

Sukkot, Moritz Daniel Oppenheim

Germany, 1867

The National Library of Israel, Ephemera Collection

Describe what you see in the picture.
Who are the people and what are they doing?

What time of year does this picture represent?

Is this picture representative of German Jewry at the time? How so?

What is the message that the artist wanted to convey in his painting?

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Answer Sheet

This picture by Moritz Daniel Oppenheim depicts a Jewish family celebrating the festival of Sukkot in Frankfurt (Germany). The family is seated inside the Sukkah (temporary booth) whilst outside, two blonde children with satchels on their backs (possibly non-Jews) are peering in curiously.

Also pictured outside of the Sukkah is a maid bringing the family a tureen of food. The Sukkah is made of wood and is also elaborately decorated with lanterns, floral wreaths, and even curtains.

About the author. Moritz Daniel Oppenheim was born in Hanau, Germany in 1800. He was one of the first recognised modern Jewish artists. He lived in the era of the Emancipation when many Jewish families were rapidly assimilating. Oppenheim, nonetheless, painted a number of portraits of traditional Jewish families performing various religious ceremonies. He also painted middle-class Germans.



Sukkot in Me'a She'arim, Jerusalem

The National Library of Israel, Postcards Collection

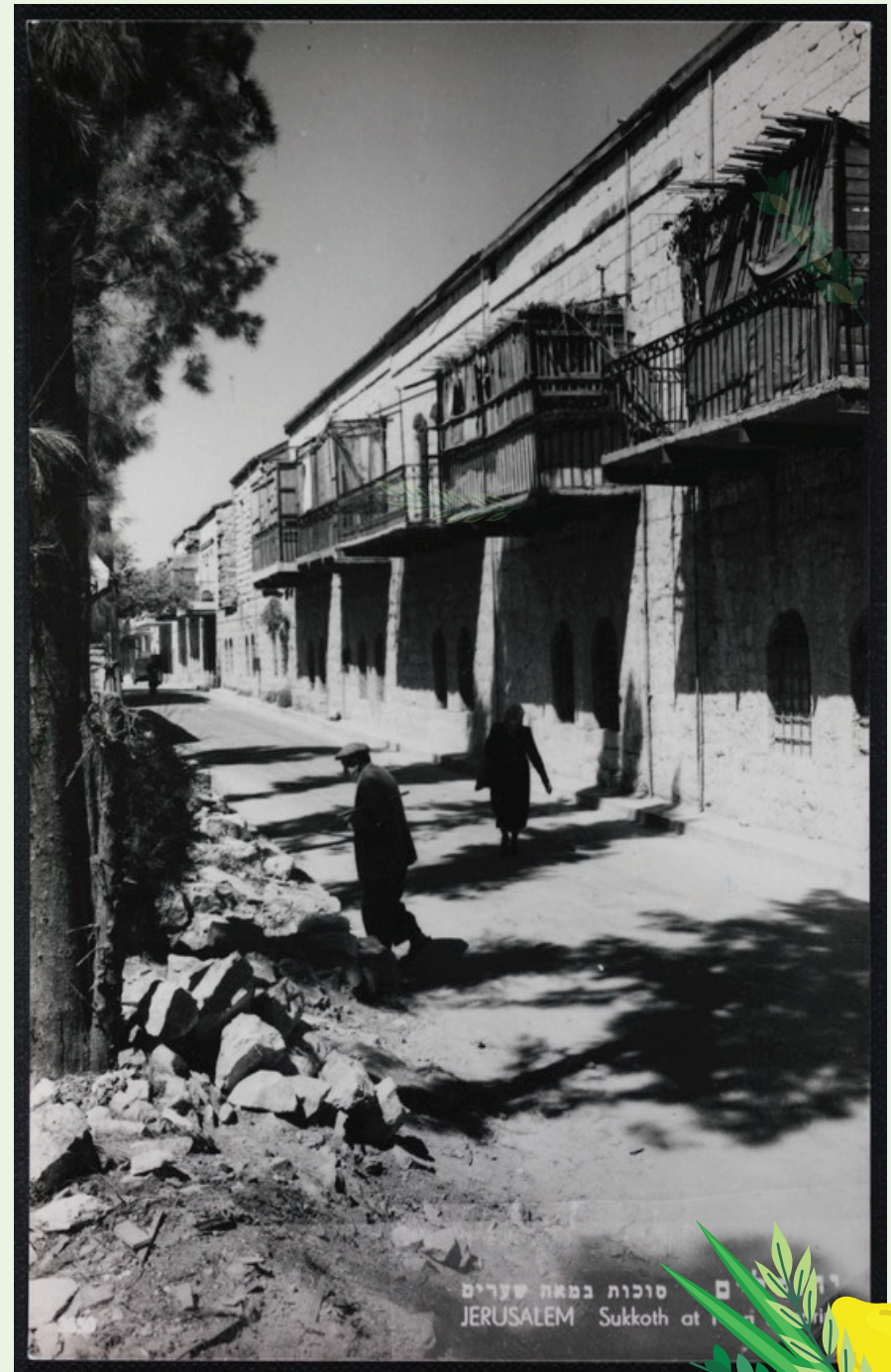
What catches your attention when you first look at the photograph? Describe the surroundings.

