

INSIDERS AND OUTSIDERS: TWO WAVES OF JEWISH SETTLEMENT IN BRITISH
COLUMBIA, 1858-1914

By

CHRISTINE BOAS WISENTHAL

B. A., University of London, 1962

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
(Department of Geography)

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

April 1987

© Christine Boas Wisenthal, 1987

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the head of my department or by his or her representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Department of Geography

The University of British Columbia
1956 Main Mall
Vancouver, Canada
V6T 1Y3

Date April 28th, 1987

ABSTRACT

In the period between 1858 and 1914, two different waves of Jewish immigrants came to British Columbia. The first wave, composed largely of Jews of German and West European origin, came to British Columbia during the gold-rush period, 1858-1871. The second wave, composed for the most part of East European Jews, settled in the province between 1886 and 1914.

This thesis is a historical geographical study of the adaptation of each of the two groups of European Jewish immigrants to their respective new settings in British Columbia. The main questions addressed concern ethnic/religious group formation and survival in new and unfamiliar physical, economic and social environmental conditions. Archival and library sources have yielded most of the primary data on which the thesis was based.

The two groups of Jewish immigrants each settled in different parts of British Columbia. Between 1858 and 1871, several hundred German and West European Jews were lured from California by the discovery of gold in the new British colony. Most settled in the city of Victoria on Vancouver Island where they formed a vibrant Jewish community during the gold-rush period. Others went to the smaller communities in, and en route to, the gold-mining regions in the mainland interior of British Columbia. By 1871, in the aftermath of the Cariboo gold-rush, many Jews had left the province, but a small core of Jewish families remained in Victoria.

In contrast, between 1886 and 1914, the province received a large

influx of generally impoverished Jewish immigrant families who had fled from pogroms in their homelands in Eastern Europe. The city of Vancouver absorbed the majority of these East European Jewish immigrants. Most concentrated in the low-income East End immigrant district of the city.

For the most part, the German and West European Jews were merchants and traders whose main business involved provisioning and outfitting the large transient mining population in the Cariboo region during the gold rushes. The base of these commercial operations was in Victoria where a concentration of Jewish businesses emerged after 1858. Many of the Jewish firms in Victoria were linked with Jewish businesses in San Francisco.

The first wave of Jewish immigrants was received with a remarkable degree of tolerance and became well-integrated into the British host society in Victoria without losing their ethnic identity. They formed a traditional Jewish community and built a synagogue in 1863 in Victoria.

The East European Jews lacked the entrepreneurial spirit of their earlier counterparts in the province. The immediate concern of most of the East European Jewish immigrants upon arrival in Vancouver was to rebuild their uprooted lives. Most set themselves up as tailors, dressmakers, scrap dealers, shopkeepers and petty traders in the East End of Vancouver. By 1914, there was a marked concentration of Jews in the clothing business in Vancouver.

Feelings of alienation from the British host society among the East European Jews led to the formation of a segregated, ghetto-like traditional Jewish community in the East End of Vancouver by 1914. Jewish life was focussed on an Orthodox congregation which built the first synagogue in Vancouver in 1911.

Despite shared religious traditions, the two waves of Jewish immigrants each produced widely different 'Jewish geographies' in British Columbia between 1858 and 1914.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
LIST OF TABLES	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ix
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER I. THE DEMOGRAPHIC PATTERN OF JEWISH MIGRATION TO BRITISH COLUMBIA, 1858-1914	9
CHAPTER II. ENTREPRENEURS AND TRADERS: JEWISH ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA, 1858-1871	30
CHAPTER III. TAILORS, PEDLARS AND MERCHANTS: JEWISH ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA, 1886-1914	65
CHAPTER IV. VICTORIA: AN INTEGRATED JEWISH COMMUNITY, 1858-1871	97
CHAPTER V. VANCOUVER: A SEGREGATED JEWISH COMMUNITY, 1886-1914.	124
BIBLIOGRAPHY	152

LIST OF TABLES

1:1	Family Composition of Jewish Population in British Columbia, 1858-1871_____	19
2:1	Jewish Merchants in the Interior Mining Regions, 1858-1871_____	36
2:2	Estimated Losses to Selected Businesses in Barkerville Fire, 16 September 1868_____	42
2:3	Types of Jewish Business in Victoria, 1863_____	47
2:4	Assessed Values of Selected Jewish Businesses in Victoria, 1861_____	48
2:5	Business Partnerships Within Victoria's Jewish Community, 1858-1871_____	58
2:6	Jewish Businesses in Gold-Rush Victoria with Known Family Connections in California_____	59
3:1	Vancouver: Occupational Structure of Jewish Population, 1914_____	72
4:1	Jewish Members of Fraternal Societies in British Columbia, 1858-1871_____	113

LIST OF FIGURES

1:1	Jewish Settlement in British Columbia, 1858-1871_____	11
1:2	Jewish Settlement in British Columbia, 1881_____	11
1:3	Jewish Settlement in British Columbia, 1891_____	11
1:4	Jewish Settlement in British Columbia, 1901_____	11
1:5	Jewish Settlement in British Columbia, 1911_____	11
1:6	Jewish Population in British Columbia, 1858-1871_____	15
1:7	Origins of First Wave of Jewish Immigrants_____	16
1:8	Origins of Second Wave of Jewish Immigrants_____	16
1:9	Jewish Population in British Columbia, 1881-1914_____	23
1:10	Jewish Population in Vancouver, 1891-1911_____	23
2:1	Jewish Trading Patterns in Gold-Rush British Columbia____	33
2:2	Jewish Stores in Interior British Columbia, 1858-1871____	35
2:3	Oppenheimer Bros. Family Store, Yale, B. C._____	40
2:4	Location of Jewish Businesses in Victoria During the Gold Rush Period_____	45
3:1	Jewish Commercial Activity in Interior British Columbia, 1886-1914_____	67
3:2	Vancouver: Areas With Concentrations of Jewish Businesses, 1886-1914_____	70
3:3	Distribution of Jewish Clothing Businesses in Vancouver, 1914_____	73
3:4	Distribution of Jewish Scrap and Second Hand Businesses in Vancouver, 1914_____	74

3:5	Distribution of Jewish Food Businesses in Vancouver, 1914_____	75
3:6	Distribution of Jewish Financial, Real Estate and Jewellery Businesses in Vancouver, 1914_____	76
3:7	Distribution of Jewish Businesses in Vancouver's East End, 1914_____	84
4:1	Location of Jewish Community in Victoria, 1863_____	98
4:2	Relationship of Jewish Minority Group to Host Society in Gold-Rush Victoria_____	102
4:3	Congregation Emanu-El Synagogue, Victoria, B.C._____	105
5:1	Distribution of Jewish Population in Vancouver, 1914_____	126
5:2	Residence of a Jewish Family on Keefer Street in the East End of Vancouver circa 1910_____	130
5:3	Relationship of Jewish Minority Groups to Host Society in Vancouver, 1914_____	134
5:4	Side View of B'nai Yehudah Synagogue, Vancouver_____	139

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am very grateful to Dr. Graeme Wynn for his careful and thoughtful supervision of the writing of this thesis.

I am also indebted to my husband and children for their constant support and encouragement during the course of this endeavour.

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a historical geographical study of the settlement of two groups of European Jewish immigrants in British Columbia in the period between 1858 and 1914. Like many other works in historical geography, it is concerned with the migration of Europeans to the new world and their subsequent adaptation to new environmental settings. In order to understand the regional mosaic of widely differentiated settlement patterns in the new world, historical geographers have explored the spatial and temporal distribution in North America of immigrants from different parts of Europe, and the various landscape patterns they created. Regional variations in ethnic group adaptation to new environments have been explained in part by examining the extent to which old world cultural and material traits were transferred or discarded, whether new world traits were imitated and adapted, or whether new traits were invented. Much of the research on this theme has dealt with immigrants in rural/agricultural rather than urban settings. For the most part, the conclusions point to the fact that European societies were not replicated in toto, but rather they were simplified when transposed to new world settings.¹ The retention or discard of unique cultural and material traits by rural immigrant groups were generally dictated by economic and environmental factors. Whereas first generation immigrants, especially those who felt nostalgia for the homeland left behind, might have attempted to replicate old world communities, they, or their descendants, were eventually compelled by circumstances to adapt farming methods, field systems, farm buildings, village settlement patterns and

societal organization to fit in with pre-existent norms in the new world. Conversely, those intrinsic cultural traits which distinguished one ethnic group from another, and which found expression in the privacy of the home or in communal ceremonies, persisted unchanged for much longer.²

The Jewish experience in North America was very different from that of rural settlers since most Jewish immigrants settled in urban areas.³ The greatest concentrations of Jews have always been in the large cities, especially in the eastern seaboard ports of entry. Between 1860 and 1914 over 2 million Jews crossed the Atlantic from Europe. The majority of them settled in the United States. A major continental shift in world Jewish population had been set in motion. Whereas less than 1% of the world's Jewish population lived in North America in 1840, 10% did so in 1900, 30% in 1939, and almost half in 1945.⁴ The experience of Jewish immigrants in the United States has been thoroughly documented and analyzed by American historians and sociologists.⁵ However, historical geographers have barely broached the subject. David Ward, who included Jewish urban ghettos in his locational studies of immigrant ethnic enclaves and their relationship to central business districts in American cities, and Jonathan Mesinger, who studied the geography of work amongst Jews in 19th century Syracuse, have offered some of the only published contributions.⁶

Works focussed on the concentrations of Jewish population in eastern North America have been of limited relevance to a study of the early Jewish experience in British Columbia. Hence, inspiration for this thesis has been derived in part from published research on Jewish migration to the American West. For example, Robert Levinson's historical study of Jews in the California gold rush, Peter Decker's study of white collar

mobility in nineteenth century San Francisco (which singles out the German-Jewish mercantile enclave for special emphasis), and William Toll's history of Jews in Portland, Oregon were useful for placing British Columbian German-Jewish immigration in the wider west coast context of Jewish migration and settlement.⁷

Although the flow of Jewish immigrants to Canada was much smaller than that to the United States, the total Jewish population in Canada grew from a few hundred in the the 1860's to 75,000 in 1911. Most of the Jewish immigrants to Canada settled in cities and towns, with the greatest concentrations in Montreal, Toronto and Winnipeg. Therefore it is not surprising that most work on the experience of Jewish immigrants in Canada has been written from an eastern Canadian viewpoint. Among the best and most comprehensive of these studies are the ones by Stuart Rosenberg and Stephen Speisman.⁸

British Columbia's Jewish population, which grew from a mere handful in 1858 to over 1,500 by 1914, was composed of the northernmost and westernmost remnants of two distinct waves of Jewish migration across North America. The first came from Germany and Western Europe, the second from Eastern Europe. To date, historians and geographers alike have shown little interest in the early history of this small, but significant ethnic component of British Columbia's population. Although useful attempts to compile in book form some of the diverse archival, library and photographic materials concerning Jews in British Columbia have been made by David Rome and Cyril Leonoff.⁹ Much of the material on Jewish life in British Columbia published in newspapers, pamphlets and journals is uncritical and ethnocentric.

This thesis examines the record of Jewish immigrant experience in

British Columbia between 1858 and 1914 from a geographical perspective. The main questions addressed concern ethnic/religious group formation and survival in newly settled frontier territory. Why did European Jews, the majority of whom had been urban dwellers in their homelands, choose to settle in a remote British colony which was still largely wilderness?¹⁰ How many Jews came, and from whence? Why did they come to frontier British Columbia? In which areas of the province did they settle? What economic activities did they pursue? What level of group cohesion existed amongst the Jewish immigrants? Was it maintained, and, if so, how? Did they create traditional Jewish communities based on religion? Were the European Jewish ghettos or shtetls reproduced in any form in British Columbia? Which aspects of Jewish religion and culture were retained or discarded in the process of adaptation? To what extent did existing physical, social and economic conditions in the province affect Jewish community formation and survival? In what ways did Jews interact with the dominant host community and with other ethnic groups?

The period selected conveniently encapsulates the first two distinct waves of Jewish immigration into the province. German and West European Jews dominated Jewish settlement in British Columbia from 1858 until the mid 1880's; by 1914, Jews from Eastern Europe were predominant. Each wave settled in separate areas of the province and members of each responded differently to their respective new surroundings. The Jewish communities which were created, first by the German Jews in Victoria during the gold-rush, and forty years later by the East European Jews in Vancouver, were quite different despite the similarities of their religious foundations. Outwardly, the former was buoyant and self-confident in relation to the wider community. The latter

was self-conscious and inward-looking. References have been made to the other ethnic groups which comprised British Columbia's population wherever it was deemed appropriate or necessary.

Archival and library sources have yielded most of the primary data on which this thesis is based. Diffuse, and all too often fragmentary information culled from directories, census records, private papers and correspondence, institutional records (including synagogue and cemetery), newspapers, maps and photographs have provided a picture of the demography and spatial distribution of the Jewish population in British Columbia between 1858 and 1914, and also of the economic, social and cultural activities in which Jews engaged.

For the purposes of this thesis, 'Jewishness,' is defined to include all levels of religious, ethnic and cultural affiliation. This is appropriate for the period under consideration, when there were significant changes in Europe and North America in Jewish religious adherence and practice, and in feelings amongst Jews about their identity. By and large first generation Jewish immigrants to British Columbia were Orthodox Jews. Many of their descendants modified or abandoned some of the ritual practices, yet still identified themselves as Jews. Until the late nineteenth century, 'Jewishness' was usually designated according to religious affiliation. But, by the turn of the century, with the development of nationalist movements in Europe, and of Zionism amongst Jews, the term took on a stronger ethnic connotation.

The question of Jewish identity is well illustrated in the census returns for the period, in which there are marked discrepancies between the total numbers of Jews identified according to religious affiliation and to ethnic origin. In the earliest censuses for British Columbia the

totals of Jews identified by religion exceeded the totals identified by Hebrew origin; by 1911, there was almost no discrepancy; by 1921, the number of 'ethnic' Jews slightly exceeded the number of 'religious' Jews.¹¹ In light of these inconsistencies this thesis used provincial and city directories, synagogue, cemetery, and other Jewish institutional membership lists and records to establish Jewish population numbers.

NOTES

¹ See R. C. Harris, "The Simplification of Europe Overseas," Annals Association of American Geographers, No. 67, 1977.

² See J.J. Mannion, Irish Settlements in Eastern Canada: A study of Cultural Transfer and Adaptation (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974)

³ There were some agricultural resettlement schemes for Jewish refugees, the best known being those organized in the 1890's in the United States, Canada and South America by the German-Jewish philanthropist, Baron Maurice de Hirsch through the Jewish Colonization Association which he helped to form.

⁴ See J. Lestschinsky, 'Jewish Migrations' in L. Finkelstein, The Jews (New York: Harper, 1960) p. 1536.

⁵ Louis Wirth, The Ghetto (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1928); Oscar Handlin, The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migrations that Made the American People (Boston: Little, Brown, 1951, 1973); Rudolf Glanz, Studies in Judaica Americana (New York: Ktav, 1970); Marshall Sklare, ed., The Jews: Social Patterns of an American Group (New York: Free Press, 1958) and America's Jews (New York: Random House, 1971); Moses Rischin, The Promised City: New York's Jews, 1870-1914 (New York: Harper and Row, 1962); Irving Howe, World of Our Fathers (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976).

⁶ David Ward, Cities and Immigrants: A Geography of Change in Nineteenth Century America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971); Jonathan Mesinger, "Peddlers and Merchants: The Geography of Work in a Nineteenth Century Jewish Community," Syracuse University Department of Geography: Discussion Paper Series no. 38 (October 1977).

⁷ Rudolf Glanz, the Jews of California: From the Discovery of Gold until 1880 (New York: Waldon Press Inc., 1960); R. E. Levinson, The Jews in the California Gold Rush (New York: Ktav, 1978); Peter Decker, Fortunes and Failures: White Collar Mobility in Nineteenth Century San Francisco (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978); William Toll, The Making of an Ethnic Middle Class: Portland Jewry over Four Generations (Albany: SUNY, 1982).

⁸ Stuart Rosenberg, The Jewish Community in Canada: Volume I, A History; Volume II, In the Midst of Freedom (McClelland & Stewart, 1970); Stephen Speisman, The Jews of Toronto: A History to 1937 (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1979). Two of the earlier narrative histories of Canadian Jewry are:- A. D. Hart, The Jew in Canada: A Complete Record of Canadian Jewry from the days of the French Regime to the present time (Toronto: Jewish Publications Ltd., 1926), and Benjamin Sack, History of the Jews in Canada (Montreal: Harvest House, 1965). A demographic approach was taken by Louis Rosenberg in his useful volume, Canada's Jews: A Social and Economic Study of the Jews in Canada (Montreal:

Canadian Jewish Congress, 1939).

⁹ D. Rome, The First Two Years: A Record of the Jewish Pioneers on Canada's Pacific Coast, 1858-1860 (Montreal: Caiserman, 1942); C. E. Leonoff, Pioneers, Pedlars and Prayer Shawls: The Jewish Communities in British Columbia and the Yukon (Victoria: Sono Nis Press, 1978)

¹⁰ Jews traditionally were regarded as outsiders in most countries of Western and Eastern Europe. Forbidden from owning land, Jews were generally confined to restricted areas of cities and towns.

¹¹ Source: Census of Canada, 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911, 1921.

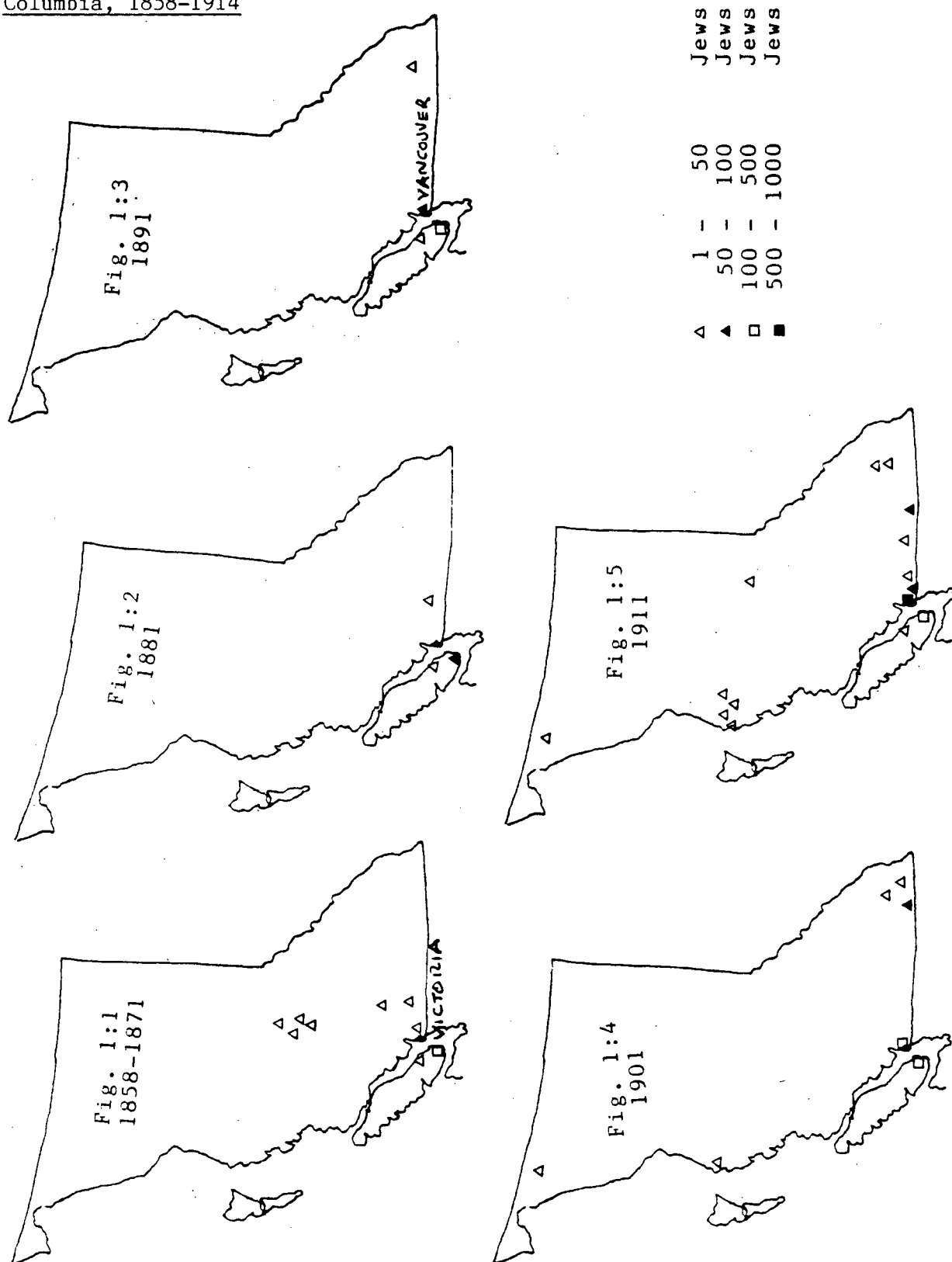
CHAPTER I

THE DEMOGRAPHIC PATTERN OF JEWISH MIGRATION TO BRITISH COLUMBIA, 1858-1914

Between 1858 and 1914, two distinct waves of Jewish immigration produced radically different "Jewish geographies" in British Columbia. The first wave, which was composed largely of cosmopolitan Jews of West European origin, formed an integrated Jewish community in Victoria on Vancouver Island during the gold-rush period, whereas the second wave, composed for the most part of Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe, by 1914 had created a segregated, ghetto-like Jewish community in Vancouver. The essential contrasts are revealed in Figures 1:1 to 1:5. The distribution of Jews of West European origin during the gold-rush period, 1858-1871, is shown in Figure 1:1; the concentration in Victoria, the colony's first large urban centre, is clear. Victoria remained the main centre of Jewish population in 1881 (Fig. 1:2). By 1891, East European Jews, who arrived in larger numbers than their predecessors, had begun to concentrate in Vancouver (Fig. 1:3). Their arrival coincided with a period of rapid economic growth in the province. By 1901 there were more Jews on the mainland than there were on Vancouver Island. Although the number of Jews in Victoria had increased steadily, but slowly, between 1891 and 1901, Vancouver's Jewish population more than doubled during that decade; there were, in addition, new clusters of Jews in the Kootenay region (Fig. 1:4). By 1911, Vancouver had the largest Jewish population in the province and Victoria's Jewish population had declined (Fig. 1:5). Jews were still dispersed in the mining towns of the Southern Interior

whilst new concentrations had appeared in Prince Rupert and Prince George. The spatial separation between the two waves of Jewish immigration to British Columbia, can be explained in part by the insular location of Victoria, and also by the history of settlement in the province. The split in the Jewish demographic pattern in British Columbia was not typical in the context of North American Jewish settlement as a whole; most cities, such as Chicago, San Francisco and Portland, absorbed successive waves of Jewish immigrants. In British Columbia, the East European Jews created a new community on the mainland, instead of joining the already mature community of West European Jews on Vancouver Island.

Figures 1:1 to 1:5. Changes in Pattern of Jewish Settlement in British Columbia, 1858-1914



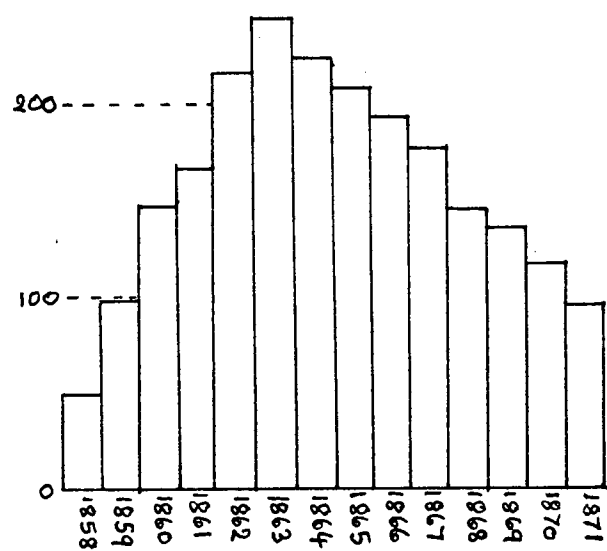
British Columbia's Jewish population originated from the latter two of three significant migrations of European Jews to North America between the seventeenth and early twentieth centuries. The first, and smallest migration in the seventeenth century, composed largely of Sephardic Jews, did not spread much beyond the original Eastern seaboard settlements. By 1790, the total North American Jewish population was 1,500, the majority of whom were of Sephardic descent.¹ The second and third migrations were composed mainly of two groups of Ashkenazic Jews who stemmed from widely different socio-economic backgrounds.² Between 1840 and 1880, approximately 200,000 German Jews, who comprised the majority of the second wave, settled in the United States. Most of them left Germany voluntarily in order to escape the constraints imposed upon their economic and social activities by all levels of government. The greatest exodus coincided with the period of European rebellions which culminated in 1848. On the whole, it was an emigration of young, single men, from moderately wealthy and fairly assimilated Jewish families. In North America they hoped to maximize their economic opportunities. Although most settled in the well-populated East, many German Jews participated in the westward thrust of the frontier of settlement as far as the Pacific coast, including California and British Columbia.³ Jews from this wave of migration, settled in British Columbia between 1858 and c1871. These included some Jews of British origin, a few of whom were Sephardim.⁴ The third, and by far the largest Jewish migration took place between 1880 and 1914, when over 2 million Jews, mainly from Eastern Europe and Russia, poured into North America. It was a migration composed for the most part of displaced whole families, in contrast with the previous wave of Jewish migration. Almost all of the new Jewish immigrants were

refugees of low socio-economic status. Repressive and discriminatory measures against Jews such as the May Laws enacted in Russia in 1882 and recurrent pogroms, forced a mass emigration of Jews from the shtetls in the Pale of Settlement in Eastern Europe.⁵ This wave of Jewish migration, which increased rapidly until 1914, was usually heavier immediately following renewed outbreaks of violence against Jews in Eastern Europe, especially in the period from 1902 to 1906. Displaced Jews at first flocked to the towns and cities of Eastern and Western Europe in search of employment. But, from these temporary places of respite, a majority found their way to North America, lured by the prospect of living in freedom and prosperity. Most of them congregated in immigrant ghettos in New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Montreal and in other large Eastern cities. But a minority of the East European Jews left these densely populated urban areas for newly opened-up regions in both the American and Canadian Wests. British Columbia, situated on the far west coast of the continent, received this second wave of Jewish immigrants between the late 1880's and 1914, the greatest influx occurring after the turn of the century.

First Wave of Jewish Immigration to British Columbia, 1858-1871: The West European Jews

Gold lured the first wave of Jewish immigrants to British Columbia. In 1858, at least 50 Jews were amongst the thousands of goldseekers of many nationalities who landed in Victoria on Vancouver Island. Most had sailed from San Francisco. Within the next five years, which marked the most intensive period of the gold-rushes in the mainland interior, the total Jewish population in the British colony had increased almost five-fold to reach a peak of 242 in 1863. During that five year period, the percentage of Jews in Victoria's population fluctuated between 4% and 4.8% as Jews concentrated increasingly in the colony's only city.⁶ But, in the following years the Jewish population went into a slow decline. As the gold rush abated, many Jews left the colony entirely, and there was very little new Jewish in-migration to offset this exodus. By 1871, the Jewish population in British Columbia was reduced to 93, and the percentage of Jews in Victoria's population had fallen to under 3%. The bar-graph in Figure 1:6, based on estimated totals for given years, shows the fluctuations in the growth of the Jewish population in British Columbia for the period between 1858 and 1871.

Figure 1:6. British Columbia's Jewish Population, 1858-1871⁷



Origins of Jewish Immigrants to British Columbia

Figure 1:7. First Wave, 1858-1871

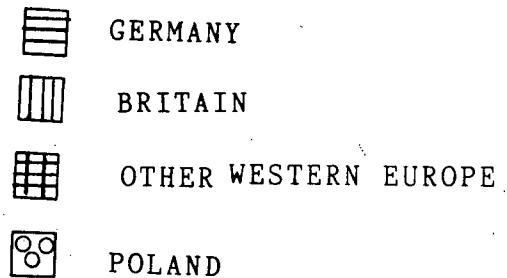
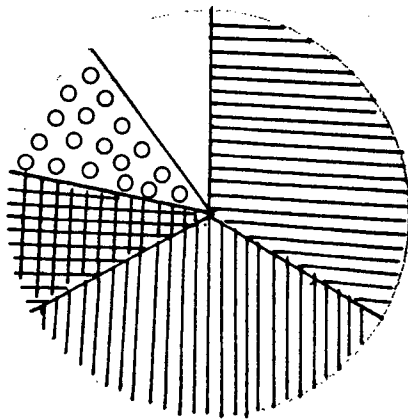
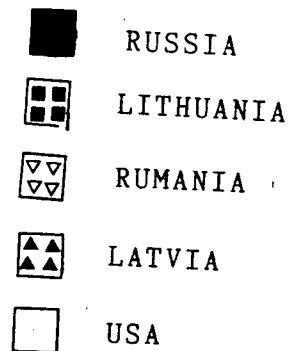
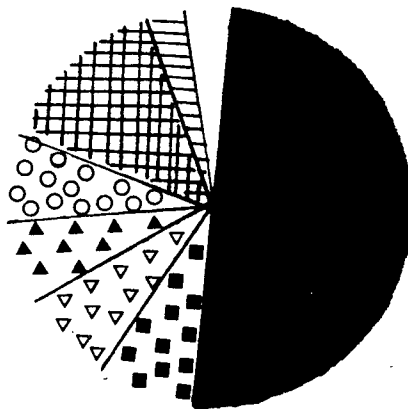


Figure 1:8. Second Wave, 1886-1914



Jews from Germany and Britain each made up approximately one-third of the first wave of Jewish immigration to British Columbia. The remainder came from other European countries, notably Poland, and from America (Fig. 1:7). Most of the German, Polish and native-born American Jews came to British Columbia via California where they had been traders and merchants during the California gold-rush in such towns as Placerville, Jackson, Stockton, Sacramento and San Francisco. By the late 1850's, the latter city contained a sizeable Jewish population, which was to become a major source of Jewish immigrants to British Columbia.⁸ When the gold fever declined in California, many Jews sought better opportunities in San Francisco and farther afield. Along with other migrants, they moved to new areas in Arizona, Nevada and, in 1858, British Columbia, where gold had been found. The majority of Jews of British origin also reached British Columbia via California. Some of those who had participated in gold rushes in Australia and New Zealand, and in the lucrative Pacific maritime trade during the 1850's were already well-established merchants upon their arrival in British Columbia. From San Francisco, which served as a temporary trading base for them, some British Jews were lured to the new British colony on the Pacific coast by the business prospects which opened up following the discovery of gold there in 1858. In addition, they had an advantage over the German and European Jews in that they were British subjects, which entitled them to full citizenship rights upon arrival in the colony.

