



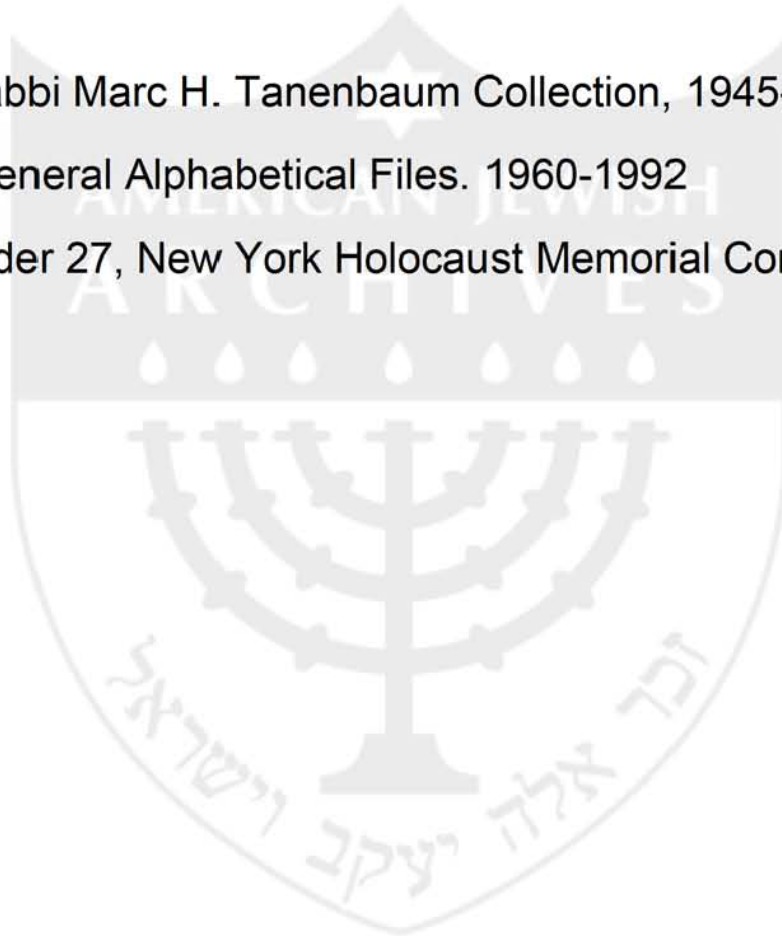
THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE
AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

Preserving American Jewish History

MS-603: Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum Collection, 1945-1992.

Series E: General Alphabetical Files. 1960-1992

Box 86, Folder 27, New York Holocaust Memorial Commission,
1988.



**New York
Holocaust Memorial
Commission**

February 8, 1988

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Dear Rabbi:

Ever since the end of World War II there has been a strong sentiment in the New York community to build a public memorial to the victims of the Holocaust. Over the years, a number of efforts were initiated for this purpose but unfortunately none succeeded.

Finally now, the time has arrived for us to actually accomplish this significant objective - here in New York, the home of the largest Jewish population in the world and the largest survivor population outside of Israel.

We all realize that with each passing day, the number of living eyewitnesses grows fewer, and those who would rewrite the history of the Holocaust raise their voices in ever-growing numbers. A Living Memorial to the Holocaust - Museum of Jewish Heritage is essential for it will serve as a permanent reminder, a permanent "eyewitness", and more.

We have enclosed a brochure which describes in detail the plans for the 180,000 square foot Memorial and Museum, to be located at the southernmost tip of Battery Park City--bounded by the Hudson River and New York Harbor--directly opposite Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty. The institution will be a "living" memorial, one that honors the dead for the lives they led, the religion they cherished and the heritage they left

New York Holocaust Memorial Commission

behind. The memorial, a 60-foot high cube of translucent glass and dark granite, built at the river's edge to reflect the lights of the harbor, will glow throughout the night like an eternal flame--an everpresent reminder of the survival of the Jewish people and universal messages the Holocaust can teach.

The Museum itself will present and preserve for future generations the rich culture of European Jews that flourished before the Holocaust. It will honor the struggles of those who died and document the tenacity of those who survived. It will examine the continuation of the Jewish heritage after the war in Israel and America. In addition, it will be the most complete exhibit of the Jewish experience in America, from 1654 until today, recognizing the contributions made to our society by the millions of Jews who have made America their home.

This will be primarily a public education institution. Roughly one-third of its space will be devoted to exhibitions that illuminate the events and issues described above. In addition, the Museum will contain a sophisticated, state-of-the-art Learning Center where students, scholars and families can access by computer a single central data base to explore Jewish themes, research family histories and retrieve Holocaust documents. An auditorium, lecture hall and classrooms will enhance its public outreach programs.

Our research staff is busy culling and gathering materials from archives and other important sources from all over the world. We are already working on joint projects with Yad Vashem, Beth Hatefutsoth and the Ghetto Fighters House in Israel. And, too, we are conducting on-going discussions with YIVO, the Leo Baeck Institute and the Jewish Museum to gain from their experience and expertise, while working on ways in which we will be able to benefit them. This collaboration will help ensure that A Living Memorial to the Holocaust - Museum of Jewish Heritage will distinguish itself as a unique and valuable institution in New York and throughout the world.

**New York
Holocaust Memorial
Commission**

We trust you will review the material in the enclosed brochure and look forward to benefitting from your observations and comments. You can further assist us in the following ways:

- 1) by conveying the enclosed information to your congregants in your synagogue bulletin, sermons, etc.
- 2) by helping us identify potential resource people for financial support, artifacts, documents, etc.

We need your support, your leadership and your assistance to help make this much needed and long awaited memorial and museum a reality.

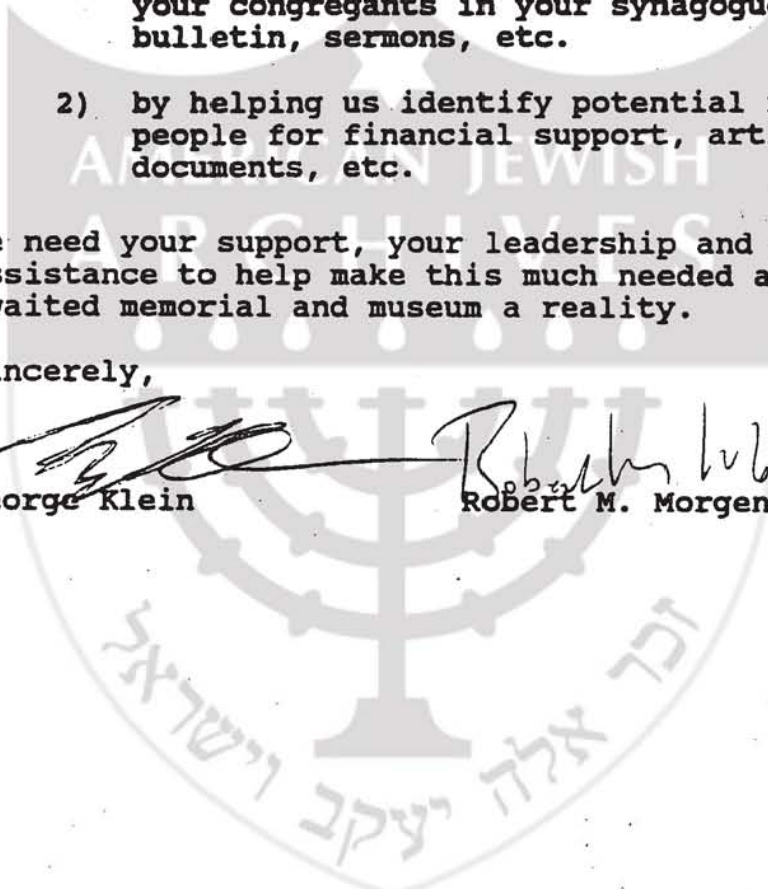
Sincerely,



George Klein



Robert M. Morgenthau





**New York honors the memory
of the six million Jews who perished during the Holocaust**

We Remember

Just one generation ago, six million Jews—including one-and-one-half million children—were murdered systematically by the Nazis during the Holocaust. At the same time, the Nazis sought to expunge all evidence of Jewish culture, which had thrived for two thousand years in Europe.

