ACCULTURATION AND RESISTANCE: JEWISH IMMIGRANT DINING IN BALTIMORE, 1890-1930

by

Rebecca Anne Louderback

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Committee:

[Signatures]

Date: July 23, 2014

Director

Program Director

Department Chairperson

Dean, College of Humanities and Social Sciences

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Acculturation and Resistance: Jewish Immigrant Dining in Baltimore, 1890-1930

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by

Rebecca Anne Louderback
Bachelor of Arts
Towson University, 2002

Director: Jennifer Van Horn, Professor
Department of History and Art History / Smithsonian-George Mason Masters Degree Program in the History of Decorative Arts

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George Mason University
Fairfax, VA
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, aunt, and uncle for teaching me that everyone is a creative genius.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS OR SYMBOLS

Jewish Museum of Maryland ................................................................. IMM
National Council of Jewish Women .................................................. NCJW
Ladies Sewing Society ................................................................. LSS
Jewish Education Alliance ......................................................... JEA
Young Women’s Hebrew Association ............................................. YWHA
ABSTRACT

ACCULTURATION AND RESISTANCE: JEWISH IMMIGRANT DINING IN BALTIMORE, 1890-1930

Rebecca Anne Louderback, M.A.
George Mason University, 2014
Thesis Director: Jennifer Van Horn

Through examination of objects from the Jewish Museum of Maryland, Leo Baeck Institute, and Yeshiva University Archives, this thesis explores the acculturation of Eastern European immigrants in Baltimore, Maryland. From 1880 to 1930 Jewish immigrants making a home in Baltimore underwent a fundamental shift in their folkways (culture) as they accommodated the influence of American culture within the material subculture of Jewish religious practice; affluent middle-class Jewish families, and their poorer working-class counterparts, adopted and altered those American dining rules and regulations established by the upper class to suit their religious practices and their identities as upwardly mobile Jewish immigrants. Immigrants’ decisions to adhere to or to modify the rules of gentility ultimately enabled some to use dining objects to maintain their religious faith while for others the adoption of genteel rituals displaced it.
INTRODUCTION

Jewish immigration to the United States from the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth is not only fascinating but a humbling subject. Between 1880 and 1930 Eastern European Jews came to this country to escape both lawlessness and tyranny. Many Jewish museums and historic societies around the country have examined their migration and material lives. The Jewish Museum in New York’s *Getting Comfortable in New York: The American Jewish Home, 1880-1950* (September 16-November 15, 1990) is a culminating example which provided a significant inspiration for this thesis. Organized by leading scholars in Judaic material culture studies, Jenna Weissman Joselit and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, the exhibit examined changes in immigrants’ quality of life, education, socio-economic status, and foodways over the course of the twentieth century.

While scholars have examined both internal and external influences on the Jewish immigrant community’s material choices, none have focused exclusively on the subject of dining. Nor have they used individual dining objects owned by Jewish immigrants to explore how Jewish residents accommodated new secular objects into their religious beliefs or practices, especially in terms of religious holidays and sacred rituals. This project will investigate to what extent exposure to new American patterns of consumption caused Baltimore’s Jewish residents to abandon their pre-existing dining traditions and to
alter their religious rituals related to dining. With the influence of larger cities, such as New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago, it will look at how they adapted the tools they already had to new American standards and when, how, and why they purchased new ones. Since the Victorian era, elite Americans obsessed with dining and etiquette focused on strict rules and regulations. During this time of increased Jewish immigration their obsession shifted to educating Eastern Europeans on how to implement this decorum.

Defining what scholars mean by acculturation, assimilation and resistance is necessary to comprehend the shift in immigrant Jewish culture. In Acculturation and Assimilation: A Clarification, scholars Raymond H. C. Teske Jr. and Bardin H. Nelson, use their expertise and knowledge of multiple scholars in anthropological studies to formulate a working definition of these terms. Acculturation and assimilation are separate processes which share similar concepts. They are both dynamic processes, can develop to meet the needs of an individual or a group, and can only be created by direct contact. Acculturation may be unidirectional or bidirectional (meaning that it may show the influence of the normative culture but also can be influenced by both the minor and major culture). It does not require a change in values, however in acculturation another’s values can be adopted. Key to acculturation is that despite this surface change, an internal change of values and traditions is not required. Assimilation, by contrast, can only be unidirectional, the change in values is demanded, and an internal change is imperative. Within these terms resistance can only occur during acculturation where a trait is either

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2 Ibid, 365
modified, rejected after a preliminary amount of time, or just does not become a part of a social structure. Objects provide an interesting means to study the related processes of acculturation, assimilation, and resistance. Richard Thurnwald, in *The Psychology of Acculturation*, notes how objects can affect acculturation in their dynamic process,

This, of course does not necessarily imply that the object itself must undergo a visible change in the other society. It might or it might not do so; it might alter its meaning or function, as with the use of mats, knives, or hoes as symbols of value, or, on the other hand, the use of coins as neck-laces.

Jewish immigrants making a home in Baltimore underwent a fundamental shift in their folkways (culture) as they accommodated the influence of American culture within the material subculture of Jewish religious practice; affluent middle-class Jewish families, and their poorer working-class counterparts, adopted and altered those American dining rules and regulations established by the upper class, to suit their religious practices and their identities as upwardly mobile Jewish immigrants. Immigrants’ decisions to adhere to or to modify the rules of gentility ultimately enabled some to use dining objects to maintain their religious faith while for others the adoption of genteel rituals displaced it. In the chapters that follow, the thesis will consider to what extent and under what circumstances Jewish immigrants acculturated their dining practices and how the artifacts that survive can reveal these changes.

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3Ibid, 356
CHAPTER ONE

Gentility, Refinement, and Americanization through Dining

An immigrant’s cultural identity can be communicated through the home. Items such as furniture and dining ware have a tremendous cultural significance as retainers of past tradition, or a means to embrace new social and cultural norms. Objects from the domestic landscape are shaped by ongoing dialogues about social, religious, and economic value. These choices are not static; just as fashion is ever changing so is the domestic landscape. As values and traditions evolve over time, so do consumers’ choices about which dining objects to purchase and how to arrange and use them. Objects, style, and etiquette taken in by one generation will often be rejected by the next in the quest for fashionability. The desire to embrace the newest trends can be especially appealing for recent immigrants and their children who seek cultural acceptance and the formation of new American identities. Yet, religious rituals and family traditions focused on foodways offer a conservative counterpoint, encouraging the retention of certain objects and behaviors. Focusing on working class Jewish immigrants this chapter will discuss how those objects from the dining room and/or kitchen promoted acculturation and accommodation. Taking as a starting point a set of chocolate cups used by a family who came to America during the second migration, it investigates the types of material goods that working-and middle-class Baltimore Jews selected and used as well as the
availability of dining goods in the Jewish community and the larger cultural influences that shaped their choices.

An example of what German Jewish immigrants in Baltimore purchased in the late nineteenth century and early twenty century can be seen in a chocolate set now owned by the Jewish Museum of Maryland (JMM) (Figure 1). The set of twelve cups are 3.125”h x 3”w x 2”d. They are marked on the bottom Jenkins & Jenkins. There are five original porcelain liners, 3.25”h x 3”diam.

![Figure 1: Silver cup, porcelain liner and saucer, part of chocolate set (12 cups and saucers with 5 original liners of white porcelain, marked Lennox) marked Jenkins and Jenkins, Baltimore Rose pattern. ca. 1908-1915. JMM object #1992.219.008a,b,&c. Image: Rebecca A. Louderback.](image)

Chocolate cups in general have a refined look, because of the smallness of the cups and because of the type of drink served in them which was reserved for upper class society. They are heavy only when the porcelain liner is added, however the weight of the silver is agreeable, not too thin or light. The process of repoussé will not allow for silver that is
to thin or the relief created by hammering will punch through. Decorated in a Baltimore Rose pattern using the repoussé method as defined by the JMM, the cups have a heightened sense of elegance.

Jenkins & Jenkins was originally founded by August Jacobi, in 1879, and is known by two other names as well, Jacobi & Co. and Jacobi & Jenkins. Jenkins & Jenkins was active from 1908 to c. 1915 when Schofield Company Inc., purchased the manufacturers. They were high-end silversmiths who also sold mid-level goods. Many small silversmiths stayed in business by making such mid-level pieces; more so when they borrowed patterns from established silver manufactures like Samuel Kirk & Son. The repoussé pattern on the silver cups is an imitation of the Kirk’s “Baltimore Rose” and Stieff’s “Rose” original. The flowers in the silver cups look more like daises than roses and it lacks the crispness of the more expensive repoussé. Looking at an example of a Kirk pitcher, from a private collection, one can see the difference in the defined flowers and the quality (Figure 2). The mark on the pitcher puts it in the same time period of the chocolate cups, S. Kirk & Son Sterling 925/1000, c. 1900. The white porcelain trumpet shaped liners have a painted double ring of gold at the top. They were used to keep the silver from overheating in turn making the cup usable, even with the addition of the liners the set cannot match the quality of the Kirk pitcher.

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Since the Middle Ages, owning silver has been a way to display one's wealth. It can be returned to its natural state quite quickly, making it as much a commodity that satisfies the wants, needs and tastes of consumers as well as being a physical representation of wealth. The porcelain liner demonstrates a more practical knowledge of what hot water will do to silver and not wanting guests to go away with burnt fingers and lips. The allure of this chocolate set, for many Jewish immigrants, had much to do with the luxury of its material, the beautiful details of the silver S-curve handle and even its repoussé decoration. However it is more than the sum of its decorative parts.

The set is evidence; a symbol for gentility, refinement, and Americanization. The cups are an important attribute into the immersion of American culture for Jewish
immigrant families in Baltimore. The set was given to the JMM by the Lowenstein family of Baltimore and reside in the Malcolm W. Lowenstein collection. He owned house and garden store in Baltimore, ca. 1960. The chocolate set surpasses the achievement of just being pretty silver and porcelain objects. As most objects do, they have a story to tell, in this case, the set is linked to the family’s acculturation into refined American culture. The cups illuminate both the family’s embrace of etiquette and their use of dining goods to illustrate their new socio-economic status in a new nation.

First, the cups show the Lowenstein’s knowledge of the stylish custom for drinking chocolate. Historically, chocolate has been a drink of fashion and health, imbibed by the prosperous and the wealthy since the Mayans. To them it was considered the food of the gods.⁶ Cocoa and the expensive beverage would eventually travel throughout Europe and into North America. Dutch merchants transporting cocoa from Venezuela to Spain introduced the beverage to England in 1657.⁷ A popular drink with both ladies and men, Anne of Austria drank chocolate while entertaining her fellow aristocrats and Louis XIV acquired the custom after marrying Maria Theresa of Spain.⁸

During the reign of Queen Victoria, cocoa was served at breakfast either with coffee or instead of coffee and could be presented along with high tea.⁹ In America, by 1850, the most popular drink was coffee. So fashionable it was even offered after dinner. Coffee was served in tiny cups, in the manner of the French, due to its stimulating nature. When diners wanted something less rousing, cocoa was recommended. Given mostly to

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⁸ Toussaint-Samat, 518.
⁹ Anne Wilson, *Luncheon, Nuncheon and other meals: Eating with the Victorians*. (Alan Sutton Published Ltd., Dover, NH, 1994.), 19 & 74.
Like the British, cocoa was served during breakfast as well, either with coffee or replacing coffee. The etiquette of drinking hot chocolate or cocoa was the same as coffee or tea. Depending on why one was drinking it would dictate the protocol for either situation. Hot Chocolate could be served for either sociability or health. If one were drinking chocolate for their health they would partake of it alone negating the need for a set. Seeking and obtaining these goods can lead to social acceptance and an elevation in social status. In an article published in *Good Housekeeping* Mrs. George W. Childs dining set is illustrated and serves as a testament to the social standing and influence of an Anglo-American culture, which incites a need for imperial possessions and etiquette. Sets are what the wealthy used, starting with Royalty and working its way down until Victorian customs dictated sets for everyone. A Bonaparte tête-à-tête set is proof of this Jewish families willingness to accept any part of royal culture (Figure 3).

