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The Myth of the Trefa Banquet: American Culinary Culture and the Radicalization of Food Policy in American Reform Judaism*

Lance J. Sussman

On July 11, 1883, one of the great landmark events in the history of Judaism in the United States took place at Cincinnati's Highland House overlooking the Ohio River.[1] The "Trefa Banquet" or "Highland House Affair" is, perhaps, Reform Judaism's most widely known faux pas but also one of its least-studied occurrences.[2] Often invoked against classical Reform Judaism both from within and from outside the Reform movement, the Trefa Banquet can also be understood both as a cautionary tale and an object lesson for Judaism's most liberal religious movement.[3] By exploring the Trefa Banquet more thoroughly, placing it into its historical context, and reexamining the chain of events that followed it, we can also learn a great deal about Judaism in America, then and now.[4]

Viewed from the perspective of its own time, the well-known Cincinnati repast of July 1883 was closely patterned after the grand banquet style of American culinary culture in an age of excess. Within the continuum of Reform Jewish history, the Trefa Banquet's pork-free menu reflected a broader culinary pattern of select *kashrut* — that is, Jewish religious dietary pratice — among nineteenth century American Jews. It also represented a midpoint between the general compliance with traditional *kashrut* at public events that characterized American Reform Judaism until the 1870s and a radical break with *kashrut* that increasingly characterized mainstream Reform beginning in the early 1880s. The radicalization of Reform food policy was occasioned by general trends in American culinary culture, upward socioeconomic mobility among American Reform Jews, and the influence of religious modernism on the Reform movement. Remarkably, Reform food policy largely remained radicalized until the end of the twentieth century when, for the first time in more than a century, the possibility of returning to select traditional dietary practices was brought up for serious discussion and review.

As is well known, the radicalization of Reform food policy in the 1880s also served as an accelerant in the formation of the nascent Conservative movement. At the same time, *kashrut* issues among newly arrived east European Jews resulted in their establishing numerous social service institutions to regulate *kashrut*. Ironically and sadly, a celebration in honor of the first ordination class of the Hebrew Union College (HUC), which was supposed to signal a new era of intrafaith cooperation among American Jews, instead proved to be a call to arms and contributed to the permanent factionalization of American Jewish religious life.

Historiography: The Myth of the Trefa Banquet

For many years following the Highland House Affair, the memory of the Trefa Banquet apparently remained alive at the grass-roots level but did not attract scholarly attention. In his 1941 autobiography, *My Life as an American Jew*, David Philipson, a member of the first HUC ordination class and an eyewitness to the banquet, published an account of the dinner that was replete with misinformation and strong personal opinion. However, Philipson's "memory" of the dinner became the codified text on what had occurred nearly sixty years earlier. In Philipson's account, "terrific excitement ensued when two rabbis rose from their seats and rushed from the room. Shrimp had been placed before them as the opening course of the elaborate menu."[5] In fact, contemporaneous reports of the dinner do not fully substantiate that the dinner had been dramatically disrupted. For sure, shrimp was not served as the first course; rather, it was littleneck clams!

Philipson also appended a historical thesis of his own. "This incident," he opined, "furnished the opening to the movement that culminated in the establishment of a rabbinical seminary of a Conservative birth."[6] While perhaps slightly overstated, Philipson's observation helped nurture a rich historiographical tradition in American Jewish history that, in particular, looked at the founding of the first Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) in New York and the rise of the largest Jewish denomination in the United States for most of the twentieth century.

While Philipson's facts were slightly revised by memory and, perhaps, a little embellished, his thesis concerning the place of the Trefa Banquet in American Jewish history eventually attracted serious scholarly attention. In 1966, Professor John J. Appel published a historical analysis of the Trefa Banquet in *Commentary* magazine. Appel concluded that the inclusion of shrimp, crab, and clams on the menu of the Trefa Banquet was not a caterer's error but reflected the "ambivalent, sometimes contradictory attitude" of Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise toward *kashrut* and, more significantly, "was deliberately arranged by some Cincinnati businessmen." In fact, the determination of the final menu was probably more benign and lacked any intention to antagonize the guests of HUC and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC), whose tenth anniversary was combined purposefully with the college's first ordination service. Like Philipson, Appel also argued that the Trefa Banquet played a role in the series of events that ultimately led to the formation of the Conservative movement in American Judaism.[7]

Appel's investigative work and brief reflections on the Trefa Banquet, now nearly forty years old, serve as the logical point of departure for an expanded discussion of the banquet. While Appel succeeded in doing much of the historical spade work on the events of July 11, 1883, and the subsequent fallout in the national Jewish community, he did not fully address the wider context in

which the Trefa Banquet took place. A review of the relevant primary literature clearly demonstrates that the menu was typical for its time and place with respect to general culture of American and American Jewish banquets of the 1880s. Moreover, Appel did not address the significant "pork-free" aspect of the dinner and its contemporaneous medical justification, which was also applied to reevaluate the "fitness" of oysters for Jewish consumption.

With respect to the denominational consequences of the dinner, again, Appel's research was narrow in its scope. The reaction of the traditionalists to the Trefa Banquet was not only confined to the founding of the first JTS and the subsequent emergence of a Conservative movement but also involved a wider splintering of American Judaism into three principal groupings early in the twentieth century. Indeed, heightened concern about *kashrut* among east European Jews in America early in the 1880s might explain the heated reaction of several traditional East Coast Jewish journalists. Ironically, the Trefa Banquet was also significant within the history of the Reform movement, whose views of the traditional dietary laws were in tremendous flux in 1883. As will be seen, the Cincinnati dinner was also part of a larger radicalizing trend that was to reposition the Reform movement as a whole on the issue of *kashrut*.

The Highland House Affair

The basic facts surrounding the Trefa Banquet are generally not well known and have remained embedded in the primary literature of the Highland House Affair. Three groups within the American Jewish community converged in Cincinnati in July 1883 for a series of meetings and celebrations. As stated, HUC's first ordination service was combined with the UAHC's tenth anniversary; Cincinnati was also host to a meeting of the Rabbinical Literary Association, a forerunner of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR).[8] The triple linkage guaranteed excellent representation from many of the most elite circles in American Jewish life during the Gilded Age.

HUC had been established in 1875 by Wise with the help of the UAHC. It was representative of a new type of rabbinic school pioneered earlier in the nineteenth century in Italy and Germany. Several attempts at opening rabbinic schools, or at least preparatory schools, had already failed in the United States by the time Wise founded HUC (although Maimonides College, established in Philadelphia in 1867 by Isaac Leeser, had ordained a class of four rabbis before closing in 1869). Wise was determined not only to keep his school open but to develop it into an important, respectable institution. To its president, commencement exercises for the first class at HUC were nothing less than a personal victory and the fulfillment of a lifelong dream.[9]

Wise, born in Steingrub, Bohemia, in 1819, had arrived in the United States in 1846. Although he had a limited Jewish education, he quickly emerged as a leading and highly controversial Jewish voice in America. After serving two

pulpits in Albany, New York, he settled in Cincinnati in 1854, where he launched both an English- and German-language Jewish newspaper, the *Israelite* and *Die Deborah*, and published his own prayer book, *Minhag America*. He believed that he had the capacity to articulate a Judaism that would unify the vast majority of American Jews under a single organizational umbrella. After a number of false starts and seemingly endless disputes within the national Jewish community, he finally helped launch the UAHC in 1873 and HUC in 1875. Now, eight years after the founding of HUC, he was about to witness and participate in the culmination of years of hard work in America.[10]

At 2:30 in the afternoon of July 11, all three groups converged at the Plum Street Temple in downtown Cincinnati for commencement exercises for the college. The Moorish synagogue's altar was lavishly adorned with flowers. In addition to a number of speeches by rabbis, including both traditionalists like Benjamin Szold and radicals like Kaufman Kohler, lay leaders of HUC and the UAHC also were invited to speak. A choir made up of five women and three men offered "excellent music." Two students, representing their class of four, spoke as well. "At the conclusion," the July 12, 1883 edition of *The Cincinnati Enquirer* reports, "Dr. Wise pronounced them duly ordained rabbis."[11]

At the request of a special ad hoc committee headed by Julius Freiberg (1823–1905) representing Cincinnati's leading Jewish families, some 215 guests were invited to continue the celebration of the first class of ordainees at a grand banquet at the Highland House, a restaurant and resort on Cincinnati's Mt. Adams. Freiberg, a wealthy businessman who had founded the distilling firm of Freiberg and Workum that introduced bourbon whiskey to the world, was active in a broad range of civic and Jewish organizations, including Cincinnati's Chamber of Commerce, B'nai B'rith, the Jewish Hospital of Cincinnati, the UAHC (president, 1889–1903), and HUC.[12]

Arrangements were made to transport the guests on the Eden Park streetcars from Fifth and Walnut in downtown Cincinnati to the Highland House. A dinner orchestra and menu greeted the two hundred guests who rode cable cars to the top of Mt. Adams. A beautiful printed menu adorned with a colored feather informed the guests, including a number of Christian clergy and professors from the University of Cincinnati, that an elegant French cuisine dinner composed of nine courses and five alcoholic drinks would be served.

