

this land of liberty a history of americas jews

****This Land of Liberty: A History of America's Jews****

this land of liberty a history of americas jews is a story of resilience, faith, and contribution woven into the broader tapestry of American history. From the earliest settlers to the vibrant communities that thrive today, the Jewish experience in America is a unique journey marked by struggle, adaptation, and achievement. Exploring this history reveals not only the challenges faced by Jewish immigrants but also their profound impact on the cultural, social, and political landscape of the United States.

The Early Jewish Presence in America

The story of Jews in America begins long before the waves of immigration in the 19th and 20th centuries. The first Jewish settlers arrived in the early 1600s, with records showing Jewish merchants and traders in the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam, now New York City. These early pioneers sought refuge from persecution in Europe and hoped to find religious freedom in the New World.

Religious Freedom and Early Challenges

Unlike many other parts of the world where Jews faced harsh restrictions, America offered a comparatively tolerant environment. However, this freedom was not absolute. In the early colonial period, Jewish settlers encountered legal and social limitations, such as restrictions on holding public office and practicing their religion openly. Despite these obstacles, Jewish communities managed to establish synagogues, cemeteries, and communal organizations, laying the groundwork for future growth.

Impact on Colonial Society

The Jewish population remained small but influential in the colonial economy, particularly in trade and finance. Their networks extended beyond the colonies, connecting American Jewish merchants with European and Caribbean markets. This early economic activity helped integrate Jewish settlers into the broader colonial society and economy.

Immigration Waves and Community Growth

The most significant chapters in the history of America's Jews unfolded with the massive immigration waves of the 19th and early 20th centuries. These newcomers transformed the demographic and cultural landscape of American Jewry.

German Jews and the Mid-19th Century

The first major wave involved German-speaking Jews fleeing political unrest and economic hardship. They settled primarily in urban centers such as New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago. German Jews were often middle-class and integrated relatively quickly, establishing institutions like Reform congregations and Jewish newspapers. Their influence helped shape the American Jewish identity, balancing tradition with modernity.

Eastern European Jews and the Turn of the Century

A second, larger wave came from Eastern Europe, primarily Russia and Poland, starting in the 1880s. These immigrants were mostly poor and religiously observant, escaping pogroms and persecution. Unlike the earlier German Jews, Eastern European Jews often lived in crowded urban neighborhoods such as New York's Lower East Side. They brought with them rich cultural traditions, including Yiddish language, Hasidic customs, and a strong commitment to community support.

Building Communities and Institutions

To address the challenges of poverty, discrimination, and assimilation, Jewish immigrants created a robust network of communal organizations. These included social clubs, mutual aid societies, labor unions, and educational institutions. The establishment of Jewish day schools and Yiddish theaters helped preserve cultural identity while fostering adaptation to American life.

Jewish Contributions to American Society

Throughout their history in America, Jews have made significant contributions across various fields, reflecting their integration and influence.

Economic and Cultural Impact

Jewish entrepreneurs and business leaders played pivotal roles in industries such as retail, manufacturing, and entertainment. The rise of Jewish-owned department stores and the founding of Hollywood's major studios showcase this economic influence. Culturally, Jewish artists, writers, and intellectuals enriched American literature, music, and philosophy, blending Jewish heritage with American themes.

Political and Social Activism

Jewish Americans have also been active in political and social movements. From advocating labor rights in the early 20th century to fighting for civil rights and social justice, Jewish activists have

contributed to shaping a more equitable America. Their experiences with discrimination fueled their commitment to combating prejudice and promoting human rights for all.

Facing Anti-Semitism and Building Resilience

Despite the promise of liberty, Jewish Americans have confronted persistent anti-Semitism throughout their history. This darker aspect of their story highlights their resilience and determination.

Historic and Contemporary Challenges

From restrictive quotas in universities and professions to violent attacks and vandalism, anti-Semitism has taken many forms. The rise of extremist groups in various periods posed threats to Jewish safety and security. However, Jewish communities responded by strengthening their institutions, engaging in interfaith dialogue, and advocating for legal protections.

Lessons in Unity and Advocacy

The Jewish experience in America underscores the importance of solidarity, education, and advocacy in overcoming prejudice. Organizations like the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) emerged to monitor and combat hate crimes, promote tolerance, and defend civil rights. This proactive stance has been crucial in maintaining Jewish life and values in the face of adversity.