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11Ibid, 162.
The six piece set, used for an intimate tea, is ostentatious in decoration and style. A 15”w x 11”l tray and a 7.25”h x 8”w tea pot, the largest pieces in the set, are an interesting way of incorporating royal culture into the possession of an immigrant Jewish family. Owned or inherited by Leslie Legum, who will appear again in this thesis as she owned a multitude of objects one cannot help the curiosity of owing such a peculiar piece. The refinement and history of the French was as important as British acceptance to justification of social movement. The set is in attractive condition. There is some wear and tear to the tray but the other pieces have either not been used or used on a rare occasion. Both the chocolate set and tête-à-tête set substantiate a want and need to be a part of a social standing through objects purchased.
Buying Dining Goods in Baltimore

The Lowenstein chocolate set is an interesting example of what would have been used by Baltimore’s Jewish immigrants during the early twentieth century. The sophisticated silver was an attempt to advantageously exhibit their wealth; it would have been feasible and more pragmatic to use something functional such as a ceramic set. Most sets were ceramic because the material held warmth without burning the user’s hands. The practicality of drinking hot beverages from a silver cup is ridiculous. It is a testament of luxury that the popularity of silver sets grew so vastly to include the middle class. The Lowenstein’s and their immigrant neighbors could purchase chocolate equipage from a variety of producers and in various forms. In 1919, Stieff, a Baltimore-run silver company, offered an after dinner coffee set as part of their case goods merchandise (Figure 4).
The same catalog also featured a chocolate set, but the cups were not part of the set (Figure 5). By the 1920s chocolate sets became a common bridal gift and were advertised for sale in both Jewish and secular newspapers (Figure 6). An advertisement in *The Washington Post* from “The Nationals,” a pay as you go store, advertised for a chocolate set in dinnerware or plated silver: a 4 piece set; made up of a chocolate pot, creamer and sugar, and a tray. Etiquette dictated that if tea was served, it was brought in
on a tray, by either the host or a servant; chocolate and coffee would have been served the same way.\textsuperscript{12}

\textbf{Figure 5:} Stieff Catalog - After dinner coffee, Case Goods. 1919. Courtesy of the Stieff Company.

\textbf{Figure 6:} “The National’s” ad for their Spring Show. The Washington Post, March 30 1924. Pg. R15.

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid, 129.
Hutzler and Bros, started and owned by Abram, David and Charles Hutzler, was a store where Baltimore residents flocked for well-priced goods. As will be explored later in the thesis this Jewish-owned store attracted a large clientele from the city’s immigrant population. As with many department stores in major cities, women would go to be seen and to shop. In Hutzler and Bros’ fiftieth anniversary booklet (1858 to 1908), they boast of their “bric-a-brac” sales floor (Figure 7). The location, goods, and service would cement their status as the leading dry goods and clothing store in Baltimore until 1970.13

Figure 7: Hutzler 50th Anniversary booklet 1858-1908, Bric-a-Brac floor. MS 153, JMM # 2000.011.009.

This photograph illustrates just how much the women of Baltimore had to choose from: silver, in the back, and the dinnerware in closer to the foreground. On the back table, on the right, just before the case is a selection of tea, coffee, and chocolate pots reminiscent of that with which this chapter began. The Jewish middle class were not the only ones who shopped at Hutzler’s. Nor was Hutzler’s the only dry goods/department store in town where Jewish consumers shopped.

Sperry and Hutchinson Company, based out of New York had a store on 412 N. Howard Street in Baltimore. Advertisements that promoted wares from their stores can be found in both “The Jewish Comment” and “Ladies Home Journal” indicating their broad appeal (Figure 8 & 9). Other stores owned by Jews in Baltimore included Hochschild-Kohn & Co. (1897) and the Hecht Co., which catered to a predominantly Jewish clientele and added to the consumer frenzy of the early twentieth century. In a 2001 interview Sarah Goldberg talks about her memories of Baltimore’s department stores. Recalling the times before World War I, when she was about 12, Goldberg noted the four main stores in Baltimore: Bernheimer’s, Hochschild’s, Stort’s and Hutzler’s. Goldberg noted that Jews did not originally shop at Stort’s because they did not employee them, a policy the store would later change due to lack of business. Dining rooms were a popular attraction in department stores in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and Goldberg mentions that she would meet her husband at

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Hutzler’s for dinner and often ate at the Hoschild’s dining room. To her Hutzler’s was more formal and Hoschild’s was homier, better for lunch and dinner with girlfriends.\textsuperscript{15}

\textbf{Figure 8: Advertisement, Sperry and Hutchinson, “The Jewish Comment.” March 15, 1912.}

\textsuperscript{15}Ibid.
Reading Dining Through Anglo-American Magazines

To get a sense of what was being sold and what influenced Baltimore’s newly planted Eastern European immigrants one also has to look to larger trends in secular culture. The May 15, 1886 issue of *Good Housekeeping* showcased the diner sets of Mrs. George W. Childs as an example of good taste (Figure 10). Like other American consumers, Jewish women read popular publications such as *Good Housekeeping*. 
It is worth describing the Childs’ dining room and its equipage in full because this is the type of sovereign influence to which German Jews were introduced and it is in stark contradiction to how reformers educated Eastern European Jews. Mrs. Child’s maiden name was Emma B. Peterson, her husband was a co-owner of the “Philadelphia Public Ledger” and was born in Baltimore, Maryland. The couple entertained a great number of important and famous people throughout their lives together. Between the image of their dining room and the article one can get a good sense of what the dining room meant to the German Jews who attempted to fit themselves into this rubric of etiquette and gentility. Articles like this one instructed readers on what to purchase and how to arrange their living spaces. Besides etiquette manuals and home guides that provided more detailed information on how to eat while dining, weekly or monthly publications gave a better sense of how to decorate. By 1900 Good Housekeeping also began to include more practical tips on how to decorate within the working and middle class budget.
The Childs article far exceeds what even the middle class housewife could achieve. From it, however, one can get an idea of just how important the dining room was at this time. It was considered the heart of the house, “[W]hat portion of the dwelling is worthy of more consideration than that in which the body is daily refreshed and fortified?”\textsuperscript{16} The Childs’ dining room measured thirty feet by fifteen feet and it was sixteen feet high; the average Baltimore housewife would be happy with half of that space. The article instructs that the ideal dining room be cheerful, well ventilated and be situated on the first floor.\textsuperscript{17} Looking forward to the immigrant dwellings of the Eastern

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
\end{flushleft}
European housewives none of those qualities would describe their tenement kitchens or
dining rooms. Middle class housewives could achieve those attributes in homes,
however, apartments would be tricky. A Community Silver advertisement published in
1914 encourages those qualities in a dining room for an apartment, suggesting that they
could be transferred to less commodious housing (Figure 11).

Figure 11: Advertisement Community Silver. Hebrew Standard, April 3, 1914. Courtesy of the New York
Public Library, Jewish Division.

The style for the Childs dining room is very different than the example set for
Eastern European Jews in the early twentieth century. In the photo of the model
tenement kitchen, one can see into the dining room (Figure 22). It too has the quality of good ventilation but is lacking the highly decorative furniture and dinner wares of the Childs home.\textsuperscript{18} Good Housekeeping writer, Hester Poole, described the dining table as seating twenty four persons, and it sits on an Aubusson carpeting made of rich colors (Figure 10). A fraction of what the Childs own sits upon a scarlet Oriental cashmere table cloth embroidered with bullion thread. The tables setting are pure opulence. In the center is a silver gilt vasiform topped with eight burners. Flanked on either end of the table are two silver gilt candelabras, “…richly chased and finished by winged griffins…”\textsuperscript{19} In the midst of the towering silver candelabras are a silver and gilt wine cooler, a fifteen inch (diameter) crystal bowl, crystal carafes, compote fruit and bonbon stands at varying heights, and a veritable World’s fair of drink ware. The ornate glasses are noted as traveling from Bohemia and Carlsbad; the champagne glasses were presented to the Childs by Gen. Grant.\textsuperscript{20} Moving on to the dinner ware and flatware, Hester Pools notes that only a fraction of what is seen in the illustration, on the table, completes the set. The table is set for twenty four and still the majority of the set stays in the upper pantries.\textsuperscript{21} Pools does not mention who made the dinnerware, just that the plates are edged with a half inch gilt band and ornamented with small multi colored flowers twisted against a narrow turquoise band just inside the gilt, on porcelain white

\textsuperscript{18} The likelihood of maintaining a clean and clutter free area in a tenement flat is impossible. The amount of bodies, goods and the lack of hygienic facilities (i.e. bathroom) did not allow for clean living space. The struggle in promoting the qualities of hygiene is what frustrated domestic reformers and occupants of tenements felt as if they were set up to fail.\textsuperscript{19} \textit{Ibid}, 3. \textsuperscript{20}\textit{Ibid}. \textsuperscript{21}\textit{Ibid}.  

21
As seen in the illustration just above the dinner plates are fish plates. The fish plates are more cream in color and are decorated with life-like images of trout, salmon, bass, and shad.

Flatware is not mentioned at all but by the photograph one can see it is silver and set modestly. Depending on what type of service the Childs used for entertaining it would dictate what we would see on the table. The two styles were Old English and à la russe. Old English, where the main and side dishes are placed on the table to be passed by host and guests, was used by Americans until the last third of the nineteenth century. For the à la russe service—which took hold by the late nineteenth century—the dishes are placed on a side table and servants do the carving and waiting. More than likely by 1886 the Childs would want to be in fashion and adopted the à la russe method of serving.

Throughout the article Pools discusses the other dinner, lunch, tea, and dessert services in the Childs collection. All of them of very high quality. The few manufactures she notes are Royal Vienna manufactory, Minton and Copeland. However, throughout the article the author emphasizes that this couple traveled the earth to find great treasures of silver, crystal, and porcelain. Pools writes, “[i]n intrinsic value it far exceeds the estimate placed upon it in print, but that is priceless which has been gathered from the far ends of the earth accompanied with a sympathetic appreciation of the loveliness and rarity of the workmanship and artistic beauty.” Only one of the pieces is from an unnamed American company who completed the fifteen inch crystal bowl. Comparing

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22 Ibid.
23 Williams, 152.
24 Poole, 4.
the Childs dining room to the Model Tenement kitchen one cannot help but see the unadornment that was endorsed by the established Jewish population. Even the chocolate cups shown previously would not fit into the Childs collection, and as high-end as Hutzler’s was considered to be neither would their goods.²⁵

Jean Gordon and Jan McArthur mention Hestor Pool in their article titled “Popular Culture, Magazines and American Domestic Interiors, 1898-1940.”²⁶ They note that Pool, “…a saucy roving reporter…” focused on Americans’ eclectic taste.²⁷ Americans can be seen to mimic that eclectic style of the wealthy well into the early nineteenth century, from furniture ads to silver and dinner ware ads. However a few questions arise while looking at these ads: does the focus of Americanization replace gentility? If so is gentility now being overlooked by advertisers and monthly publications? In fact, they are as focused on both. Advertisers honed in on specific markets with secular magazines and newspapers so they could target all immigrant populations, including Jews who, like other immigrants, wanted to be seen as American. For example, a 1920, *Ladies Home Journal* ad from Community plate focused on what a woman wanted out of her silverware: “No need to give her less than the best,” Community plate wants the viewer to see that having the “best” is the American way(Figure 12).²⁸ This ad places gentility at the forefront, despite the fact it is advertising for plated wares not Sterling silver. It targets those, like many recent

²⁵ Despite the fact the advertisers used national identity to sell their wares; the immoderately wealthy never stopped promoting their accumulated worldly goods to appear more American.
²⁷Ibid.
immigrants who shopped at Hutzler’s, by focusing on consumers who could not afford Sterling but could imitate it with products that offered “unequaled quality and design.”

In publications, such as *Good Housekeeping* and *Ladies Home Journal*, virtually all of the articles created a pro American attitude through goods while emphasizing gentility. Jewish immigrants were not the only ones affected, since the majority of the middle and working class Americans were once immigrants, but they too imbibed the

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suggestions for what to purchase and how it should be arranged in what kinds of
domestic spaces. Many of the directions from popular authors focused on purchasing and
using goods produced in colonial American styles that reinforced ideas of gentility as
well as American identity. This change can be seen in the advertisements for all aspects
of the dining room from furniture to tableware in which advertisers collectively promoted
acceptance of an American style as opposed to the Arts and Crafts or mission styles.
BAWO & Dotter’s ad in the *Ladies Home Journal* for Limoges Colonial China pattern
suggests, “If your dining-room has other Colonial furnishings, you should have a Dinner
Service of our ‘Pearl Shape’ or an important detail is over looked.” A similar ad from the
same company in the April issue of *Ladies Home Journal* labels the Colonial design
“elite” (Figure 13 &14). The John Shillito Company declared in “The American
Israelite” that they have a vast assortment of styles; modern and even the exclusive
reproductions of early periods (Figure 15).\(^\text{30}\) Dining rooms from the Italian Renaissance,
Flanders, English, and the most popular Mission and Colonial are all available, which
brings us to the forms that were used in the dining room.