The caterer for the evening was well known in the Cincinnati Jewish community. Gustave Lindeman (d. 1928) was the food manager of the Jewish Allemenia Club in Cincinnati and, subsequently, a swanky non-Jewish club in Dayton after a flood destroyed a restaurant he operated in the Queen City. Lindeman, who lived most of his life in Dayton, viewed himself as "just Jewish" and steered clear of denominational labels. He married Henrietta Oaks on May 10, 1868. Rabbi Wise officiated.[13]

Nearly a hundred years after the Trefa Banquet took place, a granddaughter of Gustave Lindeman, Edith Lindeman Calisch of Richmond, Virginia, maintained in a private correspondence that "Gus Lindeman evidently was given carte blanche when it came to the menu for the banquet and this menu was accepted by Rabbi Wise and members of the committee." In her unverified apologium, Calisch added that "my grandfather, though Jewish, had no knowledge of whom the guests were to be and had merely followed instructions to provide 'an elegant and sumptuous meal.'"[14]

When first asked for an explanation as to who decided on the menu for the evening, a defensive Wise wrote in his *Israelite* on August 3, 1883, that "said chief cook, himself a Jew wool-dyed, was to place before the guests a kosher meal." "So it was understood," the president of HUC continued, "in Cincinnati all along, and we do not know why he diversified his menu with multipeds and bivalves."[15] Two weeks later, in his German-language *Die Deborah*, where Wise generally disclosed his own viewpoint more fully, the bilingual editor admitted that "the Cincinnati Banquet Committee allowed a few dishes to be served which are forbidden according to Jewish ritual law."[16] Subsequently, however, when pushed to explain the actions of the committee, Wise went on the offensive and further embroiled himself in controversy.

By any standard, the party Lindeman provided HUC and UAHC on July 11, 1883, was lavish, even in an age of excess. For sure, the dinner was extremely costly. Some mistakes in the French spelling on the menu and the inclusion of cheese at the end of the menu suggests that the hosts and their food provider were not fully tutored in fine cuisine and were stretching to impress their East Coast guests. The celebration, including its food, decorations, music, and toasts, reflected the excessive banquet culture of its era and is part of a larger historical continuum of banquets, from the dining and drinking excesses of the biblical King Ahasurerus to contemporary American bar and bat mitzvah receptions and Israeli wedding receptions.[17]

The Cincinnati Enquirer covered the event in great detail and called the banquet a "Jewish Jollification." According to the *Enquirer*, "The banquet at the Highland House was the most brilliant event of the session of the council. [T]he arrangements were complete in every detail, providing every possible comfort for the large gathering of ladies and gentlemen."[18] The complete menu was also reported in the daily paper as a seemingly noncontroversial matter of public record.

A number of original texts of the menu have survived over the years and are in collections of the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati. The first course was littleneck clams and a sherry followed by a consommé and Sauterne, a Bordeaux wine. The third course was large and included beef tenderloins with mushrooms, soft-shell crabs, a shrimp salad, potatoes in lobster bisque sauce, and another selection of Bordeaux wine. The entrée was sweetbreads accompanied

with peas. The fifth course featured frog legs in cream sauce, breaded chicken and asparagus, followed by pigeon and squab embedded in pastry, salads, and G. H. Mumm extra-dry champagne. Of course, there were plenty of desserts, including ice cream and assorted cakes. Indeed, almost every violation of *kashrut* was in evidence — seafood, tref meat, mixing milk and meat — with the one exception of pork.[19] It is very possible that the sponsors of the dinner sincerely believed, from the perspective of "moderate Reform," that this one exception rendered the banquet religiously acceptable to Jewish traditionalists at the repast, particularly in a city that sported the nickname "Porkopolis." They could not have been more wrong.

Unlike the non-Jewish reporter at the *Enquirer*, an anonymous Jewish reporter filed a story with the *New York Herald* strongly professing that *not* everyone was impressed with the UAHC convention or comfortable with the menu. Probably written by a member of the distinguished Mendes family, the New York-based story began by stating that "a candid review of the work [of the Cincinnati Council] does not call forth special praise." It ended with a brief comment that "a painful episode was the banquet, on the menu of which, were dishes forbidden by Jewish law. Yet rabbis and laymen assembled for Jewish interests, instead of rising in a body and leaving the hall, sat down and participated."[20]

Five days later, on July 27, an article appeared in New York's *The Jewish Messenger*. Twenty-two-year-old Henrietta Szold, who had accompanied her father, Rabbi Benjamin Szold, to the Cincinnati convocation, had served as an anonymous correspondent for the paper. Her numerous abilities were recognized by the paper's editor, who offered her a column under a nom de plume, Shulamith.[21] As Shulamith, Szold wrote on a broad range of contemporary topics, particularly anti-Semitism and her experiences with the rapidly expanding east European immigrant community in Baltimore, where she lived.[22] "I eat, drink and sleep Russians," she once told her sister, Rachel.[23] Personally anchored in and respectful of the Jewish tradition and mindful of her journalistic responsibilities, Szold was stunned by the fare served at the Highland House, which stood in stark contrast to her own daily experience and what she observed in her home city.

"I would be outraging my own feelings were I to omit recording the indignation which was felt by a surprisingly small minority at the manner in which the banquet was served," Szold wrote. "There was no regard paid to our dietary laws," she continued, "and consequently two rabbis left the table without having touched the dishes, and I am happy to state that I know of at least three more who ate nothing and were indignant but signified their disapproval in a less demonstrative manner."[24]

On the other hand, the mere presence of Szold and other women at the banquet was somewhat revolutionary in and of itself. According to food historian John F. Mariani, "[W]omen were not admitted to all dining rooms, and until the 1870s separate rooms were provided for them to take their meals at eastern hotels."[25] Mixed seating was first introduced to the American Reform synagogue in 1851 in Albany, New York, and remains a significant issue in modern Judaism in the United States and globally.[26]

Word of the Trefa Banquet spread quickly throughout the Jewish press, with East Coast critics of Wise pressing the attack, demanding both an explanation and an apology. Wise, who in his own publications depicted the banquet along the same positive lines as suggested by *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, was soon placed on the defensive. However, instead of apologizing, Wise stonewalled and then retaliated with charges of hypocrisy, pointing to the dismissal of several leading Orthodox rabbis in the United States and Europe on the grounds that they had eaten forbidden foods.[27] Wise also offered arguments defending the inclusion of seafood on the menu and, at one point in the discussion, even referred to oysters as "ocean vegetables."[28]

A number of Wise's loyal readers sent letters of support to his publications and labeled his critics "ignorant fanatics."[29] Wise's "new Judaism," a Chicago correspondent wrote, "has a right to assert itself and in the very publicity of such occasions, we want to show our faces."[30] A rabbi from Pittsburgh wrote that "[I]f Wise's critics could see the hypocritical, self-indulgent though secret violations of *kashrut* by the European rabbinate, they would stop complaining about Rabbi Wise's attitude."[31] A Denver-based pro-Wise rabbi remarked that the Cincinnati dinner was the proper occasion to relegate "kitchen Judaism to the antique cabinet where it belongs."[32]

The charge of "kitchen Judaism" was not unusual at that time for radical reformers to employ against their opponents in the Jewish community. Wise himself had written as early as 1865 that he didn't "worry about the kitchen."[33] Later, in 1893, he attacked Orthodox Jews in England for their "kitchen and stomach" religion.[34] Although only speculation, it is possible that "kitchen Judaism" is not only a pejorative term for an unthinking folk religion but is inherently misogynistic as well.[35] Banquets and the principles of "the new Judaism" were the work of men. Modern women, though tempted by culture and its culinary delights, were still tethered to the kitchen in the eyes of Wise and his so-called progressive supporters.