Modern Jewish Life in America

Today, Jewish Americans represent a diverse and dynamic community. Their history of adaptation and contribution continues to evolve in new and exciting ways.

Diversity Within the Jewish Community

Modern American Jewry encompasses a wide array of religious practices, cultural backgrounds, and political views. From Orthodox to Reform congregations, secular Jews to cultural enthusiasts, the community reflects a spectrum of identities. This diversity enriches Jewish life and offers multiple avenues for engagement and expression.

Continuing Legacy and Future Directions

Education remains a cornerstone, with numerous Jewish day schools, universities, and cultural centers promoting heritage and scholarship. Moreover, younger generations are increasingly

involved in social justice initiatives, interfaith work, and innovative cultural projects. This ongoing evolution ensures that the story of America's Jews remains vibrant and relevant.

Understanding This Land of Liberty: A History of America's Jews

Exploring this land of liberty a history of americas jews invites us to appreciate the complexities and triumphs of a community that has helped shape the nation. Their journey from early settlers seeking freedom to active participants in American life embodies the ideals of liberty, resilience, and diversity. By learning about their past, we gain a deeper understanding of America itself — a land where many peoples have come to build new lives and contribute to a shared future. Whether through cultural innovation, social activism, or steadfast faith, the history of America's Jews remains a powerful testament to the enduring spirit of freedom.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is 'This Land of Liberty: A History of America's Jews' about?

'This Land of Liberty: A History of America's Jews' is a comprehensive book that explores the history, experiences, and contributions of Jewish Americans from their early arrival in America to the present day.

Who is the author of 'This Land of Liberty: A History of America's Jews'?

The book is authored by a historian or scholar specializing in Jewish American history, though the specific author should be verified based on the edition or publication.

What time periods does 'This Land of Liberty' cover in its history of America's Jews?

The book covers a broad timeline, including colonial America, the waves of immigration in the 19th and 20th centuries, and contemporary Jewish American life.

How does 'This Land of Liberty' address the challenges faced by Jewish Americans?

The book discusses various challenges such as anti-Semitism, assimilation pressures, and socio-economic struggles, highlighting how Jewish Americans overcame these obstacles.

Does 'This Land of Liberty' explore the cultural contributions of Jewish Americans?

Yes, the book highlights significant cultural, social, political, and economic contributions made by Jewish Americans throughout U.S. history.

Is 'This Land of Liberty' suitable for academic study or general readership?

'This Land of Liberty' is written to be accessible for both academic audiences and general readers interested in American Jewish history.

How does 'This Land of Liberty' portray the relationship between Jewish Americans and broader American society?

The book examines the dynamic and evolving relationship, emphasizing integration, identity, and the impact of Jewish Americans on the wider cultural and political landscape.

Are there notable figures featured in 'This Land of Liberty'?

Yes, the book profiles prominent Jewish American individuals who have influenced various fields such as politics, arts, science, and civil rights.

What themes are central to 'This Land of Liberty: A History of America's Jews'?

Central themes include immigration, identity, religious freedom, resilience, adaptation, and the pursuit of the American Dream.

Where can I access or purchase 'This Land of Liberty: A History of America's Jews'?

The book is available through major bookstores, online retailers like Amazon, and may also be found in libraries or academic institutions.

Additional Resources

****This Land of Liberty: A History of America's Jews****

this land of liberty a history of americas jews traces the intricate and multifaceted journey of Jewish communities from the earliest days of European colonization to their profound influence on modern American society. The narrative of Jewish Americans is one of resilience, adaptation, and contribution, reflecting broader themes of immigration, identity, and cultural integration within the United States. As a subject of historical scrutiny, it offers valuable insights into how minority communities have shaped and been shaped by the evolving American landscape.

Historical Foundations of Jewish Life in America

The story of Jews in America begins in the 17th century, with the arrival of Sephardic Jews fleeing persecution in Europe and the Inquisition. Early Jewish settlers established roots in colonial cities such as New Amsterdam (now New York) and Charleston, South Carolina. Their experience was marked by a search for religious freedom and economic opportunity, emblematic of America's broader promise as "this land of liberty."

Despite their small numbers, these early Jewish communities were instrumental in laying the groundwork for religious pluralism in the United States. Unlike Europe, where Jews often faced systemic discrimination and violence, early America offered a comparatively tolerant environment. This relative freedom allowed Jewish settlers to establish synagogues, participate in commerce, and integrate into civic life, setting a precedent for Jewish immigration waves in subsequent centuries.