What are some of the specifications for building a sukkah?

The photograph was taken in Me'a She'arim in Jerusalem. What type of community is it?

Why do think people decided to built sukkot on their balconies?

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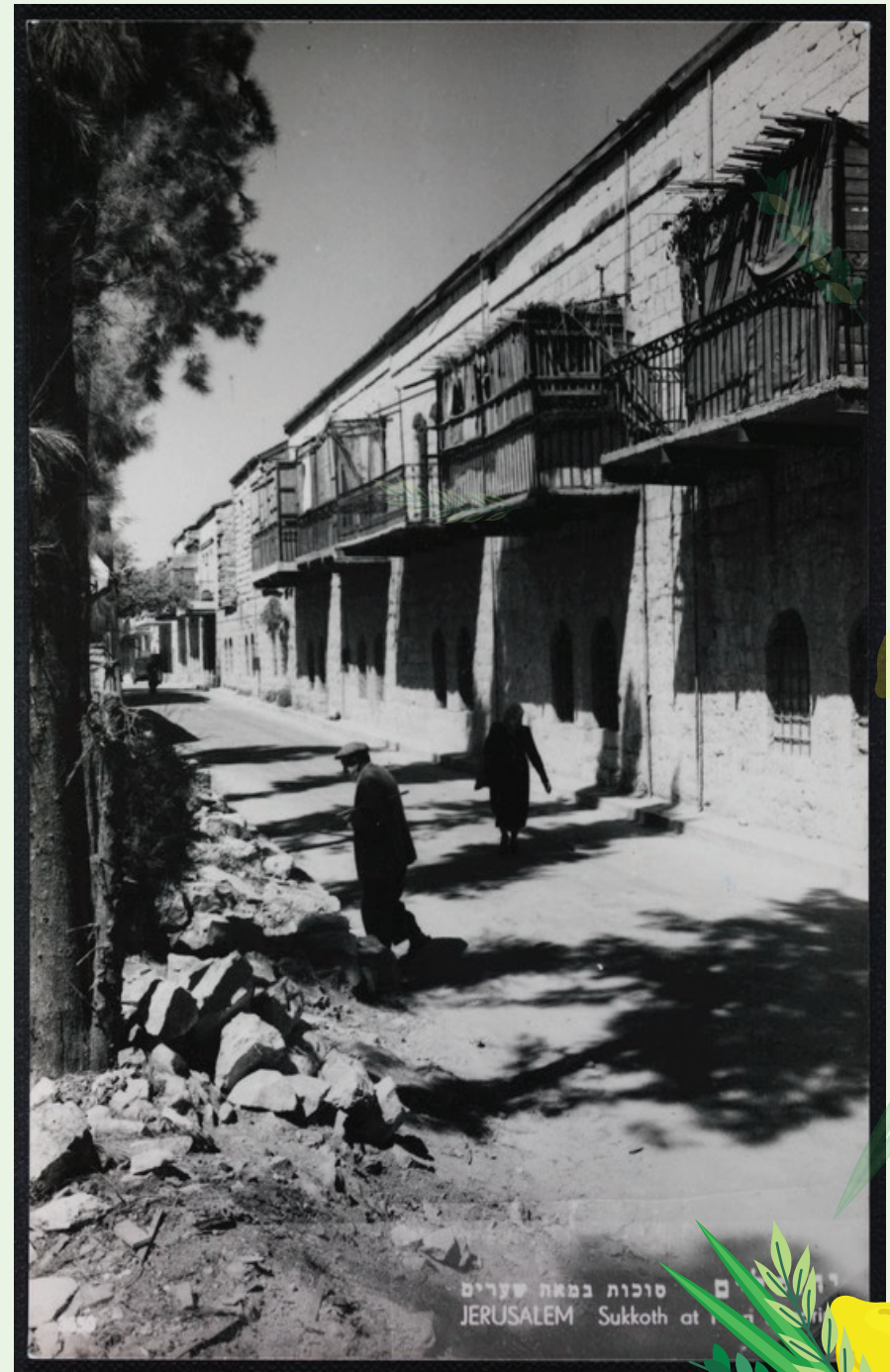


