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### Jewish Time Jump: New York

Owen Gottlieb

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## JEWISH TIME JUMP: NEW YORK

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OWEN GOTTLIEB

**Game:** *Jewish Time Jump: New York*  
**Developer:** ConverJent: Jewish Games for Learning  
**Year:** released 2013 with updates 2014, 2015, 2016  
**Platform(s):** ARIS for iOS/iPhone  
**Number of players:** 1+  
**Genre:** Situated documentary; history  
**Type of game:** Mobile; augmented reality game  
**Curricular connections:** 20th century American history; women's history; immigrant history; labor history; Jewish history; civic and democratic education  
**Possible skills taught:** Historical investigation; primary source exploration and analysis; place-based education; issues-based organizing  
**Audience:** 5th-7th grade and families; high school students also reported positive experience  
**Length of time:** At least 1.5 hours (3 hours set up)  
**Where to play:** Washington Square Park, Greenwich Village, New York City. A QR code version requires simulating New York City, but the game is most relevant played on-site in New York City.  
**Cost:** Software is free; game requires players to have iPhone with current supported iOS for ARIS and 4G or above coverage; set up and preparation for the site requires educator time (approx. four hours) and practice.  
**URL:** <http://www.converjent.org/>

### SUMMARY

*Jewish Time Jump: New York* (Gottlieb & Ash, 2013) is a place-based mobile augmented reality game and simulation that takes the form of a situated documentary. Players take on the role of time-traveling reporters tracking down a story “lost to time” to bring back to their editor at the *Jewish Time Jump Gazette*. The game is played in Washington Square Park in Greenwich Village, New York City. Players’ iPhones become their time traveling device and companion. Based on the player’s GPS location, players receive digital images from their location from over a hundred years in the past as well as contemporary video footage. They encounter simulated historical events, interactive

digital characters, and digital artifacts including primary sources and ephemera of the time. The game opens as players “land” in 1909 on the eve of the Uprising of 20,000, the largest women-led strike in U.S. history as shirtwaist workers are led by organizers like Rose Schneiderman and Clara Lemlich out into the streets in protest over working conditions. Players are tasked with gathering different perspectives from labor organizers, manufacturers, and journalists of the time, by partaking in dialogues with digital characters while tracking GPS clues on a satellite map of the park. Dialogues occur through interactive dialog choices on screen with non-player characters. Jewish history is always intertwined with the history of other people, as Polish, Italian, and Irish immigrants play important parts in the story as well. Players can control the garb of their digital character. While the players’ character is dressed as a worker, they may have to evade *shtarkers*, tough guys or thugs hired by manufacturers to beat up strikers. While dressed in “boss” garb, they may be invited to a manufacturer’s meeting. Players receive primary source materials such as newspapers, some translated from the Yiddish. Players come to learn connections between labor and management concerns in the past and those today and are on site for one of the key moments in American labor history—the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, in which 146 workers, mostly Jewish and Italian young women died. The Triangle Factory was one of the handful of factories not to unionize after the Uprising of 1909. The building still exists and is on site on the New York University campus and one of the game’s loci. As players/learners journey back to their present they come to understand that holding their iPhones, they too are a part of a story of labor dispute. Note: The game was funded by two grants from The Covenant Foundation.

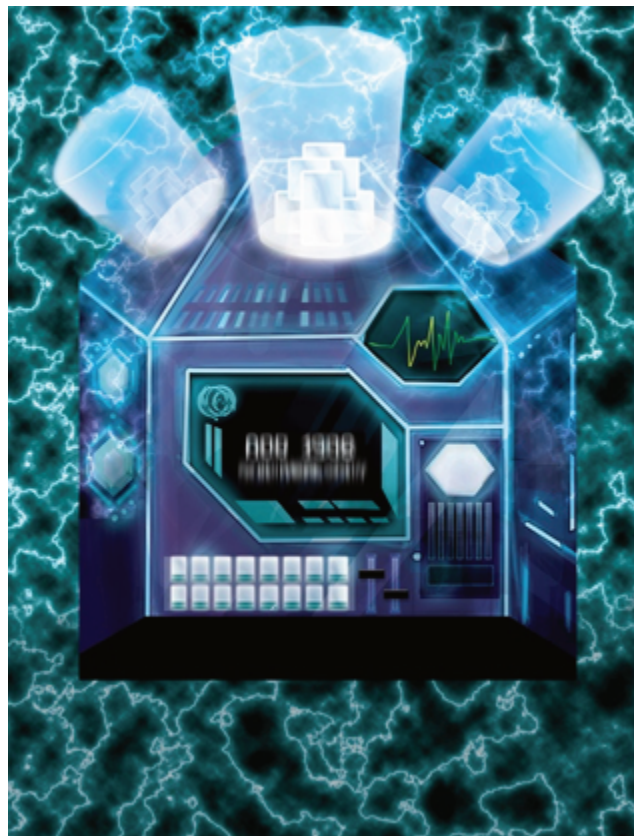


Figure 1. Painting by Liza Singer, copyright Owen Gottlieb (*The Chronometer*).

## HOW TO USE THE GAME

*Jewish Time Jump New York's* setting provide numerous opportunities for use in formal and informal learning environments taken onto location. The game's focus is on history, and in particular, women's, immigrant, labor, and Jewish 20th century history. The approach to history is one of emphasizing civic and democratic educational goals. Civic and democratic educational themes explored include issues-based organizing, on the part of labor organizers as well as manufacturers, citizen journalism, and analysis of business ties to government.

