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Review of *The Jews in Oklahoma* By Henry J. Tobias

Moses Rischin

San Francisco State University

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The Jews in Oklahoma. By Henry J. Tobias. Newcomers in a New Land. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980. Illustrations, bibliographical essay, notes. 78 pp. \$2.95.

This book is one of ten brief volumes published in the Newcomers to a New Land series. These carefully researched volumes analyze and detail the histories of ethnic groups in a state that has not been notably associated with traditions of ethnic pluralism. In Oklahoma, where even the Indians have been immigrants, Blacks, Czechs, Germans, Indians, Italians, Jews, Mexicans, Poles, and Germans from Russia are each allotted separate treatment, while the British and Irish are joined together in a single volume.

In five succinct chapters, Henry J. Tobias of the University of Oklahoma outlines the story of Jewish immigration from Europe to the United States; describes Jewish patterns of settlement in Oklahoma; depicts the development of Jewish religious, fraternal, and cultural associations; and sketches the relations between Jews and Gentiles. In a brief final chapter Tobias summarizes the social trends of the last three decades. A general bibliographical essay is appended, but there is no index.

As elsewhere on the Great Plains, the Jewish population has never been large. With approximately 100 persons shortly after the Run of 1889, 1,000 to 2,000 at statehood in 1907, and 7,800 in 1927, the Jewish population fell to 4,750 in 1955, sharply paralleling the downward dip in the state as a whole. By 1970, it was estimated at 6,500. The number of Jews in small towns has thinned out as small businesses have declined. Although the Jewish population in Tulsa and in Oklahoma City has remained the same since 1927, 60 percent of the state's Jews are currently concentrated in the state's two leading cities, compared to 46 percent in 1927.

Tobias's readable and useful survey, the first ever to be written on the Jews of Oklahoma, will spur greater interest in even larger and more broadly interpretative and finely textured

studies of the human geography of the Great Plains states.

MOSES RISCHIN
Department of History
San Francisco State University