The Waves of Jewish Immigration

Jewish immigration to America can broadly be divided into two major waves: the Sephardic pioneers of the colonial era and the Ashkenazi influx during the 19th and early 20th centuries. The latter group, primarily from Eastern Europe, arrived in the United States seeking refuge from pogroms, anti-Semitic laws, and economic hardship.

This second wave dramatically transformed the demographic and cultural landscape of American Jewry. Between 1880 and 1924, over two million Jews arrived, predominantly settling in urban centers such as New York City, Philadelphia, and Chicago. Their experiences differed significantly from their Sephardic predecessors, as they often found themselves in crowded tenements and faced xenophobia alongside economic challenges.

Cultural and Social Contributions

Jewish Americans have played a critical role in shaping the cultural, political, and economic fabric of the United States. From the arts to science, from business to social justice movements, the Jewish community's impact is both broad and deep.

Economic Impact and Entrepreneurship

Many Jewish immigrants initially found work in the garment industry, establishing businesses that would grow into major companies. Notable enterprises like Levi Strauss & Co. and Warner Bros. were founded or developed by Jewish entrepreneurs, illustrating the community's role in America's industrial and cultural development.

Moreover, Jewish Americans have historically emphasized education and professional achievement, contributing disproportionately to fields such as law, medicine, academia, and finance. This emphasis on upward mobility parallels broader immigrant success narratives but is distinguished by a communal commitment to cultural preservation.

Religious and Cultural Identity

Maintaining religious and cultural identity has been a central challenge and achievement for American Jews. Synagogues, Jewish schools, and community organizations have served as anchors, enabling generations to preserve traditions while adapting to contemporary American life.

Jewish culture in America also reflects a synthesis of diverse origins. The interplay of Sephardic customs with Ashkenazi traditions, alongside American cultural influences, has produced a dynamic and evolving Jewish American identity. This hybridity is evident in literature, music, cuisine, and religious practice.

Challenges and Resilience

The history of Jews in America is not without adversity. Anti-Semitism, while less institutionalized than in Europe, has persisted in various forms—from social exclusion and stereotypes to violent acts such as the 1915 lynching of Leo Frank and more recent hate crimes.

The community's response has typically been characterized by resilience and activism. Jewish Americans have been prominent advocates for civil rights, religious freedom, and social justice, often drawing on their collective history of persecution to inform their efforts.

Political Engagement and Advocacy

Throughout the 20th century, Jewish Americans increasingly engaged in political life, supporting movements aligned with their values, including labor rights, civil rights, and immigration reform. Organizations such as the American Jewish Committee and the Anti-Defamation League emerged as key players in combating discrimination and promoting pluralism.

The community's political orientation has often leaned toward liberal causes, though it reflects a spectrum of views shaped by generational changes and geopolitical considerations, notably the relationship between the United States and Israel.

Comparative Perspectives: Jewish Experiences in America and Beyond

Analyzing the Jewish American experience in comparison to Jewish histories in Europe, Latin America, and Israel reveals unique patterns shaped by America's distinct social and political context. Unlike the pervasive state-sponsored anti-Semitism in Europe, America's legal framework provided protections that enabled Jewish communities to flourish, albeit with ongoing challenges.

In contrast to Latin America, where Jewish populations remained smaller and often more isolated, the United States became a central hub for Jewish cultural production and institutional development. Similarly, while Israel represents the Jewish national homeland, the diasporic

experience in America underscores themes of cultural hybridity and pluralistic identity.

Pros and Cons of the American Jewish Experience

- **Pros:** Relative religious freedom, economic opportunity, political influence, cultural diversity, and robust communal support systems.
- **Cons:** Persistent anti-Semitism, assimilation pressures, internal community divisions, and the challenge of maintaining identity in a secular society.

Modern Reflections: Identity and Integration in the 21st Century

Today, the Jewish American community continues to evolve amid shifting social dynamics and global challenges. Issues such as intermarriage, secularization, and the digital revolution are reshaping communal boundaries and cultural expressions.

Organizations and leaders are increasingly focused on fostering inclusive identities that honor heritage while embracing contemporary realities. Educational initiatives, cultural festivals, and interfaith dialogues exemplify efforts to sustain Jewish life in a pluralistic society.

Furthermore, the rise of antisemitic incidents in recent years has galvanized renewed political and social activism, emphasizing the ongoing relevance of historical awareness and communal solidarity.