Meanwhile, the board of Rodeph Sholom Congregation in Philadelphia, led by its scholarly anti-Wise rabbi, Marcus Jastrow, voted to censure Wise in April, 1884, accusing him of undignified behavior and questioning his academic credentials.[36] Subsequently, the UAHC appointed a special committee of five distinguished leaders to look into the matter. Not surprisingly, they acquitted Wise of all charges. The traditional Jewish press in the East, led by the Mendes

family and Phillip Cowen (1853–1943), founder and publisher of *The American Hebrew*, immediately protested that the UAHC's findings were a whitewash. Facetiously, Cowan remarked that not only did Wise not know the laws of *kashrut,* but he was equally unfamiliar with the American practice "of eating oysters only in months with an 'R' in them."[37] Wise, of course, claimed that the crusade against him had ended with his complete exoneration.[38]

Curiously, the continued controversy had little effect on the size and composition of the UAHC, which actually grew from 99 congregations in 1883 to 102 in 1884 before dropping to 98 in 1885. By contrast, the affair had a devastating but not fatal effect on HUC. In 1884, the year after the Highland House debacle, five students were ordained, including Ludwig Grossman, Max Heller, Isaac Rubenstein, Joseph Silverman, and Joseph Stolz. However, no one was ordained in 1886 and only one in 1887. Wise himself blamed the drop in the graduation rate to the controversy that lingered for several years after the great Highland House faux pas.[39]

Contextualizing the Trefa Banquet

In its own controversial and unintended way, the Highland House Affair actually confirmed the centrality of food practices in traditional Jewish life, a social/historical dimension of the Jewish experience increasingly interesting to scholars of ancient Israel and rabbinic Judaism. Viewed broadly, *kashrut* is part of an essentially universal phenomenon in religious life in which food is imbued with extraordinary symbolic and social value. "Food in religious life," writes James E. Latham, "is a subject of immense proportions."[40] Conversely, abrogating religiously sanctioned food customs is equally laden with value for rebels, reformers, and schismatics who not only violate old norms but may seek to superimpose new symbolic foods of their own.

In his unpublished article on the Trefa Banquet, Appel astutely compared it to "a gastronomic incident which inaugurated the Swiss Protestant Reformation in 1522."[41] Ulrich Zwingli (1484–1531), a dissident priest, publicly defended the eating of meat during Lent that year. Although Zwingli himself followed traditional Catholic culinary practice in preparation for Easter, he defended to the right of others to break with church tradition, especially when the reforms did not contradict scripture. Conflict with the Catholic Church quickly escalated and, in response, Zwingli wrote his first major reformatory treatise, *Archeteles*, questioning the whole ceremonial structure of the Roman Church.

In comparing the two "Trefa Banquets," Catholic and Jewish, it is interesting to note that both Wise and Zwingli were not themselves thoroughly radicalized in their eating habits. Moreover, the Swiss controversy ultimately resulted in a schism in the Swiss Church, a process that Zwingli, much like Martin Luther, led.[42] In the case of Reform Judaism, it was the increasingly

attenuated ties of ethnicity and family as well as the external realities of anti-Semitism that prevented a true schism from occurring within the nineteenth century Jewish community.

The enormous symbolic value ascribed to food in religious life certainly applies to Jewish tradition, stretching all the way back to the earliest days of ancient Israel. A contemporary Israeli archeologist, Israel Finkelstein, has even come to the conclusion based on his own extensive field work that "half a millennium *before* the composition of the biblical text, with its detailed laws and dietary regulations, the Israelites chose, for reasons that are not entirely clear, not to eat pork. Monotheism and the traditions of the Exodus and covenant apparently come much later."[43] Similarly, contemporary anthropologists including Mary Douglas and Jean Soler, who offer structuralist approaches to the study of food norms in ancient Israel, as well as Marvin Harris, who follows an ecological approach, all place dietary laws at the center of the Israelite religious experience.[44] Samuel Krauss and Max Grunwald, both of Vienna, researched and published pioneering critical works in the early decades of the twentieth century on "*Juedischen Volkskueche*," documenting the importance of the culinary in traditional postbiblical Jewish life.[45] More recently, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett has written a number of monographs on Jewish cooking in the United States and Canada; and English scholar John Cooper published a book-length study in 1993 titled *Eat and Be Satisfied: A Social History of Jewish Food*, which offers a comprehensive look at Jewish food customs as well as the halakhah of *kashrut*.[46]

By contrast, the larger history of the food culture of American Jews is still largely unknown. Although Jacob R. Marcus, doyen of the study of the American Jew, characterized the religion of early American Jews as an "orthodoxy of salutary neglect," it is abundantly clear that *kashrut* was never entirely absent among American Jews and, as the case of the Trefa Banquet demonstrates, was often at the epicenter of their religious life. By the middle decades of the nineteenth century, at least three distinct positions vis-à-vis the dietary laws had developed among American Jews: ritually observant, pork-free, and nonobservant.[47] For the most part, however, serving kosher food at public Jewish occasions and in Jewish communal institutions through the Civil War and Reconstruction was the norm. It was not until the early 1880s that the radicalized nonkosher position fully rooted in public Judaism in the United States.

Keeping kosher in America in the middle decades of the nineteenth century was problematic at best. Two major issues, *shehitah* (ritual kosher slaughter) and the production of Passover matzah, faced the Jewish community, which grew rapidly from a few thousand individuals in 1820 to 150,000 people on the eve of the American Civil War. The responsibility for both kosher meat and matzah initially belonged primarily to individual synagogues. However, the American principle of the separation of church and state meant that no

outside regulatory power was available to help enforce standards, and the Jewish community itself, particularly in the larger cities, was highly resistant to creating pan-communal structures to supervise *kashrut*. The widespread employment of Judaically unknowledgeable gentile assistants to the Jewish butchers further complicated the issue of obtaining legitimately kosher meat. In New York during the 1850s, independent unions of kosher butchers and matzah bakers were formed, reflective of the rise of independent kosher food operators in the community. With an increase in the rate of Jewish immigration toward the end of the nineteenth century, the problems of the American kosher food industry became even more acute.[48]

A survey of food policies of Jewish hospitals in the United States prior to the Civil War reveals that keeping kosher was the norm. An advertisement for a ball to benefit Mt. Sinai Hospital in New York in 1852 assured prospective patrons that the event would be kosher.[49] Similarly, New Orleans's new Jewish hospital announced in 1855 that it would provide its patients with kosher food,[50] as did Philadelphia's Jewish Hospital nine years later.[51]

On the other hand, a large number of American Jews in their private lives practiced a selective *kashrut* that by its very nature was more subjective and uneven than systematic in actual practice. The debate over selective *kashrut* centered on two issues: pork and oysters. While most American Jews seemed to refrain from eating pork, it was a different story with seafood. A leading exemplar of the pork-free approach was Mordecai Manuel Noah (1785–1851). "Noah," his biographer Jonathan D. Sarna writes, "was vitally concerned that food brought into his home not contain lard, a swine product."[52] He even helped develop a chemical test that could detect the presence of lard in olive oil. While Noah also refrained from eating pork in public, he openly violated other dietary restrictions including the eating of turtles and oysters.[53]

A widespread opinion developed on medical grounds among nineteenth century Jews justifying the "no pork, yes oyster" viewpoint. Pork was correctly held to be highly susceptible to contamination. Similarly, many American Jewish apologists, including Wise, argued that Jewish slaughter practices were more medically fit than alternative methods. When the German government adopted the Jewish mode of slaughtering animals as a health measure for food served to its military in 1894, Wise loudly applauded the action.[54] The American military also investigated serving kosher food during the Spanish-American War for health reasons. Moreover, almost immediately after the Civil War, the consumption of beef in the United States began to increase rapidly, aided by a number of technological advances including refrigerated rail cars (1871) and barbed wire (1875). Not surprisingly, pork consumption began to recede.[55]

