Chapter 1: Emma’s Great Grandparents

Grace was born in New York City, Simon was born in England.

They are called "Sephardic" Jews because their ancestors came from Spain originally.

The majority of the early Jews who lived in New York in the 17th and 18th century were Sephardic. Grace and Nathan were part of the first Jewish community in New York City.

The Nathan family was well respected in New York City, and were considered wealthy and successful.

Simon & Grace Nathan, Miniature Portraits from 1820's
Chapter 1: Grace Nathan’s Poetry

Grace Nathan was born in New York City in 1752. She was interested in reading and writing and was a poet, just like her great-grand daughter Emma Lazarus.

Archivist’s Notes

- Grace Nathan was born in New York City in 1752
- She was interested in reading and writing and was a poet, just like her great-grand daughter Emma Lazarus.
Chapter 1: Emma and Her Family’s Home

Archivist’s Notes

- Emma was one of seven children.
- She lived in a brownstone, and would have been educated by tutors in her father’s library.
- She loved reading and writing from an early age, and her father encouraged her writing.

Source 3
Chapter 1: Emma’s First Published Book

Archivist’s Notes

• Emma published her first book of poetry when she was a teenager in 1866.

• Her father was the person who encouraged her to write and published her book. She dedicated the book to him.

• Author’s Autograph: Emma signed this copy of her book for a friend.
Chapter 2: Immigration By The Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population of New York City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1810</td>
<td>96,373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>123,706</td>
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<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>202,589</td>
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<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>312,710</td>
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<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>515,547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>813,669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>942,292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>1,164,673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>1,441,216</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Top Ten Sources of New York’s Immigrants, 1860

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>203,740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German States</td>
<td>119,984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>27,082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>9,208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>8,074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>3,899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>1,771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>1,586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>1,464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Indies</td>
<td>1,202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Foreign Born</strong></td>
<td>383,717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Population</strong></td>
<td>813,669</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Top Ten Sources of New York’s Immigrants, 1910

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>484,193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>340,770</td>
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<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>278,137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>252,672</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>190,246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>78,483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>76,627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>34,952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>33,586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>27,180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Foreign Born</strong></td>
<td>1,944,357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Population</strong></td>
<td>4,766,883</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source 1
Chapter 3: Fear of The Changing City & Neighbors

Archivist’s Notes
As New York grew and became more diverse, sometimes people grouped people of one background all together and described them as having the same characteristics. People created stereotypes for each immigrant group. Below are two political cartoons that were created during Emma’s lifetime.
Chapter 3: Fear of The Changing City & Neighbors

Archivist’s Notes

Because many Jews started off as peddlers and then opened small stores, the stereotype was that they were all in business.

The word for stereotypes about Jews is called antisemitism. Antisemitism was something that Emma sometimes experienced in New York City."

“The New Jerusalem”- Puck, 1892
Chapter 2: Uncovering Persecution

Archivist’s Notes

Sent by the U.S. Government on an undercover mission, Phillip Cowen traveled to the Pale of Settlement in Russia (St. Petersburg, Kief, and Odessa) in order to discover the cause of increased Jewish immigration from Russia to the United States. His findings revealed appalling and unremitting persecution of Russian Jews.
Chapter 3: Chinese Exclusion

Archivist’s Notes

The Chinese Exclusion Act was approved on May 6, 1882. It was the first significant law restricting immigration into the United States.

In the spring of 1882, the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed by Congress and signed by President Chester A. Arthur. This act provided an absolute 10-year moratorium on Chinese labor immigration. For the first time, Federal law proscribed entry of an ethnic working group on the premise that it endangered the good order of certain localities.
Chapter 3: Chinese Exclusion

Archivist’s Notes

Chinese immigration to America began with the Gold Rush. Chinese miners did well financially in California. The economic panic of 1873 in the United States turned native-born Americans against Chinese laborers and calls to exclude the Chinese from access to America grew loud.

There were people in the United States arguing for and against the exclusion of Chinese immigrants from the United States. Political cartoons were created to support both arguments.