We cannot restore the lives of those who perished; we cannot rebuild the communities, the synagogues, the homes.

But we can fulfill the last wish of these countless innocent victims: that the world *remember* how they lived, how they died, and the hope that they cherished for the survival of the Jewish people and the Jewish spirit. To meet this sacred obligation, we are building A Living Memorial to the Holocaust—Museum of Jewish Heritage.

This museum will be unique, for it will combine in one space exhibitions and educational facilities devoted to celebrating the vitality and creativity of 20th-century European Jewish civilization, even as it bears witness forever to the terror and tragedy of that world's annihilation. Moreover, visitors will learn how Jewish life and culture survive in Europe, Israel, the United States and around the world.

This museum also will be unique because of its special location: the City of New York. What place could be more central and appropriate to tell this story than here? This greatest of American cities—the museum and tourist capital of the world—is home to the largest number of Holocaust survivors outside of Israel and the largest Jewish community anywhere. It is the port city which for centuries has welcomed immigrants of all nations and creeds who came to America in search of freedom from oppression and want. And New York is a city to which Jews have contributed vitally for hundreds of years, ever since the first Jewish immigrants landed here in 1654—only a short walk

from the museum's site at the tip of Manhattan.

The American Jewish community has inherited the legacy of European Jewry. Welcomed first into the United States as immigrants and transformed in the process, American Jews have made this inheritance a gift to their country as a whole. Thus it is our special task and privilege in this museum to convey the cultural values of the Jewish heritage, and even more so, the crucial lessons of the Holocaust which strove to consume it. It also is fitting that we preserve a record of Jewish renewal on these shores, from colonial times until the present, and acknowledge the outstanding contributions which Jews have made to American society over the centuries.

Today more than ever, it is essential that this Living Memorial to the Holocaust be built—for as each year goes by, the enormous events of the Holocaust threaten to recede ever further from society's collective memory. What better proof of this than the obscene voices that continually speak up to deny or distort the history of the Holocaust? The Museum will stand in eternal opposition to these voices. Supported by rigorous historical research, the Museum will tell its story with uncompromising accuracy, so that the world will never forget.

The New York Holocaust Memorial Commission, founded by Governor Mario M. Cuomo and Mayor Edward I. Koch, has been designated to lead the effort to create this Living Memorial to the Holocaust. The Commission includes distinguished scholars and teachers, religious leaders, government officials, civic activists, business executives, and creative and performing artists, all combining their energies and their resources to insure that this vision becomes a reality.

The Museum will open to the public in 1990, built at a cost of \$100,000,000, which will include a significant endowment for ongoing programs. The Holo-

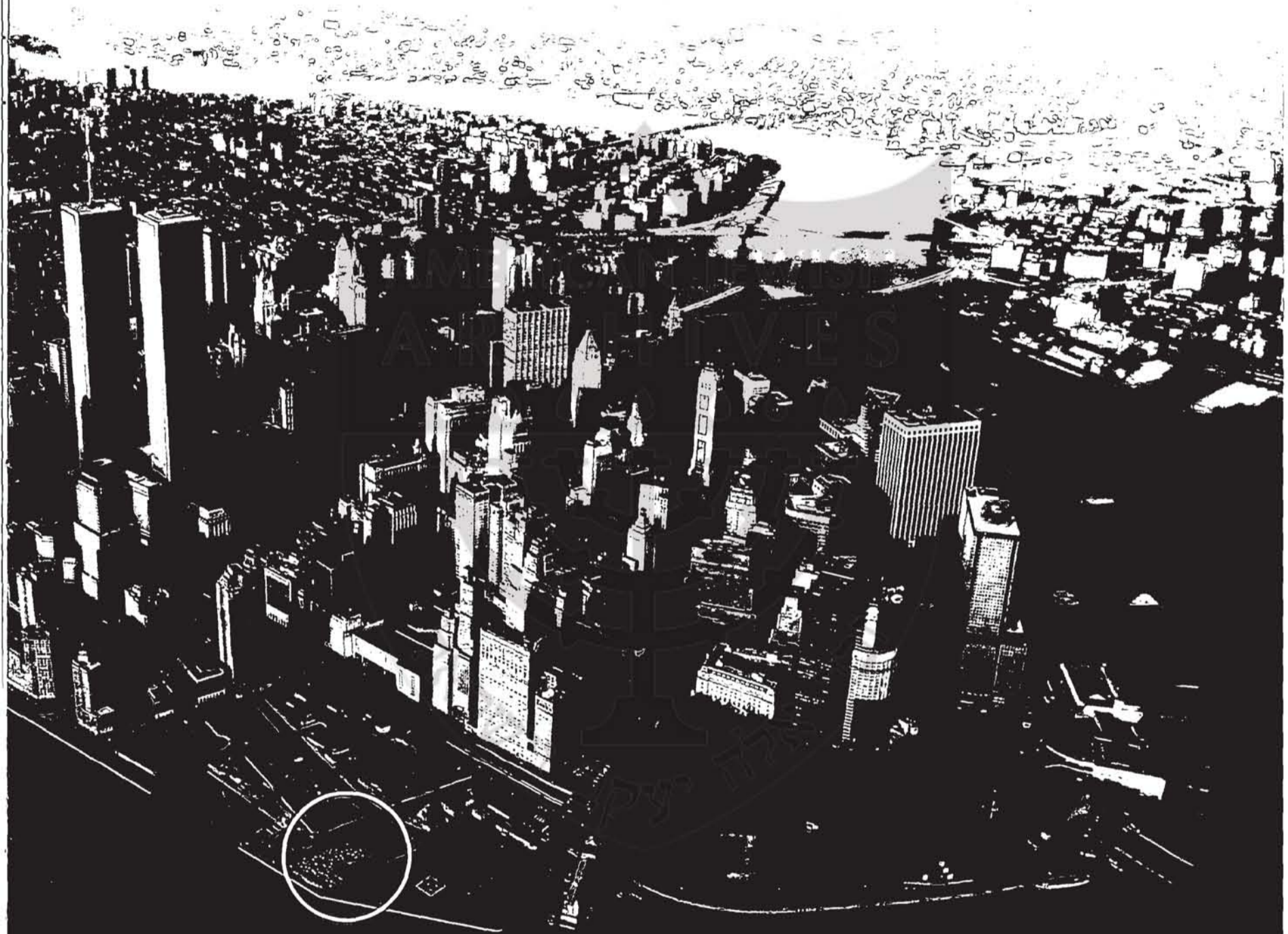
caust Commission also will arrange for the construction of a 34-story residential tower which will contribute substantial revenues toward financing the museum project.

Standing on the shoreline opposite the Statue of Liberty, augmenting the light of her torch with its own nighttime beacon, the Museum will inspire and educate visitors of all ages and backgrounds, reminding them of the sanctity and fragility of human life. Together, these two monuments will serve as a call to conscience, proclaiming to millions of visitors from all corners of the earth the necessity to *learn* from the world's past inaction—to take personal responsibility—and to *act* whenever human rights and lives are threatened.

This Living Memorial must be built *now*—while there still is time left for the last living witnesses of the Holocaust to share their memories with us. And it must be built *here* in New York, at the crossroads of the free world—so that the precious legacy of European Jewry can be transmitted to all humankind.

This is our sacred obligation to the past, and our trust for the future.

Lower Manhattan. Circle identifies site of Museum in Battery Park City.



The Architectural Concept

The Museum will be a monumental and imposing institution, dignified in design and rich in symbolic import. It is only appropriate that this should be so, for its site—at the foot of Battery Park City, adjacent to a four-acre park and directly opposite Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty—is unparalleled in its drama and resonance.

