Yiddish Theatre Project

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Shalom aleichem!
שאָלעמ־אַלייכעמ!
Hello!

Historical Background

- History of the Jewish community in Pittsburgh

- Presence in Squirrel Hill

THIS THEATRE BUILDING FOR SALE OR RENT

LOCATION: 1851 Centre Avenue, Corner Green Street, in the heart of the business and entertainment section of the Hill District of Pittsburgh . . . a thickly populated section with a large area to draw from.
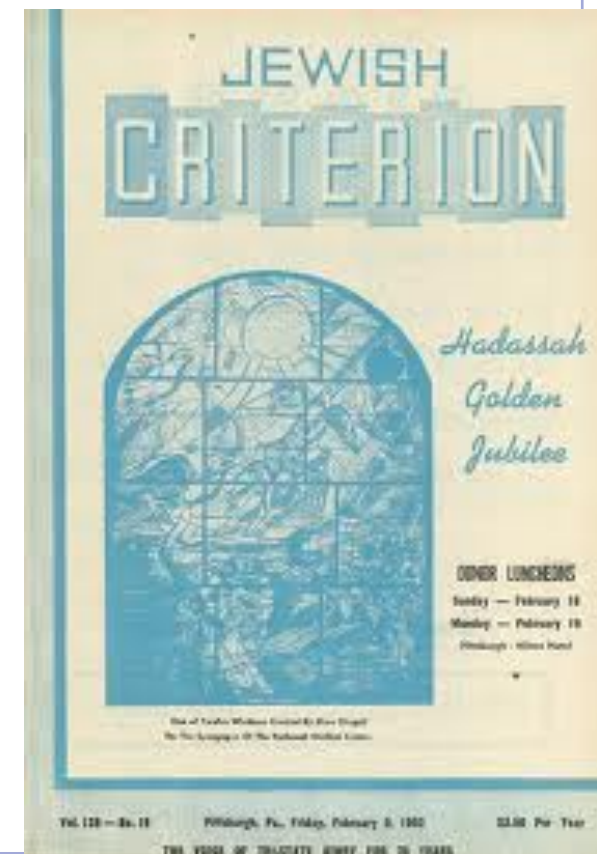
BUILDING: Size, approximately 45' by 180'; Auditorium has about 900 seats, some stage equipment, including a screen. Building also has 3 apartments and 2 storerooms.

FOR COMPLETE INFORMATION ON ATTRACTIVE PROPOSITION, WRITE OR PHONE:

LANDO REALTY COMPANY
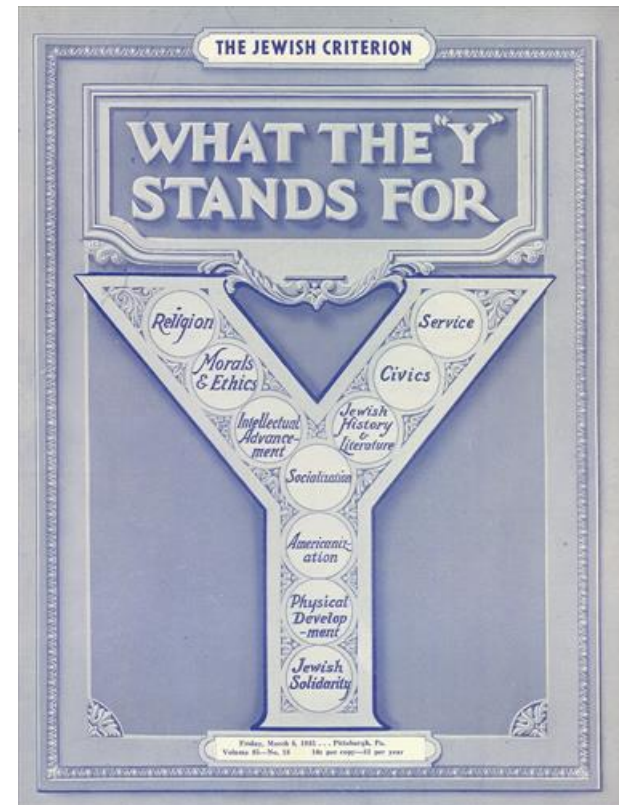331 Fourth Ave.   GRant 4481   Pittsburgh 22, Pa.

Yiddish Theatre

- What is Yiddish theatre?

- Yiddish theatre in Pittsburgh

- non-Yiddish theatre activity in Pittsburgh

Project Description

- Our sample consists in ads from a Pittsburgh-area Jewish newspaper, The Jewish Chronicle, from the years 1925-1945.

- Every 5 years: 1925/1930/1935/1940/1945

- We sampled 4 issues per year by season.