ConverJent and the Jewish Women's Archive collaborated on Curriculum from a Jewish and women's history perspective, which is available via the Jewish Women's Archive at: <https://jwa.org/teach/jewishtimejump>. This curriculum will provide any educator with background data on the game and themes that arise during play, ranging from immigration to labor disputes.

Those teaching immigrant history can include the game on trips to New York, perhaps in concert with a visit to the Tenement Museum on the Lower East Side. The variety of entry points, whether the examination of primary source material (newspapers) in the digital form, to comparison of garb of the period to contemporary dress allow educators to craft lessons with emphasis on topics they choose. The game can be used as a set induction prior to study of the period, as a mid-way point, or as a culminating experience. Any use of the game requires advance practice of the educator team, both for use of GPS which can be finicky, and because of the rapid changes to the iPhone platform. Planning in advance is key and requires time, including either working with a professional guide, sometimes available from ConverJent, or advance preparation on site to learn how to guide learners. Educators should play the game themselves prior to leading students in playing the game. An educator's guide is available from ConverJent to assist in preparation for play. ConverJent notes that set up and debriefing with reflection as well as troubleshooting are key components of running the game. An example reflection involves discussing how learners would report back to their editor. What would your headline be? What are key elements of your story? Such questions can spark reflection upon the close of the mobile augmented reality experience.

Research on the game has shown that the design has promoted learner's willingness to hear opposing points of view, even from characters in the game with whom they do not identify or even like (Gottlieb, 2015). Other research notes the hybridized genre of the situated documentary (Gottlieb, 2016) in which a science-fiction wrapper story (time travel) is used to tell an historical account which includes both dramatized dialogue and original source material.

The game also makes connections between contemporary international labor concerns and those in the historical narrative. The game opens with a mysterious article about a factory collapse in Bangladesh, a foreshadowing of later events. The reveal at the end of the game (spoiler alert) is that the iPhones learners use to play the game are also the site of a labor dispute with workers in China and Apple's work to try to address issues of worker safety. If carefully planned, educators will be able to lead reflection on the connections between the broader historical themes and their implications today, whether in contemporary New York sweatshops, or in the garment industry world-wide.

Educators can tailor the use of the game to a variety of subjects including labor history, immigrant history, and women's history. They may use the curriculum for the Jewish Women's Archive or weave

the game through their own curriculum in these areas. The Jewish Women's Archive modules also include Jewish religious perspectives on labor issues.

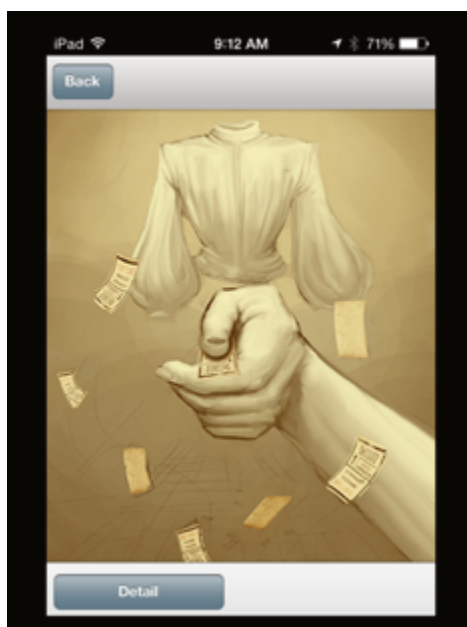


Figure 2. Painting by Liza Singer, copyright Owen Gottlieb (A Waistshirt and Tickets).

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## TIPS & BEST PRACTICES

1. Educators must practice playing the game beforehand on site in New York City before taking a class out (or prepare in advance working with ConverJent who sometimes consults, creating game days for school groups).
2. The original game has a QR Code version so that it can be played offsite (not in New York City). This requires the educator to design a space with the look and feel of Greenwich Village.
3. Educators will need to test the devices and the use of the ARIS platform prior to leading a trip.
4. Teachers need to arrange for a staging area near Washington Square Park in New York City for bathrooms, phone charging, preparation, and debriefing/reflection.
5. Participants should ensure that all phones are charged in advance and bring charges and back up batteries.
6. Educators can use the educator's guide from ConverJent and check to see if the game has been updated for the latest iPhone version (this may not be the case as the game was released in 2013 and last updated in 2016).
7. Participants should plan for rain, either with rain-dates or raingear and phone covers.

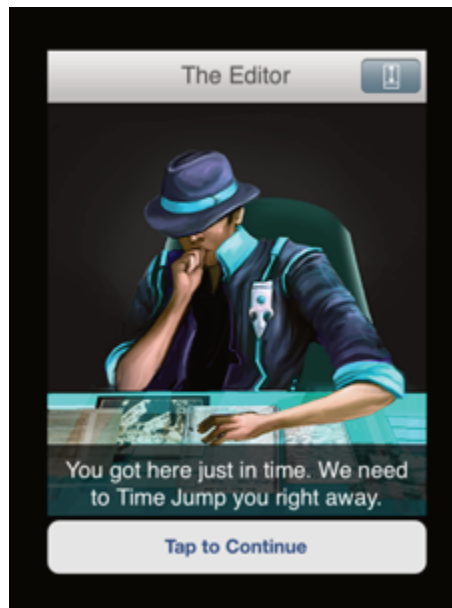


Figure 3. Paintings by Liza Singer, copyright Owen Gottlieb (*The editor of the Jewish Time Jump Gazette*).

## RELATED GAMES & MEDIA

*Dow Day* (<https://bit.ly/2wFAIxn>)

*Lost & Found* ([www.lostandfoundthegame.com](http://www.lostandfoundthegame.com))

*Pokémon Go* (<https://www.pokemongo.com/en-us/>)

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