\(^\text{30}\) Individuality was not promoted by domestic reformers, popular magazines, or etiquette guides. It was
not seen as a quality to emulate until the mid-twentieth century, when mix-n-match was more than an
individual who didn’t have enough money to fit into a specific socio-economic class. How would
individuality fit into acculturation and would it part of resistance?
Figure 13: Advertisement Colonial Design China. Ladies Home Journal, April 1900, vol XVII no 5 pg 22.

Figure 14: BAWO & Dotter “Colonial China.” Ladies Home Journal, February 1900, Vol XVII no 3 pg 19
Teaching Gentility

While some Jewish immigrants quickly became enmeshed in Anglo-American consumer dining culture through their own volition, purchasing items in department stores and reading periodicals that instructed them in what types of goods elite Americans used, other Jewish immigrants came to gentility through educational programs administered by Jewish elites. As will be explored further in future chapters, there were numerous places to gain knowledge of what was appropriate for the Tenement home.
The Clare de Hirsch Home for Working Girls was a popular place in New York, the Jewish Education Alliance (JE A) and the Young Women’s Hebrew Association (YWHA) were both in Baltimore, and then there was Mabel Hyde Kittredge, a good friend of Lillian Wald who formed the Association of Practical Housekeeping Centers. Domestic reformers, such as Kittredge, focused on ideas of gentility and refinement promoted through tenement houses and her prescriptions for dining goods are clear to those who read her manuals.

Kittredge wrote several books relating housekeeping and the management of the home between 1910 and 1920. The direction she bestowed on all Jewish women can be seen in *Housekeeping Notes: How to Furnish and Keep House in a Tenement Flat* (1911). The first portion of the books discussed what you need in your home. A dining/living room requires: a table, six chairs, scrim curtains, paper basket, air tight stove, desk (stained kitchen table, rack at the back for papers, chairs (two, not upholstered, and a lamp). In total all furnishings should cost around $19.85. The dishes recommended are small plates (six), large places (six), cups and saucers (six), large and small platter, vegetable dishes (two), a baking dish, a teapot, milk pitcher, sugar bowl, salt shakers (two), a pepper shaker, water pitcher, sauce dishes(six), glasses (six), butter dishes (six), dessert or salad plates (six) and an “odd” pitcher. Kittredge also mandated that table napkins, plate doilies and two centerpieces be used in place of table

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33Ibid, 8.
Having specialized goods in a home did not make one genteel if the objects themselves were not refined. However Kittredge did not offer immigrants an immediate path to total gentility rather she intended to provide immigrants with a type of skeleton key of what they should own before the American dream came through, even if it did not include a chocolate set. In *Bread Givers*, AnziaYezierska’s story of an early twentieth-century immigrant family living in New York City, she notes that, “Mashah came home with stories that in rich people’s homes they had silver knives and forks, separate for each person.” Even if immigrants did not immediately purchase all of these goods, access to others’ consumption gave them an idea of what social competencies they should be mastering.

Kittredge counseled her readers on cleaning essentials in her book as well; silver should be cleaned after every use. (One wonders how many immigrants required this information.) She also mentions that the wooden handle of knives and forks should not sit in water but should be wiped off with a damp cloth. Wooden handled knives and fork should be used for everyday breakfasts. If the family did not have enough money to purchase other utensils, wooden ones should be used for formal meals as well. Lunch and dinner required the use of silver flatware or plated flatware. The lessons included the cleaning of “[g]lasses, silver, teacups, saucers, rest of china, granite and tin ware, pots and pans.” Kittridge directed that granite and tin ware be used during breakfast; they were the cheapest form of dinnerware. Immigrants barely had time for a meal during the

34 Ibid.
36 Kittridge, 22.
week, so dictation of what wares to use for meals is problematic. Taking time to separate
glass, silver, granite, tin and china was less time a tenant had to earn rent money. It was
more important to have money for rent that is was to be genteel, there would be time for
that later.

**Jewish Immigrant Ideas of Gentility in the Working Class**

Due to the amount of use and abuse everyday dining items took, finding such
plates, cups and saucers is rare. No examples of working-class or lower-class immigrant
dining items, from tenements, have been discovered in museum collections from Jewish
Baltimoreans. This lack is not surprising given their hard use as well as the collecting
practices of museums, which tend to privilege the more aesthetically pleasing possessions
of the middle and elite classes. For that reason, this analysis will bring in relevant
examples from New York City as comparisons as well as the possessions of those in
other immigrant groups which also provide insight into what Baltimore Jews of the lower
classes were using, purchasing, and thinking about dining.

Robert K. Fitts identifies in “Becoming American: The Archaeology of an Italian
Immigrant,” that his case study, Michael Pette, was aware of and practiced the genteel
dining rituals for a middle class American. In his study of Pette he proves that the mixing
of cultures for an Italian immigrant can be seen through his dining practices. Fitts
indicates that the gentility is only accepted through the adoption of American dining
practices which requires “…specialized forms for specific functions.” He also argues that Italian dining tables were not always set with matching dishes, as was the early twentieth century American custom, but in a more family style serving manner. Through what Kitts recovered he determined that “Pette owned full every day and formal table settings as well as multiple tea sets.” Shards of dinner ware were recovered in plain white granite, plain white hard paste porcelain and blue shell edged white ware. A large number of tea sets were recovered, which is indicative of genteel dining. Fitts believes that Pette would have used them for coffee as well since most Italians drank more coffee than tea. The Victorian Majolica that was recovered, in forms not for genteel dining, suggests that Pette could serve guests as his native homeland would have determined.

Fitts references the work of Jenna Weissman Joselit and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett because their study prompted a more in-depth look at the dining table through both Jewish and secular influence. After translating Yiddish newspapers articles and etiquette guides both Joselit found that Jewish immigrants to New York strived to embrace genteel dining even within limited means. Jewish immigrants to Baltimore likely did the same. Though the material evidence has not survived, literary sources give us insight into their ideas and purchasing habits. In My Mother and I an autobiography by Elizabeth Gertrud Stern, for example, she encapsulates this process writing

38 Ibid., 9
39 Ibid.
40 Joselit, 21-23. It is through her research that she believes Jews displayed concern for rituals that cultural and social upward mobility was important to them.
[I]ittle by little, though, we were changing in our own home. The white cloth which had always been spread on the table on Sabbath and holy days only, now displaced the red cloth even on week days. Napkins were served at meals. Once after we had removed the dishes from the table and I turned to leave mother looked at me archly saying, ‘Wait, there is more. You forget.’

Kittredge advocated that all the children in the home learn domestic lessons; properly setting and clearing the table was for children of the apartment. Her book was a guide for those who could not get to a Practical Housekeeping Center. Stern was one of those girls. She learned cooking in school and when she visited secular friends outside of her neighborhood she was introduced into homes that had living rooms. She went back to her home and told her parents about such a room and they believed her to be putting on airs. “Someone told me that I was selfish, and I felt my heart contract at the accusation. Those who had seen ‘parlors’ thought me presuming[,]” Yet Stern was lucky enough to have a mother who wanted to fulfill all of the new American customs her daughter divulged to her. When the tenants in Stern’s house moved out, Elizabeth’s parents gave her a room to use as a “living room.” As a room of her very own, she fashioned it as a room for the Sabbath. Stern marks an important part of her life after this gift from her parents,

In one corner we put a folding bed. In another was a table. There were chairs and chairs. And a little book-case which my mother had bought somewhere to surprise me. Here a last was a ‘Sabbath room.’ Here was my room. My room came to be different from every other room in the house. I did not notice the change in it, as I did not perceive that I was changing.

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42 *Ibid*, 100.
For Stern it was a gradual change and to others, such as Yezierska’s main character Sarah, it was a necessity and unappreciated by her parents.

An article in the February edition from 1900, titled “The Actual Cost of Furnishing a House,” told women the equipage needed for a seven room house could be comfortably furnished for around $600. Elizabeth Gertrud Stern and her mother could have easily accumulated information from a myriad of publications and as tenants moved from their house in Soho they gained rooms. An article such as this combined with Elizabeth’s knowledge of her friends’ homes would be helpful in the process of purchasing accessories. The article, written by Maria Parola, was based upon a study conducted by three editors at *Ladies Home Journal* proclaimed to be “…The Three Foremost Domestic Authorities in America…” They recommend that a household needs these items, at a bare minimum: table, sideboard table, chairs, nine yards of matting and window shades, china, glass and plated wares, table linen and a carving set that totals $164.50. Kittredge’s total for the dining/living rooms was $28.09. $136.41 was what separated the middle class from the working class monetarily in this analysis. Parloa advocates that “[u]nless one can afford the right kind of sideboard it is better to purchase a sideboard table in a simple design;” simple lines in furniture are better than cheap fancy.\(^{44}\)

\(^{43}\)Parloa, 28.  
\(^{44}\)Ibid.
Reconciling Judaism with Gentility: Advertisers and Advice

Kittredge made a point of noting that the sum for the plated ware was small because the domestic authorities expected the beginner to receive gifts of silver and other wares. Certainly some Jewish immigrants in Baltimore did so. Jacob and Osnot Kornblatt received a gift a crystal wine goblet, pitcher and wasp waist glass for their wedding in 1903. All three items were donated to the Jewish Museum of Maryland (Figure 16). Other items that are characteristic of the time with provenances tracing them to Jewish families are a ladle, used by the Kornblatt family from 1900 (Figure 17). An impression of a Tiffany & Co. English King punch ladle it is a good example of refinement by imitation. So too is the Limoges cake plate owned by Elizabeth Cohen from 1917, also given to the JMM (Figure 18).

Figure 16: Goblet, Square pitcher and Wasp Waist Glass three items of glassware given as a wedding gift in 1903 to Jacob and Osnot Kornblatt. JMM #’s 1987.130.021, 1987.130.022, 1987.130.025a
Figure 17: Ladle: c. 1900, Silver ladle used by the Kornblatt family. JMM object # 1987.130.018
The painted on signature suggests it is from Limoge, France, but not from a specific manufacture. A more expensive piece would have been marked with marks from Havilland, Guerin, or Pouyat.

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries domestic authors argued that silver, china and glass brought harmony and order to a chaotic dining room and helped to elevate the overall effect in echoing those of wealthier homes. The eclectic revival style did not fit, literally, into a tenement apartment. Domestic reformers in the early twentieth century advocated for the same order, with more cleanliness than the Victorians even had. However consumerism would win. The clean lines of colonial and mission were sold to Eastern European immigrants but at a far slower rate than domestic reformers wanted. The ads of the time reflected what American consumers wanted, while
companies such as Community Plate and Gold Medal Flour went after Jewish consumers. The established German Jewish population was apprehensive; having gone through the rise of Victorian gentility they knew that to move up in society it was necessary to practice within the confine of those boundaries. Between the 1860s to 1900 multiple forms were added to sets of dishes and serving pieces, either due to the introduction of new foods or to new refined rules on how to eat old favorites. Changing how meals were served also aided the need for sets of dishes and serving ware.

Sets for dining can be seen as developing for multiple reasons, a thriving economy that in turn gave the middle class a chance to emulate the wealthy, expansion of industry and mechanical leaps to help both developments along with the use of inexpensive new materials. These led to Americans emulating their European peers and through that came the need to understand new manners and social codes. Books like John Ruth’s Decorum: A Practical Treatise on Etiquette and Dress of the Best American Society and Eliza Leslie’s, The Ladies’ Guide to True Politeness and Perfect Manners gave the impression that anyone could learn to convey good manners and their presence would be sought out making them feel at home in any society.\(^{45}\) Acknowledging the influence of new dinner services, from 1865 to 1930, there are three usual services; à la française, à la Russe, and the American service, which is a mix of both. Victorians started with à la française, three courses for dinner, each course had multiple dishes.\(^{46}\)

By the late 1880s, the upper class had switched to à la Russe for their formal meals. À la Russe put more emphasis on the course, servants and dinnerware than the

\(^{45}\)Williams, 22.  
\(^{46}\)Ibid.
previous service. It also left the table open. Without heavy serving dishes on the table guests could focus on the decoration, they were also free from the burden of carving. “Serving from the side” as dubbed by the Americans, gained in popularity and some meals lasted over three hours. With new services there were new rules. Setting the table meant each service; oysters, soup, meat, vegetables, sauces, bread, pickles, cheese, salads and dessert, had to have its own dishes and serving pieces. By the late nineteenth century, authors like Mary Henderson, *Practical Cooking and Dinner Giving* and Juliet Corson, *Practical American Cookery*, advocated the mix of services. The suggestion was to position the essential main dishes on the table, along with a floral center piece surrounded by relishes and small sweets, and have servants bring out the hot vegetable dishes and dessert. This mixed service lessened the need for each person to be served and decreased the number of servants to employ for the night.47 This is what initially led to increasing sets of dishes. It would be immigrant’s jobs to adapt these customs to their own homes, such as Stern’s Shabbat room.

