

Cambridge University Press

0521792932 - The Cambridge Companion to Jewish American Literature

Edited by Hana Wirth-Nesher and Michael P. Kramer

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The Cambridge Companion to Jewish American Literature

For more than two hundred years, Jews have played important roles in the development of American literature. *The Cambridge Companion to Jewish American Literature* addresses a wide array of themes and approaches to this distinct yet multifaceted body of writing, among them literary history, immigration and acculturation, Yiddish and Hebrew literature, popular culture, women writers, literary theory and poetics, multilingualism, the Holocaust, and contemporary fiction. This collection of specially commissioned essays by leading figures discusses Jewish American literature in relation to ethnicity, religion, politics, race, gender, ideology, history, and ethics, and places it in the contexts of both Jewish and American writing. With its chronology and guides to further reading, this volume will prove valuable to scholars and students alike.

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COMPANION TO
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EDITED BY

HANA WIRTH-NESHER

MICHAEL P. KRAMER



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CHRONOLOGY

- 1492 Expulsion of Jews from Spain.
 Columbus' first voyage. Crypto-Jews said to be among his crew.
- 1654 Twenty-three indigent Sephardi Jews arrive in New Amsterdam from Brazil. *Shearith Israel* congregation founded in 1656.
- 1658 Newport, Rhode Island becomes home to Jews.
- 1722 Public conversion of Judah Monis at Harvard College.
- 1740 Parliament passes law allowing Jews to become citizens in British colonies.
- 1775 Battle of Lexington and Concord. American Revolution begins.
- 1776 Declaration of Independence. Francis Salvador, Jewish patriot, killed in battle.
- 1790 Moses Seixas and Newport Congregation welcome President Washington to Newport.
 Approximately 1,500 Jews in the United States.
- 1820 Jewish population doubles to 3,000.
- 1825 Cornerstone ceremony for Ararat, Mordecai M. Noah's planned Jewish colony near Buffalo, New York.
- 1826 Law passed in Maryland allowing Jews to hold public office.
- 1836 Jewish population stands at 6,000.
 Immigration of German Jews begins from Bavaria.
- 1843 Isaac Leeser founds *The Occident* in Philadelphia.
 B'nai Brith, a Jewish lodge, founded.
- 1854 Isaac Mayer Wise, *History of the Israelitish Nation*. Founds *The Israelite* in Cincinnati.
 Lévi-Strauss sells canvas pants to miners in California.
- 1860 Jewish population rises to 150,000.
 Wise publishes *First of the Maccabees*.
 Abraham Lincoln elected President. Civil War begins the following year.

CHRONOLOGY

- 1862 Judah Benjamin, former US Senator, becomes Attorney General and, later, Secretary of State of the Confederacy.
- 1881 A quarter million Jews in the United States.
 Pogroms in Russia. Mass immigration of East European Jews begins.
- 1882 Emma Lazarus, *Songs of a Semite*.
- 1883 Fundraising event for pedestal to Statue of Liberty. Emma Lazarus contributes "The New Colossus."
- 1885 Pittsburgh Platform, renouncing Jewish nationality, adopted by Reform rabbis.
- 1888 Famed Orthodox preacher Rabbi Jacob Joseph of Vilna becomes Chief Rabbi of New York.
 Jewish Publication Society of America founded in Philadelphia.
- 1892 American Jewish Historical Society founded.
- 1896 Abraham Cahan, *Yekl: A Tale of the New York Ghetto*.
- 1897 Founding of the *Yiddish Daily Forward* in New York.
- 1898 Morris Rosenfeld, *Songs from the Ghetto*.
- 1900 Jacob Gordin, *God, Man, and the Devil*.
 Over 1,000,000 Jews in the United States.
- 1901 *Jewish Encyclopedia* begins publication.
- 1904 The Jewish Museum founded in New York City.
- 1909 Gertrude Stein, *Three Lives*.
- 1912 Mary Antin, *The Promised Land*.
 Henrietta Szold founds Hadassah women's organization to aid Jews in Palestine.
- 1913 Lynching of Leo Frank.
- 1914 World War I begins.
- 1915 Horace Kallen, "Democracy *Versus* the Melting Pot."
 Founding of the *Menorah Journal*.
- 1916 Funeral of Sholem Aleichem in Manhattan.
 Louis Brandeis, first Jewish Supreme Court Justice, appointed.
- 1917 Abraham Cahan, *The Rise of David Levinsky*.
 Communist Revolution in Russia.
- 1918 Sholem Asch, *Uncle Moses*.
 Mani Leyb, *Lider* (Poems).
 Rose Cohen, *Out of the Shadow: A Russian Jewish Girlhood on the Lower East Side*.
- 1919 Moyshe-Leyb Halpern, *In nyu york* (In New York).
- 1920 Anzia Yezierska, *Hungry Hearts*.
 Nearly 3.5 million Jews in the United States.

