University of Nevada, Reno

The Materiality of Family Identity:
Archaeological Investigations of 19th Century Jewish Merchant Households

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Anthropology

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Abstract

The study of family identity seeks to demonstrate the connections between material culture, individual and group identities, and social norms and beliefs from the Victorian Era. Identities are fluid and ever changing, as is material culture and the values and meanings assigned to them. Archaeological evidence from excavations in Aurora, Nevada seeks to demonstrate the fluidity and interpretative power material culture has in assigning and visibly displaying individual and group identities. Special attention is given to the unique status family receives in Victorian culture. Family and children were the venues in which to display values and aspirations of class and social status, morality, purity, and respectability. Families represent both individual and group identities and also simultaneously, possibilities and expectations of social relations, age, gender, and class.
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Also, the support and funding from Fred Frampton of the Forest Service Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest and Eric Dillingham and staff from the Bridgeport Ranger District made this project possible. Forest Service Passport In Time volunteers and UNR Aurora Neighborhood Project archaeology field school students provided priceless hours of labor to the excavation, cleaning, and cataloging of artifacts. Camping and field sessions were enjoyable with such fun groups. The Youth Conservation Corp (YCC), sponsored by the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, also contributed critical manual labor hours to this project. Additionally, many thanks are due to my fellow Aurora Neighborhood Project instructors, Emily “Eddie” Dale and Ashlee Younie. I am especially grateful for Ashlee. Moving to Reno and adjusting to graduate school was much easier with a friend by my side.
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# Table of Contents

Abstract ........................................................................................................................................... i
Acknowledgements ....................................................................................................................... ii

Chapter One: Introduction and a Brief History of Aurora.............................................................. 1
  Rethinking the Master Narrative of the American West ................................................................. 2
  Brief History of Aurora, Nevada .................................................................................................... 3
  Family as Identity ........................................................................................................................... 8
  Conclusion ..................................................................................................................................... 9

Chapter Two: Field Research and Theoretical Perspectives......................................................... 12
  Field Research in Aurora, Nevada ................................................................................................. 12
    The Levy Home .......................................................................................................................... 16
    The Kaufman-Fleishman Home ................................................................................................. 18
    Archaeological Investigations ..................................................................................................... 18
    Summary of Field Research in Aurora, Nevada ......................................................................... 20
  Theoretical Perspectives ............................................................................................................... 24
  Material Cultural Studies ............................................................................................................... 25
    Summary of Material Culture Studies ....................................................................................... 28
  Household Archaeology .............................................................................................................. 29
    Summary of Household Archaeology ....................................................................................... 32
  Feminist Archaeology .................................................................................................................. 33
    Summary of Feminist Archaeology ......................................................................................... 36
  Investigations of Children and Childhood ............................................................................... 36
    Summary of Investigations of Children and Childhood ............................................................ 39
  Conclusions and Applications for Research in Aurora ............................................................... 40

Chapter Three: The Levy Family and the Kaufman-Fleishman Family........................................ 42
  The Levy Family .......................................................................................................................... 42
  The Kaufman-Fleishman Family ................................................................................................. 50
  Shared Acquaintances and Shared Experiences ........................................................................... 55
  Jewish Cultural Identity ................................................................................................................ 56
  “The Neighbors:” Local Informants on Daily Life in Aurora ..................................................... 64
Laura Crittenden Sanchez.................................................................64
Rachel Mitchell Haskell ..................................................................67
Conclusion.......................................................................................69
Chapter Four: Materiality of Family Identity ......................................71
  Victorian Ideologies .......................................................................73
  Use of Space ...................................................................................74
  Victorian Masculinity .....................................................................78
  Childhood and Children ..................................................................79
Symbols of Material Success ..............................................................86
  Gothic Aesthetics ...........................................................................87
  White-Bodied Ceramics .................................................................91
    Additional Ceramics ......................................................................93
  Parlor Organs and Pianos ...............................................................96
  Wallpaper .......................................................................................99
  Pressed Glass ...............................................................................101
  Displayed Portraits ......................................................................102
  Foil Seals ......................................................................................104
    Summary of Material Success .....................................................106
Conclusion.......................................................................................107
Chapter Five: Conclusion ................................................................109
  Jewish Cultural Identity .................................................................110
  Community as Family ....................................................................111
    Social Labor ...............................................................................112
  Conclusion and Final Thoughts ....................................................118
Works Cited ....................................................................................120
Appendix A: Additional Maps ..........................................................133
Appendix B: Additional Historic Photographs ....................................136
Appendix C: Additional Selected Artifact Photographs .......................138
Figures and Tables

Figure 1.1. Pine Street in Aurora ca. 1870.................................................................2
Figure 1.2. Aurora ca. 1960s.......................................................................................8
Figure 1.3. Aurora from Lover’s Leap ca. 1915..........................................................10
Figure 2.1. Block C (1864 Esmeralda County Tax Assessment Roll and Map). ..........14
Table 2.1 Residents of Block C......................................................................................15
Figure 2.2. Aurora from Lover’s Leap ca. 1890.........................................................16
Figure 2.3. The Levy home ca. 1905............................................................................17
Table 2.2. Excavation Units from Levy lot and Kaufman-Fleishman lot......................20
Figure 2.4. The Levy home and east side of the Kaufman-Fleishman home ca. 1910.....21
Figure 2.5. Excavation units at Levy lot (map by Ashlee Younie)..................................22
Figure 2.6. Excavation units at Kaufman-Fleishman lot (map by Ashlee Younie) .......23
Figure 2.7. Detail of Levy home ca. 1890. ....................................................................24
Figure 3.1. Levy Brother’s Aurora Emporium ca. 1862..............................................43
Figure 3.2. Levy Brother’s Aurora Emporium ca. 1910..............................................44
Figure 3.3. Levy & CO. Aurora Emporium; *Aurora Daily Times*; December 3, 1863....45
Figure 3.4. Isaac “Ike” Levy ca. 1869. .........................................................................47
Figure 3.5. Charlotte “Lottie” Poor Levy ca. 1869-1871. ...........................................48
Figure 3.6. Hermine Levy ca. 1874. .............................................................................49
Figure 3.7. Kaufman and Fleishman Pioneer Brick Store ca. 1862...............................52
Figure 3.8. Kaufman and Fleishman Pioneer Brick Store; *Aurora Daily Times*; December 11, 1863..........................................................53
Table 3.1. Possible Jewish Residents of Aurora..............................................................61
Figure 3.9. Notice in *Aurora Daily Times*; December 11, 1863.................................63
Figure 3.10. Ramon and Laura Sanchez’s wedding party ca. December 1859 ............65
Figure 3.11. Ella Haskell Sterling Mighels ca. 1864....................................................75
Figure 4.1. Photograph of Pine Street in Aurora ca. 1900-1920.................................71
Figure 4.2. Paiute woman in front of the white fence around the Levy home ca. 1905...76
Figure 4.3. Shell fragment from the handle of a fork; Cat # 13-1564.............................77
Figure 4.4. Bakelite or Vulcanite pipe stem; Cat # 13-1699..........................................78
Figure 4.5. Children in a mule drawn wagon in Aurora ca. Date Unknown ..................82
Figure 4.6. Porcelain doll fragments; Cat # 12-80, 12-201, 12-125, 12-349 ..................83
Figure 4.7. Selected artifacts associated with children; Cat # 13-1243, 13-884, 13-1291, 12-1463, 13-738 .................................................................84
Figure 4.8. Chinese celadon alcohol cup; Cat # 13-1514. ........................................86
Figure 4.9. The Levy Home ca. 1885. .................................................................90
Figure 4.10. Gothic Revival Style tea cup fragment; Cat #13-748 .........................91
Figure 4.11. White-bodied ceramic plate fragment; Cat #13-1762 .......................93
Figure 4.12. White-bodied ceramic porcelain fragment with transfer ware design; Cat #13-1145 .................................................................94
Figure 4.13. Two women at an organ ca. 1910...............................................96
Figure 4.14. Organ or piano stool; Cat# 13-306; .........................................98
Figure 4.15. H. Holtzman & Sons piano or organ stool ..................................98
Figure 4.16. Wallpaper fragment; Cat# 13-482 ..............................................100
Figure 4.17. Colorless pressed glass fragment; Cat# 13-1763 .........................102
Figure 4.18. Home of Jewish merchant Joseph T. Goodman and family ca. 1869. .......104
Figure 4.19. Two aluminum foil seals; Cat # 13-914, 13-1089 .........................105
Figure 5.1. Tea cup handle fragment; Cat # 13-1761 .......................................115
Figure A.1. Aurora location map (map by Ashlee Younie). .............................133
Figure A.2. Aurora location map and site boundary (map by Ashlee Younie). .........134
Figure A.3. Brady’s Map of Aurora and Esmeralda ca. 1862. ..........................135
Figure B.1. Pine Street in Aurora ca. 1913. ..................................................136
Figure B.2. Pine Street in Aurora ca. 1913. ..................................................136
Figure B.3. Aurora ca. 1911 ........................................................................137
Figure B.4. Silver Street in Aurora ca. 1895 ..................................................137
Figure C.1. Porcelain plate sherd; Cat # 13-1025 ...........................................138
Figure C.2. Amethyst cologne bottle; Cat # 13-890 ......................................138
Figure C.3. Slate pencil and slate fragment; Cat # 13-1391 and 13-1318 ..............139
Figure C.4. Ceramic porcelain fragment with “Kewpie doll” image; Cat # 12-227 . . .139
Figure C.5. Hair pin; Cat #12-757. .................................................................140
Figure C.6. Prosser buttons with red detail; Cat # 13-79.........................................................140
Figure C.7. Vitreous earthenware fragment with floral transfer ware design; Cat # 13-798...............................................................................................................................................................141
Figure C.8. Amethyst glass base fragment with Maker’s Mark; Cat # 13-47. ...............141
Figure C.9. White chert projectile point fragment; Cat # 13-492........................................142
Figure C.10. Porcelain fragment with Chinese blue transfer ware print; Cat # 13-886..142
Figure C.11. Wallpaper Fragments with a light green and blue fleur-de-lis pattern; Cat # 12-1006 .................................................................................................................................................................143
Figure C.12. Amethyst cut glass fragment; Cat # 12-558...............................................143
Chapter One: Introduction and a Brief History of Aurora

The materiality of family identity in a 19th century mining boomtown is the focus of this thesis. Two household sites are employed in this study: the home of the Levy family and the Kaufman family. Both were prominent civic members and Jewish merchants who lived in Aurora, Nevada and resided in an ethnically heterogeneous middle-class neighborhood. In the pages that follow, I explore many aspects of family life and identity. Research questions are aimed at exploring families, family life, and family identity in the 19th century mining community of Aurora, Nevada (Fig. 1.1). Research questions include: How is family identity defined? How is it expressed materially? What does family life look like in Aurora? How does it differ from household to household? Does it differ? What does it look like? Can the assemblage(s) from both households be compared and contrasted? Can comparisons be drawn based on gender? Ethnicity? Class? Religion?

Artifact assemblages from two archaeological field seasons and a range of documentary resources are consulted in investigations of family identity at the two households. Ideologies and societal expectations of the Victorian era, as well as expectations of class status, ethnicity, and religious practice influenced ideas of family. Understanding the complexities, performances, and constructions of a family identity helps inform other aspects of research on frontier communities and the individuals and families who lived there.

This thesis relies on theoretical perspectives that illuminate the experiences and contributions from women, children, and families. I draw on theoretical perspectives
derived from material culture studies, household archaeology, feminist archaeology, and investigations of children and childhood.

![Figure 1.1. Pine Street in Aurora ca. 1870 (notice Lizzie Murphy on the roof in the foreground). Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno.]

*Rethinking the Master Narrative of the American West*

Price commented that the public is often interested in exaggerated or sensational stories about the American West, and little interest is given to the histories and narratives of “ordinary people” (Price 2009:81). Narratives of ordinary people can be expanded to include histories and experiences related to women, children, and families. The goal for historians according to Price, and by extension archaeologists, is to “maintain a delicate balance between telling complex histories and understanding that the Wild West
“mystique” is what the public expects and hopes for and is a way to entice public interest (2009:81). Kelly Dixon’s (2005) representation of Virginia City saloons in “Boomtown Saloons: Archaeology and History in Virginia City,” is an example of this delicate balance that incorporates elements of an imagined West and interpretations gleaned from archaeological evidence of individual lives and a diversity of frontier experiences.

This chapter shares a few of the sensational stories and mystique about the history of Aurora, Nevada and the remaining chapters seek to examine the lives and ordinary experiences of Aurora families. A goal of this thesis research is to create a “delicate balance” (Price 2009:81) between the sensational stories reported about Aurora, its reputation as a wild Western town, and its mining and extractive industries. This thesis presents a humanistic perspective of the community’s history, which privileges the daily lives of the many residents.

**Brief History of Aurora, Nevada**

“This place or camp as they call it, is a very fine looking and thriving little village.” (Howard Crittenden to Clara J. Crittenden, March 13, 1863).

Mining and other extractive industries irrevocably altered the landscape of the American West and brought mass amounts of migrating peoples, industries, and ideas to rural and isolated settings (Dixon 2014:17-18). New and diverse communities were created based on the experiences of the region, individuals, and 19th century events (Dixon 2014:18-19; Hardesty 2010:109; Rischin 1991:30). These communities left unique signatures reminiscent of their homelands and cultures along with evidence of
displayed and assigned identities, including family identities (Dixon 2014:26; Rischin 1991:30). Individuals who lived in Aurora left evidence of their daily lives in the form of archaeological materials and documentary records.

The town of Aurora was founded following the initial discovery of ore deposits. Ore deposits were discovered by a group of three men, J.M. Cory, E.R. Hicks and J.M. Braly, who were exploring an area which would later be known as the Esmeralda Mining District, in the late summer of 1860 (Shaw 2009:3, 13). By 1861 Aurora was a well-established community (Shaw 2009:3, 13). Aurora residents numbered 5,000 during the peak year of 1863 and an estimated $110,000 was produced each month from the local mines and ore veins (Shaw 2009:8). Last Chance Hill and the Wide West vein were the most productive mines and 1862 was the first large boom in Aurora’s mining activity and population growth (Kersten 1964:497). Thousands of people moved to the area in the early 1860s as a result of the lucrative, extractable resources, including one notable resident, Samuel Clemens, who resided in Aurora during the spring and summer of 1862 (Shaw 2003; Twain 1962). Samuel Clemens, aka Mark Twain, was “worth a million dollars” at one point after his mining claim prospered and became a “pauper” again when the vein gave out while living in Aurora (Twain 1962:211, 217; Williams 1987:90-92).

The community had several newspapers (including a pro-Union paper and a pro- Secession paper during the Civil War), numerous saloons, restaurants, general stores, and nearly every type of business expected in a community of its size (Shaw 2009: 7-8; Stewart 2004). The pride of Aurora was the numerous commercial buildings and private homes constructed of locally made bricks (Shaw 2009:27). Both the downtown businesses and homes of the Levy family and Kaufman-Fleishman family were
composed of brick (Silver 2011:5; Shaw 2008:100). While the impressive brick buildings were admired, so too was Aurora’s elevated and growing social climate. According to reports of the day, Aurora was a city that supported a number of social events and activities. In July of 1862:

“...there are about sixty families and over a hundred ladies now here. There are two benevolent associations; the Masonic numbering about ninety-five and the Odd Fellows, about sixty; one military company, and one fire company; one choir, which will compare favorably with any in the cities of San Francisco or Sacramento; one glee and instrumental club, hard to beat anywhere, and one military band. There is preaching twice every Sabbath and a Sunday school about to be organized. The climate of Aurora is pleasant, the water good, and it is one of the healthiest towns we have been a resident of for many a day. The society is excellent, and taking it all in all, it is one of the most orderly places in the State, and a desirable place for a residence” (California Farmer and Journal of Useful Sciences July 25, 1862).

It is easy to imagine members of the Levy and Kaufman-Fleishman families participating in some of these events and engaging in the creation of a community identity, and moreover, a family identity, in this growing frontier community.

Tremendous growth was recorded during a three to five year period and Aurora was “about as full as it can very well be” and “at least 10 or 20 persons arrive here by every stage-daily” (Howard Crittenden to Clara J. Crittenden, March 25, 1863).

Aurora filled with new incoming people and businesses, but the location of Aurora was in question (Stewart 2004:11). Esmeralda County and Mono County both claimed Aurora as county seat and California and Nevada Territory claimed Aurora as well (Stewart 2004:14). In 1863 some residents of Aurora took advantage of the confusion and cast votes for county officials in Esmeralda County and Mono County (Stewart 2004:23). In September of 1863 surveyors determined that Aurora was located
four miles within the Nevada Territory border, not in California, and could not be the county seat for either county (Stewart 2004:23).

Morris Aschim, a Jewish merchant from Carson City, visited Aurora in the summer of 1863 (Marschall 2008:17). Aschim witnessed an Aurora that was “infested with bad characters; gamblers and thieves were numerous, and were incessantly getting drunk and killing each other” (Angel 1881:422). Aurora was a “lively mining camp” that likely experienced violence and unlawfulness in the early years of the community’s history. Family life and ordinary experiences were seldom reported. Instead, sensational stories concerning the mystique of Aurora were often shared (Angel 1881:422).

Other sensational stories surrounded Aurora as well. One such event included the Daly Gang murder and subsequent trial. John Daly and associates murdered William R. Johnson in 1864 as an act of revenge for the death of their friend, Jimmy Sears, who had stolen a horse from William R. Johnson’s friend Louis Wedertz (Shaw 2014:8; Stewart 2004:60-611). Eventually, four men from the gang, John Daly, William Buckley, John “Three Fingered Jack” McDowell, and William “Massey” Masterson were hung at gallows constructed at the center of Silver Street in Aurora by a vigilante group composed of Aurora citizens (Stewart 2004:62). This is one of the sensational stories imbedded in the Wild West history of Aurora. However, this study of Aurora provides insight into the daily life of some of the residents of Aurora, in contrast to the sensational stories often presented in the history of Aurora.