Oysters were not only widely viewed as healthy but also as being an aphrodisiac. In general, Americans consumed millions of oysters during the nineteenth century. So many oysters were transported between the Atlantic coast

and Cincinnati that the stagecoach route was referred to as the "Oyster Line."[56] Thereafter, the oysters were transported by canal barge and rail. Oyster houses, oyster saloons, and oyster bars were found in American cities in every region. Special oyster dishes and even an oyster cracker were developed. Before they began to deplete in the 1880s, the oyster beds in the Chesapeake Bay produced fifteen billion bushels of oysters per year. Charles Dickens once commented on the American passion for seafood that he saw "at every supper at least two mighty bowls of hot stewed oysters."[57] By analogy, it might be said that oysters were for nineteenth century American Jews what Chinese food became for their twentieth century descendants.[58]

Determining Wise's personal food policy is not easy. Frequently inconsistent, he readily changed or revised his views for opportunistic purposes. He was openly hostile to "kitchen Judaism," yet he clearly refrained from eating swine. On the other hand, as stated previously, Wise frequently argued that oysters were kosher and, it can be assumed, he ate them. "There can be no doubt," Wise wrote in *The American Israelite* in 1895, "that the oyster shell is the same to all intents and purposes as the scales to the clean fish, protecting against certain gases in the water."[59] At various times, he wrote against the washing and salting of meat, the prohibition of mixing milk and meat, and the special food restrictions during Passover. "Those who waste their religious and moral sentiments in small and insignificant observances which make them neither better nor more useful," Wise wrote, "diminish and impair their religious and moral capacity."[60]

While changing patterns in American Jewish food culture affected Jewish men, it was Jewish women, as food consumers, cooks, and the principal stewards of "kitchen Judaism," who were profoundly affected by the new culinary climate of the post-Civil War era. According to Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, the first Jewish cookbook to appear in America, Esther Levy's 1871 *Jewish Cookery Book*, was primarily written to promote both traditional women's domesticity and *kashrut* among American Jewish women. In Levy's own words, "[W]ithout violating the precepts of our religion, a table can be spread, which will satisfy the appetites of the most fastidious." Similarly, as early as 1863, *The Jewish Messenger* condemned "tables with forbidden viands for which many young Jewesses betray a singular relish."[61]

To a great extent, the interest in cuisine, referred to in *The American Israelite* as an "anomalous monster," was class based. "Contributors to the *Israelite* and *Die Deborah,*" according to Maria T. Baader, "repeatedly reminded their readers that neither housework nor children's education could be fully delegated to servants without serious damage to home and family." Baader added that children's manners, "especially table manners, also required the close supervision of the mother."[62]

However, Levy and others were swimming against the cultural tide in the nontraditional and rapidly acculturating sector of the 1870s American Jewish community. Not only was culinary accommodation waxing in the post-Civil War American Jewish community, but the gastronomic accommodationists found theoretical support among both moderate pork-free reformers like Wise and, especially, the more radical German Reform rabbis in the years following the Civil War who advocated the complete abolition of the dietary laws.

Initially, American Reform Judaism was of a more conservative bent with respect to its dietary practices. Several of the first Reform congregations in the United States officially kept the dietary laws. According to historian Leon A. Jick, even radical congregations like Har Sinai of Baltimore (founded in 1842) and Emanu-El of New York (founded in 1843) "remained substantially traditional in their ritual practice. Men and women were seated separately, heads were covered, and the Sabbath and dietary laws were 'strictly observed.'"[63] Writing in 1859, Chicago-based Reform Rabbi Bernard Felsenthal (1822–1908) asserted that "it would be irresponsible and reprehensible to advocate the total disregard of the dietary laws."[64] However, with only a few exceptions, culinary traditionalists were unable to hold the line in the antebellum Reform movement.[65]

The debate over the dietary laws in the early Reform movement in central Europe was more nuanced than the discussion in the United States but not particularly passionate. In 1833, Michael Creizenach (1789–1842), a teacher at Frankfurt's liberal Jewish Philanthropin School, suggested that "the laws of Torah regarding forbidden foods and the laws regarding the separation of milk and meat be strictly observed, but that the rules relating to the slaughter and preparation of meat by non-Jews are abandoned."[66] A moderate Reform rabbi, Leopold Stein (1810–1843), who was appointed to a pulpit in the Frankfurt community in 1843, wrote in his guide for Jewish life, *Torat Hakim*, that only the Torah's laws regarding forbidden foods and the "prohibition of the eating of blood" be observed and that "he who does not observe these encumbering [rabbinic] ordinances has not only not transgressed the holy law, but has contributed in a conscientious and salutary manner to the restoration of the law in its purity, as well as to the possibility of living it in the present."[67] In 1847, Hungarian reformer Moses Bruck (1812–1849) argued that Reform Jews observe none of the "dietary regulations at all except that matzoth along with leavened bread would be eaten on Passover."[68] However, none of these positions proved compelling to the rank and file of the Reform movement.

In 1846, the issue of *kashrut* was scheduled to be discussed in Breslau at the third of three major Reform rabbinic conferences. Collectively, these conferences significantly shaped the religious program of the German Reform movement. However, unlike many of the other issues debated, the question of *kashrut* failed to generate much controversy. Rabbi David Einhorn (1809–1879), who was later brought to the United States in 1855 to serve Har Sinai Congregation

in Baltimore, Maryland, had been a member of the committee at the 1846 convention charged with making recommendations on how the dietary laws should be viewed by Reform Judaism. According to Reform historian Michael A. Meyer, the conference did not have time to take up the issue while in session.[69] Subsequently, according to British historian Harry Rabinowitz, Einhorn published the findings of the committee in his journal, *Sinai*, and argued that "dietary laws, with the exception of the prohibition to consume blood and animals that died an unnatural death, were directly related to the levitical laws of purity and priestly laws of sacrifice and were, therefore, of a mere temporary ceremonial character and not essentially religious or moral."[70]

If Wise was the principal builder of the Reform movement in America, its leading theologian and liturgist was the radical Einhorn. Born in Dispeck, Germany, Einhorn received a traditional yeshiva education before studying for his doctorate in the German university system. Radicalized both by his education and his conflicts with the Orthodox community, Einhorn developed a theological system he termed "Mosaism." A Reform ideological purist, he believed in a spiritualized "mission of Israel" shed of its priestly and medieval trappings, including the observance of the dietary laws. He articulated his views in German to his American followers in *Sinai* and was the driving force behind the first conference of Reform rabbis in the United States, held in Philadelphia in November 1869.[71]

Although it is always risky to argue from silence, it seems the Philadelphia conference, convened fourteen years after Einhorn's arrival in the United States, also, like the Breslau conference, did not take up the question of *kashrut* because the rabbis felt the issue had already been resolved, theoretically and practically, in favor of nonobservance.[72] If so, a split had developed between the moderate reformers who organized the UAHC in 1873 and who, following the prevailing American Reform custom, still maintained something of *kashrut* and did not eat pork; and the East Coast radicals, like Einhorn and Samuel Hirsch, who called for the abrogation of the dietary laws.

In his remarks of October 10, 1872, calling for the establishment of a union of American synagogues, Moritz Loth (1832–1913), a successful businessman, community activitist, prolific author of fictional works, and president of Wise's Reform congregation Bene Jeshurun in Cincinnati, asserted that the dietary laws and *shehitah* "shall *not* be disregarded, but *commended* as *preserving health* and prolonging life." Religious unity, Loth correctly understood, included a public and official commitment to *kashrut*, a commitment bolstered by medical and statistical proof.[73] According to Marcus, when the UAHC met in New York City in 1879, almost a decade later, "to celebrate its marriage with the Board of Delegates of American Israelite" with a "great feast at Delmonicos," the banquet was kosher.[74]

So what happened? Why just a few years later did the moderate lay leadership of the Reform movement, and perhaps even Wise himself, come to the conclusion that abstinence from pork alone constituted compliance with the dietary demands of the Jewish tradition? The answer is complex. American Jewish food folk customs, German Jewish affluence and class identification, general American banquet and culinary culture, and the ascent of "modern religion" in the 1870s and 1880s in the United States, which greatly bolstered and radicalized Reform Judaism nationally, all figure in the historical equation that resulted in the decision (or lack of a decision) to serve tref at the grand celebration at the Highland House in July 1883.

