

**The Moral Sublime:  
Jewish Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century America**

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AT THE FAIR

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Scenes of sunny brightness,  
Gleams of beauty rare,  
Gems of dazzling splendor  
At the Fair.

Eyes that sparkle merriment,  
Smiles that banish care,  
Voices sweet and tender  
At the Fair.

Booths of varied grandeur,  
Floating in the air,  
Radiant Eastern visions  
At the Fair.

Hearts that feel for sorrow,  
Giving all a share,  
Love's eternal treasures,  
At the Fair.

Pocketbooks capacious,  
Checks beyond compare,  
Flourish all around you  
At the Fair.

ROBIN.  
New York<sup>1</sup>

The most powerful fundraising method in the nineteenth-century United States was the charity fair. Organized by women, the biggest of these fairs could raise in excess of a million dollars in a matter of weeks. This was a staggering sum for the period. . No other method of fundraising—neither banquets, balls, and benefit performances, nor subscriptions and appeals—produced so much money so fast. However, the stated purpose of these fairs—to raise money for a good cause—is not the whole story. These events did much more. They shaped public life and placed women at its center, and they did so artfully. They also marked the transformation of charity into philanthropy, an important shift in Jewish life. Just how they did this is the subject of this essay.

Before the Civil War, single organizations scheduled fairs of modest scope and duration. Known variously as church fairs, ladies' fairs, fancy fairs, charity fairs, and bazaars, these events, based on English models, had been popular in New England since the 1830s.<sup>2</sup> They featured women's needlework as well as donated goods, refreshments, and various entertainments. Jewish charity fairs in the United States date from at least the 1850s. A reporter for the *Jewish Messenger* remembered attending "a bright Fair, even though it was of small dimensions, in 1859, which was held in a store on Broadway near 12th Street for the benefit of a society of the Portuguese Congregation."<sup>3</sup>

It was during the Civil War that the blockbuster fair was born. They were known as sanitary fairs because they were prompted by the urgent need to address unsanitary medical conditions on the battlefield. During the Civil War, more men were dying in infirmaries than on the battlefield due to unsanitary conditions, inadequate medical supplies, and understaffing. Many women lost husbands, fiancés, brothers, fathers, and other loved ones. Widows, many with children, were left without support. Compassion for the men on the field and for the women and children they left behind prompted women to lobby the government to form the United States Sanitary Commission. Women then set about raising millions of dollars through the sanitary fairs they organized in many parts of the country. These spectacular events wedded the purposes and style of the venerable ladies' fair with aspects of three contemporaneous developments: world's fairs, department stores, and museums.

Like world's fairs (the first was held in London in 1851 and New York hosted its own Crystal Palace in 1853), the sanitary fairs, which were organized by existing voluntary associations or by their own committees, encouraged broad national and international participation. Individual states were represented at the sanitary fairs as were various nations. Britain, for example, showed support for the United States Sanitary Commission's compassionate efforts to care for sufferers on both sides of the Civil War by being represented at the 1864 Metropolitan Fair, as this Manhattan sanitary fair was known. Even the exhibits and entertainments at sanitary fairs owed something to world's fairs, which were famous for their reconstructions of historical settings and presentations of exotic cultures. Thus, the Metropolitan Fair featured the Indian Department, which included not only Indian "relics" but also the performance of "War Dances."<sup>4</sup> Like the department store (the first was Bon Marché in Paris in 1852), sanitary fairs were organized into departments based on types of goods and designed to make a grand impression. They included not only booths full of merchandise, but also refreshments, exhibitions, and entertainment. Sanitary fairs also served as temporary museums. Indeed, the excitement generated by the art exhibition at the 1864 Metropolitan Fair prompted New Yorkers to call for the establishment of an art museum, and resulted in the founding of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1870.

The early Jewish fairs were relatively small affairs and generally organized by a single

institution. In an 1857 letter Rebecca Gratz refers to such a fair for the Jewish Foster Home in Philadelphia, an institution that had been established in 1855 at her urging.<sup>5</sup> In contrast, the enormous fairs of the post-Civil War period required the joint effort of most if not all the major congregations, lodges, charities, hospitals, and educational institutions of the Jewish community. The biggest of them all was the Fair in Aid of the Educational Alliance and Hebrew Technical Institute, held at Madison Square Garden in New York in 1895. *The Jewish Messenger* compared this fair with earlier ones as follows:

New York Israel has seen plenty of fairs—from the old-time bazaar in the forgotten Allemania Hall to the brilliant scene in the Armory at 36<sup>th</sup> street and Broadway; from the rich setting at the Brunswick to the splendors of the Rink at 60<sup>th</sup> street and Boulevard; or even the Madison Square Garden itself, when benevolent society, hospital, free school, home, and the rest were successively benefited. But never has there been a fair so brilliant, beautiful, and extensive.<sup>6</sup>

The cooperation of so many Jewish organizations in one joint venture was evidence of the community's solidarity, despite its differences. This “miracle,” which was said to surpass even the miracles recounted at the Passover seder, showed “how Jews can unite, whether they say long prayers, short prayers, or no printed prayers at all, to help the good cause.”<sup>7</sup> While the Educational Alliance and Hebrew Technical Institute fair was particularly ambitious, it was not alone in claiming to be the biggest and the best—and the most successful at rallying the Jewish community as a whole. The 1870 fair in aid of the Hebrew Orphan Asylum Society and Mount Sinai Hospital was expected to “eclipse not only all previous efforts made in the Jewish community, but every Fair held by any denomination in aid of any object ever held in this city—with the single exception of the Grand Sanitary Fair of 1864.”<sup>8</sup>

Historians generally mention these fairs only in passing, as one of several methods used by women to raise money for various causes. They find the charitable organizations themselves more important than the fundraising methods these organizations used, although important work has been done on the history of charitable Jewish women, especially German-Jewish women, in the nineteenth century.<sup>9</sup> During this period, philanthropy played a crucial role in the way German Jews, who had arrived earlier and were well-established, related to the more recent Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe. Those who have studied charity fairs tend to focus on Christian (largely Protestant) ones.<sup>10</sup> Much however is to be learned from a close examination of charity fairs in their own right and from Jewish ones in particular.