By 1864 populations had drastically decreased and the majority of the mining companies and speculators went bust (Shaw 2014:47). The “flush times” (Shaw 2009:3) did not last as Aurora’s mineral discoveries were not sustainable and populations
drastically decreased in the years following 1864-1865 (Silver 2011:8). By the late 1870s Aurora experienced a second, smaller mining and economic boom that reinvigorated the community and brought an influx of people into the area (Silver 2011:6). However, by 1900 populations in Aurora numbered less than eighty people (United States Census, 1900). By 1920 Aurora was reduced to a “ghost town,” consisting of less than six residents (Shaw 2009:14, 158). Fried Walker, the one-and-only resident for many years, passed away in 1955 (Shaw 2009:102).

Following its abandonment, Aurora began a period of attraction for ghost town hunters, auto tourists, and looters (Paher 1970:466; Shaw 2009:160; Stewart 2004:116). Aurora’s abandoned homes, businesses, water wells, and property lots experienced looting activities after its descent into ghost town status (Shaw 2009:160; Stewart 2004:116). Aurora began its final transition back to the sagebrush gulch of its pre-1860 discovery after the prominent brick buildings were dismantled and reused for housing in growing post-World War II suburban cities (Fig. 1.2; Shaw 2008:162; Silver 2011:8; Stewart 2004:83).

Beyond the economic interest of the community of Aurora is the community itself; the individuals and families who lived within the community. The relationships between individuals, households, families, and the larger community are the specific interest of this research. By focusing on the history, movement, and material remains of two households in Aurora, insight into the materiality of family identity can be gained.
Family as Identity

This thesis explores family identity and its relationship to ideologies and societal expectations from the Victorian era, as well as intersections with Jewish cultural identity. This thesis also provides insight into the daily lives of families in Aurora, Nevada and presents an interpretation of life in the Western frontier that privileges the experiences of ordinary people. Archaeologists use intersections of identity, such as gender, class, and ethnicity, to better understand complex social relationships and social activities that occurred in families and households (King 2006:297; Kruczek-Aaron 2002:175; Mullins
This thesis will also use studies of intersectionality to explore family identity in 19th century Western community contexts.

The material evidence of family identity construction and display can be interpreted from the artifactual evidence recovered from two excavated households: ceramics, home décor, beverages and food, children’s items, and artifacts associated with motherhood/fatherhood and femininity/masculinity can reveal information on the concept of family as an identity. This thesis looks specifically at ceramics, artifacts associated with children, women, masculinity, use of space, material success, and items associated with the experiences of daily life in Aurora, Nevada. Documentary evidence in the form of journals, letters, and newspaper articles are utilized to support claims about expressed family identities amongst select members of Aurora.

**Conclusion**

This chapter introduced a brief history of Aurora, Nevada (Fig. 1.3). This chapter then introduced the idea of family identity and how this discussion contributes to larger conversations surrounding narratives of the American West. Finally, the possibility of a collective family identity used to frame what family life looked like in Aurora is introduced. This thesis also questions if family life differed from household to household, and if material expressions based on gender, ethnicity, class, and religious identity can be teased from the archaeological assemblages.
Chapter Two presents field research and methods used to collect data from archaeological excavations at the Levy lot and the Kaufman-Fleishman lot. Chapter Two also discusses theoretical perspectives utilized in the interpretation of materials from Aurora and provides examples of case studies from literature reviews of pertinent research. Chapter Three explores the family histories of the Levy family and the Kaufman-Fleishman family and presents how these histories relate to larger studies of Jewish cultural identity and experiences in the American West. Additionally, Chapter Three explores the larger community of Aurora, Nevada through relationships between the Levy family, Kaufman-Fleishman family, and the community.
Chapter Four illustrates how the presented theoretical frameworks are used in interpretations and discussions of the archaeological materials and documents from Aurora, Nevada. Materials used to define these family identities range from items associated with Victorian middle-class families, Jewish cultural identity, and economic success. Symbolism in the use of space, children, and masculinity are discussed, as are Gothic aesthetics, symbols of material success, and display to reinforce notions of family. Finally, Chapter Five comments on community as family, social labor, and summarizes the previously presented information. Future research goals for family identity studies are presented.
Chapter Two: Field Research and Theoretical Perspectives

Archaeological remains provide the materials used in interpretations for this thesis. Traditional archaeological field methods were used to collect data, including excavation, survey, surface collection, and detailed field recordation. Excavations at two lots, the Levy lot and the Kaufman-Fleishman lot, were conducted to provide materials for interpretations involving family identity and material culture. This chapter presents the fieldwork conducted in Aurora through the Aurora Neighborhood Project.

Additionally, I will also discuss theoretical perspectives in this chapter. Utilizing several theoretical frameworks and lenses allows focus on the material remains associated with family identity in Aurora, Nevada. I employ frameworks of material culture studies, household archaeology, feminist archaeology, and studies of children and childhood.

Field Research in Aurora, Nevada

The archaeological site of Aurora (26MN133) is located at United States Geological Survey (USGS)’s topographic 7.5’ Aurora quadrangle at: S 1/2 of Section 18, T 5 N, R 28 E (White and Younie 2014:4). The archaeological site boundaries of Aurora were determined by Bureau of Land Management (BLM) archaeologists in the original 1966-1967 site report (Wieprecht 1972:2). Lands surrounding the town site were originally administered by the BLM and later transferred to the Forest Service. Additionally, Aurora was nominated to the National Register of Historic Places in 1972, and listed in 1974 (Wieprecht 1972).
Archaeological investigations from the Aurora Neighborhood Project, conducted at two household sites in Aurora, Nevada, provide data for this thesis. This multi-year project conducted excavations in 2012 and 2013 at the Levy lot and the Kaufman-Fleishman lot. The Aurora Neighborhood Project is run through a cooperative agreement between the University of Nevada, Reno and the USDA Forest Service, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, Bridgeport Ranger District. Two field schools were conducted as undergraduate historical archaeological field schools and USDA Forest Service Passport In Time (PIT) volunteer projects. Dr. Carolyn L. White is the Principal Investigator of this project and Emily Dale, Ashlee Younie, and I acted as field instructors and research assistants. Additional research projects associated with the Aurora Neighborhood Project focus on Chinese occupation in Aurora and nearby Table Mountain (Dale 2008), and on household consumption and foodways at the Levy and Kaufman-Fleishman households (Younie 2014). Previous related research was conducted at the commercial restaurant and hotel, the Merchants’ Exchange (Kinchloe-Smith 2001). Additional research from the Aurora Neighborhood Project is ongoing.

In 2012 and 2013, six week field schools and week-long PIT projects were held in Aurora. Excavated artifacts and materials were processed and analyzed at the UNR Historical Archaeology Lab. Artifacts and related records are curated at the UNR Anthropology Research Museum. A USDA Forest Service report has been completed for the 2012 season and an additional report for the 2013 season will be filed (White and Younie 2014). Historical research for the Aurora Neighborhood Project and for this thesis was conducted at the Mineral County Museum, Mineral County Courthouse, Mono
An 1864 Esmeralda County tax assessment roll and map was used to determine neighborhood boundaries and define an area of significance for this project (White and Younie 2014:4). An area labeled as Block C was chosen for investigations based on surname and census references to the heterogeneous nature of the resident’s ethnicity and occupations, which can be viewed in Table 2.1 (Shaw 2009; White and Younie 2014:3). Figure 2.1 shows the arrangement of Block C. Two households, the Levy and Kaufman-Fleishman homes, were chosen due to their close residential proximity to each other, and also the close proximity of their respective dry goods businesses, located downtown on Pine Street (Shaw 2009:10; White and Younie 2014:4; White 2012:2). Figure 2.2 depicts the locations of the Levy home and the Kaufman-Fleishman home.

Figure 2.1. Block C (1864 Esmeralda County Tax Assessment Roll and Map).
Table 2.1 Residents of Block C.
(1864 Esmeralda County Tax Assessment Roll; Shaw 2009; White and Younie 2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Property Owner</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Block C Property Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C. Barnes</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Lot valued at $150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Cameron</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Campbell</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Lot &amp; “wood house” valued at $300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Davis</td>
<td>Saloon Owner; Esmeralda Exchange</td>
<td>Lot &amp; “wood buildings” valued at $3500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fleishman-Kaufmann and Co.</td>
<td>Merchants; Pioneer Brick Store</td>
<td>Lot &amp; “brick building used as residence” valued at $2500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.A. Green</td>
<td>Drug Store Owner</td>
<td>Lot &amp; “brick house” valued at $15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Humphries</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Lot valued at $100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Iovanivish</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Lot &amp; “improvements” valued at $200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ladd</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Lot &amp; “wooden house” valued at $350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T. Larkin</td>
<td>Saloon Owner; Sommer’s Building</td>
<td>Lot &amp; “cabin” valued at $250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levy and Co.</td>
<td>Merchants; Aurora Emporium</td>
<td>Lot &amp; “brick house” valued at $2700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.D. Manning</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Lot &amp; “cabin” valued at $350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Martin</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Lot &amp; “wooden house” valued at $250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Pebelie</td>
<td>Bath House Owner; Washington Baths</td>
<td>Lot &amp; house valued at $350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.F. Porter</td>
<td>Saloon Owner; Porter’s Saloon</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Radervitch</td>
<td>Hotel Owner; Tremont House</td>
<td>Lot valued at $150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Schwartz</td>
<td>Stationary Store Owner</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Levy Home

The earliest record of the Levy home is its listing as the property of “Levy & Co.” in an 1864 Esmeralda County Tax Assessment Roll. The lot, brick home, and furniture contained within were valued at $2700 (1864 Esmeralda County Tax Assessment Roll). The Levy home was a handsome brick structure that contained architectural elements reminiscent of Greek Revival style, including Doric columns, and Gothic Revival style, expressed in the presence of a gable window, a false balcony, decorative bargeboard along the roofline, and two chimneys (Fig. 2.3; White and Younie 2014:12). The Levy home and lot displayed a picket fence (Fig. 2.3) to separate public from private space,
interesting architectural details, and a back addition. The Levy home was situated
towards the center and eastern side of the lot, located on the west side of Mono Street
(1864 Esmeralda County Tax Assessment Roll). Currently, the Levy lot is covered in
thick sagebrush and vegetation that obscures the local stone foundation, wooden
floorboards and joists, and fragmentary remains of the brick and wood structure. The lot
itself contains surface scatters of domestic and architectural debris, privy depressions,
and evidence of looting, including depressions, back-piles, and clusters of collected and
discarded artifacts.

Figure 2.3. The Levy home ca. 1905. Courtesy of Nevada Historical Society.
The Kaufman-Fleishman Home

The Kaufman-Fleishman home was likely completed in the fall of 1862, based on comments made about the progress of the construction and the expected move in date (Laura Sanchez to Nannie Crittenden, September 1, 1862). The home was listed as the property of “Fleishman-Kaufmann” in an 1864 tax assessment roll and the lot, home, and furniture was valued at $2500 (Esmeralda County Tax Assessment Roll). The Kaufman-Fleishman home was noted as being a “very nice brick house” and appears to have possessed a front porch, one chimney, and a back addition (Laura Sanchez to Nannie Crittenden, August 15, 1862). The Kaufman-Fleishman home faced north onto Pine Street. The structural foundation is centered towards the north portion of the lot facing Pine Street (1864 Esmeralda County Tax Assessment Roll). The back of the Kaufman-Fleishman home abutted the north side of the Levy home (Fig. 2.4). The Kaufman-Fleishman lot is also covered in extensive and thick sagebrush and vegetation. The local stone foundation is visible, as are fragmentary remains of the former brick and wooden structure. Similar to the Levy lot, the Kaufman-Fleishman lot exhibits evidence of surface scatters of domestic and architectural debris, possible privy excavate, and evidence of looting, including depressions and clusters of collected and discarded artifacts.

Archaeological Investigations

In 2012 UNR students and PIT volunteers excavated units located on the Levy lot. In 2013 UNR students and PIT volunteers excavated units on the Kaufman-Fleishman lot and one unit on the Levy lot. A grid was used to set excavation units across both the Levy
lot and Kaufman-Fleishman lot. Figure 2.5 and Figure 2.6 are diagrams illustrating the locations of the excavation units from the 2012 and 2013 field seasons and Table 2.2 lists all the excavation units and their locations. Excavation units were strategically placed in these locations to best understand the use of space and discard practices of the members of the Levy home and the Kaufman-Fleishman home. Nine units were excavated on the Levy lot and seven units were excavated on the Kaufman-Fleishman lot.

On the Levy lot, excavation units were placed in the front yard, back yard, side yard (south), and immediately to the rear and in the interior of the foundation. Of the nine total units excavated on the Levy lot, three were located on the southern portion of the lot in what would have been a front/side yard (N109 E146; N11 E147; N113 E145). One unit was placed in the true southern side yard (N112 E136) and four units were placed on the southern side of the lot in the back yard of the home (N113 E132; N116 E126; N118 E131; N119 E125). The final unit (N117 E141) was placed in the back interior of the Levy home, in a feature which is likely an addition or screened porch, as evidenced in a 1890s era historic photograph (Fig. 2.7).

On the Kaufman-Fleishman lot, seven excavation units were placed in the southern portion of the lot in the inside and outside of the house foundation. One unit was placed in the southern portion inside the structure’s foundation (N133 E142) and four units were placed on the western portion of the side yard (N128 E 135; N130 E133; N130 E138; N137 E134). Additionally, two units were placed in the southern portion of the back yard, near the shared border of the Levy lot (N130 E142; N139 E138).
Summary of Field Research in Aurora, Nevada

Excavations at the Levy lot and Kaufman-Fleishman lot were conducted in 2012 and 2013 to reveal information about architecture, use of space, and household consumption choices. Aurora was a thriving mining community during an almost five year period, from 1860-1865, which drew new people, ideas, and technologies into the area. The period of focus for this research extends beyond this five year period to include 1860-1870. Aurora Neighborhood Project is collecting and analyzing data about Aurora’s residents to develop interpretations relating to the intersection of material culture and family identity. The recovered materials from two field seasons are used to understand family in 19th century Aurora. The excavated materials from the Levy home and the Kaufman-Fleishman home are explored in Chapter Four.

Table 2.2. Excavation Units from Levy lot and Kaufman-Fleishman lot.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit Name</th>
<th>Lot</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N109 E146</td>
<td>Levy</td>
<td>Southern portion; front/side yard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N111 E147</td>
<td>Levy</td>
<td>Southern portion; front/side yard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N113 E145</td>
<td>Levy</td>
<td>Southern portion; front/side yard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N112 E136</td>
<td>Levy</td>
<td>Southern side yard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N113 E132</td>
<td>Levy</td>
<td>Southern side of lot; back yard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N116 E126</td>
<td>Levy</td>
<td>Southern side of lot; back yard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N118 E131</td>
<td>Levy</td>
<td>Southern side of lot; back yard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N119 E125</td>
<td>Levy</td>
<td>Southern side of lot; back yard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N117 E141</td>
<td>Levy</td>
<td>Back interior of home; possible addition or screen porch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N133 E142</td>
<td>Kaufman-Fleishman</td>
<td>Southern portion; inside structure foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N128 E135</td>
<td>Kaufman-Fleishman</td>
<td>Western portion; side yard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N130 E133</td>
<td>Kaufman-Fleishman</td>
<td>Western portion; side yard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N130 E138</td>
<td>Kaufman-Fleishman</td>
<td>Western portion; side yard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N137 E134</td>
<td>Kaufman-Fleishman</td>
<td>Western portion; side yard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N130 E142</td>
<td>Kaufman-Fleishman</td>
<td>Southern portion; back yard; near Levy Lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N139 E138</td>
<td>Kaufman-Fleishman</td>
<td>Southern portion; back yard; near Levy Lot</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 2.4. The Levy home (center) with the east side of the Kaufman-Fleishman home visible (right) ca. 1910. Courtesy of Nevada Historical Society.
Figure 2.5. Excavation units at Levy lot (map by Ashlee Younie).
Figure 2.6. Excavation units at Kaufman-Fleishman lot (map by Ashlee Younie).
Theoretical Perspectives

The theoretical perspectives presented in this chapter provide a framework and context through which the materials from Aurora, Nevada are interpreted. The perspectives include material culture studies, household archaeology, feminist archaeology, and studies of children and childhood. These theories highlight the experiences of individuals and place emphasis on the material culture of families, women, and children. The goal is to expose the richness of the daily life experiences of
individuals who lived in Aurora, to highlight their relationships with each other, their shared identities, and the ways identities and familial relationships are manifested through material culture.

**Material Cultural Studies**

In this thesis I aim to connect materiality with individuals and family identity. It has been theorized that aspects of identity are formed via complex relationships to material culture (Cochran and Beaudry 2006:192; Kruczek-Aaron 2002:175). Individuals “use material culture in a purposeful way” (Kruczek-Aaron 2002:175) and those materials eventually become imbued with meaning (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 2001:645; Shackel and Little 1992:8). By “understanding the activeness of material culture as it is used by people” (Shackel and Little 1992:7) materials begin to represent the individual users of these materials. Archaeologists often use these materials to interpret “individual life histories” (Prossor et al. 2012:810) and reveal the “everyday lives of ordinary people” (King 2006:296).

Individuals actively promote associations and memberships with group identities they aspire to, are ascribed to, or actively promote through material culture. Individuals rely on materials to make sense of and explain their worlds. Examples from Purser (1991), diZerega Wall (1994), Wilkie (2003; 2010), and Ames (1992) illustrate how archaeological studies can connect and reinforce this notion. Purser (1991) explored how women negotiated public spaces in rural 19th century Nevada communities, diZerega Wall (1994) explored how middle-class and working-class women actively used ceramics
in 19th century New York, Wilkie (2003; 2010) used material culture to explore the identity of 19th century African-American mothers and the identity of 19th century fraternity brothers, and Ames (1992) explored how materials reinforced notions of success and identity for 19th century individuals. These are but a few of the myriad examples of such work in the archaeological literature.