Without question, the long-term general dietary pattern in a large sector of the American Jewish community was to refrain from eating pork and other swine products while ignoring other traditional restrictions. This "no-pork" position comfortably combined Jewish tradition, contemporary culture, and modern science. Furthermore, the immense popularity of seafood in the United States in the nineteenth century, a belief in its extranutritional benefits, and rationalizations about its food classification resulted in the broad rejection of levitical restrictions on seafood among American Jews. But there was still more to the story.

Rationalizing away the dietary restrictions of traditional Judaism was not only based on science, culture, and class but also on a specifically religious argument, first introduced by the radical German reformers but then broadened and popularized by Protestant religious modernists in the United States. In his landmark 1992 study, *The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism*, Harvard professor William R. Hutchison suggests that 1883 was the highwater mark of a "New Theology" of religious modernism as represented in the writings of Washington Gladden, Henry Ward Beecher, Theodore Munger, Charles A. Briggs, and Newman Smyth. Thereafter, "the incidence of hostility to liberalism increased" and, within a short time, denominational- and seminary-based heresy trials created headlines across the United States that would last for years.[75]

The New Theology, according to Hutchison, "refused to recognize any fundamental antagonism between the kingdoms of faith and of natural law." [76] "The dominating theme of the New Theology," Hutchison emphasizes repeatedly, is "God's presence in the world and in human culture."[77] Smyth, one of the advocates of religious modernism, summed up his view in 1887 by stating that "the church is rapidly learning that many of the social and secular conditions of the present time are providential arrangements in the use of which the kingdom of God can be advanced."[78] For Reform Jews in the 1880s, the New Theology of culture and their own movement's belief in progressive revelation and the mediation of God's will in contemporary culture dovetailed perfectly — or so they thought.

In essence, Freiberg, Loth, and Wise were embedded in a kind of cultural and religious cocoon in Cincinnati. Given the culinary culture of the country, the ascent of religious liberalism, and the pervasiveness of tref in uptown American Jewish homes and social clubs, it is not altogether inexplicable why they allowed, or even ordered, Lindeman to serve clam, crab, and shrimp to their guests at the Highland House on July 11, 1883. They were unable to see the complete landscape of American Jewish life and, even more significantly, wrongly assumed that they were the engine pulling the train of American Judaism. Their faulty thinking was to have repercussions for years to come.

Denominational Consequences of the Highland House Affair

Reflecting in his memoirs about the Highland House Affair, the aging Philipson was correct in linking the Trefa Banquet to the founding of the first JTS in December 1886 and the subsequent denominational developments in both the Orthodox and Conservative streams in American Judaism. For two years after the Trefa Banquet, the debate over the culinary offense and its ideological underpinnings continued to rage until a group of Reform rabbis under the leadership of Kaufman Kohler (1843–1926), Einhorn's son-in-law and one of the banquet's speakers, promulgated the 1885 "Pittsburgh Platform." The codification of radical Reform, including, as will be shown, the complete rejection of the dietary laws, convinced a coalition of traditionalists under the leadership of Sabato Morias (1823–1897), *hazzan* of Mikveh Israel Congregation in Philadelphia, to found a rabbinic seminary parallel to HUC for "the preservation in America of the knowledge and practice of historical Judaism."[79]

Founded in 1886, the JTS, with Morais serving as its first president, was thoroughly Orthodox in its intent and practice, even though it modeled its name after the Conservative *Juedisch-Theologisches Seminar* in Breslau, Germany. Morias himself talked of an "Orthodox Seminary," as did one of its earliest Hebrew and Bible instructors, Bernard Drachman (1861–1945), who later helped shape Modern Orthodoxy and served as president of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations from 1908 to 1920.

Kashrut was one of a cluster of interrelated issues that first caused a broad coalition of American Jewish traditionalists to withdraw from the Reform movement. Subsequently, questions of kosher supervision also played a role in the further subdivision of the traditionalists into Conservative, Modern Orthodox, and fervently Orthodox camps. Newly arrived east European rabbis generally questioned the *hashgaha* (rabbinic kosher supervision) of the American Jewish communal institutions, especially the hospitals and orphanages that preceded their arrival in the United States, and determined to set up their own social service operations.[80]

As early as 1879, four years before the Trefa Banquet, Congregation Beth Midrash Hagadol "endorsed a movement to unite the religious Jewry of New

York under a chief rabbi" with responsibilities to supervise and regulate the city's growing kosher food trade.[81] In June 1887, several congregations formed the Association of American Orthodox Hebrew Congregations to recruit a chief rabbi for New York whose responsibilities would include the supervision of the *shohetim* (ritual slaughterers).[82] "So great is the scandal in this great holy city," Rabbi Moses Weinberger wrote that year in his Hebrew language book, *Jews and Judaism in New York*, "that thousands of honest families who fear and tremble at the thought of their straying into one tiny prohibition or sin never realize or suspect that they are eating all sorts of unkosher meat, carcasses trodden underfoot."[83]

On July 7, 1888, a rabbi from Vilna, Jacob Joseph (1848–1902), arrived in New York to become the chief rabbi of the city's growing Orthodox population. Known as a good public speaker and Zionist, Joseph attempted to impose a kosher meat tax and immediately became embroiled in controversy with nearly every sector of "downtown" Jewry. Debilitated by illness, Rabbi Joseph survived as an invalid from 1895 to 1902.[84] A subsequent attempt by the organized Jewish community, *Kehillah* (1908–1922), to regulate kosher meat also ended in failure.[85]

Ironically, Cincinnati, though smaller in every respect than New York, was destined to become a major center of the kosher food industry in the United States. Just three years after the Trefa Banquet took place, Isaac Oscherwitz, a recently arrived German Jewish immigrant, established a kosher meat business in Cincinnati under the family name that quickly emerged as one of the leading suppliers of kosher meat in the United States.[86] That same year, 1886, Rabbi Dov Behr Manischewitz also arrived in Cincinnati and two years later founded his matzah and kosher food supply company, which not only revolutionized the production of matzah but also played a significant role in Jewish philanthropy, the yeshiva world, and American tax law.[87] By the end of the 1880s, the Oscherwitz and Manischewitz companies were operating successfully, in sharp contrast to the chaos of New York's kosher food industry. At the same time, the increasingly radical Reform movement continued to move away from the dietary law observance after the heat of the Highland House Affair had simmered down in the larger American Jewish community.

Reform Judaism and *Kashrut* Since 1885

The controversy following the Trefa Banquet, its denominational consequences, and the deepening problems in the U.S. kosher food industry in the 1880s probably neither slowed nor accelerated the pace of radicalization within the Reform movement. On October 28, 1883, two members of HUC's first ordination class, Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf and Rabbi Henry Berkowitz, married their wives in a double ceremony in Coshocton, Ohio. A "no-pork" dinner was served, including fried and scalloped oysters, lobster salad, and cold buffalo

tongue, to mention but a few of the many courses provided.[88] The following year, the Trefa Banquet's caterer, Gustave Lindeman, was contracted to cater a banquet for a Jewish fraternal order in Cincinnati and, again, oysters were served as an appetizer. Even an 1891 cookbook published by the Bloch Publishing and Printing Company of Cincinnati, complete with a six-pointed Star of David on the title page, includes numerous recipes for oysters and soft-shell crabs.[89]

Within two years of the Trefa Banquet, Kohler, who had succeeded his father-in-law, David Einhorn, at New York's Beth El Congregation in 1879, convened a group of rabbis in Pittsburgh to craft an authoritative platform for Reform Judaism in America. It was at this convention that the rabbis rejected even the "no-pork" *minhag* (custom). Kohler had been a student of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, the architect of Modern Orthodox Judaism in Germany. While studying for his doctorate at the University of Erlangen, Kohler left Orthodoxy and embraced a radical philosophy of Reform Judaism. In 1885, in the wake of the Trefa Banquet, he gave a series of lectures defending Reform against attacks from one of New York's leading conservative rabbis, Alexander Kohut, who in the heat of the exchange had declared that "Reform is a Deformity."[90] From his exchanges with Kohut, Kohler concluded the time had arrived for a platform to be promulgated for the Reform movement in America. He even recruited Wise to serve as the head of the ad hoc conference.