Jewish charity fairs offer a living picture—a panorama—of the Jewish community as it understood itself and wanted to be seen. Part snapshot and part formal portrait, the fairs were exercises in self-definition as well as image management. They were also agents of solidarity and an early experiment in community-wide action. New York's burgeoning and diversified Jewish community was characterized by a proliferation of associations, institutions, and congregations that marked divisions based on class, gender, age, place of origin, religious ideology, and occupation. Their friendly and not so friendly rivalry was frequently noted. New York's Jews, whose numbers increased tenfold between 1840 and 1860, were exceptional in their proclivity to organize. According to historian Hasia Diner, “Between 1848 and 1860, when Jews made up somewhere between two and five percent of the city's

total population, they supported more than ninety-three philanthropic associations. The rest of the city maintained only ninety-six similar institutions."<sup>11</sup> Yet Jews in New York, the largest Jewish community in the United States, had no central communal organization, no *kehillah*, until 1908. And that, according to Arthur A. Goren, was an "experiment," which lasted only until 1922.<sup>12</sup> As the Jewish community became bigger and more diverse with the influx of Eastern European Jews by the 1880s, the more urgent did it become to coordinate charitable activity and Jewish organizational life more generally.. Jewish communal life was made complex by fissures, splits, and mergers. The fairs created an opportunity, ephemeral as it might be, for a large number of Jews otherwise attached to competing organizations to act in concert, to find strength in numbers, and to see themselves as a whole, as well as for newly merged organizations to consolidate their fusion.

Allowing Jews to express solidarity without requiring consensus on many issues, these fairs spoke to the prosperity, self-sufficiency, and public spirit of the Jewish community. Sympathetic observers such as Jacob Riis, who was duly impressed with the 1895 Educational Alliance and Hebrew Technical Institute fair, had nothing but praise for Jewish communal self-sufficiency: "There was the great fair, so fresh in the public mind, at which a fortune was realized for the Jewish charities of the city. It is more than 240 years since the Jews were first admitted, by special license, as it were, to the New Netherlands, on the express condition that 'the poor among them should not become a burden to the company or the community, but be supported by their own nation,' and most loyally have they kept the compact that long since ceased to have force to bind. Their poor are not, and never were, a burden upon the community."<sup>13</sup> Far from being a burden on society, Jews were positively public spirited. Their hospitals and technical schools were open to everyone, regardless of creed.

Women were active organizers of these events, which bore the imprint of their sensibility, and their presence was perhaps the fairs' greatest attraction. Beautifully outfitted respectable women appearing en masse in public was a brilliant spectacle, as male reporters of the period were fond of writing. Unusually inclusive, these events attracted men, women, and children; rich and poor; Jews and Christians. They offered this period a model of what an all-embracing public sphere might look like, although the fairs were not without their exclusions, divisions, and hierarchies.

Perhaps most important, the act of public assembly—Jews coming together en masse, in public, with great style, for a good cause—was taken as an important expression of Jewishness and quintessence of what it meant to be American. At the opening ceremonies of the Educational Alliance and Hebrew Technical Institute fair, Mayor William L. Strong quoted a "well-known Jewess of New York City," who informed girls and boys that if they were "good Jews and Jewesses," they would be "good American citizens."<sup>14</sup> In a word, these gatherings modeled how to be Jewish and American at the same time.

### *The Sanitary Fairs*

The immediate model for the Jewish fairs that were held across the country during and after the Civil War was the sanitary fair.<sup>15</sup> These fairs became so popular that *Our Daily Fair*, the

newspaper published daily at the 1864 Philadelphia Sanitary Fair, could refer to "the fair movement in the United States" and trace its history "in other countries and former wars," including the French Revolution, the Prussian uprising against the French in 1813, and the revolutionary movements in Europe in 1848. But, *Our Daily Fair* continued, despite the popular enthusiasm and patriotism they expressed, these earlier fairs were "short-lived and spasmodic" in comparison with American sanitary fairs.<sup>16</sup> During the Civil War, preexisting Jewish women's organizations redirected their efforts to wartime needs by collecting supplies, providing personal services, or diverting the proceeds of their fundraising efforts to the Sanitary Commission. Jewish women also formed new organizations expressly for this purpose. Some Jewish women and their organizations found that participation in the large metropolitan sanitary fairs offered them an unparalleled opportunity to demonstrate their patriotism by taking part in a spectacular local event with high national visibility.<sup>17</sup> In the case of New York, the organizers of the 1864 Metropolitan Fair included Jewish representatives on the various committees, "undoubtedly to assure the cooperation of all the Jewish organizations."<sup>18</sup> Jewish participation in these activities was a demonstration of patriotism and good citizenship that allowed Jews to show that they were not parochial.

Two principles governed the organization of the fairs. First, by arranging merchandise by category, fair organizers emulated the rational plan of the department store. Indeed, these fairs were temporary department stores. Second, organizations were allowed to open their own booths. At the sanitary fair in Cincinnati in 1863, the Jewish community set up four stands, "one each by the Allemania Club, the Phoenix, a group calling themselves the 'Independent Ladies,' and the Broadway Synagogue."<sup>19</sup> The Jewish stands were estimated to have earned about a third of the proceeds generated by the fair. However, Jews were not in accord on the question of group participation. Some felt that Jews should participate as citizens and should not label "Jewish participation as Jewish."<sup>20</sup> Nor did they want to be the only ones to establish "denominational stands," an option sometimes exercised by other religious groups.<sup>21</sup>

The sanitary fairs built on the custom of charging admission to specially organized art exhibitions. Such exhibitions were a major attraction in cities that did not yet have an art museum and therefore depended on private collectors to open their treasures to the public for a good cause. Jewish art collectors were prominent in this endeavor. In the case of the Metropolitan Fair, August Belmont was one of two collectors to exhibit his private art collection.<sup>22</sup> Belmont, né Schoenberg, was a Jew by birth, from Germany. A banker who represented the Rothschilds' interests in the United States, he had entered New York society by marrying the daughter of Commodore Perry and converting to Christianity.

The sanitary fairs were covered in detail by the Jewish press, which provided a virtual guided tour of the highlights, among them the art. The *Jewish Messenger*, for example, recommended the art exhibition at the Metropolitan Fair to "those who never have been among the wondering visitors to the Louvre or the Munich Gallery" and went on to say that "the Gallery at the 14th Street building will compare more than favorably" to the painting and statuary at the Crystal Palace.<sup>23</sup> Such statements indicate the degree to which world's fairs, such as the Crystal Palace, were a point of reference for the sanitary fairs.