Artifacts and objects are a medium often used to explain how and why “people use material culture in a purposeful way;” to display their identity to themselves and to others (Kruzcek-Aaron 2002:175). Materials were purchased and displayed by families as a form of exhibiting social status, class standing, and cultural competency. Mullins provided an example of constructed and displayed family identity in his work on ascribed social and material meanings of parlor bric-a-brac in 19th century African-American homes (2001:158-176). In the example from Mullins, members of the family and household actively constructed and displayed their “identity aspirations” and attempts at assuming “material symbols of American affluence and genteel worldliness” through materials (2001:164-165). The purchase, display, and maintenance of these items reveals how individuals carefully crafted and displayed materials in meaningful ways, with the explicit intent to define and illustrate a proper, collective, family identity (Mullins 2001:160).

Wilkie (2010) provides another example of materials used to claim family as a group or community. For example, Wilkie uses ceramics and elements of conspicuous consumption to illuminate the intersection of individual and family identity (2010:66). The brothers of the 19th century Zeta Psi fraternity used shared meals and dining activities as a method to reaffirm familial organizations and relationships, both fictive
and kin, between the brothers, and to display materials that further reinstated and displayed their shared family identity (Wilkie 2010:66).

Artifacts and objects can also be linked to phases of family and household lifecycle (LeeDecker 1994:349; Rotman 2005:1). Artifacts associated with women and children are often used as indicators of family homes. Allison (1999), Brighton (2001), LeeDecker (1994), Prossor et al. (2012), Rotman (2005), and Wilkie (2003) all comment on the feasibility of associating artifacts with certain stages and developments in the family lifecycle. For example, Wilkie (2003) was able to correlate the appearance and abundance of children’s toys as a direct result of the birth and presence of children in the Perryman family and household. She confirms the presence of children by using census documents and newspaper articles.

Material culture studies also provide information about women’s agency in households through purchase and consumption (Beaudry et al. 1991:172; Brighton 2001:21; Grimshaw and Willett 1981:150; Klein 1991:86). Mullins claims that consumption and purchasing is “empowering” to consumers and “reflects their identities” as actively constructed rather than assigned (2009:213-214). Beranek’s example from the 18th century Tyng Mansion uses active consumption and purchasing of ceramics as interpretable evidence of the maintenance of social relationships, both with family members and with outside networks of contacts (2009:169). Viewing individuals within a group context and through material culture reveals how individuals actively manage affiliations and memberships with larger entities (Beranek 2009:180).

Conspicuous consumption refers to the active purchasing behavior utilized by individuals to indicate their wealth and success to themselves and to others (Trigg
2001:101). Additionally, conspicuous consumption was “largely of a ceremonial character” used to differentiate households through the purchase, use, and display of goods (Veblen 1934:68). Using this framework, individuals actively engaged in conspicuous consumption to secure and promote perceived reputations and identities. In this thesis, conspicuous consumption refers to the purchase, use, and display of goods, which were actively utilized to construct a family identity based on luxury, economic success, and comfort.

Summary of Material Culture Studies

Theoretical frameworks associated with material culture studies can be used in a variety of ways to better understand family identity. Some of those ways include associating materials with specific individuals, incorporating symbolism, and acknowledging the link between materials and active purchasing and conspicuous consumption. This framework focuses on material culture and the relationships between materials, individuals, and groups. In this thesis, a material culture framework illuminates how individuals used materials and what those materials represented in relation to identity construction and display. Furthermore, the use of specific individual’s experiences can reveal insights into broader exploration and interpretations of families. Individual lives are central to discussions of family, as are the type of materials associated with these individuals, how they were used, and the social realities and ideologies ascribed to them (King 2006:302). Theoretical frameworks associated with
material culture studies will be applied to interpretations of associated materials from Aurora, Nevada in Chapter Four.

_Household Archaeology_

The study of family has been approached in a variety of ways in archaeological scholarship, most commonly intertwined with studies of households (Prangnell and Quirk 2009:39; Purser 1991:6; Spencer-Wood 1994:177). Households and families have been described as the most basic structure of society where relationships, activities, adaptations, and behaviors can be viewed (Grimshaw and Willett 1981:154; Kruczek-Aaron 2002:173; LeeDecker 1994:346; Wilk and Rathje 1982:618). A household archaeological framework can reveal information on family relationships, activities, and behaviors. However, archaeologists do not excavate behaviors, but instead use structural remains and materials associated with households to study behaviors (Wilk and Rathje 1982:618-620). Thus, archaeologists must make informed interpretations about activities, relationships, and behaviors using recovered physical materials, linking intersections of materiality- one ethereal, one physical. First, ethereal examples of household archaeological studies will be presented. Second, physical materials associated with households will be discussed.

century ideologies of gendered spaces, public and private dichotomies, and images of the home, families, and women. In her study, Spencer-Wood (1994) notes that homes were commonly segmented by activity, gender, and class status. Yentsch furthers this claim saying that specialized rooms and spaces conveyed “details of the family’s moral character” and reveal the power and agency of women within the home (2011:201).

Examples of this segmentation described by Spencer-Wood (1994) and Yentsch (2011) are plentiful in the archaeological literature. For example, in middle-class Victorian homes, parlors and dining rooms were often used as spaces to entertain guests who were from outside of the family and from the public sphere (Kruczek-Aaron 2002:178; Purser 1992:111; Rotman 2005:2). The dining room was dually used as a private location for family dinners and as a space to display internal beliefs concerning morality, family identity, and social values related to middle- and upper-class status (Kruczek-Aaron 2002:179; Rotman 2005:3; Spencer-Wood 1994:179, 197). Dining was a ritual practice that incorporated domestic beliefs and reiterated performances of identity that were enacted daily by families and guests to the home (diZerega Wall 1994:11). These “constant and familiar reunions” (diZerega Wall 1991:78) with family, and sometimes male visitors from the outside sphere, reinforced the shared and performed identity of family (Wilkie 2010:74). Women often only shared the experience of dinner with people who were perceived as family, perpetuating the familial ritual experience of dining (diZerega Wall 1994:115).

A household approach also allows for women and children’s actions and agency to be viewed in relation to materials and use of space (Barker and Majewski 2006:227). Families are commonly assumed to occupy household spaces and it is frequent practice to
begin explorations of family by excavating and studying household sites (Hardesty 1994:137). Some scholars confine family to households, inadvertently excluding the activities and daily experiences of families that did not occur in the home (Wilkie and Hayes 2006:250). Separating family from households provides insight into activities and identities and their relationships to larger geographical, cultural, and social contexts (King 2006:297).

Purser’s (1991) work explored women’s contributions to social labor and community networks in a contemporaneous Paradise Valley, Nevada mining town. Purser illustrated how gendered roles and relationships structured the ways in which public space was utilized and manipulated in distinctive gendered strategies in a 19th century Nevada community. Purser explained that women strategically used their agency and cultural/social restrictions of spatial use utilizing public spaces and mobility in active ways (1991). Women traveled between homes, visited family and friends, and organized community events as ways to reinforce family identities and maintain kinship and friendship bonds (Purser 1991:11). Grimshaw and Willett (1981), Lawrence (1998:50), and Watson et al. (1998) also study how women actively used public spaces in 19th century contexts.

In Aurora, textual evidence provides insight into women’s roles outside of the home. Newspaper articles cite the social and charity work completed by Auroran women, journals speak about visits from community members in family homes, and letters illustrate how women spent time maintaining social bonds and relationship. These written accounts from women in Aurora will be explored further in Chapters Three and Four.
remedied the assumption that households or homes automatically equal women and children. It is also an example of an interpretations utilizing ethereal evidence from household investigations.

Finally, physical remains associated with households reveal information about families. Physical households have been theorized as being “an unmistakable, public sign of achievement” and provide a material expression of the individuals who live within (Yentsch 2011:200). The physical characteristics of the home, then reveal ethereal aspects of success and display. This section presents interpretations that utilize the physical and ethereal quality of household archaeological investigations. A second way that homes manifest ideas of success and material wealth is through their modifications. Homes were also often modified to accommodate changes in family composition, economic wealth, and shifting ideas of spatial use (Purser 1992:112; Rotman 2005:11). Using the Levy home as an example, the addition of a back porch and the corresponding recovered artifacts likely reflect changes within the home, growth of family, material wealth, and spatial organization and use. The material remains excavated from the two selected households in Aurora expose the usefulness of using a household archaeological lens in interpretations of family identity.

Summary of Household Archaeology

Using a household archaeological lens is pertinent to this thesis, because during 19th century Victorian America a “proper home” was a combination of both a physical
house/structure and a family (McDannell 1986:24). I have presented interpretations influenced by household archaeological studies that utilize both ethereal and physical remains to define family. Identifying and describing a family identity is the goal of this thesis research. Household archaeology provides a structure in which to view relationships, use of space, and individuals. However, it must be cautioned that households are not the only place to view certain individuals, including women and children. Examples from Purser (1991) illustrate how women navigated imbued spaces and utilized both domestic households and public spaces. Finally, household archaeology allows focus on the material remains of households themselves and utilizes architectural remains to do so. Household archaeological perspectives permeated aspects of this research on Aurora, Nevada and interpretations of the materials from the homes of the Levy family and the Kaufman-Fleishman family.

**Feminist Archaeology**

It has been noted that “feminism leads to better science” (Hays-Gilpin 2000:93) as it incorporates theories and frameworks that illuminate contributions from individuals often ignored in archaeological scholarship, including women and children (Grimshaw and Willett 1981:141; Purser 1991:13; Spencer-Wood 1994:176; Wilkie 2003:142). Feminist archaeology strives to reveal the importance of gender and make visible women, children, and other less-visible groups in archaeological studies (Allison 1999:8 Hays-Gilpin 2000:94; Lawrence 1999:121; Spencer-Wood 1999:162). Also, importantly, feminist
theories support a multi-vocal approach that does not privilege one interpretation over another, but instead, allows for a developed narrative that “produces multivocal, contextually situated” interpretations and presentations (Hays-Gilpin 2000:95). Feminist inspired archaeological investigations also have “…been taken as the starting point for an expanded archaeological discourse that is people-centered and arises from a fine-grained understanding of the details of daily life” (Lawrence 1998:40). Insight into individual’s daily life enriches the understanding of individuals from the past and the study of daily life in Aurora is a goal of this thesis as well.

Feminist frameworks have been used to interpret women’s experiences in the American West, and by extension family’s experiences. One ways has been to study women’s roles in the construction and maintenance of community networks and social labor. Textual sources are important for developing and defining family identity and recognizing women’s agency in the American West (Wilkie and Hayes 2006:244). Newspaper social columns in 19th century newspapers frequently contain information about visits, community events, church, and other town activities that illuminate the experiences and connections between individuals and families (Purser 1991:12-13; Watson et al. 1998:179).

Articles concerning visits, shared meals from local newspaper columns, and mentions in journals and diaries are critical to the material expression of family identity (Watson et al. 1998). These textual notations illustrate how women organized and maintained frontier communities as an extension of their role within their families, and illustrate how women actively used both private domestic spaces and public spaces (Watson et al. 1998:180). Researchers must develop informed interpretations about the ways women
have inhabited domestic and public places and read beyond androcentric historical documents that cloak the visibility of women and their contributions (Allison 1999:3; Beaudry et al. 1991:162; Watson et al. 1998).

Rituals surrounding tea taking have been interpreted as an important focus of feminist and household archaeology. Allison (2003:184), diZerega Wall (1994:123), Hodge (2009:197) and Lawrence (1998:50) provided examples. Taking tea became a feminized activity in 19th century America and developed into an opportunity to involve individuals from extended networks as family (diZerega Wall 1994:125). Taking tea exposed visitors to the symbolic meaning of sharing tea and strengthened and maintained social networks (diZerega Wall 1994:125). Women were responsible for projecting a proper family image and used their homes as a way to negotiate and display their family identity (diZerega Wall 1999:103; Kruczek-Aaron 2002:180; Rotman 2005:3-4).

The materials used in tea taking activities are related to acts of social labor. Social labor included activities frequently performed by women to maintain and develop social networks and relationships. Social labor is often explored in feminist archaeology, and ceramics have been used as archaeological evidence of social labor. Ceramics were actively chosen by 19th century women to reveal information on the perceived social competency, properness, wealth, and status of the individuals from the family (diZerega Wall 1994:139; Praetzellis and Praetzellis 2001:646; Rotman 2005:8-10). Often “competitive displays” (Rotman 2005:10) of wealth and success were expressed through white ceramic vessels, whether expensive fine porcelain or less-expensive refined earthenwares (Wall 1999:113). Ceramic, proper social behaviors, and the carefully
constructed public image and identity of individuals represented the family’s active identity (Beaudry et al. 1991:155; diZerega Wall 1994:123).

Summary of Feminist Archaeology

Feminist archaeological perspectives focus on individuals often ignored in archaeological investigations. Feminist theories explore contributions by women, children, the elderly, individuals with disabilities, and other less-visible individuals. Historical archaeologists have used feminist theoretical perspectives to investigate how women utilized both private and public spaces in the 19th century American West. Often, they accomplished these movements by social labor activities and the management of their homes. In Chapter Four, I employ a feminist perspective to examine the materials associated with family life in Aurora, Nevada.

Investigations of Children and Childhood

The presence of children is a common factor in defining family in archaeological literature (Baxter 2005:2; Kamp 2001:2; Prangnell and Quirk 2009:38; Wilkie and Hayes 2006:250). Childhood is a culturally constructed and temporal period that varies cross-culturally, but is common to all societies, and offers children as useful interpretive agents in archaeological investigations (Baxter 2005:1; Chamberlain1997:249; Prangnell and Quirk 2009:38; Kamp 2001:3; Wilkie and Hayes 2006:250). However, Baxter (2005; 2008) and Kamp (2001) note that children have been underrepresented in archaeological
interpretations due to adultist biases in research and interpretations that privilege adult, and often male, experiences and material culture. Focusing on childhood experiences provides another lens of interpretation of the materiality of family identity. This thesis explores childhood and its relationship to family identity during the 19th century Victorian era. Materials associated with children, children’s use of space, and family lifecycles are explored.

Children in Victorian middle-class families were viewed as economic and social capital, as the “heart of the private nuclear family,” (Prangnell and Quirk 2009:38), as social brokers between other households and the community, and as the public face of family identity (Baxter 2008:160; Kamp 2001:21). Victorian families were structured around the presence of children and the responsibility of caring for and educating them lay with parents and family members (Kamp 2001:12; Prangnell and Quick 2009:41).

Materials attributed to children and childhood experiences are primarily created, designed, and purchased by adults and create a “complex, ambiguous relationship between children and material culture” (Baxter 2005:2) that often renders children as passive users of materials rather than active creators or users (Kamp 2001:19, 24). Children use their agency within confines and limits to exert control and power under restrictive and defined frameworks (Kamp 2001:27). Children’s active and expressed agency can be incorporated into interpretations concerning children, childhood, and families (Kamp 2001:26).

Recently, many scholars have illustrated the contributions of children to cultural change and continuation by exploring children’s reciprocal symbolic relationship with material culture (Crawford 2009; Kamp 2001; Prangnell and Quirk 2009). Children in
Victorian families were often provided with toys and materials that encouraged gendered play such as dolls, tea sets, and marbles (Prangnell and Quirk 2009:43). Materials were created, marketed, and purchased by adults and included adult expectations and restrictions on gender, age, and class. Toys can be interpreted using a child centered analysis that acknowledges children used materials differently than adults intended. Frequently toys associated with girls’ play are recovered in archaeological settings. Boys’ toys are often absent, as boys were encouraged to play physical games, outdoors, or with other boys (Prangnell and Quirk 2009:43).

Furthermore, children used space differently than adults and were often regulated to private, specific locations intended for children within the home (McDannell 1986:26). Gendered and ageist use of space was defined by Victorian ideologies of the 19th century (Baxter 2005:35). Women and children could be regulated to “less-visible realms” or private spaces within the home (Kamp 2001:1-3). Cultural factors determined and defined appropriate spaces for children (Baxter 2005:60). Archaeological remains and spatial analyses reveal use patterns created by social values, class standing, ethnicity, and religious practice (Baxter 2005:35). Social structures, like family size, community layout, and architectural space also limited and allowed spaces for child use (Baxter 2005:35; Kamp 2001:4; Prangnell and Quirk 2009:38).

Allison (2003) provides an example from her work at the Old Kinchega Homestead of gendered and age-based spatial use within a household. In her study she uses the recovered location of material culture to suggest where individuals within the household spent the majority of their time. She proposes that women and children utilized the verandah located in the rear of the home and near the fireplace in the living room. She
suggests these locations were utilized as activity centers by members of the household due to seasonality and in accordance with common spatial use at the time.

Similar to household archaeological studies, scholars have recently begun associating material remains with specific temporal stages in family and household lifecycles (Prossor et al. 2012:814-816; Rotman 2005:18). A family identity, in the traditional nuclear family sense, ultimately contains individuals with specific experiences, relationships, and perspectives (diZerega Wall 1994:6-7; Prossor et al. 2012:816; Wilkie 2003:142). Motherhood and childhood are examples of lifecycle stages found in families. Motherhood and childhood are both culturally constructed and socially sanctioned periods of an individual’s life (Grimshaw and Willett 1981:141; Rotman 2005:5; Spencer-Wood 1994:179; Wilkie 2003:142). Social relationships and cultural expectations are often based on an individual’s position in life and his or her experiences and perceived status or station in life (Kruczek-Aaron 2002:180; Prossor et al. 2012:816; Rotman 2005:5-15). These lifecycle phases are expressed through artifacts associated with women and children, and are used as indicators of family homes.