Between 1858 and 1871, Jewish immigrants established a substantial Jewish community in Victoria. There was a small cluster of Jews in Nanaimo, a coal-mining community on the east coast of Vancouver Island; and Jewish merchants and itinerant traders penetrated the interior

gold-mining regions. Victoria, linked directly by sea with San Francisco, and as the chief port of entry to and exit from the colony, quickly acquired the largest and only significant concentration of Jewish immigrants. Not only was Victoria the sole urban centre of any size, but it was also the commercial headquarters and the seat of government in the colony. Jewish settlement in the interior mining communities, which, for the most part was temporary and seasonal, paralleled closely the waxing and waning of the gold fever. Nevertheless, a few Jewish merchants remained in the larger settlements such as Yale, in the Fraser valley, and Barkerville, in the Cariboo region, until the mid-1870's (Fig. 1:1). In spite of a decline in the rate of Jewish immigration after 1864, Victoria continued to be the main centre of Jewish population in the colony throughout the period. The number of Jews in Yale, Lytton, Quesnel, Barkerville, Williams Lake and Lillooet declined significantly by 1871 from the heights reached during the first four or five years of the gold-rush. Those who left either settled in Victoria, or departed from the colony altogether.

Table 1:1. Family Composition of the Jewish Population in British Columbia, 1858-1871 * 9

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>House-</u>	<u>Single</u>	<u>Families</u>	<u>Children</u>
	<u>Jewish</u>	<u>holds</u>	<u>Persons</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>No. (% total)</u>
	<u>Popn.</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>No. (% total)</u>		
1858	50	32	19 (38%)	13	6 (12%)
1859	99	60	33 (33%)	27	12 (13%)
1860	149	76	34 (23%)	42	31 (21%)
1861	167	78	35 (21%)	43	34 (20%)
1862	217	106	49 (22.5%)	57	54 (24%)
1863	242	119	54 (22%)	65	58 (24%)
1864	221	96	29 (13%)	67	58 (26%)
1865	208	88	28 (13%)	60	60 (28%)
1866	191	83	27 (14%)	56	52 (27%)
1867	177	85	24 (13.5%)	61	51 (28%)
1868	144	58	15 (10.4%)	43	43 (29%)
1869	134	55	17 (12.6%)	38	41 (30%)
1870	118	45	12 (10.1%)	33	40 (33%)
1871	93	34	8 (8.6%)	26	34 (36%)

*Based on estimated population statistics

Once in British Columbia, the obvious linguistic and cultural distinctions between the Jews from different European backgrounds gradually merged as they intermingled to form a single ethno-religious community. Jews in Victoria quickly established the framework of a traditional Jewish community, linked both by blood and marriage. The earliest Jewish immigrants to British Columbia were most often advance parties of male relatives, usually brothers or cousins, or fathers and sons; hence men outnumbered women at first. That situation changed with the arrival of the wives and children of those men who were married prior to migration, and the marriage of single men after migration. Given the shortage of eligible Jewish women of marriagable age in British Columbia in this period, many of the Jewish men sought and found Jewish spouses in San Francisco. The data contained in Table 1:1 suggests that the Jewish population became increasingly familial and stable as the first decade of immigration wore on. Although single persons accounted for 38% of the total Jewish population in 1858, by 1864, the proportion was 13%, and seven years later it was 8.6%. Conversely, the proportion of families increased from 40% of all households in 1858, to 69% in 1864, to 76% in 1871. Despite a shrinking Jewish population over time, a pattern of household persistence developed in Victoria with the emergence of a solid core of Jewish families by 1871. The community was composed for the most part of an interlocking network of young families and single men. Jewish men were most often in the early or middle stages of their working lives. Their wives were still of childbearing age. Jewish families were not exceptionally large, with few having attained their full complement of children by 1871. The majority of families had one or two children; only a minority had four or more offspring. Whereas children made up 12% of

the Jewish population in 1858, and 26% in 1864, they accounted for over one-third of the total in 1871. Throughout the period deaths accounted for some losses to the Jewish population; accidents, illness and complications connected with childbirth were the most common causes of death. Headstones in the Jewish Cemetery in Victoria bear grim witness to the incidence of infant and child deaths in the community, and also to the deaths of women in their prime.¹⁰ Old age was not a major cause of death until the Jewish population had matured.

The Victoria community derived additional cohesion from the familial and business ties which were maintained with the much larger Jewish population in San Francisco. Throughout the period these links were reinforced by the regular movement of Jews in both directions between San Francisco and Victoria. A significant portion of Victoria's Jewish population was made up of younger branches of Californian Jewish families, whilst the older, well-established components of these families remained in San Francisco. Furthermore, by 1871, a considerable number of Victoria's Jews had returned to San Francisco.

The ten year florescence of the Jewish community created by the West European Jews in gold-rush Victoria was followed by a period of decline during which Jewish immigration to British Columbia almost ceased. The lull lasted for over fifteen years from about 1870 until the start of the second wave of Jewish immigration into the province in the late 1880's.

Second Wave of Jewish Immigration to British Columbia, 1886-1914: The East European Jews

Between 1886 and 1914, the arrival of a large wave of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe brought about a major shift in the distribution of British Columbia's Jewish population from Vancouver Island to the mainland. The vast majority of the second wave of Jewish immigrants settled in Vancouver, which made that city the largest centre of Jewish population in the province by the turn of the century (Fig. 1:3). Vancouver increased its share of the provincial Jewish population from 30% in 1891 to 72% in 1911. At the same time, the proportion of Jews in Vancouver's rapidly expanding population increased from 0.5% in 1891 to 1% in 1911. East European Jews also penetrated other areas of the province where previously there had been no Jews; in the north, Dawson City, Prince Rupert, Prince George, and in the south-east, Rossland, Greenwood and Kaslo were some of the towns which had substantial Jewish populations for brief periods between 1886 and 1914. West European Jews from the first wave of migration continued to maintain their numbers, with small fluctuations, in Victoria and Nanaimo, in addition to the few who moved to Vancouver (Figs. 1:3, 1:4, 1:5).

Figure 1:9 Jewish Population in British Columbia, 1881-1911¹¹

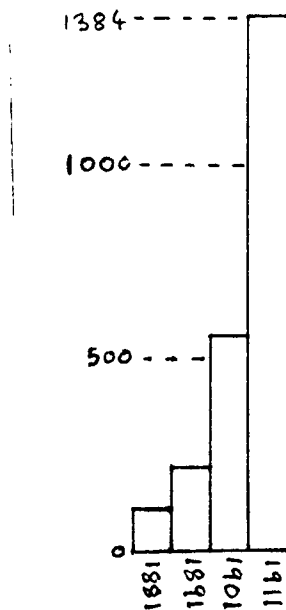
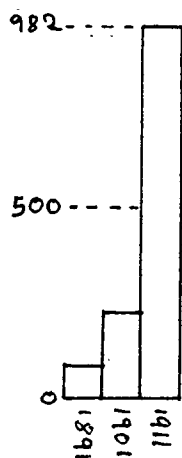


Figure 1:10 Jewish Population in Vancouver, 1891-1914¹²



Whilst Canada's Jewish population increased from about 1,000 in 1861 to 75,000 in 1911, when Jews accounted for 1.03% of the Canadian population, British Columbia's share of Canada's Jews declined from approximately 5% in 1861 to 2% in 1911. Nevertheless, British Columbia's Jewish population increased from 104 in 1881 to approximately 1500 in 1914. This was less than 1.0% of the provincial population in 1914. The bar-graph in Figure 1:9 shows that most of the increase occurred during the decade between 1901 and 1911. Whereas the Jewish population doubled in each of the two decades prior to 1901, it almost tripled between 1901 and 1914. Most of that increase was directly attributable to the continued in-migration of East European Jews, which declined markedly during World War I. During the same period, Vancouver's Jewish population increased correspondingly, from 83 in 1891 to well over 1,000 by 1914. But, this included a five-fold increase in the city's Jewish population between 1901 and 1914 (Fig. 1:10).

Most Jews who came to British Columbia between 1886 and 1914 were born outside of North America (Fig. 1:8). At least 75% of them originated in Eastern European countries, 45% were from Russia, 9% from Lithuania, 9% from Poland, 7% from Rumania, and 5% from Latvia. Of the remaining 25%, 18% were from Western European countries; the rest were either Canadian- or American-born.¹³

The majority of the East European Jewish immigrants who came to British Columbia prior to 1914 arrived by train from Eastern Canada and the United States. A small minority crossed the border into British Columbia from the states of Washington, Idaho and Montana. From the Eastern ports of arrival, Jewish refugees moved westwards following the routes of transcontinental railways. It was a form of chain migration,

usually undertaken in several stages, in which heads of households moved west in search of new opportunities, ahead of their families. Their choice of destinations was largely determined by chance and by financial considerations. For some Jews the choice was made by immigrant relief organizations in Montreal or Toronto. Quite a number of Jews made stops in Winnipeg, which had a sizeable Jewish community by the early 1880's, and in other new communities, including Jewish agricultural settlements like Hirsch and Wapella, situated along the railway route.¹⁴ The rest continued to the west coast terminus. The city of Vancouver absorbed the majority of these Jews.

In Vancouver, the East European Jewish immigrants settled along with immigrants who belonged to other ethnic groups, in the less affluent residential district of Strathcona, which was located immediately to the east of the central business district of the city. By 1914, this East End district of Vancouver accounted for over half of the city's Jewish population. The remaining Jewish population in the city was more widely dispersed; in 1914 it was divided in roughly equal proportions between the West End, where a small group of more assimilated West European Jews had settled, and the Fairview and Mount Pleasant districts into which upwardly mobile Jews from the East End had moved.

Even though they came from widely dispersed regions of Eastern Europe, the Jewish immigrants shared not only a religion, but also the experience of being forcibly uprooted from their homelands and subsequent migration. They formed a fairly homogeneous community. In addition, a wide spectrum of age groups was represented amongst the East European Jewish immigrants.¹⁵ This was reflected in the composition of the East-End Jewish community which, by 1914, consisted of a closely-knit network

of interrelated nuclear and extended families. As a rule, the East European Jews arrived in Vancouver in single or interrelated family groups. But, it was also fairly common for heads of families to precede wives and children to Vancouver by a year or more. Transient single male adults comprised only a minority of these Jewish immigrants. On the other hand, female adults, the majority of whom were married, were well represented in the East European contingent. By 1911, the ratio of females to males in the Jewish population stood at 4:5.¹⁶ Since exogamous marriages were traditionally forbidden to Orthodox Jews, who formed the majority of the East European Jewish immigrants, most marriages occurred between Jewish partners from within the East End community. Such marriages served to strengthen pre-existing familial ties. Jewish in-migration together with natural increase resulted in the continued growth of the East End Jewish population to reach a total of about 600-700 by 1914. This growth was partly offset by deaths in the community. Whilst old age took its toll, a number of Jews met untimely deaths as the result of illness or accidents. Out of 40 burials in the Pioneer Jewish Cemetery in the years between 1892 and 1914, 40% were of children and young adults, 22.5% were of women still in their prime, and 12.5% resulted from accidents or illness. Similarly, outmigration of Jews was of minor significance in reducing the size of the Jewish population during this period.

Between 1886 and 1914, there were also clusters of East European Jewish merchants and traders in various parts of the interior of British Columbia (Figs. 1:3, 1:4, 1:5). A significant percentage of this total was associated with mining activities in the province. In the hard-rock mining district of the Kootenays there were 98 Jews in 1901. By 1911 that

number had dropped by half to 47. Within districts, distribution oscillated according to mining activity; in 1901, Rossland was the major centre of Jewish population in the area with 72 Jewish residents; ten years later, Greenwood and Kaslo with 74 and 28 Jewish residents respectively, were the main centres of Jewish population. The brief but intense gold-rush in the Klondike and Atlin districts of the province from 1897 to 1898 brought as many as 60 Jews to Dawson City.¹⁷ By 1911, some 40 to 50 East European Jews lived in a cluster of towns along the new Grand Trunk Pacific Railway: Prince George, Telkwa, Smithers, New Hazelton and Prince Rupert.¹⁸ Mobile and opportunistic, many of these Jews left to settle in Vancouver when the anticipated economic growth did not materialize in the Prince Rupert district.

For the most part, the East European Jewish immigrants who came to British Columbia between 1886 and 1914 had the intention of settling permanently in the province. Their rate of persistence was high and few left the province to return to their homelands or to settle in other parts of Canada or the United States. In consequence, the continued influx produced an increasingly large concentration of East European Jews in Vancouver. The stable and lasting Orthodox Jewish community which they formed in the East End endured in that location until the 1930's.

The dominant demographic pattern thus produced by the two waves of Jewish immigrants to enter British Columbia between 1858 and 1914 was one of clustering in urban centres, and of concentration into the province's two major cities. In 1914, Victoria and Vancouver remained the only real centres of Jewish communal life in British Columbia, although the former community had been eclipsed in size and importance by the latter before the turn of the century.¹⁹

NOTES

¹ Sephardic Jews are of Spanish and Portuguese origin. They are descended from the Jews who fled to Holland, England and the Dutch colonies in the West Indies following their expulsion from Spain and Portugal in 1492. From the latter countries, some went to the American colonies, where concentrations of Sephardic Jews emerged in several of the Eastern seaboard cities, in particular, New Amsterdam (New York), Newport, Philadelphia, Charleston and Savannah. See Martin Gilbert, Jewish History Atlas, (New York: Macmillan, 1976) p. 61.

² Originally, the term Ashkenazic was applied only to Jews who were of German origin, but it was later used to refer to all Western and Eastern European Jews who were not of Spanish and Portuguese descent. Ashkenazic Jews differed from their Sephardic counterparts in both cultural and religious traditions. Likewise, the two branches of Ashkenazim evolved very differently; the West European group was generally more cosmopolitan and acculturated than the East European Jews who were steeped in Orthodox Judaism and the Yiddish culture of the shtetl.

³ For further discussion of the migration of Jews from Germany to North America see Mack Walker, Germany and the Emigration, 1816-1885 (Cambridge: 1964).

⁴ These were descendants of Jews who had fled to Britain in the sixteenth century.

⁵ The Pale of Settlement, between 1835 and 1917, was the area of Russia and Poland to which Jews were confined by law. In 1885, more than 4 million Jews lived in the Pale. See Martin Gilbert, Jewish History Atlas. (New York: Macmillan, 1977), pp. 71, 72, 75.

For further discussion of the condition of East European Jewry in the late nineteenth century, and the nature of the mass emigration, see Irving Howe, World of our Fathers: The Journey of the East European Jews to America and the life they found and made. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976) pp. 5-63; Mark Zborowski and Elizabeth Herzog, Life is with people: The culture of the shtetl. (New York: Schocken Books, 1962).

⁶ Source of population statistics for early Victoria derived from E. Robertson, "The Business Community and the Development of Victoria, 1858-1900." M.A. thesis, University of Victoria, 1981: 160.

⁷ Source: David Rome, 'Early British Columbia Jewry: A Reconstructed "Census".' Canadian Ethnic Studies, vol. 3, No. 1, (June 1971): 58.

⁸ It has been estimated that there were some 962 Jewish males (many of whom would have been heads of families) in San Francisco in 1860. See Robert Levinson, The Jews in the California Gold Rush, (New York; Ktav, 1978).

⁹ Table 1:2 is compiled from data contained in David Rome, "Early British Columbia Jewry: A Reconstructed 'Census'," (1971), pp. 57-62.

In the absence of official census data for British Columbia for the period between 1858 and 1881, reliance has been placed on unofficial compilations of Jewish population statistics for the period under study. The 'census,' compiled from directories, newspapers, Jewish institutional records, and a variety of other archival sources by the librarian David Rome, is the sole published attempt to tabulate the early Jewish population in British Columbia. His estimated totals are probably conservative. Jews who lived in the province only temporarily, and those who moved frequently, were unlikely to appear in the contemporary records consulted by Rome. Similarly, the records would likely not include the full component of Jewish women and children in the population. In addition, information regarding the marital status, age, size of family would be incomplete for the Jewish population. The 'census' therefore provides a sketch rather than a complete picture of the main Jewish demographic trends in British Columbia from 1858 until 1871.

¹⁰ Jewish Cemetery, Cedar Hill Road, Victoria. Also, cemetery records located in PABC: C.E.V. Add.MSS. 59, Folder 9.

¹¹ Source: Census of Canada, 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911.

¹² Source: Census of Canada, 1891, 1901, 1911.

¹³ Percentages based on approximately 20% of British Columbia's Jewish population for whom country of origin was known.

¹⁴ See Cyril Leonoff, 'Pioneers, Ploughs and Prayers; The Jewish Farmers of Western Canada.' Reprinted from The Jewish Western Bulletin, September, 16, 1982.

¹⁵ Evidence derived in part from headstones in Pioneer Jewish Cemetery, Street, Vancouver.

¹⁶ Census of Canada, 1911. Volume I. p.?

¹⁷ C. Leonoff, Pioneers, Pedlars and Prayer Shawls. (Victoria: Sono Nis Press, 1978) p.71.

¹⁸ Leonoff, Pioneers, Pedlars and Prayer Shawls, pp.41-44, 64-70.

¹⁹ According to the Census of Canada, 1881-1911, the Jewish populations in Victoria and Vancouver changed as follows:-

	Victoria	Vancouver
1881	76	-
1891	148	83
1901	170	205
1911	139	973

CHAPTER II

ENTREPRENEURS AND TRADERS: JEWISH ECONOMIC ACTIVITY IN BRITISH COLUMBIA, 1858-1871

Relatively few of the Jews who came to British Columbia after 1858 actually mined for gold; most supplied goods and services to the mining population. Thus, the majority of Jewish immigrants engaged in some form of trading or commerce. Their entry into this trade was facilitated in 1858 by the Hudson's Bay Company's loss of its exclusive trading monopoly.¹ There were two main focii of this Jewish commercial activity in the colony: the mainland interior mining regions, and the city of Victoria. Victoria, through which the bulk of early British Columbia's trade was channelled, served as the headquarters of Jewish commercial operations in the colony. Between 1858 and 1871, a network of Jewish-run wholesale and retail businesses, closely linked to the Jewish trade in the interior mining districts, emerged in Victoria.

During the British Columbian gold-rush period, many of the immigrant Jewish businessmen were general merchants. Given the uncertainty and seasonality of demand for certain items, neither wholesaler nor retailer could afford to specialize in handling a narrow range of merchandise. In the process of expanding their trading networks into new territories, these pioneer Jewish entrepreneurs had first to assess the potential of the new market, both in Victoria and in the interior of the province. Consequently, they handled a wide range of goods including groceries, provisions, tobacco, fruit, dry goods, clothing, footwear, hardware. As

Victoria's population grew and the nascent business community became more complex, increased competition led to greater specialization amongst retail merchants. But, during the first six or seven years, the trading activities of British Columbia's Jewish merchants were both versatile and fluid; they were intermittently commission merchants, wholesalers, jobbers, retailers; or they combined several of these functions at different times, and in different places.

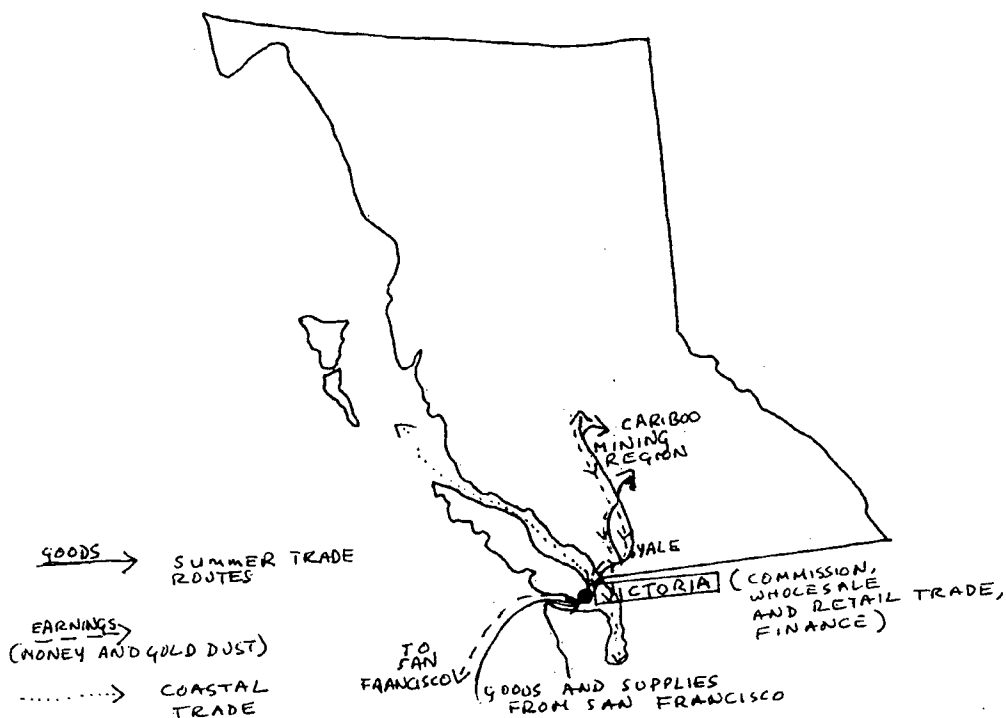
The majority of these Jewish merchants and tradesmen who settled in British Columbia during the gold rush were able to capitalize on their immediate past experience in similar lines of work. The largest number of Jews came directly from California where they had been occupied variously as general storekeepers and itinerant tradesmen in the mining settlements of the Mother Lode region, and as more substantial merchants in wholesale and retail enterprises in San Francisco.² A much smaller number of Jews came to British Columbia after having been engaged in similar trading activities in gold rushes in Australia, New Zealand and elsewhere, whilst a few came to Victoria in connection with their maritime trading activity along the Pacific coast. The reasons for the marked concentration of Jews in specialized sectors of commerce and trading could be traced back to their countries of origin in Western Europe. Until the mid-nineteenth century, Jews who lived under most West European jurisdictions were subjected to a variety of economic restrictions which usually included a prohibition against owning land. Jews in these countries were therefore forced into the types of economic pursuit which were not dependent on the ownership of land or property, such as merchandizing, commerce, and banking. The skills and expertise which were developed in these areas were readily transferred to North

American settings with the Jews who migrated. For example, by the 1860's in the United States, there were noticeable concentrations of German Jews engaged in the dry goods and tobacco trades, in the import/export business, and in real estate and auctioneering.³ Likewise in British Columbia, Jews for the most part followed the kinds of economic pursuits with which they were familiar, which, in many cases, involved the extension of established Jewish commercial enterprises into new territory.

Whilst some of the Jewish immigrants were fairly prosperous businessmen upon their arrival in British Columbia, many were still in the early stages of their commercial careers. The latter group was made up to a large extent of younger members of Jewish families who had come to British Columbia to set up branches of their family businesses. In both groups, those Jewish entrepreneurs who were supported financially from their connections with businesses in San Francisco were at an advantage in expanding their trading operations into British Columbia. Their possession of capital and commercial expertise enabled them to establish businesses which could withstand fluctuations in the volatile gold rush economy of British Columbia. Amongst the wealthiest Jewish businessmen in British Columbia were the large-scale wholesale and commission merchants, and the auctioneers and land agents. They formed a small, but elite group in the hierarchy of Jewish merchants in gold rush Victoria. Beneath them, in the middle position, was the largest group. It was composed for the most part of moderately wealthy small-scale general and commission merchants, retail store-keepers and saloon proprietors. Occupying the lowest bracket was the least advantaged group of Jewish immigrants, most of whom were petty tradesmen involved in fairly marginal

enterprises. Their numbers fluctuated considerably, but never represented more than a small proportion of the total Jewish population. The first two groups together formed a distinct nucleus of middle class Jewish merchants in Victoria's (and British Columbia's) business community between 1858 and 1871. In this capacity, Jewish businessmen participated fully, alongside their non-Jewish counterparts, in shaping the pattern of economic development and settlement in the new colony.

Figure. 2:1. Jewish trading patterns in British Columbia, 1858-1871.



The pattern of Jewish commercial operations in British Columbia during the gold-rush period is revealed in Figure 2:1. The importance of Victoria as the entrepôt through which the bulk of the trade was channelled is clear. During the gold rush, it was the only port in the colony which was linked by regular steamer service with San Francisco and the world beyond. Most immigrants entered and left the colony through Victoria. Furthermore, all of the manufactured goods, and most of the non-perishable provisions required by the miners in the interior and the growing urban population in Victoria had to be imported from San Francisco, then the largest city on the west coast. Goods intended for distribution in the interior of the colony were stored in warehouses close to the wharves in Victoria. Jewish trading operations followed a seasonal pattern. In the summer months, when routes into the interior were passable to miners and traders, goods were transported from Victoria by boat and waggon train into the accessible mining regions. In the autumn the trading pattern was reversed; surplus summer earnings, (sometimes in the form of gold dust or nuggets) were taken back to Victoria, and to San Francisco.

Jewish Trade in the Fraser River and Cariboo Mining Districts, 1858-1871

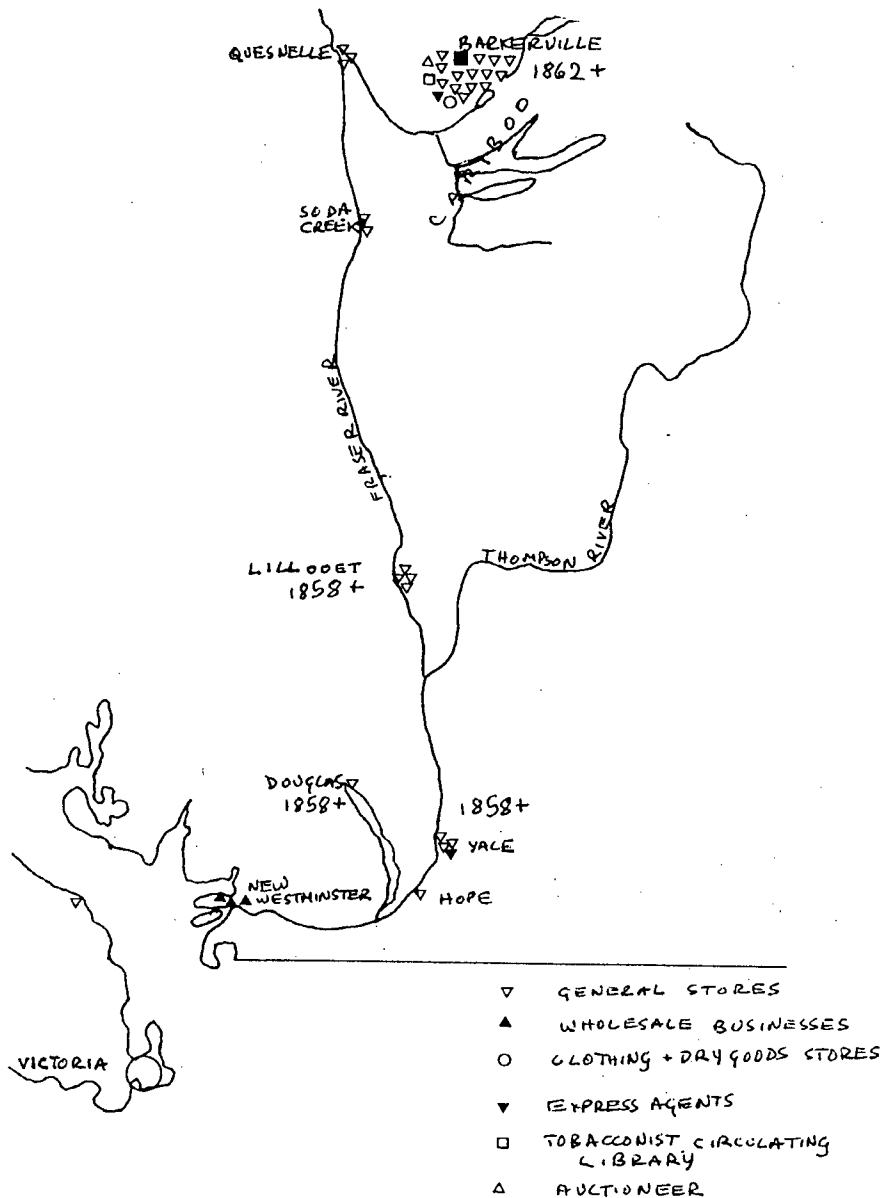


Figure. 2:2. Locations of Jewish Stores in the Interior of British Columbia during the Gold Rush Period

Table 2:1. Jewish merchants involved in the Cariboo trade between 1858 and 1871

<u>Name</u>		<u>Places</u>
Adler		Forks of Quesnelle,
Barkerville		
Belasco	1858-1860	
Braverman & Lewin	pre-1862	
Bielsky	1861-1864	
Boas & Levi		New Westminster, Forks of Quesnelle, Richfield
H.M. Cohen		
Ehrenbacher		Barkerville
Elsasser	1865+	Williams Creek, Cameronton
Frauenthal	1868	Yale
Goldstone		
Grunbaum Bros		Barkerville, Van Winkle
L. Grunbaum		Yale, Barkerville
Hamburger	1863	Forks of Quesnelle
A. Hoffman & J.Cohen		Lillooet, Barkerville
Lewis	1858-1859	Yale
Lichtenstein Bros.	-1862	Williams Creek
Moss	1862	Williams Creek, Barkerville
Neufelder & Son	1859-1875	Lillooet, Soda Creek, Williams Creek, Richfield, Barkerville, Van Winkle, Parsonville
Oppenheimer Bros.	1858-c1879	Hope, Yale, Barkerville
Prager Bros.	-1867	Douglas, Williams Creek, Grouse Creek
Price	1859-1861	Lillooet
Reinhart		New Westminster
Schultz & Trickey	1863	Forks of Quesnelle
Sporborg		
Sokolosky		
Strouss	-1871	Barkerville, Williams Creek, Richfield
Sylvester	-1863	Lillooet, Quesnelle?
Weill	1868	Barkerville
Wolff	1861+	Yale, Soda Creek, Barkerville

Although gold lured Jewish merchants and traders to British Columbia, few of them settled permanently in the mining regions. After a few 'seasons' as itinerant traders in the gold fields, most Jewish immigrants established themselves as sedentary merchants in Victoria. For the most part, Jewish merchants who settled in the mining regions ran general stores or acted as agents for Jewish importers and wholesalers in Victoria. In the summer months the number of Jews in these interior regions frequently doubled with the arrival of itinerant traders. Whilst some of them were acting independently, many were engaged in trading missions on behalf of Jewish firms in Victoria and New Westminster. Business partnerships based on kinship or friendship commonly structured Jewish business arrangements, but in the fluctuating economic climate of the gold-rush, frequent changes in business associates were not unusual. Similarly, Jewish businesses changed location often because many of the camps and smaller settlements of the mining frontier were ephemeral.

