Jews in America

1. First Jewish settlement in New Amsterdam, 1655, Dutch allowed then to own property after 1656. Under British rule, only 250 Jews lived in New York, out of a population of 80,000 Jews were denied permission to reside in Puritan Massachusetts, Connecticut and New Hampshire; Jews were more accepted in New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

2. Jewish businesses: By the mid-18th century, Jewish businesses accounted for 15% of New York's import-export trade, although the population numbered only about 350 Jews.

3. Haym Salomon built a fortune in currency exchange (arbitrage).

4. Isaac Touro was a Dutch-born American rabbi. Born in Amsterdam, in 1758 he left for Jamaica. In 1760, he arrived to serve as cantor and spiritual leader of Jeshuath Israel, a Portuguese Sephardic congregation in Newport, Rhode Island.

5. Jews began immigrating to America from Europe. By 1840, there were about 15,000, and by 1847, 50,000.

6. California gold rush: By 1865, the Jewish population of SF was listed at 4,000 or a total population of 119,000.

7. The rise of Yiddish: with the immigration of large numbers of Jews from Eastern Europe, the use of Yiddish began to spread in Jewish communities. Jewish journals newspapers began to appear.

8. But the largest was the Forverts, which began publication in 1897, and within a decade became the largest Yiddish newspaper in the world.

9. By 1912 the Forverts circulation was 120,000, and by the late 1920s/early 1930s, The Forward was a leading U.S. metropolitan daily with considerable influence and a nationwide circulation of more than 275,000.

10. The single most widely read column in the Forverts was the "bint’l Brief", an advice column, the precursor of Dear Abby, which gave advise to newly-arrived immigrants on adapting to life in America.

11. Yiddish literary pioneers: The Sweatshop Poets

12. Sholem Asch: His Kiddush ha-Shem (1919) is one of the earliest historical novels in modern Yiddish literature.

13. Jewish emigration to the New World: Jewish immigration to Latin America began with seven sailors arriving in Christopher Columbus' crew.

14. Jews on the Frontier: After the Inquisition commenced autos-da-fé in Mexico City, some Jews fled north to infant Spanish settlements in south Texas and New Mexico.

15. Jews in California: Selling dry goods and clothing to miners and other new arrivals, most Jewish men became merchants, wholesalers, or clerks in San Francisco, Sacramento, or the numerous river and mining towns. Jewish women, usually the wives or sisters of merchants, also owned shops and worked as milliners and teachers.

16. San Francisco's Jewish women, many the daughters and grand-daughters of the city's founders, were active in social, cultural, and philanthropic organizations.
Yiddish curses

1. A klog/brokh (a disaster)
   A klog tsu mir! ("Woe is me!") a klog tsu dir ("May a curse come to you!"

2. Shavarts yor (Ger.: schwartzen Jahren, black year)
   In ale shvartse yorn! (into all the years of misfortune ...)
   Ex.: A shvarts yor oyf ir, a gantsn tog hot zi mir gehákt a tshaynik vegn kléynikaytn! ("A black year on her, all day long she chewed my ear off with trivia!")

3. Ruekh (ghosts, evil spirits), plural rukhes
   Tsu ale (shvartse) rukhes! (To the devil with it!)
   Ex.: A ruekh in dayn tatn aráyn! (May a demon enter your father!)

4. Wishing disease on someone

   Zol zi geshvoln vern vi a barg! (May she swell up like a mountain!)
   A fayer zol ir trefn vi zi redt! ("May a fiery pain meet her, the way she talks!")
   A kholerye zol im khapn! ("May the cholera seize him!")
   Gey (mir) in der erd! ("Goto hell")
   Gey in drerd mit di beyner ("Go to hell with your bones!")

5. General curses

   Kush mir in tokhes! ("Kiss my ass!")
   Zol + M + azoy + BAD THING + vi + BAD THING

   Ex.: Oy, zol im nor azóy rinen fun noz, vi's rint mir fun der kvalpen! (Oh, may his now only lead on him the way this fountain pen leaks on me!")