Summary of Investigations of Children and Childhood

This section uses a childhood focused framework to illustrate the contributions of children to household assemblages and also begins to provide an alternative analysis of materials and spaces that were possibly used by children rather than adults. Investigations of children and childhood rely upon utilizing a cultural constructed temporal period and associating materials with that constructed period. An investigation of childhood also
broadens the discussion to include lifecycle phases common to families and households, including motherhood and marriage. Childhood and children centered perspectives will be applied to archaeological materials collected from the Levy lot and Kaufman-Fleishman lot and explored further in Chapters Three and Four.

Conclusions and Applications for Research in Aurora

This chapter introduced the Aurora Neighborhood Project and presented the field research that was conducted in Aurora, Nevada. Field research included excavations, survey, and surface collections. This chapter also provided information about the location of archaeological excavation units and the reasoning behind the placement of these units. The artifacts discussed in the following pages were recovered from excavations at the Levy and Kaufman-Fleishman lots.

This chapter also explored the theoretical perspectives employed in this thesis. Theoretical frameworks included material culture studies, household archaeology, feminist archaeology, and studies of children and childhood. These perspectives contribute to interpretations of family identity and its material expression in Aurora, Nevada.

The experiences of families, and the individuals that comprised these families, particularly women and children, are the focus of this thesis. Their experiences reveal contributions to the larger conversation about family identity and the relationship between material culture and the formation and display of identity. This thesis will present interpretations based on the material remains from excavations at Aurora, Nevada.
and will attempt to link those materials to expressions and displays associated with family identity.
Chapter Three: The Levy Family and the Kaufman-Fleishman Family

This chapter presents the family histories of the Levy family and the Kaufman-Fleishman family, the two households explored through excavations in Aurora, Nevada. The period of significance for this research is 1860-1870. The chapter’s intent is to introduce the two family histories and to present their connections and relationships to the community of Aurora. This chapter begins to provide insight into the daily lives of the Levy family and Kaufman-Fleishman family. The materiality of a family identity is approached by using examples from the family’s histories, by drawing on Jewish cultural identity, and by using insights from other Aurora community members.

The Levy Family

The experiences of the Levy family were similar to experiences of other Jewish families in the American West. The mobility, economic success, and family life of the Levys are shared in the following sections. The French-born Levy brothers; Baruch (born 1824), Nathan (born 1829), Isaac (born 1839), and possibly a “J. Levy,” appear to have resided in California beginning in the late 1850s (Shaw 2013; Silver 2012a:23; White and Younie 2014:163). The Levys likely immigrated to the United States during the first great wave of Jewish immigration that occurred before the 1880s (Weissbach 2005:12). Jewish populations were initially situated around large urban centers in the eastern half of the United States, and later with other populations of Americans, emigrated westward
towards California and the West coast (Weissbach 2005:24). The Levy brothers likely participated in this migration movement.

The Levy brothers were merchants and business partners. In January of 1863, the Levy brothers, Isaac, Nathan, and Baruch, and business partners Leopold Dreyfus and Joseph Coblentz, owned a store called the Aurora Emporium (Fig. 3.1; Silver 2012:23; Silver n.d.:2; Shaw 2013:2). Eventually, the Levy brothers became sole owners, billing the store as the “Levy and Company Aurora Emporium” (Fig. 3.2; Fig. 3.3; Aurora Daily Times, December 3, 1863). The Aurora Emporium was a brick building on the corner of Pine Street and Antelope Street and sold groceries, dry goods, and clothing (Shaw 2009:134).

![Figure 3.1. Levy Brother’s Aurora Emporium ca. 1862; Detail from Brady’s Map of Aurora.](image)

The individual histories of the three Levy brothers, Baruch, Nathan, and Isaac, are explored in the following sections. Baruch, his French-born Jewish wife, Pauline, and their family appear to have spent the majority of their time in Diamond Springs,
California from 1859 to 1867 (Shaw 2013:2-3). However, Baruch is noted as living with Isaac in Aurora in 1870 (Shaw 2013:2-3). Additionally, one of Baruch and Pauline’s children, Nettie, was born in Aurora in 1865 (Shaw 2013:2-3). It is likely that the family traveled back and forth between Aurora and Diamond Springs during this 1860-1870 period. It is likely that Baruch and Pauline had a “commuter marriage” arrangement, a common practice during this time, traveling between Aurora, Diamond Springs, and eventually San Francisco (Marschall 2008:44; Shaw 2013:3). Baruch and Pauline eventually had ten children: Sarah, Isaac, Matilda, Helen, Nettie, Fernand, Samuel, Julius, Rauche, and Aaron (Shaw 2013a:2; Shaw 2013b:3; United States Census, 1880).

The second brother, Nathan, and his French-born Jewish wife Fanny also had a commuter marriage (Marschall 2008:44; Shaw 2013:3; White and Younie 2014:163).
Nathan and Fanny spent some time at the Levy home in Aurora, as Nathan was enumerated in Aurora in 1870 (Shaw 2013:3). Nathan likely traveled between Aurora, Winnemucca, and San Francisco to conduct business and to visit family. Nathan was essentially enumerated in two locations at once. Nonetheless, by 1868, Nathan had moved to Winnemucca and helped pioneer the fledgling community of Winnemucca (Marschall 2008:44; Shaw 2013:3). Nathan was elected as Humboldt County’s commissioner in 1872 while living in Winnemucca and owned a successful dry goods business there (Marschall 2008:44). Nathan and Fanny eventually had five children, but only four names are known: Isadore/Fridar, Felix, Hattie, and Benny (Marschall 2008:44; Shaw 2013:3; White and Younie 2014:165). The movements presented by the Levy bothers are expressions of “complex mobility,” (Purser 1991:9), which were an expression of individualism, household reorganizations, a commitment to maintaining Jewish cultural ties, and a middle-class luxury.

Figure 3.3. Levy & CO. Aurora Emporium. Courtesy of Aurora Daily Times; December 3, 1863.
An excerpt from the journal of Rachel Haskell, a mother and wife, who lived at a toll station located a half mile west of Aurora in 1867, helps to clarify the history, movements, and living arrangements of the Levy brothers and their families (Lillard 1944). Rachel commented, “called on Mrs. Levy [likely Nathan’s wife Fanny], quite a pleasant chat and looked at her numerous sisters nine I think and fine portraits of her father and mother from Strasburg on the Rhine.” (Lillard 1944:86; Shaw 2013a:3; Shaw 2013c:1). This documentary evidence suggests the families of Baruch, Nathan, and Isaac lived at the Levy home on Mono Street.

Isaac, the youngest Levy brother, did not marry until 1871 and likely lived as a bachelor at the Levy and Company home on Mono Street for nearly ten years (Silver n.d.:3). He probably witnessed numerous different living arrangements of the brothers and their families at the home. The described household compositions are not uncommon for the time period and utilized commonly accepted notions of spatial use (Rotman 2005:13; Wall 1999:109). Moreover, households often contained nuclear families and several generations related by kinship and marriage (Toll 1993:11; Levinson 1972:67). The living arrangements at the Levy home on Mono Street seems to have exemplified this practice, as the household appears to have held several lateral kinship relationships during numerous periods of time.
In 1871, Isaac married Charlotte “Lottie” Poor, a non-Jewish woman, who was fifteen years his junior. She gave birth to their only child, Hermine, in 1874 (Shaw 2013; Silver n.d.:4; White and Younie 2014:165). His portrait in Figure 3.4 was taken three years prior to his marriage to Lottie. Lottie’s portrait in Figure 3.5 was taken sometime before her 1871 marriage as well. Hermine’s portrait, illustrated in Figure 3.6, was probably taken one or two years within her 1874 birth. By the mid-1870s Isaac’s brothers and families were enumerated in other areas of California and only Isaac remained in
Aurora. Isaac, Lottie, and Hermine lived at the family home in Aurora until 1884, when they moved to Reno, Nevada, and then eventually to San Francisco (Shaw 2013; Silver n.d.:4).

Isaac Levy and his family appeared often in Aurora’s newspapers. One such example noted the involvement of Lottie and Hermine Levy in a Sunday school performance (Esmeralda Herald, September 24, 1881). Lottie Levy is also mentioned in relation to an Odd Fellows Ball held in the Spring of 1873, as wearing a “dress black silk, with demi-train, white Swiss Watteau [a type of bustle] overdress, orange blossoms in her
hair” (Sacramento Daily Union, May 2, 1873). Lottie was remembered as attending “…all the social gatherings…” and apparently made a positive impression as she is also remembered as having “…many a kindly word…” spoken about her (Mighels 1929:157).

Figure 3.6. Hermine Levy ca. 1874. C. E. Baldwin Scrapbook Aurora NV; Courtesy of Mono County Museum at Bridgeport.

Isaac Levy was highly regarded for his generosity and kindness. Ella Sterling Mighels, daughter of Rachel Haskell, notes that “gratitude must have followed him [Isaac Levy] all his days for the many kindesses he gave forth. And many bills he allowed to run, and which were never paid, must certainly be waiting for him on the other shore” (Mighels 1929:157-158). Isaac was called as a jury member of a coroner’s inquest into
the Daly Gang murders that occurred at Aurora in early 1864 (Shaw 2014:49). Although a murder trial is not a social or community building activity, it illustrates the respect and authority Isaac Levy held in the community of Aurora. Isaac was also an active Odd Fellows member as well (Mighels 1929:157). The Levy family was held in high esteem in their community. Evidence might not explicitly reveal Jewish religious and cultural affiliations, but the Levys and Kaufmann-Fleishmans participation in social committees, fraternal organizations, social labor, and philanthropic generosity could possibly be interpreted as extensions of the Jewish cultural principle of tesedakah or “strong feelings” of charity extended to other members of the community (Moskow 2003:103-108).

The Levys made a home in Aurora and developed relationships with the community. The remains of their brick house on Mono Street, their lost or discarded belongings, and a few historic documents reveal information about the years 1863-1884 the Levys lived in Aurora. This thesis explores the 1860-1870 years spent in Aurora and investigates how the materials recovered in Aurora related to a material expression of family identity.

The Kaufman-Fleishman Family

The Kaufman-Fleishman family shared experiences similar to the Levy family and common to Jewish experiences in the American West. The Kaufman-Fleishman family consisted of two families related by marriage. Both the Kaufmans and the Fleishmans were Jewish. Benjamin M. Fleishman and Gabriel Kaufman were business partners. Benjamin M. Fleishman and Jetta Kaufman were siblings. Jetta Fleishman
Kaufman was married to Gabriel Kaufman, who was Benjamin M. Fleishman’s business partner (Silver 2012:19). Benjamin M. Fleishman was married to Jeanette Levy Fleishman. Gabriel Kaufman was born in Bavaria, Jetta Fleishman Kaufman and Benjamin M. Fleishman were German, and Jeanette Levy Fleishman was French (Shaw 2013:1; Laura Sanchez to Nannie Crittenden, August 15, 1862).

Marriages often connected Jewish families in the American West. This is true of the Kaufman family and the Fleishman family. Jetta Fleishman and Gabriel Kaufman were married in Diamond Springs, California in 1862 and soon after moved to Aurora, Nevada (Silver 2012:19; Laura Sanchez to Nannie Crittenden, August 15, 1862). Benjamin M. Fleishman did not live in Aurora. He married Jeanette Levy in 1857, in a synagogue-held ceremony, and appeared to have made a home and raised a family in Diamond Springs (Silver 2012:9). It is possible Jeanette Levy was a sister or relative of the Levy brothers. Documentary evidence supports this claim as the 1860 business of “Fleishman, Levy, and Drefeuse” was located in Diamond Springs, California, where the Levy brothers and the Kaufman-Fleishman family were living (Sacramento Daily Union, May 8, 1860). Also, Jeanette Levy Fleishman was born in France, like the Levy brothers (United States Census, 1860).

The Kaufman-Fleishman family also owned a dry goods business in Aurora. By 1862, Gabriel Kaufman and Benjamin M. Fleishman owned the Pioneer Brick Store located on Pine Street (Fig. 3.7; Silver 2012:18). Benjamin Fleishman and his family likely stayed in Diamond Springs and grew produce for the Pioneer Brick Store in Aurora (Laura Sanchez to Nannie Crittenden, September 1, 1862; Purser 1991:12). The Pioneer Brick Store was a general merchandise store that was described as “the best general store
in town” and that “these gentleman [Fleishman and Kaufman]…are very polite and accommodating to me at all times” (Fig. 3.8; Laura Sanchez to Nannie Crittenden, August 15, 1862). The Pioneer Brick Store carried “groceries, provisions, hardware, dry goods, clothing, and crockery” (*Esmeralda Daily Union*, March 23, 1864).

Figure 3.7. Kaufman and Fleishman Pioneer Brick Store ca. 1862; Detail from Brady’s Map of Aurora.

Jetta and Gabriel Kaufman had numerous friends, acquaintances, and neighbors in Aurora. One of these friends was a woman named Laura Sanchez. Laura’s life in Aurora will be discussed later in this chapter. Jetta and Laura appear to have been good friends. Laura commented that Jetta “…looks like a lady, is not pretty, but has a very pleasant face. I like her looks.” (Laura Sanchez to Nannie Crittenden, August 15, 1862). Laura wrote frequently about visits from “Mrs. K” [Jetta Kaufman] (Laura Sanchez to Nannie Crittenden, August 15, 1862). Laura wrote to her sister Nannie about one particular visit when Jetta Kaufman brought her “little baby who is just four weeks and one day
old”…who is “better looking than other little girls” and that Laura had “never seen Mrs.
K. looking as well since she came here as a bride” (September 27, 1865).

The Kaufmans eventually had eight children: Sophie, Bettie aka Bertha, Solomon, Moses, Fanny, and two others. The older two children, Sophie and Bettie, were born in Aurora (Silver 2012:19-20; United States Census, 1900). Laura Sanchez noted that “you [Laura’s sister Nannie] want to know what Mrs. Kaufman’s baby looks like (or rather the last baby, for the oldest is only a baby, she was not fifteen months old when the youngest was born.) I can satisfy your curiosity for its mother insisted on my taking a good look at it. She is a pretty likeness of Sophie [oldest Kaufman daughter] and is really quite a pretty and sweet looking baby. Then she always looks so sweet and clean” (Laura Sanchez to Nannie Crittenden, October 18, 1864).
The Kaufman-Fleishman family resided in a home on Block C in Aurora. Gabriel Kaufman, his wife Jetta, and their children resided in the Kaufman-Fleishman home on Pine Street, but it is likely the household composition was fluid and ever changing as family members spent seasons living in Aurora, new children were born, and members of the family traveled between Diamond Springs and Aurora. This information about the mobility of the family, especially Benjamin M. Fleishman, Jetta Kaufman’s brother and Gabriel Kaufman’s business partner, is gleaned from Laura Sanchez’s comments in one of her letters about the fruit and vegetables grown in a “splendid garden” by Fleishman in Diamond Springs and transported and sold in Aurora at their grocery store (Laura Sanchez to Nannie Crittenden, September 1, 1862).

The family business was constructed of brick and was located in the downtown business area on Pine Street. Brick and stone buildings were an indicator of “prosperity and insurability,” (Marschall 2008:22) even though, ironically, the advertised fireproof Fleishman and Kaufman Pioneer Brick Store burned down in 1865 (Silver 2012a:19). After the fireproof building burned it appears the Kaufman family moved elsewhere, as Gabriel Kaufman is enumerated in Yolo County, California in 1867 and eventually in North Dakota in 1900 (Silver 2012:19; United States Census, 1900).

The Kaufman family lived in Aurora for almost three years. In that time they lived in a home on Pine Street, managed a business, had two children, and made connections with other residents of the community. The experiences of the Kaufman-Fleishman family, as individuals and as a family, and their relationships to material culture are of great interest here. The materials they left behind provide information about the three years they spent in Aurora. This thesis will further explore those materials, and
those from the Levy family lot, recovered in archaeological excavations and will draw
cannections between the materials and the display of their family identities.

*Shared Acquaintances and Shared Experiences*

Themes of mobility, economic possibilities, and marriage surrounding the
experiences of Jewish families in the 19th century American West were shared by the
Levy and the Kaufman-Fleishman families. Their commonalities extended to their
movements, professions, marriage patterns, and even their acquaintances.

The families had ties to several communities and likely maintained intricate
networks of business associates, friends, additional family members, and other members
of their Jewish community. The Levy brothers shared a mutual acquaintance, Leopold
Dreyfus, with the Kaufmans and Fleishmans. In 1860, Dreyfus jointly owned a dry goods
the Levy brothers and Benjamin M. Fleishman, and apparently lived with Baruch and
family in Diamond Springs *(Silver 2012:7-8; Silver 2013:2; (United States Census,
1860). This business eventually dissolved and the respective parties moved to Aurora,
where the Levy brothers and Dreyfus opened the Aurora Emporium in 1863 and
Kaufman and Fleishman opened the Pioneer Brick Store in 1862.

The social circles of the Levys and Kaufman-Fleishmans possibly included
individuals, groups, and families from places they had formerly called home, including
Diamond Springs, Aurora, Winnemucca, Woodland, and San Francisco. One such
example of shared social circles is an 1865 naturalization ceremony. Leopold Dreyfus,
Gabriel Kaufman, and Nathan Levy, became naturalized citizens during the same September 1865 ceremony and shared witnesses for this inauguration (*Sacramento Daily Union*, September 5, 1865). Additionally, Leopold Dreyfus, the Levy brothers, Pauline (Baruch’s wife), Fanny (Nathan’s wife), and Jeanette Levy Fleishman (Benjamin M. Fleishman’s wife) shared a common French Jewish heritage.