The Museum's architectural concept is a dynamic arrangement of elemental forms, providing a powerful interplay of natural materials posed in meaningful contrast. Rooted in the Memorial—a free-standing cube 60 feet in height—the museum building arcs monumentally toward the harbor in a majestic sweep of glass. A soaring atrium transects a major portion of the building, enhancing the overall museum space. The ultimate statement is resolute in will and clear in vision.

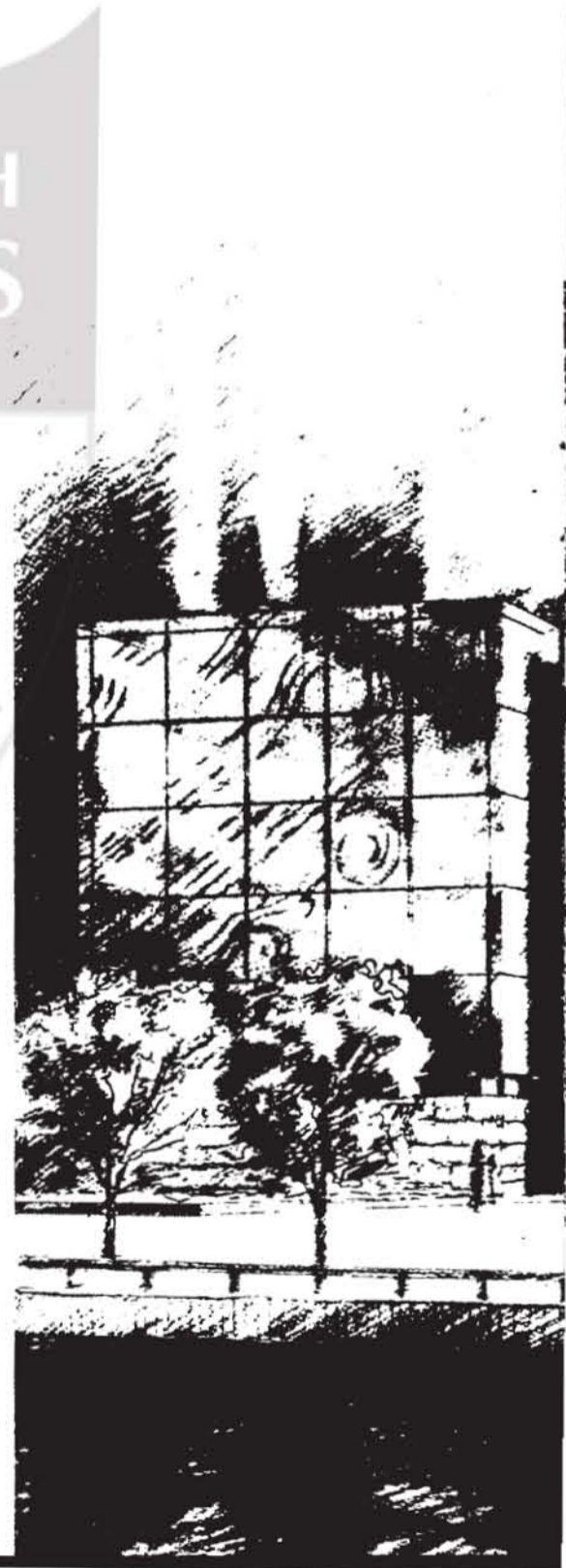
The Museum's inner structure does not entail a conventional arrangement of floors, but instead makes use of an innovative interplay of six levels. This design allows for the creation of spaces appropriate both to the intimate dimensions of Jewish culture and history as well as to the enormity of the Holocaust, while simultaneously providing a rational and unobtrusive support system for administration and maintenance. The necessity for optimum movement of visitors has been taken into account in all aspects of architectural planning. Thus the Museum's exterior responds to the building's interior circulation system, while yielding dramatically to the Museum Memorial's provocative form. A sculpture terrace and outdoor memorial walkway provide meaningful public areas.

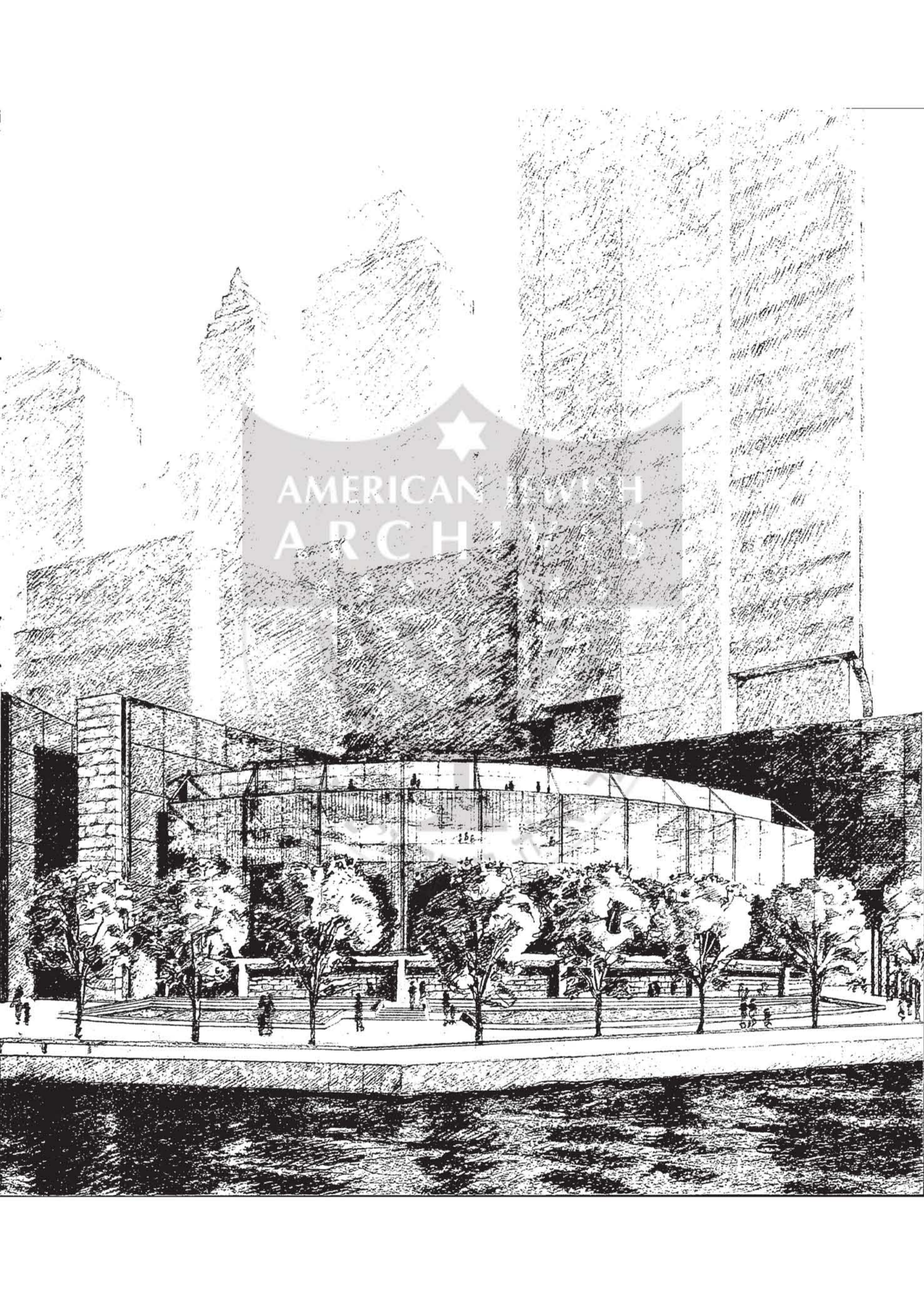
Through these features of design, the architecture of the Museum will affirm the positive spirit which imbues the Museum's institutional purpose and identity. This is the spirit of *renewal* out of the rubble, exemplified after the war by the vital energies of Holocaust survivors,

and the spirit of *permanence*, as evidenced by the persistence of the Jewish people over the centuries, despite all adversity.

