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## **Jewish Roots in Southern Soil: A New History (review)**

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(p. 2–3). Like Michele Accolti in San Francisco, Jesuits moved between western communities, interacting with Indians, Hispanics, and European immigrants in schools, parishes, and districts. McKeivitt shows how Jesuits' foreign nationalities helped them win the trust of marginalized groups mistrustful of Protestant America. At the same time, Jesuits' unfamiliarity with the West's religious plurality tended to make them "polemical and adversarial" toward Protestants (p. 239). In the Southwest, Jesuits mediated between Anglo culture and *californio*, *tejano*, and *nuevomexicano* cultures even as they propagated a proudly Old World Catholicism.

With its important themes of transnationalism and religious accommodation, *Brokers of Culture* deserves a wider reading audience than it will likely find. Its abundance of detail and slow start—ninety pages pass before McKeivitt turns his attention to the actual West—may hinder its attractiveness to nonspecialists of Catholic history. However, the book's countless stories of individual Jesuits, placed as they are within a broader international context, reward the patient reader with a new understanding of a largely misunderstood and ignored religious subculture that left an enduring mark on the American West.

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JOSHUA PADDISON

*Jewish Roots in Southern Soil: A New History*. Edited by Marcie Cohen Ferris and Mark I. Greenberg. (Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis University Press, 2006. Pp. 384. Illustrations, notes, index. ISBN 1584655887. \$65.00, cloth. ISBN 1584655895. \$29.95, paper.)

Because the first Jews came to America in 1654, a "stream of books and essays" (p. xi) has been published in recent years to commemorate the 250th anniversary of that event. Among these have been anthologies focusing on specific states and regions, such as *Lone Stars of David: The Jews of Texas* (2007), edited by Hollace Ava Weiner and Kenneth D. Roseman, and *Jewish Life in the American West* (2002), edited by Ava F. Kahn. *Jewish Roots in Southern Soil* (2006) is a "timely contribution" (p. xi) to that genre.

Composed of thirteen carefully researched essays by noted scholars, *Jewish Roots* offers "a rich gumbo of ideas and observations" (p. x). The introduction provides a concise overview of Jews in Southern history. Chapters one through eight are organized chronologically, beginning with "One Religion, Different Worlds: Sephardic and Ashkenazic Immigrants in Eighteenth-Century Savannah" and concluding with "A Tangled Web: Black-Jewish Relations in the Twentieth-Century South." Topics as diverse as Jewish women writers and Jewish Confederates are included. The remaining five analytical essays cover broader themes, such as "sacred and profane" food (p. 226), material culture, and demographic information.

According to the editors, "all American Jews . . . have two things in common" (p. 19). One is "their Jewish heritage" (p. 19). The other is the strong influence of "the places they call home" (p. 19). The authors of the essays agree that historically there has been "a distinctive Southern Jewish history and identity" (back cover). That identity is "compounded of rural and small towns, southern mores—especially racial

practices—and Jewish traditions” (back cover). Motivated by economic opportunity, Southern Jews inhabited “a region not famous for cherishing pluralism” (p. 309). They often made a number of accommodations “to fit into their surroundings” (p. 299). For some, these adaptations included abandoning traditional religious practices in favor of the Reform movement “with its English prayers and Christian-based elements” (p. 299) and also accepting the necessity of doing business on the Sabbath (Saturdays). Others intermarried with gentiles and began to attend Christian churches. By assimilating to a greater or lesser degree, Jews in the South once again proved “that Judaism can endure in the most ominous conditions” (p. 2).

The authors disagree as to whether a distinctive Southern Jewish identity still exists, because the “mercantile and village way of life is dying” (p. 326). Despite this debate, they argue that Southern Jewry is alive and well. Atlanta, for example, has become a “center of American Jewish life” (p. 294) and has experienced an increase in the number of Orthodox congregations. Even more significantly, despite the stagnating Jewish population in the United States overall, the number of Jews in the South has doubled in the last seventy years. These newcomers to the Sunbelt are urban professionals lured by economic opportunities and senior citizens seeking to retire. As one author hypothesized, these new Southern Jews will adapt but in different ways than earlier generations. They “will find their American, Jewish and Southern identities becoming intertwined like a challah [braided egg bread]” (p. 325).

*Jewish Roots* has limited material directly related to Texas but offers valuable information and insights into the history of Jews in the South. Any reader should be able to find something of interest in the impressive variety of topics covered in the anthology.

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*Lone Star Lawmen: The Second Century of the Texas Rangers.* By Robert M. Utley. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007. Pp. 416. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. ISBN 0195154444. \$30.00, cloth.)

While innumerable volumes of Texas Rangers histories grace the retail bookshelves, very few have attempted to examine the more modern era of this fabled group of lawmen. Noted frontier historian Robert Utley has produced the most comprehensive modern work in *Lone Star Lawmen: The Second Century of the Texas Rangers*, the second volume of his Rangers history. The result of years of archival research and countless interviews with active and retired Texas Rangers, *Lone Star Lawmen* extends the work of the original Rangers historical standard, *The Texas Rangers: A Century of Frontier Defense* by Walter Prescott Webb (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1935; Austin: University of Texas Press, 1965).

Utley places criticism where he feels it warranted but generally finds that the twentieth-century Rangers operated with efficiency and effectiveness. He begins by describing how during the early 1900s the Rangers declined in numbers, as well as in proficiency and in public respect. Between 1910 and 1915 people from El Paso to Brownsville were upset with the Rangers and some of their actions. For example, Utley relates the politics of the 1915–1916 Bandit War and how the conduct of some