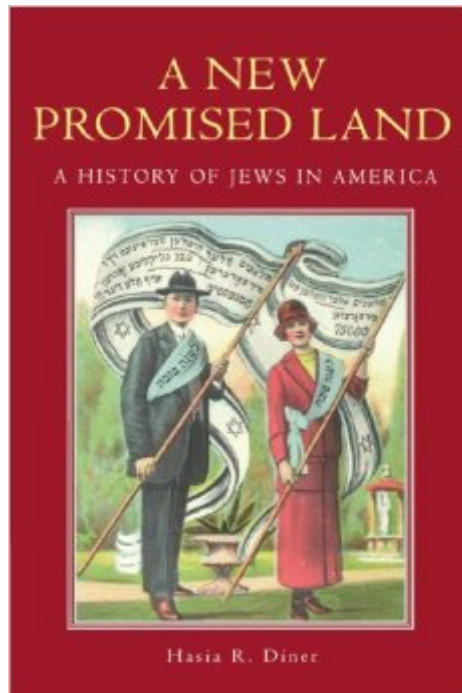


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# A New Promised Land: A History Of Jews In America (Religion In American Life)



## Synopsis

"An excellent Afikoman gift for the teen or young adult at the seder... Diner...writes in a clear style that pulls together that diverse entity known as the American Jewish community."--The Chicago Jewish Star  
An engaging chronicle of Jewish life in the United States, *A New Promised Land* reconstructs the multifaceted background and very American adaptations of this religious group, from the arrival of twenty-three Jews in the New World in 1654, through the development of the Orthodox, conservative, and Reform movements, to the ordination of Sally Priesand as the first woman rabbi in the United States. Hasia Diner supplies fascinating details about Jewish religious traditions, holidays, and sacred texts. In addition, she relates the history of the Jewish religious, political, and intellectual institutions in the United States, and addresses some of the biggest issues facing Jewish Americans today, including their increasingly complex relationship with Israel.

## Book Information

Series: Religion in American Life

Paperback: 176 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press; 1st edition (2002)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0195158261

ISBN-13: 978-0195158267

Product Dimensions: 8.2 x 0.7 x 5.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.1 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 2.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (2 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #162,918 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #28 in [Books > Children's Books > Religions > Judaism](#) #38 in [Books > History > World > Religious > Ethnic & Tribal](#) #84 in [Books > History > Americas > United States > Immigrants](#)

## Customer Reviews

I didn't learn much new and encountered a pronounced bias in favor of Orthodox Judaism. I was interested in learning more about Jews in very early America and I did learn a little. I had heard there was a rabbi at George Washington's inauguration. This book mentions George Washington four times in connection with Jews and even mentions a letter from a Virginia congregation congratulating him on his inauguration but it never mentions a rabbi at the official ceremony. I began to think maybe it was an urban legend, but no, if you research elsewhere, you will find that there was a very prominent American-born rabbi, Gershom Mendes Seixas, at the inauguration, which I

think is an important piece of American history in these days when so many people say the U.S. is a Christian country. I think Diner skips over him because he was not traditionally ordained. Diner says Irving Berlin "ceased to be a Jew." That was news to me and in fact it's not true. It's just that to Diner he ceased to be a Jew because he married a Gentile woman and his children were raised as Christians. While Berlin was not an observant Jew, there is no evidence that he renounced Judaism and it is my understanding that he would be considered Jewish even by Orthodox standards. Berlin received honors from the National Conference of Christians and Jews and the New York YMHA. Diner tends toward broad generalizations such as saying the only ones who could prevent the Holocaust were American Jews (p. 88). She often makes it sound like all Jews were of a one mind politically/socially/philosophically, other than differences in religious observance. She never ever mentions Palestinians living in the area that Zionists wished to settle, never mentions the refugee problem.

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