The journey to and from the goldfields involved hazards and uncertainties for miners and traders alike. There were physical dangers in navigating the Straits of Georgia, the Fraser River and interior lakes, and in negotiating the Fraser Canyon and the difficult mountainous terrain of the interior on foot and with pack trains. Although the construction of the Cariboo Waggon Road⁴ improved travel conditions, and reduced the duration of the journey between Yale and Barkerville from six weeks to four days by 1865, most of the mining and commercial traffic along the route was restricted to the summer months by the prevailing harsh winter climate.⁵ In addition, traders who travelled through remote areas, laden with goods and/or earnings, were the occasional victims of robberies and violence.⁶ However, firm measures introduced by Governor

James Douglas and Judge Begbie during the early stages of the gold-rush, brought a system of law and order to the interior mining regions of the colony. This was an improvement upon the state of lawlessness which had prevailed in the California goldfields, and from which many miners in British Columbia had come.

In the early years of the gold rush the main focus of Jewish commercial activity was along the lower and middle reaches of the Fraser River in the communities of New Westminster, Douglas, Hope, Yale, Lytton, Lillooet and Soda Creek, which were located at trans-shipment points or stopping places along the routes to the goldfields (Fig. 2:2). There were several Jewish firms, mostly branches of Victoria businesses, located in New Westminster, near the mouth of the Fraser River. Most of them specialized in supplying goods to the goldfields. Each of the other communities had one or more Jewish stores at various times. But, Yale, which was situated at the head of navigation on the Fraser, and served as the articulation point between boat and waggon routes, quickly became an important settlement and base of commercial operations as gold mining activity progressed upstream. It was the site of several Jewish businesses from 1858 onwards. The Oppenheimer Brothers operated a substantial wholesale and retail business from a brick warehouse and general store on the main street of Yale for over twenty years, and they ran a similar business in Hope (Fig. 2:3).⁷ Jewish businesses in Yale and Hope were less affected by short term fluctuations in the focus of gold mining activities than those located in more remote settlements. Lillooet, "a very small, primitive town, but full of life and business" in 1859,⁸ on the Harrison Lake/Port Douglas route to the Cariboo, was also the location of a number of Jewish-owned general stores

Figure 2:3. Oppenheimer Bros. Mercantile Store, Yale, B. C. (date unknown)

Source: Jewish Historical Society of British Columbia Archives.



and a fairly prosperous clothing and dry goods store.⁹ Jewish businesses in these small communities like Lillooet were usually seasonal, and frequently shortlived. The highly mobile Jewish merchants moved on to take advantage of better opportunities as the mining frontier advanced into the Cariboo region after 1862.

Between 1862 and 1868, the Cariboo region was an important focus of Jewish commercial activity in the interior (Fig. 2:2). Approximately 20% of the businesses in Barkerville, Richfield and Williams Creek were Jewish-run during this period.¹⁰ The majority were general stores, (some with lean-to living quarters). A few specialized in dry goods and clothing. And there were one or two Jewish auctioneers in the region. Many of the Jewish merchants engaged in both wholesale and retail trade. Although the greatest concentration of Jewish merchants and traders was in Barkerville, the largest settlement in the region, a number of Jews established branches of their businesses in neighbouring communities. In Williams Creek in 1868, three of the four Jewish-run stores were branches of Barkerville firms. Soda Creek, Richfield, Van Winkle, Cameronton, Grouse Creek and Parsonville each had one or more Jewish stores. In addition to general merchandising, some of the Jewish merchants were involved in freighting. They acted as express agents in Williams Creek, Grouse Creek and Yale, and a few operated pack trains to and from the goldfields.

The goldfield trade was lucrative for many of the Jewish merchants, both in the Cariboo and in Victoria. Isolation, and the enthusiastic optimism of the mining camps provided a lively market for goldfield merchants. Many charged high prices without fear of competition. Jewish merchants were no exception. Some indication of the relative worth of

Jewish and non-Jewish merchants in the Cariboo is revealed in the losses sustained by approximately 60 businesses in the fire which razed Barkerville in September 1868 (Table 2:2).¹¹ This list shows all known Jewish businesses in Barkerville at the time of the fire, and a sample of the biggest and smallest non-Jewish businesses. Several Jewish merchants lost substantial holdings in property and merchandise. By far the largest business in Barkerville in 1868 was Jewish-owned. Carl Strouss, who purchased the Oppenheimer Brothers' store in Barkerville in 1867, had owned general stores in Richfield and Williams Creek earlier in the gold rush.

Table 2:2. Estimated losses to selected businesses in the Barkerville fire, September 16, 1868¹²

<u>Jewish Businesses</u>		<u>Other businesses</u>	
1. C. Strouss	\$100,000	1. Hudson's Bay Co.	\$65,000
2. Cohen and Hoffman	\$32,000	2. Kwong Lee store ¹³	\$40,000
3. Grunbaum Bros.	\$25,000	3. N. Cunio (brewery)	\$40,000
4. Adler & Barry(saloon)	\$18,000	4. F. Castagnetto(store)	\$33,000
5. J. Weill	\$10,000	58. J. Taylor (druggist)	\$2,000
6. M. Wolf	\$6,000	59. W. Rennie (shoe store)	\$1,000
7. L. Grunbaum	\$5,000	60. W. Hill (paint shop)	\$500

In general, the most successful Jewish enterprises in the Cariboo adapted readily to changes in the focus of mining activity. When trade declined in one location, Jewish merchants moved their business to another community. The larger scale Jewish firms also commanded access to freighting services to and from the Cariboo. For example, the Oppenheimer Brothers used Yale as the base of their trading operations in the Cariboo.¹⁴ Until 1867, they ran a thriving general merchandising business in Barkerville. On September 30, 1865 it was reported in the Cariboo Sentinel that:

Messrs. Oppenheimer have recently built extensive underground vaults in the rear of their premises in Barkerville for the storage of goods....they have at present an immense stock on hand and daily expect three large (pack) trains with an augmentation.

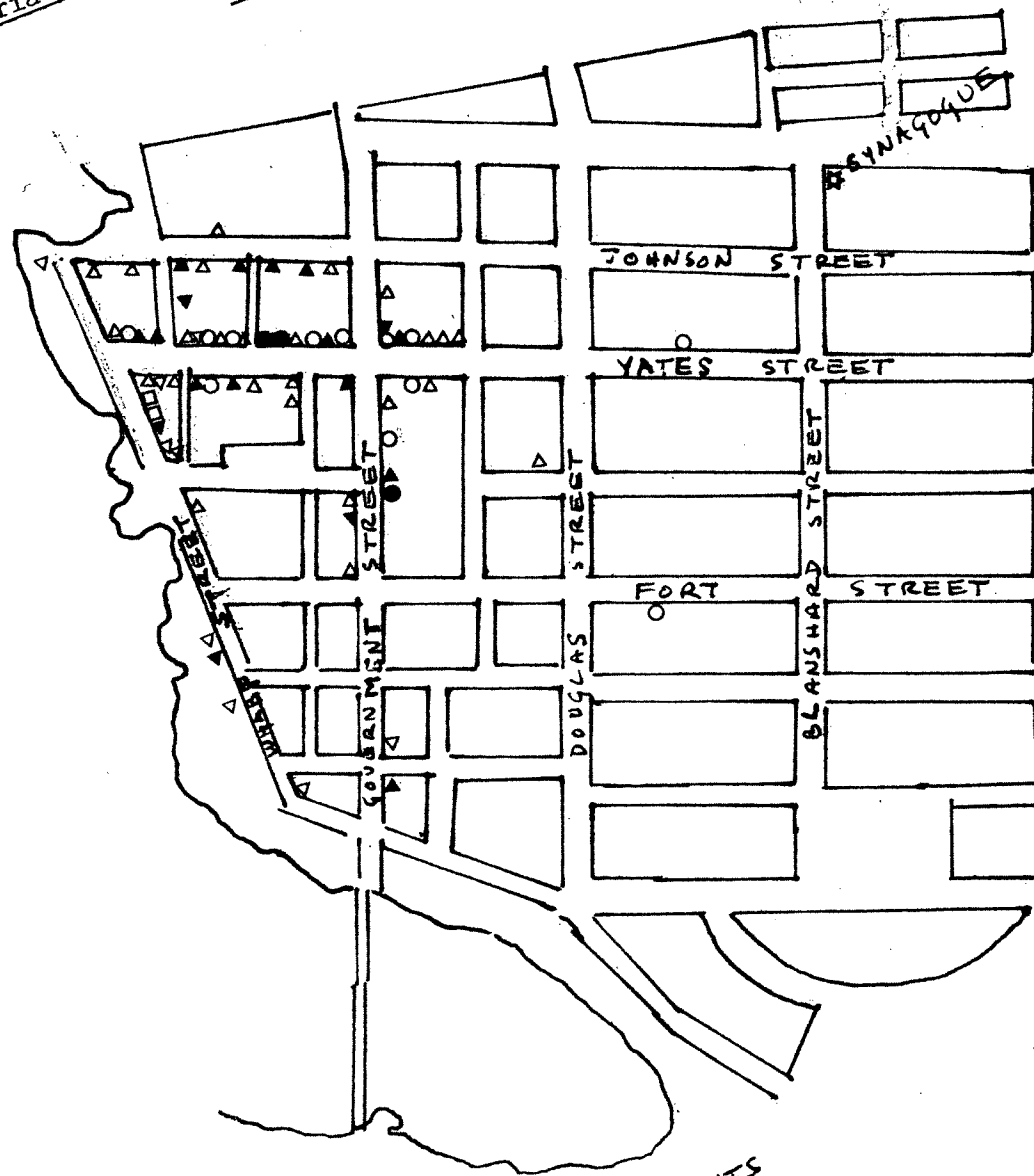
Another prominent Jewish merchant who had widespread commercial operations in the region was Felix Neufelder, who, together with his son, operated stores in Lillooet, Soda Creek, Williams Creek, Van Winkle, Richfield and Parsonville. As late as 1879, the firm was still in business in the area.¹⁵

The returns of itinerant Jewish traders are hard to establish. Most of them had some connection with businesses in Victoria and New Westminster, and, in spite of the difficulty of the journey, some of them made more than one selling expedition into the Cariboo in a summer season. After each trip, they returned to Victoria (or San Francisco) with earnings which often totalled several thousand dollars. In the summer of 1862, for example, Samuel Goldstone carried \$15,000 in gold from the Cariboo back to the Victoria business which he ran jointly with Moses Sporborg.¹⁶ Their premises included a special Patent Packing Press

for packaging merchandise intended for the Cariboo.¹⁷ Similarly Herman Lewin and David Sokolosky were reported to be carrying \$12,000 and \$1,000, the proceeds of tobacco and fruit sales, when they were murdered near Forks of Quesnelle on the way back to New Westminster and Victoria in July 1862.¹⁸

Jewish commercial involvement in the interior mining regions declined as the gold-rush waned and trading opportunities shrank after 1871. Many of those who left the region consolidated their business interests in Victoria, where, in many cases, they rejoined partnerships or family firms. Others left the province entirely, perhaps after spending a brief spell in Victoria. None chose to settle permanently in the remote interior of British Columbia. Today the landscape contains few reminders, except for the occasional remains of a store, warehouse or wharf, of the Jewish commercial presence in the Cariboo and interior valleys during the gold rush. Most of the impact of that presence was transferred to Victoria.

Victoria: Hub of Jewish Commercial Enterprise in British
Columbia, 1858-1871



- ▽ GENERAL MERCHANTS
- △ CLOTHING AND DRY GOODS
- ▲ LAND AGENTS, AUCTIONEERS
- ▼ TOBACCONISTS, FAUTIERERS

- RETAIL MERCHANTS
- FURRIERS
- SALOONS, HOTELS

Figure. 2:4. Location of Jewish Businesses in Victoria During the Gold
Rush Period

Jewish businesses formed a marked concentration in the centre of Victoria during the gold rush (Fig. 2:4). Of the 200 to 300 Jews resident in Victoria between 1858 and 1871, approximately 95% were occupied in some form of commercial activity. In 1863, at the height of the Cariboo gold rush, up to one third of the businesses in Victoria were probably run by Jews.¹⁹ Their stores and warehouses were interspersed amongst non-Jewish firms, along Wharf, Yates, Johnson and Government Streets in what was then Victoria's central business district. Yates Street was the location of more than 40% of the Jewish businesses. From an early date, the streets in Victoria became differentiated along commercial lines. The warehouses and offices of firms which specialized in importing and wholesaling were concentrated mainly on Wharf Street, close to the waterfront. Yates and Government Streets contained most of the larger and more prosperous stores, whilst small stores and 'Indian Traders' were chiefly confined to Johnson Street.²⁰ Jewish businesses were similarly differentiated (Fig. 2:4).

Table 2:3 shows the proportions of Jews involved in different types of commercial activities in Victoria at the height of the Cariboo gold rush in 1863, when the colony's Jewish population in British Columbia reached its 1858-71 peak. At least 50% of the Jewish businesses were directly involved in supplying clothing, dry goods, groceries, provisions and hardware to the mining communities in the interior of the province, and to the growing urban population in Victoria. All but one or two of the tobacconists and fruiterers were petty traders. Although a handful of Jews figured prominently as auctioneers and land agents, the vast majority were occupied almost exclusively in the area of wholesale and retail trade.

Table 2:3. Jewish Businesses in Victoria, 1863

<u>Type</u>	<u>Total Number</u>	<u>%</u>
Clothing and dry goods	22	31.4
General merchandise,		
Groceries and provisions	14	20.0
Tobacco and fruit	13	18.6
Retail stores (hardware,		
Jewellery, drugs, tents,		
books & stationery etc.)	10	14.2
Auctioneers & land agents	5	7.1
Hotels, saloons, restaurants	3	4.2
Furriers	2	2.8
Manufacturers	1	1.4
<hr/>		
Total	70	99.7

Table 2:4. Assessed Value of Selected Jewish Businesses in Victoria,
1861²¹

<u>Business</u>		<u>Assessed Value in</u> <u>Pounds Sterling</u>
Price	General merchant	5,000
Reinhardt	" "	5,000
Sporborg	" "	5,000
Gambitz	Clothing & dry goods	2,500
Koshland	" "	2,500
Lewis	dry goods	350
Myers	Clothing	150
Brunn	Tailor	150
Simpson	Camphene dealer	1,200
Blackman &		
Marks	Hardware	650
Sutro	Tobacco & cigars	1,200
Malowansky	" "	250
Belasco	Fruit	250
Abrams	"	250
Copperman	Indian trader	750
Phillips	Soda water factory	150

Fragmentary data from Assessment Rolls indicate the relative wealth of some of the Jewish firms. Table 2:4 lists the assessed value of sixteen randomly selected Jewish firms in Victoria in 1861. It illustrates the supremacy of the general wholesale merchants, the good standing of several of the specialist merchants, and the relatively weak economic condition of some of the petty traders.²²

Large-scale wholesaling businesses which imported goods in bulk directly from San Francisco for general distribution in British Columbia were among the most prosperous Jewish firms in Victoria during the gold rush period. Among them were Samuel Price, Reinhardt Bros., Sporborg and Co., Nathan and Son, Goldstone Bros., J.P. Davies and Son. Of these firms, three were assessed the maximum 5,000 pounds sterling in 1861 (Table 2:4). Most of these businesses operated from substantial commercial premises, wharves and warehouses, most of which were constructed of fire-resistant brick, located on or near Wharf Street (Fig. 2:4). For the most part, they imported a wide range of general merchandise including non-perishable groceries, liquor, provisions, clothing, dry goods, lumber and hardware which was generally sold directly to retailers for distribution. But, some of the Jewish wholesale merchants also handled the distribution of goods, either through their own retail outlets, or through agents who were dispatched on seasonal selling trips to the gold-mining districts. Some of the Jewish wholesale merchants were also involved in shipping merchandise from Vancouver Island to the Fraser River ports on the mainland. Samuel Price had interests in both the Victoria Steam Navigation Company and the British Columbia Steam Navigation Company which ran steamboats from Victoria to

Port Douglas and Fort Hope during the gold rush.²³

Most of the Jewish wholesale merchants in Victoria were also commission agents. This meant that they imported goods which had been consigned to them or which they had purchased directly from merchants or wholesalers (usually Jewish) in San Francisco. In the former case, a Victoria merchant would earn a commission upon selling the consigned goods. In the latter, he would act independently for his own account. The Jewish wholesalers in Victoria served an important connective function in providing the vital link between the distant source of production of goods in San Francisco and the customers in British Columbia. Through their entrepreneurial activities, backed by capital from San Francisco (and Britain), Jewish wholesale merchants played an important role in pushing the frontier of economic development into the far reaches of British Columbia, and in laying the foundations of a commercial infrastructure in Victoria.²⁴

Equally prosperous, and similarly influential in Victoria's early business community were the Jewish auctioneers and land agents. Most of the eight or ten auctioneers and land agents in Victoria during the early gold-rush period were Jewish. All except the Shirpsers were British-born and, as British subjects, were entitled upon arrival to purchase and own land in the new British-governed territory. All members of this group either possessed capital or had access to money in San Francisco. Most of them came directly from California where they had previous business experience as auctioneers, merchants or property owners. Selim Franklin, who became the official government auctioneer in the two colonies early in 1859, had been an auctioneer for seven years in San Francisco and had accumulated considerable property before coming to Victoria in 1858,

where he was later joined in business by his brother Lumley.²⁵ In Victoria, the Franklin brothers prospered as auctioneers and land agents until after the gold-rush land boom was over. In contrast, the Joseph brothers were exceptional. They were involved in maritime trade along the Pacific coast and with the Sandwich Islands for eight or more years before the successful sale by auction of a cargo of building supplies in Victoria in the summer of 1858 encouraged them to invest extensively in property on Vancouver Island and the mainland.²⁶ These Jewish entrepreneurs provided an important service in facilitating the sale and transfer of land and property in the newly settled colonies, but they also enriched themselves by land speculation. Selim Franklin was among those accused of being "land-sharks and speculators who never intended to pay,"²⁷ and the description might well have applied to the Joseph brothers, who appear to have been solely occupied in land speculation during their five years in Victoria.

Although few became farmers, Jewish immigrants enjoyed the unrestricted privilege of land ownership (and speculation) permitted to them in North America, and previously denied to them in much of Europe. Thus, it is not surprising to find that a few Jewish merchants in Victoria had interests in land speculation in addition to their main business. J. P. Davies, a commission agent, was also prominent as an auctioneer and land agent. In addition, his firm had extensive interests in land around Puget Sound. Simon Reinhardt, a wholesale liquor and general merchant, speculated in land in Fort Langley and in New Westminster between 1858 and 1860.²⁸ In 1860, W. Zelner, a druggist, served as agent for the Joseph brothers in the lease of fifty town lots in Victoria.²⁹

Clothing and dry goods merchants and tailors formed the largest segment of Jewish retail stores in Victoria in 1863. Their stores occupied prime retail space alongside non-Jewish stores on three of Victoria's streets, Yates, Government and Johnson. The stores on Johnson Street were generally smaller than those on Yates and Government, the heart of the town's business district. In 1863, at the height of the gold-rush, there was a concentration of Jewish clothing and dry goods stores on Yates Street, but by 1871 this was much less marked because about half of them had left the province.

In addition to good business sense, successful clothing and dry goods merchants usually had specialized knowledge and skills in the trade; they also had links with reliable suppliers and wholesalers. Many of those in Victoria also had previous experience in the business. Some of the Jewish merchants had operated clothing and dry goods stores in California in the 1850's - Lewis Lewis and Nathan Koshland in Sacramento, Kady Gambitz in Shasta, David Shirpser in Placerville, and H. M. Cohen in San Francisco. They arrived in Victoria complete with established lines of credit and contacts with suppliers in San Francisco. In the main, these merchants and tailors served the clothing and home-furnishing demands of the better-established residents of Victoria. However, some did carry items such as boots, sturdy waterproof clothing and blankets to suit the needs of the miners who passed through Victoria en route to the goldfields. For the townspeople, Kady Gambitz advertised 'A Complete Assortment of Gentlemens' Furnishing Goods, Family Furnishing Goods, Broadcloths, Cassimeres & Tailors' Trimmings' and also a wide range of other goods from silks, furs, laces, riding hats and mantillas to oil cloths, mattings and paper-hangings for sale in his Yates Street store.

Likewise, Abraham Hoffman also with a store on Yates Street advertised that he was 'constantly in receipt, by every occasion from California and elsewhere, of complete assorted supplies of Dry Goods and Clothing of the Latest Fashions and Styles.'³⁰ Both the 'Magasin Francais' of Leopold Blum and the fact that French dress goods from Paris were sold by Isadore Lash, amongst others, hint at the cosmopolitanism of the Jewish merchants. Such stores undoubtedly had as their clientele the wealthier segment of Victoria's population. There was a definite emphasis on mens' attire in many of the stores - an indication of the greater proportion of men than women in the province's population during the first years of white settlement.

Other Jewish retailers who specialized in particular lines of merchandise in Victoria in 1863 were ironmongers and hardware merchants, jewellers, tobacconists, shoe merchants, a druggist and a bookseller. Their businesses were generally located on Yates and Government Streets. The goods and services which they provided were in demand by both the transient mining population and the residents of Victoria. The ironmongers and hardware merchants filled a special need in those early years since they sold miners' tools and equipment and construction supplies and domestic hardware required by new settlers. Abraham Blackman specialised in "stove, tin and sheet iron manufactory" and was a "wholesale and retail dealer in hardware, pumps, lead pipe, crockery and glassware." He had previously run a similar business in Stockton, California, and his brother was a tinsmith in New Westminster and later, in Barkerville. Martin Prag, who owned stores on Government and Yates streets at different times, had previously run successful hardware stores in Shasta City and in San Francisco. Jewellers such as the firm of

Vineberg and Staples served the wealthier segment of Victoria's population. The Jewish bookseller, W. F. Herre also operated a 'circulating library of English and French works.' With the exception of one or two specialist firms such as that of the brothers Gustav and Emil Sutro, which prospered in the same location on Yates Street for seventeen years,³¹ most of the Jewish tobacconists in Victoria were small traders. The tobacco trade proved to be lucrative for the Sutros. It placed them firmly in the upper echelons of Victoria merchants.

There is no record of kosher food stores in gold rush Victoria. The special dietary needs of the Jewish population were probably met by some of the Jewish merchants in addition to their main business. For example, once a year, Alexander Phillips, a syrup, soda water and cider manufacturer, baked Passover bread (matzos) for "the Israelites of Victoria, Vancouver Island, British Columbia and Puget Sound."³²

A few Jews catered to the large seasonal transient population in Victoria during the gold rushes by operating saloons, hotels and restaurants. In 1863, there were two known Jewish hotel and saloon proprietors and one restaurateur in Victoria.

Most of the Jewish tobacconists and fruiterers, 'Indian traders,' and operators of 'Cheap John' stores³³ were petty traders who operated at the economic margins of gold-rush Victoria. Their retail outlets were located mainly on Johnson Street, then on the outer edge of Victoria's business district. Their businesses were generally more transitory in nature than those of Yates Street. Peddling and petty trading in small goods in popular demand -- such as fruit, tobacco, cigars and candy-- provided a ready, if unreliable, source of income for the less affluent Jewish immigrants. A modicum of sheltered space and a supply of goods

were the only prerequisites for starting such a business. For example, I. Braverman operated a cigar depot in the Royal Hotel in 1860; H. Lewin was a fruit pedlar before joining Braverman in business on Yates Street.³⁴ As the fortunes of the Belasco family reveal, business locations and partnerships changed more frequently among the less affluent Jewish vendors than they did among the more prosperous merchants. Shortly after the family's arrival in Victoria in 1858, Abraham Belasco spent some time in the interior trading with Indians and miners; his wife ran a fruit and tobacco store on Johnson Street. By 1861, Belasco was a partner with Cohen in a fruit store on Yates Street, but from 1862 until his departure from Victoria, he ran his own tobacconist business on Yates Street. The majority of the small Jewish tobacco and fruit businesses were marginal, and in so precarious a marketplace as gold rush Victoria, several of them failed.³⁵ For many Jews, petty trading in fruit, tobacco and other small items was a first step towards the accumulation of sufficient capital to embark on some more substantial commercial enterprise.

Following the purchase of Alaska by the United States in 1867, Jewish merchants from San Francisco and Victoria were attracted to sealing and maritime trade off the north Pacific coast. But, from 1858 onward, there were several wealthy Jewish furriers and dealers in hides based in Victoria. For the most part, they were agents and wholesalers for fur trading companies in San Francisco, then the chief west coast market for furs and skins. Victoria served as a collection point for furs and hides, and as an intermediate base for this largely maritime trade.

Morris Moss, an English Jew, arrived in Victoria in 1862 as an agent for the San Francisco fur traders Leibes and Company. He subsequently

established trading posts at Bella Coola and Bella Bella, and on the Queen Charlotte Islands. During the 1870's, his sealing and fur business, conducted by two schooners, was one of the largest on the British Columbia coast. Members of the Boskowitz family from San Francisco ran a highly successful fur and hide business in Victoria for over thirty years after 1858. In 1868, they invested heavily in the sealing industry and also became involved with the Alaska Commercial Company together with other Victoria and San Francisco merchants.³⁶ The Shirpser brothers, the Simpson brothers and John Malowanski were among the Jewish merchants who abandoned businesses in Victoria to participate in sealing and general trading in Alaska after the gold-rush had subsided in British Columbia. They then shifted the base of their operations to San Francisco where they sold furs and sealskins and purchased goods to sell in Alaska.

By 1868, the number Jewish businesses in Victoria had been reduced considerably to about half of the total in 1863. The proportions of merchants involved in the clothing, general merchandising, tobacco and auctioneering businesses remained roughly the same as in 1863. Although many Jews left the province between 1864 and 1871, the losses to the Victoria business community were slightly offset by the return of the Oppenheimers, Neufelders, Grunbaums, Strouss, and other Jewish merchants from the interior of the province. In 1871, there still remained a concentration of Jewish businesses on Yates, Wharf and Government Streets in Victoria. The fortunes of some of these businesses fluctuated as a result of the economic slump during the 1870's. Several of the Jewish businesses in Victoria received merely 'fair' or 'very moderate' credit ratings in the 1879 Bradstreet Report. The Victoria grocery and general stores of J.P. Davies, F. Neufelder and J. Rueff merited 'good' ratings,

whereas the Victoria and Fort Yale general stores of the Oppenheimer Brothers, (whose business prowess was to reap greater rewards later in Vancouver), appeared to be faltering in 1879.³⁷ Only the Boscowitz's, whose fur business encompassed much of the Pacific north-west coast by that time, received an 'excellent' rating.

The outstanding characteristic of the early Jewish business community in Victoria was the network of familial and social interconnections which structured it. These ties were reinforced by an underlying commitment and sense of belonging to an ethnic group, a tradition among avowed Jews. Thus, for the most part, Jews in British Columbia chose their co-religionists as business partners and associates in preference to non-Jews; they were also loyal in their support of the businesses of fellow Jews. A strong element of trust was built in to such business relationships. In addition, lines of credit were secured through family members. Table 2:5 shows the main Jewish business partnerships in gold rush British Columbia. Over 30% of all the Jewish businesses were family-run, in partnerships of brothers or cousins, or fathers and sons, many of whom maintained links with family businesses in California.

Table 2:5. Business Partnerships within Victoria's Jewish Business Community, 1858-1871

	A. & M. Blackman	
	J. & L. Boscowitz	
	I. & L. Braverman	
	H. M. Cohen	
	J. P. Davies & Son	
	S. Elsasser	
	S. & L. Franklin	
	K. Gambitz	
	S. Goldstone	
	J. & N. Grunbaum	
	A. & S. Hoffman.	
	A. Israel	
	J. Joseph & L. Joseph	
	Koshland Bros.	
	H. & J. Levy	
	L. & N. Levy.	
	H. Lewin	
	J. & M. Malowansky.	
	S. Marks	
	A. & S. Martin	
	M. Meyer	
	H. & H. Nathan	
	C. Oppenheimer	
	Oppenheimer Bros.]	
	M. Prag	
	S. Price & Co.]	
	S. & S. Reinhart]	
	Rosenberg	
	J. Rueff	
	H. Schultz	
	Shirpser Bros.]	
	N. Solomon	
	M. Sporborg	
	E. & G. Sutro	
	Staples	
	F. Sylvester	
	Trahey	
	Trieste	
	E. H. Vineberg]	

Note: most of the businesses listed were family firms, i.e. operated by two or more members of the same family.

The linkages show some of the known additional business partnerships which existed intermittently between Jewish merchants in Victoria in the gold-rush period. A number of these were also between kin.

Another 20% of the Jewish merchants in Victoria were involved in business partnerships with fellow Jews who were not relatives. These arrangements were more fluid and changeable than were the family partnerships. Very few Jewish merchants were in business partnerships with non-Jews in British Columbia between 1858 and 1871. The remaining businesses were operated by individual Jews, some of whom had outside family connections. Those Jews without a family support system or business partners were the ones least able to withstand fluctuations in the precarious frontier economy.

Table 2:6. Victoria Jewish businesses with known family connections in California, 1858-1871

H. Bornstein
 J. Boscowitz
 H. M. Cohen
 Franklin Bros. ?
 K. Gambitz
 Joseph Bros. ?
 Koshland Bros
 L. Lewis
 J. Malowanski ?
 S. Martin
 Oppenheimer Bros. ?
 M. Prag
 S. Price
 Reinhart Bros.
 F. Sylvester
 Shirpser Bros.
 M. Sporborg
 Sutro Bros

The Victoria Jewish business community derived additional strength and support from connections which were maintained with Jewish counterparts in California. Table 2:6 lists the Victoria Jewish firms with known links to businesses in California. In many respects, the Victoria community was an extension of Jewish commercial enterprise in San Francisco. In addition to the branches of San Francisco Jewish firms a number of the Jewish merchants in British Columbia acted as agents for Californian firms.³⁸

Most of Victoria's Jews were either self-employed or were partners and associates in Jewish firms. Very few were employees of non-Jewish businesses or institutions. Self-employment was common among non-English speaking Jewish immigrants to North America who feared discrimination on account of their language and religion from gentile employers and business associates. In the field of commerce Jewish immigrants could trade independently and engage in individual entrepreneurial pursuits.

Nor were many of the early Jewish immigrants in Victoria, or other parts of North America, professionally trained. This was because few Jews in Europe in the mid-nineteenth century had yet gained entry to the professions. Although a number of the Jews in Victoria from middle-class backgrounds in Europe were well-educated, most had come to North America with the desire to make money from commercial pursuits. This was reflected in Victoria's early Jewish population. Doctor M. Boscowitz, a physician from Germany, and Rabbi Morris Cohen were the only two professionally educated Jews in practice in Victoria before 1871.