Above all, fairs offered women a way to appear in public. Listen to an observer complain in

1864 of the limited range of places that respectable American women could visit:

There is one thing that always strikes us with wonder in the amusement world of New York, which is the want of matinees or afternoon entertainments. There are thousands of ladies and children, those who perhaps have not attendants even for evening amusements, who would be glad to patronize an afternoon performance if they had reliance on its perfect order and respectability. These are confined to the Museum, the Stereoscopticon and the Menagerie. Why some of our first-class theatres should not give an occasional matinee we do not know. Certainly there can be no better time for the experiment than during the Sanitary Fair, when the city will be full of strangers only in for the day, or citizens out for a day's pleasure.<sup>24</sup>

In no small measure, the fairs addressed the felt need for a public social place in which women would be comfortable and in which they could act.

The apparent frivolity of these events, according to Beverly Gordon, was carefully staged by the women who organized them to display "the powerful playing at being powerless."<sup>25</sup> It was as if by magic that these women worked their wonders in the fairyland they deliberately contrived. They were sometimes faulted for tiring of "the daily routine of amateur shop keeping and dickering" and for sending their "clerks and subordinates" to fill in for them. But for the most part their efforts to organize and run these events, even when hidden beneath an aura of frivolity, were arduous.<sup>26</sup> The aura of frivolity was cultivated and strategic, and it made the work of entrepreneurial women less threatening.

Terms like "fairyland" and spectacle indicate an appreciation of these fairs as an art form in their own right, a point that Gordon rightly emphasizes. Indeed, so dizzying was the impression that one observer referred to the sanitary fair as the "Insanity Fair," while others spoke of fair mania. There was concern that the fairs were distracting women from the home production of clothing and food and from gathering supplies for the troops, so that money generated by the fair had to make up the shortfall.<sup>27</sup> For this and other reasons, the fairs were not as effective economically as they might have been.

The participation of Jewish women in sanitary fairs and other fundraising efforts for the Sanitary Commission was a point of considerable pride, and lessons learned from the sanitary fairs were directly applied to the Jewish fairs. In anticipation of the 1870 fair to aid the Hebrew Benevolent and Orphan Asylum Society and Mount Sinai Hospital, *The Jewish Messenger* recommended "the plan pursued at the great Sanitary Fair of 1863—the hall being divided into various sections and every table representing a distinct branch of trade" and insisted that "Our Fair could not have a better model than the great Sanitary Fair of 1863," which was praised for its systematic plan and a series of features that were to become standard fixtures of the charity fairs that followed.<sup>28</sup> *The Jewish Messenger* declared that in "picturesque appearance, elegance and perfection of detail, and substantial promise," the 1870 fair would "compare favorably with the most notable Bazaars our country has witnessed—not alone in pecuniary results, but in character as spectacle."<sup>29</sup> A reporter enthused: "A more lovely spectacle can scarcely be imagined—glowing with bright colors, brilliant with light, gay and glorious in the noble assemblage of 'fair women and brave men'." With those words he captured the moral sublime.<sup>30</sup> What better context for Jews—and

especially Jewish women—to appear in, in public, as Jews.

*The Jewish Fairs*

*Tsey u-l'mad*: go and learn, ye that are in the metropolis;  
See for yourselves what is going on, what there is for sale,  
and how beautifully it is sold by fair women.<sup>31</sup>

During the second half of the nineteenth century, American Jewish women were the impresarios of some of the largest philanthropic social events in their communities. In conceiving, organizing, and managing these events, they not only raised large amounts of money in a very short time, but also helped create the public culture of their communities. A round of philanthropic activities gave form to Jewish social life—from the Purim balls and Hanukkah pageants so popular during the latter half of the nineteenth century, both largely organized by men, to the Purim kettledrums (a pun on tea kettle and drum that refers to a noisy tea) and charity fairs, which were mainly in the hands of women.

Among German Jews, holding social events with charitable objectives became an important way of dealing with the Jewish holidays. Families rented boxes at opera houses where Purim balls were held and received visitors there instead of at home. Special Purim quadrilles were composed for the occasion.<sup>32</sup> One member of the Purim Association [of New York? JM] used the term "social Judaism" for these events, which suggests the importance of Jewish association and sociability in public as an expression of Jewishness at this time.<sup>33</sup> As many Jewish holiday celebrations moved out of the house and into public places—armories, opera houses, music academies, restaurants, Masonic halls—the Jewish holiday calendar converged with social seasons and shopping cycles. Nowhere was this more clear than in the annual charity fairs held just before Christmas.<sup>34</sup> For Jews, these fairs were a response to the December dilemma—specifically, how Jews should deal with Christmas and their anxieties about declining interest in Hanukkah. Timed to take advantage of the Christmas shopping season, the Jewish events were less about "copying" the Gentiles, who also held charity fairs at this time, and more about using the form of the charity fair for their own ends.

Fairs like the one mounted to raise money for the Educational Alliance and Hebrew Technical Institute in 1895 became even larger, more sophisticated, and professional in their management than those of the preceding two decades, as did the philanthropic organizations they supported. Those organizations faced new challenges during the Progressive Era, in particular the influx of Eastern European Jewish immigrants, who were ready targets for the Christian missionary movement. To protect them, Jews organized their own "missions" in the form of Jewish vocational and technical schools that would not only teach trades but also socialize the newest arrivals into American and American-Jewish life. This period saw a reorganization and consolidation of Jewish institutions, as can be seen from the history of the Educational Alliance and Hebrew Technical Institute.<sup>35</sup>

The Educational Alliance was created by the Hebrew Free School Association (founded in 1864), the Young Men's Hebrew Association (founded in 1874), and the Aguilar Free Library (founded in 1886). In 1889 these three groups organized a fair that raised about \$125,000 for a new building.<sup>36</sup> They formed a corporation, the Educational Alliance, to

handle the money, oversee the building's construction, and manage the building once it was occupied. The building for the new entity, which was known as the Hebrew Institute, opened its doors in 1891.<sup>37</sup> When the YMHA could not meet its financial obligations and withdrew, the remaining groups reorganized in 1893 as the Educational Alliance and became a membership society. This reorganization was spearheaded by Isidor Straus, a department store magnate and congressman, who became president of the Educational Alliance.<sup>38</sup> As for the Hebrew Technical Institute (founded in 1883), it grew out of the Hebrew Benevolent and Orphan Asylum Society (founded in 1822), the Hebrew Free School Association, and the United Hebrew Charities (founded in 1874).