Furthermore, the Levy and Kaufman-Fleishman families likely had similar experiences, mobility patterns, and shared friends as there is documentation of the respective families living in the same cities during overlapping periods and sharing some of the same acquaintances. Leopold Dreyfus is one of the documented shared business associates and acquaintances. The Levys and the Kaufman-Fleishmans were residential and commercial neighbors: both occupied homes on Block C and had downtown Pine Street businesses. These families were active members of Aurora social life and highly visible members of a small Jewish community. The documentary evidence supports the close connections between these families via shared ethnic backgrounds, experiences, business partnerships, marriages, and friendships.

**Jewish Cultural Identity**

This section explores Jewish cultural identity and Jewish history in the American West. Economic opportunities, mobility, connections to San Francisco, marriage possibilities, and religious observances are experiences common to Jewish individuals in the American West. These themes have been explored by scholars, such as Kremer
Many Jewish individuals and families were merchants and dry goods proprietors who took advantage of economic opportunities in frontier settings (Weissbach 2005:36). Frontier communities were often chosen because of their importance as market centers to supply goods in the area (Weissbach 2005:38). The Levy family and Kaufman-Fleishman family lived in several communities in California and Nevada and owned dry goods businesses there. It is possible they chose these locations based on economic opportunities.

Economic success as merchants might also explain why the Levy and Kaufman-Fleishman families were neighbors in Aurora. The Levy and Kaufman-Fleishman families lived next door to each other on Block C and also maintained competing and neighboring dry goods businesses on Pine Street. It is possible they lived in a clustered ethnic neighborhood (Weissbach 2005:33 Marschall 2008:72; Toll 1993:8) in Aurora as Mitchell Schwartz, another Jewish individual owned property on Block C as well (Table 2.1; Fig. 2.1). However, it is uncertain if the neighboring living arrangements of the Levys and the Kaufman-Fleishmans were a direct result of religious and ethnic affiliations or possibly related to economic similarities. Residents of Block C were primarily business owners (Table 2.1). Based on the list compiled by Silver (2012) based on surnames. Jewish residents are recorded as living throughout Aurora (Table 3.1). Regardless, the Levys and Kaufman-Fleishmans lived in a merchant class neighborhood as a result of their merchant class and economic success.
Mobility and connections to San Francisco were another shared experience of Jewish families. Urban centers and rural satellites were important to trade and merchant routes utilized by Jewish merchants and businessmen for maintaining supplies and connections to larger Jewish communities in cities (Kremer 2003:11; Weissbach 2005:33). The maintenance of these connections was often integral to maintaining arrangements based on economic ties, social relationships, and kinship networks (Purser 1991:11). San Francisco was the common hub city for Jewish individuals in rural communities in California and Nevada (Marschall 2008:105). The mobility and travel networks of the Levy and Kaufman families illustrated the importance of San Francisco as a center for Jewish families during this time period (Marschall 2008:105).

Families often lived in San Francisco for extended amounts of time, while the merchant heads-of-households traveled back and forth between rural satellites and urban centers (Weissbach 2005:33-38). This mobility often required a commuter marriage (Marschall 2008:44). Families could also eventually move to San Francisco after spending time in rural locations in Nevada and California. Nathan Levy and his family illustrated the first example. Nathan lived in Winnemucca while his family lived in San Francisco and utilized the railroad to travel back and forth (Marschall 2008:44). Baruch, Nathan, and Isaac Levy illustrated the second example. Baruch Levy and family were reported as living in San Francisco in 1880 (United States Census, 1880). By 1891, Nathan Levy and his family were living in San Francisco (White and Younie 2014). Isaac Levy and his family had moved to San Francisco in 1900 (United States Census, 1900).
Marriage patterns are often included in discussions of 19th century Jewish experiences in the West. Finding a Jewish marriage partner in the American West was a difficult task for many individuals (Marschall 2008:88; Toll 1991). A common practice was to marry teenage daughters of other early Jewish settlers or to find marriage partners through “kinship and friendship networks” (Marschall 2008:88; Toll 1991). Jewish men also often married later in life (Marschall 2008:88; Toll 1991:174). The Kaufman, Fleishman, and Levy families reflected such practices. Gabriel Kaufman married the younger sister, Jetta, of his business partner Benjamin M. Fleishman (Sacramento Daily Union, November 27, 1865; Silver 2012:19). Benjamin M. Fleishman married Jeanette Levy, who was likely a sister or relative of former business partners, the Levy brothers (Sacramento Daily Union, May 8, 1860).

Another marriage practice in the American West was to marry a non-Jewish woman (Marschall 2008:88; Levinson 1972:67; Toll 1991). Intermarriage created a uniquely American Jewish identity—developing new and unique cultural, religious, and ethnic unions and families (Toll 1991:169, 172). Intermarriage changed the demographics of Jewish communities and also muted markers of ethnicity and religion that often defined “Jewishness” (Toll 1993:169). Intermarriage was practiced for economic reasons, to alleviate stigma, and most commonly, due to the lack of Jewish women in remote towns on the western frontier (Toll 1991:172-173). Isaac Levy’s marriage to Lottie Poor illustrates two common marriage themes seen in the American West, an older man marrying a younger woman and marriage outside Judaism.

Religious observation or the lack thereof is also included as a defining trait of Jewish experiences in the 19th century American West. Many merchants and families
settled in rural and isolated areas without large Jewish populations and many individuals found it difficult to participate in religious observance or maintain cultural ties (Weissbach 2005:39). This may have been the case in Aurora, as there are no mentions of Jewish synagogues, congregations, fraternal organizations, or cemeteries. However, a compilation of surnames from censuses, documents, and newspaper records indicated a significant Jewish population in Aurora (Silver 2012). Table 3.1 lists possible Jewish residents, their occupations, and the location of their residences in Aurora, compiled by Silver 2012, based on surname.

Formal and spontaneous religious observance in frontier communities was reflective of the individuals in those communities. Rochlin and Rochlin contended that Jewish religious identity was maintained by “pioneer ingenuity and the wish to remain Jewish” (1984:202). Some Jewish individuals were able to incorporate aspects of their religious identity in the form of communal worships, marriage ceremonies, and burial services (Rochlin and Rochlin 1984:203). It is possible some of these events occurred in Aurora and were attended by the Levys and the Kaufman-Fleishmans.

Similarly, participation in religious observations by Jewish individuals varied and was dependent on members of the Jewish community. Perhaps Jewish religious observances did not occur in Aurora’s Jewish families. Several interpretations based on documentary evidence are provided. For example, Isaac and Lottie Levy had an inter-faith marriage. An article from the Esmeralda Herald mentioned that Lottie Levy organized a Sunday school program and Hermine Levy participated in the recital (September 24, 1881). Similarly, it is unknown if Nathan or his family “maintained any Jewish tradition” while residing in Winnemucca (Marschall 2008:53).
Table 3.1. Possible Jewish Residents of Aurora (Silver 2012).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Location and Value of Residence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Berg, Emanuel</td>
<td>Excelsior Book Store in Caro, Galland &amp; Co. Store</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berliner, Abraham</td>
<td>Clothing store in Wingate’s Building</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloomingdale, Herman</td>
<td>Merchandise in Preble &amp; Devoe’s Building</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohn, D.</td>
<td>D. Cohn &amp; Co.</td>
<td>Lot in east side of Silver Street south and adjoining Crop &amp; Dumay’s property 50x100; $250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dreyfus, Leopold</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fleishman, Benjamin Martin</td>
<td>Pioneer Brick Store</td>
<td>Block C; Lot &amp; “brick building used as residence” valued at $2500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friedman, S.</td>
<td>Fruit and confectionary in Minard’s Saloon</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallick, Jacob</td>
<td>Clothing, groceries, and merchandise in Aurora City Store</td>
<td>Lot 12 1/2 by 100 on South side of Pine west of Exchange Stable; $1100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goldner, N.</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haas, Abraham</td>
<td>Haas &amp; Finlayson; clothing store</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaufman, Gabriel</td>
<td>Pioneer Brick Store</td>
<td>Block C; Lot &amp; “brick building used as residence;” $2500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaufman, Jonas</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levison, Jacob</td>
<td>Beehive Saloon in Betchel’s Building</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levy, Isaac or Ike Levi</td>
<td>Aurora Emporium</td>
<td>Block C; Lot &amp; “brick house;” $2700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levy, Nathan</td>
<td>Aurora Emporium</td>
<td>Block C; Lot &amp; “brick house;” $2700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marks, Moses</td>
<td>Marks &amp; Co. Saloon in La Rue Building</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newfield, Aaron</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oppenheimer, Julius</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price, William</td>
<td>Last Chance Saloon</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schwartz, Mitchell</td>
<td>Bookstore in Shiers Building</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schwob, Adolp</td>
<td>Stockbroker</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Anti-Semitism may have contributed to abstention from religious practice and is an additional interpretation about the lives of Jewish families in Aurora. Marschall (2008:10) commented that anti-Semites often found fault with Jewish merchants because they stayed open on the Christian Sabbath (Sunday) and closed on the Jewish Sabbath (Saturday). Marschall’s comment might inform the interpretation of a newspaper article (Fig. 3.9), on the Sunday closure of Aurora businesses in 1863 (Aurora Daily Times, December 11, 1863). Isaac Levy’s and Gabriel Kaufman’s names are included on the list of business owners observing this closure (Aurora Daily Times, December 11, 1863). Several other Jewish merchants are named on the same list, including Jacob Gallick and Haas & Finlayson (Silver 2012).

This example might indicate adherence to Christian practices, assimilation, or attempts to accommodate co-religious observances in Jewish families in Aurora. It is also possible that the Levy brothers, and Gabriel Kaufman’s family, did not participate in any Jewish religious observances due to personal choice. The small numbers of Jewish persons in Aurora might have also made religious observance and practice less likely (Kremer 2003:23; Marschall 2008:19).
The common themes of economic possibilities, mobility, connections to San Francisco, marriage, and religious observation surrounding the experiences of Jewish families have been discussed. The shared experiences of the Levy and the Kaufman-Fleishman families correspond with traits commonly discussed in the history of Jewish families in the 19th century American West. However, these experiences are shared with other non-Jewish families as well. Many families had similar experiences surrounding the discussed traits. The histories of Laura Sanchez and Rachel Haskell are presented in the following sections. Their experiences are similar to the Levy family and the Kaufman-Fleishman family. The defining difference between these families is the known Jewish ethnic background of the Levys and the Kaufman-Fleishmans.
“The Neighbors:” Local Informants on Daily Life in Aurora

This thesis frequently references written documents by two women, Laura Sanchez and Rachel Haskell. Sanchez wrote extensive letters to family members and Haskell kept a detailed daily journal. Laura and Rachel lived in Aurora during the period of significance (1860-1870) explored in this thesis, and the documents indicated that they knew the Levys and the Kaufman-Fleishmans. The insights in these documents are useful for understanding the compositions of the Levy family and Kaufman-Fleishman family. Laura Sanchez’s letters are part of a larger collection of family written correspondence. In this thesis these letters are often cited and include citations from Ramon Sanchez, Alexander P. Crittenden, Clara J. Crittenden, Nannie Crittenden Van Wyck, and Howard Crittenden. The relationships between these individuals and Laura Sanchez will be explained in the following section.

Laura Crittenden Sanchez

Laura Crittenden Sanchez was the wife of bank manager and Aurora mayor, Ramon Sanchez, and resided in Aurora from 1862-1865 (Stewart 2004:96, 108). Laura and Ramon were married in December 1859 and their wedding photograph is presented in Figure 4.2. Ramon managed a bank called Howard and Sanchez, which was located in the brick building that also housed the Levy & Co. Aurora Emporium (Stewart 2004:96). Laura was the oldest daughter of the Crittenden family, originally from North Carolina and Texas (Dann n.d.). The Crittenden family eventually resided in different locations throughout California and the Nevada Territory in the 1860s (Dann n.d.).
The Crittenden family were Southerners living in an area which was not yet a state of the Union during the tumultuous Civil War years. Laura’s husband, Ramon Sanchez and her father, Alexander P. Crittenden had refused to take an oath of allegiance to the United States, and as a result they experienced pressure and skepticism from
officials in the state of California (Dann n.d.). As a result, they both moved to Nevada Territory where an allegiance oath was not required (Dann n.d.). Of course, by 1864 Nevada had been admitted to the Union and a vast majority of the minerals extracted from the region funded the Unionist cause (Dann n.d.). Besides these loyalties and hardships, Laura was a genteel Southern woman and remained a highly regarded member of the community. Laura had a “leading spirit in all good works, moral, social, educational and religious; a most charming lady” (Colcord 1928:118). Laura and her husband Ramon were frequently mentioned in the local Aurora social column of the newspapers (Stewart 2004:109).

By 1863, Laura’s mother Clara J. Crittenden resided in San Francisco while her daughter Nannie and new husband, Sydney Van Wick, her teenage son Howard Crittenden, and husband Alexander P. Crittenden lived in Aurora (Dann n.d.). Laura’s brother-in-law Sydney Van Wick was a broker for an assay business in Aurora (Stewart 2004:98). Laura’s youngest brother, Howard, was a clerk for the Wide West Mine. Two of the older Crittenden brothers, Churchill and James Love, served in the Confederate Army and youngest brother, Howard yearned to join them once he turned eighteen (Dann n.d.; Howard Crittenden to Clara J. Crittenden, April 25, 1863). The experiences and arrangements of the Crittenden family are typical of families in the 19th century American West and can be compared to the experiences of the Levy family and Kaufman-Fleishman family.

Laura wrote extensive letters to family while she lived in Aurora. Laura wrote about her daily experiences, her social and community activities, the clothing she wore, the food she cooked, and her frequent visitors. She even mentions her pets, a bird named
Dick, several kittens, and her dog Hector (Stewart 2004:110). Laura’s letters provide a wealth of knowledge about daily life in Aurora.

Rachel Mitchell Haskell

Rachel Mitchell Haskell was a mother and wife who lived at a toll station house located a half mile west of Aurora from 1865-1869 (Lillard 1944:83). Rachel’s husband, Dudley Haines Haskell, owned the toll station and was an attorney in Aurora (Lillard 1944:83). Rachel eventually had six children, Ella (from a previous marriage), Dudley Haines, Harry Hepburn, John Mitchell “Birdie,” Eugenia Dudley, Maney Raymond, and Ernestine Shannon (Lillard 1944:85). Later in life, eldest daughter Ella had a successful career as a writer who went by the pen name, Aurora Esmeralda (Fig. 3.11; Lillard 1944:85). Rachel’s son John Mitchell “Birdie” was born in Aurora (Lillard 1944:87). The family left Aurora for San Francisco in 1869 and lived in a four-story mansion after D.H. Haskell found great success working as an agent for the Central Pacific Railroad (Lillard 1944:83). The San Francisco home contrasted greatly to the “mere frame shanty” at the toll station near Aurora described by J. Ross Brown (1865:274-275; Lillard 1944:82).
Rachel Haskell’s journal provided a rich narrative concerning daily life in Aurora as well as the daily experiences of families and women living in the 19th century American West (Lillard 1944). Rachel’s journal entries present a humanistic perspective that supplements the mining and sensational histories of Aurora. Rachel was a well-educated woman from New England. Her first husband died on their voyage West and she showcased resiliency by raising a child as a widow, teaching public school, and eventually remarrying and becoming a mother to six children (Lillard 1944). Rachel often commented on the clothing she and her family wore, what they ate, how they spent their
time, and who visited their home (Lillard 1944). She was an extensive reader, entertained guests, tolerated her husband’s frequent drinking and socializing, and raised her children in her home. The following journal entry exemplifies the range of topics she addressed:

“Exceedingly deep snow, the deepest of the season. Breakfast over and work was made easy today. Sat down to complete the dear little velvet breeches commenced so long ago. Gave Ella [eldest daughter] another lesson on Linda de Chamernix, who had an easy time all day between the Piano and "Newcomes." Had a boiled dinner, of cabbage, potatoes and carrots, which were cooked on the front room stove. Ate our supper alone, Mr. H[askell] not coming Felt very much concerned thereat, worried in mind a good deal. Completed Birdie's [fourth-born son] suit, put him in them, admiring him as he ran up and down in his first male habiliments. Hemmed some ruf-fling on machine to put on bottoms…” (Lillard 1994:87).

Laura Sanchez and Rachel Haskell, and their families, were not the focus of archaeological investigations in Aurora, but their letters and journals provide background and context for recovered archaeological materials. Their insights supplement the materials as well as the documentary evidence available. The women recorded events and commented on Aurora and some of the community residents, including the Levys, the Kaufmans, and the Fleishmans. They supply evidence about life in a 19th century American West mining town and their contributions are immeasurable in this study of family life in Aurora.

**Conclusion**

The family histories of the Levys and the Kaufman-Fleishmans were presented in this chapter. The Levy and Kaufman-Fleishman families were residential and commercial neighbors and appear to have shared similar acquaintances and participated in similar
events. Information was also presented about Laura Sanchez and Rachel Haskell and their relationship as “the neighbors” of the Levy and Kaufman-Fleishman families. All these families resided in Aurora during the 1860-1870 period of significance and made homes in the mining community. While there are similarities, each family had familial connections, community networks, and experiences unique to their families and to individual family members. The next chapter will explore the archaeological remains from the Levy and the Kaufman-Fleishman lots and will draw connections between the materials and constructed and displayed family identities.
Chapter Four: Materiality of Family Identity

The goal of this chapter is to define a family identity and explore materials that are used to define family identity. This chapter specifically looks at the family identity of the Levy family and the Kaufman-Fleishman family. The Levys and the Kaufman-Fleishmans were members of the merchant class who resided in Aurora during the community’s population and economic boom (1860-1870; Fig. 4.1). Both of these families were Jewish and likely knew each other before they lived in Aurora. The history and context of the families was presented in Chapter Three. The materiality of the Levy family and the Kaufman-Fleishman family is the focus of this chapter.

Figure 4.1. Photograph of Pine Street in Aurora ca. 1900-1920. Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno.

