



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

Robert P. Swierenga

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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.

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