

## Jewish-American History:

# CARL SAGAN



**Carl Sagan** was an astronomer, astrophysicist, and cosmologist. He was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1934. He would later remember attending the 1939 New York World's Fair, where he was delighted by the science and technology on display. He was also fascinated with an exhibit that showed off a new broadcast technology: the television set!

Early trips to his local library increased little Carl's interest in outer space. He read about stars and the sun, what they were made of, and how far away they were. As he grew, Carl began to read science fiction, which also fed his imagination and his thirst for knowledge about space and science.

In college, Sagan studies physics, and graduated with a Ph.D. in astronomy and astrophysics. He taught at Harvard University, among others, and then went to work for NASA, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. There, he helped with space missions to Venus, Mars, and Jupiter.

His work helped scientists understand the atmospheres of the planets Venus and Jupiter, and the seasons on Mars. As on Earth, the tilt and rotation of Mars create seasons much like the ones we experience. He hoped humanity would one day make contact with alien life, and worked on the "search for extraterrestrial intelligence," or SETI.

Sagan is probably best known as host of the television series *Cosmos: A Personal Voyage*. He is also known for his novel, *Contact*, about contacting extraterrestrial life, which was made into a movie in 1997. He won numerous awards, and even has an asteroid named for him! An asteroid is a small, rocky body orbiting the sun. Carl's asteroid is named 2709 Sagan.

1. What is Carl Sagan best known for? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What does SETI stand for? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What first interested young Carl in science? \_\_\_\_\_