Ideologies and dominant discourses of the 19th century explicitly defined family by providing narrow possibilities and specific frameworks in which individuals could
identify and associate with (Hardesty 1994:132-135; Laslett 1972:21; Wilkie 2003:209). Still, identities were constantly shaped and influenced by intersections of gender, ethnicity, and class status. Definitions and expectations of families respond similarly and are temporally, socially, and culturally derived. Specifically, family in the 19th century American West often assumed common normative relationships such as father, mother, children, and kinship (Grimshaw and Willett 1981:146, 154; Prossor et al. 2012:816; Wilkie 2003:4).

However, other kinds of families existed beyond kinship and included fictive kinships defined by households, communities, and social relationships. An interpretation and definition of family in Aurora includes these relationships. Materials used to define families archaeologically range from items associated with symbols of the Victorian middle-class and Jewish cultural identity. Within these frameworks materials associated with Gothic aesthetics, symbols of material success, display, use of space, masculinity, and children will be presented. Additionally, the houses these families lived in and the spaces they occupied are used as materials to define their family identity.

First, the use of space, Victorian masculinity, and the importance of childhood and children in 19th century Victorian families will be examined. Next, Victorian ideologies and elements of Gothic inspired aesthetics will be explored. Symbols of material success, including white-bodied ceramics, parlor organs, wallpaper, pressed glass, portraits, and foil seals will be examined. Finally, materials associated with symbolic display and constructed identities, crucial in materially identifying a family identity will be discussed. Specific archaeological and documentary examples from the
Levy home and the Kaufman-Fleishman home are provided that support the materiality of family identity.

**Victorian Ideologies**

American Victorianism was a cultural and social creation that was influenced by class differentials as well as “ethno-religious” markers (Howe 1976:9). British Queen Victoria was the inspiration for the cultural and social values that inspired the American middle and upper-classes (Howe 1976:3). Victorianism placed emphasis on progress, knowledge, good manners, and self-control. Industrialization, mass market conspicuous consumption, and “self-cultivation” were the vehicles through which Victorian individuals expressed themselves (Howe 1976:18-19). Additionally, individuals behaved in, performed in, and conceived their world using a set of values and material culture that defined their identities (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 2001:646). Often “genteel Victorians” actively used materials to define common righteous morals and proper values (Mullins 2001:158). And moreover, materials were used to demonstrate to others an adherence to those “appropriate values and attitudes” (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 2001:646).

In archaeological literature, household analyses have been used to reveal information about behaviors and materials used by Victorian individuals. These individuals performed and displayed their identities and continued their cultural practices and beliefs in their homes. To Victorians the home was a “place of family community”
where proper socialization for children and community strengthening activities occurred (Howe 1976:25-26).

Ideologies of Victorian culture permeated many aspects of family life, childhood, motherhood, and perceptions of femininity and masculinity. Thus adherence to or resistance to Victorian ideologies provides an underlying structure for the interpretations of recovered materials from the Aurora Neighborhoods Project. Materials associated with Victorian cultural practices will be explored in this chapter. Additionally, the presence of Gothic Revival style objects, white-bodied ceramics, and other items of mass market conspicuous consumption are introduced. Archaeologically recovered materials from the Levy home and the Kaufman-Fleishman home will be used to illustrate the materiality of family identity of the Levys and the Kaufman-Fleishmans.

*Use of Space*

The use of space holds its own symbolic significance in the 19th century. Spaces and rooms within Victorian homes could be assigned as public or private spaces and were given gendered identities (Langland 1992:295). However, this rigid distinction and adherence has been criticized, and there are many exceptions to this model. However, utilizing this common interpretation provides insight into investigations in Aurora. Dining rooms were viewed as masculine and contained furniture with perceived masculine features, such as sturdiness, size, wood type, and colors (Langland 1992:295). Drawing rooms and sitting rooms were regarded as feminine, containing certain fabrics, like silks, furniture styles, and design styles (Langland 1992:295). Parlors were the
“public” room of the home where families could entertain guests and display examples of their wealth, morality, and identity (Wilkie 2010:33). In Victorian culture, nuclear families and homes provided a private “oasis” to the outside world (Prangnell and Quirk 2009:42). Kitchens and bedrooms were the private locations of the home where families interacted and maintained relationships with each other (Nassaney et al. 2001:234).

Often, the designations of public and private spaces extended outside of the home and included the lot the house was located on. For example, the Levy lot displayed a picket fence that separated public from private space (Fig. 4.2). At the Sanchez home, Ramon Sanchez, Laura’s husband, wrote that he “had a high board fence put around the yard which makes the place quite secure and private” (Ramon Sanchez to Nannie Crittenden, July 25, 1862). Designating these spheres would have kept the family and the home separate from the public spaces of the community and would have communicated an aspect of “competitive display” to their neighbors evidenced in the control of the environment (Purser 1992:112). The proper designation and separation of space was reflective of Victorian ideologies.

Modifications to the home were another way to communicate control, wealth, and display. It is theorized that additions to homes communicated wealth and success (Purser 1992:111). Individuals built additions to accommodate the increase of children in a family, like in household lifecycles, as a display of wealth and comfort to community members (Allison 2003; Prossor et al. 2012). For example, “Laura [Sanchez] will have two more rooms put on to her house this week or next…” in an attempt to increase the size and comfort of her home (Howard Crittenden to Clara J. Crittenden, June 6, 1863). Often, merchants and business owners used their private residences to advertise their
success in their business and personal endeavors (Purser 1992:111). Additions were also constructed for practical reason, to accommodate storage and production needs, but these justifications are often based on financial possibilities and incomes.

Figure 4.2. Paiute woman in front of the white fence around the Levy home ca. 1905. Courtesy of Nevada Historical Society.

The use of public space within the home will be discussed next. Parlors were the public room of the home where residents’ hosted visitors and guests were entertained and materials were displayed. Dining rooms were also sometimes considered public spaces in the 19th century home (diZerega Wall 1994:144). Visitors invited to share a meal would have dined in the dining room. Shared meals were especially important during this period as it reaffirmed and celebrated the bonds of family severed by dominate ideologies. It is likely that a special dish set, sometimes different than sets used at breakfast or lunch,
would have been used (diZerega Wall 1994:134). Using matching white-bodied ceramic dishes would have emphasized the meal as a family or community as family ritual (diZerega Wall 1994:144). Fragments from plates, bowls, and a fork used in dining room or meal-time activities were recovered from the Levy home and Kaufman-Fleishman home. The artifact illustrated in Figure 4.3 is a shell fragment from the handle of a fork which would have been used for dining in the home’s dining room.

![Figure 4.3. Shell fragment from the handle of a fork from the Levy lot; Cat # 13-1564; Photograph by Katee Withee.](image)

Victorian use of space and ideology has been evaluated by many historians and archaeologists. The Levy and Kaufman-Fleishman homes contained a range of materials from archaeological investigations that highlight the materiality of socially and culturally changed spaces. Other aspects of material culture and use of space will be explored in the following sections. Material culture associated with Victorian masculinity will be discussed first. Then, materials and spatial use associated with children will be explored.
**Victorian Masculinity**

It has been suggested that middle-class Victorian life was divided into defined public and private spheres (Wilkie 2010:21). These defined spheres and Victorian beliefs often removed “men’s influence from homes,” regulating them to public spaces (Wilkie 2010:21, 31-32). Men were charged with earning income for families, leaving activities like “child rearing, home decorating, entertaining, managing servants, [and] shopping” to women (Wilkie 2010:31). Instead, men were left to manage outside of the home and became “satellite presences” in their homes (Wilkie 2010:32). Industrialization and shifting ideologies changed men’s influences as the domestic heads of households, and instead placed women at the head of families and households (Wilkie 2010:31). Women essentially commanded the moral and social authority of the home and its occupants and became “the face of the household” to the outside public (Wilkie 2010:32).

![Figure 4.4. Bakelite or Vulcanite pipe stem recovered from the Kaufman-Fleishman lot. Cat # 13-1699; Photograph by Katee Withee.](image-url)
Archaeological and documentary materials from the Levy and Kaufman-Fleishman lots can be interpreted using middle-class success and connections to Victorian masculinity. A recovered vulcanite or Bakelite pipe stem might indicate the material manifestation of a commonly masculine pursued activity, smoking, and an element of competition. Inexpensive, disposable clay pipes were commonly used due to cost, so the presence of the substantial vulcanite or Bakelite pipe stem might indicate economic success and competitive display. A pipe stem, like the one viewed in Figure 4.4, would have been used for an extended period of time. A clay or possibly meerschaum pipe bowl would have then been attached to the vulcanite or Bakelite pipe stem. The investment in this type of smoking pipe might be interpreted as an element of competitive display, as activities like drinking and smoking often occurred in public homosocial spaces, and the pipe would have been visible to business associates, fellow male community members, and friends. This pipe stem and other recovered archaeological materials can be interpreted as displays of competition and material success.

Childhood and Children

Baxter begins by defining childhood as “a prolonged period of dependence during which children mature physically and acquire the cultural knowledge necessary to become accepted members of society,” and also notes that children and childhood are culturally variable and defined terms (2000:21). In past archaeological practice, Baxter contends the roles of children, and the associated material culture have been
“downplayed” in archaeological research and interpretations (2000:23). Like an androcentric bias, Kamp notes there is an “adultist” bias that ignores children’s contributions and inaccurately reflects adult’s perceptions of childhood and children’s experiences in the archaeological record (2001:24). Allowing for agency is a method used to combat adultist biases and social, age related, and classist hierarchies (Kamp 2001:27).

Childhood, like gender, is culturally constructed and sometimes based on biological developments that incorporate age as an importance social organizing factor (Kamp 2001:3). It is important then to include childhood in relevant interpretations and attempt to use childhood as a method for analysis similar to how gender has been used. Also like women, children are often viewed as inhabiting private and domestic spaces deemed “less visible” (Kamp 2001:3). Children; and women, have also been viewed as passive recipients of culture rather than active and engaged participants (Kamp 2001:24).

Socialization is important to childhood development, and modes of socialization demonstrate how cultural practices, behaviors, and ideals are learned, taught, and embedded in culture (Baxter 2000:21). Kamp notes that childhood is a “training ground” in which culture is taught and “attitudes and values inculcated” making childhood essential to culture and continued cultural development (2001:2). Socialization often is enforced by families, the responsibility often falling to mothers (Baxter 2000:3; Wilkie 2003).

Such was the case in the mid-19th century. Victorian parents were concerned with instilling morals and strict values in their homes, personal lives, and in the lives of their families and children (Chudacoff 2007:67, 96). Victorian middle-classes viewed children
as “blank slates” that families, especially mothers, school, church, and communities influenced and “molded” into respectable, moral, and virtuous individuals (Prangnell and Quirk 2009:39; 44). Middle-class families were especially concerned with proper child rearing and Chudacoff (2007:75) notes that a new “middle-class culture of childhood” was created through mass production, advertising, and “instructional literature” in the 19th century. Increased attention was given to child raising in this period, as children were seem as public reflections of the proper and moral identity of their parents, families, and communities (Kamp 2001:21; Prangnell and Quirk 2009:38).

In contrast to earlier periods and other class groupings, children in middle-class Victorian families often did not contribute monetarily, but were more valued for their “affectional” contributions to families (Kamp 2001:3, 21). Parents, especially mothers, sought to “care, love, and educate their children,” while children were expected to reciprocate that love and affection as well as respect their parents and become “responsible adults” (Prangnell and Quirk 2009:41). Children were assigned an identity as a “beloved child” not as a laborer or economically contributing household member (Prangnell and Quirk 2009:46).

While children did not work for wages, they did make important household contributions (Kamp 2001:15). Wilkie provides the definition of kinscription to describe the work family members often do for the “service of the family good” (2003:38). This work was often undertaken by women, children, and elderly members of the households. Children often performed tasks like childcare, self-maintenance, and other domestic activities that contributed to overall household and family labor and production and bring
into question the applicability of adult male and adult female dichotomies of labor and work (Kamp 2001:15-16).

Figure 4.5. Children in a mule drawn wagon in Aurora ca. Date Unknown. Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno.

While strict values and morals were prized, Chudacoff has demonstrated that children learned these themes through play encouraged by material items like toys, books, and structured activities (2007:68). Evidence of play in Aurora is exhibited in Figure 4.5. Toys and other aspects of material culture were used to encourage and promote play and to introduce and familiarize children with their expected roles and contributions in adulthood (Kamp 2001:14). Kamp notes that values, skills, and gender roles were especially stressed in teaching, learning, and playing contexts (2001:14). Play and access to toys, specialized material culture, and clothing has limited by gender and
class distinctions (Kamp 2001:19). Chudacoff (2007) lists such items as dolls, marbles, books, tin toys, and board games as material culture intended to promote play.

![Porcelain doll fragments from the Levy lot. Cat # 12-80, 12-201, 12-125, 12-349, 12-756; Photograph by Ashlee Younie.](image)

Figure 4.6. Porcelain doll fragments from the Levy lot. Cat # 12-80, 12-201, 12-125, 12-349, 12-756; Photograph by Ashlee Younie.

Fragments of bisque and porcelain dolls have been recovered and observed at both the Levy and Kaufman homes (Fig. 4.6). Chudacoff contends that these toys served as ideological symbols of gender roles and expectations for young girls and encouraged ideals of motherhood and primary child care (2007:83; 88). Chudacoff presents marbles as male gendered objects that encouraged children to learn mathematics skills, play with others, and develop social activities (2007:83). Evidence of slate, slate pencils, ceramic doll fragments, remnants of a child’s tea set, and a marble fragment have been recovered from archaeological excavation units at the Levy home and at the Kaufman-Fleishman home (Fig. 4.7). These commonly gendered artifacts suggest that daughters lived in the Levy and Kaufman-Fleishman homes. Interestingly, marbles and marble fragments were only recovered from the Levy home. Documentary evidence confirms that several young
boys, lived at the Levy home, while only young girls are recorded living at the Kaufman-Fleishman home.

![Figure 4.7](image.jpg)

Figure 4.7. Selected artifacts associated with children from the Levy lot (left to right; top to bottom) Slate pencil fragments (13-1243), child’s tea set fragment (13-884), child’s tea set fragment (13-1291), slate fragment (12-1463), and marble fragment (13-738); Photograph by Katee Withee.

For example, Baruch and Pauline Levy had ten children; the oldest five likely lived in Aurora and their fifth child, Nettie, was born in Aurora in 1865 (*Sacramento Daily Union*, October 27, 1865). Children Sarah, Isaac, Matilda, Helen, and Nettie likely lived at the brick home on Mono Street before moving to Diamond Springs, and eventually San Francisco. Second Levy brother, Nathan and his wife Fanny also lived in Aurora. Their three oldest children, Isadore/Fridar, Felix, and Hattie Levy most likely spent time at the Levy home as well. Hermine, youngest brother Isaac and Lottie Levy’s daughter lived at the home on Mono Street the longest of the Levy cousins, from 1871 to 1880. The brick Levy home on Mono Street probably housed nine or more children while
it was owned by the Levy brothers. Gabriel and Jetta Kaufman eventually had eight children; the oldest two, Sophie and Bettie were born in Aurora (*Sacramento Daily Union*, September 25, 1864; Laura Sanchez to Nannie Crittenden Van Wyck, October 18, 1864).

A small complete celadon bowl commonly used for the consumption of alcohol by Chinese men provides an opportunity for alternative interpretation of an object through the lens of childhood (Fig. 4.8; Williams 2008:62). This artifact was recovered from a unit that was located near the back entrance of an addition at the Levy home. This space and the recovered location are significant as Kamp (2001:1, 3) contends children were more likely to utilize space located in the rear, more private locations of homes. The artifact may have been used by children in the Levy home. This interpretation is based on the assumption that “children used different material culture than adults did, or used the same objects in different ways than adults did” (Baxter 2008:161).

It is unusual to recover an artifact with obvious Chinese cultural use from a middle-class domestic site. This unusual discovery promotes numerous interpretations and theories. One such interpretation suggests, perhaps, that a child who lived in the Levy home used this small celadon bowl as a play item. This item could have been used to simulate gendered activities, like cooking or preparing meals, which is different than it’s intended adult use, which was as a symbol of masculinity by Chinese men (Williams 2008:62). Using a childhood theoretical perspective produces an alternative interpretation to a recovered material which commonly receives an adultist interpretation. Frameworks associated with childhood and children provide opportunities for numerous interpretations based on material culture.
Symbols of Material Success

Symbols of material success can be interpreted from the material remains recovered at the Levy and Kaufman-Fleishman lots. Homes and their furnishing were especially important in the 19th century due to the increase in dinner parties, non-family visitors, and a shift to the public importance of homes (Wilkie 2003:85). Wilkie notes that homes became a “canvas” for displaying family identities, personalities, and values (2003:85). China and curio cabinets, shelving units, wallpaper, lighting, indoor plants, ceramics, and silverwares were used to convey identity and choice (Wilkie 2003:85). Symbols of comfort and economic status, and sometimes the admirations and imitations of middle-class values were expressed through materials (Wilkie 2003:76). Rachel
Haskell wrote about papering a shelf in her home to display her decorative items. Laura Sanchez commented on the time it took for her to dust around her items on display in her home. It can be assumed that the Levy and Kaufman families also had similar furniture and decorative items.

Interpreting symbolism from artifact assemblages is a method employed by archaeologists studying households and families. Common to 19th century archaeological sites is the inclusion of Victorian and “genteel” cultural and social ideologies (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 2001). Archaeologists have used material remains from architecture, ceramics, clothing, tablewares, and other materials to draw conclusions about symbolic behaviors, patterns, rituals, and ideologies (Allison 1998; Allison and Cremin 2006; Wall 1991; Kruczek-Aaron 2002; LeeDecker 1994; Praetzellis and Praetzellis 2001; Rotman 2005; Wilkie 2003; Yentsch 2011). This section examines items associated with material success and display. Conspicuous consumption of white-bodied ceramics and exotic ceramic designs are first discussed. Next, portraits, foil seals, parlor pianos/organs, wallpaper, and pressed glass fragments and their symbolic importance is discussed.