Since immigrant girls did not have servants they learned how cook and keep an attractive table from public schools, books such as Kittredge’s and from their mothers’ advice. Essentially they were taught how to be domestic servants; how to adapt to their own homes. Even if they did not get jobs as domestic help they would always know how to maintain a smart table. In an effort to support and aid fellow immigrants, articles in Yiddish newspapers and cookbooks helped any woman keep up with American customs. The cookbooks that were used depended on one’s preference and location. There were

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numerous church and Christian women’s groups who put out their own cookbooks, domestic guides and etiquette books. Within that spectrum so did Jewish women and Jewish sisterhood organizations.48

With domestic reformers creating heavy propaganda around etiquette and décor it was only a matter of time before it took hold. By the eve of World War I, both East Baltimore and the Lower East side of Manhattan were seeing the results of a developing culture of civility. *Etiquette: A Guide to Proper Behavior Politeness and Good Manners for Men and Women, Assembled According to the Best Authorities*, published in 1912 is an encyclopedia of etiquette. Considered the Yiddish adaptation of Emily Post, it discussed the rules of conduct for every situation of social interaction.49 Focusing heavily on dining etiquette, the reader was advised to use only the proper utensils. If a host had the proper place settings, they were to be used. One should never use a knife to transfer food to their mouths and never use a spoon when you could use a fork.50 Even Yiddish advertisements and commercial cookbooks advocated this way of living, the need for rules and civility.

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48 These books tend to stay in communities and focus more on food and meal creation. They had small sections on table settings but it is as if the reader should already know this information.
49 Joselit, 38.
50 Ibid.
The cover of the *Gold Medal Flour Cookbook*, shows a Jewish family around a Shabbos table (Figure 19). Every aspect of this drawing is a sign of the times, and it is possibly one of the best examples of the stereotypical Jewish immigrant family. It is missing the hordes of other family members that would have also been sitting around the
table, but the essence is there. The father stands in the middle blessing the challah bread before the meal. A symbol of both the modern and immigrant Jewish family, he is the center of their world. His height is also a characteristic of the family dynamic. Both mother and son sit quietly while the blessing commences. Some characteristics to note before moving to the tableware, mother and son have generic facial features while the father has the stereotypical large hook nose associated with Jews. He looks quite a bit older than his wife, not uncommon for the time period.

A few questions come to mind with this ad/cookbook. If a company is breaking into a new market why would they use the image of a “typical” Jewish man to represent their consumer? Which should lead someone to inquire, who is the consumer? It is not the husband; he’s not going to the store, buying the goods, and preparing the meal. Yet this type of pragmatic advertising was indicative of food industry. Different ethnicities put out specialty cookbooks for holidays with recipes that could be made year round. Gold Medal flour is showing respect, even with the stereotypical Jewish man, to their new consumer, the Jewish housewife. While using traditional images of rituals and food they were also promoting change. Advertisers pinpointed their audience, with small cookbooks showing a new American custom, the Shabbos dinner.51 This is an uplifting image to Jews who want to be recognized as Jews and Americans. It is an illustration of acculturation that resonates within a community trying not to separate its self.

51 Although the Friday night meal is nothing new, its association to advertisers is new. Jews were not advertised to in other countries yet in the United States the consumer is important despite obvious culture/religious differences. It is both an indication of acceptance and conformity.
Along with the generic faces of both mother and son are the generic table ware and surrounding furniture, and yet it looks very similar to the model tenement kitchen (Figure 22). The sparseness of furniture works in favor of relating to an immigrant population. However, it is an ideal of what those apartments would look like if they were not overcrowded with family, tenants, work and furniture. Unknowingly they are also promoting the domestic reformers’ rules of etiquette. The silverware, plates, and glasses, all clean and sparkling, are laid out accordingly. Using traditional imagery and customs, Gold Medal Flour entices female Jewish consumers to see that an American staple ingredient can fit into even the most holy of Jewish celebrations. They can have Anglo-American gentility, through the ritual of baking, cutting and eat challah on Shabbat.

The Community Silver ad placed in the Hebrew Standard, in 1914, shows two sophisticated Jews planning their Passover Seder (Figure 11). It is a different type of advertisement than Gold Medal Flour, however, they reach the same conclusion. The couple sit, albeit very casually, in front of a ubiquitous city, dressed in urbane clothing with a caption stating, “The young housekeeper who is planning her first Passover should select Community Silver for its artistic designs will make your Passover table the most attractive[].” In this context silverware has a unique way of being a universal equalizer. Community advertises to the Jewish housekeeper. The piece of silverware on the bottom is a cake server. It could just as easily be found in the home of non-Jews used

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52 The plate off to the side belongs to the father, it is customary because the two challahs need to sit in front of him to bless before the meal. The place setting is moved back once the bread has been sliced and everyone receives a piece.

to serve their cakes as it could be to serve a traditional Jewish noodle kugel. This ad in particular only shows one type of server. The majority of Community Silver Plate ads in secular magazines were focused on what a man was buying for the consumer, i.e. his wife. This ad states that the consumer, Jewish housekeep, is purchasing it for herself. It pushes the consumer to start an American tradition of refined silver plate and suggesting it be added for established Jewish celebrations, in turn promoting acculturation. However it is also showing the Jewish housekeeper is more willing to buy her own goods than have them “gifted” to her. In actuality, as will be more fully discussed in later chapters, Jewish “housekeepers” went through the same process the majority of early twentieth century women dealt with, being the consumer without means of purchasing.
CHAPTER TWO

Domestic Education from Middle class reformers: The Russians are coming

In the home economics guide Increasing Home Efficiency (1912), author Martha S. Bruère provides insight into perceptions of eastern European Jewish girls at the beginning of the twentieth century. Bruère presents anecdotal stories for educational purposes. One of them involves a “little Russian Jewess” and a “brisk little American girl.”

Noting that the school takes girls from immigrant families west of State Street as well as well-to-do girls from Hyde Park, the period reader would quickly note the geographical distinctions between classes: new immigrants to New York City versus well-established Anglo-Americans. Bruere’s story draws a distinction between the social knowledge and familiarity with genteel goods enjoyed by Hyde Park residents and the unfamiliarity with genteel dining rituals evidenced by the State Street dweller. Upon being told to set the table for a specific menu, the Russian Jewess did not know what to use or where to put the dishes and flatware. While the Jewess attempted to set the table the American girl corrected her along the way. After the table was set the Jewess believed it to be too crowded with objects; the American girl boldly stated that she thought it looked just fine. The American girl from the undoubtedly “well to do”

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neighborhood, comes from a family which employed proper genteel behavior. The teacher’s response to the incident is perhaps more telling than the girls’ actions, “‘No wonder she thinks there is too much on the table,’ the teacher whispered. ‘Sophie’s people practically never sit down to a meal. They are just on the edge of destitution and eat whenever and wherever they can get food.’”

As Martha S. Bruère and other reformers like her well knew, working class women, and especially many recent immigrants to urban environments such as New York City and Baltimore faced great economic difficulties as well as periods of social readjustment. While the home life of working class women and middle class women was similar in that they both worked at similar tasks, the working class woman endured more hardships. She knows no leisure time nor time alone. The picture Bruère paints of a family so desperate to make ends meet that they do not have time for a meal is based on fact, yet it also serves to perpetuate stereotypes about Jewish immigrant behaviors and lack of knowledge. The teacher is not talking just about Sophie’s family but rather condemns the whole of Jewish immigrants in Chicago, New York and Baltimore. The impression this anecdote will leave on the educators who use this book, or students who learn from it, is one of social, cultural, and racial prejudice. The prejudice is not in saying that working class families do not know the rules of gentility, but instead in assuming that all Jews possessed no form of decorum.

\[\text{Ibid.}\]
A black and white photograph of an unidentified Baltimore toddler discovered in the Lansburgh family papers, from the JMM, effectively disputes the image Bruère portrays (Figure 20). The little girl in the picture is about two or three years old and impeccably dressed, sporting a polished demeanor and promoting a respectability beyond her years. She is perched beside a table and grasps a teacup with floral decoration in both her hands, seeming to be about to lift it to her lips. The toddler’s parents undoubtedly valued manners since the teacup is more prominently featured in her photograph than the toys strewn about the table’s surface. Moreover, we are confident that she is familiar with the rituals of gentility since the toddler is happier to play with the teacup than her toys.
Unfortunately there is little evidence about the Lansburgh family and nothing to demonstrate whether they were recent immigrants or members of a more established German Jewish population. What can be proven is that the Jews of Baltimore held gentility in high regard. Yet tracing Jewish immigrants’ interactions with gentility can be difficult due to the stereotypes laid upon them by domestic reformers, and even from some within their own culture,

The established German Jewish population viewed Eastern European Jewish immigrants with disdain. Isaac M. Fein charts the common path that many Jews followed to acculturation after settling in the United States. Generations of immigrants worked hard to meld their culture with American culture and, by 1880, many within the German immigrant population saw themselves as American natives. While they had gained substantial knowledge which would have aided new immigrants, many members of this community chose not to help, despite many having been immigrants themselves just a few years before. Instead, they saw incoming refugees from Eastern Europe as distasteful and urged segregation and deportation. Leaders of Baltimore’s German Jewish community put out statements to the European Jewish agencies to stop sending more immigrants as the Jewish communities’ funds were exhausted. They claimed new Jewish immigrants were becoming a bane to the country and a curse to all that the German Jews had established. N.S. Weil a secretary of the Baltimore chapter of an Immigrant Aid Society established in Baltimore sent word to the New York chapter that no more refugees were to be sent down and that the immigrants wished to be returned to

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Fein, 144.
Ibid.
Europe. This was wistful thinking on his part. As Fein points out the image of Eastern European Jews begging to “go home” was false; they came for a new life and wanted to stay.

Part of Baltimore’s German Jews’ reaction may have stemmed from fears over their communities being engulfed by rising numbers of Eastern European immigrants. In Baltimore, the number of German Jews immigrating to Baltimore dropped significantly in the 1860’s. However the number of Eastern Europeans was on the rise. From 1881 to 1890 approximately 24,095 Eastern European Jewish immigrants landed in the port of Baltimore. This would prove to be the peak of migration. Between 1891 and 1898 17,367 entered Baltimore and between 1900 and 1905 the average number of Jews that came in to Baltimore was between five and six thousand. Though the number of eastern European Jews dropped each year, the population continued to build at a sizeable pace. While not all would stay in the city, the problems of overcrowding, unemployment, and health issues that began in the 1880s were still relevant to those who stayed in the city at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Eastern European Jews who came to Baltimore turned for help to a small number of sympathetic German born Jews who were already well established in the local community. Although the initial reaction from German Jewish settlers was to stop the migration as quickly as possible, after a slow start the Germans took to the aide movement. Religious-centered or nationality-driven charities were common in the

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58 Ibid, 148.
59 Ibid, 144.
60 Ibid, 149.
United States between 1880 and 1920. For example, Christian charitable, missionary, and temperance organizations were common. All of these groups embody the same efforts that domestic reformers sought to achieve with working class families.\textsuperscript{61} In Baltimore, Henrietta Szold and her father Rabbi Benjamin Szold ventured to the docks, starting in the late 1870’s, to assist with the influx of Eastern European Jews. They had an intellectual and spiritual connection with the progressive thinkers of the Russian community. The Szold family were focused more on general education than domestic education. They consistently had immigrants to their Shabbat and holiday table justifying that the newly established could preserve their Jewish tradition while integrating American ways.\textsuperscript{62} German-born Jews’ intentions were altruistic but also to some extent self-serving; they wanted to move forward in their own process of Americanization.