Jewish business life in early British Columbia was also marked by the versatility and spontaneity of many of the merchants and traders. Since most Jewish commercial pursuits in British Columbia were not land-

based, Jews were fairly mobile and free to move their place of business in response to changing economic circumstances. Jewish traders in the Cariboo goldfields showed such flexibility. Similarly, when Victoria did not materialize as another San Francisco, Jewish merchants moved on in search of better opportunities elsewhere.

The nucleus of well-established cosmopolitan Jewish merchants produced some prominent business and political leaders in Victoria in the 1860's. Through membership in masonic lodges and the Chamber of Commerce, Jewish merchants were able to protect and further some of their business interests. In 1863, four Jewish merchants, E. Sutro, N. Koshland, S. Goldstone and J. Rueff were listed as members of the Chamber of Commerce of Vancouver Island.³⁹ Three of Victoria's Jewish businessmen became political leaders. Selim Franklin was a member of the Legislative Assemblies of Vancouver Island between 1860 and 1866, Lumley Franklin was Mayor of Victoria in 1866, and Henry Nathan was a member of the Canadian parliament from 1871 to 1874.

After 1871, the once flourishing Jewish business community in Victoria never regained its former strength. From 1886, the focus of the province's economic activity shifted to the newly founded city of Vancouver which was also the destination of most of the second wave of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe. They created a business community in Vancouver which bore only slight resemblance to that established thirty years earlier by their Jewish counterparts in Victoria.

NOTES

¹ In September 1858, the Hudson's Bay Company Crown Grant of 1838 was revoked by the British Parliament in London. See Imperial Blue Books on Affairs Relating to Canada: Volume 39, British Columbia; M. Ormsby, British Columbia: A History (Canada: Macmillan, 1958), pp. 150, 163.

The Oppenheims were among the Jewish merchants in San Francisco who had been trading with the Hudson's Bay Company prior to 1858.

² See R. Levinson, Jews in the California Gold Rush (New York: Ktav, 1978), pp. 23-60.

³ See Rudolf Glanz, Studies in Judaica Americana (New York: Ktav, 1970).

⁴ For information about transportation in early British Columbia, see R. C. Harris, "Moving Amid the Mountains, 1870-1930," BC Studies, no. 58 (Summer 1983): 3-39.

⁵ In August 1861, Solomon Levi, a Jewish merchant then in the Cariboo, communicated with the headquarters of his firm, Levi and Boas in New Westminster, that closed roads in winter forced him to order supplies for several months ahead in September. See Isobel Bescoby, 'Some aspects of life in the Cariboo from its discovery until 1871.' (MA thesis University of British Columbia, 1932), p. 54.

⁶ Some Jewish traders met untimely deaths at the hands of attackers. Morris Price was murdered by Indians in Cayoosh (Lillooet) in February 1861. Herman Lewin and David Sokolosky were murdered near Forks of Quesnelle in July 1862.

⁷ The Oppenheimer Brothers operated a business in Yale until about 1880.

⁸ Frank Sylvester, 'Early Reminiscences' Typescript, (PABC EEy5A) pp. 1, 2.

⁹ The proprietor, Morris Price, was murdered by Indians in February 1861. See The Scribe, no. 16, (March 1983) p. 7.

¹⁰ Total number of stores in derived from Isobel Bescoby, 'Some aspects of society in the Cariboo, from its discovery until 1871.' (MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 1932) p.52.

¹¹ The possibility of fire damage to wooden buildings was an ever-present threat at the time. Some of the Jewish merchants took precautions by building their stores and warehouses of brick or stone, and by constructing underground storage cellars. they also became active members of voluntary fire brigades.

¹² Extracted from list of 89 buildings damaged in the fire, published in the Cariboo Sentinel, 22 Sep. 1868.

13 The Kwong Lee Company was a large and successful Chinese owned wholesale and retail general merchandising firm which had extensive involvement in the Cariboo trade after 1860.

14 In 1862, Charles Oppenheimer, a Jewish entrepreneur then in business with Walter Moberly, diversified his interests to include a government contract to build a section of the Cariboo Waggon Road between Lytton City and Green Lake, but this was later cancelled due to the unavailability of adequate labour and funding. See British Colonist, 24 Sep. 1862.

15 In 1879, a general store in Barkerville owned by Neufelder and Company was reported valued worth between \$10,000 and \$20,000. See Bradstreet's Reports: British Columbia (New York: Bradstreet Company), January 1879. PABC.

16 The Scribe, no. 18 (March 1984), p. 4.

17 C. Leonoff, 'Pioneer Jewish Merchants of Vancouver Island and British Columbia,' reprinted in pamphlet form from JWB, 7 Sep. 1983, p. 18.

18 The Scribe, no. 18 (March 1984), p. 4.

19 In 1863, there were over 70 Jewish-run businesses in Victoria; in that same year approximately 175 businesses in Victoria advertised regularly in the press.

20 Frank Sylvester, 'Early Reminiscences' Typescript, (PABC, EE Sy5A).

21 Source: Assessment Rolls for Victoria, 1861. Cited in David Rome, The First Two Years (Montreal: Caiserman, 1942).

22 Information is not available to provide a complete analysis of the fluctuations in fortune of Jewish businesses in early Victoria.

23 David Rome, First Two Years (Montreal: Caiserman, 1942), pp. 18-20.

24 The role of the Jewish wholesalers in gold rush British Columbia conforms with the theory of wholesaling in pioneer communities developed by James Vance in The Merchant's World: The Geography of Wholesaling (Englewood Cliffs N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970).

25 Selim Franklin was controversial in his role as official government auctioneer. See David Rome, First Two Years, pp. 56, 78-94.

26 D.Rome, First Two Years, pp. 15-16.

27 D.Rome, First Two Years, p. 53

28 D.Rome, First Two Years, p. 21.

29 British Colonist, March 31, 1860.

30 Copies of advertisements from contemporary newspapers appear in C. Leonoff, 'Pioneer Jewish Merchants of Vancouver Island and British Columbia.' Reprinted from JWB, 7 Sep. 1983.

31 Between 1858 and 1860, the Sutro business in Victoria functioned as a branch of G. Sutro & Co., a cousin's firm in San Francisco.

32 D. Rome, 'First bakers of matzos in Victoria,' JWB, 2 April 1958.

33 Jewish traders and pedlars were quite frequently stereotyped by non-Jews as 'Cheap Johns' or 'Cheap Jacks' who offered bargains by selling goods at low prices. For example, Jewish business practice in San Francisco in 1861 was described by a critical observer as follows:

"They [Jewish tradesmen] seem anxious to dispose of their stock in a short time, and at little profit, and you will generally find throughout the country, that their stores are known as the 'cheap stores.' This is a great secret of trade; and when once that reputation is acquired, the custom will seek that store."

(From an article in the True Pacific Messenger, San Francisco, 24 May 1861, published in Morris Shappes, A Documentary History of the Jews in the United States, 1654-1875 (New York: Schocken Books, 1971, p. 443).

34 There was probably a higher percentage of Jewish pedlars in gold rush Victoria than is shown in the records.

35 Notices of bankruptcy appeared in the contemporary press. For example, Michael Cohen ('Cheap John') filed for bankruptcy in October 1863 according to a notice in the Victoria Daily Chronicle, 29, Oct. 1863.

36 D. Rome, First Two Years, p. 9.

37 The Oppenheimer ratings were unlisted and only available to Bradstreets subscribers 'in the office.' See Bradstreets Reports, January 1879, (New York: Bradstreet Company). PABC.

38 Samuel Price and Simon Reinhart were among the Victoria Jewish merchants who also maintained business premises in San Francisco. Among the British Columbia agents for San Francisco firms were Felix Neufelder for Levi Strauss clothing, Morris Moss for the furriers Leibes and Co., Goldstone & Co. for Pioneer Flour Mills.

39 E. Robertson, 'The Business Community and the Development of Victoria, 1858-1900,' M.A. thesis, University of Victoria, 1981, p. 43.

CHAPTER III

TAILORS, PEDLARS, AND MERCHANTS: JEWISH ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

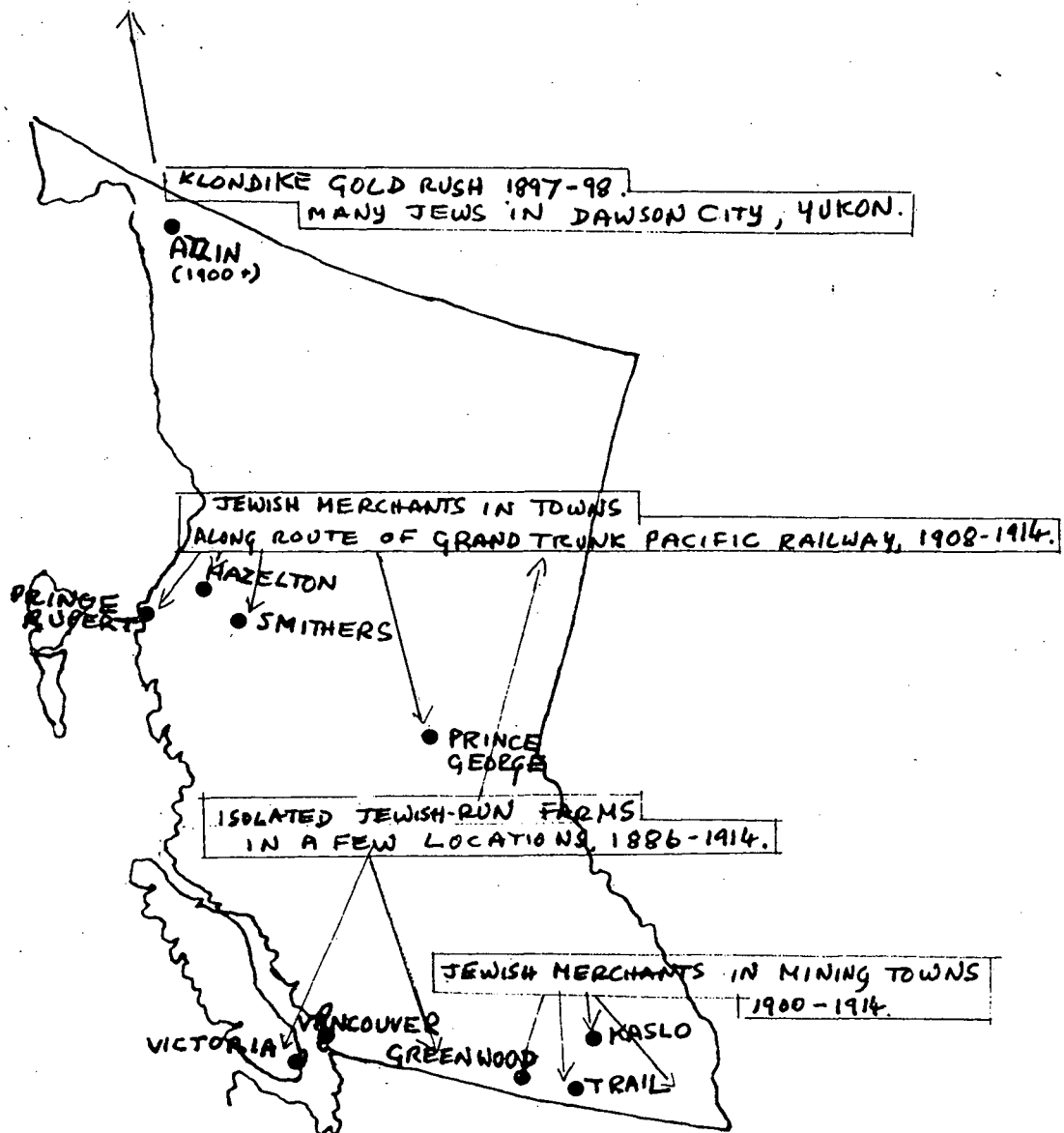
IN BRITISH COLUMBIA, 1886-1914

The influx of the second wave of Jewish immigrants into British Columbia between 1886 and 1914 coincided with a period of rapid demographic and economic expansion in the province and in the city of Vancouver. In this generally healthy and optimistic economic climate the new immigrants were able to find a niche for themselves. A few Jews were lured to mining communities and new settlements in the interior of the province, but the majority congregated in Vancouver. By 1914, more than 1,000 Jews, slightly over two-thirds of the provincial Jewish population, resided in Vancouver. This influx changed the character of the Jewish population in British Columbia. Most of the new Jewish immigrants lacked financial resources and capital; few had much if any previous work experience in North America, most were unfamiliar with the customs and language of their new place. Few were ambitious entrepreneurs seeking quick profits in British Columbia before moving on. Most sought a home and a reasonably secure living. They "brought with them distinctive habits and attitudes that were slow to disappear and that strongly influenced the occupational trajectory of their group."¹ As a result, the adjustment of many East European Jewish families to their new settings in British Columbia ran into the second generation.

Of those Jews who found their way into interior parts of British Columbia before 1900, most were German and West European Jewish merchants and entrepreneurs who had already spent some time in the province.² After

1900, this group consisted for the most part of adventurous and individualistic East European Jews. In addition to sealing and mining interests, a number of Jews set up general stores in the ephemeral communities of the various mining frontiers in the province (Fig. 3:1). There were several Jewish stores in Dawson City during the Klondike gold-rush of 1897-98, and later in the mining towns of the Kootenays and other parts of the southern interior. Some East European Jews anticipated the development of the site of Prince Rupert as a deep-water port for trade with the Orient in the early 1900's. The construction of the transcontinental Grand Trunk Pacific Railway to Prince Rupert brought Jewish traders and merchants to the the new towns along the route, Hazelton, Telkwa, Smithers, Prince George, where they opened clothing and general stores.³ The depression brought about by World War I, and the collapse of the railway company, caused many of these Jewish businessmen to move to Vancouver.

Figure. 3:1. Jewish Commercial Activity in Interior British Columbia,
1886-1914



In Vancouver, most of the East European Jewish immigrants worked as shopkeepers, traders and artisans. Between 1886 and 1914, most of the Jewish business units in Vancouver were owned and operated by separate families or by self-employed individuals. A common pattern was for businesses to be started by husbands or single men who arrived in Vancouver in advance of other family members. Those family businesses which prospered were able to absorb other Jewish immigrants who arrived later. This led to the expansion of some Jewish firms in Vancouver into larger concerns than Jewish businesses had been in Victoria fifty years earlier. For this reason, and because the new wave of Jewish immigrants initially lacked entrepreneurial resources and initiative, there were fewer interconnecting, non-family partnerships within the Jewish business community in Vancouver than there had been in early Victoria. Thus, by 1914, the Jewish business sector in Vancouver consisted of a loosely-knit network of family-run firms and stores interspersed with single-proprietor shops and small businesses.

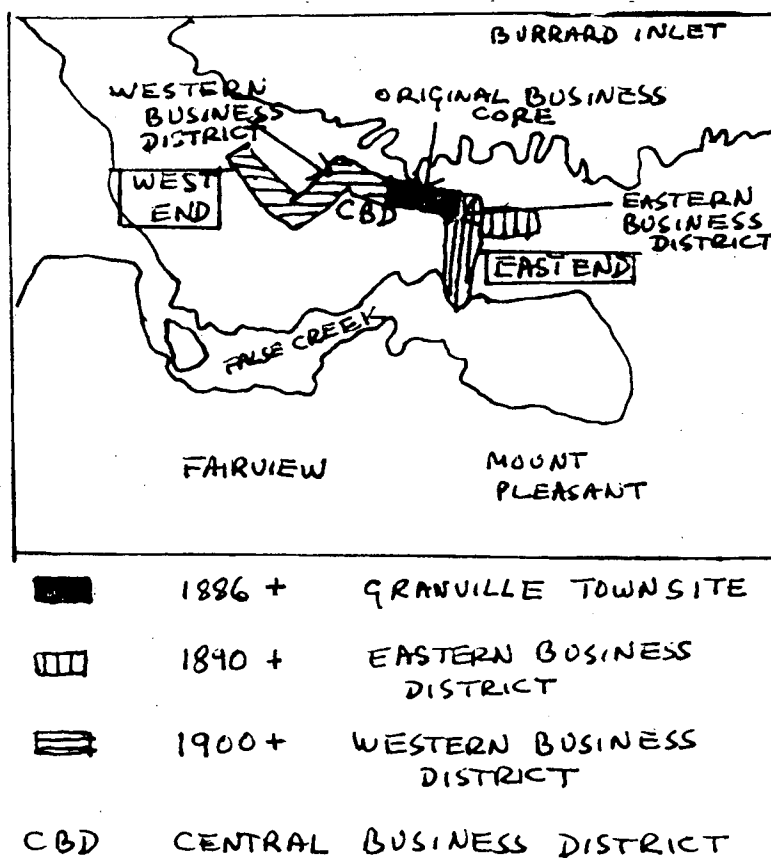
Until the turn of the century, most of the Jewish places of business in Vancouver were located in the area of Cordova, Water, East Hastings and Carrall streets, in the original commercial district of the city (Fig. 3:2). Workplace and residence commonly occupied the same premises or were not widely separated at this time, since most Jews lived in the residential district just to the east of the business district. By 1914, Jewish businesses were more widely dispersed through the main commercial districts of the city. Although the largest concentration was still on Water, Cordova and Hastings streets between Carrall and Cambie (Eastern Business District), there was now a secondary concentration of Jewish stores along Main Street in the lower class

district of Strathcona. In addition there were new clusters of Jewish businesses in the higher class commercial zone in the area of West Hastings, Granville and Robson Streets (Western Business District).

Since the influx of East European Jews was neither as great in volume nor as rapid in pace as in New York, Montreal and other large eastern cities, the Jewish community in Vancouver never achieved the same level of spatial concentration or separation. In Vancouver where there were no distinctly Jewish commercial districts, Jewish and non-Jewish businesses were interspersed in the same areas. But, the eastern business district and the East End were two areas of the city where there were greater concentrations of Jewish stores and businesses than in other areas (Fig. 3:2). In general, there was a correlation in the type of business and in the level of prosperity between Jewish and non-Jewish businesses in a particular commercial zone. Similarly, Jewish businesses spread into new commercial districts as they developed; one example is provided by the spread of Jewish clothing and financial firms into the more affluent western business district after 1900.

Figure 3:2. Vancouver: Areas With Concentrations of Jewish Businesses

1886-1914



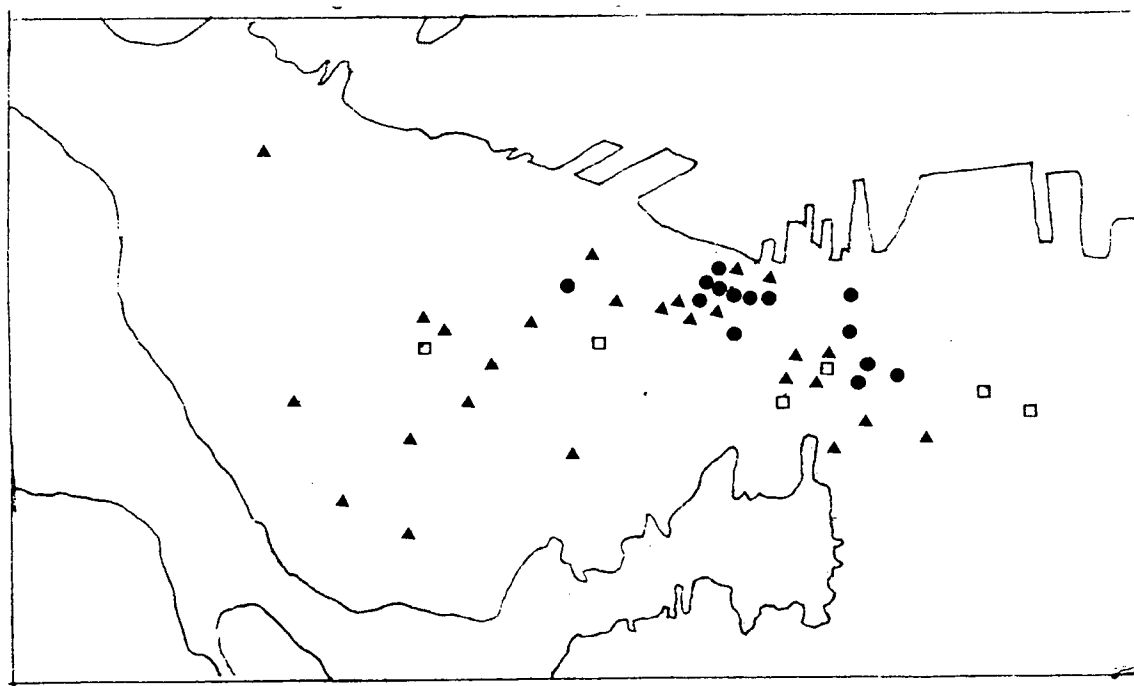
By 1914, the majority of Vancouver's employed Jews were involved in some form of merchandising, manufacturing or trading (Table 3:1). The clothing business and the second-hand goods and scrap trade were especially important, and employed almost 2 of every 5 Jews; another 1 in every 5 worked in finance and real estate, the jewellery business and the food business. In addition, both Jewish men and women were employed as wage-earners in Jewish and non-Jewish firms and offices. Only a few Jews were engaged in professions. In essence, the Jewish occupational structure showed many similarities to that found among first-generation East-European Jewish immigrant populations in other North American cities.

Table 3:1 Occupational Structure of Vancouver's Jewish
Population, 1914 ⁴

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Percentage of employed Jews</u>
Clothing business (factory proprietors, merchants, tailors, dressmakers, pressers, sewing machine operators, milliners, shoemakers etc.) -----	26.4% (A,B,C)
Junk and second-hand goods -----	10.4% (B,C)
Finance & real estate-----	7.7% (A,B)
Retail and wholesale food business-----	6.7% (A,B,C)
Jewellery, watchmaking, pawnbroking-----	6.4% (A,B)
Hotel, theatre, entertainment-----	4.0% (B)
Cleaning and dying-----	3.7% (B,C)
Professions-----	3.5% (B)
Teamsters, pedlars, travellers-----	3.5% (C)
Tobacco & confectionery-----	2.1% (C)
Wage-earners (white and blue-collar)-----	18.0% (B,C)
Miscellaneous-----	6.4%

[A - upper income group; B - middle income group;
C - lower income group]

Figure 3:3. Distribution of Jewish Clothing Businesses in Vancouver, 1914



- CLOTHING STORES
- ▲ SEWING SHOPS (TAILORS, DRESSMAKERS, MILLINERS)
- CLEANERS AND DYERS

Figure 3:4. Distribution of Jewish Scrap and Second-Hand Businesses in
Vancouver, 1914

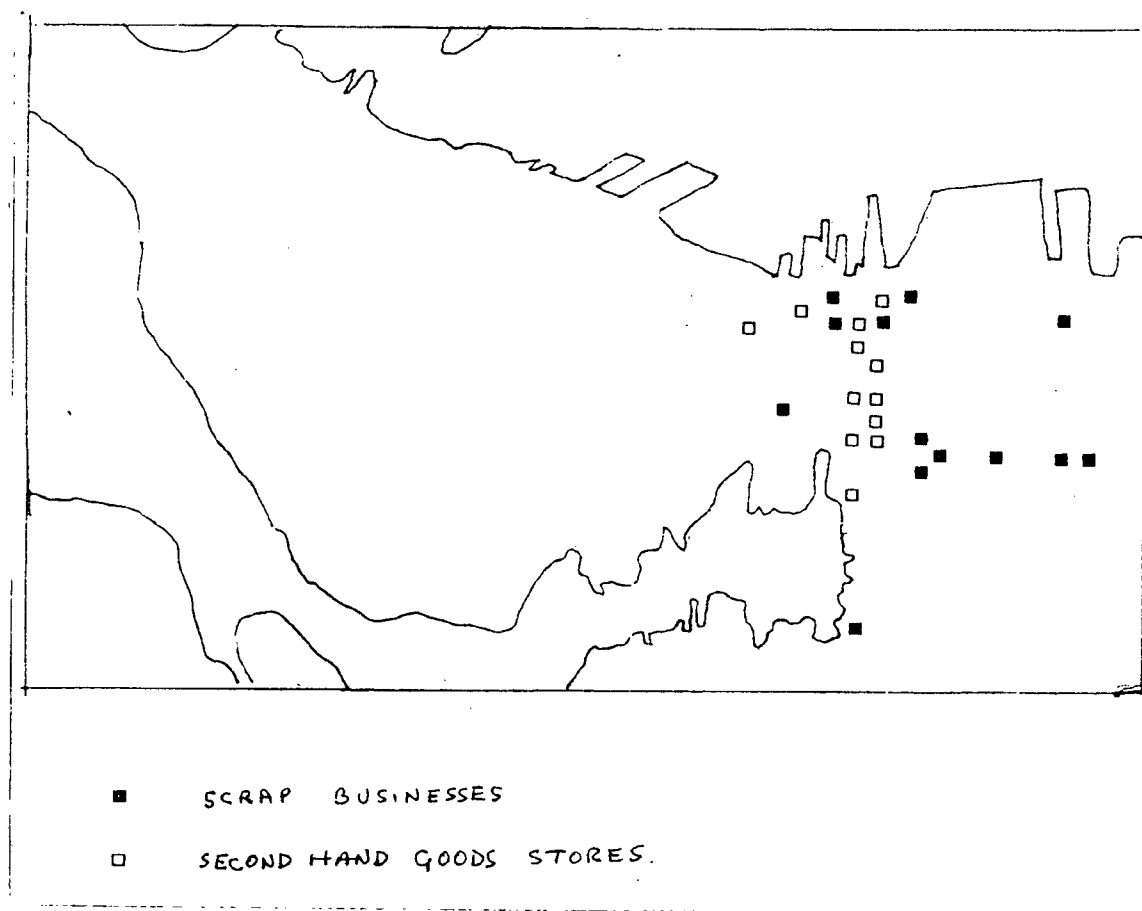
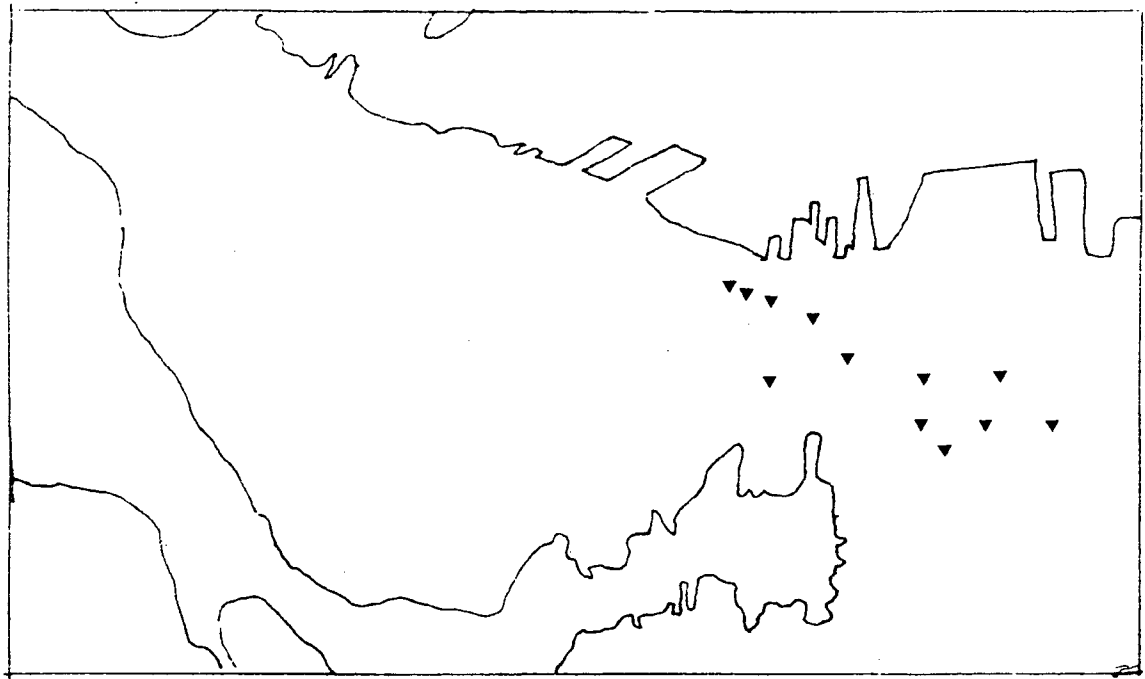
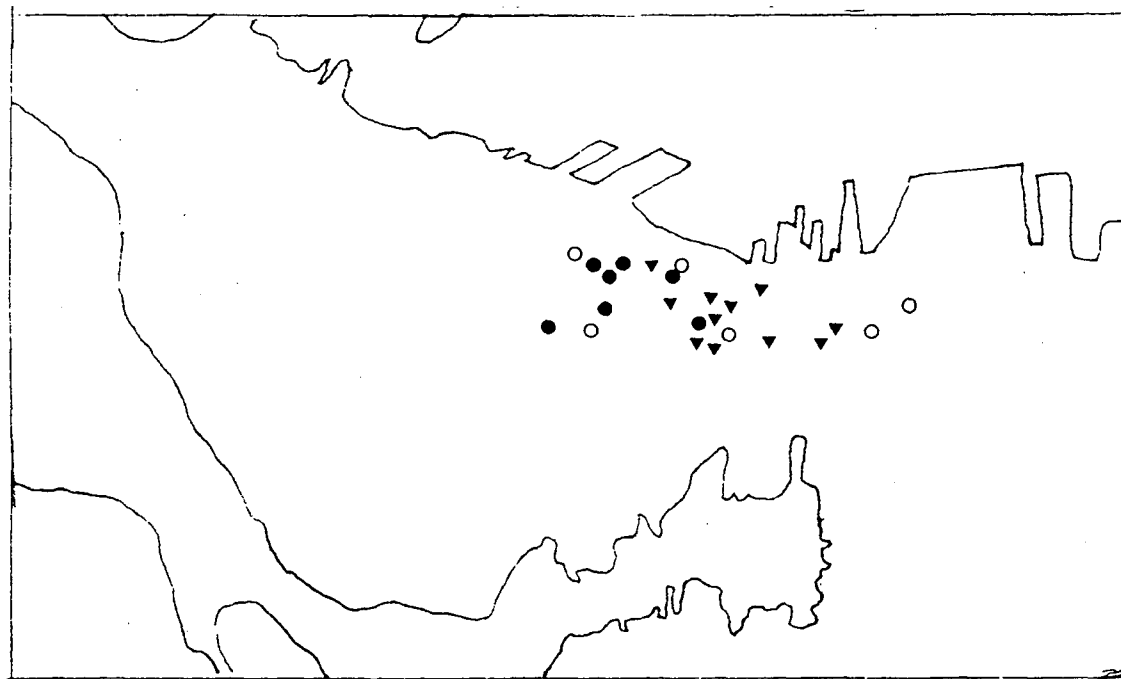


Figure 3:5. Distribution of Jewish Food Businesses in Vancouver, 1914



▼ FOOD BUSINESSES

Figure 3:6. Distribution of Jewish Financial, Real Estate and Jewellery
Businesses in Vancouver, 1914



Between 1886 and 1914, Vancouver's Jewish population became differentiated along economic and spatial lines into three loosely defined occupational sectors (Table 3:1). The lowest position on the economic scale was occupied almost exclusively by the recently arrived Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe. During their initial period of adjustment, they took up work as petty tradesmen and shopkeepers, tailors and artisans of various sorts, and blue-collar workers -- occupations that could provide an immediate source of income and which required little initial capital. This group, which by 1914, accounted for 50% to 60% of Vancouver's Jewish population, was almost completely confined to one district -- the East End of the city. In contrast, in the uppermost position was a small group of wealthy Jews, mostly of West European origin, who accounted for fewer than 10% of Vancouver's total Jewish population. The majority of them were occupied as realtors, financial agents and proprietors of successful firms. Their businesses were generally located in the downtown core of Vancouver, but their homes were in the exclusive West End residential district of the city. The intermediate position was taken up by a middle income sector which represented between 30% and 40% of the city's Jewish population. This group included the newly-rich merchants, store and business owners, white-collar wage-earners and a few Jews occupied in the professions.