*Gothic Aesthetics*

Victorians used materials to communicate their adherence to strict morals, values, and righteousness to themselves and others (Howe 1976:21). Frequently, items utilized exhibited elements of Gothic Revival style. Domesticity is often linked to Christian obligations and the home is often viewed as a sacred and reverent place for families to
reside (Chandler 2011:42). Gothic aesthetics were employed to further strengthen these relationships and provided materials to reinforce ideologies and identities. To illustrate the importance of materials and divine obligations, Charles Richmond Henderson (1897) stated that “our works and our surroundings corrupt or refine our souls. The dwellings, the walls, the windows, the furniture, the pictures, the ornaments, the dress, the fence or hedge- all act constantly upon the imagination and determine its content” (Mullins 2001:158).

Using household archaeology frameworks, 19th century Gothic Revival style and architecture can be seen as “mode of communication” concerning the achievements, taste level, economic success, and morals of the individuals who lived within the home (McDannell 1986:22, 35). Photographs of the Levy home show Gothic Revival inspired decorative bargeboard along the roof-line (Fig. 4.9). The image showcases the substantial brick constructed home and also provides information about the displayed economic and social achievements of the Levy family. The finials on top of the chimney stacks and the homes’ tall windows were reminiscent of church architecture favored by Gothic aesthetics. The arched window located in the eave of the roofline and the false balcony also suggests a church-like design.

Gothic aesthetics were also extended to ceramic items. Victorian rituals associated with dining and taking tea have left remains for archaeologists to recover, and some possess Gothic elements. A fragment of a white-bodied tea cup recovered from the Kaufman-Fleishman lot illustrates “traditional church architecture” in the form of molded panels reminiscent of church windows (Fig. 4.10; Praetzellis and Praetzellis 2001:646). This tea cup was part of a set of visual cues that affirmed middle-class position and
adherence to Victorian cultural and social values. Gothic Revival style was also extended to other items used by Victorian families, including furniture, ceramics, and bric-a-brac (McDannell 1986). The purchase, use, and display of items that exhibited Gothic aesthetics related to conspicuous consumption and middle-class aspirations. Materials, including items displaying Gothic aesthetics possessed “encoded messages to viewers about their makers and users” (Nassaney et al. 2001:222). Individuals actively chose these items to represent their identities to themselves and to others.
Figure 4.9. The Levy Home ca. 1885. Courtesy of Nevada Historical Society.
White-Bodied Ceramics

The use and purchase of white-bodied ceramics is a second element of Victorian values embodied in material culture. White-bodied ceramics were used “to reinforce the sanctity of the home and family through the symbol of purity as embodied in the white ceramics” (Wilkie 2010:74). Often white-bodied ceramic tablewares displayed molded Gothic lines and have been used to draw conclusions about class, religious obligations, and women’s cult status within the home (Allison 1999:11; Spencer-Wood 1994:167). The color and style of the ceramics represented religious markers such as purity, sanctity, and reverence, which were critical influential elements in Victorian homes.
White-bodied ceramics have also been used by archaeologists in interpretations about women’s domestic roles and spaces, the dichotomy between public/private and male/female spaces, and the creation and maintenance of family identities (Allison 1999:11; Spencer-Wood 1994:167). Such ceramics would have been used to reiterate to family and friends the obedience to social values and morality (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 2001:646). The use, purchase, and display of these ceramics created a carefully constructed public image and identity of individuals and the family’s identity (Beaudry et al 1991:155; diZerega Wall 1994:123).

For example, Wilkie used ceramics to illuminate the intersection of individual and family identity (2010:66). The brothers of the 19th century Zeta Psi fraternity used shared meals and dining activities as a method to reaffirm familial organizations and relationships, both fictive and kin, between the brothers and to display materials that further reinstated and displayed this shared family identity (Wilkie 2010:66). Approved middle and upper-class white-bodied earthenwares, images of fraternal crests, and matched individual dining sets “reinforced a sense of community and brotherhood, providing a visual reinforcement of these ties” and further materially defined the family identity of this all-male fraternity home (Wilkie 2010:190).

Both the Levy and the Kaufman-Fleishman lot yielded evidence of the purchase, use, and display of white-bodied ceramics. Figure 4.11 depicts a plate of white improved earthenware. DiZerega Wall comments that white earthenwares were usually reserved for the breakfast table or for meals shared exclusively with the family (1994:134). Additionally, a porcelain tea cup saucer recovered from the Levy lot would have assumed similar symbolic importance and likely would have been used while entertaining guests.
(Fig. C.1 in Appendix C). Other white-bodied ceramics were also recovered from the excavations units, including porcelain, vitreous earthenware, and items with white-bodies and transfer ware patterns (Fig. C.7 in Appendix C). The use of white-bodied ceramics supports the interpretation about the materiality of family identity and family as the intersection of individual and group identities. White-bodied ceramics also represent elements of conspicuous consumption and the striving of middle-class values. The active purchase of these types of materials reveals information about family identity construction and display at the Levy home and Kaufman-Fleishman home.

![Image](image_url)

**Figure 4.11.** White-bodied ceramic plate fragment from the Kaufman-Fleishman lot; Cat #13-1762; Photograph by Katee Withee.

**Additional Ceramics**

Multiple ceramic fragments exhibited evidence of patterns associated with exoticism. One particular fragment from the Kaufman-Fleishman lot was composed of porcelain with a transfer ware pattern. The artifact shown in Figure 4.12 shows an
“Oriental” scene reminiscent of the “South Pacific” including possible palm trees and homes made of local materials (Mullins 2001:172). Objects deemed as “exotic goods” were often used by 19th century households to convey a sense of worldliness or a distinction in taste and aesthetics (Mullins 2001:166). These objects provided a material manifestation of “otherness” which included goods from the “colonized and natural world” and have been interpreted as material confirmations of perceived superiority and whiteness by the upper and middle-classes (Mullins 2001:169).

Figure 4.12. White-bodied ceramic porcelain fragment with transfer ware design from the Kaufman-Fleishman lot; Cat #13-1145; Photograph by Katee Withee.

Perhaps these ceramic fragments, along with fragments of celadon, porcelain with Double Happiness images, and the complete celadon alcohol cup were used by the Levy family and the Kaufman-Fleishman family to assert their worldly taste and to affirm their perceived whiteness similar to their Christian, non-Jewish neighbors (Fig. C.10 in
Appendix C; Mullins 2001:166-169; Wilkie 2010:101). These “other” pieces related to white-bodied earthenwares preferred by the 19th century middle-class, because they both suggest “whiteness,” in the symbolism of the white-bodied ceramics and the perceived “otherness” of the exotic goods.

Ceramics in 19th century American Victorian homes conveyed information to the users and viewers of these materials. Elements of conspicuous consumerism presented elements of “genteel domesticity” and represented the family’s constructed identity (Mullins 2001:170). Often, these luxury items were defined by the leisure, or upper-classes and it has been theorized that other social classes sought to emulate the upper-classes through consumption behaviors (Trigg 2001:101; Veblen 1934:70).

Additionally, consumerism in the 19th century created an identity based on “personal and social ambition” and allowed consumers to select the materials that would represent their identities (Mullins 2001:176). These purchased or acquired items also provided a “statement about their consumers” and symbolically linked displays of consumerism to identity. White-bodied ceramics and items that promoted exoticism were archaeologically recovered from the Levy and Kaufman-Fleishman lot and represent elements of constructed family identity. Additionally, items like furniture, wallpaper, and bric-a-brac also communicated similar information. These materials were actively purchased and displayed in Victorian homes and will be explored in the next section of this chapter.
Parlor Organs and Pianos

An example of active consumer identity and relationships to material culture comes from Ames’ exploration of parlor organs and their affiliation to family identity (1992:150). Organs were “prominent and valued parts of Victorian lives” and were essential items in “affluent created spaces” in middle and upper-class homes (Ames 1992:150, 155). Organs also held cultural and social capital related to moments in family lifecycles and were used to communicate how time and money was spent in middle-class homes (Fig. 4.13; Ames 1992:157-164). For example, Laura Sanchez mentioned wishing for a “cottage piano” after her move to Aurora in 1862 (Laura Sanchez to Nannie Crittenden, July 13, 1862).

Figure 4.13. Two women at an organ (notice the organ stool) ca. 1910. Courtesy of State Historical Society of Wisconsin-Madison.
Playing the piano or organ was seen a proper and fulfilling activity for women and young girls and allowed these individuals to bring “beauty into the home” (Ames 1992:164). Additionally, Wilkie notes that “accomplished musicianship was also a signifier of class position” (2010:91). These performances often allowed the public and private spheres to unite within the home and were “social bonding” activities that further strengthened ties between family, and community as family (Ames 1992:166, 173-174). Rachel Haskell made several references to the piano in her home (Lillard 1944). She mentioned her eldest daughter “Ella playing on the piano some pleasant airs” for several female friends while they were visiting her home in 1867 (Lillard 1944:85-86).

Archaeological evidence from Aurora reveals the likelihood of a piano or organ in the Kaufman-Fleishman home. A foot fragment, illustrated in Figure 4.14, was recovered from the Kaufman-Fleishman lot and could be from a stool similar in style to a H. Holtzman & Sons organ or piano stool (Fig. 4.15). Perhaps the Kaufman-Fleishman family displayed their family identity through the purchase, display, and use of their parlor organ or piano. Jetta Kaufman or her daughters Sophie and Bettie could have played the piano for the family and for visitors to the home, to reaffirm their conscious consumption, middle-class position, and family identity. The parlor organ would have represented the symbolic adherence of the family to Victorian ideals and principles. Their family identity would have been shaped by the presence of this symbolic item and would have communicated their family identity to other family members and the public.
Figure 4.14. Organ or piano stool from the Kaufman-Fleishman home; Cat# 13-306; Photograph by Katee Withee.

Figure 4.15. H. Holtzman & Sons piano or organ stool located at Junkee in Reno, Nevada; similar to the foot fragment from the Kaufman-Fleishman home; Cat# 13-306; Photograph by Katee Withee
**Wallpaper**

Wallpaper would have performed a similar function as the piano or organ in a family’s home or parlor. Wallpaper illustrated the maintenance of “genteel standards” and provided an example of “what a respectable home was” (Lawrence 1998:54). Furthermore, the addition of wallpaper to frontier homes presented the “firm evidence for the presence of women” in an attempt to create a proper home for their families (Lawrence 1998:50). Their efforts often did not go unnoticed, as it was commented that “their [Laura Sanchez and Nannie Crittenden Van Wyck] houses are fixed up very nicely and look very snug indeed…” (Howard Crittenden to Clara J. Crittenden, May 31, 1863).

Wallpaper improved the appearance of homes and made homes more comfortable as well. Laura Sanchez’s father remarked on the lack of wallpaper in her home. Laura’s kitchen, you must know, is rather an open concern. Its walls are planks nailed up side by side with awful cracks between them, and the floor is more open than the sides. There are fine currents of air cross ways and upwards and make as much fire as you will you cannot ware the room. One’s feet are bound to freeze from the small hurricanes that come up through the floor. (Alexander P. Crittenden to Clara J. Crittenden, September 14, 1862)

There is evidence that the Levy home and the Kaufman-Fleishman home had wallpaper in their homes as wallpaper fragments were recovered from excavations at the Levy home and the Kaufman-Fleishman home. The fragment illustrated in Figure 4.16 shows a geometric pattern of gold and red and was collected from the Kaufman-Fleishman lot. This excavation unit (N133 E142) was located outside of the northeast corner of the Kaufman-Fleishman house foundation, near a possible cellar feature. Additionally, wallpaper fragments in a light blue or green fleur-de-lis pattern were
recovered from an excavation unit on the Levy lot located near the back entrance to a possible addition (Fig. C.11 in Appendix C).

A text from the mid-1950s reveals that the gold and red wallpaper fragment could have potentially originated from the Levy home, or it is possible the Kaufman-Fleishman house also had similar wallpaper (Murbarger 1956). It was noted that a “...splintered piece of the “gingerbread lace” that had graced it’s [the Levy house] gables, and to some of the broken boards still clung brittle scraps of maroon-and-gold wallpaper” (Murbarger 1956:74).

Figure 4.16. Wallpaper fragment from the Kaufman-Fleishman lot; Cat# 13-482; Photograph by Katee Withee.
Pressed Glass

Pressed glass items were also used to communicate wealth and gentility. Technological advances in glass manufacturing “made pressed glass readily available and affordable, this medium, too, came to communicate the wholesome and sacred values of the household using them” (Wilkie 2010:33). Pressed glass fragments were found at the Levy and Kaufman-Fleishman lots. Possible pressed glass fragments included seven cataloged items, including colorless, aqua, and amethyst, and were recovered from both the Levy lot and the Kaufman-Fleishman lot (Fig. C.12 in Appendix C; Cat #12-558, 13-622, 13-667, 13-1450, 13-1508, 13-1523, 13-1631). The fragment seen in Figure 4.17 was from the Kaufman-Fleishman lot. It is composed of colorless glass and is likely the lip or edge of a bowl, tumbler, or vase. The fragment could have originated from a tumbler that was originally used for food storage and then reused as drinking vessels (Wilkie 2003:99). The presence of pressed glass fragments suggests these families were actively using their purchasing and consuming powers to carefully craft and define their identities. The materiality created was one of a successful, wholesome, and striving for middle-class family.
Displayed Portraits

Displayed portraits in Victorian middle-class homes often signified wealth and aspects of competitive display. Portraits have been interpreted as “conscious constructions” of self-representation, often displayed for others (Smith 2003:13). Displayed portraits had the unique ability to divulge information about identity construction from the view of the audience, the photographer, and the subject of the portrait (Smith 2003:14). In Smith’s examples Jewish families displayed portraits of family to maintain a connection of shared identity with family separated by distances created by migrations and mobility (2003:14).

Rachel Haskell wrote about such an experience after visiting the Levy home on Mono Street (Lillard 1944). Rachel writes that, [she] “called on Mrs. Levy [likely
Nathan’s wife Fanny], quite a pleasant chat and looked at her numerous sisters nine I think and fine portraits of her father and mother from Strasburg on the Rhine” (Lillard 1944:86; Shaw 2013a:3; Shaw 2013b:1). Fanny Levy could have been consciously displaying and articulating her connections to a family identity, and in turn her own identity, as a sister, a Jewish woman, and as a member of a family (Smith 2003:14).

Laura Sanchez also kept a photograph album of family portraits in her parlor for visiting friends to view (Howard Crittenden to Clara J. Crittenden, September 25, 1863). This behavior was common in middle-and-upper class homes and inevitably continued to develop and maintain the connections between family members and family identity. A typical middle-to-upper class parlor can be viewed in Figure 4.18. This image is from the home of successful Virginia City, Nevada, Jewish business man, Joseph T. Goodman and is contemporaneous with Aurora (1860-1870). It is possible that the parlors of the Levy family and the Kaufman-Fleishman family resembled that of Joseph T. Goodman and family.
Foil Seals

Related to the presence of the previously discussed items is the archaeological recovery of olive glass and two aluminum foil seals. These artifacts inform interpretations about economic and class standing, preference, and identity (Society for Historical Archaeology n.d.). Wine was an important component in Jewish holidays,
rituals, and celebrations, in which the Levy and Kaufman families might have participated. Fragments of olive glass, possibly from wine vessels, were recovered from the Levy and Kaufman-Fleishman lots. Two aluminum foil seals were also recovered from a unit located near the back addition of the Levy home. These types of artifacts are common in 19th century domestic contexts. This is just one possible interpretation for the presence of these items.

Figure 4.19. Two aluminum foil seals likely from wine or brandy bottles from the Levy lot (left) and Kaufman-Fleishman lot (right); Cat # 13-914 and Cat # 13-1089; Photograph by Katee Withee.

An aluminum foil seal embossed with “A. De Luze & Fils Bordeaux” was manufactured and imported from the Bordeaux and Burgundy regions of France from a company established in 1817 (Fig. 4.19; A. De Luze & Fils n.d.). The wine most likely traveled by means of a cargo ship via the Isthmus of Panama and eventually to the port of San Francisco, or to New York City, where it traveled overland to San Francisco, and
was dispersed to retailers, merchandisers, and traders (A. De Luze & Fils n.d.). The imported wine and Isaac Levy, his brothers Nathan and Baruch, Nathan’s wife Fanny, and Baruch’s wife Pauline likely traveled on a similar route from France to San Francisco and eventually to Aurora in the mid-1800s (Kahn 2002:19; Silver 2011:146). The seal dated from 1822-1880 when the company was dealing exclusively in the importing of “quality table wines” and “fine Cognac brandies” (A. De Luze & Fils n.d.).

The second aluminum foil seal bears an embossed mark from the “Roth Bros San Francisco” liquor manufacturing and filling company (Fig. 4.19). Using company records it has been determined that the image embossed on the seal renders a diagnostic date for 1879-1919 (Pre-Pro.com, n.d.). This date corresponds with the final and remaining years the home was occupied by the Levy family. Roth & Co appears to have been primarily filling and manufacturing whiskeys and other liquors from their San Francisco location (Lockhart et al. 2011:58). These aluminum foil seals would have been used to seal glass bottles containing wine, brandy, or whiskey. One possible interpretation for the presence of these artifacts relates to the consumption of wine in Jewish religious practices. A second interpretation indicates the foil seals represent alcohol preference related to economic success or conscious consumption. Both of these interpretations demonstrate the materiality of family identity.