Interestingly, the text of the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885 is less a defense of Reform against attacks from traditional Judaism as it is an apologium for Reform Judaism against criticisms leveled by Felix Adler and the Ethical Culture movement. Although a radical document from the perspective of "historical Judaism," the Pittsburgh Platform also represents a midpoint between traditional Jewish theism and ethnicity on the one hand and Adler's deracinated secular ethicism on the other. Sharply attacked from outside the movement from the left and the right, the Pittsburgh Platform quickly became both the ideological standard as well as a textual symbol of Reform Judaism in America.[91]

Animated by a rational, optimistic faith, the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885 was clearly a Judaic parallel to the New Theology of the Protestant modernists. As such, it viewed culture — at least the part of contemporary culture it favored — as providential. Apparently, that culture had no place in it for traditional Jewish dietary practices and, in the fourth plank of the platform, the last vestige of *kashrut* was officially abrogated by the assembled rabbis:

> We hold that all such Mosaic and rabbinical laws as regulate diet, priestly purity and dress originated in ages and under the influence of ideas altogether foreign to our present mental and spiritual state. They fail to impress the modern Jew with a spirit of priestly holiness; their observance in our days is apt rather to obstruct than to further modern spiritual elevation.[92]

By stating that "all such Mosaic and rabbinical laws as regulate diet," Kohler and his supporters had effectively pushed the Reform movement beyond its "moderate" no-pork position and into a borderless gastronomic antinomianism. Reform culinary culture now had no limits. Synagogue banquets and Sisterhood cookbooks alike were soon to include not only seafood but pork dishes as well. Viewed historically, the Reform movement had institutionalized a truly radical vision of Judaism.

The situation was particularly pronounced in — although not limited to — the South. For example, Steven Hertzberg reports that in Atlanta, Georgia, "by the midnineties, forbidden foods like ham, game, and shellfish were unabashedly consumed in public. Oyster pâté à la Baltimore was served to Rabbi Reich and the leading members of the Temple at the Concordia Hall dedication banquet in 1893, and two years later delegates to the regional B'nai B'rith convention in Atlanta dined on fresh lobster washed down with 'Palestine Punch.'"[93] As late as 1935, at the Triennial Conference of the National Council of Jewish Women in New Orleans, the entrées for the Sabbath dinner were "Baked ham aux légumes or Swiss and Bacon."[94]

Approximately half a century later, the Pittsburgh Platform was superseded by the 1937 Columbus Platform and that by the 1987 San Francisco Bicentennial Statement. While both of these documents included significant, even monumental, changes in the ideology and practice of American Reform Judaism, the movement's official views of *kashrut* have remained virtually unchanged for nearly a hundred years. As late as 1979, the Responsa Committee of the CCAR retrospectively concluded that "although dietary laws were discussed at length during the last century and early in this century, they ceased to be a matter of primary concern for Reform Jews. This is also clearly indicated by the lack of questions regarding dietary laws addressed to the Responsa Committee through the decades."[95]

However, other forces were already at work within American Reform Judaism, and by the end of the twentieth century, the Reform movement, led by neotraditionalist members of the CCAR, began to rethink its official view of the dietary laws.[96] In 1979, the same year the Responsa Committee essentially reaffirmed Kohler's understanding of Reform Judaism, another CCAR publication, *Gates of Mitzvah*, declared that "the range of options available to the Reform Jew is from full observance of the biblical and rabbinic regulations to total non-observance." This new and emerging viewpoint suggested that "Reform Judaism does not take an 'all or nothing' approach."[97] In 1999, a second Pittsburgh Platform directly countered Kohler's original Pittsburgh Platform and maintained that some of the commandments not historically observed by Reform Jews "demand renewed attention as the result of the unique context of our own times."[98]

Defining "the unique context of our times" now becomes the task of the contemporary Reform movement both in terms of its foundational ideas as well as in determining the mandated religious practices of Reform Judaism. The issue of *kashrut* has become particularly complex for contemporary Reform Judaism; it involves not only the issue of defining *mitzvah* in a Reform context but also answering questions about *hashgaha* and the ethics of food production and consumption. Today, as in the past, the Reform movement continues to negotiate the many tensions and relationships that exist between tradition and innovation, religious resistance and cultural adaptation, as well as the internal needs of the Reform community versus the place of Reform Judaism in the pan-historical faith and global people called Israel. In the deepest sense of the terms, the Reform movement needs to decide yet again what it believes to be kosher (fit) and what it deems to be tref (unfit).

Rabbi Lance J. Sussman, Ph.D., is a member of the Executive and Advisory Board of The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives and is senior rabbi of Reform congregation Keneseth Israel, Elkins Park, Pennsylvania.

Notes

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[1]Debra Nussbaum Cohen, "A Menu for Reform," *Wall Street Journal*, July 6, 2001.

[2]The only critical research on the Trefa Banquet is John J. Appel's "The Trefa Banquet," *Commentary*, Volume 41, Number 2, February 1966, pp. 75–78. Also see his longer, nineteen-page paper, "The Trefa Banquet" unpublished paper, n.d., AJA SC-5978, which was presented at the 63rd Annual Meeting of the American Jewish Historical Society in Cincinnati in March 1965.

[3]According to Appel, general historians of the American Jewish experience as well as "conservative" historians generally skirted or "tactfully avoided the issue" of the Trefa Banquet up to the 1960s. John J. Appel, "The Trefa Banquet," unpublished paper, n.d., AJA, SC-5978, pp. 2–3. However, after the publication of his article in *Commentary*, the banquet assumed a more central, and sometimes more polemical, history in the historiography of the non-Reform movements in American Judaism. For a recent example, see Elliot Dorf, *Conservative Judaism: Our Ancestors to Our Descendants* (New York: United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, Department of Youth Activities, 1977, 1996), who suggests the serving of nonkosher food may have been a "deliberate attempt by Isaac Mayer Wise to drive the more traditional members out of the Reform camp so that he could more easily form a radical program for the Reform movement" (p. 13). Pro-Reform authors tend to minimize their reporting of the Trefa Banquet or not report it at all. For example, see Michael A. Meyer, *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1988, pp. 263, 267, 282. James G. Heller, in his *Isaac M. Wise: His Life, Work and Thought* (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1965), refers to the Highland House Affair as "trivial and ridiculous" (p. 452). Also see "Chapters in American Jewish History," Chapter 52, 2000, American Jewish Historical Society, http://www.ajhs.org.

[4]The scope here is limited to the United States due to a lack of secondary literature on Reform experience in Canada. According to Rabbi Sharon Sobel, the Canadian Regional Director of the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ), the current practice "in Greater Toronto is that most of the Reform congregations are kosher style. Some use kosher meat but only have one set of dishes. There are one or two strictly kosher congregations" (e-mail correspondence with the author, August 12, 2005). More broadly, see Gerald J.J. Tulchinsky, *Taking Root: The Origins of the Canadian Jewish Community*, Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 1993; and his *Branching Out: The Transformation of the Canadian Jewish Community*, New York: Stoddart, 1998.

[5]David Philipson, *My Life as an American Jew*, Cincinnati: Kidd, 1941, p. 23. For another example of the development of myth as reality in American Jewish history, see the "Rebecca Gratz legend" in Dianne Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz: Women and Judaism in Antebellum America,* Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1997.

[6]Philipson, *My Life*, p. 23.

[7]Appel, "The Trefa Banquet," pp. 75–78. Also see Daniel Jeremy Silver, "The Trefa Banquet Story or a Study in Causation": unpublished, typescript, n.d., AJA, Box 511.