This land of liberty a history of americas jews is thus an ongoing narrative—one that captures the complex interplay between a minority community and the broader society in which it lives. It is a testament to perseverance and adaptation, reflecting both the promise and the challenges inherent in the American ideal.

[This Land Of Liberty A History Of Americas Jews](#)

this land of liberty a history of americas jews: Vom Jerusalemer Tempel nach New York
Boris Fernbacher, 2018-03-02 Das 484 Seiten starke Buch nimmt den Leser mit auf eine faszinierende Reise durch 3000 Jahre jüdischer Musikgeschichte: Vom Auszug aus Ägypten über Antike, Mittelalter und Neuzeit bis in unsere Gegenwart. Durch Israel und den Nahen Osten, Nordafrika, die Türkei, Südosteuropa, die Iberische Halbinsel, West-, Mittel- und Osteuropa bis nach Russland und in die USA. Es geht u.a. um traditionelle jüdische Gebete, die Musik der Chassidim, Jazz- und Rockmusik in Israel, mehrstimmige Musik der Synagoge, Musik aus den Konzentrationslagern, Lieder der Sephardim, einen jüdischen Minnesänger im Mittelalter, klassische Kompositionen über jüdische Themen, die Klänge im altisraelitischen Tempel in Jerusalem, jüdische Kantoren des 19. Jahrhunderts, die Musik der Juden in Nordamerika, Israel

sowie im islamischen Raum und vieles mehr. Dabei werden viele Themenbereiche behandelt, die in deutschsprachiger Literatur bislang noch gar nicht oder nur am Rande dargestellt wurden. Im Mittelpunkt steht dabei immer die Musik selber! Musikalische Stile, Gattungen und Entwicklungen im Judentum zu verschiedenen Zeiten und in unterschiedlichen Regionen werden dargestellt. Ausführlich und detailliert werden weltliche Lieder, religiöse Hymnen und Gebete, Kompositionen der Klassischen Musik sowie Jazz- und Rocksongs musikwissenschaftlich analysiert. Biografien und allgemeine Darstellungen der historischen und religiös-kulturellen Entwicklungen ergänzen dies, da ein tieferes Verständnis von Musik in ihrer jeweiligen Zeit nur aus dem Zusammenspiel dieser drei Faktoren erwachsen kann. Mehr als 100 Notenbeispiele und über 60, teils farbige Abbildungen erleichtern das Verständnis des Textes. Ein ausführlicher Apparat aus Quellenverweisen auf Forschungsliteratur und etliche Anmerkungen in den Fußnoten laden zum vertiefenden Studium der Materie ein. Fazit: Ein einzigartiges, sowohl für Laien als auch bereits näher im Thema involvierte Leser geeignetes, interessantes und spannend geschriebenes Buch, das jedem Leser zum empfehlen ist, der sich für Musik und/oder jüdische Geschichte und Kultur interessiert.

this land of liberty a history of americas jews: Bridges and Boundaries African Americans and American Jew Jack Salzman, Adina Back, Gretchen Sullivan Sorin, 1992 While no single volume can fully explain this issue, Bridges and Boundaries: African Americans and American Jews provides us with a means to challenge, and perhaps even to verify, our sense of the past - and in so doing to better understand the present. Fifteen critical essays by leading historians, scholars, and political and religious figures of this century provide historical overviews of the relationships between African Americans and American Jews. They also represent the diverse attitudes within the two groups, and reflect the multiple voices that have themselves shaped these attitudes. A visual essay that follows links texts and images of more than one hundred works of art and artifacts, first seen in an exhibit at The Jewish Museum, to explore the historical places at which the paths of African Americans and American Jews have crossed in meaningful ways during this century.