The marked concentration of the East European Jews in the East End of the city made this the most visible segment of the Jewish population. By 1914, a vibrant Jewish community, focussed on the Orthodox synagogue at the corner of Heatley and Pender Streets, had emerged in the Strathcona district of Vancouver. Most members of this community were first generation Jewish immigrant families who shared a common past of

poverty and persecution in Eastern Europe. In Eastern Europe, where most Jews were confined to the peripheral sector of the economy as small traders and craftsmen because they were excluded from occupations which required ownership of land and property, many acquired skills in the tailoring, dressmaking, shoemaking, jewellery and watchmaking trades.⁵ Upon arrival in Vancouver, most East European Jewish immigrants struggled to earn a living in a variety of marginal occupations until they could establish themselves more securely in an economically viable line of work. The rate of occupational mobility amongst the East End Jews was therefore high during their initial period of adjustment to the new place. Although, the majority of the East European Jews were self-employed tradesmen and artisans, many of whom both lived and worked on the same premises, by 1914, a significant number of Jewish men and women had become wage-earners. The majority of skilled East European Jews were employed in the clothing business as tailors, dressmakers, pressers, milliners and shoe-makers. Next in importance in terms of the numbers of Jews involved were the scrap and second-hand goods businesses, followed by petty trading and shopkeeping.

In Vancouver, as in New York, Montreal and Toronto, a large proportion of the East European Jewish immigrants gravitated towards the garment industry.⁶ Their arrival in North America coincided with the transformation of the clothing industry. Mass production of ready-made clothing to meet the demands of rapidly expanding urban populations came about with the introduction of mechanization to most levels of clothing manufacture. East European Jewish immigrants provided much of the labour in the sewing shops and garment factories in New York and other eastern cities where the garment trade quickly became an overwhelmingly Jewish

preserve. Jews were involved at all levels of production and distribution. Until the turn of the century when the balance shifted, many of the owners and managers of garment shops in New York were German Jews who provided employment to vast numbers of their less fortunate correligionists. On a smaller scale, a similar process led to a concentration of East European Jews in the garment industry in Vancouver, but with two differences. Firstly, East European rather than German Jews became the employers, and secondly, a smaller proportion of the clothing industry was in Jewish hands. Nevertheless, immigrant East European Jewish tailors, clothing manufacturers and merchants were quick to respond to the steadily increasing demand for tailored and ready-made clothing in British Columbia during the boom years between 1900 and 1914.

Until the turn of the century, there was a small concentration of Jewish tailors' shops and clothing stores in the East End of Vancouver. But after 1900, as the number of Jews employed in the garment trade increased, Jewish clothing businesses diversified and dispersed into other parts of the city. Gradually, small scale, individually operated tailoring businesses and clothing stores evolved into enterprises with a number of employees, others expanded only moderately or fell by the wayside, but the effect was that, by 1914, approximately 25% of employed Jews in the city were engaged in some aspect of the clothing business. Approximately two-thirds of that number were occupied in the manufacture of garments, either in individual tailoring and dressmaking establishments or in larger sewing shops; one-third distributed and marketed clothing.

In 1914 most of the Jewish-run tailoring businesses and clothing

manufacturers in Vancouver were located close to the main commercial districts in the city. Better quality custom tailoring firms were scattered along the commercial fringes of the West End residential district; other tailoring, dressmaking and shoemaking establishments that catered to a less affluent clientele were located on the east side of the central business district. Many Jewish tailors, seamstresses and pressers travelled from their residences in the East End to work in the larger Jewish and non-Jewish clothing firms located in various parts of downtown Vancouver.

Cleaning and dying, a service industry closely connected with the cloth trade, occupied 3.7% of employed Jews in Vancouver in 1914. In fact a number of the tailors combined cleaning and dying with sewing. Jewish owned dye works, which were usually family-operated, were located close to the residential areas which they served on both the east and the west sides of the city. A minority lived and worked on the same premises.

Jewish scrap and second-hand goods businesses, which accounted for 10.4% of the employed Jews in Vancouver, were almost entirely confined to the East End of the city. By 1914, there were about four times as many Jewish junk and second-hand goods merchants as there had been in 1900. This, and other forms of petty trading, were the types of work followed by the more impoverished of the Jewish immigrants who came during this period. Slightly more than half of these Jews were scrap or junk dealers. They ranged from pedlars with carts who operated out of their lodgings or homes to more wealthy scrap merchants who owned large scrapyards located on cheap land near the railway and the waterfront.

Main Street, between Alexander and Prior contained half of the Jewish second-hand stores in Vancouver in 1914. These stores were

ideally situated to capitalise upon the trading opportunities created by the large volume of commercial traffic along one of the city's major arteries serving the East-End. New immigrants from various ethnic groups who poured into the East-End and Strathcona districts of the city formed a large market for second-hand furniture and household items. The Jewish stores were usually small, family-run, or individually-run enterprises. In a number of instances, the second-hand business was merely a temporary endeavour that preceded the establishment of a more specialised commercial enterprise. For example, Samuel Toban, a Lithuanian shoemaker who came to Vancouver in 1910, eventually set up a chain of shoe stores in the city, together with two of his sons, after first running a shoe repair shop on Davie Street and later a second-hand store on Main Street.

In addition to tailoring and trading in scrap and secondhand goods, petty trading and shopkeeping were the most common forms of economic enterprise among the Jews of the East End. Many newly arrived East European Jewish immigrants in the East End took up peddling and street vending in order to gain a first economic foothold. But, as soon as sufficient capital had been accumulated, most Jewish pedlars abandoned their pushcarts to become sedentary shopkeepers. The typical unit was a small retail store, operated by individuals or families who often lived on the same premises. The majority of these Jewish-run stores, which, for the most part, handled groceries, tobacco, confectionery, clothing or general merchandise, were scattered in various locations through the East End where they mainly served the less affluent immigrant population. In the early years, such Jewish stores were confined to the Water Street area of the city, but, by 1914, smaller concentrations had spread into the district east of Main Street. Typically, many of these enterprises

were fairly marginal and were shortlived in any one location.

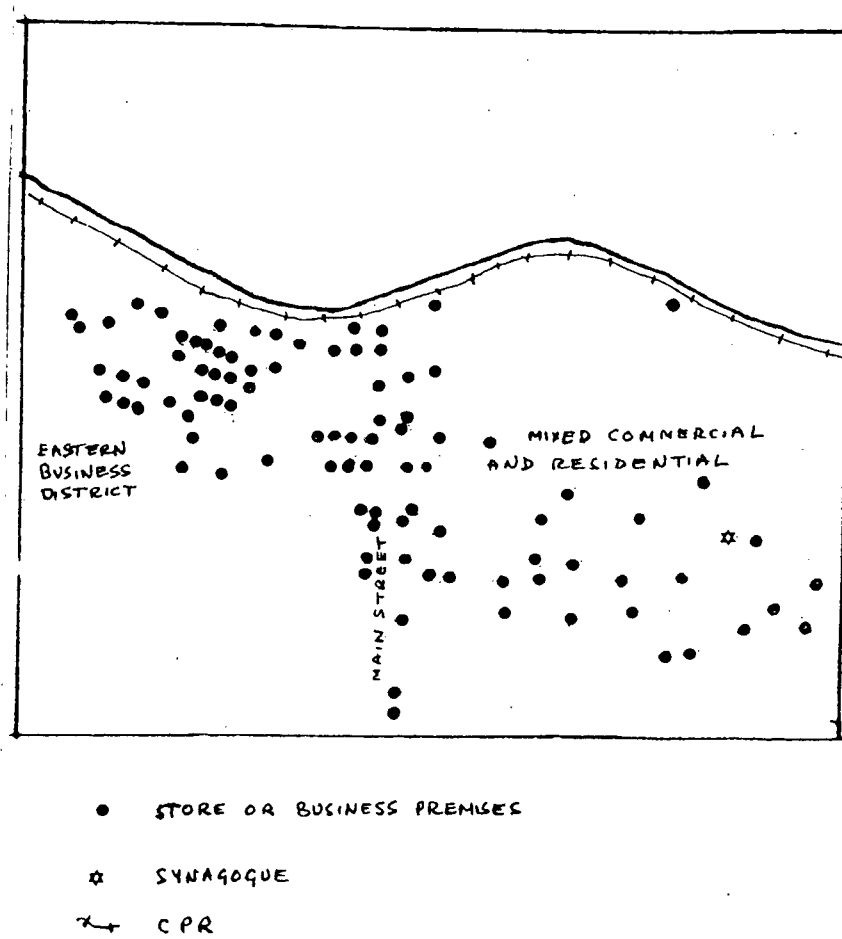
The East End was also characterised by businesses which catered exclusively to the resident Jewish population. Before the city's Jewish population grew large enough to support stores which were entirely devoted to the sale of kosher foods, special dietary needs were supplied by individual Jewish merchants as a sideline to their main business.⁷ As early as 1887, Zebulon Franks, the hardware merchant, was importing kosher meat from Seattle. After his arrival in 1892, Louis Rubinowitz, a general merchant, became the first shochet (ritual slaughterer) for the Jewish community. But by 1914, a few kosher butchers' shops, food markets and restaurants imparted a distinctly 'Jewish' flavour to small pockets of the East End, especially along the axes of Main and East Hastings Streets, and in the vicinity of the synagogue located at the corner of Pender and Heatley.⁸

A significant feature of the Jewish occupational structure in Vancouver was the gradual emergence of a wage-earning class which accounted for approximately 18% of the city's Jewish population by 1914. This class was formed largely of East European Jews who lived in the East End and worked in various parts of the city. The majority of them were employed in white collar jobs as clerks, book-keepers, salesmen and cashiers, but there were also some Jewish blue-collar workers employed in the garment and other industries, and those who worked as casual labourers. Significantly, many Jewish women were also included in the work-force. Apart from those who worked as seamstresses in the sewing shops, most Jewish working women were employed as stenographers, cashiers or waitresses. Most often, East European Jews who arrived in Vancouver feeling disoriented and alien, but wanting work, preferred to

find jobs with Jewish employers who would understand them. The greatest influx of Jewish immigrants which occurred in the first decade of the century, coincided with a period of economic boom in Vancouver when newly established Jewish business proprietors, imbued with feelings of charity and obligation towards their less fortunate co-religionists, were ready to absorb more employees into their expanding firms.⁹ Thus, in addition to members of their immediate families, Jewish business owners employed other Jews as salesmen, clerks and book-keepers, and also as tailors, cutters and pressers in clothing firms. In 1914, between 50% and 75% of the Jewish wage-earners were employed in family businesses or worked for other Jewish employers. The remainder worked for non-Jewish businesses and institutions. The latter proportion increased between 1900 and 1914 as Jewish immigrants became adjusted to their new social and economic environment.

Figure 3:7. Distribution of Jewish Businesses in Vancouver's East End,

1914



Between 1886 and 1914, the small, wealthy segment of the Jewish population in Vancouver was composed of entrepreneurs, land speculators, real estate agents, financial agents, and proprietors of successful firms. Before 1900, this group was represented by a handful of wealthy Jewish entrepreneurs, most of whom were of West European origin. Their diverse economic interests included heavy investment in land, property, public transport and improvement schemes in the lower mainland. After 1900, the group expanded to include newly wealthy East European Jews who performed more specialized economic functions as realtors, financial agents and business proprietors. In 1914, most of their offices and businesses were located in the heart of Vancouver's financial and better commercial districts; the majority lived in the West End residential district, close to their places of business.

Activity of Jews in the pre-1900 period is best exemplified by the entrepreneurial ventures of David and Isaac Oppenheimer, who along with a number of other wealthy entrepreneurs, made significant and substantial contributions to the creation and early development of Vancouver as a city.¹⁰ Their wide ranging activities in the lower mainland spanned more than twelve years until the death of David Oppenheimer in 1897.¹¹ In 1886, the head office of Oppenheimer Brothers, a wholesale grocery business in operation since the Cariboo gold rushes, was moved from Victoria to Vancouver in order to facilitate trade with the interior of the province, and to capitalize on the potentially large market promised by the completion of the transcontinental railway to Vancouver. The involvement of David and Isaac Oppenheimer with a group of Victoria entrepreneurs, who included E. C. Baker, R. P. Rithet and A. W. Ross, in land speculation in the the Coal Harbour, English Bay and False Creek

areas of the lower mainland in the mid-1880's was instrumental in forcing the extension of the Canadian Pacific Railway from Port Moody to Granville Townsite.¹² Subsequently, David Oppenheimer became one of the six leading dealers in real estate in Vancouver. In 1886 David Oppenheimer became president of the newly formed Vancouver Land and Improvement Company, a syndicate of Victoria and Vancouver businessmen which acquired large land holdings on the East side of the city, in an area that would become the commercial and industrial heart of the new settlement. In 1887, the Oppenheimer Brothers' holdings, assessed at \$125,000, ranked them behind only the CPR (\$1M) and the Hastings Saw Mill (\$250,000) among major real estate owners in Vancouver;¹³ In 1889, they held the same position behind the CPR (\$1.7M) and the Vancouver Improvement Company (\$225,000)¹⁴; and this ranking continued until at least 1891 when their holdings were worth \$200,000. Characteristically for the period, the business activities of entrepreneurs like the Oppenheimers and their associates overlapped into municipal politics. For instance, David Oppenheimer served as President of the Board of Trade (1888 and 1889) and as Mayor of Vancouver (1888 to 1892). During this time, he was instrumental in shaping the land-use patterns of the city, as well as moulding the direction of its growth through the development of an electric street railway system. In addition, during his term of office, the urban environment was improved in many ways including the organization of the city's water supply, street paving and lighting and the preservation of public open spaces such as Stanley Park.

Most of the Jews who became prominent realtors, financiers and business proprietors in Vancouver after 1900 either had brought capital with them or had made money fairly quickly upon arrival in the province.

A large proportion of them made profits from real estate speculation during the boom years between 1900 and 1914. Some of them were directly involved in building, as was Abraham Goldstein who built the Sylvia Court eight-storey apartment block in the West-End in 1911. Others, were active in other types of commercial enterprise before embarking on the real estate and/or financial business. For example, Abraham Grossman and his son ran a men's wear clothing business between 1893 and 1908 before they established a real estate firm and financial agency and became proprietors of the Dunsmuir Hotel. Similarly, Maurice Gintzburger, a Swiss Jew, who arrived in British Columbia in 1887, was active in a variety of entrepreneurial pursuits which included working for several years with Oppenheimer Brothers, silver mining in the Kootenays, running a grocery business on Cordova Street, and land speculation in North Vancouver, before he created a real estate company and financial agency in the city in 1907.

In 1914, 7.7% of the employed Jews in Vancouver were realtors and financiers. The majority of the Jewish real estate and financial businesses were located on West Hastings Street in what had become the financial district of Vancouver. Several of the larger Jewish firms combined a number of functions. The Gintzburger, Flack and Grossman firms handled real estate as well as loans, investments, insurance and other financial matters. At least one of the firms was a branch of a Seattle company.¹⁵ Jews also occupied prominent positions in a number of financial companies. In 1914, G.H. Salmon was managing director of Dominion Stock and Bond Corporation; he was also manager of Northern Loan and Mortgage Guarantee Corporation. Also included in the wealthiest segment of the Jewish population in 1914 were some proprietors of

clothing firms and various wholesale and retail businesses, several jewellery merchants, theatre and hotel proprietors, and a scrap merchant.

The period between 1886 and 1914 saw the emergence of a Jewish middle class in Vancouver. It comprised for the most part those East European Jews who had begun to make a success of their business and professional ventures in Vancouver. In 1914, this group included wholesale and retail merchants, hotel and theatre proprietors and managers, white-collar wage-earners and a few professionally employed Jews. The East End was still the chief residential area for the majority of Jews belonging to this sector in 1914, although some had already moved to the Fairview and Mount Pleasant districts and to apartments in the West End by then. Their businesses and offices were located mainly in the older Eastern commercial district of the city, but with smaller concentrations on the commercial perimeters of the West End. The typical Jewish businesses in this category were those which handled clothing, jewellery and food, although hardware, furs and tobacco businesses were also common.

In 1914, 8% of the gainfully employed Jews in Vancouver were occupied in the distribution and marketing of clothing. The main concentration of the 30 to 40 Jewish wholesale and retail clothing businesses was in the area bounded by Water, Pender, Main and Cambie streets (Fig. 3:3). Better-quality Jewish clothing stores and bespoke tailoring and dressmaking shops which catered specifically to an upper class clientele were located in commercial blocks in and peripheral to the West End. A few Jewish specialty stores which sold millinery, feathers, furs and other accessories like the South African Plume Shop operated by the Malakoff family on Granville Street were similarly

located. The area in the vicinity of Main Street contained more modest new and second-hand clothing businesses of which The East-End Clothing Store run by J. Stein and T. Templeman provides one example.

By 1914, there were more than a dozen Jewish jewellery stores on Hastings and Cordova Streets in the blocks between Main and Richards. These owners and their employees, most of whom had arrived in Vancouver after 1900, represented 6.4% of the employed Jews in Vancouver in 1914. They brought with them skills in the arts of jewellery-making and watchmaking from Europe where the jewellery business had been one of the traditional Jewish occupations. Most of these were family businesses or Jewish partnerships as in the case of the Main Exchange operated by Jacobs and Perrish. They employed relatives or other Jews as watch and jewellery makers, salesmen, clerks and travellers. The larger firms, like the Koenigsberger company, were involved in all aspects of jewellery trading from manufacturing and importing to wholesaling and retailing. A few Vancouver Jews were occupied in the related businesses of jewellery and pawnbroking during this period. In 1914, Kalman Silverman owned a long-established pawnbroking business on Cordova Street, and Harry Evans ran B.C. Collateral Loan Company on West Hastings Street.

The East European Jews were also occupied as provisioners, both to the Jewish and non-Jewish communities in Vancouver and the lower Mainland, as their West-European predecessors in the province had been in the 1860's. However, by 1900, a much smaller proportion of the Jewish community was thus occupied, partly because business opportunities were more diverse available than there had been in Victoria fifty years earlier. By 1914, in Vancouver, 6.7% of employed Jews were occupied in the wholesale and retail food businesses, which included groceries,

produce and liquor. The warehouses and offices of several of the larger Jewish firms were located in the vicinity of Water street; these included the Swartz and Chess brothers, who, in 1914, were just getting started in their respective wholesale fruit and produce businesses, and a branch of the Victoria based wholesale wine and tobacco firm, Pither and Leiser, which was established in Vancouver in 1912. The Oppenheimer wholesale grocery business was in operation on Powell Street from its establishment in 1886 until 1901, when it became a food brokerage firm in the hands of a younger generation of the family.

Whereas the business of manufacturing cigars and tobacco products had been a traditional occupation of pioneer German Jews in North America, it was not as common amongst East European Jews. For the latter immigrants, the operation of a cigar stand usually marked a temporary stage in the process of securing a permanent economic foothold. In Vancouver, in addition to a few such vendors, there were also several Jews who ran more substantial tobacco and cigar businesses; they included Aaron Blumenthal, Solomon Blackson and H. E. Lazarus, proprietors of cigar shops on Granville Street in 1914.

In 1914, two of the three Jewish owned fur stores in the city were located on Granville Street. One of these was managed by David Boscowitz as a branch of a long-established Victoria fur business which had ties with the Alaskan sealing ventures of an earlier generation of Jewish entrepreneurs in the province.

From 1886 onwards, there were always a few Jewish hotel and boarding house proprietors in Vancouver. After 1900 the number of Jews involved in the hotel and entertainment businesses increased; by 1914, it included 4% of the employed Jews in Vancouver. In that year, in addition to

various rooming houses, Jews owned the Dunsmuir, Glasgow, and Maple hotels. In general, these were modest establishments, located in less affluent parts of the city where they catered to the transient element of the city's population. By 1914, several Jews had become theatre and billiard hall proprietors. For example, the Lipsin brothers owned the Maple Leaf Theatre, a pool hall and a cigar stand; Jacob Izen owned the National Theatre; Phillip Lesser and Robert Raphael operated the Leland Billiard Parlour on Granville Street. Both hotels and theatres changed hands frequently during this period.

Very few Jews were engaged in professional pursuits in Vancouver until after the First World War. Those Jews who did practise medicine, law or optometry during this early period had received their training elsewhere in Canada, the United States or Europe. Since many of the East European Jewish immigrants arrived in British Columbia with little knowledge of English, it was left to the next generation to benefit from formal education and to seize opportunities for professional training. By 1914, the professions, together with post-secondary students, accounted for 3.5% of the Jewish population. Amongst this group were several lawyers, physicians and optometrists.¹⁶ Two of the Jewish physicians specifically served the immigrant Jews in the East End. By 1914, the Jewish community had also begun to produce a number of teachers and students, a sign of the value the Jewish newcomers placed on education as a means of improving economic and social status. Rabbis were also amongst the professionally trained Jews in Vancouver. At least six rabbis were hired at various times by the two Jewish congregations in the city during the period up to 1914.¹⁷

In spite of distinctions based on wealth, Jewish businesses in

Vancouver shared a number of characteristics in common including a preference for self-employment and the predominance of family firms and Jewish partnerships. The majority of the East European Jewish immigrants preferred self-employment or the perceived security of employment in Jewish-owned businesses in the difficult period of adjustment which usually followed their arrival in Vancouver. This was a typical feature of the East European Jewish immigrant experience in North America. Ethnic discrimination in Europe and to a lesser extent in North America, combined with sudden social and spatial dislocation from their homelands contributed to their initial feelings of disorientation. Self-employment or employment in totally Jewish-run enterprises provided new Jewish immigrants with a degree of independence and immunity from the predominantly gentile host community. In addition, in such situations, traditional cultural and religious customs which affected business practice could be preserved; Orthodox Jews in Vancouver who refrained from work on the Sabbath and special holy days, would be mutually understood.¹⁸ This work preference is illustrated in Vancouver by the relatively high proportion of Jews who were employed in small businesses, especially in the eastern business district and in the East End. Although Jews in the wealthy sector were the most assimilated and interacted freely with the gentile host community, they still preserved a degree of ethnic loyalty in business relations. As proprietors, most were also in control of their own enterprises.

Although the greatest percentage of Jewish economic activity in Vancouver was at the tertiary level, confined mainly to wholesale and retail trade and finance, by 1914, at the secondary level, there was an incipient Jewish manufacturing sector based almost exclusively on

clothing production. Clothing was manufactured in establishments which ranged in size from tailors' shops to larger sewing-shops and factories, largely for the non-Jewish market in the province. The industry relied on the imported tailoring and sewing skills and the labour of Jewish immigrants.

Paralleling Jewish involvement in the garment industry at all levels was their entry into other areas of employment as wage-earners. The majority of Jews worked for Jewish employers, even in 1914, but a few Jews worked outside their own community. Apart from garment workers and a small number of labourers, the Jewish workforce, which also included women, consisted mainly of white-collar clerical workers.

The Jewish business sector was characterised by a moderate degree of occupational mobility during the formative period before 1914, but probably no more than in the wider Vancouver community. The trend was generally upward for the uprooted Jewish immigrants who were anxious to establish a firm economic foothold in their new milieu. For many this meant an initial step backwards and a succession of different occupations before achieving a semblance of financial security. The East European Jews who arrived with skills in specialised trades like tailoring, dressmaking, shoemaking, watch-making and jewellery making, found themselves using those skills in Vancouver. They generally persisted in those occupations, and some eventually rose to the managerial or ownership level, whereas unskilled Jews who started off as pedlars, and peripheral traders, were the most highly transient. Some Jews, who began early as modest tradesmen had become well-established merchants or even financial agents by 1914. For example, Maurice Gintzburger who began as a tobacconist in 1887, had become a successful financial broker and real

estate agent by 1914. This suggests that there was a direct correlation between the length of time Jews had spent in Vancouver or British Columbia and the degree of their financial success. Jewish immigrants who became clothing, jewellery, food and general merchants usually continued to specialise in handling the same lines of goods, but changed the location of their premises a number of times as their businesses responded to economic and market fluctuations. The longer-established Jewish-owned stores, the majority of which were situated in the main business district of Vancouver on Cordova, Hastings and Water streets, had become fairly stable enterprises by 1914. Furthermore, the Jewish businesses which had been founded in the commercial and financial core of Vancouver during the city's formative years, persisted in those locations after 1914, even after first and second generation Jewish immigrants began to move out of the mainly working-class East-End district and into better-class neighbourhoods to the south of False Creek in the 1920's and 1930's.

NOTES

¹ Stephen Thernstrom, The Other Bostonians (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964), p. 175.

² The Boscowitz's, Oppenheimers and Gintzburgers, for example.

³ Included amongst these Jewish merchants were Maurice Cohen, Isidor Director, Louis Ripstein, William Goldbloom and Morris Soskin.

⁴ Table compiled from information derived from:- Henderson, Vancouver and New Westminster Directory, 1914; Leonoff, Pioneers, Pedlars and Prayer Shawls (Victoria: Sono Nis, 1978).

⁵ For further information on the economic background of the East European Jewish immigrants consult:- Mark Zborowski and Elizabeth Herzog, Life is with people; the culture of the shtetl (New York: Schocken Books, 1962); Irving Howe, World of Our Fathers (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976), pp. 5-25.

⁶ The garment industry in New York and other large eastern cities employed at least half of the East European Jewish immigrants at the beginning of the century. See Irving Howe, World of Our Fathers, pp. 154-168.

⁷ Orthodox Jews observe the traditional religious dietary laws strictly; only kosher (i.e. ritually permitted) foods may be consumed.

⁸ In 1911, Maxwell Leshgold, a tailor, was also the proprietor of Kosher Dining Parlours at 54, West Cordova Street. In 1914, there was a Kosher Market at 527 Harris Street, a Kosher Restaurant at 121 East Hastings Street, and a Jewish bakery on Union Street. In addition there were several other Jewish-run food stores in the area, some of which might have handled kosher foodstuffs.

⁹ Jewish group solidarity was reinforced by a tradition of mutual self-help and charity, of which this employment pattern constituted one expression. See Chapter V for further discussion.

¹⁰ David and Isaac Oppenheimer were the youngest of a family of five brothers who had emigrated to America from Germany in 1851. After spending time in California, several of the brothers went to British Columbia in 1858; David and Isaac remained in the province for the next forty years.

¹¹ The economic ventures of David and Isaac Oppenheimer outside of Vancouver included the British Columbia Dredging and Dyking Company which reclaimed 6,000 acres of agricultural land in the Pitt Meadows area, the British Columbia Milling and Mining Company, and a number of mining and real estate interests in various parts of the province. See Oppenheimer Papers, CAV Add.MSS. 108.

12 As part of the deal to bring about the extension of the railway, David and Isaac Oppenheimer and associates relinquished one third of their land holdings on the west side of the city to the provincial land grant to the CPR.

13 Assessment figures for 1887, 1889 and 1891 derived from Norbert MacDonald, "The Canadian Pacific Railway and Vancouver's Development to 1900," (BC Studies, 35, Autumn 1977) reprinted in W. P. Ward and R. A. J. McDonald (eds.) British Columbia: Historical Readings (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1981), p. 407.

14 David and Isaac Oppenheimer also retained considerable interests in the Vancouver Land and Improvement Company.

15 The firm Leibly and Blumer was a branch of a real estate company in Seattle where Leibly resided as president, with Blumer as vice-president in Vancouver.

16 Included among the lawyers were Samuel Schultz, born in Victoria in 1865 and trained in Toronto, he practised in Victoria, Nelson and Vancouver where he was appointed a County Court Judge in 1914; Israel Rubinowitz, a criminal lawyer and son of a pioneer Jewish general merchant in Vancouver. Among the physicians were Dr. Samuel Petersky, and Dr. Samuel Blumberger who set up practices on Union Street and East Hastings Street in the East End in 1911 and 1909 respectively. Following their arrival in Vancouver in 1910, as qualified optometrists, Albert and Saul Hirschberg established the Toric Optical and the Consolidated Optical companies in Vancouver.

17 The first were Semi-Reform rabbis--Solomon Philo and Bernard Rosengard; the later arrivals were Orthodox --Oscar Yackheimy, Solomon Friedman, Rudolph Farber and David Belasoff. See Chapter V.

18 A substantial proportion of Orthodox Jews in the East End would not have worked on the Sabbath and special Jewish holy days.