Summary of Material Success

The ceramics, piano stool fragment, wallpaper, pressed glass, portraits, and foil seals were material symbols of a displayed family identity. Aspects of Victorian culture,
middle-class success, and material displays of identity converge to create a material image of family identity. Parlors and homes illustrated by this sentiment from Rachel Haskell relay “how comfortable and cozy the sitting room did look this evening by twilight. The shelves laden with books, specimens, minerals, shells. The Piano, the Sewing Machine, comfortable sofa and easy chair, with healthy, happy, prattling, chippy, little children,” provide an image of a proper, striving for middle-class Victorian home (Lillard 1944:88). The types of materials presented in this chapter were used in “social jockeying” to secure the image of a proper middle-class Victorian family to the family and community members (Wilkie 2003:85). Using theoretical frameworks from material cultural studies illuminates conspicuous consumption and allows individuals to create their identities from the materials they purchased, displayed, and further used to maintain assigned and personal meaning.

Conclusion

Identities are in constant flux, continually constructed and always “in process” (Hall 2000:16). Identity can be defined by others or by self, by “kinship, religious belief, and by ancestry” (King 2006:312) and performed as an individual or as a group identity. Artifacts and materials can represent these identities and provide insight about performed and displayed identities. This chapter explored interpretations about the materiality of family identity.

Elements of Victorian ideology have been the used throughout this chapter as a framework to define family identity and to explore the materiality of family identity in
Aurora. Explorations in this chapter present an image and an interpretation of the Levy family and the Kaufman-Fleishman family. In all, it appears that family in Aurora, Nevada was defined by relationships, including kinship, friendship, and community ties. An interpretation and definition of family in Aurora includes perspectives about these types of families and the materials they actively purchased, displayed, and used to define their collective family identity. Materials used to define these families range from items associated with Victorian middle-class families and Jewish cultural identity. Within these frameworks materials associated with Gothic aesthetics, symbols of material success, use of space, children, masculinity, and display reinforce notions of family. Specific archaeological examples from the Levy home and the Kaufman-Fleishman home and documentary evidence confirm and support these claims.

The presented material evidence and scholarly interpretations, allow one to imagine busy and lively households filled with playing children, women holding social visits with friends from the community, completing daily household chores, eating dinners as a family, and entertaining other members of the Aurora community. One can also image their homes as constructed and decorated to communicate about their active consumer and family identities. These images present a humanistic perspective of the mining history of the region and the community of Aurora, Nevada and begin to define the materiality of family identity.
Chapter Five: Conclusion

In this thesis, research of family has been approached from a variety of perspectives and frameworks. Claims utilized archaeological materials, material culture, textual sources, and analyses that strived to illuminate individual daily experiences and performances. Personal assemblages, excavated from household sites or creatively constructed public spaces, are telling and interpretable material for archaeologists to make informed claims about expressed and constructed family identities (Mullins 2001:167).

Identities are constantly shaped and influenced by intersections of gender, ethnicity, religious practice, and class status. Individuals and groups react and respond to pressures and identities that are displayed based on situation, context, and motivation (Nassaney and Brandao 2009:2). Definitions and expectations of families respond similarly and are temporally, socially, and culturally derived. Specifically, family in the 19th century American West was often defined by relationships, including common normative relationships defined by kinship such as father, mother, and children. Explorations of family in the 19th century American West often cite Victorian ideologies and social expectations as a basis for understanding and interpreting sites and materials (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 2001:646). This thesis used Victorian middle-class cultural to frame interpretation about materials, spaces, and lifecycle stages in families.
**Jewish Cultural Identity**

In chapter three I described aspects of Jewish cultural identity related to the histories of the Levy and Kaufman-Fleishman families. Some of the shared experiences of Jewish cultural identity in the American West include mobility, migration patterns, family, and community life (Marschall 2008; Rochlin and Rochlin 1984; Kahn 2002).

In the 19th century American West, many Jewish individuals and families were merchants and dry goods proprietors (Weissbach 2005:36). Business ventures provided opportunities for upward mobility and adaptability for Jewish individuals within American social and economic class status (Levinson 1974:287). Material success became an attainable goal for many Jewish families and represented aspirations of family identity (Cantor 1995:170, 177).

Jewish identity in the 19th century American West did not significantly differ from other kinds of identity display. Jewish identity was not necessarily marked or visible in material remains. Perhaps, instead Jewish identity was an additional mode of identity construction that was closely related to 19th century middle-class family identity. Research from Aurora provided an example of Western frontier Jewish identity construction and its traits of mobility, migration, family, and community life. The materiality of a Jewish identity in Aurora is similar to the 19th century American frontier merchant class, the only distinguishing difference is the acknowledgement that the Levy family and the Kaufman-Fleishman family were Jewish. The Levy family and the Kaufman-Fleishman family’s Jewish identity is just one aspect of their identities presented in the larger exploration of family identity.
Community as Family

Scholars like Purser (1991) and Grimshaw and Willett (1981) have demonstrated the fluidity and degree of diversity in frontier contexts and performances of family identities. Families were critical in “coping strategies” for surviving in harsh, rural, and isolated settings on the American frontier and family could take on various compositions and organizations for survival in this setting (Hardesty 2010:180). The fluidity of families could also extend to inclusions of non-traditional groups as family, including households of all-male and all-female inhabitants, communities, and extended family and friendship networks (Ames 1992:1; Grimshaw and Willett 1981:135-142; Hardesty 1994:140; Prossor et al. 2012:834; Purser 1991:8; Wilkie 2010:64).

Families in frontier communities were often physically separated from their relations and kin, and frequently transferred their reliance on familial networks to members of their new community (Casella and Fowler 2005:3; Grimshaw and Willett 1981; Prangnell and Quirk 2009:42; Wilk and Rathje 1982:621). New families were formed on the basis of ethnic origin, economic similarities, class standing, religious affiliation, and other geographic and social variables (Casella and Fowler 2005:3; Hardesty 1994:140; Purser 1991:11). These families were strategic opportunities for survival developed and maintained by acts of social labor.

Essentially, community performed the same functions as family for individuals in these contexts (Prangnell and Quirk 2009:42). Community relationships and networks in rural, isolated Western frontier communities performed family and kinscription roles and responsibilities (Grimshaw and Willett 1981:135; Hardesty 1994:140; Purser 1991:9). Wilkie defined kinscription as the work family members do for the “service of the family
good” (2003:38). This work was often undertaken by women, children, and elderly members of households who were not recognized as wage earners in documents like census records.

Social Labor

The concept of social labor and its many aspects, including elements of kinscription responsibilities, motherwork, and other gendered behaviors is an important one at Aurora. Social labor and the maintenance of social networks is an integral component of a gendered analysis. Social labor was an activity often performed by women in western mining communities. Lawrence argued that community networks and activities were integral to the success of mining communities in frontier settings (1998:41). Community membership was often defined by participation and interaction in the community. Social work involved sharing a group identity associated with goals aimed at supporting the community (Lawrence 1999:43). Status, class, ethnicity, and gender all acted as significant markers and organizing themes that contributed to a community’s identity (Lawrence 1998:45).

Social labor involved participating in church services, schools activities, taking tea, motherwork, and visiting friends, community members, and family (Lawrence 1998:50; 54). Social labor was visible in the relationships women develop as economic and social strategies that supplied households with social benefits, food, and other support systems (Purser 1991:12). Social labor maintained relationships with community members and in turn those relationships performed similar family-like functions.
A useful example of community as family comes from Grimshaw and Willett’s (1981:138) study of settlement patterns in the Australian frontier in the 19th century. Networks were developed by family, friends, and business partners by settling in close, related areas, actively recruiting other family and friends to those areas, and maintaining these networks through acts of social labor (Grimshaw and Willett 1981:138-139). These connections created a family-like relationship in the newly settled 19th century Australian frontier.

Social labor was primarily performed by women and included visits, help with childcare, and other community events and worked to strengthen economic, social, and kinship bonds (Purser 1991; Watson et al.1998:183). Women maintained and organized events in the community like dances, church activities, and socials as acts of social labor. For example, Lottie and Hermine Levy were mentioned in a newspaper article about a Sunday school performance (Esmeralda Herald, September 24, 1881). The article lists other Auroran women involved in the planning process who were neighbors from Block C and peers of the Levy family, including Mrs. C. Novacovich (who was Lottie’s married sister, Clara Poor), the Davison’s, and the Wingate’s (Esmeralda Herald, September 24, 1881). Laura Sanchez also writes about teaching a Sunday school class in Aurora and enjoying the singing of her “scholars” (Laura Sanchez to Sidney Van Wyck, August 22, 1864; Laura Sanchez to Nannie Crittenden Van Wyck, September 8, 1864; Stewart 2004:104). Participating in these types of events likely strengthened the community’s family-like bonds.

Other examples of the performance of social labor are abundant in Aurora, Nevada. Newspaper social columns describe numerous examples as do journal entries
from Rachel Haskell and letters written by Laura Sanchez. Laura Sanchez frequently commented about her own acts of social labor in her letters to friends and family, including frequent social visits, entertaining guests, and caring for other women in sickness, childbirth, and death.

Laura Sanchez mentions the Kaufman family regularly. Frequent visits between Jetta Kaufman and Laura Sanchez acted to maintain social bonds, develop social relationships, and provided a public image of their homes to others (Watson et al. 1998:183). Social labor strengthened family-like bonds, but it also presented an opportunity for a competitive display of class, wealth, and gentility (Purser 1992:111-112). Laura Sanchez demonstrated the importance of public image, in her frequent letters to her sister, Nannie, commenting on the positive or negative public image of various women, families, and households in Aurora.

Social visits between women often occurred in the private realm of homes and “taking tea” was an activity conducted during these visits (diZerega Wall 1994:159). Special ceramics were often used in tea taking activities, including porcelains, transfer ware patterns, and items deemed as exclusive “specialty” pieces (diZerega Wall 1994:134-135). These recoverable items can be viewed in the archaeological record. Fragments from several tea cups and saucers from excavated materials from the Levy lot and Kaufman-Fleishman lot were identified, suggesting that tea drinking, socializing, and other activities associated with social labor were conducted in their homes. The example in Figure 4.19 is the white porcelain handle fragment from a tea cup.
Wilkie (2003:46) summarizes work by Patricia Hill Collins (1994) by noting that “motherwork” was another form of social labor that strengthened community networks. According to Collins (1994) motherwork was the work done on the “behalf of one’s own biological children, or for the children of one’s own racial ethnic community” (Wilkie 2003:119). The term motherwork could be applied to the type of work Laura Sanchez often engaged in as evidenced in the comments about caring for newborn babies and mothers in her letters. Laura had no children of her own, but she participated in community motherwork in Aurora. Socially held notions of motherhood were important in middle-class society of this period and motherwork became an expected role and service for women and mothers to perform (Wilkie 2003:7). Maintaining family-like networks was also an expected duty of proper Victorian wives and mothers.

During the 19th century, womanhood and motherhood were inseparable spheres for middle-class women and provided a perceived privileged position for these women to
Fluidity in identity and performance as has been used to interpret mothering as a performative identity that could be situational and utilized during certain periods and circumstances in women’s lives (Wilkie 2003:1). Women achieved higher social standing by having and raising children with socially acceptable morals, virtues, and responsibilities. Childbirth changed how women were viewed in families and society and created new significant relationships between mothers, fathers, husbands, and friends (Wilkie 2003:142).

While women in Aurora participated in social labor and motherwork, men in Aurora also participated in social activities. Men often performed actions related to social labor, community, and networking in more public spaces, such as at the post office, saloons, barbershops, at local businesses, and with fraternal organizations (Purser 1991:12; Watson et al. 1998:185; Wilkie 2010:34). Rachel Haskell frequently described her husband, Dudley, spending time downtown waiting for the mail, drinking, and socializing with other men, and sometimes coming home intoxicated (Lillard 1944:89). Social networks maintained by men related to economic success and survival in isolated rural settings. Howard Crittenden, Laura Sanchez’ youngest brother, saw the value in developing and maintaining social interactions and networks and stated that “if only he [brother-in-law Sydney Van Wyck] would be more sociable with men he would prosper much better than he does….” (Howard Crittenden to Clara J. Crittenden, June 27, 1863).

Men bridged private and public spheres by inviting and bringing other men home for dinner. Rachel Haskell “talked for hours with dull visitors” that her husband, Dudley, often brought home (Lillard 1944:81). However, by bringing these guests into the home, sharing a meal, and having “a social chat in front room with the visitors,” (Lillard
both Rachel and Dudley were performing important social work and network maintenance. These activities provided an opportunity for the separate gendered spheres to converge and share similar goals.

Participation of men in formal social groups and gatherings were also common. Middle-class men were often engaged in fraternal organizations like the Odd Fellows and Masons, that further strengthened economic, social, and business ties within the community (Marschall 2008:64). A “G. Kaufman” is included in an 1862 list of members of the local Masonic Lodge, the “Esmeralda Lodge,” as were other notable Aurora residents including D. H. Haskell (Rachel Haskell’s husband); A. M. Wingate (grocer and namesake of Wingate Hall); and Charles C. Dodd (Mrs. Dodd’s poor public image is mentioned repeatedly by Laura Sanchez) (Shaw 2008:54; Torrence 1944; Laura Sanchez to Nannie Crittenden Van Wyck, August 17, 1864). “G. Kaufman” appears on a “committee of invitation” for a social party that Ramon Sanchez also organized (Aurora Daily Times December 3, 1863).

Community and social life for individuals often revolved around family, cultural, religious, and social affiliations. Social relationships were important for women as well as men. Developing networks and relationships with others in the community was a form of survival and created family-like associations. Grimshaw and Willet (1981:146) contended that networks developed a “modern family” unique to frontier settings that rendered community bonds as important as kin and familial ones. Intimate relationships were developed with neighbors, friends, and class members as an imitation of family (Grimshaw and Willet 1981:146). Women and sometimes men performed the creation and maintenance of family identity by performing social labor, which included church
service, schools activities, taking tea, helping and visiting friends, community members, and family (Lawrence 1998:50; 54).

**Conclusion and Final Thoughts**

Family identities were created in rural, frontier communities in Aurora and elsewhere in the American West. The Levys and the Kaufmans were upper middle-class Jewish families who lived in an affluent, heterogeneous neighborhood in the frontier mining community of Aurora, Nevada. These families might not have overtly participated and recapitulated explicit Jewish cultural behaviors or displayed religious markers, but instead likely employed fluid and complex identities that were based on ethnicity, social status, religious practice, and individuality. All of which composed family identity. Their identity production was mediated through material culture. The archaeological materials and evidence from the Levy and Kaufman-Fleishman lots demonstrate this proposed fluid, constructed image, created and teased out from documentary and archaeological research.

Interpretations of identity draw on details of daily experiences that create a narrative that privileges ordinary people. This research has provided details about the lives of families, with specific interest into their daily experiences. The interpretative power of material remains, identity construction, and display is used here reveal the materiality of family identity. Gender, class, and ethnic identities were negotiated and constructed in these families in the American West and are probable starting points for future research directed towards identity studies.
My work draws on current trends and hopes to contribute to the growing body of literature on family identity. My research also contributes to broader understandings of Aurora, Nevada and provides an example for future comparisons with other households from the Aurora Neighborhood Projects. I have explored family identity utilizing material culture, theoretical perspectives, and interpretative frameworks that privilege and illuminate the everyday experiences of ordinary people. This thesis has explored how family identity has been defined, how it is expressed materially, what family life looked like in Aurora, and how gender, ethnicity, class, and religion contributed as indicators for family identity. Victorian ideologies were used as a framework to discuss elements of material success and middle-class status. The symbolic use of space was discussed and presented as a material marker in the investigation of family identity as well. The lens of family identity might be utilized by others to provide invaluable narratives and explorations of understudied and underrepresented experiences of daily life in the American West.
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Appendix A: Additional Maps

Figure A.1. Aurora location map (map by Ashlee Younie).
Figure A.2. Aurora location map and site boundary (map by Ashlee Younie).
Figure A.3. Brady’s Map of Aurora and Esmeralda ca. 1862. Courtesy of Nevada Historical Society.
Appendix B: Additional Historic Photographs

Figure B.1. Pine Street in Aurora ca. 1913. Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno.

Figure B.2. Pine Street in Aurora ca. 1913. Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno.
Figure B.3. Aurora ca. 1911. Courtesy of Nevada Historical Society, Emil W Billeb Collection.

Figure B.4. Silver Street in Aurora ca. 1895. Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno.
Appendix C: Additional Selected Artifact Photographs

Figure C.1. Porcelain plate sherd from the Levy lot. Cat # 13-1025; Photograph by Katee Withee.

Figure C.2. Amethyst cologne bottle from the Levy lot. Cat # 13-890; Photograph by Katee Withee.
Figure C.3. Slate pencil and slate fragment from the Levy lot. Cat # 13-1391 and 13-1318; Photograph by Katee Withee.

Figure C.4. Ceramic porcelain fragment with “Kewpie doll” image from the Levy lot. Cat # 12-227; Photograph by Ashlee Younie.
Figure C.5. Hair pin from the Levy lot; Cat #12-757; Photograph by Ashlee Younie.

Figure C.6. Prosser buttons with red detail from the Levy lot; Cat # 13-79; Photograph by Katee Withee.
Figure C.7. Vitreous earthenware fragment with floral transfer ware design from the Kaufman lot; Cat # 13-798; Photograph by Katee Withee.

Figure C.8. Amethyst glass base fragment with Maker’s Mark from the Kaufman-Fleishman lot; Cat # 13-47; Photograph by Katee Withee.
Figure C.9. White chert projectile point fragment from the Kaufman-Fleishman lot; Cat # 13-492; Photograph by Katee Withee.

Figure C.10. Porcelain fragment with Chinese blue transfer ware print from the Levy lot; Cat # 13-886; Photograph by Katee Withee.
Figure C.11. Wallpaper Fragments with a light green and blue fleur-de-lis pattern from the Levy lot; Cat # 12-1006; Photograph by Ashlee Younie.

Figure C.12. Amethyst cut glass fragment from the Levy lot; Cat # 12-558; Photograph by Ashlee Younie.