The 1895 Fair in Aid of the Educational Alliance and Hebrew Technical Institute—the press referred to it generically as The Hebrew Fair, or The Great Hebrew Fair or, more specifically, The Education Fair—was dedicated to raising money to pay off the mortgage on the Hebrew Institute building and cover other debt. In part because it is so well documented, this fair rewards close examination. Coming at the end of the period of fair mania, but organized with excessively high hopes, it also holds clues as to why such events went out of fashion. Like the earlier fairs, this one was praised as evidence of the "unanimity with which the entire Jewish community makes the cause of any one organization, when called upon to do so, its own" in the words of Isidor Straus.<sup>39</sup> As he and others emphasized, the cause in question marked a shift in the culture of benevolence from charity (ameliorating misery) to philanthropy (preventing need) through education. As *The American Hebrew* explained, "It was not charity but philanthropy that animated the activity in preparing for the Fair," the proceeds from which would aid the students of the Educational Alliance and Hebrew Technical Institute "in becoming useful citizens, well-beloved by their Gentile neighbors and truly a credit to the Jewish race."<sup>40</sup>

Abram S. Hewitt, an industrialist, congressman, and former mayor of New York City, spoke at the opening. Taking the fair as evidence of the success of American democracy, he declared that only here, in a "free land, where distinctions of birth, race and religion have no place in the economy of government," can Jewish people come together "in such numbers, in such wealth, and in such beauty." Indeed, Jewish success is "the greatest tribute to American institutions," for it offers proof of "the American principles of freedom." The fair, he continued, shows what Jews can do when they are free: "Of all the races in the world, they understand the meaning of self-help best," thanks to two thousand years of experience. To the "Jew baiter" he says, "Come see!"<sup>41</sup> The *Souvenir Book of the Fair in Aid of the Educational Alliance and Hebrew Technical Institute* featured a facsimile of a 1790 letter from George Washington to the Jews of Newport, Rhode Island, in which Washington lauded the new nation as the home of "liberty of consciousness and immunities of citizenship," specifically citing "the children of the stock of Abraham" as a kind of test case.<sup>42</sup>

This fair departed from earlier ones in ways that mark changes in American and American Jewish life. The fair's artistic ambitions and business practices demonstrate these changes.<sup>43</sup> Fairs generally opened with a grand ceremony and ended with an auction, announcements of the winners of contests, and a ball. Many of these elements were to be found at the Educational Alliance and Hebrew Technical Institute fair to be sure, but with a difference. The opening ceremonies, for example, were noteworthy for being exceptionally short, less

than a half hour, as if to say: “Enough with the formalities. Get on with the shopping!” Given the enormous and impatient crowd, the speeches would have been difficult to hear in any case.

The fair also differed in its design. Departing from the eclectic look of many earlier fairs, where women designed and decorated their own stands as they pleased, the design of this fair was modeled on the principle pioneered by department stores—the unified look. Department stores, which gathered many kinds of merchandise under one roof, used design to create a coherent corporate image, in keeping with the era’s tendency toward corporatization, of which the Educational Alliance itself was also an example. The fair’s unified look was accomplished by the department store magnates in whose hands its administration was centralized.<sup>44</sup>

Whereas women were in charge of most of the earlier charity fairs, their role here was to manage individual booths and particular attractions, such as the art gallery. Mrs. William Einstein (née Hannah Bachman), who was active in charitable causes (and is remembered for her progressive views on the welfare of widowed and deserted mothers and their children), was in charge of the art exhibition. The display of 150 pictures, valued at \$400,000, was celebrated as “superior to any loan exhibition seen at any other fair,” and taken as indicative of Jewish appreciation and patronage of the arts.<sup>45</sup> In his president’s report for 1895, Isidor Straus wrote, “Too much cannot be said in praise of the ladies who participated in [the fair], and I trust that I may not be accused of invidious partiality when I ascribe our success largely to their zeal, energy, and devoted interest.”<sup>46</sup> Everyone knew that women were essential to the success of the event (and that events like these were women’s events), from organizing and managing the individual booths, to using their charms to extract money from the visitors. Nonetheless, in the case of this fair, men were decidedly at the helm, as they were in the two institutions that would benefit most from the fair, an arrangement that was not without its tensions. Just a year earlier, there had been an incident at the Educational Alliance in which trustee Nathan Straus, a brother of Isidor Straus, prevented women from holding an anti-Tammany meeting in the building, which the press took as an indication that he “was evidently afraid of the work that the women may do in the Hebrew quarters of the city.”<sup>47</sup>

Women’s participation was thus contained within the unified plan created by the fourteen (or eighteen—the figure varies) professional architects commissioned to design the fair. The illustrations in the *The Souvenir Book of the Fair in Aid of the Educational Alliance and Hebrew Technical Institute*, which had been made before the fair opened, reflect what they had in mind. The effect was utterly feminine, so much so that one reporter was prompted to write as if women had dreamed up the design:

The octagon-shaped edifices in the centre were surely the beauteous dream of a chaste mind, so dainty with white and gold they were. Graceful pyramids of some fairy-like fabric rose above them to the apex of the roof, where bannerets of alternate white and golden gauze veiled the enormous girders of the building.

At the flower stand the pillars were bound with simlax, so as to relieve the eye, which almost tired of the glitter of ivory and gold.<sup>48</sup>

These structures, the center of attraction at the center of the large hall, were dedicated to flower and candy sales, which were expected to bring in the largest revenues—and they did. Candy sales accounted for \$20,075 and flowers for \$8,401.