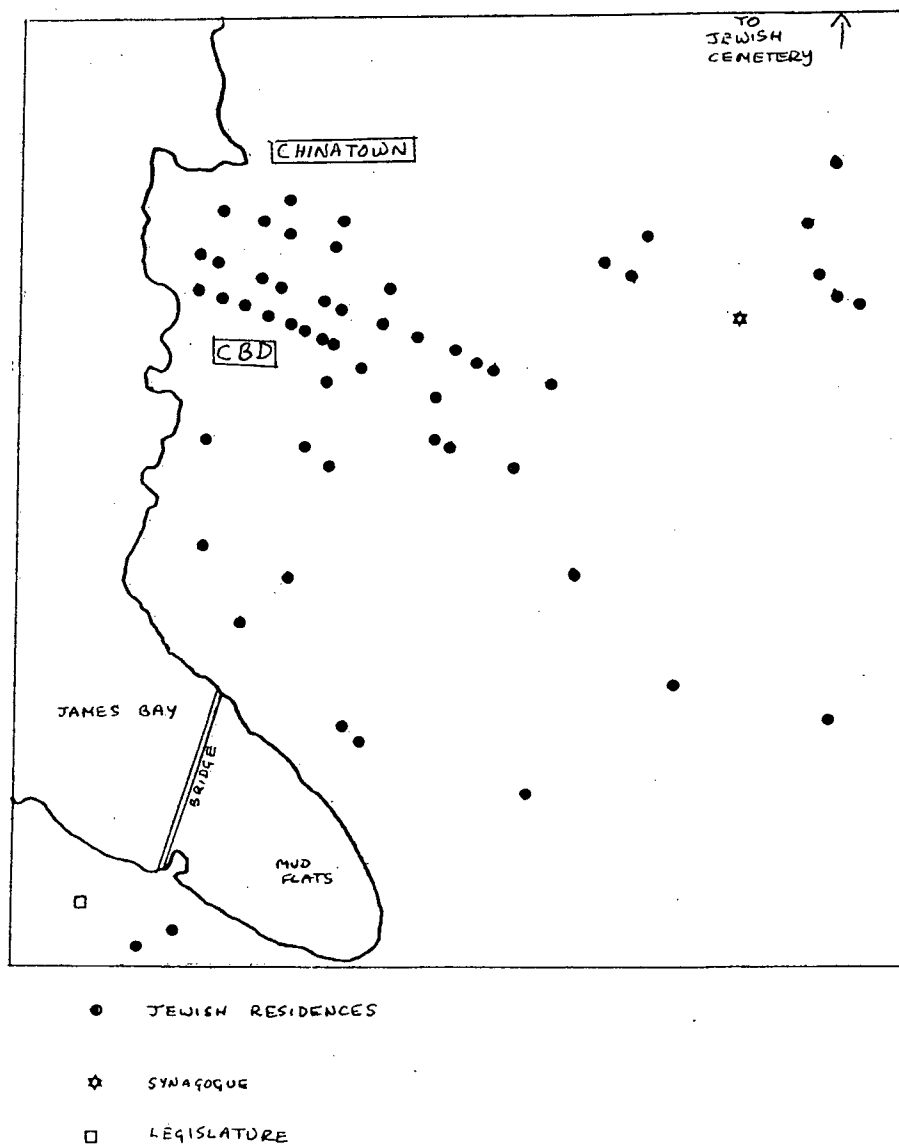
CHAPTER IV

VICTORIA: AN INTEGRATED JEWISH COMMUNITY, 1858-1871

The tolerance with which British Columbians met the first wave of Jewish settlement in their community was uncommon in Europe and older settled parts of North America.¹ Most European Jews lived on the margins of the host society; they were at best partial 'outsiders'. But, in British Columbia as in California, early Jewish immigrants, with useful entrepreneurial and mercantile skills, were readily accepted as 'insiders' in communities which they helped to found.² Between 1858 and 1871, without losing their ethnic identity, Jewish settlers in British Columbia were able to participate equally with the majority British population in the economic and social development of the fledgling colony.

Although Jewish immigrants settled temporarily in a number of interior communities along the Fraser River, in the Cariboo district and on Vancouver Island between 1858 and 1871, the city of Victoria, with the largest and most permanent concentration of Jews, became the main focus of the colony's Jewish life.

Figure 4:1. Location of Jewish Community in Victoria, 1863



In 1863, when the colony's Jewish population had reached almost 250, the highest for the period, the majority resided in the recently founded city of Victoria. There, Jews were fairly widely dispersed, but two parts of the city had more marked concentrations of Jews - the section of the business district which included Yates, Johnson and Government Streets, and the area in the vicinity of Pandora and Blanshard Streets (Fig. 4:1). The main concentration of Jewish businesses in Victoria was at the western ends of Yates and Johnson Streets where an undetermined number of Jews of more modest means lived above or adjacent to their commercial premises.³ More affluent Jews who could afford to buy or rent houses lived in the second area, which was more mixed in function and lay a few blocks to the west of the central business district. This area contained some of the more religiously observant Jews who lived on the streets close to the synagogue after its completion in 1863. A few of the wealthiest Jewish merchants had homes in the James Bay area, which was exclusively residential, and farthest removed from the business district. By 1871 when Victoria's Jewish population had fallen to below 100, this residential pattern remained more or less unchanged except in the reduced density of Jewish residents.

For the most part, the colony's Jewish population was fairly homogeneous. It was composed largely of merchants and small businessmen and their families, the majority of whom stemmed from similar cultural backgrounds, and were involved in similar economic activities. In Victoria, a network of interconnected families and business partnerships structured the closely-knit Jewish community in the city. But, the major cohesive force was the shared experience of a rich religious and cultural heritage. For these reasons, the Jews to a degree presented a unified

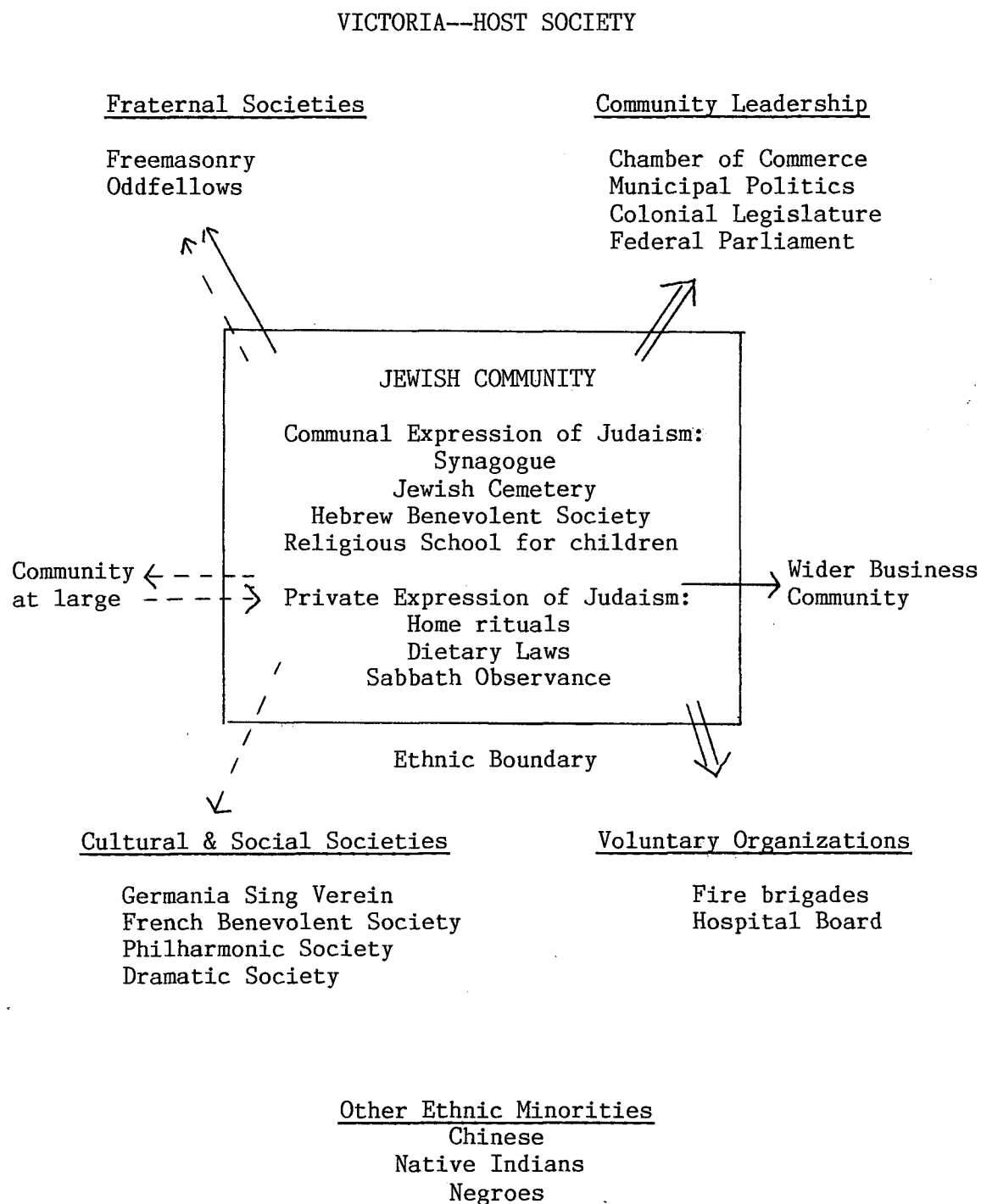
front to the rest of the population. On the other hand, for much of the period, the Jewish population displayed a restlessness as Jews came and went between Victoria and San Francisco and between Victoria and the Cariboo. This was reflected in a certain amount of commercial and residential mobility in Victoria, especially in the first heady years of the gold rushes. Although the mobility of Jewish immigrants brought numerical changes in the composition of the resident Jewish population over the period, the main characteristics of the community, as mentioned above, remained relatively unchanged. Furthermore, between 1864 and 1871, as the gold rush subsided, the return of Jews to Victoria from the Cariboo, and the departure of Jews from the colony, resulted in a smaller, but more stable Jewish population in Victoria.

Ethnic group consciousness is primarily defined from inside by a set of common religious and/or cultural beliefs and practices, which have both private and communal forms of expression. In urban settings in particular, a minority ethnic group, (such as Jews in the Diaspora), is also defined from outside by the host population and other ethnic groups. The degree of interaction which takes place between a minority group and the dominant population is governed in part by the reciprocal perceptions, whether real or imagined, which come into play. The flexibility of the social/cultural boundary which separates them will usually depend upon the perceived level of acceptance or rejection extended towards the ethnic minority by the host community. When the minority group is looked upon with favour, the boundary will be 'open' with interaction in both directions, but when the minority group feels alienated the boundary will be 'closed' with the minimum of interaction occurring in either direction. The former situation can lead to eventual

assimilation of the minority group, the latter to ghettoization. The theoretical construct above, which is applicable to immigrant ethnic minorities in new world cities, is exemplified in Figure 4:2 where it is used to assess the adaptation of Jews to gold rush Victoria.⁴

The model in Figure 4:2 shows the inner dimensions of Victoria's Jewish community and the ways in which that community blended with the host society. Jews were free to practice their religion openly and the synagogue, cemetery, and institutional infrastructure which came into being were central to their communal religious and cultural life. In the privacy of their homes Jews observed traditional rituals and ceremonies which reinforced their ethnic identity. Not only were Jews tolerated as a visible religious minority in Victoria, they were also accepted into the wider community as business associates, members of voluntary organizations, and as politicians. But, this was in effect a one-way movement across the ethnic boundary; gentiles would not as a rule become involved inside the Jewish community.

Figure 4:2. Relationship of Jewish Minority Group to Host Society in Gold Rush Victoria

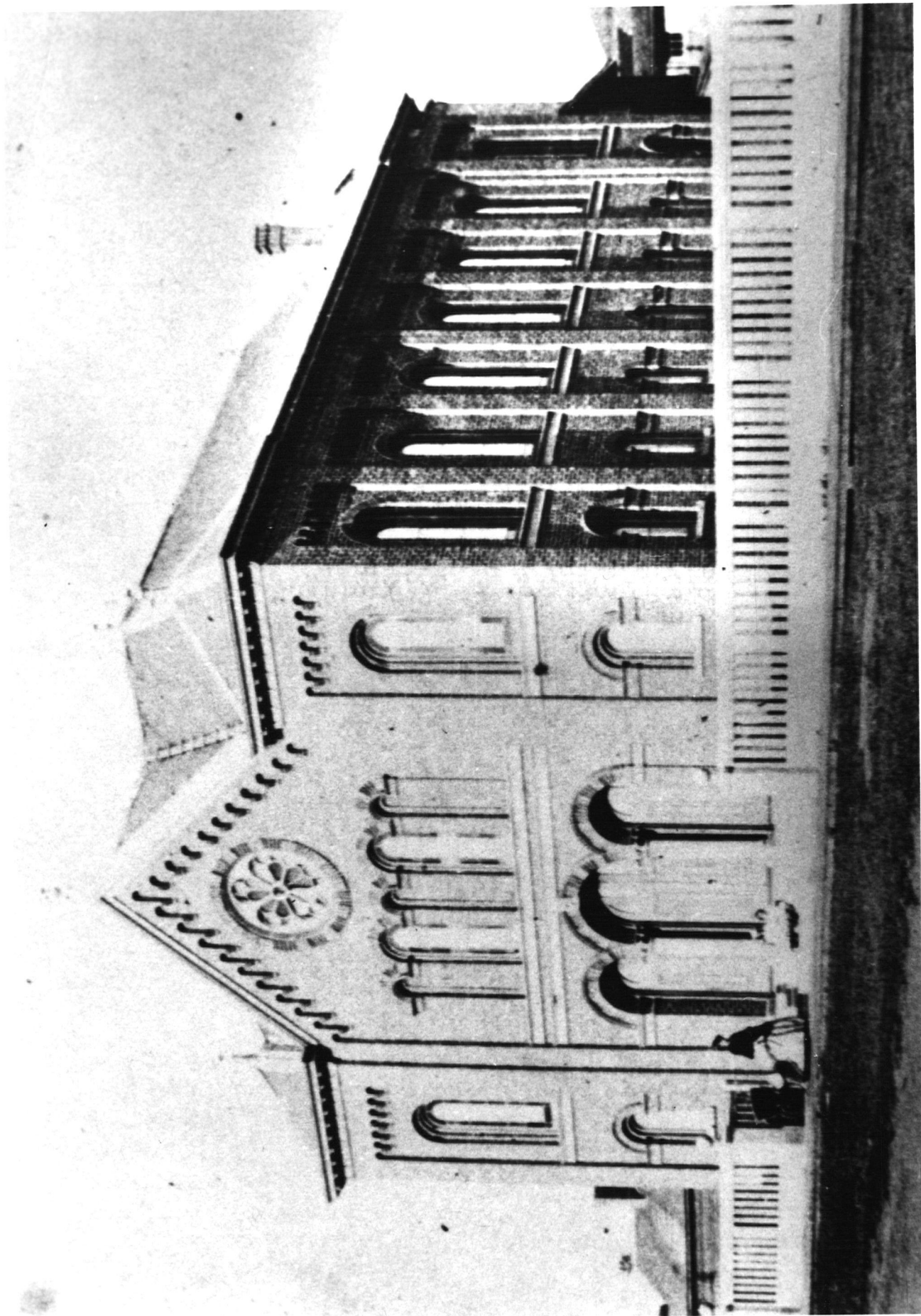


← Business Relationships
 - - - Social Relationships
 <== Public Service

The first Jewish immigrants to Victoria quickly created the rudiments of a religious community. The difficulties entailed in organizing a Jewish community and congregation 'in the wilderness' of Vancouver Island, had been encountered before by the Jews who first set foot in the colony. Many of them had come from California where they had previously been involved in organizing congregations in the mining communities of Stockton, Placerville, Jackson and Shasta and in San Francisco. The development of the Victoria community's institutional infrastructure followed a common pattern for newly transplanted Jewish communities in both the old and new worlds.⁵ In the autumn of 1858 some of the 50 Jews in Victoria celebrated communal Sabbath and holiday worship informally in private homes.⁶ The formation of a Hebrew Benevolent Society⁷ in May 1859 provided the initial organizational framework for creating a Jewish community in the city. In addition to providing charity to needy Jewish immigrants, one of the primary purposes of this society, which had 40 members in 1860, was to acquire a separate Jewish burial ground in the city. Although land for Christian churches and cemeteries in Victoria was assigned free of charge by the city fathers, the Jews had to purchase sites for their synagogue and cemetery.⁸ The one and a half acre plot of land some distance beyond the north-eastern edge of the settled area of the city, which was acquired by the Jews and consecrated as a cemetery in February 1860 became the first Jewish landmark in Victoria.⁹ It continued to serve as the only Jewish cemetery in the province until 1887 and the headstones on the graves serve as testimony to the lives and experiences of some of those early Jewish immigrants.¹⁰

Figure 4:3. Congregation Emanu-El Synagogue, Victoria, B. C.

Source: Jewish Historical Society of British Columbia Archives.



The 'substantial brick Synagogue'¹¹ built by the newly formed Congregation Emanu-El at the corner of Blanshard and Pandora streets, and consecrated in September 1863, created the main focus for Jewish communal religious life in Victoria. The handsome structure, built in the style of some of the synagogues in Western Europe included a glass domed skylight in the centre of the vaulted roof and a rose window in the gable above the main doors (Fig. 4:3). The interior of the building was designed to incorporate many of the traditional features of an Orthodox synagogue; the Ark¹² was placed on the East wall (nearest to Jerusalem), there was separate seating for women on balconies above the main floor of the sanctuary which was reserved for men, and a ritual bath (mikvah)¹³ was housed in the basement. In addition the building included social and classroom space. That the synagogue was built with a seating capacity of 400, i.e. 37% larger than required for the total Jewish population of the colony in 1863, is suggestive of the optimism with which the early Jews viewed their newly founded community in Victoria. The confidence which Jews felt about their religious identity was similarly reflected in the price they were prepared to pay to have a 'gorgeous temple' in their midst; the synagogue was completed at a total cost of \$9,196 for the building and \$730 for the land.

The Jews of Victoria used their new synagogue as prescribed by tradition as a bet hatefillah (house of prayer), bet hakenesset (house of assembly) and bet hamidrash (house of study). In this they were no doubt influenced and encouraged by the pastoral letter circulated in 1862 to "all the Hebrew congregations in the British colonies," by the Chief Rabbi of England in which he urged the Jews in Victoria, who were then included in his fold, to form a traditional congregation.¹⁴ Under such

distant guidance, the Jewish congregation in Victoria at first preserved more of the tenets of Orthodox Judaism than did many of the contemporary small congregations in the American West. The religious leaders of the community created an Orthodox Jewish congregation¹⁵ in the wilderness of Vancouver Island, remote from similar congregations in California and Oregon. In the process of transplantation, the traditional religious trappings of an Orthodox congregation were retained by Congregation Emanu-El:- regular Sabbath, weekday and seasonal holy day services were held with the required minyan (quorum) for public worship of ten adult male Jews (above age 13), synagogue services were conducted according to Polish Minchag (custom),¹⁶ and men and women were seated in separate areas of the sanctuary. For the first three buoyant years of the new synagogue's operation, religious and spiritual leadership was provided by a paid rabbi.¹⁷ As was customary in small Jewish communities, the rabbi's position in Victoria combined a number of additional special duties including those of reader, cantor, shochet, mohel, and teacher of Hebrew and Judaism in the religious school.¹⁸

Jews in Victoria affirmed their religious and ethnic identity publicly through affiliation with Congregation Emanu-El. Fluctuations in synagogue membership broadly paralleled fluctuations in the colony's Jewish population during the period. The high point for synagogue affiliation during the decade was reached in 1863, when Congregation Emanu-El had over 60 paid up members, most of whom were 'fathers of families,' which, with the inclusion of women and children, brought the actual total much higher.¹⁹ This figure represented a good majority of the Jews in Victoria in 1863, as well as some of the more transient 'Cariboo Jews.' Amongst the former were the religious leaders and most

active members of the congregation; but many of the latter group maintained links with the synagogue which they had helped to build. Even Jews in isolated communities, who, for reasons of expediency, had abandoned many of the traditional ritual practices still felt an attachment, if only nominal, to the synagogue in Victoria. The existence of the synagogue enabled such 'distant' Jews to mark passages in their lives - birth, coming of age, marriage, death - with the appropriate communal religious rituals.

Inside the homes of Victoria's Jews, was found the more private and individual expression of Jewish identity. Observance of a set of prescribed home rituals, which constituted a major component of their shared religious and cultural heritage, also served to reinforce ethnic group consciousness among Jews, and to separate them to some extent from the community at large. It is difficult to assess from the available records the degree of home religious observance among the Jews in Victoria. However, it seems reasonable to assume that, given the substantial synagogue membership, many Jews in Victoria also kept 'Jewish' homes. On the strictest level, this would have involved observance of the Sabbath as a day of rest from any kind of work, observance of the Jewish dietary laws, practice of special home rituals such as candle-lighting, prayers and ceremonial meals to celebrate the Sabbath and the yearly cycle of holy days and festivals, and to mark stages in the life cycle. That kosher meat was available fairly early in Victoria suggests that a number of Jews in Victoria followed the dietary laws and kept kosher homes.²⁰ Similarly, the manufacture of matzos by a Jewish merchant in Victoria suggests that Passover, one of the major Jewish festivals was observed in the community.²¹

For the most part, Jewish homes in Victoria would have been indistinguishable from other homes except for the occasional mezuzah, (a small decorated box containing a parchment inscribed with Hebrew verses) attached to an exterior doorpost.²² But, the interior of many Jewish homes would have contained a number of special ceremonial and ritual objects, including Sabbath candlesticks, wine goblets, separate sets of dishes and utensils for dairy and meat foods and for use during Passover, prayer books and a variety of other items associated with specific Jewish festivals and occasions. Most of these objects used in Jewish homes in Victoria would have been acquired in San Francisco, or brought from Europe. Portable religious paraphernalia formed an essential and concrete component of the cultural baggage of Jewish immigrants.

Gold-rush Victoria's vibrant Jewish community focussed on synagogue and was held together by a supporting communal infrastructure. If Congregation Emanu-El, run by a board of directors, was the primary Jewish organization, the Benevolent Society, (also known as the Chevra Kaddisha) acquired an important status in the community. Jewish women made their own contribution to the community through involvement with the Hebrew Ladies Society.²³ In addition, Jewish life was enriched and reinforced by the observances or celebrations which took place in individual homes to mark the Sabbath, the annual cycle of festivals and holy days, and life-cycle stages.

The response of the Jews in Victoria to their new environment, and their sense of achievement in having established a Jewish community in the city are best evoked in the rhetoric of one of its members at the opening of the new synagogue in 1863:

Who would have thought that in the short space of five years we should have a temple erected where aborigines were the lords of the domain? Who would have dreamt that in this isolated part of the globe, where, ere now, feet of white men have hardly trod, a comparatively large city would spring up, studded with magnificent edifices and inhabited by a large concourse of intellectual people? Who would not have ridiculed the idea that where, ere now, naught but the hunter's step and wild beast's roar disturbed the wilderness, should at this day be erected a synagogue to the scattered tribes of Israel? With feelings almost amounting to envy, we beheld the erection of churches of almost every denomination extant; but what could we, a handful of people, do to gain a similar edifice? It is easy to remember the advent of the first Israelite. Nevertheless, scattered as our race is over the world, and limited in numbers as we generally are, compared to our Gentile brethren, I am proud to say that since we first made our appearance, one by one, we have each and all striven manfully to uphold the religion which has been handed down to us by our forefathers.²⁴

In addition to "striving manfully to uphold the religion handed down to them by their forefathers", the Jews in Victoria established a comfortable modus vivendi alongside the host British colonial society. Since the Jews had come to the newly opened colony primarily to take advantage of commercial opportunities, they sought to develop a good relationship with the gentile population with whom they wished to conduct business. Jews therefore crossed the religious/cultural boundary which enclosed their community in order to interact with the society outside. Thus, having firmly established a niche in the colony's commercial sector, the Jewish immigrants were accepted by most segments of the population for their economic contribution to the developing frontier society. From their varied backgrounds in Europe and the United States, some of the Jews also brought a cosmopolitan air to the raw frontier society. What is more, the social acceptance and status gained through business success enabled Jews to penetrate all levels of the host society. At the same time, Jews confidently displayed their cultural and religious identity, without too much fear of discrimination. The Jews in

Victoria seemed to adapt to their new social and economic environment without losing their ethnic affiliation.

The construction of a synagogue in Victoria was greeted with unexpected enthusiasm by the dominantly Christian community. Approximately 70% of the contributions to the building fund, solicited by a special committee of Congregation Emanu-El, were from non-Jews, the remaining 30% from Jews in all parts of the colony and also from Jews in San Francisco.²⁵ The cornerstone laying ceremony for the new synagogue was likewise a community-wide involvement. In addition to the Mayor of Victoria and the Chief Justice of the colony, the Masonic fraternity, who laid one of the cornerstones, were active participants alongside the Jews in the ceremony, as were many other groups including the Saint Andrew's Society, the Germania Sing Verein (Choral Society), the French Benevolent Society and a band from a British warship in the harbour. The following favourable report of the ceremony appeared in The British Colonist:²⁶

Thus terminated an eventful day in the history of the Jews on Vancouver Island, and it must be a source of infinite gratification to that body, that the ceremonies of the day were participated in by all classes of our community with a hearty goodwill and brotherly feeling evidencing the high esteem in which they are held by fellow townsmen of the City of Victoria.

In such an atmosphere of tolerance, Jewish merchants joined community-wide voluntary organizations through which they participated in the promotion of improved economic, social and cultural conditions in the newly settled colony. To this end, Jews became members of Masonic lodges, the Independent Order of Oddfellows, the Vancouver Island Chamber of Commerce, the Victoria Board of Trade, volunteer fire brigades, hospital and orphanage boards, and of various cultural societies. Furthermore, a few of the more prominent Jewish merchants entered politics and were elected to positions of leadership in gold-rush Victoria.

Freemasonry attracted a much larger Jewish membership than did the Oddfellows who founded a lodge in Victoria in 1864. A number of Jews had previously been active in masonic lodges in California. In 1860, when the Victoria Lodge was formed, there were 21 members, of whom 6 (28%) were Jews (Table 4:1). The number of Jewish Freemasons on Vancouver Island increased between 1860 and 1871; both the Victoria Lodge and the Caledonia Lodge, which opened in 1867, included a fair complement of Jewish members. Their acceptance within the organization was so complete that some Jews rose to prominence in the Masonic order.²⁷ Not only were they members of Masonic lodges during their lifetime, but many of the Jews who died in the colony were buried with both Masonic and Jewish ritual. The Jews who became Freemasons were also founding members and supporters of Congregation Emanu-El. Their religious affiliation did not stand in the way of their acceptance as members of masonic lodges. This suggests that at least some of the German and West European Jews in Victoria were sufficiently acculturated to be regarded as social equals by the dominant British segment of the population. They spoke the same language, English, and perhaps did not openly display their ethnicity in this particular social context. The close association between Jews and Freemasons in Victoria was well demonstrated by their joint cooperation in the cornerstone laying ceremony for the synagogue. Thus, through involvement with the masonic fraternity, Jews widened business connections and thereby improved their economic and social status in the community. The apparent popularity of Freemasonry among Jewish merchants may explain in part why the Jewish fraternal organization, B'nai Brith, which was fairly widespread in Californian gold-rush communities, did not take hold in Victoria until 1886.²⁸

Table 4:1 Jewish Membership in Fraternal Societies in British Columbia, 1858-1871²⁹

<u>Masons</u>	<u>Oddfellows</u>
<u>Victoria Lodge 1085</u>	
A. Blackman	J. P. Davies & son
H. Cohen	N. Koshland
L. Franklin *	H. Levy
K. Gambitz	L. Lewis.
S. Goldstone *	A. Phillips
J. Keyser	M. Sporborg
L. Lewis	F. Sylvester
J. Malowansky *	
M. Myers	
H. Nathan	
F. Neufelder	
Oppenheimer Brothers	
M. Preis	
M. Sporborg *	* Members of Victoria Lodge in 1860
C. Strouss	
G. Sutro *	F. Sylvester
L. Wolff *	
Hoffman	
<u>Caledonia Lodge (Nanaimo)</u>	
A. Mayer	
S. Levi	
M. Wolfe	
J. Mahrer	

For Jews to have been accepted so readily as members of these exclusive fraternities was in complete contrast to the situation in many parts of Europe. In some countries, and in Germany in particular, enlightened Jews had struggled, but with only moderate success, to gain entry to masonic lodges. Religion proved to be the main obstacle. Although Masonry was founded on the precept of religious toleration, that rule was seldom put into practice, and adherence to the Christian faith

was normally a condition of membership in European lodges.³⁰ In contrast, Freemasonry when transplanted to North American pioneer societies, seemed to revert to the original founding precept, and did not exclude membership on the basis of religion.

The Vancouver Island Chamber of Commerce and the Victoria Board of Trade were community economic institutions in which Jewish merchants interacted with non-Jewish businessmen. Several prominent Jewish merchants including Emil and Gustav Sutro, Nathan Koshland, Samuel Goldstone and Jules Rueff were amongst the Jewish members of the Chamber of Commerce in 1863.³¹ The Jews who played prominent roles in the public life of the colony were mainly the wealthier merchants, most of whom were also Freemasons and/or Oddfellows. Almost without exception, they were the well-educated, British-born Jews who automatically had qualified for full citizenship rights upon arrival in the British colony. Since only naturalized British subjects were permitted to seek public office, many of the German Jewish merchants who preferred to retain their American citizenship were disqualified from holding leadership positions. In many ways business and politics worked hand in hand in frontier communities such as Victoria; business leaders tended to become political leaders, mainly in order to protect or further their own entrepreneurial interests, but also to improve environmental and societal conditions for the population as a whole. In fact, the early municipal and colonial governments in British Columbia were intensely entrepreneurial in executing their main task which was the economic and social development of previously unsettled territory. The Franklin brothers exemplified the typical entrepreneur/politicians in early British Columbia. They were British Jews who became wealthy from land speculation and auctioneering,

first in California, then on Vancouver Island. Selim Franklin served in the Legislative Assemblies of Vancouver Island intermittently between 1860 and 1866.³² His brother, Lumley was Mayor of Victoria for one year in 1866. Similarly, Henry Nathan, a British-born commission merchant in Victoria, who worked to bring the west coast colony into Confederation, served in the last colonial legislative Council in British Columbia and, from 1871 to 1874, in the new Canadian Parliament in Ottawa.

Some of the Jewish merchants in Victoria took a keen interest in contemporary political issues. The Jewish community was divided over the question of Confederation. On the whole, Jews of British origin like the Nathans supported union with Canada, whereas German and central European Jews with Californian connections, who had retained their American citizenship, favoured the annexation of the colony to the United States.³³ They had developed close economic (and familial) ties with California and other parts of the American West which they wished to retain. Consequently, they felt no particular emotional ties with either Britain or Canada. The eventual union was in part responsible for a number of Jews returning to California in the 1870's.

The more cosmopolitan Jews participated freely in the artistic and cultural life of gold-rush Victoria. For instance, Jews were to be found as members of a number of cultural organizations which included the Germania Sing Verein (N. Koshland), The French Benevolent Society (H. M. Cohen, J. Rueff), the Victoria Philharmonic Society (S. & L. Franklin, G. & E. Sutro), the Amateur Dramatic Society (S. Franklin), the Agricultural and Horticultural Society (H. Nathan, K. Gambitz, G. & E. Sutro), the Royal Theatre Company (H. Belasco). In addition, Jewish men and women

became involved with several charitable institutions such as hospitals and orphanages in the city.

Although by and large a "hearty good-will and brotherly feeling" developed between Jews and other ethnic groups in the colony during the gold-rush period, negative attitudes were expressed from time to time. Jews were regularly designated as 'foreigners', although up to one-third of the Jewish immigrants to the colony were British-born. In 1858, the huge influx of foreign-born immigrants caused anxiety among the rulers of the colony who wished to promote the immigration of British settlers.³⁴ Ordinary colonists bemoaned the fact that:

Victoria was assailed by an indescribable array of Polish Jews, Italian fishermen.....speculators of every kind, land agents, auctioneers, hangers-on at auctions, bummers, bankrupts, and brokers of every description.....Many of these seemed to care very little about the gold diggings,They came to sell and to speculate, to sell goods, sell lands, to sell cities, to buy them and to sell them again to greenhorns, to make money and be gone.³⁵

Likewise, colonial merchants feared competition from the foreigners, who, they thought, would simply exploit and remove the riches of the territory without having any intention of settling there permanently.