The Museum complex is designed by the architectural firm of James Stewart Polshek and Partners, noted for its restoration of many cultural landmarks, including Carnegie Hall; Polshek and Partners also is co-architect of the Brooklyn Museum master plan. James Polshek himself is the former Dean of the Graduate School of Architecture at Columbia University.

View along the esplanade in front of the Memorial (left) and the Museum (right) from the harbor.





AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHITECTURE

The Museum

The Museum will contain permanent exhibitions on four main themes: *The World Before*, *The Holocaust*, *The Aftermath*, and *Renewal in America*. The path through the first three of these themes will be a journey—a rite of passage—from the warmth of European Jewish life in the early 20th century, through the pain and darkness of the Holocaust, into the light of liberation and the rebirth achieved in the Aftermath. Museum-goers also will have an opportunity to explore the Museum's fourth theme, *Renewal in America*, which tells the saga of Jewish immigration to the United States from 1654 until today and portrays and honors the contribution Jews have made over the years to American society.

A state-of-the-art Learning Center and a highly varied program of changing exhibitions will provide visitors with unending opportunities to probe further every dimension of the museum's themes. The Museum will encompass 180,000 square feet in total, with substantial areas devoted to its permanent exhibitions.

Visitors enter the Museum through a 60-foot-high atrium. The permanent exhibitions begin with a sweeping treatment of Jewish dispersion in Europe over two millennia. This space also provides entry to a theater, where visitors will view a unique introductory film, an intrinsic part of the exhibition that can be seen only at the Museum. At its conclusion the screen walls open, creating a portal into the Museum's lower level and the journey through the *World Before*, the *Holocaust*, and the *Aftermath*. The exhibition path then leads visitors to the Memorial, and through it they gradually return to the entry level.

A duplex gallery joining the first and second levels will house the Learning Center, classrooms, and other educational facilities. The exhibition on immigration—*Renewal in America*—is in-

stalled on the third level, in a large gallery with expansive views across New York Harbor. That level also will house galleries for temporary exhibitions and for paintings and drawings, sculpture and photography.

On the top level is a 400-seat auditorium, as well as dining facilities with an open terrace facing the harbor, office space for museum administration, film and photo archives, and studios for videotaping the testimony of survivors.

The permanent exhibitions and museum spaces are conceived and designed by Chermayeff & Geismar Associates, whose distinguished projects include the John F. Kennedy Library Museum in Boston and the "Nation of Nations" exhibit at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History, as well as the exhibitions at Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty.

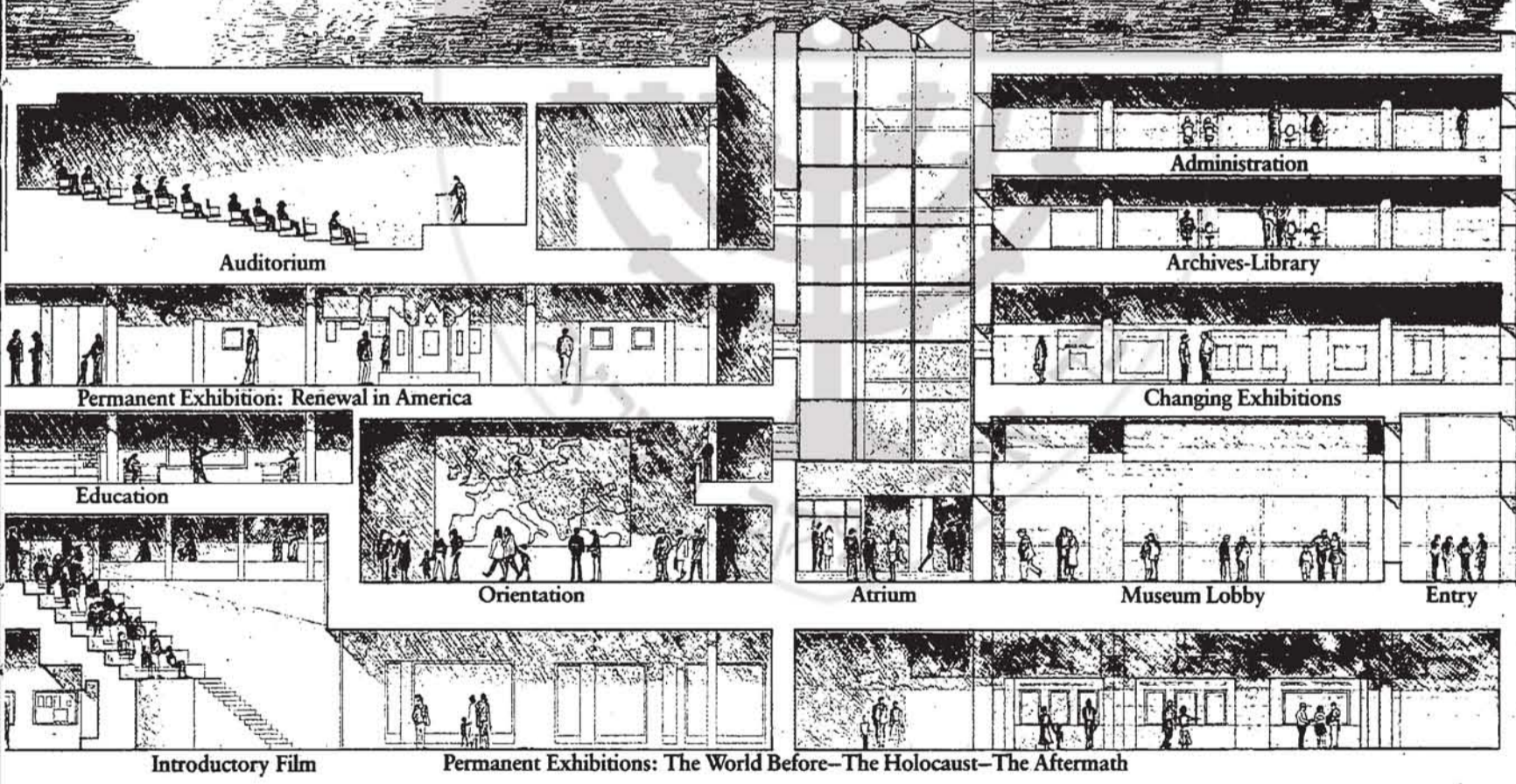
The museum planning effort is organized by a select staff of experts, including historians, cultural anthropologists, archivists, researchers and writers, administrators, computer and media specialists, and educators. This team is building collections and providing the intellectual and interpretive content of the Museum, in concert with the leadership of the New York Holocaust Memorial Commission as well as with the Museum's special consultants.

This team also will insure that the Museum's educational impact transcends its immediate physical space to reach across the state, the nation, and beyond. By sponsoring numerous outreach programs—traveling exhibitions, publications, teacher training institutes, and specially produced audiovisual and computerized materials—the Museum will make its diverse resources available to schools, educational and cultural organizations, as well as to civic and religious groups who will help to further the Museum's goals.



Section through Museum identifying program levels.