CHRONOLOGY

- 1921 Joseph Opatoshu, *In Polish Woods*.
 Judah Leib Lazerow, *Mateb Yebuda* (The Staff of Judah).
- 1922 Ludwig Lewisohn, *Up Stream: An American Chronicle*.
 Hebrew newspaper *HaDoar* begins publication.
- 1923 Marcus Loew and Louis B. Mayer establish the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Corporation (MGM).
- 1924 Johnson Act restricts immigration.
- 1925 Anzia Yezierska, *Bread Givers*.
- 1926 Edna Ferber, *Show Boat*.
- 1927 Al Jolson stars in *The Jazz Singer*.
- 1929 Anna Margolin, *Lider* (Poems).
The Goldbergs begins on radio.
 Stock market crashes. Great Depression begins.
- 1930 Michael Gold, *Jews Without Money*.
- 1931 The Marx Brothers star in S. J. Perelman, *Monkey Business*.
 Lamed Shapiro, *New Yorkish*.
 Charles Reznikoff, *By the Waters of Manhattan*.
- 1932 Fannie Hurst, *Imitation of Life*.
 H. Leivick, *Lider* (Poems).
- 1933 Israel Efros, *Vigvamin Shotkim* (Silent Wigwags).
 Charles Reznikoff, *Testimony*.
 Albert Einstein flees Nazi Germany, arrives in the United States.
- 1934 Henry Roth, *Call It Sleep*.
 Mordecai Kaplan, *Judaism as a Civilization*.
 Tess Slesinger, *The Unpossessed*.
 Daniel Fuchs, *Summer in Williamsburg*.
 Founding of *Partisan Review*.
 Baseball star Hank Greenberg decides not to play for Detroit Tigers on Yom Kippur.
- 1935 Clifford Odets, *Waiting for Lefty*.
- 1937 Meyer Levin, *The Old Bunch*.
 Delmore Schwartz, *In Dreams Begin Responsibilities*.
 Ephraim Lisitzky, *Medurot do'akhot* (Dying Campfires).
 Kadya Molodowsky, *In the Country of My Bones*.
 Jacob Glatstein, *Yidishtaytshn*.
- 1938 Muriel Rukeyser, *Book of the Dead*.
 Irving Berlin, "God Bless America." The song is sung at both the Democratic and Republican conventions the following year.
- 1939 Nathanael West, *The Day of the Locust*.
 World War II begins. First reports of Holocaust reach the United States.

CHRONOLOGY

- Jewish population nears 4,000,000.
- 1943 Jacob Glatstein, *Gedenklider* (Memory Poems).
- 1945 Isaac Bashevis Singer, *The Family Moskat*.
 Founding of *Commentary* magazine.
- 1946 Isaac Rosenfeld, *Passage from Home*.
 Jo Sinclair, *Wasteland*.
 Sholem Asch, *East River*.
- 1947 Laura Hobson, *Gentleman's Agreement*.
 Arthur Miller, *All My Sons*.
 5,000,000 Jews in the United States.
- 1948 Irwin Shaw, *The Young Lions*.
 Norman Mailer, *The Naked and the Dead*.
 Israel declares independence. War with neighboring Arab states.
- 1949 Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman*.
 Ephraim Lisitsky, *Eleh toledot adam* (*In the Grip of Cross-Currents*).
- 1950 Lionel Trilling, *The Liberal Imagination*.
Your Show of Shows premieres on NBC.
- 1951 Alfred Kazin, *A Walker in the City*.
 Julius and Ethel Rosenberg convicted of espionage for the Soviet Union. Sentenced to death by Judge Irving Kaufman. Executed in 1953.
- 1952 Leslie Fiedler, *An End to Innocence*.
- 1953 Isaac Bashevis Singer, "Gimpel the Fool."
 Saul Bellow, *The Adventures of Augie March*. First National Book Award to Jewish writer.
- 1955 Herman Wouk, *Marjorie Morningstar*.
- 1956 Saul Bellow, *Seize the Day*.
 Abraham Joshua Heschel, *God in Search of Man*.
 Allen Ginsberg, *Howl and Other Poems*.
The Diary of a Young Girl (Anne Frank) opens on Broadway.
- 1957 Bernard Malamud, *The Assistant*.
- 1958 Bernard Malamud, *The Magic Barrel*.
 Karl Shapiro, *Poems of a Jew*.
 John Hollander, *A Crackling of Thorns*.
 Leon Uris, *Exodus*.
- 1959 Grace Paley, *Little Disturbances of Man*.
 Philip Roth, *Goodbye, Columbus*.
 First appearance of satirical comic strip "Feiffer" by Jules Feiffer.
- 1960 Eli Wiesel, *Night*.
- 1961 Tillie Olsen, *Tell Me a Riddle*.
 Allen Ginsberg, *Kaddish and Other Poems*.
 Joseph Heller, *Catch-22*.