In Victoria, prejudice directed against Jews, as a group and as individuals, was mainly revealed in the market-place, where most of the interaction between Jews and non-Jews occurred. Jews were perceived by some as a group which attempted collectively to further its own commercial interests in the community. By way of example, in September 1860, "the little Jews of Johnson Street" were criticized in the Legislature for their apparent collusion with the Attorney General over a taxation bill.³⁶ And, on the personal level, Selim Franklin bore the brunt of anti-Jewish prejudice which was directed at him both in his

role as an entrepreneur and as a prominent local politician.³⁷

In sum, the Jewish immigrants who settled in Victoria during the gold-rushes, created a visible and viable ethnic community. This reality was confirmed by the expression of Jewish group consciousness from within in the form of traditional religious life which revolved around synagogue and home. At the same time, the ethnic and cultural boundary which enclosed the Jews and separated them from the dominant British population was never rigid or immutable. As the Jewish community became increasingly well-established as a community, Jews became more confident in the economic and social position which they came to occupy in the city. The Jewish population became well-integrated with the wider community without losing its ethnic identity significantly. The nucleus of a Jewish community survived in Victoria, despite the decline in the colony's Jewish population to about 25 families by 1871.

Historically, Diaspora Jews have shown remarkable adaptability in new settings. Judaism and the associated distinctive way of life have survived in part because of modifications made to fit in with host communities. Jewish immigrants to gold-rush British Columbia were following that tradition when they transplanted a Jewish community in Victoria. In the process of adaptation to the new setting, Jews preserved the communal practice of their religion as the nucleus of a community in Victoria. This they achieved by making only minor ritual modifications. On the other hand, more changes were made in individual religious observances, especially those which impinged upon relationships with non-Jews in the wider community.

Congregation Emanu-El remained Orthodox in practice throughout the period. Sabbath and daily services, as well as services in observance of

Jewish religious festivals, continued to be held in the synagogue, even as the congregation declined in size.³⁸ In 1871, when slightly fewer than 100 Jews resided in Victoria, attendance at Congregation Emanu-El regularly exceeded the minyan of ten adult male Jews necessary for communal worship. This was in contrast to some of the small Jewish congregations in the American west which dropped regular Sabbath services, but held High Holy Day services once a year. So too, Orthodox Judaism survived in traditional form in Congregation Emanu-El, without some of the reforms that had appeared in congregations to the south. This reflects the fact that Victoria's Jewish population was both sufficiently numerous to follow traditional communal ritual and fairly conservative in outlook. In addition, the connection of Congregation Emanu-El with the Chief Rabbinate in Britain probably contributed to the retention of Orthodoxy.

There was undoubtedly considerable variation in individual Jewish observance among the colony's Jews. Devoutly observant Jews would have continued to practise all or most of the necessary ritual obligations, but, these likely accounted for very few of the Jewish immigrants. Successful entrepreneurs and merchants, whose business activities depended on interaction with non-Jews, generally adapted their religious obligations the most. In order to be able to compete with non-Jewish merchants, the majority of the Jewish-owned stores in Victoria would have been kept open on Saturdays. In addition, many of the Jewish businessmen who met regularly with non-Jews in community-wide fraternal, voluntary, social and cultural organizations would have found it necessary to abandon some or all of the dietary laws, which effectively separated Jews from their gentile neighbours. Similarly, many of the Jewish

adventurers, merchants and traders who ventured into the colony's hinterland during the gold-rushes did not observe the Sabbath, and made dietary compromises out of necessity, and even preference. Some Jews who had previously experienced frontier life in California and elsewhere, had probably abandoned some Jewish ritual practices before they came to British Columbia. These were generally the more acculturated and cosmopolitan Jews in the colony. Apart from the relaxation of Sabbath observance and the dietary laws, the Jews in the Victoria community continued to follow many other Jewish religious and cultural customs, both communally and in the privacy of their homes. These would have included ceremonial meals and candle-lighting rituals for the Sabbath Eve and Jewish festivals; the consumption of unleavened bread during the week-long festival of Passover; fasting on the Day of Atonement; the observance of life-cycle rituals such as circumcision, bar mitzvah, mourning.

Jewish life in gold-rush British Columbia is exemplified by that of a typical member of the community who recorded some of his experiences.³⁹ Frank Sylvester, a Jew of Polish origin, migrated to British Columbia via New York and San Francisco. He arrived in Victoria in 1858 where, after trying his hand at operating stores in Lillooet, Quesnel and Alexandria for several years, he settled permanently and worked for two of his brothers-in-law before becoming a book-keeper in the firm of his father-in-law, following his marriage. (This illustrates the interconnectedness of Jewish families and businesses in Victoria). Having had a religious upbringing, Frank Sylvester became an active member of Congregation Emanu-El, and was a member of the Benevolent Society. In his diary, which covers a three month period between November 1866 and January 1867, Frank

Sylvester provided some glimpses of Jewish life in early Victoria. During the three months he attended both Sabbath and daily services in the synagogue, several Jewish funerals for which he also participated in the home mourning rituals, a bar-mitzvah, Chanukah celebrations, meetings of the Chevra Kaddisha, and of a committee to raise money for the synagogue. Many of his friends and associates in Victoria were Jews, but Frank Sylvester also mixed with people outside his ethnic group. He was a Freemason and also took part in community sports, for example. In addition, the diary entries give a sense of the isolation felt by the Jewish families living in Victoria, separated from their kin and the Jewish population in San Francisco.

In all, the Jews who settled in gold-rush Victoria preserved more of their inherited religious and cultural traits than they abandoned. The majority retained their ethnic identity, although there was some inevitable, but probably insignificant slippage. The fears expressed by the Chief Rabbi of England in 1862, that "however religiously you may have been brought up,...separated as you are from your brethren in faith, surrounded by manifold temptations, and engrossed by the pursuit of wealth and riches, you or your children may in the course of time become indifferent to the duties incumbent upon every true Israelite, and at the end be wholly estranged from the Lord,"⁴⁰ were not borne out by the Jews in Victoria. For most of the Jews in the colony including those in isolated interior communities, Jewish ethnicity and a 'sense of belonging' overrode lapses in observance.

NOTES

¹ Victoria's Jewish community was the only one of its kind in Canada to be founded in such favourable, unprejudiced circumstances.

² See Arnold Ages, The Diaspora Dimension (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1973), p.26.

³ In the early directories for Victoria residential listings are fragmentary and incomplete, in comparison with business listings.

⁴ Theories concerning ethnic group definition are derived in part from the following works:- Fredrik Barth, ed., Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969); Abner Cohen, ed., Urban Ethnicity Association of Social Anthropology Monograph no. 12 (London: Tavistock Publications, 1974); Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan, eds., Ethnicity: Theory and Experience (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975); Evelyn Kallen, Spanning the Generations: A Study in Jewish Identity (Toronto: Longman Canada, 1977).

⁵ In new Jewish settlements, the acquisition of a Jewish burial ground usually preceded the construction of places of worship and other religious buildings.

⁶ Services for the Jewish New Year and Day of Atonement were held in a house on Johnson Street in the autumn of 1858. (See Leonoff, Pioneers, Pedlars and Prayer Shawls, p. 222). Also see CEV. Add. MSS. 59, vol. 3, Minute Book, p.19, for evidence of Sabbath services held regularly in a room reserved for the purpose.

⁷ Known as the Chevra Bikkur Cholim Ukeddisha, or 'Holy Brotherhood.' Such voluntary societies, had a long tradition in Jewish communal life. They were formed primarily to care for the sick and needy, and to supervise the ritual burial of the dead, the latter being regarded as one of the highest forms of charity according to Jewish law.

⁸ See Benjamin II, Three Years in America, 1859-62, (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1956) vol. 2, p.143.

⁹ The Jewish Cemetery, which is still in use today, is located on Cedar Hill Road in Victoria. For a brief history of the cemetery see G. Castle, "Victoria's Jewish Cemetery," The Scribe 14 (June 1982): 2-4.

¹⁰ The Victoria Jewish cemetery contains the graves of a number of Jews who met their deaths in other parts of the province.

¹¹ C.E.V., Add. MSS. 59, vol. 3, Minute Book, p. 5.

¹² The Ark, which was the receptacle for Torah scrolls, was the holiest part of the synagogue.

- 13 A mikvah is a bath used for ritual purification by Jewish women.
- 14 C.E.V. Add. MSS. 59, vol. 3, Minute Book, p. 16.
- 15 Orthodox Judaism accepts the Mosaic Laws and their rabbinical interpretation in the Talmud as binding.
- 16 C.E.V. Add. MSS. 59, vol. 3, Minute Book, p. 45. Polish minchag or custom for conducting services was Orthodox.
- 17 Rabbi Morris Cohen, who came to Victoria from Sacramento, California, served Congregation Emanu-El from September 1863 until April 1866.
- 18 A shochet was the person qualified to slaughter permitted animals according to Jewish ritual for food. A mohel was a person qualified to perform ritual circumcision.
- 19 C.E.V. Add. MSS. 59, Minute Book, pp. 20, 24.
- 20 The services of a shochet had been acquired by the Jewish community before Rabbi Cohen assumed those duties in 1863. See C.E.V. Minute Book, Vol. 3, p. 19.
- 21 D. Rome, "First Bakers of Matzos in Victoria." JWB, 2 April 1958.
- 22 A mezuzah is a small parchment inscribed with Hebrew verses, enclosed within a case and affixed to a doorpost of a house.
- 23 A women's voluntary organization, probably formed in Victoria in 1863.
- 24 From an address by the Vice-President of Congregation Emanu-El, Samuel Hoffman, given in 1863 at the cornerstone-laying ceremony for the new synagogue. Reported in British Colonist, 3 June 1863.
- 25 Out of a total of 221 subscriptions, approximately 67 were from Jews, 154 from non-Jews. The pledges varied in amount from \$5 to \$150. See typescript of 'Subscription List, JHSBC Archives. Original list on display with Congregation Emanu-El, Victoria, BC.
- 26 3 June 1863.
- 27 Two Jews held the office of Worshipful Master of Victoria Lodge, L. Franklin in 1865, and H. Nathan in 1869. The latter held the office of Junior Grand Warden of the Grand Lodge of British Columbia when it was formed in 1871. Marcus Wolfe became Grand Master of that lodge in 1891. S. Levi was Worshipful Master of Caledonia Lodge in 1867.
- 28 B'nai Brith, a Jewish secular mutual benefit organization, was founded in New York in 1843.

²⁹ Table compiled from information contained in M. Wolff, The Jews of Canada, (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1926); A. D. Hart, The Jew in Canada, (Toronto: Jewish Publications Ltd., 1926); C. Leonoff, Pioneers, Pedlars and Prayer Shawls, (Victoria: Sono Nis, 1978).

³⁰ See Jacob Katz, Jews and Freemasons in Europe, Harvard, 1970).

³¹ See E. Robertson, "The Business Community and the Development of Victoria, 1858-1900," MA thesis, University of Victoria, 1981

³² Selim Franklin represented the constituency of Victoria City from March 1860 to July 1863, and from early 1864 until April 1866 in the second and third Legislative Assemblies of Vancouver Island.

³³ Amongst the Jews opposed to the Yale pro-union convention in September 1868 were Joseph Boscowitz (furrier), Lewis Lewis (clothier), Gustav and Emil Sutro (tobacconists), Frank Sylvester (accountant).

³⁴ "The interests of the empire,.....may not, however be improved by the accession of a foreign population whose sympathies are decidedly anti-British." Letter from Sir James Douglas to the Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, 27 April 1858, in Imperial Blue Books on Affairs Relating to Canada, Reports, Returns and other Papers, Vol. 39.

³⁵ Alfred Waddington, The Fraser Mines Vindicated, (Victoria, 1858).

³⁶ D. Rome, First Two Years, pp. 106-112.

³⁷ D. Rome, First Two Years, pp. 59, 64-77.

³⁸ See Frank Sylvester Diary. Typescript, PABC, EB.SysA.

³⁹ Typescript of Frank Sylvester Diary. PABC, EB.SysA.

⁴⁰ C.E.V. Add. MSS. 59, vol. 3, Minute Book, p.16.

VANCOUVER: A SEGREGATED JEWISH COMMUNITY, 1886-1914

The generally impoverished refugees from Eastern Europe and Russia who comprised most of the second wave of Jewish immigration to British Columbia, were less buoyant in their response to the new social and environmental conditions which they encountered than their West European counterparts in the first wave had been some forty years earlier. Although they shared a religious heritage, the new Jewish immigrants differed in language, custom and socio-economic status from the earlier Jewish settlers in the province. Most of the Jewish newcomers were Yiddish-speaking Orthodox Jews, steeped in the distinctive culture of the East European shtetl. In the predominantly English society of British Columbia they were strangers. Upon arrival in this remote and unfamiliar part of the world, their primary concern was to rebuild and re-order their uprooted and disrupted lives. In their bewildered response to the unfamiliar environment in which they found themselves, the displaced Jews "struggled to keep what they had brought with them from the old country, while at the same time learning from, yielding to, criticizing and embracing the new."¹ Thus, the initial preoccupation of most of the East European Jewish immigrants who reached British Columbia in the period between 1886 and 1914 was with their own survival as individuals and as an ethnic group. And, although their arrival coincided with a period of rapid economic growth and development in the province, and with the founding of the city of Vancouver, the East European Jews were only partial participants in this process. They represented only a small proportion, 1% to 2%, of the large influx of new settlers, all of whom were feverishly competing for a place in the new society. Along with

that of many other 'foreign' immigrants of moderate means, the Jewish presence in Vancouver was tolerated, but not especially encouraged by the dominant British population. Attitudes towards Jews had changed since the mid-nineteenth century. Nevertheless, by 1914, the East European Jews had succeeded in the creation of a traditional Jewish community in Vancouver, almost un-noticed by the host community and segregated from it. In contrast to the East European immigrants, who formed the largest segment of the Jewish population in the province by 1914, there was also a small group of wealthy, assimilated Jews, mainly of West European origin, who participated more fully in the economic and social development of Vancouver and the province as a whole.

The influx of East European Jews to British Columbia that began with a slow trickle in the mid-1880's increased noticeably in volume from 1905 onwards so that by 1914, the total provincial Jewish population (including the small segment of West European Jews) had reached approximately 1500. Although some of the more adventurous East European Jewish immigrants went into the interior of the province, the vast majority settled in the newly founded city of Vancouver. In contrast to early Victoria where the anticipated large Jewish population did not materialize, Vancouver's Jewish population grew steadily in size with the continued influx of new immigrants, and by natural increase. The concentration of Jewish population in the city took place steadily over the thirty year period between 1886 and 1914.

Before the turn of the century, there was little residential segregation within the Jewish population. Until 1900, most Vancouver Jews lived in the mixed East End residential district. But, the increased influx of East European Jewish immigrants accentuated the economic and social disparities between Jews in the city and brought about a spatial separation between them. As a result, the more fully assimilated Jews of West European background began to move into the better residential districts in the city. There they were followed in the decade before the First World War by increasing numbers of upwardly mobile East European Jews.

By 1914, Vancouver's Jewish population became spatially differentiated along socio-economic lines (Fig. 5:1). Most of the city's more successful Jews were dispersed around the fringes of the West End residential district, especially along Robson Street to the north-east, Thurlow and Burrard streets to the south-east and Bidwell and Denman

streets to the north-west (Fig. 5:1). Some Jews occupied houses which had been vacated by the WASP elite, many of whom had moved to the new upper class residential district of Shaughnessy on the heights to the south of False Creek.² Other Jews lived in apartments which had been created in some of the abandoned West End mansions, and in new apartment blocks which were built in the area after the turn of the century. Although their business interests were located on the East side of the city, some prominent Jewish businessmen, including David and Isaac Oppenheimer, lived in the Hotel Vancouver close to the West End before the turn of the century.³

Most of the East European newcomers took up residence in the cheaper residential district, close to the docks and railway station on the East side of Vancouver. This newly settled area of the city expanded rapidly to absorb the flood of 'foreign' immigrants, which included Jews and other ethnic groups who jostled for space. Initial feelings of alienation caused the East European Jewish immigrants to cling together for mutual support. This led to the formation of a ghetto-like Orthodox Jewish community in the East End of the city. During the first years of immigration, the East European Jews settled in the vicinity of their stores on Water, Cordova, East Hastings and Abbott Streets. There, quite a number of Jews lived in premises either above or behind their stores. But, as the rate of immigration increased, the main area of Jewish concentration shifted to the residential area south of East Pender Street, bounded by Main Street to the West, Campbell Avenue to the East, and Prior Street to the South. In part, the shift was associated with the extension of the streetcar lines into the Strathcona district. By 1914, 500-600 Jews, amounting to over half of the city's Jewish population,

Figure 5:2. Residence of a Jewish Family on Keefer Street in the East End of Vancouver circa 1910

Source: Jewish Historical Society of British Columbia Archives.



resided in this part of the East End.⁴ This concentration was manifested in the higher densities of Jewish residents in some blocks, especially in the vicinity of the synagogue on Heatley Street, and in the clustering of Jewish stores and homes along Main and East Hastings Streets. The close juxtaposition of Jewish homes imparted an East European Jewish atmosphere to the way of life in some of the East End streets. But, the only building in the area which displayed Jewish architectural style was the synagogue. Most of the immigrant Jewish families (many of which were extended families) occupied simple working class single-family dwellings, of which, as a rule, they were tenants rather than owners (Fig. 5:2). In addition, cheap hotels and rooming houses in the area provided temporary homes to single Jewish immigrants.⁵ There was a high rate of residential mobility among this population, which, in part, reflected the upward economic mobility of many East End Jews. Almost without exception, they aspired to the stability of home ownership.

A significant proportion of those who realized this aspiration did so in areas of the city away from the two main concentrations of Jewish residents. As Figure 5:1 reveals, in 1914, the Yaletown area south-west of Smythe Street, between Burrard and Homer streets, contained a cluster of Jewish residents in apartments and modest single-family dwellings. Most were wage-earners and independent small businessmen. By 1914, a trend that shaped the direction of future growth of Vancouver's Jewish population, had been set in motion. The majority of the Jewish immigrants who came to Vancouver between 1900 and 1914 stayed to become permanent residents. They anticipated a prosperous future for the city and chose to remain there rather than to 'move on.' Those fortunate enough to have made a successful start on the economic ladder, began to break out of the

East End ghetto into better residential areas to the south of False Creek. In 1914, there were Jews dispersed through the Fairview, Mount Pleasant, Grandview and Kitsilano districts. They were either Russian and East European Jews from the East End or new immigrants of moderate means. A few Jews took advantage of the commercial opportunities which were being opened up as the city expanded in area. Broadway became a new commercial artery where a few of them located businesses. However, most continued to work in the downtown business district, but preferred to live a greater distance away, in a residential area, served by a streetcar line, where they might own a house and small plot of land. This was an opportunity which had been denied to them in their countries of origin. The trend continued, so that by the late 1930's the main focus of the Jewish population in the city had shifted southwards from the East End to the Oak Street area.

The Jewish population in Vancouver was much larger and more heterogeneous than the Jewish population in gold-rush Victoria. But the two main constituent groups were fairly homogeneous in character. For the most part the East European Jews in the East End were confined to commercial occupations at the lower end of the economic ladder, whereas most of the West End component of the city's Jewish population were wealthy financiers, realtors and business proprietors at the upper end. The East European Jewish population became an increasingly cohesive network of inter-related families as in-migration of Jews progressed and kinship ties within the community were reinforced by marriages. It was a strongly ethnocentric community bound together by the shared religious and cultural inheritance of Orthodox Judaism. On the other hand, the Jews of the West End, who stemmed from more diverse religious and social

backgrounds, formed a more loosely knit community than that of the East End Jews. Out of expediency, many had relaxed or abandoned some of the basic tenets of their religion, and instead practised Semi- Reform Judaism.

Figure 5:3. Relationship of Jewish Minority Groups to Host Society in Vancouver, 1914

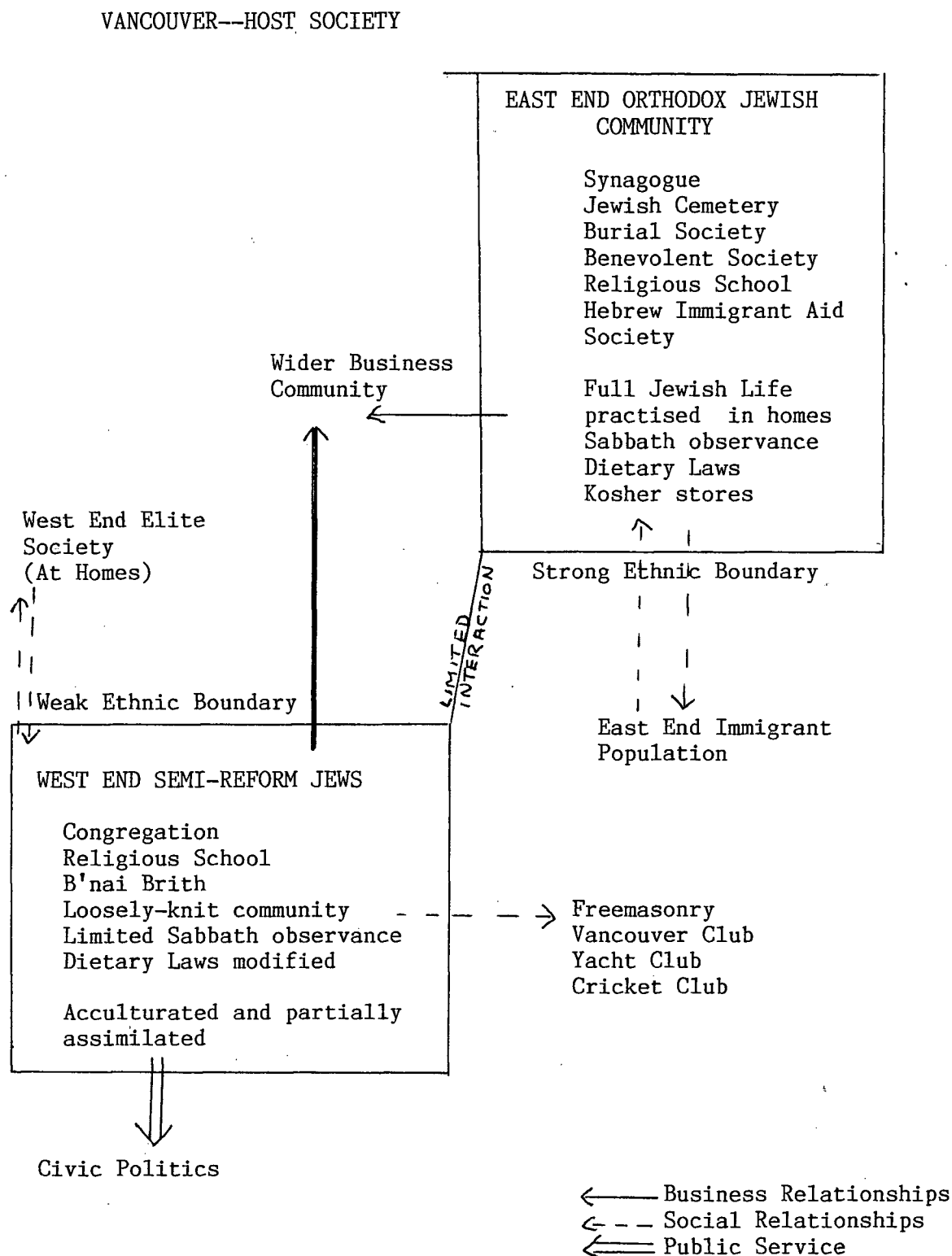


Figure 5:3 shows the inner dimensions of the two Jewish communities and the position they occupied in the majority society in Vancouver. The East European Jews were strongly defined from within as a distinctive ethnic group in Vancouver's total population. The strongly defined ethnic group consciousness of the East European Jews was based on the communal and private expression of Orthodox Judaism and the associated rich Jewish cultural heritage (Yiddishkeit) which permeated their way of life. In the East End of Vancouver, the new Jewish immigrants successfully replicated the type of Orthodox Jewish community, complete with supporting institutional infrastructure, which they had known in their East European homelands. But there was a major difference. In Vancouver, they were free to practise their religion openly and to live fully as Jews, without the constant threat of pogroms. In spite of that, the East European Jews separated themselves as a group from the population at large by a sharply defined ethnic boundary which they seldom crossed. This voluntary segregation, which was imposed more from within than without,⁶ no doubt arose from previous experience in Eastern Europe which had made Jews suspicious of the dominant groups in the societies in which they lived. Consequently, the East End Jews did not seek entry into the wider Vancouver society as the Jews in gold-rush Victoria had done successfully. Their chief form of interaction with the gentile population was in business relations, which could remain impersonal. In such dealings, Jewish immigrants were hampered by lack of familiarity with the English language and customs. However, the East European Jews were forced to interact with their immediate East End immigrant neighbours with whom they were also in competition. The East European Jews also had limited contact with their assimilated brethren in

the West End, from whom they were separated culturally and spatially. On the other hand, the West European Jews, who had generally been in the province longer, had established a way of living with the host British society. Their Jewishness, which had been modified, but not abandoned, was expressed through their religious and cultural affiliation with Semi-Reform Judaism; and the ethnic boundary which separated them from the population at large was weakly defined, both from within the group and without. These were Jews who had extensive business connections with non-Jews in the wider community and freely entered their society, a few as community leaders. At the same time they were charitable towards their less fortunate East European counterparts in the East End.

For much of the period between 1886 and 1914, the pattern of Jewish communal organization was fragmented and split between the two groups of Jews in the city. The East European Jews, who were deeply committed to traditional Judaism, at first lacked the communal organization and financial resources to create the necessary institutions, whereas the smaller group of acculturated, more affluent Jews could muster the resources, but preferred to establish a Semi-Reform congregation. However, by 1914, the two groups did join forces in the creation of a number of Jewish communal institutions.

The replication of all the components of a traditional Jewish community in the East End of Vancouver did not occur until after 1900 with the increased concentration of East European Jewish immigrants in that part of the city. But, the rudiments of that community were created much earlier by the first East European Jewish immigrants. There is little evidence of the formation of either a Burial Society or a Benevolent Society during the early years of Jewish settlement in

Vancouver. Jews had no special burial ground, as was required by Jewish law, until the early 1890's when part of the city's Mountain View Cemetery in South Vancouver was fenced off for such purposes.⁷ Pioneer Jewish Cemetery became the first visible Jewish landmark in the city. The headstones, with inscriptions written partly in Hebrew, provide a partial profile of the lives (and deaths) of the early Jewish community in Vancouver. Until 1910, when a Chevra Kaddisha (Burial Society) was formally established, Jewish burials in Vancouver were supervised by ad hoc groups of volunteers. A Hebrew Benevolent Society was not officially formed in Vancouver until about 1909.

In 1887 the communal practice of Orthodox Judaism began in Vancouver with regular Sabbath and holy day services held in private homes, stores and rented halls.⁸ In 1905 the Orthodox Congregation B'nai Yehudah (Sons of Israel) was officially established. At first, services were held in rented halls on West Cordova Street,⁹ but in 1910, a plot of land was purchased on Heatley Street in the East End for the construction of a synagogue, which was completed the following year.¹⁰ In reflection of the economic status and the nostalgia of the East European Jews, the synagogue was a modest, sparingly ornamented clapboard building in the style of synagogues in the shtetls of Eastern Europe (Fig. 5:4). Inside, the synagogue contained a main sanctuary with separate seating for men and women, and classrooms. There was a mikvah (ritual bath) in the basement. The small seating capacity of 200, given that at least 1,000 Jews lived in Vancouver in 1911, well over half of them in the East End, was probably dictated by the poor financial condition of the group.¹¹ Moreover, the continued growth of the East End Jewish population soon resulted in the need for a larger synagogue. With financial assistance

Figure 5:4. Side View of B'nai Yehuda Synagogue, Built in 1911 at the
Corner of Heatley and Pender Streets in the East End of Vancouver

Source: Jewish Historical Society of British Columbia Archives.



from the Semi-reform congregation, a new, much larger Orthodox synagogue, Schara Tzedek, with seating capacity for 600, was built on the same site in 1920.¹² In spite of repeated financial difficulties, the Orthodox congregation hired a succession of trained spiritual leaders.¹³ In addition to rabbinical duties, they also acted as mohel and shochet for the Jewish community.

Congregation B'nai Yehudah became both the religious and social focus of the East European Jews in the East End, the majority of whom lived within walking distance of its doors at the corner of Heatley and East Pender Streets. Communal worship and prayer in the synagogue punctuated their daily lives. There was rarely a shortage of ten adult males to form the required minyan (quorum) for communal worship. The synagogue was also fully used for Sabbath and Festival observances and for ceremonies and rituals to mark life-cycle stages. In addition, a Talmud Torah (Jewish religious school) was formed which operated at first in classrooms in the synagogue, then in a separate building in the vicinity.

In the privacy of their homes the East European Jews recreated the religious and cultural life they had known in the shtetls. Jewish families achieved a closeness and sense of security from the repetition of familiar, time-honoured rituals and customs, one of the most important being dinner on the eve of each Sabbath and festival. Many of the home observances included the consumption of special ceremonial foods, perhaps most notable being during the week-long commemoration of Passover. To these religious Jews, strict observance of the dietary laws in their homes was routine. In practice, one of the important effects of these laws, which decreed the types of foods which could be consumed, and the

methods of preparation, was to preserve Jews as a distinctive group by ensuring their social separation from the population at large.¹⁴ Until about 1905, when the Jewish population in the East End became large enough to support a number of kosher food outlets, special dietary needs were met in an ad hoc way by local Jewish merchants.¹⁵ A large proportion of the Orthodox East End Jews refrained from work on the Sabbath and Jewish holy days. This is confirmed by contemporary accounts, including one from the son of an East End Jewish storekeeper, who described his father as "an extremely religious man - in our religion and tradition, he would not open his business on Saturdays, as many Jewish folks didn't. Yet Saturday was the busiest day on the street, really."¹⁶

The distinctive way of life formulated on the precepts of Orthodox Judaism which the East European Jews evolved in the East End was reinforced by communal social and cultural activities. The social lives of the East European Jews were largely restricted to their own community, and spatially confined to the East End of the city. They generally did not mix with their more assimilated brethren in the West End. Apart from the religious congregation, Jewish communal organization was slow to evolve. However, by 1914, a few Jewish social and cultural organizations, which met special interests and needs, had begun to emerge in the East End. Interests in the causes of Zionism and Socialism, which a few of the Jewish immigrants brought with them from Eastern Europe, were reflected in two of the organizations in Vancouver. As early as 1903 there was a Zionist movement in Vancouver, although a Zionist Society was not formed officially until 1913. A small group of socialist Jewish immigrants formed an Arbeiter Ring (Workmen's Circle) in Vancouver in 1910.¹⁷ A Hebrew Aid and Immigrant Society, in keeping with

the Jewish tradition of Tzedaka (Charity), was formed in 1910 in order to provide assistance to impoverished Jews. The wealthier and established West End Jews united with their Orthodox brethren in this charitable organization. Later, in 1915, the Vancouver Hebrew Free Loan Association was formed in order to provide interest free loans of up to \$50 to needy Jews in the East End.