**Baltimore’s Patrons: Department Stores**

A few organizations were established in Baltimore for immigrant aid, most notably the Baron de Hirsch Fund (1891) and the Hebrew Benevolent Society (1856). In 1917, President Louis S. Hutzler, the son of a German immigrant, addressed the tremendous difficulties immigrants were having in Baltimore at an annual board meeting. Hutzler knew that only organizations like his and a few others could make a difference. Without aide these families would not make it through the winter and Baltimore would have even more mouths to feed and bodies to clothe. Hutzler’s testimony to the affluent

\textsuperscript{61}Caroline Young Friedman. “The Great Influence of the Mothers in Israel” Baltimore’s Jewish Community Confronts the Women Question, (Generations; The Jewish Museum of Maryland, 2009/2010), 35.

\textsuperscript{62}Fein, 144.
Jews of Baltimore was indicative of Jews monitoring other Jews, in this case the working class or the poor. Those who applied for aide, were either unemployed, or worked part-time and still could not make ends meet. By contrast those Jews who founded, fundraised for, and administered charitable organizations were financially successful, and some tremendously successful. Louis S. Hutzler and Albert David Hutzler Sr., president of the Associated Jewish Charities, were both prominent men of influence in Baltimore. Hutzler’s was well known in Maryland as a high-end department store owned and run by Jews. These men then significantly influenced Jewish consumer culture through Hutzler’s Department store. Their eagerness to be a part of charitable organizations and Baltimore’s consumer culture was indicative of their spirit as a Jews.

The association of Hutzler’s with Jewish cultural identity is clear in later interviews conducted with members of Baltimore’s Jewish community. Sara Goldberg, for instance, started shopping at Hutzler & Bros when she was a teenager. When interviewed she stated that “…[t]he stores were purposely geared towards Jewish people.” She also noted they did not sell specifically Jewish items until later, they closed on High Holidays and it wasn’t until after World War I that they would stay open on all Jewish holidays. Given that the majority of Hutzler’s patrons were Jewish, they had a profound impact upon what members of Baltimore’s Jewish community purchased. In addition, their business practices and philanthropic work increased their importance in promoting both traditional Jewish values and new American values. This melding of the ethnic community with new American identity is encapsulated in “The Baltimore Girl”

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63 Oral History of Sara Goldberg, 11:30.
64 Ibid.
print. In the commemorative fiftieth anniversary of Hutzler Brothers brochure, A.G. and David Hutzler looked back and gave thanks to the patrons of Baltimore. In 1907 they asked New York artist and illustrator Harrison Fisher to paint the typical “Baltimore girl.” (Figure 21). Mr. Fisher, knowing the city and frequenting it many times, told the brothers that he had the perfect pretty girl in mind. Fisher was known for his commissions for the *Saturday Evening Post, McClure’s, Ladies Home Journal, and Cosmopolitan*. His representations of women were not standardized, but they were not culturally diverse.

Figure 21: “The Baltimore Girl,” Harrison Fisher. 1907. Fiftieth Anniversary 1858-1908 Hutzler Brothers, Baltimore. JMM # 1989.207.004, MS 153.
Thus the “Baltimore Girl” appears to be a close cousin of the famous Gibson Girl: rosy-cheeked and fresh-faced wearing a becoming hat of pink roses she fits the type of an American beauty. Yet her flowing dark hair and fair skin may suggest an ethnic identity. Perhaps to her patrons and to the Hutzler’s customers she could have appeared as a Jewish-American Baltimore girl, a perfect (and fantastical) representation of traditional Jewish values as expressed through American consumerism.

**Women’s Organizations Aid in Refinement**

Times were hard for Eastern European Jews, it does not seem as if aspects of their culture would be affected by domestic, educational, and philanthropic organizations. Yet these groups had as much influence into consumer culture and domestic culture as popular magazines, ads in newspapers and real life knowledge of what was selling on the streets and in department stores. Two that had great importance in Baltimore were the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) and the Ladies Sewing Society (LSS). NCJW was a civic branch that basically monitored smaller groups. The organization had chapters all over the United States. The LSS, started as a charity providing clothing to the poor, later they would provide furniture, and would eventually help women learn the seamstress trade. Their organization foreshadowed a change in what charity was to become by the twentieth century, the outcome was to gain skills and even a job out of what was given.\(^{65}\)

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\(^{65}\)Fein, 153.
The main organizations involved in Baltimore immigrant culture were the NCJW, organized in 1894, the Jewish Education Alliance (JEA) formed in 1909, and the Young Women’s Hebrew Association (YWHA). They were the first effective organizations to educate women on domestic ideals in Baltimore and around the country. Baltimore’s garment industry overshadowed other activities for women. Sewing classes were dominant on the list of organizations such as the JEA, YWHA, and LSS. Domestic reform was inconsequential, in the manner of cities like New York, Baltimore had to respond to the domestic reform sanitation movement.

The JEA’s main objective, as part of a national settlement house movement, was to engender social service in urban areas, specifically immigrant neighborhoods. In “A ‘Children’s playground’ and ‘Centre for Adults,’” historian Jennifer Vess summarizes that although the house was utilized mostly for children, it was also a center for adults. “Programs, lectures, and classes aimed at adults addressed many of the issues dear to the hearts of reformers of the day—health and sanitation, culture, and citizenship[,]” all of these meant to enrich the lives of immigrants intellectually and culturally. The house was a place to get away from the overcrowding of tenements.

New York City had the largest immigrant population. Consequently they had the greatest number of relief organizations for immigrations. Not only did they have national organizations that started in the city but they also had privately run organizations such as the Hebrew Technical School for girls and the Clara de Hirsch, the only daughter of

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66 Jewish Education Alliance, “Meeting minutes,” January 1921 report, MS 170, Folder 213.
Baron de Hirsch, home for working Girls. All organizations shared in common a charitable obligation to change the perception of Eastern European immigrants. In “A Set Table” Jewish Domestic Culture In the New world 1880-1950, Jenna Weissman Joselit conveys these groups’ determination to develop “…a canon of domestic ideals that shaped, governed, and hastened the adjustment of Jewish immigrants to modern urban American life…”68 The consensus of Jewish domestic reformers was to associate manners with religious rules, promoting the dining room/kitchen as the heart of the home. Placed under a label of domesticity women could not separate themselves from the home. The rules taught were not strictly American and yet adapting them for Eastern European standards would have been thoroughly American. If a women could achieve hygienic simplicity in her tenement flat then domestic reformers would deem her genteel and with gentility came acculturation. The majority of rules disseminated through charitable organizations stemmed from Victorian norms and attitudes; to them their ways were consummately American.

For Jewish immigrants, then, educational guides and literature on etiquette became a fundamental key to fitting into American culture; American Jews worked to relate manners and gentility to religious observance and rules. Jews were already living their lives according to religious rules. Joselit has translated and studied the work of one Jewish early twentieth-century writer from New York that connects gentility with religious ritual.69 Abraham Cahan’s article “Decorum at the table,” written in Yiddish, in the July 21, 1903 issue of the Jewish Daily Forward sets forth a program to educate

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68 Joselit, 25.
69 Ibid, 21.
immigrants by accompanying American ideals with religious ideals already followed. “[l]ikening etiquette to a ‘veritable shulkhnarekh’ (literally a ‘set table,’ the title of the Jewish compendium of ritual law), he linked the secular social code directly to the process of becoming an American.” By showing and teaching new Jewish immigrants ways to clean, furnish, and maintain tenement apartments, while incorporating religious duties and Victorian American ideals, domestic reformers changed immigrant culture through urging them to adopt new material possessions and practices.

Figure 22: Model Tenement Kitchen, YWHA, New York. ca. 1910. Archives of 92nd Street YM-YWHA

70Ibid.
Practice or Implementation: Ideal Tenement Decoration

The model tenement kitchen is the ultimate example of what reformers promoted (Figure 22). It is categorically clean room and in turn exhibits tight control expressed over the family’s hygiene. The kitchen/dining room may be the heart of one’s home however it needs to be neat, tidy, and compartmentalized. The Victorian idea of control over one’s environment manifested itself easily into dining. The kitchen showcases sets at every turn. For Victorians dining sets, for every occasion, demonstrate an intense symbolic need for an acute level of sophistication. Victorians conveyed these observable rituals into dining; they had a set for every meal and a utensil for every morsel of food. Obviously their obsession manifested into sets that were larger and more functionally distinct than a poor or working class family could afford. The set of dishes on the wall shelves depicted in the photograph are a suitable set for a working class family. There are enough bowls, small plates, dinner plates, serving plates and even cups that would work for coffee, tea dessert, dinner and small meals in between. They are not extravagant or ornamented, instead they are plain, straightforward, and manageable. The set also upholds the order and symmetry made necessary by Victorian standards. The cake and pie tins on the opposite side of the kitchen are lined up in a symmetrical pattern, as are the canister and glass jars on the lower shelf. The dishes in the breakfront, seen in the dining room, are exactly the same as in the Kitchen thus promoting continuity throughout the home.

71 Williams, 78.
Promoting order may have upheld Victorian ideals, but by preaching this agenda, reformers selectively overlooked the reality of tenement life. Rooms in new immigrants’ houses were taken up by bodies from both family and borders and residents were unable to uphold the prototypical allocation of space that was possible in a middle-class environment. Domestic reformers deemed themselves pedagogues of taste and regulated how many people should live in a respectable tenement apartment. Six was the largest number to be allowed in a four room flat.\(^{72}\) Joselit points out that there was a disconnection from the idealized model flat and the crowded reality of the tenement apartment.\(^{73}\)

In their haste to educate new immigrants about hygiene and to be arbiters of taste, domestic reformers also overlooked the demands of the working class as consumers in particular as practitioners of Judaism. Immigrants from Eastern Europe observed the kashrut laws before traveling to America and they kept that tradition after settling. Reformers failed to realize their needs. In respect to domestic reformers of the YWHA of New York and the photo of the model kitchen, for example, one cannot help but notice that both the sets of dinner ware in the dining room and the kitchen resemble each other. Significantly, however, for keeping kosher, families needed at least three sets of dishes: one for meat dishes, one for dairy dishes and one for Passover. Additionally families should be able to distinguish between these sets so that they would not intermix. Although, it is not necessary to have three sets of different looking dishes to keep kosher it is much easier to tell meat dishes from dairy dishes and Passover dishes if they are

\(^{72}\)Joselit, 30.  
\(^{73}\)Ibid, 31.
different colors and shapes. According to Jewish ritual, Passover dishes should be kept separate because they should not come in contact with leavening and other foods not allowed during the holiday. Milk and meat products are also never supposed to be combined. Aside from the issue of cost, the size of tenement apartments did not give way to accumulating large amounts of goods. Most were filled beyond capacity with people that utilized all rooms. In New York and Baltimore, immigrants frequently converted the kitchen and parlor/dining room to accommodate more residents. The parlor was altered for the boarder’s bedroom. Living in urban spaces abundant with goods for those of all income levels, the working class were already considered consumers by merchants so why not reformers? In the small area on Lombard Street the merchants knew tastes ran a bit differently than advised.

While domestic reformers promoted the acceptability of modest dinnerware by displaying the dishes in the model kitchen, and despite the fact that dishes would have been used by every family member and any borders in the apartment, finding surviving examples is difficult and extant examples are unusual. Fragments have been found in excavations of apartment buildings were tenements were common. The JMM has not concluded their excavation of the Lloyd Street synagogue next to the museum, which held special gatherings in which food would have been served. The tenements were built over before anyone had the time or money to excavate the area. It has only been in recent years that museums started collecting the everyday goods of the American middle and working class. The JMM has one plate that could represent the style of a working class dinner set (Figure 23). The plate is 7.375 inches in diameter; the common size of a dinner
plate was nine inches, so it was most likely a small plate in a set or a salad plate. Noting that although immigrants had to spend money on dishes they would have had the bare minimum to start out and may have used aluminum instead of ceramic.