The other stands were described as "gorgeously decorated in silk and stuffs of brilliant hue, with roofs of evergreens, after the manner of the symbolical booths used by the children of Israel" for Sukkoth, with the foliage supported on "Corinthian columns" like the ones to be found in the octagonal edifices.<sup>49</sup> In this way, Jewish meanings were discreetly read into otherwise neutral materials such as evergreens, which were a standard feature at these events. But explicitly Jewish symbols were also to be found. Thus: "Around about the limits of the arena were built a range of twenty copartments [sic] decorated in red and festooned in various rich colors, each booth being divided from its neighbor by a golden shield bearing the noble device of 'the Lion of Judah.' Spears upheld the canopies at regular intervals, reminding the observer of the glorious days of the Maccabees." And: "At the end of the vast hall, opposite the main entrance was a row of columns, each one bearing a golden globe, grand souvenir of the Temple of Solomon."<sup>50</sup>

The total effect was not only a "scene of Oriental splendor" that would "rival what has been depicted by the authors of 'The Arabian Nights'," but also one of unified vision and efficient management.<sup>51</sup> The fair was praised in prose and verse for running "as smoothly as a first-class business."<sup>52</sup> After the initial chaos of the opening crowds, it was also lauded for being "brilliant and orderly," both artistically and financially.<sup>53</sup> This effect extended to the crowd, which was a spectacle in its own right, the dresses of the women "clad in costly fabrics of every hue of the rainbow" set off against the dark clothing of the men.<sup>54</sup> Indeed, the crowd was the main attraction, as such dignitaries as Abram S. Hewitt were quick to note from their privileged place in the gallery overlooking the entire arena

From below the experience was quite different. Variousy figured as a "solid phalanx," "an army of charity," a "wondrous scene of animated traffic, well punctuated by innocent flirtations," the crowd was so enormous that "One was carried along in the swim, as it were; swift locomotion toward any fixed point was impracticable."<sup>55</sup> The contrast with the more sinister characterizations of the threatening masses of the Lower East Side, the beneficiaries of the fair, could not be more striking.

Charity fairs were predicated on a gift economy that women in particular understood. This fair, in contrast, was run like a business. At the helm of the Fair Association were Isidor Straus—of Macy's and Abraham and Straus—as president and Joseph B. Bloomingdale, as one of the vice-presidents. They ensured that the style and discipline of the department store prevailed. As already noted, professional architectects were to create a unified design for the fair and all transactions at the fair were to be conducted with decorum. There was to be "no raffling, no selling of chances," according to the advertisements for the fair, though both actually did occur, as did auctions.<sup>56</sup> The *New York Times*, which covered the fair extensively, declared that the methods would be "entirely different" from usual. There would be no "buttonholing":

The army of young ladies will not wander about the auditorium persisting in the visitors buying chances; they will be found occupying positions behind the counters

of the different booths and performing the duties of saleswomen. They will take pleasure in displaying such goods as the purchaser wishes to examine.<sup>57</sup>

Prices would be considerably below market rates and lots of bargains would be found. Contests would be conducted so as to "avoid any unpleasantness on the part of the visitors."<sup>58</sup>

In a word: "The projectors of this enterprise have simply converted Madison Square Garden into the largest apartment [sic] store in New-York for the time being, and all the proceeds will go" to a good cause.<sup>59</sup> One reporter noted that the favorite stands, which were crowded by lines of purchasers, "resembled bargain counters at department stores."<sup>60</sup> With expenses reduced, an estimated \$200,000 worth of stock donated (and not only by Jews), and an estimated one thousand to fifteen hundred-person volunteer staff, the gross income, projected at \$250,000, was to be nearly all profit. Admission was twenty-five cents; one dollar for a season ticket. In fact, gross revenues fell far short of the goal, coming in at \$165,109. The net was \$142,570.01 to the penny, after expenses.<sup>61</sup> For a fair that was celebrated as "the largest Fair that the Jews of the city have given," this was a sign of its waning power as a fundraising instrument.<sup>62</sup> Twenty-five years earlier, in 1870, the fair held on behalf of the Hebrew Benevolent and Orphan Asylum Society and the Mount Sinai Hospital netted nearly as much, \$140,000, an astonishing sum for the time.<sup>63</sup> The 1886 fair for the Montefiore Home for Chronic Invalids, which raised the record sum of \$175,000, could not be topped a decade later by the Educational Alliance and Hebrew Technical Institute Fair.<sup>64</sup>

As for the sales force, these middle class and well-to-do women were described as utterly seductive, prying every last penny from the pockets of smitten gentlemen with their charm and beauty. At the same time, they were described, tongue in cheek, as "Amazons...versed in the science of extraction," Robin Hoods, or highway robbers:

The women who worked for this occasion as vendors of votes for the many contests, had a difficult task getting at their victims. But their badges were accepted by the crowd as tokens of special privileges, and their unceremonious rushes were taken good-naturedly. Many a watch chain was torn in two and many a ribbon and piece of lace damaged by the rush of this army of handsome and active women, who had but one object in view—of getting at the visitors' exchequer.<sup>65</sup>

It was useless on the part of the victim to resort to subterfuge or excuse....It was simply a metaphorical case of 'Hands up!' Many an old Western frontiersman was, for the time, carried back to the days when his wealth was taken from him by bold highwaymen.<sup>66</sup>

Even children were enlisted in the sales force on a Friday afternoon. The fair was described as "a veritable Lillyput Levée with the host of boys and girls as salespeople and shoppers, with rosy cheeks and wide-open eyes, bustling about and diffusing an atmosphere of radiant enjoyment."<sup>67</sup> Ironically, these are the activities that generated funds for an organization whose *raison d'être* was to train Jewish youth in so-called productive occupations—trades and industries—so that they would not revert to the traditional Jewish occupations of peddling and shopkeeping.

Strategically timed, these "festivals of consumption," to use Daniel Boorstin's apposite phrase, arrived at the height of the charity and the shopping seasons, which converged just before Christmas and coincided with the "winter festival of the Jews."<sup>68</sup> Discrete references to the Jewish holiday could be found at the Educational Alliance and Hebrew Technical Institute fair, where "Chanuka lights were burned in the Y.M.H.A. Booth."<sup>69</sup> For the children who attended, the fair itself was "a monster Hanukkah festival,"<sup>70</sup> in stark contrast with the way holidays were celebrated in the nostalgic domestic "Scenes from Jewish Life" in Germany by Moritz Daniel Oppenheim (1800-1882), which "sold like hot-cakes."<sup>71</sup> Indeed, *The American Hebrew* printed an admonishing editorial alongside its coverage of the fair to the effect that children should be encouraged to celebrate Hanukkah so "the Christian celebration of their Gentile friends will have less attraction for them."<sup>72</sup> Indeed, coming as it did just before or at the same time as Hanukkah, these fairs gave the holiday, which as early as the 1870s was "rapidly falling into disuse," a needed push.<sup>73</sup>

The business approach to the sale of goods in department store fashion did not eliminate what was most distinctive about these fairs, namely, their gift economy and spectacular displays of compassion, charity, and philanthropy. The fairs' gift economy reversed the logic that governed business. At the fairs merchants gave goods away and sellers did not keep the money they earned. People were encouraged to speculate in the irrational sphere of raffles, lotteries, and fortune-telling. Legitimizing the crime of vote-buying, they paid to vote and to vote as many times as they wished, whether for the most popular dentist or for the most popular little girl. They were encouraged to have their fortunes read by beautiful young ladies dressed in fantastic Gypsy costumes.

