JEWISH-AMERICAN FAMILIES IN FICTION

The recent popularity of Anita Diamant’s Boston Girl has focused attention on the many other books in the Newton Free Library written about Jewish American individuals and families. Some of the novels are sad and bittersweet. More of them are upbeat and life-affirming. However, all of the stories tell something about the experiences of Jewish immigrants and their children in America, with many backward glances and recollections of “the old country.”

The books on this listing are shelved in the Fiction section on the second floor. The books are arranged on the shelves by the author’s last name. To find other books of a similar interest, you can do a Subject search by using one or both of the following subjects: Jews - United States - Fiction: Jewish women – Fiction; or Jewish Families – Fiction. Ask a Reference Librarian for help if you need help in locating a particular book.

Adelman, Michelle. Piece of Mind - Talented artist Lucy is forced out of her protective Jewish home and into a New York City studio apartment with her college-age brother, where she struggles to adapt to life away from home and her changed circumstances.

Auster, Paul. 4 3 2 1 - A sweeping family saga about the life and loves of Archie Ferguson, a Jewish boy born to second-generation immigrants in the United States just after World War II.

Brown, Jennifer S. Modern Girls - A moving novel, set in New York City’s Jewish immigrant community in 1935 that conveys the sacrifices a mother and daughter make in order to save face for their family knowing that their lives will never again be the same.

Carter, Betsy. We Were Strangers Once - A moving novel about friendship, love, and redemption in a circle of immigrants who flee Europe for 1930s-era New York City. A successful German Jewish doctor finds solace among a tight-knit group of fellow immigrants, men and women drawn together as much by their differences as by their memories of the world they left behind.

Clayton, John Jacob. Radiance: Ten Stories - Many of the stories are specifically Jewish, either in family background or religious vision, or both. They are stories of fathers and sons, parents and children, husbands and wives.

Cohen, Paula Marantz. Jane Austen in Boca - This novel set in a Jewish retirement community in Boca Raton, where Carol is obsessively seeking a mate for her widowed mother-in-law, provides plenty of insights about life among the retirees of Florida.

Diamant, Anita. The Boston Girl - An unforgettable novel about family ties and values, friendship and feminism told through the eyes of Addie Baum, a young Jewish woman born in 1900 to immigrant parents growing up in Boston in the early twentieth century.

Epstein, Joseph. The Love Song of A. Jerome Minkoff and Other Stories - Fourteen stories of ordinary men - Jews who live in Chicago - facing the moments that define a life: complex love affairs and unspoken rivalries, family triumphs and private disappointments.

Fishman, Boris. A Replacement Life - A story of an aspiring twenty-something Russian-Jewish writer who struggles to reconcile his immigrant roots with his fragile new American identity.

Goldstein, Naama. The Place Will Comfort You: Stories - These haunting stories illustrate the cultural divide between American and Israeli Jews -- and the difficulties of moving between these two vastly different worlds.

Golub, Ellen. Psychosemitic – The novel provides a deeply revealing portrait of American Jewry told from the inside out as it recounts the story of Menachem Mendel, a yeshiva-educated man and his wife the doyenne of a prominent rabbinic family as they face a crisis in their marriage.

Goodman, Allegra. Kaaterskill Falls - A conflict breaks out between liberal and orthodox Jews in a summer resort in New York State. The liberals live in the town while the orthodox are summer tourists who are led by a hardline rabbi.
Havazelet, Ehud. **Bearing the Body** - Stoic and determined, Holocaust survivor Sol Mirsky becomes a successful New York shoe manufacturer, but his two sons are plagued by despair and anger in this tale of a family fractured by unspoken suffering.

Hershon, Joanna. **The German Bride** - Driven by guilt over an illicit affair, a young Jewish girl living in 1860s Berlin flees to America to make a new life in the wild and untamed American frontier.

Hoffman, Alice. **The Museum of Extraordinary Things** - A Russian Orthodox Jewish immigrant abandons his father and his community then witnesses the aftermath of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire and falls in love with Coralie in New York more than a century ago.

Horn, Dara. **All Other Nights** – A Jewish soldier in the Union army during the Civil War, is ordered on two missions: one to kill a relative and then to marry a Confederate spy, a mission that ends up fostering a genuine romance with danger on all sides. The novel highlights the role of Jewish Americans on both sides in the Civil War.

Jungk, Peter Stephan. **Crossing the Hudson** - A Jewish family suffers tensions as generations clash over the differences between the European refugees who arrived in the United States during the Second World War and the children of that generation.

Kane, Andrew W. **Rabbi, Rabbi** - Yakove Eisen is a rebel in the Jewish-American community of Brooklyn. He refuses to follow in his father's footsteps and become an Orthodox rabbi. Next, he falls in love with a woman who wants to be a rabbi, an occupation forbidden to Orthodox Jewish women.