[8]The Rabbinical Literary Association, 1880–1882, was founded by Rabbi Max Lilienthal. See Sidney Regner, "The History of the Conference," in *Retrospect and Prospect: Essays in Commeration of the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Founding of the Central Conference of American Rabbis*, Bertram Wallace Korn, ed., New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1965, p. 2.

[9]Heller, *Wise*, p. 444.

[10]A considerable literature exists on the life of Isaac M. Wise. Most recently, see Sefton D. Temkin, *Isaac Mayer Wise, Shaping American Judaism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992. Heller's *Wise* (see note 3) is a massive, though less critical, study.

[11]*The Cincinnati Enquirer*, July 12, 1883, p. 4.

[12]"Julius Freiberg," in *Reform Judaism in America: A Biographical Dictionary and Sourcebook*, Kerry M. Olitzky, Lance J. Sussman, and Malcolm H. Stern, eds., Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1993, pp. 64–65.

[13]Based on correspondences from and to Edith Lindeman Calisch, a granddaughter of Gustave Lindeman, on file at the American Jewish Archives: Calisch to Norman Podhoretz, May 1, 1966; Calisch to J. Appel, May 21, 1966; Calisch to J. Appel, June 18, 1966; Calisch to Jacob R. Marcus, March 14, 1975 and April 25, 1977. All found in AJA, SC-456. Country clubs founded by German Jews in America generally continue to eschew traditional Jewish dietary restrictions.

[14]Calisch to Marcus, March 14, 1975, SC-12418.

[15]*The American Israelite*, August 3, 1883, p. 4.

[16]*Die Deborah*, August 17, 1883. Author's translation.

[17]The "Menu Collection of The New York Public Library" — especially the Buttolph Collection, which covers the years 1890–1910 — contains more than 25,000 menus including banquet menus. For general histories of food in America, see endnote 56.

[18]*The Cincinnati Enquirer*, July 12, 1883, p. 4.

[19]Mark Bauer, a chef and instructor at the French Culinary Institute of New York City, reviewed the menu with the author (e-mail correspondence, July 24, 2000).

[20]*New York Herald*, July 22, 1883. Photocopy available at AJA. The article was probably filed either by Henry Pereira Mendes (1852–1937), rabbi of Shearith Israel congregation in New York City and a founder both of the JTS and the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America; or his older brother, Frederic de Sola Mendes (1850–1927), rabbi of Congregation Shaaray Tefila in New York City, who worked within the Reform movement and later became a member of the CCAR.

[21]Joan Dash, *Summoned to Jerusalem: The Life of Henrietta Szold, Founder of Hadassah,* New York: Harper & Row, 1979, p. 25.

[22]"Shulamith," *The Jewish Messenger*, July 27, 1883.

[23]Dash, p. 25. For Wise's reaction to the arrival of increasing numbers of Russian Jews in America, see *The American Israelite*, May 21, 1886, p. 6, where he suggests that "no immigrant student over the age of fourteen be sent to the College as after that age it is difficult to change their manners or speech to the purely American." Initially, he was more welcoming.

[24]*The Jewish Messenger*, July 27, 1883, p. 6. A humorous account of a private dinner at Wise's home during the Szold's visit was reported by Bertha Szold, a younger sister of Henrietta, who accompanied her and her father to Cincinnati. About the dinner at the Wises', Bertha wrote, "There were fifteen or twenty rabbies [sic] there. At dinner when we were going to eat the turkey, some more rabbies came in, then everybody got up from the table to talk to the rabbies that came in, then the rabbies that came in took the other people's places and began to eat, and then went off. Not long after dinner we had ice cream and cake, and then we went home." Quoted in Alexandra Lee Levin, *The Szolds of Lombard Street: A Baltimore Family, 1859–1909*, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1960, p. 159.

[25]John F. Mariani, "Restaurant," in *The Encyclopedia of American Food & Drink*, New York: Lebhar-Friedman Books, 1999, p. 269.

[26]Jonathan D. Sarna, "The Debate over Mixed Seating in the American Synagogue," in *The American Synagogue: A Sanctuary Transformed*, Jack Wertheimer, ed., New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987, pp. 363-394.

[27]In 1869, Wise had reported on the dismissal of Rev. Dr. Bernard Illowy because he did not adhere strictly to the regulations of the milk and meat laws (*The American Israelite*, September 24, 1869). Isaac Leeser (1806–1869), the leading voice of antebellum Jewish traditionalism, left his position at Mikveh Israel in Philadelphia in a storm of controversy, in part because of a suspicion that he did not strictly adhere to the dietary laws. On Leeser, see Lance J. Sussman, *Isaac Leeser and the Making of American Judaism*, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995, p. 175.

[28]*The American Israelite*, April 4, 1895, p. 4. The notion of oysters as sea vegetables was suggested to the author by Jonathan D. Sarna in a private correspondence (April 4, 2000) and is based on Professor Sarna's reading of Louis Finkelstein's Hebrew introduction to his father's (Simon Finkelstein) prayer book. S. Finkelstein, *Seder Tefilah,* Jerusalem, 1968, p. 10 [in Hebrew]. For Wise's complex views on oysters see Dena Wilansky, *Sinai to Cincinnati*, New York, 1937, pp. 237–240.

[29]Reactions by Wise's supporters are reported in Appel, "The Trefa Banquet," typescript, pp. 10–11.

[30]*The American Israelite*, March 7, 1884, p. 6.

[31]*Die Deborah*, July 18, 1884.

[32]*Die Deborah*, August 10, 1883.

[33]*Die Deborah*, Volume XI, p. 34.

[34]*The American Israelite*, November 9, 1893.

[35]On women and *kashrut* in nineteenth century America, see endnote 61.

[36]*The American Israelite,* May 9, 1884, p. 4; May 23, p.4.

[37]*The American Hebrew*, July 25, 1883. Cowen's autobiography, *Memories of an American Jew*, was published in 1932. He published the work of numerous American Jewish luminaries, including Henry P. Mendes, Emma Lazarus, Mary Antin, and Alexander Kohut.

[38]*The American Hebrew*, July 18, 1884.

[39]Wise reported that there were no graduates from HUC in 1885 because of opposition to the

college. See *The American Israelite*, April 3, 1885, p. 4.

[40]James E. Latham, "Food," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Mircea Eliade, ed., New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan, 1995, Volume 5, pp. 387–393.

[41]John J. Appel, "The Trefa Banquet," unpublished paper, n.d., AJA, SC-5978, p. 19.

[42]For more on Zwingli see W.P. Stephens, *Zwingli: An Introduction to His Thought*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992.

[43]Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed: Archeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of Its Sacred Texts*, New York: The Free Press, 2001, p. 120.

[44]Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, New York: Routledge, 1966, 1984; Jean Soler, "The Semiotics of Food in the Bible," in *Food and Drink in History: Selections from the Annales*, Volume 5, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1979, pp. 126–138; Marvin Harris, *Cannibals and Kings: The Origins of Culture*, London: Fontana Collins, 1977.

[45]John Cooper, *Eat and Be Satisfied: A Social History of Jewish Food*, Northvale, New Jersey: Jason Aronson, 1993, p. xiii.

[46]Also see Erich Isaac, *Commentary*, Volume 41, Number 1, January 1966, pp. 36–41.

[47]In recent times, other positions have developed within the Reform movement including levitical (no pork, no seafood), eco-*kashrut* and ethical *kashrut*. For a recent discussion of *kashrut* in American Reform Judaism, see "The Civilized Diet: A Conversation with Rabbi Simeon Maslin," *Reform Judaism*, Summer 2007, pp. 38, 41, 50.

[48]Harold P. Gastwirt, *Fraud, Corruption and Holiness: The Controversy over the Supervision of Jewish Dietary Practice in New York City, 1881–1940*, Port Washington, New York: National University Publications, 1974, pp. 18–26.

[49]Allon Schoener, *The American Jewish Album: 1654 to the Present*, New York: Rizzoli, 1983, p. 93.

[50]Jacob R. Marcus, *Memoirs of American Jews, 1775–1865*, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1955, Volume 2, p. 87.

[51]Allon, American Jewish Album, p. 94.

[52]Jonathan D. Sarna, *Jacksonian Jew: The Two Worlds of Mordecai Manuel Noah*, New York: Holmes & Meier, 1980, p. 141.