This gift economy depended literally on gifts, whether outright donations of cash, fancy goods and food made by women expressly for the fair, volunteered services, or a variety of standard fair fixtures that combined many of these elements. These included the post office, contests, raffles, lotteries, restaurants, and fair publications, among others. In 1888, Jewish women in Denver organized a fair for the synagogue's building fund, ran a profitable restaurant at the event, and published *The Fair Cook Book*.<sup>74</sup> The *Souvenir Book of the Fair in Aid of the Educational Alliance and Hebrew Technical Institute* was praised as one of the most lavish of its kind, featuring as it did illustrated histories of all the participating organizations, *The Fair Journal*, which appeared daily, provided "the latest news and gossip, with some solid reading."<sup>75</sup>

The post office consisted of lovely young women delivering love messages on the fair floor. The Educational Alliance and Hebrew Technical Institute fair, emulating the sanitary fairs, managed to get United States Postmaster-General Wilson to make it "a regular sub-station." He commissioned Miss Annette Kohn "as postmistress, allowing her the privilege of appointing fifteen young lady carriers," who were dressed in letter carrier uniforms.<sup>76</sup> The post office raised \$807 in the following way: "Victims" were "run, or rather rushed, by beautiful maidens. Their impetuous manner of forcing an envelope into your hand sealed and stamped, and the rest of the post-official *modus operandi*, made them for the time being the loveliest creatures in the vast encampment" of thirty-eight booths.<sup>77</sup> Such forward behavior on the part of young women, characterized in several accounts as Amazons, was countenanced at the fair, which provided a public space, however temporary, for female

assertiveness.

The fairs typically featured voting contests, which were often coordinated with "special days," a tried and true world's fair tactic for recruiting special constituencies. At the Educational Alliance and Hebrew Technical Institute fair, there were voting contests "for the most charitable organization, temple, regiment, president of an institution (charitable), and popular judge, not counting for the most popular college."<sup>78</sup> December 12 at the Educational Alliance and Hebrew Technical Institute fair was military day, and the entire National Guard was expected to attend and to vote for its favorite regiment, the prize being a silk regimental flag that had been donated by Jackson's, the dry goods house. Other prizes included a grandfather clock, gold and silver clock, banner, and gavel.

The various constituencies were given the opportunity to participate in spectacles of compassion. They included the display en masse of the beneficiaries of charity in bands and choruses, as well as ceremonies of benevolence such as the dispensing of treats, toys, tours, and rides. Thus, the children of the Jewish Orphan Asylum and the Brightside Day Nursery were given a tour of the Educational Alliance and Hebrew Technical Institute fair and served a banquet in the dining hall. The children were also treated to popcorn, chocolate, and cake, and each one was presented with a doll.<sup>79</sup> The band of the Hebrew Orphan Asylum, made up entirely of boys under the age of fourteen, led a delegation from the Mount Neboh lodge on a march through the building and, during the evening, shared the bandstand with the Victor Herbert orchestra.<sup>80</sup> The Hebrew Free School had its delegation of three hundred pupils sing in several choruses.<sup>81</sup> Such performances not only allowed the institutions responsible for these children to exhibit themselves, but also they provided a way to structure the massive presence of children and to intensify the spectacle of compassion by placing its most tender beneficiaries at center stage and inviting them to perform the beneficence that had been bestowed upon them. At the fair the children saw themselves being seen even as they witnessed their benefactors on display.

Marking the shift from spectacles of charity to demonstrations of philanthropy were the work displays. A reporter from *The American Hebrew* noted that the "greatest crowd gathered about" the boys at work at the Hebrew Technical Institute booths. "The handiwork of these clever boys was given to spectators," he continued, "and the demand for souvenirs has far exceeded the supply."<sup>82</sup> The reporter named the boys running the machines, provided their biographies, and celebrated their skills. Each one was a potential Horatio Alger. These live displays were indebted to a century of industrial fairs as well as to the "machinery halls" of world's fairs. They also demonstrated the shift from charity to philanthropy. As *The American Hebrew* explained, the difference between charity and philanthropy, as evidenced here, was this: instead of shutting out "by a small donation, misery from sight," the fair would "provide the younger generation of our people and even succeeding generations with what the foresight of our communal leaders demonstrated would aid them in becoming useful citizens, well-loved by their Gentile neighbors and truly a credit to the Jewish race."<sup>83</sup>

An astonishing feature of the mammoth fairs—indeed, what made them possible at all, their gift economy notwithstanding—was their relationship to the burgeoning consumer culture of the period. Before the Civil War, wealth had difficulty finding goods, and the Anglo-American elite eschewed public celebrations, preferring to retreat to their homes. Fancy fairs,

as their name indicates, featured fancy needlework and other items made by the women who ran the fairs. After the Civil War, consumer culture blossomed and these fairs offered an outlet for the overstock of stores and for the contents of overstuffed closets, such that the fairs became an important way station in the "social life of things."<sup>84</sup> They offered things an afterlife by reversing the direction of their flow. Sent back into the world, things fell into the hands and homes of a second and third round of consumers. As promoters of redemptive shopping, women and their fairs were great levers in the circulation of wealth and in the redistribution of goods through the irrational gift economy of the fair.

By the end of the century, the fairs had become so big, so arduous to run, and also so repetitious, that charitable organizations became ambivalent about this way of raising money. There was even the feeling that the very idea of a fair was worn out. By the 1930s these affairs had diminished to the small ventures organized by local schools, churches, and synagogues that are familiar to us today.