AN AMERICAN HISTORY



Auditorium

Administration

Archives-Library

Permanent Exhibition: Renewal in America

Changing Exhibitions

Education

Orientation

Atrium

Museum Lobby

Entry

Introductory Film

Permanent Exhibitions: The World Before--The Holocaust--The Aftermath

The Memorial

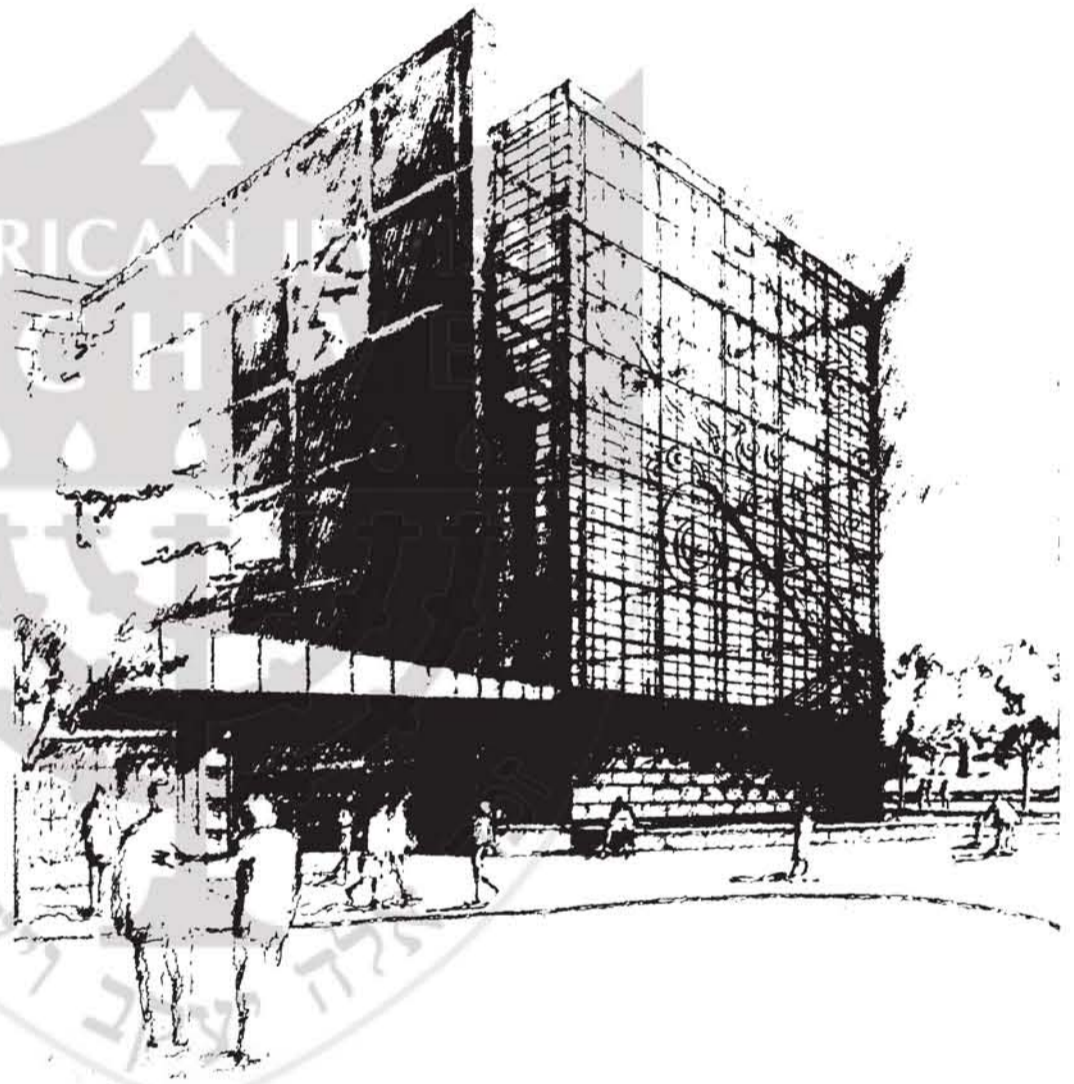
The Museum will contribute a major new architectural landmark to New York. Its Memorial is among its most imposing components—a 60-foot-high cube built of stone and translucent glass. Reflected in the waters of the harbor, this structure will glow throughout the night like an eternal flame—an ever-present reminder of the survival of the Jewish people, and of the universal messages which the Holocaust can teach us.

It often has been said that the only way to confront the *Shoah* is with silence. And yet, because of its centrality for an understanding of modern life, poets, scholars and artists have felt compelled to speak of the Holocaust, as have, above all others, the survivors themselves. Like them, the Museum also bears witness, breaking silence in the urgent name of history.

But here, in the Memorial—donated by the survivors themselves—we fully acknowledge the need for silence. In this sacred space, six flames burn steadily, focusing our attention on the memory of the six million Jews who perished in the Holocaust. Each year, on Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day), these memorial lights will be rekindled during an official public commemorative ceremony.

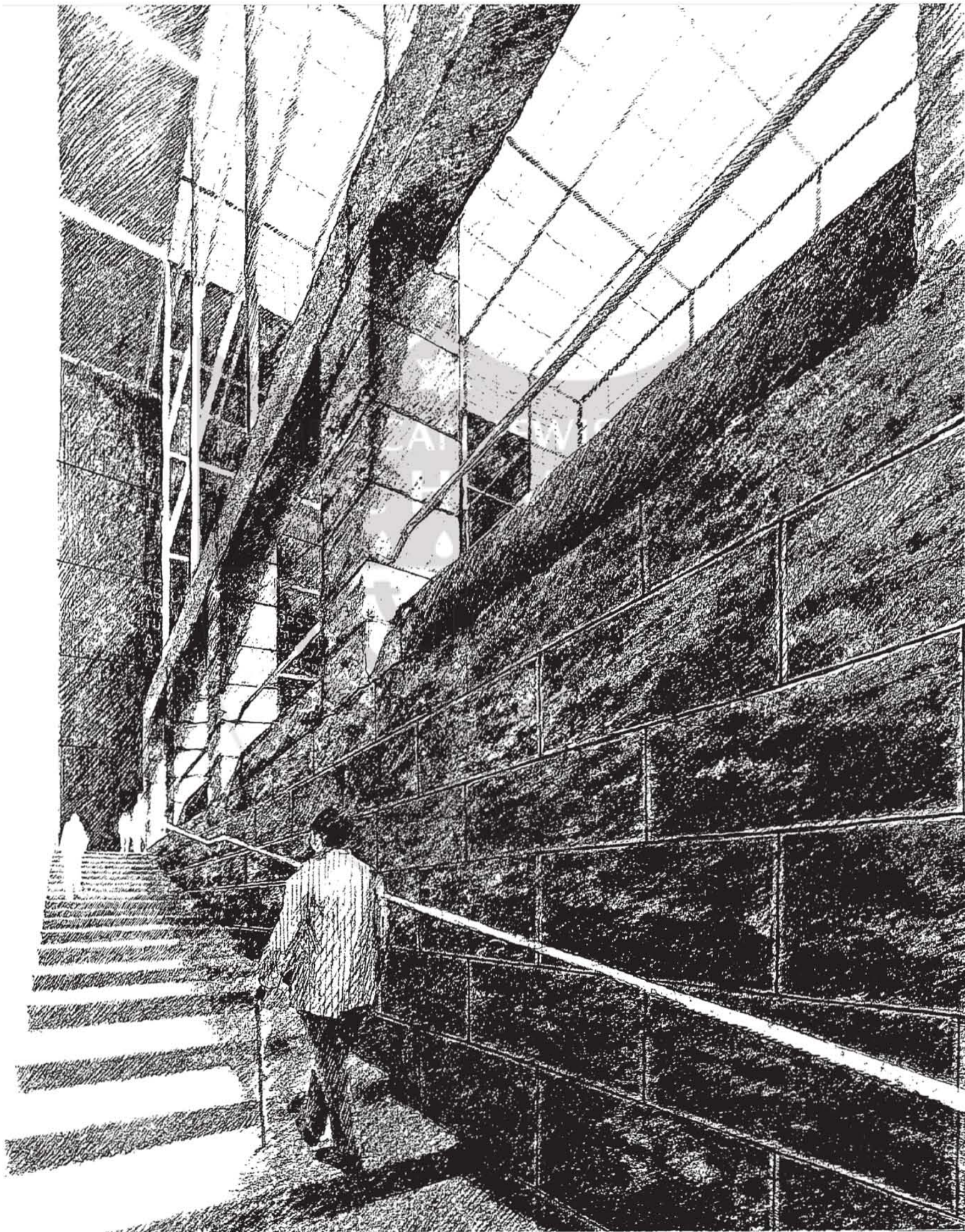
The Memorial is an integral part of the museum experience, evoking the transition between the darkness of the Holocaust and the rebirth that followed. The transcendence of tragedy is reiterated in the Memorial's basic materials—the heavy weight of stone transmuting to sculptured glass.