[53]Ibid.

[54]Dena Wilansky, *Sinai to Cincinnati*, New York: Renaissance Book Company, 1937, p. 247.

[55]Mariani, "Restaurant," in *Encyclopedia*, p. 269.

[56]Mariani, "Oysters," in *Encyclopedia*, p. 226. For more on the history of food and eating in America, see Donna R. Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1997; and Harvey A. Levenstein, *The Paradox of Plenty: A Social History of Eating in Modern America*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994. For a comparative perspective, see Hasia R. Diner, *Hungering for America: Italian, Irish and Jewish Foodways in the Age of Migration*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2001.

[57]Mariani, "Restaurant," in *Encyclopedia*, p. 269.

[58]Numerous theories, none definitive, exist on American Jews' attraction to Chinese food. See Gaye Tuchman and Harry G. Levine, "New York Jews and Chinese Food: The Social Construction of an Ethnic Pattern," *Contemporary Ethnography*, 1992, Volume 22, Number 3, pp. 382–407; Mimi Sheraton, "A Jewish Yen for Chinese," *New York Times Magazine*, September 23, 1990, p. 71; and Jenna Weissman Joselit, *The Wonders of America: Reinventing Jewish Culture, 1880–1950*, New York: Hill and Wang, 1994.

[59]Quote in Joan Nathan, *Jewish Cooking in America*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994, p. 14.

[60]Quoted in Wilansky, *Sinai*, p. 246.

[61]Both Levy and the *Messengers'* quotes are reported in Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "The Kosher Gourmet in the Nineteenth Century Kitchen: Three Jewish Cookbooks in Historical Perspective," *The Journal of Gastronomy*, Winter 1986/1987, Volume 2, Number 4, p. 63.

[62]Maria T. Baader, "From *'The Priestess of the Home' to 'the Rabbi's Brilliant Daughter'"*: Concepts of Jewish Womanhood and Progressive Germanness in *Die Deborah* and *The American Israelite*, 1854–1900," in *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book XLIII*, 1998, p. 67.

[63]Leon A. Jick, "The Reform Synagogue," in *The American Synagogue*, p. 86. Also see Kevin Proffitt, "A *Kashrut* Challenge in Nineteenth Century American Judaism," 10 Minutes of Torah, August 2, 2005. Accessed at http://tmt.urj.net/archives/2socialaction/080205.htm.

[64]Quoted in W. Gunther Plaut, *The Growth of Reform Judaism: American and European Sources until 1948*, New York: World Union for Progressive Judaism, 1965, pp. 265–266.

[65]For example, Leeser reports in *The Occident* (Volume XVI, 1858, p. 360) that Har Sinai congregation in Baltimore abolished *kashrut*.

[66]Plaut, *The Growth of Reform Judaism*, pp. 212–213; Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, pp. 119–121.

[67]Plaut, *The Rise of Reform Judaism: A Sourcebook of Its European Origins*, New York: World Union for Progressive Judaism, 1963, pp. 260–265.

[68]Meyer, *Response*, p. 160.

[69]Meyer, *Response*, p. 150.

[70]Harry Rabinowitz, "Dietary Laws," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Jerusalem: Keter, 1971, Volume 5, column 44.

[71]A full, critical biography of David Einhorn is a major desideratum. See Kaufman Kohler's eulogistic essay in the *Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis*, Cincinnati: CCAR, 1909, pp. 215–270.

[72]Sefton D. Temkin, *The New World of Reform*, London: Leo Baeck College, 1971, pp. 111–112.

[73]*Proceedings of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations*, Cincinnati: Bloch and Company, 1879, Volume 1, p. i. On Loth, see "Moritz Loth," in *Reform Judaism in America*, Kerry M. Olitzky, ed., pp. 132–133.

[74]Marcus, *United States Jewry*, 1776–1985, Volume III, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993, p. 108. Delmonico's, established in 1827 by two Swiss brothers, was the first "public restaurant" to open in the United States and was known for its lavish meals and excessive portions.

[75]William R. Hutchison, *The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1992, p. 105.

[76]Ibid, p. 97.

[77]Ibid, p. 79.

[78]Ibid, p. 102.

[79]Alvin Kass, "Jewish Theological Seminary of America," in *Encylopaedia Judaica*, Jerusalem: Keter, 1971, Volume 10, Column 96.

[80]In St. Louis, neither the Jewish hospital nor the orphanage provided kosher food. See Walter Ehlrich, *Zion in the Valley: The Jewish Community of St. Louis*, Volume 1, Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1997, pp. 390–391.

[81]Harold P. Gastwirt, *Fraud, Corruption and Holiness: The Controversy over the Supervision of Jewish Dietary Practice in New York City, 1881–1940*, Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, 1974, pp. 55–73.

[82]Ibid.

[83]Jonathan D. Sarna, *People Walk on Their Heads: Moses Weinberger's Jews and Judaism in New York*, New York: Homes and Meier, 1982, p. 50.

[84]Abraham J. Karp, "New York Chooses a Chief Rabbi," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, Volume 44, 1955, pp. 129–198.

[85]Arthur A. Goren, *New York Jews and the Quest for Community: The Kehillah Experiment, 1908–1922*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1970, pp. 76–85. For a discussion of the subsequent history of the kosher food industry in the United States, see Saul Bernstein, *The Orthodox Union Story: A Centenary Portrayal*, Northvale, New Jersey: Jason Aronson, 1997.

[86]A 1998 film documentary directed by Bill Chayes, *Divine Food: 100 Years in the Kosher Delicatessen Tradition*, focuses on the Oscherwitz family.

[87]Jonathan D. Sarna, "Manischewitz Matzah and the Rabbis of the Holy Land: A Study in the Interrelationship of Business, Charity and Faith" (in Hebrew), *Gesher* 140, Winter 1999, pp. 41–49. Also see Ari Y. Greenspan and Ari Z. Zivotofsky, "Hand or Machine: Two Roads to Fulfilling the Mitzva of Matza," in *The Jewish Observer*, April 2004, pp. 20–33.

[88]A handwritten invitation to the Berkowitz-Krauskopf wedding (October 28, 1883) and a fragment of a newspaper clipping reporting on the ceremony and dinner are on file at the AJA.

[89]*Aunt Babette's Cook Book. Foreign and Domestic Receipts for the Household. A Valuable Collection of Receipts and Hints for the Housewife, Many of Which are Not to be Found Elsewhere*, Cincinnati: Bloch, 1891.

[90]Hasia R. Diner, *The Jews of the United States*, Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2004, p. 120.

[91]Benny Kraut, *From Reform Judaism to Ethical Culture: The Religious Evolution of Felix Adler*, Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1979; Sefton D. Temkin, "The Pittsburgh Platform: A Centenary Assessment," *Journal of Reform Judaism*, Volume 32, Fall 1985, pp. 1–12.

[92]Meyer, *Response*, p. 388. A complete text of the Pittsburgh Platform (1885) is also available online at http://ccarnet.org/documents and positions/platforms.

[93]Steven Hertzberg, *Strangers Within the Gate City: The Jews of Atlanta, 1845–1915*, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1978, p. 68.

[94]Faith Rogow, *Gone to Another Meeting: The National Council of Jewish Women, 1893–1993*, Tuscaloosa, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1993, p. 127. Currently, food service at many "Jewish" country clubs continues to include both swine and seafood. Author's observation.

[95]"Responsum 49: *Kashrut* in Reform Judaism (1979)," *American Reform Responsa: Collected Responsa of the Central Conference of American Rabbis*, Walter Jacob, ed., New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1979, pp. 128–131.

[96]Arnold Jacob Wolf, "The Need to Be Commanded (1967)," in *The Reform Judaism Reader: North American Documents*, Michael A. Meyer and W. Gunther Plaut, eds., New York: UAHC, 2001.

[97]*Gates of Mitzvah: A Guide to the Jewish Life Cycle*, Simeon J. Maslin, ed., New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1979, pp. 40, 130–132. The Union of Reform Judaism's Canadian summer camp, Camp George, founded in 1999, is under the supervision of the Kashruth Council of Canada.

[98]Meyer and Plaut, *Reader*, p. 210.