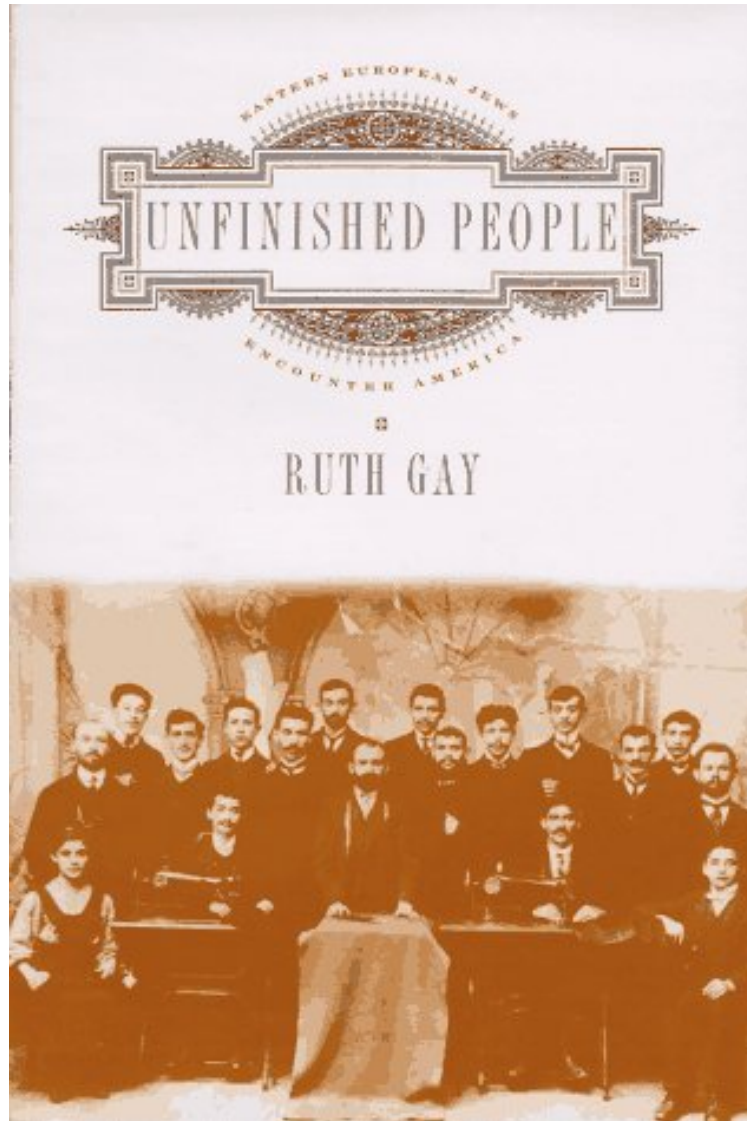


[Ebook free] Unfinished People: Eastern European Jews Encounter America

Unfinished People: Eastern European Jews Encounter America

Ruth Gay

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Ruth Gay : Unfinished People: Eastern European Jews Encounter America before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Unfinished People: Eastern European Jews Encounter America:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Sheila Bassman For those who want to learn about the immigrant experience. Captured much of my childhood. 6 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Every Day Life By kbyrd@tcnet.net I am not Jewish. I do not have any Jewish friends. I live in Kentucky and I doubt that there is

any Jewish people within miles of me. I wanted to find out more about their culture. This book was excellent. It dealt with the issues that I wanted to know about the every day ones. What they wore, what they ate, their household customs. I enjoyed reading how they were scared to send their children to camp. I liked the part where the women were always cleaning and to have bed bugs was the ultimate shame. 5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Educating and entertaining. By Robin L. Poses I read this book to better inform myself on the every day lives of the Jewish immigrants. I am searching my husband's Jewish ancestors and was pleasantly educated during the course of the book on the lives of these immigrants in New York City; their every day comings and goings, customs, work places, religious practices and the heavy influence their "pre-immigration" lives had on their new situations.

This is an account of the emigration of three million Jews from Eastern Europe to America between 1880 and the outbreak of World War II. They were mostly young, single and uneducated, but filled with hope of a new life in a new land. The newcomers maintained a sense of community longer than most immigrant groups, although culturally they were uncertain, clinging to fading memories of home, and not yet able to enter American life. For many, New York provided a refuge, for in its densely-populated, Yiddish-speaking enclaves, it was possible to keep in touch with customs from the old country. Through hard work, humour and storytelling, Eastern European Jews maintained a sense of community longer than most immigrant groups, but as a new generation born in America grew up, married and moved out of the neighbourhood, customs gave way to change.

.com Ruth Gay's writing traverses the paths of history from the microcosm of personal memoir to millennial histories of peoples and nations. In *The Jews of Germany*, she traced one and a half centuries of Jewish life in Europe. In *Unfinished People*, Gay describes the lives of Jewish immigrants from Eastern and Central Europe and the process through which they forged new cultural identities in America. The materials for Gay's examination of Jewish life range from historical essays to personal remembrances. Short vignettes describe the role of Yiddish theater, the changing fashions of dress and family life, and her studied opinions on Jewish-American history and identity. Her opinions are sharp and her exposition is lucid and informative. From Publishers Weekly In this vivid and informed account, Gay (*The Jews of Germany*) explores the lives of Jews who fled Eastern Europe and settled in New York City between 1881 and 1911. She describes the poverty and persecution these Jews lived with in Europe and documents the ways in which the relative freedom of the New World impacted upon their language, culture and religious practices. Gay's major focus is on the reminiscences of her parents, both turn-of-the-century childhood immigrants, and her own memories of growing up in a Yiddish-speaking Bronx home. Using evocative descriptions of the furniture, cooking and dress of the period, Gay conveys how immigrants of her parents generation were forced to negotiate between the language and customs of their own parents and the English-speaking world they found at school and at work, and how newfound freedoms coexisted with the unforeseen difficulties of assimilation. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Nine out of ten Jews who left Eastern Europe during the 40 years that bracketed the turn of the century chose the United States. Most came through Ellis Island to New York, where three out of four remained. Most were also young, single, uneducated, and unskilled; many were children. These immigrants were "unfinished." They had not mastered the stylized, static, and traditional world they left before they encountered the baffling life of a mushrooming foreign metropolis. Gay (*The Jews of Germany*, LJ 8/92) here weaves an absorbing account of that life by combining history and her personal reminiscences as a child of immigrant parents. In chapters prosaically titled "Floors," "Laughter," "Chairs," "Hats," "Food," "Corsets," and "Beds," Gay provides a glimpse into Jewish immigrant life absent from most historians' accounts. In the new world, while clinging to parts of the old, the "unfinished" immigrant arrival tried not to appear as a griner-a greenhorn. This highly readable volume should have wide appeal. Nicholas C. Burckel, Marquette Univ., Milwaukee Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.