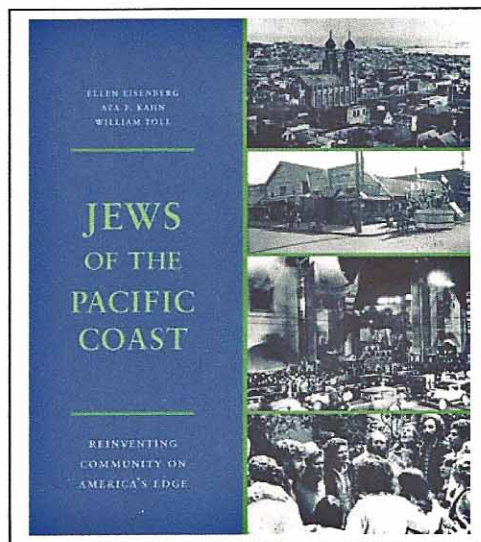


## Jews of the Pacific Coast

*Reinventing Community on America's Edge*

Ellen Eisenberg, Ava F. Kahn, and William Toll

From the California Gold Rush of 1849 to the explosion of population centers in the Southwest in the 1980s, Jews have played a significant role in shaping the Pacific West. Through their mercantile networks and cultural innovations, their philanthropic institutions and political leadership, western Jews created a distinctive identity. In *Jews of the Pacific Coast*, Ellen Eisenberg, Ava F. Kahn, and William Toll have joined together to write the first interpretive history of the Jews of this region.



In the West, Jewish men and women were less restricted in their pursuits than they had been in Europe or in the eastern United States. Unlike the East, where Jews arriving in large numbers had to accommodate themselves to preexisting local elites and Jewish communities, in the Pacific West they were full participants in the civic life of a new and rapidly developing society.

The authors examine the distinctive roles that Jews played in the Pacific West, especially the innovative role of women. Drawing on manuscript collections, oral histories, newspapers, and private papers, this collaborative work sketches the outline of Jewish life from its origins to contemporary times. Personal stories and anecdotes give the authors the opportunity to compare and contrast the nature of the Jewish experience in Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and the small towns of the West. They explain the important differences among these cities, the significance of the regional shift of focus in the early twentieth century from San Francisco to Los Angeles, and after 1960 the importance of new population centers like Las Vegas.

**Ellen Eisenberg**, the Dwight and Margaret Lear Professor of American History at Willamette University, is the author of *The First to Cry Down Injustice? Western Jews and Japanese Removal During WWII*, a 2008 National Jewish Book Award finalist. **Ava F. Kahn** is the editor of *Jewish Voices of the California Gold Rush* and *Jewish Life in the American West*. She co-edited *California Jews*. **William Toll** teaches American Jewish history at the University of Oregon and is the author of *The Making of an Ethnic Middle Class: Portland Jewry Over Four Generations*.

"*Jews of the Pacific Coast* embraces the entire Pacific West. It places the Jewish experience within a regional context; it highlights points of regional distinctiveness; and it makes the case for a more nuanced, regional approach to the American Jewish experience as a whole." — Jonathan D. Sarna, Brandeis University

*A Samuel and Althea Stroum Book.*

*Forthcoming January 2010. 320 pp., 55 illus., 8 in color, 2 maps, notes, bibliog., index*  
*\$50 hardcover, ISBN 978-0-295-98965-5*