Several factors are at work here, perhaps most important, the professionalization of philanthropy, not only how money is raised, but also the emphasis upon a more rational, if not scientific, basis for the philanthropic work itself.<sup>85</sup> Women who might earlier have made fancy work, organized charity fairs, and volunteered their services, began to make careers for themselves in the helping professions. There arose new media and new genres for mobilizing personal giving, from telethons and marathons to mega-media-events such as Hands across America and Live Aid. Less well understood are the changes in sensibility that brought about the demise of the great charity fair, as we know it from the nineteenth century, and the concomitant changes in American Jewish public culture and the role of women in producing it.

## Notes

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1. *Jewish Messenger*, December 13, 1895, p. 1.
2. As Beverly Gordon has suggested, these events and their economic, social, and political importance, have been underestimated by later scholars (though their importance was certainly appreciated at the time). She attributes later dismissals of these events to the stereotype that they were run by housewives with time on their hands who made useless things for sale like fancy work or supplied equally superficial bric-a-brac and other novelties. See Beverly Gordon, "Playing at Being Powerless: New England Ladies Fairs, 1830-1930," *Massachusetts Review* 27, (1986): 144-160. See also, Mary Bosworth Treudley, "The 'Benevolent Fair': A Study of Charitable Organization Among American Women in the First Third of the Nineteenth Century," *Social Service Review* 14 (1940): 509-522, and Rodris Roth, "The New England, or 'Olde Tyme,' Kitchen Exhibit at Nineteenth-Century Fairs," in *The Colonial Revival in America*, ed. Alan Axelrod (New York: Norton, 1985), pp. 159-183.
3. "The Story of Other Fairs," *American Hebrew*, December 27, 1895, p.238.
4. See Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Exhibiting Jews," in *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).
- <sup>5</sup> David Philipson, ed., *Letters of Rebecca Gratz* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1929), pp. 407-408.
- <sup>6</sup> "The Educational Fair: Towards the Close," *Jewish Messenger*, December 20, 1895.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>8</sup> "The Fair As It Is To Be," *Jewish Messenger*, November 11, 1870. .
- <sup>9</sup> For work that attends specifically to Jewish women's organizations and to German Jewish philanthropy during the nineteenth century, see "Jewish Women's Philanthropy," in Paula Hyman and Deborah Dash Moore, eds., *Jewish Women in America: An Historical Encyclopedia* (New York: Routledge, 1997); Maria Benjamin Baader, "Rabbinic Study, Self-Improvement, and Philanthropy: Gender and the Refashioning of Jewish Voluntary Associations in Germany, 1750 – 1870" and Tobias Brinkmann, "Ethnic Difference and Civic Unity: A Comparison of Jewish Communal Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century German and U.S. Cities," in *Philanthropy, Patronage, and Civil Society*, ed. Thomas Adam (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004); Faith Rogow, *Gone to Another Meeting, The National Council of Jewish Women, 1893–1993* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1993); Riv-Ellen Prell, "The Vision of Woman in Classical Reform Judaism," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 50 (1982): 575–589; and Karla Goldman, *Beyond the Synagogue Gallery: Finding a Place for Women in American Judaism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000). See also "The Women in Philanthropy Web Site," University of Michigan, <http://www.women-philanthropy.umich.edu/tributes/index.html>, accessed March 6, 2005.
- <sup>10</sup> An important exception is Beverly Gordon, *Bazaars and Fair Ladies: The History of the American Fundraising Fair* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1998).
- <sup>11</sup> Hasia Diner, *A Time for Gathering, 1820-1880: The Second Migration, The Jewish People in America*, ed. Henry Feingold, vol. 2 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), p. 102.
- <sup>12</sup> Arthur Goren, *New York Jews and the Quest for Community: The Kehillah Experiment, 1908-1922* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970).
- <sup>13</sup> Jacob Riis, "The Jews of New York," *Review of Reviews* 13 (1896): 58-62.
- <sup>14</sup> "The Fair in Progress," *The American Hebrew*, December 13, 1895, p. 171.
- <sup>15</sup> On the history of sanitary fairs, see William Y. Thompson, "Sanitary Fairs of the Civil War," *Civil War History* 4 (1958): 51-57; Jeanie Attie, *Patriotic Toil: Northern Women and the American Civil War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998); and Gordon, *Bazaars and Fair Ladies*.
- <sup>16</sup> See "The First Charity Fair," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, April 30, 1864. .
- <sup>17</sup> Bertram W. Korn, *American Jewry and the Civil War* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1951), pp. 98-107, provides a detailed account of the fundraising activities of Jewish women during the Civil War and their participation in the sanitary fairs..
- <sup>18</sup> Korn, *American Jewry and the Civil War*, p. 103.
- <sup>19</sup> . *Ibid.*
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99.
- <sup>23</sup> *Jewish Messenger*, April 20, 1864.
- <sup>24</sup> "Town Topics," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, April 16, 1864, p.50.