Historian Question: What is the message this political cartoon is trying to get across?
Chapter 3: Emma’s Friends and Artist’s Circle

Helena Dekay Gilder
Illustrator and Artist

Richard Watson Gilder
Editor of The Century Magazine

Archivist’s Notes
Emma was published often in Century Magazine, Scribner’s Magazine and the New York Times. These publications were read by a broad range of New Yorkers.

Rose Hawthorne
Author & Daughter of Nathaniel Hawthorne

Henry James
Author
Chapter 3: Barred From Entrance

"A Sensation at Saratoga" from the New York Times, June 19, 1877.

On Wednesday last Joseph Seligman, the well-known banker of the City, and member of the syndicate to place the Government loan, visited Saratoga with his wife and family. For 10 years past he has spent the Summer at the Grand Union Hotel. His family entered the parlors, and Mr. Seligman went to the manager to make arrangements for rooms. That gentleman seemed somewhat confused, and said: "Mr. Seligman, I am required to inform you that Mr. Hilton has given instructions that no Israelites shall be permitted in future to stop at this hotel."

Mr. Seligman was so astonished that for some time he could make no reply. Then he said: "Do you mean to tell me that you will not entertain Jewish people?" "That is our orders, Sir," was the reply.

Before leaving the banker asked the reason why Jews were thus persecuted. Said he, "Are they dirty, do they misbehave themselves, or have they refused to pay their bills?"

"Oh, no," replied the manager, "there is no fault to be found in that respect. The reason is simply this: Business at the hotel was not good last season, and we had a large number of Jews here. Mr. Hilton came to the conclusion that Christians did not like their company, and for that reason shunned the hotel. He resolved to run the Union on a different principle this season, and gave me instructions to admit no Jew. Personally he [the manager] was very sorry, much as Mr. Seligman had patronized the hotel for so many years, but the order was imperative."

Source 2
Chapter 3: Whisper Behind Her Back

Mary Hallock Foote to Helena deKay Gilder, 15th November 1876

"You cannot really be worried about Charley's interest in Miss L! It seems to me to be so very inappropriate as to be quite absurd—not that he should be interested in her but that he should be entangled, so to speak. ...

Must I confess that the facts of her being of Jewish blood and an aspiring young poetess are my great stumbling blocks in her case. Was there ever anything so unreasonable in one who is herself of a "peculiar people" and one of the pitiful aspirers! It seems a pity that she should be so gushing about Charley. That sort of thing is always very dreadful to other women—a lowering of the pride of us all, and it is very bad for men."

Archivist's Notes
Helena deKay Gilder is Charley’s older sister. This is Mary’s reply to Helena’s letter expressing concern about Charley and Emma’s growing friendship.

Helena deKay Gilder would later become one of Emma’s closest friends.
Archivist’s Notes


Using an early form of projector known as a stereopticon to display images of the slum and its residents, Riis took his audience on a visual tour of the tenements.
Chapter 2: A Changing Neighborhood

Print of Union Park in 1854

Labor day Parade in 1887 at Union Square

Source 5
Chapter 4: A Letter To a Friend

Emma became close friends with famous author Ralph Waldo Emerson’s Daughter Ellen. In a letter written to her sister, Ellen Emerson describes how it was a new experience for her to meet and talk to a Jewish person. She also describes a conversation she has with Emma about how her family's practice of Judaism.

She wrote that Emma said she had been raised "to keep The Law, and the Feast of the Passover, and the Day of Atonement ... she says her family are outlawed now, they no longer keep the Law, but Christian institutions don't interest her either."

Archivist’s Notes

Important Term

The Law: Jewish Law is a set of practices and rules that regulate religious observances and the daily life and conduct of the Jewish people.
Chapter 4: Updating A Tradition

Archivist’s Notes
At this time, it was the rule that traditional Jewish men were not allowed to shave their beards or cut their hair for 30 days when they were mourning the loss of a family member.

Question For Historian: Why do you think Grace is giving her son permission to only follow this rule for 7 days?

Emma’s Great Grandmother, Grace, at 75 years old, wrote a letter to her son, Emma’s Uncle. In the letter she wrote, that when she dies, that her son should:

“Keep the seven days of mourning and no more – for that time only will you keep your beard.”

Source 2
In 1882, Emma Lazarus published *Songs of a Semite*, which includes a play entitled “The Dance of Death” and other poems that explore her Jewish identity and religious roots.

