

The Forerunners: Dutch Jewry in the North American Diaspora (American Jewish Civilization Series)

Robert P. Swierenga

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Robert P. Swierenga : The Forerunners: Dutch Jewry in the North American Diaspora (American Jewish Civilization Series) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Forerunners: Dutch Jewry in the North American Diaspora (American Jewish Civilization Series):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Lydia F. Burns Great book about my ancestors. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Wonderful book on early Jewish communities in the United States By Julie Kaye I hope that we can get a reprint of this book. I am assisting someone with research and found this in my local library, but it's under lock and key. If I couldn't view the book at my local library, I think I'd have difficulty getting a copy through inter-library loan. I'd love to add a copy to my personal library. It's an excellent resource on Jewish populations in the major cities. The author includes maps and histories of different families, which provides a good balance of historical narrative and graphics for contextual visualization. While there is a focus on Jewish individuals and their families with Dutch background, it's very useful to understand the history of early Jewish communities in the United States, as a whole. Not only does it have a lot of information, the back is loaded with other resources by chapter, so if you are looking for additional information, the book points you to a many other equally useful resources.

The Forerunners offers the first detailed history of the immigration of Dutch Jews to the United States and to the whole American diaspora. Robert Swierenga describes the life of Jews in Holland during the Napoleonic era and examines the factors that caused them to emigrate, first to the major eastern seaboard cities of the United States, then to the frontier cities of the Midwest, and finally to San Francisco. He provides a detailed look at life among the Dutch Jews in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and New Orleans. Swierenga gathered materials from published local community histories, Jewish archival records and periodicals, synagogue records, and particularly, the Federal Population Census manuscripts from 1820 through 1900. He details the contributions and the leadership provided by the Dutch Jews and relates how they lost their "Dutchness" and their Orthodoxy within several generations of their arrival here and were absorbed into broader American Judaism.

From Library Journal Swierenga (who edited *The Dutch in America*, Rutgers Univ. Pr., 1985) has broken new ground in this detailed history of the immigration of Dutch Jews to this country—until now, a story that has remained largely untold. This comprehensive work on Dutch Jews in America, from the early Colonial years to the modern period, includes chapters for the major Eastern seaboard cities; the Great Lakes frontier cities of Buffalo, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Toledo, Detroit, Chicago, and Saint Louis; and westward to San Francisco. The author examines Jewish archival records and periodicals and synagogue records along with the Federal Population Census, city directories, and local histories. The results detail the contributions and the leadership provided by Dutch Jews and relates their Americanization, along with their absorption into broader American Judaism. An authoritative reference on Dutch Jewry in America, this book is highly recommended for all students of American Jewish and religious history. But its contribution is far broader, and its value in the fields of American immigration and social history make it essential for serious collections of American history, local history, and genealogy. Judith P. Reid, Library of Congress

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