Figure 23: Ivory colored ceramic plate, with metal ring around rim and Star of David JMM# T1989.077

The plate has been heavily used, it shows a high concentration of crackling as well as some staining on the body. It has chips and a crack on the outer edges and is not marked by a manufacture or factory. The minimal decoration in silver is comparable to what was allocated for use by reformers but the Star of David and the laurel leaves are distinct. In actuality this could be a commemorative plate or one for a special occasion/holiday. However the plainness of it represents the ideal hygienic style.
domestic reformers were looking to publicize. This steadfast plate that has survived everyday use and is distinctly different to what the elite and middle classes were using. For example, David and Ella Hutzler, of Hutzler Brothers Department store, used a set of desert plates from Adolphe Hache and Leon Pepin-Lehalleur, whose porcelain company was founded in 1845 (Figure 24). Located on in Vierzon on the Cher river their factory was a major force for porcelain manufacturing in France. There is a date stamp of 1878 on the back of the plate along with the factories name. It is slightly larger than the Star of David plate measuring at 8.5 inches, making it a true dessert plate. It has slightly scalloped edges, banded in gold. A wide glossy pink band is set at the outer rim of the plate. Layered over the glaze of the pink band and white body are painted morning glory ornamentation and a monogram of “DEH” in gothic lettering. The plate is an example of luxury for what the affluent Jews in Baltimore were using. In contrast to the everyday plate, the Hutzler’s plate is not made up of clean lines and simple design and is most certainly not hygienic in its decoration.

Another opulent middle class example, is a Elizabeth Cohen’s Limoges tea cup, saucer and dessert plate (Figure 25). The dessert plate is the only one with the markings Limoges U.C. France, the color and décor of the other pieces confirm a set. They do not have factory mark but all three pieces have the initials, S.M.A-a1917 painted in black over a gold background. There are two possibilities, the marks over the glaze could have been put there the one who painted the ornamentation by using stock bodies to create a set, or they are from a factory in Limoges that did not mark them. The cake plate and the saucer are monogramed with an “E” over a stylized “Cohen.”

The coloring on the cake plate is slightly different than the saucer but the result could be due to a number of issues in glazing or firing. They are meant to be a set. A creamy white transitions into a light rose with a floral decoration which has a slightly rougher texture because it is painted over the glazed porcelain body. Neither the cup nor the saucer have a green “Limoge” under the glaze. They all have the same floral decoration of pansies and thin gold band and the tea cup has a painted gold handle.

Not knowing if this was painted in United States or France one can still see the difference between the Elizabeth Cohen set and the Star of David plate. One was meant for everyday use and the other an endorsement of American gentility. The set itself looks unused. The cake plate has almost no wear, except for the small amount of gold that has
flaked off on the edges and some scratches on the concentrated part of the floral work. Since the floral embellishment is over the glaze it could have come off over with light handling and cleaning. Whether decorative or used on special occasions, the working class did not have the means or time to create a set such as Elizabeth Cohen’s.

Proving one’s gentility was part of acculturation as dictated by mainstream periodicals such as the *Ladies Home Journal*, a magazine dedicated to the middle class. The magazine had a series of articles by Amelia C. Austin on “Correct China Painting.” Austin set guidelines for every scenario, from what type of bodies were in style, how to paint floral, landscapes, figures, any other embellishments, what colors mixed well, and how to paint in monochrome. The well-meaning article was meant for ladies who had spare time and the working class did not. This set is not something that would have fit into the model tenement home, nor would it have been promoted by the domestic reformers.

Domestic education was as rigid as the rules they set forth and they were not prepared when the women they taught chose not to apply every rule to their own homes. The photograph of the model home does not make allowance for any special occasions. Holidays like Passover, Chanukah and the High Holidays, are the most publicized, however other Jewish holidays also provided occasions for special consumption. A set of ironstone or aluminum dinnerware that families used during week would not have allowed for the celebration of special occasions. It is as if domestic reformers were only worried about immigrants keeping their homes free from clutter and chaos and their

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75 Amelia C. Austin. “Correct China Painting” IV Landscape and Figure Painting in Monochrome,” *Ladies Home Journal*, January 1900, 19.
religious and family rituals were not important. Training new Jewish immigrants as consumers to observe what was needed in the home and to buy nothing more did not work.

Figure 26: Mold-blown footed sugar bowl, with floral designs relief on bowl. JMM# 1986.025.015

To begin with, immigrants did not start their material lives in America from scratch. A large number of immigrants brought goods with them, items that were personal and had significant emotional ties to their lives. One example of such an object is a mold blown glass sugar bowl (Figure 26). Owned by Baltimorean Rebecca Rosenfield, it was given to her for her wedding in Lithuania in 1900. It has a trumpet shaped bowl with a floral motif surround by small textural dots. The edging on the bowl is scalloped with slightly larger textural dotting. The cylindrical base is elongated and more bulbous at the bottom and has the same linear fluting as the foot. The foot has a small imperfection due to the mold, the sunburst has two lines closer together than the
rest. The sugar bowl is not heavy and yet it is more decorative than the example in the model kitchen.

To Rebecca it was an expression of her old life, a piece of history either from her wedding or the old county which she had no intention of letting go, except for the objects’ donation to the JMM. Of course, the unknown significance which compelled her to treasure the sugar bowl from her former country, does not mean that the object did not also have an association to acculturation. Domestic educators were teaching immigrant women that the bare minimum was appropriate, however magazines like *Ladies Home Journal* were saying cheap was ugly. Rebecca had a piece that was neither cheap nor plain; a built-in reminder of her past and proof of her commitment to American culture.76 The sugar bowl was not part of set therefore it was not quite in the full Victorian etiquette. However going back to “The actual cost of Furnishing a House,” from *the Ladies Home Journal* Household Department, the accoutrements specified for the dining room of a refined family includes glassware.77 In the March 1915 issue of the magazine, Ida Cogswell Bailey-Allen penned a prescription for “The Right way to Give a Tea.” In it she informs readers that a “[c]ertain tea-table furnishings are always in good taste. The swinging kettle may be made of silver, copper, nickel or brass; the sugar-bowl and creamer pitcher should be small and of silver, china or glass.”78 Rebecca likely navigated well within the realm of proper etiquette as she already had a sugar bowl of mold blown glass.

76 Kittridge, 11.


Three more objects that claim a stake in acculturation of Baltimore Jewish immigrants are the pressed glass pitcher, drinking glass, and goblet from the set that Jacob and Osnot Kornblatt received as a gift for their wedding (Figure 16). The set has slightly different motifs but the same overall decorative elements in the pattern. They are meant to look like cut glass, however, the edges are not sharp enough. They could be mold blown even though there are a few seams. The pitcher is short, fat, square and has a seven pointed star-like decoration on both sides. The handle is sturdy and beveled edging with textured groove like pattern along the sides that gets more pronounce as one moves down the handle. The opening of the pitcher is wide making it appropriate for a few beverages, mostly water. The wasp waste glass has a similar look but is made up of diamonds and starburst patterns. Showing signs of use, the glass is a bit scratched. Underneath it exhibits the same pattern that was used on the sides which resembles a kaleidoscope pattern. The goblet has the same wear as the wasp waste glass but has less physical decoration that the other two pieces. The decoration occupies three quarters of the bowl and consists of the same diamond patterns as the rest of the set. The stem has some edging but overall it is cylindrical and the foot has a starburst pattern on the top.
A receipt from Hebrew Loan and Savings Association for $100 dollars proves that the Kornblatts were recent immigrants (Figure 27). The association provided interest free loans to members of the immigrant community who wanted to start their own business. The receipt dates from November 25, 1908, and, according to their wedding portrait, Jacob and Osnot were married in 1903. The set doesn’t really fit into anything Kittredge, Martha Bruère or the Model tenement kitchen suggested for immigrants in tenement apartments. However, these cultural arbiters would likely be pleased with the Kornblatt’s material consumption. Reformers’ overall goal was to give families, and women in particular, a better grasp of the rituals of gentility and the importance of a certain kind of domestic environment so that they would strive and work hard for that better life, which meant moving out of the “Jewish Ghetto” and accumulating “proper”
goods, goods that consumers came in contact with in department stores, and saw advertised in newspapers and magazines. Few families could afford silver, china, crystal or cut glass, but they eventually accumulated those exact objects. Whether given as a wedding present or brought from their old lives immigrants were exposed to more than just domestic education classes.

The three examples of Baltimore dinnerware discussed in this chapter are a representation of Jewish immigrant class structure at the turn of the century. Starting with the working class, the Star of David plate lacks decoration and is a much heavier plate than the other two. It could represent the heavy burden of being incorporated into American culture, of all the immigrants the Jews were known for going after acculturation with gusto. The middle class set, Elizabeth Cohen’s set, is trying too hard. It is engineered to look like a set but in actuality it is made up of separate bodies painted to resemble one another. The desert plate from the Hutzler family from 1878 is prosperous, worldly and not of twentieth century design. The wealthy did not have to worry about educators telling them how to properly furnish a home; they set the guidelines. The majority displayed goods they bought from traveling and knowing what the world’s taste was. The working class, having traveled for completely different circumstances were not told they could do the same, instead they were considered “old world” unless they conformed.

In hindsight domestic education was a double edged sword. It focused on what was proper for the working class in American society and sometimes recent immigrants felt they could look no higher. Reformers focused on women and particularly young
women because they had a better grasp of the language and it was intended, unless they were orphans, that they would take their knowledge back home. Even though classes were well attended in New York, Joselit identifies that not all women were quick to change their ways. “…[T]he women who attended them did not readily give up their Old World possessions…[,]” which included recipes, pots and even ideas of what furniture they should display. It was easier to shape the minds of the young and that is what they tried desperately to accomplish.

In *Increasing Home Efficiency*, Martha S. Bruère has a chapter entitled “Training the Consumer.” She believed that an immigrant woman could not learn this skill from her mother, who likely upheld the old ways, so instead they must study the science of the home in a university or public school. For Bruère housekeeping was part of the science of consumption, not just on an individual basis but on a national level. The consumer needs to know the principals of what it takes to keeps a house running efficiently. Bruère points out that “Household Economics” are taught in every public school in Chicago. The classes show that girls should be learning more than baking and sewing. Instead they were taught “…how to select a flat or house with reference to the needs of any given family, they learn what is and is not adequate plumbing, something of interior decoration and furnishing…” As a domestic reformer Bruère is just one example of what reformers taught all working class women. While trying hard to lead female consumers to specific conclusions, domestic reformers pushed too far in one direction.

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79 Joselit, 31.
The fundamentals of consumer acculturation might have been different for the working class had reformers not been so rigid. As an example of way that household guides promoted a strict, and for many immigrants’ impossible model to achieve, we can examine Bruere’s stipulations about income and dinner wares. Household guides followed budgets. Bruère, believed that if you did not make at least 900 to 1000 dollars a year, you were not worth teaching.\(^{83}\) For those who did not make this amount, the guide served only as an aspirational tool.

The largest problem was how to enforce the character traits reformers most wanted to see in immigrants and who and where to teach these ideals. In Melissa Klapper’s “Jewish Women and Vocational Education in New York City, 1885 – 1925,” she puts forth that private schools were founded to create conformity to the American middle class principles of feminine domesticity.\(^{84}\) These schools were established to safeguard the hard work of acculturation achieved by the German Jews. Indeed, some argue that they were on their way to assimilation until the Eastern Europeans came and strengthened Jewish morals.\(^{85}\) They needed an outlet to educate on the subject of domestic reform. In turn, reformers changed the nature of unstructured immigrant home life, where women were not as segregated to the home, into the ideology of feminine domesticity. Clare de Hirsch and her Home for working girls, for example, would help shape the domestic ideals of immigrants in New York. The home was started in 1897 to help women who found themselves in need of work. The influx of immigrants into small

\(^{83}\)Ibid.


\(^{85}\) Sorin, 28.
areas and even smaller apartments led the already established Jewish population to commit themselves to teaching the right habits. There were an abundance of etiquette books, domestic guides and cookbooks to gain even more knowledge. The earliest and by far the most practical information given to aid the transition were classes given by temples and Jewish charities on how to maintain one’s domestic landscape.

On May 18, 1900, in an issue of the *Jewish Comment* Miriam Bernstein explains its impact on girls in New York, however she notes that the last two directors were both from Baltimore. Both Elizabeth Ash and Rose Sommerfeld were chosen to steer the school through difficult times. It would be Miss Sommerfeld who would be credited with increasing attendance from seventeen boarders and thirteen trainees to thirty-seven boarder and fifty trainees. Unknowingly Bernstein promoted Baltimore Jew’s knowledge of gentility as much as New York’s. Her description of the house, that was sought by housekeepers and girls who desperately needed homes, is of one of the best equipped in the United States. Sommerfeld made sure that these girls had the skills to enable them to work in an upper class home as either a cook or housekeeper. Indeed, each girl had a set of her own utensils as to practice. The school was not open to just New Yorkers or Jews, however. Bernstein tells us, “[t]here have been a number of Baltimoreans’ names entered during the past year into the register found in the main entrance hall, and they, as all visitors, are impressed by the homelike, natural atmosphere, the happiness and lack of restraint manifested by the girls, and yet their willing obedience.”