CHRONOLOGY

- Edward Wallant, *The Pawnbroker*.
 Eichmann trial in Jerusalem.
- 1963 Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*. Three years later co-founds the National Organization for Women (NOW).
- 1964 Saul Bellow, *Herzog*.
 Civil Rights workers Michael Schwerner, Andrew Goodman, and James Cheney murdered in Mississippi.
Fiddler on the Roof opens on Broadway.
- 1965 Lionel Trilling, *Beyond Culture*.
 Norman Mailer, *An American Dream*.
 Bob Dylan, "Like a Rolling Stone."
 Neil Simon, *The Odd Couple*.
 Joseph B. Soloveitchik, "The Lonely Man of Faith."
 Vatican Council repudiates Jewish collective guilt for execution of Jesus.
 Sandy Koufax refuses to pitch in the World Series on Yom Kippur.
- 1966 Eli Wiesel, *The Jews of Silence*.
 Louis Zukofsky, *All the Collected Short Poems*.
 Susan Sontag, *Against Interpretation*.
- 1967 Chaim Potok, *The Chosen*.
 The Six-Day War in Israel.
- 1968 Barbra Streisand stars in *Funny Girl*.
- 1969 Philip Roth, *Portnoy's Complaint*.
- 1970 Saul Bellow, *Mr. Sammler's Planet*.
- 1971 Adrienne Rich, *When We Dead Awaken*.
 E. L. Doctorow, *The Book of Daniel*.
 Cynthia Ozick, *The Pagan Rabbi*.
- 1972 Isaac Bashevis Singer, *Enemies, A Love Story*.
 Lionel Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity*.
 Leslie Fiedler, *To the Gentiles*.
 First woman ordained as Reform rabbi.
- 1973 Adrienne Rich, *Diving into the Wreck*.
 Maxine Kumin, *Up Country*.
 Erica Jong, *Fear of Flying*.
 Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*.
The Jewish Catalog: A Do It Yourself Kit.
 Henry Kissinger is first Jew to be appointed Secretary of State.
 Yom Kippur War in Israel.
- 1974 Grace Paley, *Enormous Changes at the Last Minute*.
- 1975 E. L. Doctorow, *Ragtime*.

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- David Mamet, *American Buffalo*.
 Sacvan Bercovitch, *The Puritan Origins of the American Self*.
- 1976 Irving Howe, *World of Our Fathers*.
 Marge Piercy, *Woman on the Edge of Time*.
 Nobel Prize for Literature awarded to Saul Bellow.
- 1977 Irving Howe, ed. *Jewish American Stories*.
 Woody Allen, *Annie Hall*.
- 1978 Nobel Prize for Literature awarded to Isaac Bashevis Singer.
- 1979 Philip Roth, *The Ghost Writer*.
- 1980 Cynthia Ozick, *The Shawl*.
 Geoffrey Hartman, *Criticism in the Wilderness*.
 Jewish population close to 6,000,000.
- 1982 Kate Simon, *Bronx Primitive*.
 Adrienne Rich, "Split at the Root, An Essay on Jewish Identity."
- 1984 Robert Pinsky, *The History of My Heart*.
- 1985 Lore Segal, *Her First American*.
- 1986 Art Spiegelman, *MAUS, a Survivor's Tale*.
 Benjamin and Barbara Harshav, eds. *American Yiddish Poetry*.
 Sanford Budick and Geoffrey Hartman, eds., *Midrash and Literature*.
 Founding of *Tikkun* magazine.
- 1987 Philip Roth, *The Counterlife*.
 Jorie Graham, *The End of Beauty*.
 Jonathan Pollard convicted of spying for Israel.
- 1988 Wendy Wasserstein, *The Heidi Chronicles*.
- 1989 Howard Nemerov first Jew appointed Poet Laureate of the United States.
 First *Seinfeld* episode.
- 1990 Irena Klepfisz, *A Few Words in the Mother Tongue*.
 Joyce Antler, ed. *America and I: Short Stories by American Jewish Women Writers*.
- 1993 Rebecca Goldstein, *Strange Attractors*.
 Opening of Holocaust Museum in Washington.
- 1994 Henry Roth, *Mercy of a Rude Stream*.
 Tony Kushner, *Angels in America*.
 Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* wins Academy Award.
- 1995 Melvin Bukiet, *While the Messiah Tarrys*.
 Victor Perera, *The Cross and the Pear Tree, A Sephardic Journey*.
- 1996 Thane Rosenbaum, *Elijah Visible*.
 "Too Jewish?: Challenging Traditional Identities" opens at The Jewish Museum, New York.

CHRONOLOGY

- President Bill Clinton attends funeral of slain Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.
- 1997 Cynthia Ozick, *The Puttermesser Papers*.
 Philip Roth, *American Pastoral*.
 Allegra Goodman, *Kaaterskill Falls*.
 Aryeh Lev Stollman, *The Far Euphrates*.
 Diane Matza, ed. *Sephardic–American Voices*.
- 1999 Jaqueline Osherow, *Dead Man’s Praise*.
 Marge Piercy, *The Art of Blessing the Day*.
 Joseph Lieberman is Democratic Vice-Presidential candidate.
- 2000 Philip Roth, *The Human Stain*.
 Saul Bellow, *Ravelstein*.
- 2001 Bob Dylan, *Love and Theft*.
 Publication of *Jewish American Literature: A Norton Anthology*.