this land of liberty a history of americas jews: How America Met the Jews Hasia R. Diner, 2017-12-29 Explore how American conditions and Jewish circumstances collided in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries In this new book award-winning author Hasia R. Diner explores the issues behind why European Jews overwhelmingly chose to move to the United States between the 1820s and 1920s. Unlike books that tend to romanticize American freedom as the force behind this period of migration or that tend to focus on Jewish contributions to America or that concentrate on how Jewish traditions of literacy and self-help made it possible for them to succeed, Diner instead focuses on aspects of American life and history that made it the preferred destination for 90 percent of European Jews. Features: Examination of the realities of race, immigration, color, money, economic development, politics, and religion in America Exploration of an America agenda that sought out white immigrants to help stoke economic development and that valued religion as a force for morality

this land of liberty a history of americas jews: The Cambridge Companion to Jewish American Literature Hana Wirth-Nesher, Michael P. Kramer, 2003-06-12 For more than two hundred years, Jews have played important roles in the development of American literature. The Cambridge Companion to Jewish American Literature addresses a wide array of themes and approaches to the distinct yet multifaceted body of Jewish American literature. Essays examine writing from the 1700s to major contemporary writers such as Saul Bellow and Philip Roth. Topics covered include literary history, immigration and acculturation, Yiddish and Hebrew literature, popular culture, women writers, literary theory and poetics, multilingualism, the Holocaust, and contemporary fiction. This collection of specially commissioned essays by leading figures discusses Jewish American literature in relation to ethnicity, religion, politics, race, gender, ideology, history, and ethics, and places it in the contexts of both Jewish and American writing. With its chronology and guides to further reading, this volume will prove valuable to scholars and students alike.

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this land of liberty a history of americas jews: DK Eyewitness Travel Guide: USA , 2010-03-01 DK Eyewitness USA travel guide will lead you straight to the best attractions this fascinating country has on offer. Packed with photographs, illustrations and detailed maps discover the USA region-by-region; from the snow-drenched rockies to the Arizona desert. The guide provides all the insider tips every visitor needs from where best to see the fiery colours of New England's fall foliage to sampling island-life in Hawaii with comprehensive listings of the best hotels, resorts, restaurants and nightlife in each region for all budgets. You'll find 3D cutaways and floorplans of all the must-see sites plus street-by-street maps of all the great American cities and towns. DK Eyewitness USA explores the culture, history, architecture and art of this diverse country not forgetting the best scenic routes and the country's magnificent national parks. With up-to-date information on getting around by train, car, walking in cities and all the sights and resorts listed town by town, DK Eyewitness USA is indispensable. Don't miss a thing on your holiday with the DK Eyewitness USA

this land of liberty a history of americas jews: *The Jews in Colonial America* Oscar Reiss, 2015-01-24 The first synagogue in colonial America was built in New York City in 1730 on land that was purchased for £100 plus a loaf of sugar and one pound of Bohea tea. The purchase of this land was especially noteworthy because until this time, the Jews had only been permitted to buy land for use as a cemetery. However, by the time the Revolutionary War began, the Jewish religious center had become fairly large. Early in their stay in New Amsterdam and New York, many Jews considered themselves to be transients. Therefore, they were not interested in voting, holding office or equal rights. However, as the 18th century came to a close, Jews were able to accumulate large estates, and they recognized that they needed citizenship. After a brief overview of the Jews' migrations around Europe, the West Indies and the North and South American continents, this book describes the hardships faced by the Jewish people, beginning with New Amsterdam and New York and continuing with discussions of their experiences in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, New England, and in the South. Subsequent chapters discuss anti-Semitism, slavery and the Jews' transformation from immigrant status to American citizen.

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this land of liberty a history of americas jews: Encyclopedia of American Jewish History Stephen H. Norwood, Eunice G. Pollack, 2007-08-28 Written by the most prominent scholars in American Jewish history, this encyclopedia illuminates the varied experiences of America's Jews and their impact on American society and culture over three and a half centuries. American Jews have profoundly shaped, and been shaped by, American culture. Yet American history texts have largely ignored the Jewish experience. The Encyclopedia of American Jewish History corrects that omission. In essays and short entries written by 125 of the world's leading scholars of American Jewish history and culture, this encyclopedia explores both religious and secular aspects of American Jewish life. It examines the European background and immigration of American Jews and their impact on the professions and academic disciplines, mass culture and the arts, literature and theater, and labor and radical movements. It explores Zionism, antisemitism, responses to the Holocaust, the branches of Judaism, and Jews' relations with other groups, including Christians, Muslims, and African Americans. The encyclopedia covers the Jewish press and education, Jewish organizations, and Jews' participation in America's wars. In two comprehensive volumes, Encyclopedia of American Jewish History makes 350 years of American Jewish experience accessible to scholars, all levels of students, and the reading public.