The Memorial will be a solemn, awe-inspiring space for personal and public ceremonies of commemoration. Here visitors will pause to offer memorial prayers or to meditate in silence.



Museum entrance adjacent to the Memorial.

Stairway leading up to the Memorial.



The World Before

It is with *The World Before*—diverse and vibrant—that the journey through the Museum begins. Appropriately, film is the medium chosen to introduce the visitor to a Jewish civilization that, above all else, was filled with the pulse of life. Examining first a large animated map tracing the 2,000 year process whereby Jewish culture established itself and blossomed throughout Europe, the audience enters a theater. There they encounter, amidst an impressionistic and colorful multi-screen film, a group of survivor-narrators. Each shares memories of European Jewish life in the decades preceding the Holocaust against a backdrop of original film footage from that era. These voices of testimony, integral to subsequent exhibit portions, will serve as occasional guides throughout. They are our living links to the past.

Once the film is finished, the screen walls open, ushering the audience into *The World Before* itself. Moving at their own pace through the exhibition galleries, visitors discover a world in motion, its sights and sounds held steady just long enough to grasp its essential forms and to absorb, implicitly, the forces of change at work. Covering the geographic range of European Jewish life, from Paris to Kiev, from Vilna to Salonika, and from Cracow to Berlin, exhibits will examine the full thematic scope of modern Jewish civilization. Moving ever further on their journey, museum-goers will encounter some of the most widely-loved cultural images of European Jewry. Even as they delight in these experiences, they are helped by the museum exhibition to break through the veil of nostalgia. Instead of distancing stereotypes, an ever-present, ever-surprising reality is revealed.

In artifact, image, film and music, visitors discover the persistence of traditional life in the *shtetl* and the city despite the forces of secularization, as well as the press of urbanization, the lure of

new freedoms, and the urgent drive into modern politics. Both Ashkenazic and Sephardic Jewish life will be presented in full array: the synagogues and homes; the importance of the Sabbath, festival seasons, and rites of human passage; and the impact of the great Jewish movements, from Hasidism and Jewish Socialism to Zionism in its many forms. Museum visitors will explore the accomplishments of Jewish culture, from Talmudic learning and Hebrew philosophy to literature, Yiddish theater and film. Finally we will encounter the scintillating cross-fertilization of Jewish culture with that of surrounding Europe, and the stunning contributions made to modern arts and sciences by such giants as Kafka and Freud, Einstein, Schönberg and Chagall.

Above all else, the museum visitor will experience a world suffused with an essential optimism, even in its darkening moments. Only we, the generations after, know for sure what fate is in store for them. Soon, in the coming exhibition, we will learn what it means for this vibrant, living community to be shattered, and their ways of life snuffed out.

Only now can we begin to grasp exactly what the world has lost.



MARKET, HAZMIERZ, POLAND, 1926. PHOTO: M. KIPNIS, YIVO INSTITUTE FOR JEWISH RESEARCH



BEEKEEPER, CZECHOSLOVAKIA, 1930s. BETH HATEFUTSOH, MUSEUM OF THE JEWISH DIASPORA



▼ OLD AGE HOME, LITHUJANA, 1937, YIVO INSTITUTE



SYNAGOGUE, KARLSRUHE, GERMANY, LEO BAECK INSTITUTE



WEDDING, ESTONIA, 1936, YIVO INSTITUTE

The Holocaust Chronology 1933–1945

The events of the Holocaust lie at the border of our capacity to understand. For this reason the history of the Holocaust must be told in a manner that helps visitors, whatever their background or knowledge, to comprehend its significance.

A monumental Chronology Wall will help accomplish this task. Its 400 linear feet display of artifacts, documents, photographs and film footage will trace dramatically the sequence of events, beginning with Hitler's accession to power in 1933 and ending with Germany's surrender in 1945.

This display will include, for example, the Nazi boycott of Jewish businesses and the establishment of the first concentration camp at Dachau; Propaganda Minister Goebbels' notorious book burnings, and the passage of the infamous anti-Jewish Nuremberg Laws; the ill-fated voyage of the *St. Louis* and the failure of the Bermuda Conference to take rescue action; the invasion of Poland and the German defeat at Stalingrad; the first gassing of Jews at Auschwitz and the revolt by Jewish prisoners at Treblinka; the rescue of Denmark's Jewish community and the liberation of Bergen-Belsen.

Such dramatic large-scale events as Kristallnacht or the Babi Yar massacre will be described alongside events that convey a more personal dimension of the Holocaust—for example, the heroism of Raoul Wallenberg.

Thus the Chronology Wall will offer the museum-goer an essential overview. It will provide a backdrop—a set of landmarks, both large and small—by which to guide the visitor in the journey through the Museum.



WARSAW GHETTO UPRISING, 1943, YIVO INSTITUTE

SYNAGOGUE, EBERSWALDE, KRISTALLNACHT, 1938, BILDARCHIV PREUSSISCHER KULTURBESITZ



JEWS SCRUBBING STREETS, VIENNA, 1938; GHETTO FIGHTERS' HOUSE IN MEMORY OF YIZHAK KATZNELSON



S.S. ST LOUIS, 1939, HEBREW IMMIGRANT AID SOCIETY



BOYCOTT, GERMANY, 1933, LED BAECK INSTITUTE



NAZIS OUT JEWS' BEARDS, POLAND, GHETTO FIGHTERS' HOUSE IN MEMORY OF YIZHAK KATZELSON

The Holocaust Thematic Galleries

Heinrich Himmler called SS crimes against the Jews of Europe “. . . a page of glory in our history which has never been written, and must never be written . . .” But Chaim Kaplan, Warsaw Ghetto chronicler, faithfully described in his diary the compulsion of Jews to bear witness: “This idea is like a flame imprisoned in my bones, burning within me, screaming: *Record!*”

The Museum’s response to Chaim Kaplan’s imperative will be found in the dialogue between the Chronology Wall and a juxtaposed series of thirteen individual thematic galleries, where visitors will confront the Holocaust from multiple angles of vision. Even as the tragic events of the Holocaust unfold before our eyes, its human dimensions are allowed to emerge. These galleries enable us to understand as fully as possible the diabolical structure of the Holocaust as well as the enormity of Nazi crimes; they help us to appreciate the extraordinary significance of Jewish resistance as well as the miracle of simple survival.

Through a rich array of documentary and visual techniques, visitors will encounter the tenacious history of *European Anti-Semitism* and confront the *Rise of Hitler and Nazism* as set against the backdrop of the Weimar Republic.

Next the museum-goer will survey the process of *Exclusion and Degradation*, whereby the Nazis legally disemancipated the Jews of Europe, and then examines the life within *The Ghettos*. But here, as elsewhere throughout the exhibition, we see more than just the Nazi strangulation hold: we also encounter the Jewish struggle for life, always seeking to escape the harsh double-binds of Nazi rule. The fate of one-and-one half million Jewish *Children* also will be described, but tenderly, allowing their own voices to speak once more.

The stirring and often unsung story of *Jewish Resistance*, both physical and spiritual, also will be told—from those

who practiced their religion in the ghettos and camps to the partisans, the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, the Jewish soldiers of the Allied fighting forces, and the extraordinary revolts in the death camps themselves.

