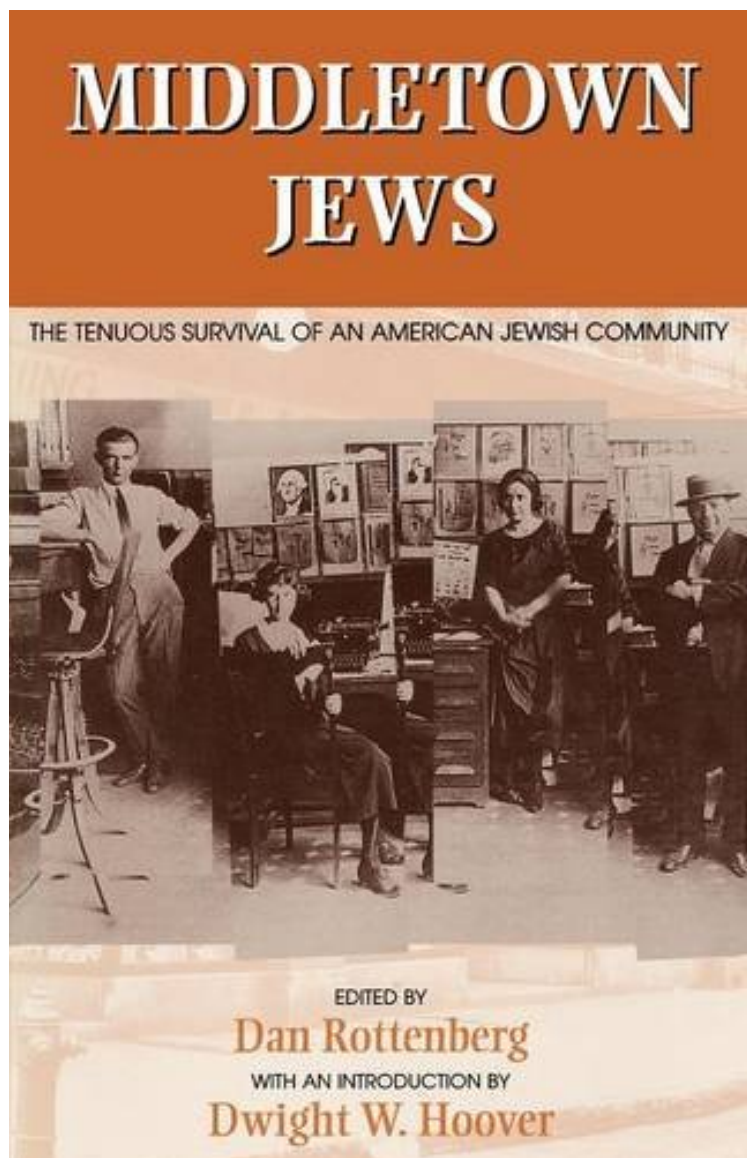


(Free) Middletown Jews: The Tenuous Survival of an American Jewish Community

Middletown Jews: The Tenuous Survival of an American Jewish Community

From Dan Rottenberg
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#4433318 in Books Dan Rottenberg 1998-02-22 1998-02-22 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.50 x .57 x 5.251, .50 #File Name: 0253212065192 pages Middletown Jews The Tenuous Survival of an American Jewish Community | File size: 50.Mb

From Dan Rottenberg : Middletown Jews: The Tenuous Survival of an American Jewish Community before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Middletown Jews: The Tenuous Survival of an American Jewish Community:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I enjoyed reading about how they started it was a good ...By Joyce A. I grew up in Muncie and knew some of people and as a teen worked part-time in a clothing store here. I enjoyed reading about how they started it was a good read. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A very valuable contribution By NA Miles As historical books go, very solid, honest, no revisionism, and thus, a pleasure to read. It did go on a tad too long, but I realize that was the intent of the study, so it was hard to avoid. I hope more Jewish leaders, especially those who forget (or don't know of) our pre 20th century history and triumphs in the midwest, will read this. It's eye-opening and important as we celebrate not just the lawyers and doctors of our heritage, but the working class who symbolize a proud portion of American Jewry as well. Mazel Tov! 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Oral histories By Janice P. Liehr Oral histories were very interesting. I grew up in Muncie knowing many of these people, or their children. Was interesting to read their comments about the Klan and its activities/members in the 20's 30's.

Middletown Jews... takes us, through nineteen fascinating interviews done in 1979, into the lives led by mainly first generation American Jews in a small mid-western city." San Diego Jewish Times... this brief work speaks volumes about the uncertain future of small-town American Jewry." Choice The book offers a touching portrait that admirably fills gaps, not just in Middletown itself but in histories in general." Indianapolis Star... a welcome addition to the small but growing number of monographs covering local aspects of American Jewish history." Kirkus Reviews In Middletown, the landmark 1927 study of a typical American town (Muncie, Indiana), the authors commented, "The Jewish population of Middletown is so small as to be numerically negligible... [and makes] the Jewish issue slight." But WAS the "Jewish issue" slight? What did it mean to be a Jew in Muncie? That is the issue that this book seeks to answer. The Jewish experience in Muncie reflects what many similar communities experienced in hundreds of Middletowns across the midwest.

From Kirkus s The pioneering 1929 and 1937 sociological studies of "Middletown"--the small city of Muncie, Indiana--said almost nothing about the community's 200 Jews. This work, while not altogether satisfying, goes a significant way toward describing Jewish life there during the first three-quarters of this century. Reading these interviews with Muncie Jews whose roots in the community go back to the 1920s, one is struck by how professionally homogeneous they were : Almost all the heads of households were merchants. Almost as notable is their lack of religious and cultural resources: There was and is one Reform temple (serviced by a visiting student rabbi) and a chapter of the fraternal organization B'nai B'rith. This has resulted in much intermarriage--apparently, a critical mass of Jews is needed for a community to endure--and some syncretistic religious practices by those who have remained Jewish; one woman recalls how her family lit Sabbath candles each Friday night but also had a Christmas tree. The word "tenuous" in the book's subtitle is well chosen. Revealingly, not a single interviewee recalls the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 or mentions visiting there. Finally, the interviews reveal the extent of anti-Semitism in Muncie. In his useful introduction, Hoover (History/Ball State Univ.) estimates that fully ten percent of the town's citizens were members of the Ku Klux Klan during the '20s, and that restrictive covenants in housing persisted until the mid-'50s. This book could have benefited had Rottenberg, a Philadelphia-based journalist, and Hoover noted the broader political, socioeconomic, and cultural context in Muncie and provided some hard data on such questions as: What exactly was the intermarriage rate at various periods, or, how did the Jews' educational and income levels compare with those of their fellow Muncie-ites? Yet if this history is somewhat "soft," it still is a welcome addition to the small but growing number of monographs covering local aspects of American Jewish history. -- Copyright 1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. "Middletown Jews ... takes us, through nineteen fascinating interviews done in 1979, into the lives led by mainly first generation American Jews in a small mid-western city." - San Diego Jewish Times "... this brief work speaks volumes about the uncertain future of small-town American Jewry." - Choice "The book offers a touching portrait that admirably fills gaps, not just in Middletown itself but in histories in general." - Indianapolis Star "... a welcome addition to the small but growing number of monographs covering local aspects of American Jewish history." - Kirkus s From the Back Cover What did it mean to be a Jew in Muncie? That is what this book seeks to discover, through a series of oral narratives.