Below is a stanza, or verse, from a poem Emma wrote entitled “In Exile”.

```
IN EXILE.

“Since that day till now our life is one unbroken paradise. We live a true brotherly life. Every evening after supper we take a seat under the mighty oak and sing our songs.—Extract from a letter of a Russian refugee in Texas.

Freedom to love the law that Moses brought, To sing the songs of David, and to think The thoughts Gabirol to Spinoza taught, Freedom to dig the common earth, to drink The universal air—for this they sought Refuge o’er wave and continent, to link Egypt with Texas in their mystic chain, And truth’s perpetual lamp forbid to wane.
```
...As for my "copy," I have not written anything this week, and do not think I shall, as "the spirit" does not move me. I am never going to write for the sake of writing. Now for disappointment No. 3. To refer to the Sun article. It seems to me so coarse and vulgar that it deserves no reply from any self-respecting Jew. It represents the habitual light in which we are regarded as a race by the Christians, but it happen to be couched in somewhat more offensive terms than usual. I am perfectly conscious that this contempt and hatred underlies the general tone of the community towards us, and yet when I even remotely hint at the fact that we are not a favorite people I am accused of stirring up strife and setting barriers between the two sects.

Archivist’s Notes

In 1883, Emma Lazarus wrote to her friend and editor of the American Hebrew Philip Cowen. She expressed dismay over an article published in The Sun.
Philip Cowen wrote an obituary about Emma Lazarus after she died in *The American Hebrew*. In it, he talked about her identity as a Jewish woman. He wrote:

*Have we tracked her to her home; have we followed her to the synagogue to spy out whether she personally observed the ceremonial laws? Nay! We are not Grand Inquisitors. ... It is enough for us and for Judaism that she did worthily and well the task allotted to her in behalf of her people and her people's faith.*

... With the zeal and enthusiasm ... she applied herself to the study of language, history and literature of her people. ...
Chapter 4: A Life Long Student

Archivist’s Notes

This is a picture of the Hebrew book that Emma's tutor, Louis Schnabel, gives to her. This is a section of the Bible. On the cover, we can see how Emma wrote her name out in Hebrew letters.

Emma had been studying and writing poetry since she was a girl. And she had been learning languages since she was a young girl. At first she learned Hebrew poetry in translation, and then studied the language itself.

Source 6
Chapter 5: Inspiring Action and Words

Archivist’s Notes

Emma Lazarus was so inspired by Henry George’s book “Progress and Poverty”, she wrote a poem by the same name. The book opened Emma's eyes to inequality: why was it that the bosses and the property owners had so much when the workers had so little?

Her poem was published in the New York Times on October 2, 1881. When Henry George read her poem he wrote:

“I flatter myself that if I cannot sing myself, I have at least been the means of inspiration for one who can.”

Source 1
Chapter 5: The Plight of The Russian Jews

Due to attacks on their homes and lives in Russia, Jews started to leave Europe in large numbers to come to New York for safety. Because there wasn't housing for them, the city opened Ward's Island where the Jews had temporary shelter. But it became more and more crowded by the day.

Archivist’s Notes

Source 2
Chapter 5: Writing About Her Experiences

Among the Russian Jews

A Visit to the Refugees on Ward’s Island.

The grandeur imparted by misfortune —educated outcasts—starving children—young men who propose to found a colony in the West.

Three weeks ago, upon a dull, gray Sunday afternoon, I made a visit to Ward’s Island, New-York, where the Jewish fugitives from Russia were domiciled in a temporary asylum provided by the United States Government. All the refugees had assembled in a large hall in the lower part of the building to celebrate the festival of “Purim,” and at least a hundred voices united in singing the strange, melancholy melodies of the Russian folk songs. Even those of the immigrants who had found employment in the City returned to the island to pass this holiday with their wives and children or with their companions in exile. Curious foreign types surrounded me on

Archivist’s Notes

Even though the conditions at Ward’s Island were very crowded, and Emma rallied the Jewish community to improve the physical conditions, she also saw the larger picture: how wonderful it was that the Jews had a safe place to go to. She wrote about this in the New York Times on March 26, 1882.