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86. *The Clare De Hirsch Home, "Jewish Comment, May 18,1900, 16.*
88. *Ibid, 18.*
organization had classes for all ages, the power Americanization had on the children of immigrants was far greater than the impact it would have on the adults.

Middle class families were already promoting that their children were genteel. This unidentified girl holding a tea cup and sitting properly in a chair exhibits the behaviors that were expected of women of the early twentieth century (Figure 27). She is a child in the sense that she is small, there are toys on the table and her feet do not reach the ground. The rest of the photograph, however, embodies acculturation and gentility. She looks polished in her stark white dress and spotless shoes while gracefully holding her tea cup and smiling. There is a saucer on the table and a small plate that might have held a tea cake or small sandwich. This is in stark contrast to what immigrant children were learning in domestic education classes. They were learning to serve as well as keep a proper home. The photograph is also in contrast to the belief of some public domestic educators who saw Jewish immigrant women as prospering to achieve the position of domestic servants or just being able to keep a tidy house. This little girl already knows that she is both Jewish and a genteel American.
CHAPTER THREE

In “Russia in America,” an article in the Baltimore Sun published on July 13, 1892, Henrietta Szold pushed for the Americanization of Russian Jews in Baltimore. An educational reformer in her own right, she was the daughter of Rabbi Benjamin and Sophia Szold. Her father was a guiding force in the reform movement in Baltimore after his arrival from Hungary in 1859. Henrietta eulogized the need for night schools to Americanize immigrants through education. She saw hard working, bright, and creative men and women who needed an opportunity to immerse themselves in a culture but could barely speak the language.89 The Szold’s fish server is part of the JMM’s collection (Figure 28).

Figure 28: Server, engraved B & S Szold, belonging to Benjamin and Sophie Szold, Sterling. ca. 1860. JMM# 2004.021.004.

The family was known for their hospitality and the server is proof of their quest for gentility. Etched and reticulated with decorative sinuous lines, flowers and stylized leaves, it is dominated by the fish in the center. The scaled fish is set as if it were being displayed for consumption. This design element is in keeping with a larger Victorian custom: to use the same food being eaten as a decorative element on serving pieces (Figure 29).
A personal artifact employed by the elite Szold family on special occasions such as Shabbat meals, this fish server also spoke to the family’s importance in shaping the tastes and consumption habits of the larger Baltimore Jewish community. Just as Henriette Szold’s article urged poorer Jews to Americanize, so too did her fish server communicate the need for immigrants to embrace American habits of consumption and rituals of genteel dining. Just imagining the number of eastern European Jewish immigrants who experienced the Szold’s hospitality and were served both the fish and the plan for consumption that the Szold’s offered one can deduce the influence of their dinner table.

The simultaneous transformation of immigrants’ religious culture, consumer culture and the significance of growing feminization in the middle and working class are fundamental to understanding the process of how Eastern European Jewish immigrants in Baltimore remodeled their material lives. From the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century the feminization of the home had a direct effect upon religious and dining rituals for both the more established German Jews and the recent immigrant population of
Eastern European Jews; it is no coincidence that the fish server with which this chapter
began was wielded by Henrietta Szold. Reflected in the consumer culture of the
established German Jews and the immigrant population of Eastern European Jews the
objects in this chapter will reflect the process of Americanization. As purchasers of
dining objects, as organizers of domestic interiors, and as the primary upholders of
Jewish heritage, women played a key role in incorporating ritual objects into the genteel
customs of American dining. By so doing they helped to establish a new Jewish
American material culture

**Feminization of Dining**

A salvaged lithograph scrap, now entitled *Woman Lighting Candles*, which dates
from about 1896 is a prime example of what was expected of genteel Jewish women
(Figure 30). While the use of the scrap is unknown, the Center for Jewish History locates
its origins in Germany and it is currently located at the Yeshiva University Museum.
The scrap could be anything from part of a child’s educational image bank to a stock image employed for advertisements by a small publishing company. Carefully positioned within the lithograph are three elements: the woman, the set table, and the items on the table, all of which work together to promote a material life of inclusion and the upkeep of tradition. The woman, respectably dressed and showing refinement, is depicted blessing candles before the Sabbath. She holds her hands up over the candles caught in mid prayer. This movement of circling over the candles and drawing the hand inward is a symbolic gesture to welcome the Sabbath, a time of rest. Shabbat is considered to be the bride of Israel and the Jewish people. Just before sundown it is the woman’s role to welcome her. To do so, the tradition of lighting candles, going back to Abraham and Sarah was the first symbolic way to incorporate the woman’s role. This tradition may
have had more to do with the practicality of having light during the evening meal; no work is to be taken on during the day of rest so one cannot create a flame after sundown. However what made the lighting of candles so special is that the light would burn all week; it is considered a miracle for oil to last that long. To support this tradition a story is told that Isaac (Abraham’s son) noticed his future wife Rebecca’s candles last though the week as well, thus the start of a ritual. Men have more roles throughout the day of rest, blessing the wine, food, leading grace after the meals, teaching children or guests in the home torah, blessings after sundown (Havdalah) and multiple trips to the synagogue for morning, afternoon and evening prayers. They play a more central role on the day of rest than a woman, her activities lie more in the home then out of it. The ritual is one position where the traditions of the Jewish religion supports separate spheres. The scrap reinforces this dichotomy as well, the cleanliness and order of the table is fundamental to the time period.\[90\] The tablecloth is also a significant indicator of early twentieth century gentility, white tablecloths were a luxury and used on special occasions in working class homes.

The table is set methodically, with the placement of the candelabra, two challahs (a braided bread rich in eggs), silver wine cup, wine, glass water or wine pitcher, flatware, plates, and a vase of flowers. Noting first that the candelabra is not common, they are more for decoration and light as seen in this photo of Emil Wassermann’s dining room set for a Passover seder, from 1912 (Figure 31). Two silver or bronze, in the case of working class families, candlestick holders should be in their place however as stated...

earlier this may have been put together by a person/company that did not know the difference.

Figure 31: Dining room table set for Passover Seder; Home of Emil Wasserman. Bamberg Album Wasserman Family.ca 1912.Leo Baeck Institute Photograph Collection: AR 269 ALB-OS 32.

The observed ritual of Shabbos is on display, the items to be blessed, candles, wine and challah, take center stage and the formalities of dinner take a back seat. The refined vase of flowers is pushed aside; the plates, not meant for dinner but either fish or salad are also moved to the side. Fish is a staple in Eastern European diets yet salad was seen as an Americanized dish. In Bread Givers, a semi autographical novel by Anzia Yezierska (1885-1970), she has the narrator, Sara Smolinsky, point out that her sister Mashah’s need to impress an Americanized boy involved learning “…the American way
of cooking vegetables and fixing salads.” These few items can be seen as an incorporation of American culture. If the scrap is an educational tool for children or even immigrants the point is that both traditional customs and new genteel American customs can be accomplished at the same time. Moreover, in order for the religious ceremony to be accomplished in the appropriate way these new “American” consumer goods and standards of gentility have to be adhered to.

Emil Wasserman (1842-1911) born in Wallerstein, Germany, owned and directed A.E. Wasserman, a private banking firm for fifty years. His son Oscar worked for the Deutsche bank as well as being on the Reichsbank general counsel. Oscar was suspended in 1933. The Waserman sons, Oscar and Sigmund, immigrated to the United States before World War II, however we do not know exactly when. Figure 2 depicts Emil Wasserman’s dining room in Bamberg, Germany. Not knowing if they could take any accumulated goods with them, this photograph may mean more to the family than the average recollection photograph.

Passover (Pesach) celebrates the exodus from Egypt for the Jews in the Jewish month of Nissan 2448 (1313 BCE). It is difficult to say if the holidays are more important than one another. Shabbat is a day of rest that is seen as one of the most holy mitzvahs a Jew can practice. Passover is more of a celebration/festival and remembrance of the hard times Jews faced in Egypt. Looking back on the Wasserman dining room, the element of refinement is strongly present. During the celebration each person has a silver

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91Yezierska, 55-56.
wine cup. Wine cups for the seder do not have to be made of silver, glass is another common material, but vessels for wine are needed. The tradition for Passover is that four cups of wine during the Seder be consumed by all, although grape juice is substituted for children. The wine is seen as a luxury only royalty and the wealthy had but can now be used in celebration for the exodus from Egypt. Inferring that royal customs can be practiced by all. A vase of flowers is set to the side. The candelabras are placed in the center of the table for maximum exhibition and to provide the most light. There are tiered silver trays with food, a glass wine pitcher and spice containers, in the foreground behind and either side of the main tiered tray. The imposing sideboard at the back right of the photograph would hold elements of the meal until they are needed, in such manner as a la russe or American style. The table cloth with imposing lace trim is a touch more refined than the plain white one in the lithograph. Yet despite these slight divergences the message the photograph sends is the same as the print: gentility was compatible with the traditions of Jewish ritual and even necessary for the adequate observance of these rituals in a new American context.

**Spiritual Tradition and the Table**

Missing from the photograph but prominently positioned in *Woman Lighting Candles*, is the active presence of a Jewish woman. The lithograph typifies the gender ideology behind the cult of domesticity. At this time a woman’s domain, in association with the cult of domesticity, is the home. As historian Katherine C. Grier explains, during the nineteenth century, “…separate but complementary ‘spheres’ of work for men
and women in preindustrial economics was incorporated into a new kind of
domesticity…"93 Women held vigil over the household and the essential emotional
nature of everyone in it and men held on to commerce and work.94 Grier also points out
that even though men were in charge of finances it was women who dictated the
character of the home. Women lighting candles supports the gender ideology where the
home was sacred and entrusted to the women. Grier identifies the juxtaposition of the
church and home through Catherine Beecher’s American Woman’s Home.95 The private
residence becomes a sanctuary and the objects within it become emblems of gentility.
Having her perform a sacred ritual, lighting of the Sabbath candles, then, supports the
idea that the home and dining area are a haven away from the evils of the outside world.96
There is also a spiritual element in the representation of a woman at the table and her
relationship to family meals. Colleen McDannell interprets the belief that Christians used
ritual to maintain the home. Family life was seen as an extension of religious life and
personal piety and both family and the role of religion gave a home protection.97 The
development of this doctrine came from both the old and new testament. McDannell also
points out that Methodists used the dining room as a sanctuary for informal prayer. In
that room the family, fed by God, gains strength from the first to last meal of the day.98
According to McDannell, nineteenth-century Catholic viewers saw objects that transmit

93 Katherine C Grier and Grier, Culture & Comfort: Parlor Making and Middle-Class Identity, 1850-1930,
(Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997), 5.
94 Ibid, 5-7.
95 Ibid, 4.
47, no. 4 (August 1, 2006): 666.
97 Colleen McDannell, The Christian Home in Victorian America, 1840-1900 (Bloomington: Indiana
University Press, 1994), 78.
98 Ibid, 81.
grace and spirituality as sacramental, not as potent as sacraments, which are mediators between God and humanity, these are seen on a lesser scale. They are aspects of daily life and link the secular and sacred worlds. An understanding that the majority of religions have undergone some type of persecution and may at one time found it necessary to hide their religious objects, rosaries, crosses, and a Star of David, the home becomes a comfortable sanctuary in which to display spiritual objects.

**Gender and Objects**

Further study of the gendering of objects during Shabbos calls attention to some difficulties in mapping out the ideal of separate spheres onto Jewish immigrants in Baltimore. In *Separate Spheres: Beyond the Dichotomies of Domesticity*, Deborah Rotman explains that the cult of domesticity, a reality of the white urban middle class, sanctioned separation of public and private spheres; where public are masculine and private are feminine. In her article she defends that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in Deerfield Massachusetts, “…gendered uses of space were fluid… and an absolute separation of space did not exist” Rejecting this structure allows for the reality that social interactions do not just focus on man versus woman, or public versus private. In Rotman’s opinion it allows an artifact to be classified and expanded upon while looking at age, marital status, class status, and race as fundamental factors of gendered social relations.” In light of Rotman’s analysis, the cultural meanings of

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101 Rotman, 666.
102 *Ibid*.
refined dining objects in Jewish rituals can now be further dissected by looking at the socio-economic background as well as the ethnic fundamentals of the scene.