- 4 months apart +/- and then labeled by season.

Initial Research Questions

- How did the prevalence of Yiddish theatre relate to cultural assimilation in Pittsburgh?

- What does the amount and type of Yiddish theatre in Pittsburgh say about cultural norms amongst Jews in Pittsburgh?

Final Research Questions

- How did the Great Depression and World War II affect Jewish oriented theatre in Pittsburgh?

- How did popularity of different media change over this time period?

Our Schema

```
start = newspaper
newspaper = element newspaper { title, printYear }
title = element title { text }
printYear = element printYear { year, issue }
year = attribute year { xsd:gYear }
issue = element issue { date, ad+ }
date = attribute date { xsd:gMonthDay }
ad = element ad { yiddish, page, show+ }
show = element show { medium, title, actors?, venue, performance }
yiddish = attribute yiddish { "yes" | "no" }
medium = attribute medium { "film" | "photoplay" | "play" | "standup" | "musical" |
"theatre" }
page = attribute page { xsd:int }
actors = element actors { actor+ }
actor = element actor { origin?, text }
origin = attribute origin { "local" | "alien" }
venue = element venue { text }
performance = element performance { text }
```

Sample of our XML markup (summer 1925 [partial])

```xml
<newspaper>
  <title>The Jewish Chronicle</title>
  <printYear year="1925">
    <issue date="--07-03">
  <ad yiddish="no" page="30">
    <show medium="film">
      <title>"Introduce Me"</title>
      <actors><actor>Douglas MacLean</actor></actors>
      <venue>Manor</venue>
    <performance>Sunday, July 4th</performance>
    </show>
      <show medium="film">
        <title> "The Talker"</title>
        <actors><actor>Anna Q. Nilson</actor></actors>
        <venue>Manor</venue>
        <performance>Monday-Tuesday, July 6-7th</
performance>
      </show>
<show medium="film">
        <title>"Super Speed"</title>
        <actors><actor>Reed Hoives</actor></actors>
        <venue>Manor</venue>
        <performance>Wednesday, July 8th</performance>
      </show>
<show medium="film">
        <title>"The Way of a Girl"</title>
        <actors><actor>Elinor Boardman</actor></
actors>
        <venue>Manor</venue>
        <performance>Thursday, July 9th</
performance>
    </show>
    <show medium="film">
      <title>"The Shock Punch"</title>
      <actors><actor>Richard Dix</actor></actors>
      <venue>Manor</venue>
      <performance>Friday, July 10</performance>
    </show>
</ad>
    </issue>
  </printYear>
</newspaper>
```

Search Utility

Results

- The number of plays advertised in the Jewish Chronicle rose somewhat between 1925 and 1930, rose substantially between 1930 and 1935, and then dropped dramatically between 1935 and 1940. This number remained very low between 1940 and 1945.

- The number of musicals and plays remained consistent over the 20-year period.

- During WWII, there were very few theatre or film showings in Pittsburgh.

- Theatres in the eastern parts of the city (Squirrel Hill, Oakland, and East Liberty) – where more Jewish people lived – had more advertisements overall in the Criterion.

Under the Hood

Website design:

- We wanted a site that had tones of traditional gray newspaper.
  - We chose grey and black theme.
  - We used a serifed typeface.

- We prioritized simplicity and accessibility.
  - Consolidating sections.
  - Large, easy to read typeface.
  - Eliminated visual noise.
  - Not centered; slightly to the left and centered beneath the title.

```css
CSS
body {
  margin:0; padding:0;
  font-size: 15px;
  line-height: 1.3;
  font-family: Constantia, Georgia, serif;
  color: #333333;
  background-color:#efefef;
}

h1 { font-size: 36px; text-align: left; }
h1 a { color: black !important; }

.content {
        width: 520px;
        margin: 100px auto; }

.nav { margin:0; padding:0; text-align: left; }
.nav li {
        margin:0; padding:0;
        list-style-type: none;
        float: left;
        width: 100px; display: block; }

p { clear: both; padding: 30px 0 0; }
a { text-decoration: none; }
.people-photo {float: left; margin-right: 18px; width: 110px;}
```

Impediments

Several major issues caused impediments in our research.

1.Loss of group member.

2.ArchivalWare

3. Lack of Yiddish resources

4. lack of team member's Yiddish language skills.

5. Breadth and scope of data.

Moving Forward

Next steps (short-term):

-Produce additional SVG graphs

-Add data to sample for better results

-Make search feature more precise.

Next steps (long-term):

- Access Microfilm of Yiddish newspapers

- Learn rudimentary Yiddish

- Widen scope and deepen breadth of sample size.

- Geotagging theatre locations