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25. Gordon, "Playing at Being Powerless," p. 154.
26. "Town Gossip," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, April 30, 1864, p. 82.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 66.
28. "The Hebrew Fair," *Jewish Messenger*, June 10, 1870; "The Fair," *Jewish Messenger*, June 24, 1870. The author is comparing the Hebrew Fair with the Metropolitan Fair, a sanitary fair that was held in Manhattan in 1864, not 1863, as the author mistakenly asserts.
29. "The Fair," *Jewish Messenger*, October 21, 1870.
30. "The Great Fair: Its Remarkable Success," *Jewish Messenger*, December 9, 1870.
31. "The Fair in Progress," *The American Hebrew* 58, 6 (13 December 1895): 171.
32. The Purim balls were masked balls and, according to the *Jewish Messenger* (April 1, 1870, p.1) "the mask, in this country, seems to be affected solely by us Israelites," particularly the practice of masked house visits on Purim. On Purim balls, see Philip Goodman, "The Purim Association of the City of New York, 1862-1902," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 40, part 2 (December 1950): 135-172. On the role of immigrants, and in particular Germans, in teaching Protestant Americans how to have a good time, see David A. Gerber, "'The Germans Take Care of Our Celebrations': Middle-Class Americans Appropriate German Ethnic Culture in Buffalo in the 1850s," in *Hard at Play: Leisure in America, 1840-1940*, ed. Kathryn Grover (Buffalo: The Strong Museum, 1992), pp. 39-60.
33. *Jewish Messenger* 77, 6 (8 February 1895), p. 1.
34. Leigh Schmidt, *Consumer Rites: The Buying and Selling of American Holidays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).
35. Gordon, "Playing at Being Powerless," p. 153.
36. The Aguilar Free Library became part of the Seward Park Branch of the New York Public Library in 1906.
37. See "In a Wide Labor Field, What is Now Accomplished by the Educational Alliance, Work of the Hebrew Institute," *New York Times*, May 19, 1895, p. 17.. See also Adam Beller, *The Educational Alliance: A Centennial Celebration* (New York: The Education Alliance, Inc., 1990). This publication is unfortunately marred by errors.
38. Isidor Straus, who led the family business, L. Straus and Sons, established, together with a brother, Abraham and Straus in 1892, and acquired ownership of Macy's in 1896. He was an important philanthropist, who, among his other achievements, created an endowment fund for the Jewish Theological Seminary. He died tragically, with his wife, in the sinking of the Titanic.
39. Isidor Straus, "President's Report," in Educational Alliance, *Annual Report*, 1895 (New York: The Educational Alliance, 1896), p. 13.
40. "The Fair in Progress," *American Hebrew*, December 13, 1895, p. 169.
41. "The Educational Fair, A Brilliant Opening," *Jewish Messenger*, December 13, 1895, p. 5.
42. Educational Alliance and Hebrew Technical Institute, *Souvenir Book of the Fair in Aid of the Educational Alliance and Hebrew Technical Institute* (New York: De Leeuw & Oppenheimer, 1895), p. 44.
43. "An Educational Fair, Plans of the Hebrew Charitable Societies of the City to have an Artistic Exhibition," *New York Times*, October 25, 1895, 16.
44. Alan Trachtenberg. *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982) and his more recent "The Incorporation of America Today," *American Literary History* 15 (2003): 759-764.
45. "The Hebrew Fair," *New York Times*, December 11, 1895, p. 6.
46. Isidor Straus, "President's Report," in Educational Alliance, *Annual Report* 1895,, p. 12. *The American Hebrew* however, felt a need to defend the women against charges of a lack of idealism, adding to the observation of how lovely they were, that they gave their all to the noble purpose of the fair. "The Fair in Progress," *American Hebrew*, December 13, 1895, p. 171. . In "Our Complaint Box," on page 174 of the same issue, a writer identified as a woman with the initials K.C.F. admonishes the women planning booths for the fair for not conducting their meetings in a businesslike way.
47. "Straus Diverts a Women's Meeting," *New York Times*, October 18, 1894, p. 7.
48. "The Education Fair, A Brilliant Opening," *Jewish Messenger*, December 13, 1895, p. 5.
49. *Ibid.*
50. *Ibid.*
51. "The Hebrew Fair," *New York Times*, December 10, 1895, p. 6; "Hebrew Fair Opens To-Night," *New York Times*, December 9, 1895, p. 2.
52. "Our Gossip," *The Jewish Messenger*, December 13, 1895, p. 1.

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- 53 Ibid.
- 54 "The Education Fair, A Brilliant Opening," *Jewish Messenger*, December 13, 1895, p.5.
- 55 Ibid.
- 56 Display advertisement, *New York Times*, December 19, 1895, p. 7.
57. "The Great Hebrew Fair," *New York Times*, December 8, 1895, p. 20.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid.
- 60 "The Educational Fair: Towards the Close," *Jewish Messenger*, December 20, 1895.
61. The gross sum and full table of receipts was reported in the *American Hebrew*, December 27, 1895, p. 241. The net sum was recorded in the Educational Alliance's *Annual Report* for 1895, p. 13.
- 62 "Our Gossip," *Jewish Messenger*, December 13, 1895, p. 1.
- 63 On the 1870 fair, see "The Hebrew Charity Fair," *Jewish Messenger*, December 23 and 30, 1870.
- 64 "The Montefiore Home Fair," *New York Times*, December 12, 1886, p. 3.
- 65 "The Fair in Progress," *American Hebrew*, December 13, 1895, p. 171.
66. "The Hebrew Fair," *New York Times*. December 15, 1895, p. 6.
67. "The Educational Fair: Towards the Close," *Jewish Messenger*, December 20, 1895.
- 68 Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Americans: The Democratic Experience* (New York: Random House, 1973); "Editorial Notes," *American Hebrew*, December 13, 1895.
69. "Another Visit to the Fair," *American Hebrew*, December 20, 1865, p. 203.
- 70 The Educational Fair: Towards the Close," *Jewish Messenger*, December 20, 1895.
71. "Another Visit to the Fair," *American Hebrew*, December 20, 1895, p. 204.
72. "Editorial Notes," *American Hebrew*, December 13, 1895.
73. "Our Gossip," *Jewish Messenger*, December 10, 1875, p. 1.
74. See Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "The Moral Sublime: The Temple Emanuel Fair and Its Cookbook, Denver 1888," in *Recipes for Reading: The Community Cookbook and Its Stories*, ed. Anne L. Bower (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997).
- 75 *Jewish Messenger*, December 6, 1895, p. 4.
- 76 "The Educational Fair," *Jewish Messenger*, November 22, 1865.
77. "The Fair in Progress," *American Hebrew*, December 13, 1895, p. 171.
- 78 The Educational Fair," *Jewish Messenger*, December 6, 1895.
79. "The Hebrew Fair," *New York Times*, December 17, 1865, p. 6.
- 80 "The Hebrew Fair," *New York Times*, December 19, 1865, p. 7.
- 81 "The Hebrew Fair," *New York Times*, December 21, 1865, p. 7.
82. "The Hebrew Fair," *New York Times*, December 12, 1895, p. 6.
83. "The Fair in Progress," *American Hebrew*, December 13, 1895, p. 169.
- 84 Arjun Appadurai, ed., *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). On the history of American Jewish consumption, see Andrew R. Heinze, *Adapting to Abundance: Jewish Immigrants, Mass Consumption, and the Search for American Identity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990) and Jenna Weissman Joselit, *The Wonders of America: Reinventing Jewish Culture, 1880-1950* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996).
85. See Anne Firor Scott, *Natural Allies: Women's Associations in American History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991). Scott traces the history of women's efforts from charity to reform, and from volunteerism to professional careers, from the 1790s to World War I.