From the false fronts of Theresienstadt to the misleading language of deportation, the Nazis used *Deception and Disbelief* to disarm their victims and the world. Yet this was but one of the mechanisms which permitted the *Engineering of Death*, a process which the museum visitor will encounter, in the brutality of mobile killing operations and the inhuman horror of the death camps, gas chambers and crematoria. Respectful attention also will be paid to the fate of other European victims of persecution, molested and murdered by the Nazis in the course of establishing their brutal Aryan empire.

The *World’s Inaction* to Nazi crimes must be described, in all its callousness and apathy. But visitors to the Museum will find inspiration in the extraordinary efforts of *Rescue and Escape* which also occurred, from attempts by Jews to spirit children out of occupied Europe to the risks taken by courageous non-Jews—“the righteous of the nations”—to save their imperiled Jewish neighbors.

Museum visitors will encounter the full scope of the Holocaust by way of *Numbers* which present its statistical devastation in human terms. The *Precious Legacy* of European Jewish culture also will be presented, through a special collection of sacred Jewish artifacts—a remnant of the World Before which the Nazis themselves had preserved for a projected “museum of an extinct race” in Prague.

Theme by theme, the story of the Holocaust unfolds—by no means completely, but instead through an exemplifying mosaic—until at last we reach the moving account of *Liberation* by the Allied armed forces.



BARBED WIRE, AUSCHWITZ, AMERICAN RED CROSS



WARSAW GHETTO CHILDREN, YAD VASHEM



SELECTION AT AUSCHWITZ, YAD VASHEM



LIBERATED SURVIVORS, WOBBELIN, 1945; NATIONAL ARCHIVES



PARTISANS OF VILNA, 1944; GHETTO FIGHTERS' HOUSE IN MEMORY OF YIZHAK KATZNELSON



The Aftermath

"God's gift," the 18th-century Hasidic master the Ba'al Shem Tov tells us, "is a world that is new to us every morning—and a person should believe that he is reborn each day." It is in this spirit that the museum-goer will enter the Aftermath, imbued with a new and deeply personal measure of understanding.

In these galleries we will relive with survivors themselves the pain and joy of rebirth that followed their liberation. We will ache with them as they search each new face, hoping against hope to discover a friend or loved one—and we will rejoice in the miracle of reunion, despite the odds.

We also will witness their plight after the war as Displaced Persons, still housed in the camps that once were their prisons. And we will marvel at their resilience, as they construct vital if temporary communities once again, in preparation for resettlement in the United States, Israel and wherever else they found nations willing to benefit from their visceral need to raise new families and rebuild productive lives.

The first stumbling steps of many survivors led them back to homes in Eastern Europe. But the pain of life in a vast, unmarked Jewish cemetery, exacerbated by postwar pogroms, quickly made it clear that Palestine posed the only answer for the majority of survivors. This Saved Remnant now aspired, above all else, to Eretz Yisrael, the Land of Israel.

Sped along now by image and artifact, film and sound, we will trace the routes of the Bricha, or illegal immigration—one of the most extraordinary and insistent mass movements of all time—passing with survivors through the rubble of postwar Europe and across national barriers. Monitoring their progress across the strenuous "Green Trail" through forests and over mountain passes, we will see them finally reach the coastal staging points from which they made the last, determined portion of their journey.

And lastly, museum-goers will share in the passage to Palestine, circumventing the British blockade that sought to surround the survivors yet again in the barbed wire of detention camps on Cyprus, or even deport them back, like the *Exodus 1947*, to the German camps from which they only recently had fled. We will witness these pilgrims as they refuse to be obstructed, breaking free to land on the beaches of Palestine, where they joined their brothers and sisters to fight for independence and the chance to build their lives anew.

Sooner or later, each Holocaust survivor realizes that he or she bears a crucial message for every man, woman and child in the modern world. That message is borne partly in the lessons of the War Crimes trials, which have continued to resonate to the present day and which the Museum will present. But it resides even more strongly in the affirmative resolution of survivors to teach the lessons of renewal and redemption—forged by a journey through darkness into light—which ultimately only they can convey.





FUNERAL AFTER KIELCE POGROM, 1946, GHETTO FIGHTERS' HOUSE IN MEMORY OF YIZHAK KATZELSON

ON THE WAY TO PALESTINE, 1945, NATIONAL ARCHIVES



LANDSBERG DP CAMP, CA, 1946, PHOTO: Z. KADUSHIN, BETH HATEFUTSOH, THE MUSEUM OF THE JEWISH DIASPORA



ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT SHIP HAIFA HARBOR, 1947, CENTRAL ZIONIST ARCHIVE

NEW LIFE IN ISRAEL, CA, 1948, CENTRAL ZIONIST ARCHIVE



Renewal in America 1654—Today

After the war, some survivors of the Holocaust finally reached the shores of America. Many of them, passing the future site of the Museum as they arrived in New York Harbor, found themselves greeted by words they can never forget—words spoken in a foreign tongue, and yet somehow familiar:

Give me your tired, your poor
Your huddled masses yearning to
breathe free
The wretched refuse of your
teeming shore
Send these, the helpless, tempest-
tossed to me
I lift my lamp beside the
Golden Door!

These words, engraved on the Statue of Liberty, were written by Emma Lazarus—American Jewish poet and advocate of the homeless and oppressed, whatever their background or beliefs. Through the experiences of the Holocaust survivor, her words reveal themselves anew, in all their poignancy and beauty.

But the Museum's fourth permanent exhibition, *Renewal in America*, by no means focuses on Holocaust survivors alone. Instead it allows their story to merge into the wider, centuries-old stream of Jewish immigration to America, and the process whereby Jews came to redefine themselves, even as they contributed to their adoptive and developing nation.

Renewal in America will present the tapestry of Jewish immigration and the establishment of Jewish life in the United States, describing the major waves of Jewish migration, from 1654 to the present. It will present those difficult and hopeful voyages against the backdrop of forces—the push and the pull—which stimulated the desire of Jews to uproot themselves and plant roots here. But the exhibition also will demonstrate the clashes between the European and American experience, the marriage of these traditions, and the processes

whereby Jews, settling in, transformed even while retaining essential aspects of their traditional identities.

The golden door was not always golden. Jews, struggling as did others with poverty and prejudice, were among the leaders in this nation of immigrants striving to explore the meaning of America's democratic ideals. They fought against the abuses of civil rights and worked with other Americans in safeguarding America's social contract and founding principles. At the same time they contributed with unparalleled energy to American achievements in all fields, from the arts and sciences to politics and the economy. The Museum will depict this story in all its breadth and variety.

Nowhere else in the world is the important story of Jewish Renewal in America treated in such a major permanent exhibition. And the Museum site is uniquely situated to serve this purpose. Exhilarating views of New York Harbor can be seen through the Museum's broad windows at this exhibition level. The living history of Ellis Island will be only a glance away, as will the Statue of Liberty.



COLONIAL JEWISH MERCHANTS' CHILDREN. AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY



STEERAGE DECK, 1893. MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK



YIDDISH ART THEATRE POSTER. AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY



WAR ORPHANS ARRIVE IN NEW YORK, 1921. JOINT DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE

LOWER EAST SIDE, NEW YORK, 1898; MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK



D.P.'S, NEWLY ARRIVED IN AMERICA. HEBREW IMMIGRANT AID SOCIETY



Learning Center

In his elegiac memoir of Eastern European Jewish life, the 20th-century American Jewish theologian, Abraham Joshua Heschel, spoke for the entire legacy of European Jewish culture: "The present generation still holds the keys to the treasure. If we do not uncover the wealth, the keys will go down to the grave with us, and the storehouse of the generations will remain locked forever."

The Learning Center of the Museum, expanding upon all facets and dimensions of the themes established in the permanent exhibitions, will be the Museum's contribution to uncovering that wealth. An integral part of the museum experience, the Learning Center will provide public access to unique interactive computer programs, as well as to sound recordings, photographic banks, and film and video resources. An electronic outreach program also will make a wide variety of computerized resources available to educational institutions and for home use. Through these state-of-the-art education techniques, the Learning Center will transform this museum into one of the world's premiere resources for disseminating knowledge about 20th-century European Jewish culture, the Holocaust, the Aftermath, and Jewish immigration to America.

