



The Jewish American Family Album (American Family Albums)

Dorothy Hoobler, Thomas Hoobler

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As long ago as September 1654, 23 Jews disembarked from a ship named the *Sainte Catherine* into New Amsterdam--today's New York City. They came to find a safe haven from oppression and religious persecution and to seek economic opportunity. But even they were not the first Jewish Americans, and they were certainly not the last. Three million Jewish immigrants followed in the next three centuries. Today, about 4 out of every 10 Jews in the world are U. S. citizens.

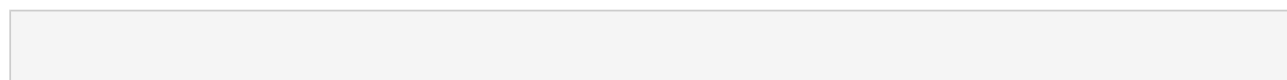
The Jewish American Family Album tells personal stories of Jewish immigrants from their arrival in this country (as early as 1579) to the present day. Dorothy and Thomas Hoobler have found letters, diaries, and newspaper articles that describe what life was like in the old countries and tell of the difficulties encountered in leaving home for a new life in America. They have combed through family archives and scrapbooks to find personal accounts that make history as immediate and exciting as stories told generation after generation in any family.

In their own words, we learn what life was like for these millions of Jewish immigrants. We read of the earliest of the Jewish Americans, some of whom fought and died in the Revolution. We hear from Holocaust survivors and their children. We discover that from the beginning, Jewish Americans provided a base of support--lodging and fellowship--for those who followed. The part Jewish Americans played in the settlement of the American West, their strategic importance to the U.S. labor movement, and their many contributions to theater and music are documented with rare first-person accounts and extraordinary photographs. We hear of the challenges the immigrants faced, including anti-Semitism, even in the "Land of the Free." But Jewish Americans linked old traditions with new ones to build communities that have become a permanent and important part of American life.

The memories and experiences of well-known Jewish Americans such as comedians George Burns and Jack Benny, Oscar Solomon Straus (the first Jewish Presidential cabinet member), and novelist Edna Ferber are included, as are profiles of Barbra Streisand, Steven Spielberg, Leonard Bernstein, union leader Samuel Gompers, and poet Emma Lazarus, among others. But other Jewish Americans who did not achieve celebrity status are also represented. Moses Albert Levy, a doctor who joined Sam Houston's army, 13-year-old Mary Antin, who arrived in Boston in 1894, Sarah Thal, who was a homesteader in the Dakotas, and many more fascinating but unknown immigrants tell powerful, emotional, and sometimes funny stories of life in their new homeland.

These memories and profiles are illustrated with rare and moving photographs from news sources and family collections. They show in vivid fashion a people who have brought us humor, spirit, and perseverance. *The Jewish American Family Album* is an important tribute to the magnificent variety of people and cultures that makes up our United States.

The titles in the American Family Albums series tell the multicolored and often heroic stories of American immigrant groups, largely through their own words and pictures. Like any family album or scrapbook, the pages contain many period photographs and other memorabilia. These join with original documents--including selections from diaries, letters, memoirs, and newspapers--to bring the immigrant experience vividly to life.



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