“Every American must feel a thrill of pride and gratitude in the thought that his country is the refuge of the oppressed, the “home of hope to the whole human race,” and however wretched be the material offered to him from the refuse of other nations, he accepts it with generous hospitality. ... This is not a matter that concerns the Jews alone; it is rather one phase of the general emigration question, which is of vital importance to the whole people.”
Chapter 5: Witness to Her Kindness

James Hoffman, who worked with the refugees, remembered how Emma worked to help the refugees despite language barriers and even under difficult conditions:

Our next personal meeting was on Ward’s Island, on the day of the memorable riot. She had been paying a visit to the refugees housed there, and though unacquainted with the language of these poor people she tried to calm and pacify them in a manner so full of kindness and sympathy that it spoke louder than words.
Chapter 6: The Statue of Liberty’s Timeline

1865: French historian Edouard de Laboulaye suggests that France create a statue to give to the United States to celebrate its success in building a democracy.

1870: The French sculptor Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi begins sketching the Statue of Liberty.

1878: Statue’s head and shoulders are completed and displayed at the Paris Universal Exposition.

1883: Emma Lazarus is asked to write a poem to be auctioned off as part an effort to raise funds for the construction of the Statue’s pedestal.

1885: Statue of Liberty arrives in New York City from France in pieces. The US is still unable to raise the needed funds to build the pedestal.

1886: President Grover Cleveland officially dedicates the Statue of Liberty at a ceremony.

1887: Emma Lazarus passes away.

1892: The U.S. government opens an immigration station on Ellis Island.

1903: A plaque of the poem “The New Colossus” by Emma Lazarus is created and installed inside the pedestal.

Source 1
Constance Cary Harrison, in her obituary for Emma Lazarus, wrote about how Emma Lazarus came to write “The New Colossus”. Constance was helping organize an auction to help fund the construction of the pedestal for the Statue of Liberty. She wrote:

I may cite, in illustration, the circumstances under which were written the beautiful lines entitled The New Colossus. ... I begged Miss Lazarus to give me some verses appropriate to the occasion. She was at first included to rebel against writing anything “to order” as it were, ... Think of that Goddess standing on her pedestal down yonder in the bay, and holding her torch out to those Russian refugees of yours you are so fond of visiting at Ward’s Island,” I suggested. The shaft sped home – her dark eyes deepened – her cheek flushed – the time for merriment was passed – she said not a word more, then.

A day or two later, accompanied by a note of generous sympathy, came the poem below appended, which was welcomed as a treasure for the Portfolio....
Chapter 6: The Dedication Of The Statue of Liberty

On October 28th, 1886 President Grover Cleveland performed the dedication ceremony of the Statue of Liberty. As President Cleveland accepted the statue on behalf of American citizens, he declared “we will not forget that liberty here made her home; nor shall her chosen altar be neglected.”

Emma Lazarus’ poem was not read at the ceremony, and was not mentioned. For a time, it seemed “The New Colossus” had been forgotten.
Chapter 6: Reflecting on Her Life’s Work

When Emma began to not feel well towards the end of her life, she hand wrote a selection of her poems into a red journal. The first poem in the collection is “The New Colossus”.

Emma Lazarus died a year after completing this handwritten book.

**Archivist’s Notes**

When Emma began to not feel well towards the end of her life, she hand wrote a selection of her poems into a red journal. The first poem in the collection is “The New Colossus”.

Emma Lazarus died a year after completing this handwritten book.

**Historian Question:** Why do you think, of all the poems she wrote, Emma Lazarus chose this poem to be the first poem the reader would see?

Source 4
Chapter 6: A Friend’s Mission To Honor Emma

Georgina led the effort to reestablish the connection between the poem and the statue. Two years later in 1903 a plaque of "The New Colossus" was placed on an interior wall of the statue’s pedestal.

Archivist’s Notes

Georgina Schuyler, a direct descendent of Alexander Hamilton, a member of the New York elite, was a close friend of Emma Lazarus. In 1901, Georgina saw a copy of Emma’s poetry in a bookstore, and was inspired to act.

Georgina led the effort to reestablish the connection between the poem and the statue.

Two years later in 1903 a plaque of “The New Colossus” was placed on an interior wall of the statue’s pedestal.

Source 5