The Museum's computerized data base and videodisc storage capabilities will be linked to individual information carrels and to group and family viewing environments. Each facility will allow viewers instantly to retrieve texts, still and moving images, and sound recordings in a variety of ways, for example simply by touching words or images on a video display screen.

The Museum currently is arranging to make the following special computerized collections accessible in the Learning Center:

Yad Vashem Pages of Testimony. Translated from eight languages, these pages record the stories of some one-

and-one-half million Jewish Holocaust victims and only the names of one-and-one-half million more who perished. These records will be updated continually in pace with the new scholarly research and eyewitness testimony. Additionally, in an area adjacent to the Memorial, a perpetually changing video projection will commemorate the millions of known Holocaust victims by displaying all their names, pictures, and biographical data.

Beth Hatefutsoth Community Listings, Register of Jewish Genealogy, and Etymology of Jewish Family Names. These documents include a carefully researched collection recording the fates of some 3,000 separate European Jewish communities during the Holocaust, as well as an ever-expandable, computerized registry of Jewish family trees and a fascinating compilation detailing the origins of Jewish family names.

The Learning Center is also currently developing its *Interactive Encyclopedia of Jewish Heritage and the Holocaust*, an accessible and electronically advanced resource which will help to put the keys to the treasure of Jewish culture, and the tools to understanding the Holocaust, in the hands of museum visitors, whatever their age and educational interests.

Other Learning Center materials will include *documentary films and original film footage, recordings of European Jewish music, and archival documents* in their original languages and in English translation.

Finally, special *videotaping studios* will allow visitors—particularly survivors of the Holocaust, but first generation Americans as well—to record their testimony about European Jewish life, the Holocaust, and Jewish immigration to America and Israel. This testimony will be supplemented by survivors' oral history records collected by such institutions as the Center for Holocaust Studies

in Brooklyn and the Yale University Archives.

There is no comparable facility anywhere today. Anticipating its central role within an international educational network, the Museum already has begun to develop inter-institutional collaborations with Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, Beth Hatefutsoth in Tel Aviv, the Ghetto Fighter's House in Haifa, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, and with its valued sister institutions in New York, including the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, the Leo Baeck Institute, and the Jewish Museum.

Through these efforts, the Museum's Learning Center will invite the public to become a part of the museum community. By so doing, it will strive to bridge the chasm created by the Holocaust and help to reforge modern civilization's broken ties with its European Jewish heritage.

The Learning Center on two levels overlooking the harbor.

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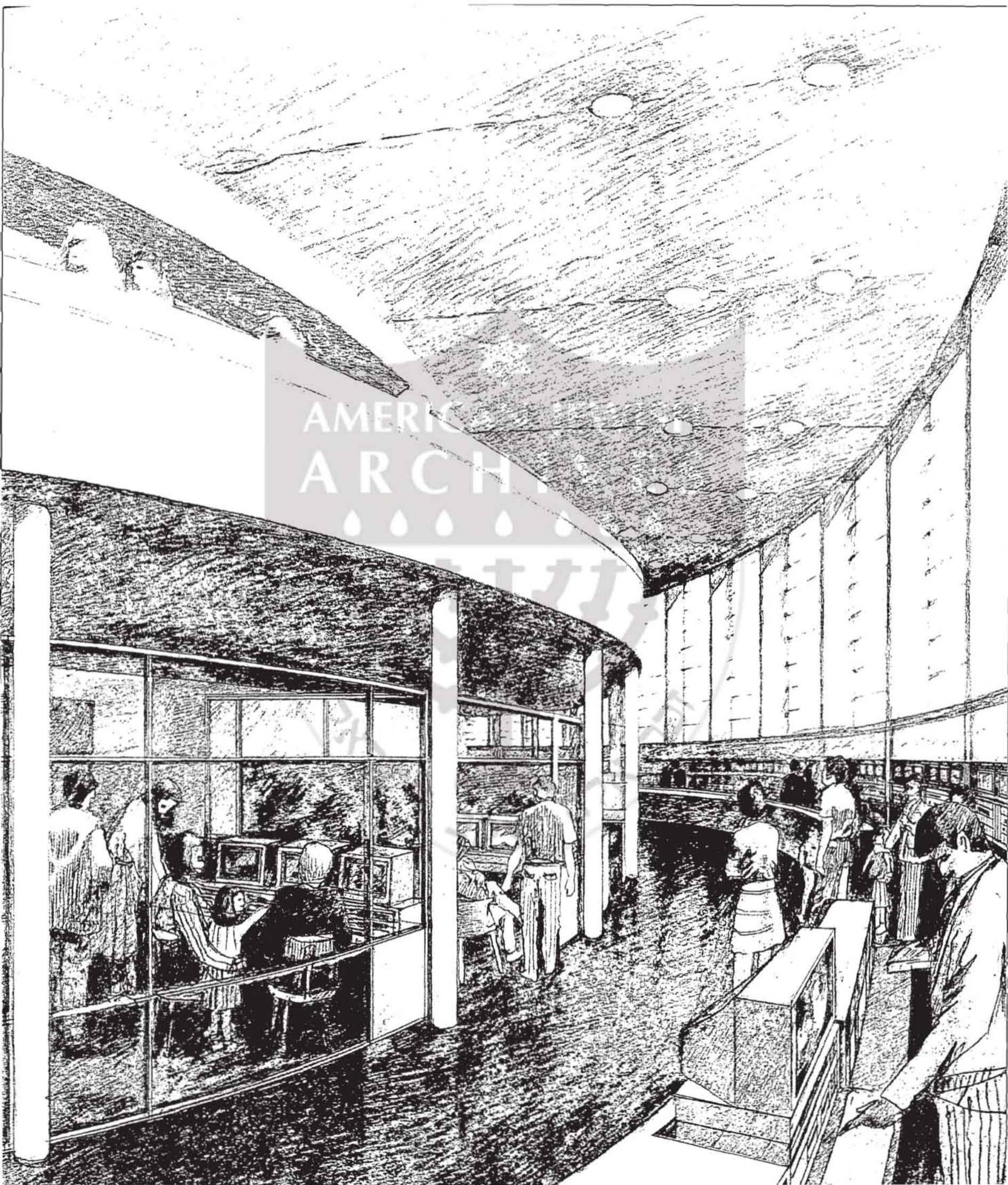
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A Living Memorial to the Holocaust

For the survivors of the Holocaust the obligation to bear witness is a means each day of repaying God for the gift of life, while testifying to the evil of which human beings are capable.

But it now is nearly one half-century since the Holocaust. And each day our own obligation grows ever more pressing to assure these last survivors that their story not die with them—that we in turn will bear witness to the catastrophe of the Holocaust, while striving to keep alive the memories and hopes of Jewish civilization and culture.

We must recount the story of what happened to European Jewish culture and its people as if each and every one of us had made the journey out of the death camps and back to life. Here, in New York, we can find a way to retell that story for everyone, so as to bring out its Jewish and universal significance and reaffirm the meaning of modern life, while looking to the future with the strength that memory brings.

It is a Jewish custom, when visiting a cemetery, to place small stones on top of the memorials marking the graves of friends and loved ones. This gesture is a way of showing: "We were there." It is a way of saying: "We remember."

It is in the spirit of this gesture—and for all the gravestones smashed to dust, and for all the ashes strewn uncaringly to the winds—that we must work together in New York to create this Living Memorial to the Holocaust—Museum of Jewish Heritage. In so doing we can fulfill our obligation to insure that the world remembers how the Jews of Europe lived, how they died, and the hope that they cherished for the Jewish people and the Jewish spirit. We must testify that the world cannot stand idly by while the innocent are slaughtered. And we must act now to marshal the lessons of the past, so as to safeguard the present and secure for our children a just and humane future.