The silver Kiddush cup in *Woman Lighting Candles*, the silver Kiddush cups in Emil Wassermann’s dining room set for a Passover Seder, and a Russian silver wine cup from Leslie Legum’s collection at the Jewish Museum of Maryland, provide a rich area for analysis (Figure 32).

![Kiddush Cup](image)

**Figure 32: Kiddush Cup, Russian silver wine cup. Donated by Leslie Legum. ca. 1885 JMM # 1989.121.002**

Under the cult of domesticity these examples should be in the private/domestic sphere of the gendered divide. However using Rotman’s theory, they are part of a male/female gender relation. Moreover, separating out some of the objects associated with male duties during Shabbos, seems to complicate the practice of separate spheres with actual object use in Jewish homes. Due to Jewish cultural constructions the wine is blessed by a
man whenever possible. In *Sabbathbend* (Sabbath Evening), ca. 1815-1830, Otto Herschel presents a vivid portrait of a man and the Sabbath ritual (Figure 33). As the singular figure in the composition the male leads the viewer to see the man as the significant part of the liturgy for welcoming the Sabbath. Looking past the table and the man, the viewer can see an amalgam of portraits of various sizes, leaving one to ask if the man is truly alone in this ritual or just the focus.

![Image of a man with a cup and Sabbath objects]


According to Jewish tradition, a woman is allowed to say the blessing when a man is not present. The dichotomy, in both middle and working class households, was that a woman set the table, cleaned, and put away everything once the meal has ended, but the use of the cup during the religious ritual belonged to the man. The same was true
for the challah. When one is not eating bread, there is a blessing for each food group, however when bread is part of a meal only one blessing is said before the meal, which encompasses all food once recited. The other food groups are thanked in the reciting of grace after the meal. Challah, during Shabbos is considered at the top of a food hierarchy. It may be blessed by the man but it is made and put on the table by the woman. Both genders actively engage in the hierarchy of the challah.

Rotman argues that, “…an artifact can be an aspect of production and consumption, public and private or male and female.”¹⁰⁴ The silver wine cup supports her claim. The etched silver cup with a rolled top edge, was made by a male silversmith in Russia and purchased by a female, either in America or in Russia. During the late nineteen and early twentieth centuries the major consumer of goods were women. Even in Eastern Europe women were still consumers; men would learn Torah, after the chores because it was their right and duty to uphold tradition. Confining the cup to a domestic sphere because it is used in that domain, ignores both its production and its specialized use. Around this time period immigrant women were beginning to change social boundaries of gendered interaction.

A woman in the middle class, between 1880-1930, was an important consumer. To be a consumer they needed to venture out into the public sphere. As briefly discussed in Chapter One, the goods on these tables were purchased by women who took on the task of consumption while attempting to acculturate themselves into American society. Consumption for middle class women was an evolution of character linking objects to

¹⁰⁴Ibid.
culture in corporeal form. They could easily obtain domestic comfort. The working class was not so lucky. Anzia Yezierska enlightens her reader on the reality of what happens when a working class family does not have to skip a meal and become the consumers they so desperately want to be. To her consumption leads to materialization, “[w]e no sooner got used to regular towels than we began to want toothbrushes, each for himself…[a]nd more and more we wanted more things, and really needed more things the we got them.”

Working class women were seen as consumers, however the reality of time constraints and house work led them to get lost and forgotten in tenements. Many were also too busy to even think of anything other than supporting their families. The Jewish Women’s Archive, *Weaving Women’s Words*, includes the oral history of Senator Rosalie Silber Abrams. She states that her “[m]other got up around 5:00. Opened the bakery at 5:30. So we baked all day until about, I guess the last batch about 4:00.” She points out that they only ate together on Friday nights for Shabbat or the Passover Seders. Although Abrams found the bakery to be a valuable part of her childhood, she loved having her mother around. She recalled, “Shabbos was wonderful. It was the only day my mother did not work.”

Influences of gentility, domesticity, and the changing values (or ideals) of religious precept are the key principals to acculturation. Looking at three examples it is clear that these materials and visual artifacts can be firmly set into the socio-economic

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105 Grier, 8.  
106 Yezierska, 29.  
107 Ferris, 12.  
109 Ewen, 203.
realm of the middle class, are part of the domestic sphere, and can be used in all
festival/holiday meals. Incorporating refined meals with fundamental religious edict the
future of a Jewish American culture is agreed upon. Leslie Legum, born in Virginia grew
up in Baltimore. Along with the silver wine cups he donated was a tête-à-tête service
which features the Bonaparte’s; Napoleon, Josephine, Jerome and a historical figure in
Baltimore Betsy Patterson (Figure 3). The tête-à-tête is a tea set for two people only and
a luxury for those who could afford a specialty tea set. The decoration could be seen a
sign of support for a city that has been monetarily prosperous. The luxury can be seen in
the items his family donated: a large set of mother of pearl flatware, a glass cranberry
wine decanter and five Russian silver wine cups (Figure 34 & 35). It is reasonable to say
he grew up in or owned a house with a separate dining room and his mother would have
been part of cult of domesticity. These are also examples of items purchased with
means from a man but intended for the use of women. The tea set can be used after
special holiday meals when the men and women separate, by women for tea and men for
alcohol and smoking.
Legum and his family were not part of the working class in Baltimore but their objects are indicative of the types of goods that Eastern Europeans sought to purchase. All of these objects can easily fit into the cult of domesticity, the tea set more than the others. There is no evidence to indicate who bought it, however we can confidently say that it was used by women. Tea was served at breakfast or in the afternoon, this is not a set that would have been used a breakfast. As stated earlier, this could have been employed as an after dinner set for the ladies or an afternoon call for a pleasant gossip session between two women.
While Legum’s family may have been able to work within the ideal of the cult of domesticity (even while adapting it for their own needs), lower class Jewish immigrants did not have the option of recreating middle class interiors. How did socioeconomic status play a role in the gendering and refinement of spaces? While middle class women had a separate kitchen and dining room/parlor, working class women in tenements did not. They had one room in which to work, entertain and sleep: the kitchen.

In certain immigrant households women worked. If it was avoidable then the wife could focus on the home and the daughters went out to gain employment. The majority of Jewish women took in work, such as piece work or extra wash, for money. Work, or “house work” was still done in the home, the domestic sphere. As discussed earlier the severity of the impoverished was the norm for Eastern European Jews in the
tenements. Separate spheres for the working class was quite different. They did not have the space or the luxury not to send their daughter out to work. Although they did not work in public, mothers did work from home, creating a new type of matriarch.

The majority of Jewish women were heads of their households. Despite the American ideals that women did not work, it was just not the case with immigrant women of the working class. The connection of feminization and industrialization is what led to the bulk of “women’s work” or housework. What should have been a decrease in labor turned out to be the nail in the coffin of a women’s time spent at home. The amount of physical work corresponds with the socioeconomic status of the wife/mother. Middle class women had more means but were still burdened with the task of taking care of children, housework and entertaining. Ruth Schwartz Cowan, in her book More Work for Mother: The Ironies of Household Technology from the Open Hearth to the Microwave, uses a study from economist John B Leeds and L.R. Dodge, which shows that the middle class house wife did around 10 hours of work in the home, five days a week, and 5 hours on the other two days.\(^\text{110}\) As men worked less out of their home, the burden fell to women to pick up the slack.

Before industrialization men and women’s roles were equal in labor but not in status. If the man of the household was sick the wife/woman picked up the extra work and vice versa. What used to be made in the home, clothes and candles could now be purchased; heat went from wood to coal, also bought; food was no longer butchered at

home but bought in butcher shops. The shift from homemade goods to manufactured goods was supposed to ease the burden of those who could afford it, however by no means did it work out that way for women in the home. Men became the wage earners and women were left of pick up remaining chores; “housework.” It did aid in the accumulation of goods, purchased by the Americanized daughters, who were out in the workplace. On their way to the factory or the department stores they were influenced by new trends of femininity, in clothes and domestic goods.

By the early twentieth century there was a hierarchy of what labor was appropriate for a middle class housewife to perform. Cowan’s review of Leeds’ study mentions that these women would split their time between manual labor (cooking, baking, putting rooms in order and sewing) and managerial labor (supervision of household tasks by outside help, keeping household accounts up to date, ordering foodstuffs, and teaching the children). If possible, because of affluence, any heavy labor (ironing, scrubbing on hands and knees, washing and hauling laundry) was done by outside help. Heavy labor was seen as a task for the unrefined; the working class. Their burden was that of having to do as much, and more, as the middle class housewife and help provide for their family, this includes young girls who went out to help support the family as well. As most scholars point out, the working classes lived in small dilapidated houses or in the case of immigrant Jews a tenement in a large urban area.

111Ibid, 41.
112Ibid, 43. Women’s magazines and home economic books tried to help with the organizational problem but only really succeeded in adding to the judgment that was placed on women in the home to perform perfectly.
113Ewen, 208.
114Ibid, 159.
The home is fundamental in tracing the changing dining standards and household organization for the both the Jewish middle class and working class. Without the middle class as a direct influence American domestic ideals would have been vastly different. Immigrants’ “old world” background and their current surroundings were also factors in the feminization of dining. The middle class was not as successful in assimilating immigrants to their principals of stylistic reform, but they were when it came to abundance. Despite their aggravation of not being able to convince immigrant Jewish mothers and fathers of cleanliness and hygiene, they had no concept what impact their rules and regulations had on the second generation. The children of Eastern European immigrants prospered in America. They changed their religious formalities to fit into American standards. There is no better example than The Jewish Home Beautiful, first published in 1941 and after nine printings it is still a fundamental guide book on decorating for festival meals. It encompasses eight major holiday table settings, Rosh Hashanah, Hanukkah, Pesah (Passover), Shavout, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Purim and the Shabbat. Each section has an illustration using silver wine cup, glass wine decanters, sparkling silver flatware, richly decorated china and large silver candle sticks. Even the Yom Kippur table, a day of fasting until sundown, is pictured in a richly decorated room with a brocade table cloth and luminous silver candle sticks.

The book is published by The National Women’s League of The United Synagogue of America, a group of women who are more than likely the daughters of immigrant mothers. These children were also the ones who held and attended banquets
in honor of Sisterhood organizations, the American Jewish Congress, and the National Federation of Temple Brotherhood (Figure 36, 37 & 38).

Figure 37: Sepia photograph, Banquet, American Jewish Congress at the New Willard Hotel in Washington, DC, February 20, 1928. JMM# 1994.011.012.

Figure 38: Black and white photograph, Luncheon/ National Federation of Temple Brotherhoods/ Mayflower Hotel, April 4, 1929. JMM# 1994.011.013.
Honoring older and younger generations alike, the banquet photographs show just how refined a group of Jews could become; couples dressed in their finery dine in style. All of the photos show stark white table cloths, bold folded napkins and perfectly placed tableware (Figure 39).

![Image](image.png)

**Figure 39: Detail of National Federation of Temple Brotherhood. JMM# 1994.011.013.**

The impeccably set tables overflow with men and women who attended these grand galas for support in their organizations, but more importantly to see and be seen. In the sisterhood photo not only are they celebrating women in Judaism who made a difference but the process of becoming American. An American flag hangs in all of the photos. At the Pennsylvania Sate Federation of Temple Sisterhoods banquet it hangs directly behind the honorees. In the American Jewish Congress photo the flag is both behind the
honorees as well as hung by the front window and in the National Federation of Temple Brotherhood it is front and center. Both the American Jewish Congress and Temple Brotherhood were held in Washington D.C. Whether intentional, the symbolism has an unconscious link to the ceremoniousness and chutzpah of acculturation. These Jewish immigrants have made the genteel dining rituals they discovered in America their own and have embraced a new American identity (symbolized by the flag they voluntarily hang) which includes Jewish religious belief and Jewish community, as well as refinement.
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BIOGRAPHY

Rebecca Anne Louderback graduated from Walkersville High School, in 1997. She received her Bachelor of Science from Towson University in 2002 in Art History. She is employed at Quinn’s Auction Gallery and received her Master of Arts in History of Decorative Arts from George Mason University in 2014.