



BUCKS LOCAL NEWS

Your town. Your news. **Updated daily.**

JERSEY FRESH: Story of Jewish agriculture in America on display at National Museum of American Jewish History in Philadelphia

Published: Sunday, August 07, 2016

BY BRIAN BINGAMAN

bbingaman@21st-centurymedia.com

@brianbingaman on Twitter

PHILADELPHIA >> Beginning in the 1880s, a few of the thousands of Jewish immigrant families fleeing persecution in eastern Europe took up the unexpected vocation of farming in their new land.

Some of the most successful of these family farms were in New Jersey's Cumberland and Salem counties, due to accessibility to train lines that shipped to New York and Philadelphia. As a result, New Jersey became one of the five biggest egg-producing states by the 1950s.

A special look in film and photographs at those hardy immigrants that tilled the soil and raised livestock in organized farming colonies — “Locally Grown: Jersey’s Jewish Farmers” — is on view through Aug. 28 at the National Museum of American Jewish History.

Highlights include an interactive, farm-themed children’s nook, a display of hand-made farm tools, a celebrated, taxidermied leghorn named Meg O’Day and an “It’s Your Story” recording booth for anybody that recalls the farms in towns like Brotmanville, Rosenhayn and Woodbine.

What is with that stuffed chicken?

Meg O’Day, a prize-winning hen owned by Gus Stern of Vineland, N.J., got her name from Rutgers University students and won a contest when she laid an “egg a day” for one year.

Organized farming colonies? Is that like a community supported agriculture thing?



Gus Stern and prize hen Meg O'Day in 1957. Submitted photo Gus

Farming colonies were part of an international movement whose influence extends to today's locavore and organic food movements and CSAs.

This is pretty cool. When is this open?

10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Wednesdays and 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays.

The NMAJH is on Independence Mall in Philadelphia, right?

Yes, at Fifth and Market streets.

How much is admission?

The installation is on the free-of-charge first floor. If you want to get the full NMAJH experience, admission is \$12, \$11 for seniors and young adults 13-21, free to children 12 and under and active military personnel. On Wednesday evenings through Labor Day, admission after 5 p.m. is pay-what-you-wish.

Where can I learn more?

Visit www.nmajh.org or call (215) 923-3811.