Mapping Jewish San Francisco

The University of San Francisco’s Swig Program in Jewish Studies and Social Justice is pleased to officially announce a new Jewish history resource called Mapping Jewish San Francisco.

Mapping Jewish San Francisco is a new digital humanities project that takes a collaborative approach to examine the complex history and unique religious, cultural, and political identity of Jewish San Francisco. Top scholars and experts — including university faculty, undergraduate and graduate students, and community leaders — are contributing exhibitions to tell the stories of the Jewish individuals and institutions that have shaped and are shaping the San Francisco Bay Area. Along with our partners, including other academic institutions, libraries, archives, and leading Jewish organizations, Mapping Jewish San Francisco aims to bring the past to life, making it possible to travel back in time to virtually explore the rich Jewish history of the Bay Area. Mapping Jewish San Francisco is based on and in partnership with Mapping Jewish LA at UCLA.

In addition to the two exhibitions highlighted below, we are publishing another exhibition this summer called Honoring Our Elders: Queer Jewish Lives in the Bay Area by Rabbi Camille Shira Angel.

You can read news coverage of the launching of this valuable historical resource in The Jewish News of Northern California. Mapping Jewish San Francisco is an ongoing project and will continuously publish new exhibitions.

For more information, or to contribute to an exhibition, please contact Oren Kroll-Zeldin at omkrollzeldin@usfca.edu.

Out of Egypt: The Karaite Jews of the San Francisco Bay Area

The Out of Egypt exhibition, by Aaron J. Hahn Tapper, explores the history of Karaite Jews in the San Francisco Bay Area. It is both a classic American tale of refugees fleeing persecution and the story of a unique contemporary Jewish American community. This exhibition is the extraordinary story of how this minority-within-a-minority has survived against great odds and re-established a robust religious, spiritual, and cultural life in the Bay Area, including the only Karaite synagogue in the Western Hemisphere. In portraying this distinct experience in contemporary Jewish American life, the exhibition compiles archival materials — including video testimonies, community newsletters, and immigration documents — to weave together a notable story of perseverance, commitment, and family.

Click here to experience the Out of Egypt exhibition.

The House of Love and Prayer: A Radical Jewish Experiment in San Francisco

The House of Love and Prayer exhibition, by Oren Kroll-Zeldin, documents the radical experiment of a synagogue and religious commune during the 1960s counter-cultural revolution in San Francisco. A historical ethnography of the House of Love and Prayer, this digital humanities project explores the new Jewish identities and rituals that emerged from the intersection of traditional Hasidic Judaism and the “free spirit” of the Hippie subculture. Based on archival research and interviews with those who lived in and frequented the House of Love and Prayer, this project tells a seldom-told story about a unique moment in Jewish history, revealing the complexities of Jewish identities and Jewish experiences within the post-Holocaust American Jewish milieu. The exhibition is deeply interactive, with visitors able to see photos and posters, listen to music, watch video interviews, and read newsletters printed by residents of the House of Love and Prayer.

Click here to experience the House of Love and Prayer exhibition.

Your generous support of the Swig Program in Jewish Studies and Social Justice will help us engage students in both theoretical and practical approaches of social justice and activism rooted in the Jewish traditions.

GIVE NOW

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