



Jewish Women Pioneering the Frontier Trail: A History in the American West

Jeanne E. Abrams

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The image of the West looms large in the American imagination. Yet the history of American Jewry and particularly of American Jewish women—has been heavily weighted toward the East. **Jewish Women Pioneering the Frontier Trail** rectifies this omission as the first full book to trace the history and contributions of Jewish women in the American West.

In many ways, the Jewish experience in the West was distinct. Given the still-forming social landscape, beginning with the 1848 Gold Rush, Jews were able to integrate more fully into local communities than they had in the East. Jewish women in the West took advantage of the unsettled nature of the region to “open new doors” for themselves in the public sphere in ways often not yet possible elsewhere in the country. Women were crucial to the survival of early communities, and made distinct contributions not only in shaping Jewish communal life but outside the Jewish community as well. Western Jewish women's level of involvement at the vanguard of social welfare and progressive reform, commerce, politics, and higher education and the professions is striking given their relatively small numbers.

This engaging work—full of stories from the memoirs and records of Jewish pioneer women—illuminates the pivotal role these women played in settling America's Western frontier.

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