

Nat'l Museum of American Jewish History Celebrates 5th Anniversary

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Expansion of core exhibition, robust programming, and new temporary exhibition to mark anniversary year



One of the many exhibits at the National Museum of American Jewish History located in Philadelphia



The Westward Expansion interactive in the NMAJH's core exhibit explores in visual and narrative form the period between 1820 and 1870 when the United States doubled in size, quadrupled in population, and experienced an industrial revolution that transformed the country. It uses infographics, personal stories, and immersive audio to tell the story of several individual Jewish Americans who headed west

The National Museum of American Jewish History is proud to celebrate its fifth year in its iconic building on Independence Mall. Since opening the doors to its new home, NMAJH has hosted 15 special exhibitions and hundreds of public and educational programs; welcomed more than a half a million visitors; granted free or reduced admission to nearly 40,000 students; seen the Museum's Chasing Dreams: Baseball and Becoming American exhibition travel to 12 venues across the country; and acquired more than 5,000 new objects.

In honor of this anniversary, the Museum has taken a fresh look at its core exhibition—which tells the story of more than 360 years of Jewish life in America—and has introduced a number of new acquisitions and behind-the-scenes stories. Never-before displayed objects and new insights into existing ones allow visitors to experience the stories they may have seen before, but in deeper and different ways. The highlights offer a behind-the-scenes look into the Museum's collection, invite visitors to share they own stories, and use contemporary connections that encourage visitors to consider how the American spirit of courage and determination, aspiration and hard work, and leadership and service continues to inspire our lives today. Highlights of these “interventions” to the core exhibition are as follows:

“Sunny Day, Chasing the Clouds Away...” - What does Sesame Street and a World War II

uniform have in common? Newton N. Minow, former chairman of the FCC. Minow, whose uniform is newly on view, enlisted in 1944 at the age of 17. While in the army, he helped build the first telephone lines between India and China, but is best known for a different moment in his service to the nation as chairman of the FCC during the Kennedy administration. Famously calling television “a vast wasteland” in his first speech, his insistence that broadcasters serve the public interest above commercial gain led to the creation of PBS and a family favorite, Sesame Street.



Photograph by Jay Rosenblatt, courtesy of National Museum of American Jewish History

The Museum’s Chasing Dreams: Baseball and Becoming American exhibition travelled to 12 venues across the country; and acquired more than 5,000 new objects

Former refugees pay it forward - Europe is experiencing the largest influx of migrants in nearly a century—most arriving from the Middle East and North Africa. Their arrival, while not and support. Visitors to the Museum can listen to two interviews with two Hungarian Holocaust survivors, who explain why they felt compelled to help because of their experiences 70 years ago.

Women in the Military - Now, when visitors are introduced to Corporal Eva Davidson, one of 300 women to enlist in the United States Marine Corps after the Secretary of the Navy began permitting it in 1918, they will also learn about the first women to graduate

from the United States Army Ranger School in 2015 and the Pentagon’s recent announcement that women will now be considered for all combat positions.

- Cross-cultural connections – The Livro de Embazar las linguas Ingelza I Yudish booklet (Book for Learning the English and Yiddish languages), now on view in the core exhibition, belonged to Cali and Vitali Sadacca, who emigrated from Constantinople (now Istanbul) in 1910, and spoke Judeo-Spanish (also called Ladino). The booklet helped them and other Ladino-speaking Jewish immigrants communicate with their English and Yiddish speaking neighbors. It also helped them adjust to life in America during a wave of mass migration that saw an influx of immigrants primarily from Eastern Europe. Visitors are given Yiddish and Ladino phrases to try out with their friends and families.
- Where are you from? Fun vanen kumstu? - Visitors can mark their hometown on a map of the United States that contains Yiddish state and city names beside their English counterparts. If visiting from another country, visitors are prompted to choose an American city they hope to see.
- Classroom memories- Rebecca Gratz, pioneering educator, humanitarian, and social activist who established the first Hebrew Sunday school in America, has always been a fundamental

part of the exhibition. Now, visitors can share a lesson that has stayed with them from their own school days in an album next to the Gratz exhibit.

- Phone a Friend - Many objects throughout the Museum were donated by Rabbi Peter Schweitzer, including a hotel room phone from The Concord resort in upstate New York. Now visitors can dial 0 on the phone to hear Rabbi Schweitzer tell the behind-the-scenes story about building his collection.

All highlights in the core exhibition will be marked with the anniversary logo. New highlights and artifacts will be installed throughout the year.

The anniversary year will also feature a special exhibition, Bill Graham and the Rock and Roll Revolution, opening on September 16, 2016. Recognized as one of the most influential concert promoters in history, Graham launched the careers of countless rock & roll legends in the '60s at his famed Fillmore Auditorium. He conceived of rock & roll as a powerful force for supporting humanitarian causes and was instrumental in the production of milestone benefit concerts such as Live Aid (1985) and Human Rights Now! (1988). As a promoter and manager, he worked with the biggest names in rock, including the Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane, Jimi Hendrix, Santana, Led Zeppelin, and the Rolling Stones.

Public programs will include the Museum's fourth annual Freedom Seder Revisited, the third installation of the Museum's OPEN for Interpretation program, with photographer J.J. Tiziou as artist-in-residence, and numerous lectures, films, performances, and symposia. More information can be found at [NMAJH.org/public programs](http://NMAJH.org/public%20programs).

About the Museum

The National Museum of American Jewish History, located on historic Independence Mall in Philadelphia, brings to life the 360-year history of Jews in America. Tracing the stories of how Jewish immigrants became Jewish Americans, the Museum invites visitors of all backgrounds to share their own stories and reflect on how their histories and identities shape and are shaped by the American experience. An open door for all, NMAJH honors the past and contributes to a better future by sharing the power of imagination and ideas, culture and community, leadership and service, in ways that turn inspiration into action.

The National Museum of American Jewish History is located at 101 South Independence Mall East at the corner of Fifth and Market Streets in Philadelphia. Museum hours are Tuesday to Friday, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm, and Saturday and Sunday 10:00 am - 5:30 pm. NMAJH is closed most Mondays, including federal holidays and some Jewish holidays. Museum admission is \$12.00 for adults, \$11.00 for senior citizens and youth, free for children 12 and under, Museum Members, and active military with ID. Admission to the Museum is FREE throughout the month of February. For more information, visit NMAJH.org or call 215.923.3811.