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struggles of 25 years at Temple Sinai, a large Reform Jewish synagogue in Washington, D.C. The book includes a selection of Rabbi Fred Reiners High Holy Day sermons, Purim messages, scholarly papers, and additional writings that comment on key moments in his tenure. The result reflects Rabbi Reiners religious and intellectual journey, as well as the history of Temple Sinai during years of challenge, expansion, and growth. Standing at Sinai grapples with the questions confronting the congregation and the larger Jewish community at the turn of the 21st century: Can our Jewish community maintain its integrity as it continues to assimilate? What role does Israel play in our lives? What are the beliefs and values that help to shape us as post-modern American Jews?

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this land of liberty a history of americas jews: *The Posen Library of Jewish Culture and Civilization, Volume 9* Samuel D. Kassow, David G. Roskies, 2020-11-24 The Posen Library's groundbreaking anthology series—called “a feast of Jewish culture, in ten volumes” by the Chronicle of Higher Education—explores in Volume 9 global Jewish responses to the years 1939 to 1973, a time of unprecedented destruction, dislocation, agency, and creativity “An extensive look at Jewish civilization and culture from the eve of World War II to the Yom Kippur War . . . It's a weighty collection, to be sure, but one that's consistently engaging . . . An edifying and diverse survey of 20th-century Jewish life.”—Kirkus Reviews, starred review “Readers seeking primary texts, documents, images, and artifacts constituting Jewish culture and civilization will not be disappointed. More important, they might even be inspired. . . . This set will serve to improve teaching and research in Jewish studies at institutions of higher learning and, at the same time, promote, maintain, and improve understanding of the Jewish population and Judaism in general.”—Booklist, starred review The ninth volume of The Posen Library of Jewish Culture and Civilization covers the years 1939 to 1973, a period that editors Kassow and Roskies call “one of the most tragic and dramatic in Jewish history.” Organized geographically and then by genre, this book details Jewish cultural and intellectual resources throughout this era, particularly in political thought, literature, the visual and performing arts, and religion. This volume explores worldwide Jewish perceptions of momentous events that transpired in the mid-twentieth century and how Jews redefined themselves across regions throughout an era rife with tragedy, displacement, and dispersion. The breadth and depth of this work goes beyond any comparable collection, with detailed insights and sharp focus to accompany its breathtaking scope. A major, ten-volume anthology project more than a decade in the making, the Posen Library is an ideal reference tool for scholars, teachers, and students at all levels.

this land of liberty a history of americas jews: *American Jewry* Christian Wiese, Cornelia Wilhelm, 2016-11-03 American Jewry explores new transnational questions in Jewish history, analyzing the historical, cultural and social experience of American Jewry from 1654 to the present day, and evaluates the relationship between European and American Jewish history. Did the hopes of Jewish immigrants to establish an independent American Judaism in a free and pluralistic country come to fruition? How did Jews in America define their relationship to the 'Old World' of Europe, both before and after the Holocaust? What are the religious, political and cultural challenges for American Jews in the twenty-first century? Internationally renowned scholars come together in this volume to present new research on how immigration from Western and Eastern Europe established a new and distinctively American Jewish identity that went beyond the traditions of Europe, yet remained attached in many ways to its European origins.

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the American Jewish Historical Society. Contains books and articles, most of them in English, dealing with the history of Jews in North America and in Latin America. See the subject index for items on antisemitism.

this land of liberty a history of americas jews: Facts about American Immigration David M. Brownstone, Irene M. Franck, 2001 The massive, worldwide emigration to the United States has been a major feature of world history for more than five centuries and into the present day. Facts About American Immigration explores this extraordinary saga, focusing on who came to the U.S. and from where, their reasons for coming, the nature of their journey, and where they settled, starting with the earliest Americans, who crossed the Bering Land Bridge into Alaska between 12,000 and 15,000 B.C. The volume is a practical resource for historians and sociologists, as well as a boon to genealogical researchers. The work opens with an overview, including extensive statistical materials, to place the process of immigration in a wide historical context. This section also includes: A survey of the efforts to restrict immigration A portrait of the immigrant journey over the centuries A discussion of Native Americans and immigration A chronology of immigration The main section of the book delves into immigration experiences, numbers, and motives, by region of emigration: Europe, Africa, Asia, the Americas, and Oceania. Each section begins with a brief introduction to the region, followed by a series of articles focusing on specific countries or groups of countries. Articles include tables and graphs that summarise and portray statistical information relating to immigration, as well as related Internet and print resources. Each regional section ends with tables and graphs summarising the pattern of immigration from the region, plus general Internet and print resources.

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