Their close proximity forced East European Jews into contact with other immigrant groups in the East End. Between the Jews, Italians, Russians, Ukrainians, Poles, Chinese, Japanese and immigrants of other nationalities who comprised the rich and colourful cultural and ethnic mix in the East End there was competition to establish a foothold in the new urban society. But, at the same time, they shared common experiences in adjusting to the unfamiliar economic and social conditions in Vancouver. Strathcona School became the melting pot for the immigrant children of many nationalities who lived in the area, and the means to economic and social advancement for the second generation of East Enders.¹⁸ At school, immigrant children, who spoke languages other than English in their East End homes, quickly learned to communicate with one another in English. This gave them an advantage over their parents in adapting to the new society.

The settlement of a distinctive group of East European Jews seemed to go almost unnoticed by the majority British population in Vancouver. Anti-semitism did not become an issue during the racial disturbances which were mainly directed at the more visible Asian minorities. However, there were occasional references to Jews and their customs in the contemporary press, which generally reflected the ignorance and prejudices of the observers. Jews were referred to as 'God's Peculiar

People'.¹⁹ Their practices were sometimes reported with a certain skepticism, as in the Province headline of 21 September, 1912: "Observing Day of Atonement: Orthodox Hebrews of Vancouver Fasting and Refraining from Business." As they had in Eastern Europe, the majority of East European Jews maintained a safe distance from the host society. Unlike their earlier counterparts in Victoria, the East End Jews did not aspire to gain entry into Masonic lodges or other gentile social organizations. Nor did they aspire to achieve social status, or assume political leadership roles in the community at large. They were content to move within the security of their own ethnic sphere.

In contrast, religion played a much less significant role in regulating the lives of the acculturated minority of West European Jews in Vancouver. Paradoxically though, the ethnicity of this group of Jews was defined by their ancestral affiliation with Judaism. Their Jewish consciousness and sense of belonging was retained, even when some religious practices were modified or abandoned. This wealthier, well-established segment of Vancouver's Jewish population modified both the communal and individual practice of traditional Judaism to suit their new social and economic circumstances. A small group of about 22 Jewish families formed the Semi-Reform Congregation Emanu-El in Vancouver in 1894.²⁰ The modified practices included greater use of English rather than Hebrew in services, and joint seating of men and women for services. At first, the congregation was based mainly in the East End of the city where most Jews lived, but it had shifted to West End by the turn of the century. Throughout its twenty year existence, Congregation Emanu-El functioned without a permanent building for communal religious activities; Sabbath and High Holyday services and communal events were

held in rented halls.²¹ Although there is every indication that wealthier members of the congregation wished to construct a synagogue, the plans never came to fruition.²² The congregation flourished under a succession of rabbis hired between 1894 and 1914. In addition, a religious school and a Ladies Auxiliary were formed in association with Congregation Emanu-El.

In their homes, the Semi-Reform Jews adapted their practice of religious rituals in keeping with individual levels of religious observance. The Dietary laws were relaxed or partially abandoned in order to facilitate social relationships with non-Jews in the wider community. In addition, many of the Jewish merchants would have worked in their businesses on Saturdays. But no doubt many of the Sabbath, festival and life-cycle ceremonies continued to be observed in the homes of Semi-Reform Jewish families in Vancouver.

In comparison with the East End Orthodox Jews, the Semi-Reform Jews formed a more loosely structured community, which imposed fewer constraints upon its members. Nevertheless, group consciousness was maintained and reinforced by the Jewish secular organizations which they formed. In 1910, the first B'nai B'rith lodge was founded in the city, with members drawn mainly from the Semi-Reform Jews.²³ A Young Men's Hebrew Association for cultural and athletic activities was formed in 1910.²⁴ Apart from the Ladies Auxiliary attached to Congregation Emanu-El, Jewish women's organizations, such as Hadassah and Council of Jewish Women, did not appear in Vancouver until after 1918.²⁵ In addition, the West End Jews felt a sense of identity with their religious counterparts in the East End, to whom they provided assistance through the Hebrew Aid and Immigrant Society and the Hebrew Free Loan Association. In addition,

Congregation Emanu-El made a substantial financial contribution towards the construction of the Orthodox synagogue on Heatley Street. But the amount of interaction between the West End and East End Jews was minimal. Social and cultural differences between the two groups militated against the formation of one unified Jewish community in the city.

In contrast, the acculturated Semi-Reform Jews interacted comfortably and widely with the dominant British community who were their neighbours in the elite West End residential district. As individuals, rather than as a group, they became well integrated into Vancouver society through their business and social activities. Any barriers posed by their ethnicity seemed to be readily overcome as they became, in effect, ex officio members of the elite British segment of Vancouver's population. A few successful Jewish businessmen like the Oppenheimers and Gintzburgers proved themselves to be of equal stature with the prominent non-Jewish entrepreneurs of the day and became accepted as leaders in the wider community. The best known were the Oppenheimer brothers, whose involvement in civic affairs spanned Vancouver's first decade. First as an alderman in 1887, then as Mayor from January 1888 until December 1891, David Oppenheimer played a leading role in shaping the new city. After his death he was lauded for his vision and the paternalistic role which he adopted. His achievement in a British dominated society was a remarkable feat for a member of an ethnic minority, and especially for one who had a pronounced European accent. His brother Isaac served as an alderman for two terms, in 1887 and 1888. The entry of the Oppenheimers and other Jews into the upper echelons of Vancouver society was in part facilitated through their involvement with Freemasonry.²⁶ In addition, they became members of exclusive Vancouver

clubs and social and cultural societies - the Vancouver Club, the Vancouver Cricket Club, the Burrard Inlet Rowing Club.²⁷ Similarly, Jewish women participated in the 'At Homes' which formed part of the organized social life of the West End.²⁸

In many ways the Oppenheimer family provides a typical example of the less religious segment of the Jewish population in Vancouver in the 1890's. David Oppenheimer's daughter, Flora, born in 1883, recalled that as a child she was compelled to attend High Holy Day services with her cousins in a hall rented for the occasion. She described her father and uncle as not being 'particularly religious, but felt it their duty to be present on these occasions, as well as send us children.'²⁹ This suggests that Jews like the Oppenheimers acknowledged their Jewish identity, but did not allow the practice of Judaism to interfere with their business careers. They still wanted to confirm their ethnicity through affiliation with a synagogue, particularly for rituals connected with births, marriages and deaths, and most wished their children to be brought up as Jews.

In sum, Vancouver's early Jewish population was differentiated spatially along socio-economic and denominational lines. The two groups of Jewish immigrants exhibited different levels of accommodation to British Columbian society during a critical formative period. On the one hand, the largest group of Jewish immigrants, who had come more or less directly from the shtetls in Russia and Poland, transplanted in the East End of Vancouver an East European type of Orthodox Jewish community which maintained an almost separate existence within the host society for several generations. On the other hand, the small minority of Semi-Reform Jews, the majority of whom were already acculturated to English or

North American society before coming to Vancouver, adapted Judaism to fit in with their entrepreneurial activities and economic aspirations in the new environment which they had chosen. Relatively quickly, they became integrated into the community at large as British Columbians.

The continued influx of East European Jewish immigrants before and after the First World War added strength and reinforcement to the Orthodox East End community. On the whole, both communally and individually expressed religious and cultural traits were retained little changed by the first generation of East End Jews. Nostalgia for Jewish life in the shtetls made them cling to the past which they had left behind. Sabbath candlesticks, prayer books and other religious artifacts rescued from the shtetls were cherished and added a dimension of continuity in their uprooted lives. However the emphasis which the immigrant Jews placed on education for their children was in part responsible for the dissolution of the East End Jewish ghetto in succeeding generations. Children of Yiddish-speaking parents learned English and absorbed some new cultural traits in school, which paved the way for their entry into the wider community, and for the brighter students to acquire academic and professional qualifications. By 1914, the trend had been established for young, upwardly mobile Jewish adults to raise their social status by becoming teachers, lawyers and doctors in Vancouver. Inevitably this resulted in some relaxation of the tenets of Orthodox Judaism, but not in an abandonment of Jewish consciousness.

In contrast, the West End Jewish community of Semi-Reform Jews became more assimilated, but did not disappear altogether. In general, home observances and rituals which separated Jews from their gentile neighbours were considerably modified or abandoned, whereas communal

worship was retained. Moreover, acculturated and assimilated Jews still retained many inherited cultural traits and values which formed part of their collective Jewish consciousness.

As the preceding chapters have demonstrated, the contrasting Jewish geographies produced in British Columbia by the two waves of Jewish immigrants resulted in part from their different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds in Europe, and from the varied expectations which they brought with them. The adventurous and resilient West European Jews, who chose to emigrate to North America primarily for economic reasons, and secondarily to gain religious freedom, responded with enterprise and vigour to the challenges posed by unfamiliar new world environments. Their response to British Columbia, as elsewhere, can best be described as expansive. While retaining their ethnic identity for the most part, the West European Jews became fairly well integrated into British Columbian society. In contrast, the uprooted East European Jews migrated to North America primarily in order to gain religious freedom, and secondarily, for reasons of basic physical survival. Their cultural and ethnic 'strangeness' produced feelings of alienation which inhibited their adaptation to unfamiliar environments in the new world. In British Columbia, most East European Jews clung to their religious heritage and withdrew into their own ethnic community.

NOTES

¹ Kenneth Libo and Irving Howe, We Lived There Too: Pioneer Jews and the Westward Movement of America, 1630-1930, (New York: St. Martin's/Marek, 1984), p.262.

² One Jewish family, that of the real estate agent and financier Abraham Grossman lived on Osler Street in Shaughnessy in 1914.

³ Angus Robertson, "The Pursuit of Power, Profit and Privacy: a Study of Vancouver's West End Elite, 1886-1914," M.A. thesis: University of British Columbia, 1977, p. 230.

⁴ Between 1886 and 1900, Oppenheimer Brothers had extensive land holdings in the East End of Vancouver.

⁵ For example, in 1914, rooming houses at the following addresses, 660 Jackson, 235 Princess and 260 Vernon each contained several Jewish residents.

⁶ In comparison with the neighbouring Chinese community, the Jewish population in the East End of Vancouver formed a less visible ethnic minority. Thus, whereas Chinatown might well have been largely defined from outside by the host society, as argued by Kay Anderson in a recent thesis, such a model of ethnic group definition is less applicable to the Jewish community. See Kay Anderson, "'East' as 'West' : Place, State and the Institutionalization of Myth in Vancouver's Chinatown," Ph.D. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1986.

⁷ The city assigned a section of the cemetery, at Fraser Street and Thirty-seventh Avenue, to the Jews with the proviso that they should pay for the upkeep. The first Jewish burials took place there in 1892.

⁸ In 1887, the store and home on Water Street of Zebulon Franks, a Russian Jew, were used to hold Orthodox services. See C. Leonoff, Pioneers, Pedlars and Prayer Shawls (Victoria : Sono Nis Press, 1978), p. 127.

⁹ 14, West Cordova Street, and 165, West Cordova Street.

¹⁰ The total cost of the land and the synagogue was \$14,000. See Schara Tzedek, Fiftieth Anniversary Yearbook.

¹¹ Note that in 1863, Victoria's Jewish population was 242, and the newly built synagogue held 400 congregants.

¹² The old building was moved to the back of the site where it continued to be used for classrooms, meeting hall and mikvah. See Julius Shore, "Vancouver's Jewish community emerged and began to grow," JWB, 9 July 1971.

¹³ Rabbi Solomon Friedmann (1899+?), Rabbi Oscar Yackheimy (c1907),

Rabbi David Belasoff (1911-1918).

14 Jews who adhered strictly to the Dietary laws were rarely able to partake of food in the homes of gentiles.

15 From 1887, Zebulon Franks, a hardware merchant, arranged for kosher meat and other foodstuffs to be delivered from Seattle. Following his arrival in 1892, Louis Rubinowitz, a general merchant, took on the duties of shochet for the Jewish community. See Chapter 3 for information on location of kosher food stores in Vancouver by 1914.

16 Interview with Myer Freedman in Daphne Marlatt and Carole Itter, eds., "Opening Doors: Vancouver's East End," Sound Heritage, 8 (1979), pp. 63-67.

17 C. Leonoff, Pioneers, Pedlars and Prayer Shawls, p. 189.

18 See Stanley McLarty, The Story of Strathcona School (Vancouver: Vancouver School Board, 1961).

19 Daily World, 1 October 1892.

20 In the United States, the number of Reform congregations had increased markedly by the last quarter of the century. In 1873, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations was formed, and in 1875, Hebrew Union College was established in Cincinnati for the purpose of training Reform rabbis. See Max Dimont, The Jews in America, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1978) pp.121-144).

21 The Labour Temple at 411 Dunsmuir Street and O'Brien's Hall at 406 Homer street were used regularly by Congregation Emanu-El.

22 At one time, the congregation purchased a plot of land on Melville Street in the West End for \$16,500 for the construction of a synagogue, but the plans had to be abandoned. JWB, 27 Nov. 1970, p. 3.

23 B'nai Brith (Sons of the Covenant) was a Jewish fraternal organization, founded in New York in 1843, with many branches across the continent. See JWB, 30 June 1958, p.24.

24 JWB, 30 June 1958, p.62.

25 Hadassah (1920), Council of Jewish Women (1924). The latter group opened a Neighbourhood House at 800 Jackson Avenue in 1926, to assist the East End Jews.

26 David Oppenheimer became a Freemason in Victoria in 1885; following his death in 1897, his funeral in Vancouver, prior to burial in a Hebrew cemetery in New York, was conducted by Cascade Lodge Number 12. Typescript. J.S. Matthews, 'Oppenheimer of Vancouver,' VCA.

27 For example, David Oppenheimer was a founding member of the Vancouver Club, the original president of the Vancouver Cricket Club, and

a member of the Burrard Inlet Rowing Club.

²⁸ The Vancouver Social Register for 1914 contains the following Jewish entries:-

Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Gintzbürger - 1075 Harwood
Mr. and Mrs. Harry Grossman - 1643 Harwood (receives first Wed)
Mr. and Mrs. Abraham Grossman - Shaughnessy Heights
Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Izen - 1143 Haro Street
Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Koenigsberg - 1728 Comox
Mr. and Mrs. Milton Oppenheimer - 1069 Denman (no receiving day)
Mr. and Mrs. Louis Ripstein - 2495 Sixth Avenue West

For a detailed analysis of Vancouver's West End residents see Angus Robertson, "The Pursuit of Power, Profit and Privacy; A study of Vancouver's West End Elite, 1886-1914," M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1977.

²⁹ Letter from Mrs. D. Hirsch [Flora Oppenheimer] to Major J.S. Matthews, 15 Aug. 1945. VCA.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abbreviations

AJHQ American States Jewish Historical Quarterly.
CEV Congregation Emanu-El, Victoria.
JHSBC Jewish Historical Society of British Columbia.
JWB Jewish Western Bulletin.
PABC Provincial Archives of British Columbia.
VCA Vancouver City Archives.
WSJHQ Western States Jewish Historical Quarterly.

PRIMARY SOURCES

Original Papers and Documents

Congregation Emanu-El of Victoria, Original Papers. PABC, Add. MSS. 59.
Microfilm reels A269-A271.

Oppenheimer Family, Original Papers, 1879-1922. VCA, Add. MSS. 108.

Diary of Frank Sylvester, Typescript. PABC, EB.SysA.

Census and Directories

Census of Canada, 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911.

Henderson, L. G. British Columbia Directories, 1889, 1899, 1907, 1911, 1914.

Howard, F. P. and Barnett, G. The British Columbian and Victoria Guide and Directory for 1863. Victoria, V.I. 1863.

Mallandaine, Edward. First Victoria Directory. Victoria, V.I.: 1860, 1863, 1868, 1869, 1871.

----- . British Columbia Directory, 1887.

Vancouver Social Register and Club Directory, 1914.

Williams, R. T. British Columbia Directory, 1892.

Maps

Goad, Charles. Fire Insurance Plans of Vancouver, 1912-13.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Newspapers

British Colonist (Victoria), 11 Dec. 1858.

Daily Victoria Gazette. July - Dec. 1858.

Victoria Daily Chronicle. 2 May 1863 - 23 June 1866.

Cariboo Sentinel.

Daily World (Vancouver).

Jewish Western Bulletin. (Vancouver) 1930 - Selected issues including B. C. Centenary Edition 1858-1958, 30 June 1958.

Pamphlets

Schara Tzedek 50th Anniversary Yearbook, 1957.

Schara Tzedek 77th Anniversary Yearbook, 1984.

Vancouver. Social Survey of the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches, 1912.

Unpublished Theses

Anderson, Kay. "'East' as 'West': Place, State and the Institutionalization of Myth in Vancouver's Chinatown." Ph.D. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1986.

Berson, S. C. "Immigrant Experience: Jewish Garment Workers in Canada, 1900-1930. M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1980.

Bescoby, Isobel. "Some Aspects of Society in the Cariboo from Its Discovery Until 1871." M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1932.

Brooks, G. W. S. "Edgar Crowe Baker: An Entrepreneur in Early British Columbia." M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1976.

Hier, Marlene. "Ethnicity and residential Location." M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1973.

McCririck, Donna. "Opportunity and the Working Man: A Study of Land Accessibility and the Growth of Blue Collar Suburbs in Early Vancouver." M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1981.

- McDonald, R.A.J. "Business Leaders In Early Vancouver, 1886-1914." Ph.D. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1977.
- Pilton, James. "Early Negro Settlement in Victoria." M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1951.
- Robertson, Angus. "The Pursuit of Power and Privacy: A study of Vancouver's West End Elite, 1886-1914." M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1977.
- Robertson, I. E. "The Business Community and the Development of Victoria, 1858-1900." M.A. thesis, University of Victoria, 1981.
- Ruzicka, S. "The Decline of Victoria as the Metropolitan Centre of British Columbia, 1885-1901." M.A. thesis, University of Victoria, 1973.
- Walden, F. E. "Social History of Victoria, British Columbia, 1858-1871." M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1951.
- Walhouse, F. "Minority Ethnic Groups in Vancouver's Cultural Geography." M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1951.

Articles

- Arnold, A. "Jewish Life in Canada: A Historical Essay." In W. Kurelek. Jewish Life in Canada. Edmonton: Hurtig, 1976.
- Careless, J. M. S. "The Lowe Brothers, 1852-1870: A Study in Business Relations on the North Pacific Coast." BC Studies 2 (Spring 1969).
- . "The Business Community in the Early Deveopment of Victoria, British Columbia," in J. Friesen and H. K. Ralston, Historical Essays on British Columbia. Toronto: Gage, 1980.
- Castle, Geoffrey. "Victoria's Jewish Cemetery." The Scribe 14 (June 1982).
- Cauthers, J. ed. "A Victorian Tapestry: Impressions of Life in Victoria, B.C. 1880-1914." Sound Heritage vol. VII, no. 3 (1978).
- Cohen, Martin. "Structuring American Jewish History." AJHQ LVII (1967).
- Dinur, Ben Zion. "American Jewish Historiography in the Light of Modern Jewish History." Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society XLVI (March 1957).
- Fierman, Floyd, S. "Peddlers and Merchants - on the Southwest Frontier." Password 8 (1963).

- Gelfand, Mitchell. "Jewish Economic and Residential Mobility in Early Los Angeles." WSJHQ (1979).
- Gerber, David. "Ethnics, Enterprise and Middle Class Formation: Using the Dun and Bradstreet Collection for Research in Ethnic History." Immigration History Newsletter 12 (May 1980).
- Harris, R. C. "The Simplification of Europe Overseas." Annals of Association of American Geographers 67 (1977): 469-83.
- . "Industry and the Good Life around Idaho Peak." Canadian Historical Review 67, no. 3 (1985).
- Hertzberg, Steven. "Unsettled Jews: Geographic Mobility in a Nineteenth Century City." AJHQ LXVII.
- Kuznetz, Simon. "Economic Structure and Life of the Jews." In The Jews. Ed. L. Finkelstein. New York: Harper, 1960.
- Landes, David. "The Jewish Merchant: Typology and Stereotypology in Germany." Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook 11 (1974).
- Leonoff, Cyril. "Pioneer Jewish Merchants of Vancouver Island and British Columbia." Canadian Jewish Historical Society Journal 8, no. 1 (Spring 1984): pp.12-43.
- . "Pioneers, Ploughs and Prayers: The Jewish Farmers of Western Canada." Reprinted in pamphlet form from Jewish Western Bulletin, 16 Sep. 1982.
- . "1886-1986: Centennial of Vancouver Jewish Life." Supplement to Jewish Western Bulletin, 14 Aug. 1986.
- Lestschinsky, J. "Jewish Migrations." In The Jews. Ed. L. Finkelstein. New York: Harper, 1960.
- MacDonald, Norbert. "The Canadian Pacific Railway and Vancouver's Development to 1900." BC Studies 35 (Autumn 1977).
- McDonald, R. A. J. "City Building in the Canadian West: A Case Study of Economic Growth in Early Vancouver, 1886-1893." BC Studies 43 (Autumn 1979).
- Marlatt, D. and Itter, C. eds. "Opening Doors: Vancouver's East End." Sound Heritage vol. VIII, nos. 1 and 2 (1979).
- Mesinger, Jonathan. "Peddlers and Merchants: the Geography of Work in a Nineteenth Century Jewish Community." Discussion Paper Series no. 38, (1977). Department of Geography, Syracuse University.
- Paterson, D. G. "An Essay on the Role of the Regional Entrepreneur." BC Studies 21 (Spring 1974).

- Paul, Rodman. "Old Californians at British Columbia Goldfields." Huntington Library Quarterly XVII (1954).
- Raphael, M. L. "The Utilization of Local and Federal Sources for Reconstructing American Jewish Local History: The Jews of Columbus Ohio." AJHQ LXV (1975).
- Rome, David. "Early British Columbia Jewry: A Reconstructed 'Census'." Canadian Ethnic Studies 3, no. 1 (June 1971): 58-62.
- Rosenberg, L. "The Jewish Population of Canada: A Statistical Summary from 1851-1941." Reprinted from American Jewish Yearbook, Vol. 48 (1946-47).
- ". "Two Centuries of Jewish Life in Canada." Reprinted from American Jewish Yearbook, Vol. 62 (1961).
- Samuels, Marwyn. "The Biography of Landscape: Cause and Culpability." In The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes. Ed. D. Meinig. Oxford University Press, 1979.
- Schlichtmann, Hansgeorg, "Ethnic Themes in Geographical Research on Western Canada." Canadian Ethnic Studies 9, no. 2 (1977): 9-41.
- Shirpsen, Sol. "An Alaskan Memoir." WSJHQ (Oct. 1977).
- Stern, Norton, B. "A Western Canadian Report of 1859." WSJHQ 9 (Oct. 1979).
- Ward, David. "The Emergence of Central Immigrant Ghettoes in American Cities: 1840-1920." AAAG 58 (1968): 343-59.
- Wynn, Graeme. "Ethnic Migrations and Atlantic Canada: Geographical Perspectives." Canadian Ethnic Studies 18, no. 1 (1986): 1-15.
- Yee, Paul. "Business Devices from Two Worlds: the Chinese in Early Vancouver." BC Studies no. 62, (1984): 44-67.

Books

- Ages, Arnold. The Diaspora Dimension. The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1973.
- Barth, F. Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: the Social Organization of Culture Difference. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1969.
- Baskerville, Peter A. Beyond the Island: An Illustrated History of Victoria. Burlington, Ontario: Windsor Publications Ltd., 1986.
- Benjamin II. [Israel, I. J.]. Three Years In America, 1859-1862. C. Reznikoff, trans.. 2 vols. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1956.

- Billington, Ray. The Far Western Frontier, 1830-1860. New York and Evanston: Harper and Row, 1956.
- Bodnar, John. The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in urban America. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985.
- Cowen, Ida. Jews in Remote Corners of the World. New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1971.
- Decker, Peter. Fortuned and Failures; White Collar Mobility in Nineteenth Century San Francisco. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard, 1978.
- Dimont, Max. The Jews in America: The Roots, History and Destiny of American Jews. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978.
- Doyle, D. The Social Order of a Frontier Community, Jacksonville, Illinois, 1825-1870. Urbana, 1978.
- Fawcett, E. Some Reminiscences of Old Victoria. Toronto: William Briggs, 1912.
- Finkelstein, L. The Jews. New York: Harper, 1960.
- Friesen, J. and Ralston, H. K., eds. Historical Essays on British Columbia. Toronto: Gage, Carleton Library No. 96, 1976.
- Gilbert, Martin. Jewish History Atlas. rev. ed. New York: Macmillan, 1976.
- Glanz, Rudolf. The Jews of California: From the Discovery of Gold until 1880. New York: Waldon Press, 1960.
- . Studies in Judaica Americana. New York: Ktav, 1970.
- Handlin, Oscar. The Epic Story of the Great Migrations That Made the American People. Boston: Little, Brown, 1951.
- Hardwick, Walter. Vancouver. Don Mills, Ont.: Collier Macmillan, 1974.
- Harney, Robert, ed. Gathering Place: Peoples and Neighbourhoods of Toronto, 1834-1945. Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1985.
- Harris, R. C. The Seigniorial System in Early Canada: A Geographical Study. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966.
- and Warkentin, J. Canada Before Confederation: A Study in Historical Geography. Oxford University Press, 1974.
- Hart, A. D. The Jew in Canada: A Complete Record of Canadian Jewry from the Days of the French Regime to the Present Time. Toronto and

- Montreal: Jewish Publications Ltd., 1926.
- Hartz, Louis. The Founding of New Societies. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1964.
- Hertzberg, Steven. Strangers within the City Gates: The Jews of Atlanta, 1845-1915. 1978.
- Higgins, D. W. The Mystic Spring and Other Tales of Western Life. Toronto: Briggs, 1904.
- Howe, Irving. World of Our Fathers: The Journey of the East European Jews to America and the Life They Found and Made. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976.
- and Libo, Kenneth. How We Lived: A Documentary History of Immigrant Jews in America, 1880-1930. New York: New American Library (A Plume Book), 1979.
- Jick, Leon. The Americanization of the Synagogue, 1820-1870. Hanover: University Press of New England, 1976.
- Kaganoff, Benzion. Dictionary of Jewish Names and Their History. New York: Schocken Books, 1977.
- Kallen, Evelyn. Spanning the Generations: A Study in Jewish Identity. Toronto: Longman Canada Ltd., 1977.
- Kalman, Harold. Exploring Vancouver 2: Ten Tours of the City and its Buildings. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1974.
- Katz, Jacob. Jews and Freemasons in Europe, 1723-1939. Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970.
- Leonoff, Cyril. Pioneers, Pedlars and Prayer Shawls: The Jewish Communities in British Columbia and the Yukon. Victoria: Sono Nis, 1978.
- Levinson, Robert E. The Jews in the California Gold Rush. New York: Ktav, 1978.
- Libo, Kenneth and Howe, Irving. We Lived There Too: In Their Own Words and Pictures - Pioneer Jews and the Westward Movement of America, 1630-1930. New York: St. Martin's/Marek, 1984.
- Mannion, J.J. Irish Settlements in Eastern Canada: A Study of Cultural Transfer and Adaptation. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974.
- McLarty, Stanley. The Story of Strathcona School. Vancouver: Vancouver School Board, 1961.
- Ormsby, Margaret. British Columbia: A History. Toronto: Macmillan, 1958.

- Paul, Rodman. Mining Frontiers of the Far West, 1848-1880. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963.
- Porter, G. and Livesay, H. Merchants and Manufacturers: Studies in the Changing Structure of Nineteenth Century Marketing. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins, 1971.
- Rome, David. The First Two Years: A Record of the Jewish Pioneers on Canada's Pacific Coast, 1858-1860. Montreal: Caiserman, 1942.
- . A Selected Bibliography of Jewish Canadiana. Montreal: Canadian Jewish Congress and Jewish Public Library, 1959.
- Rosenberg, Louis. Canada's Jews: a Social and Economic Study of the Jews in Canada. Montreal: Canadian Jewish Congress, 1939.
- Rosenberg, Stuart. The Jewish Community in Canada, Volume I: A History. Toronto/Montreal: McClelland and Stewart, 1970.
- Roy, Patricia. Vancouver: An Illustrated History. Toronto: Lorimer, 1980.
- Sack, Benjamin. History of the Jews in Canada. Montreal: Harvest House, 1965.
- Scull, Penrose. From Pedlars to Merchant Princes: A History of Selling in America. Chicago: Follett, 1967.
- Shappes, Morris. A Documentary History of the Jews in the United States, 1654-1875. New York: Schocken Books, 1971.
- Sklare, Marshall, ed. The Jews: Social Patterns of an American Group. New York: Free Press, 1958.
- Speisman, Stephen. The Jews of Toronto: A History to 1937. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1979.
- Stelter, G. A. and Artibise, A. The Canadian City: Essays in Urban History. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, Carleton Library no. 109 (1977).
- Stewart, R. E. and M. F. Adolph Sutro. Berkeley: Howell-North, 1962.
- Taylor, G. W. Builders of British Columbia: An Industrial History. Victoria: Morriss, 1982.
- Thernstrom, Stephen. The Other Bostonians: Social Mobility in a Nineteenth Century City. Harvard University Press, 1964.
- Toll, William. The Making of an Ethnic Middle Class: Portland Jewry Over Four Generations. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1982.
- Vance, James. The Merchant's World: The Geography of Wholesaling.

- Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970.
- Victoria, British Columbia. Reports of Public Schools, 1906-1911.
- Ward, David. Cities and Immigrants: A Geography of Change in Nineteenth-Century America. New York: Oxford University Press, 1971.
- , ed. Geographic Perspectives on America's Past: Readings on the Historical Geography of the United States. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979.
- Ward, W. P. and Macdonald, R. A. J. British Columbia: Historical Readings. Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1981.
- Wirth, Louis. The Ghetto. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1928.
- Wynn, Graeme. Timber Colony: A Historical Geography of Early Nineteenth Century New Brunswick. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981.
- Wolff, Martin. The Jews of Canada. New York: American Jewish Committee, 1926. Reprinted from American Jewish Yearbook 27 (1925-1926).
- Zborowski, Mark and Herzog, Elizabeth. Life Is With People: the Culture of the Shtetl. New York: Schocken Books, 1962.