Answer Sheet

This is a postcard with a photograph of a street in Jerusalem's ultra-Orthodox neighborhood of Me'a She'arim during the festival of Sukkot. The black and white photograph depicts homes, each with a sukkah built on the balcony. A sukkah is the temporary dwelling in which Jews traditionally live during the seven days of Sukkot. The sukkot in the photograph are made of wood and tarpaulin with branches used as schach, the special roof that characterizes a sukkah.

The specifications of a sukkah are detailed in the Mishnah and other codes of Jewish law and state that nothing may come between the schach and the sky. This is why sukkot are built on balconies and not on the street below, where they would be underneath the balconies.

Me'a She'arim is a Haredi or Hassidic (ultra-Orthodox) neighborhood in Jerusalem. Founded in 1874, Mea She'arim is one of the oldest Jewish neighborhoods built outside the walls of the Old City.



The Perfect Etrog, 1978

Israel

The National Library of Israel, Dan Hanani Archive

What do you think this photograph shows?

What are the requirements for a kosher (suitable) etrog?

How does this etrog display the characteristics of a perfect etrog?

Have you ever held an etrog? What did it smell and feel like?



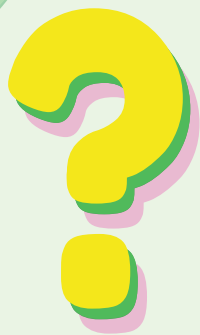
Answer Sheet

This is a black and white photograph of a worker at an etrog farm holding up the perfect etrog. The etrog is large, wider at the bottom and narrower at the top. The pitom (protruding stem) on the top is intact, as it should be. The box for packing the etrog in is on the table in front of the worker. A cushioned liner sits in the bottom of the box to protect the etrogs. If the pitom falls off the etrog, the etrog is no longer kosher (suitable for use).

The etrog, a citrus fruit, is one of the Four Species, along with the willow, myrtle, and lulav (palm branch), that are used to fulfill one of the major commandments of the festival of Sukkot. In order for the etrog to be kosher for use on Sukkot, it must be unblemished and complete. Pickers and packers must therefore be very careful when handling them.

On every day of the festival, Jews take the Four Species (Arba'at HaMinim) in hand and make a blessing over them. Each of the Four Species has certain requirements for them to be kosher. According to tradition, the buyer should check that the requirements are present in each of the species.





Where is Iwanowa located?

What is the connection between a raised roof and a sukkah?
How do you think the sukkah looked?

Why do you think the Jews of Iwanowa built their sukkot in this way?
What problems were they trying to solve?

Sukkot in Iwanowa, 1916

The National Library of Israel,
Sukkot in Russia



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This is a postcard printed in Germany depicting a Jewish alley in the town of Iwanowo in the Austrian Empire in 1916. As with many places in Eastern Europe, this town has been ruled by many different countries and has had various different names. Today it is located in Ukraine and is called Ivano-Frankivsk. The photograph shows a narrow, crowded, and muddy street.

It seems that the Jews who lived in this street built their houses with a roof that could be raised. When the festival of Sukkot arrived in the month of Tishrei, they opened the roof, laid **schach** (the branches used for the ceiling of a sukkah), and sat under it. In this way, they fulfilled the mitzvah of sitting in a sukkah that is open to the sky. It is possible that the sukkah was built inside the house with the roof raised due to lack of space in the narrow street or cold autumn weather conditions. It is also possible that sitting in the sukkah inside the house provided a sense of security at a time when hundreds of pogroms were taking place in this region.

This photograph is part of a series of photographs taken by German soldiers (some of whom were Jewish) during World War I, documenting the areas in the Eastern Europe that were occupied by the German Army. For many Jews in Western Europe, these photographs were their first encounter with the Jews living in shtetls in Eastern Europe in the Pale of Settlement. This encounter had large impact on many of these Western Jews whose connection to Jewish tradition was influenced by the “discovery” of more traditional Jews and Jewish lifestyle.

Answer Sheet



Seppl-Gasse in Iwanowo während des Laubhüttenfestes 1916.