Malamud, Bernard. **Bernard Malamud: Novels and Stories of the 1940s & 50s** - One of the great American writers of the last century, is best known for his fiction about Jewish life in New York.

Mansbach, Adam. **The End of the Jews** - Tristan Brodsky, born of Jewish immigrant parents in the bustling New World shtetl of the Bronx, is introduced to pre-WWII jazz and African-American culture by a City College professor who mentors him into a successful career as a novelist.

Manseau, Peter. **Songs For the Butcher's Daughter** - Fleeing violent anti-Semitism in Russia in the 1920s, Yiddish poet Itzik Malpesh arrived alone in New York at age 16 with vivid memories of the 4-year old girl who saved his life during a pogrom, who became the subject of one of his poems.

Melman, Peter Charles. **Landsman** - Elias is fleeing the police when he enlists in the Third Louisiana Regiment, where 3,000 other Jews will ultimately fight for the Confederacy, with the hope that he will not lose the woman he loves.

Mishook, Anita. **Helen** – It is 1936 when a young, Jewish, Polish-American immigrant moves from New York to California to be near her sister and reluctantly becomes a spy against the West Coast operation of the pro-Hitler American Bund.

Neugeboren, Jay. **News from the New American Diaspora and Other Tales of Exile** – Set in various times and places (including Massachusetts, New York, and Florida), these stories of personal exile focus on Jews - strangers in strange lands, far from home.

Orner, Peter. **Esther Stories** – Orner details the lives of two Jewish families - the Kaplans, from a middle-class Massachusetts's mill town, and the Burmans, a prosperous Chicago family – who lead quietly unremarkable lives – until they don’t.

Plain, Belva. **Heartwood** - Belva Plain’s last novel, continues the saga of a Jewish family that she first wrote about in Evergreen. Laura, who tries to be a good wife out of duty but becomes more interested in her adult children and her growing business than her husband who feels like a failure.

Plante, David. **American Stranger** – Nancy Green is the daughter of World War II European refugees, who grows up in a secularized Jewish household in Manhattan. As she seeks for some kind of spiritual connection to her Jewish heritage, she encounters a Hassidic man. Then she meets a Catholic student in Boston, who changes her life and becomes the great love of her life.

Pogrebin, Letty Cottin. **Single Jewish Male Seeking Soul Mate** – Zach is the son of Holocaust survivors who promises his mother on her deathbed that he will marry a Jewish woman and raise Jewish children, but complications arise when he falls in love with an African American woman.

Potok, Chaim. **Davita's Harp** – For Davita Chandal, growing up in the New York of the 1930s and '40s is an experience of joy and sadness, partly due to her gentle father and her mother, a Jewish woman from Poland, who seek a better world without seeing Davita's sadness.
Rabb, Jonathan. **Among the Living** - In the summer 1947, 31-year-old Yitzhak Goldah, a concentration camp survivor, arrives in Georgia to live with his only remaining relatives, where he becomes confused by the lifestyles and beliefs of the fractured Jewish community that has been in Georgia since the founding of the colony.

Ragen, Naomi. **The Tenth Song** - Two pillars of the Orthodox Jewish community in a Boston suburb and their daughter believe that they have a charmed and perfect life – until they don't when their world falls apart when a story saying that the husband is funding terrorists appears on the Internet.

Raphael, Lev. **The German Money** - The lives of the children of Holocaust survivors are front and center in this unconventional Holocaust novel, a family drama about the upheaval caused by a million-dollar legacy of German reparations money, which was given to the mother.

Rubin, Derek (Editor). **Promised Lands: New Jewish American Fiction On Longing and Belonging Short Stories P944RU** - This anthology, which features new, unpublished short stories, provides a rich reading experience and a unique window onto Jewish American life and culture at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Widmer, Eleanor. **Up From Orchard Street** - The Roth family's three generations embody the hopes, dreams, and frailties of thousands of immigrant Jewish families settling in New York and pursuing the dream of freedom and prosperity in America in the 1930s.

Wouk, Herman. **Marjorie Morningstar** – Freed from the social constraints of her traditional Jewish family, a starry-eyed nineteen years old beauty, Marjorie Morgenstern, finds adventure and first-love in the colorful world of theater. A classic love story, one that spans two continents and two decades in the life of its heroine.

Yezierska, Anzia. **Bread Givers** – Sara Smolinsky is the youngest daughter of an Orthodox rabbi who rebels against her father’s rigid conception of Jewish womanhood. The story is set in the 1920s on the Lower East Side of Manhattan and tells of Sarah's struggle towards independence and self-fulfillment.

Zeldis, Kitty. **Not Our Kind** – A thought-provoking novel set in postwar New York City, about two women--one Jewish, one a WASP--and the wholly unexpected consequences of their meeting. While their friendship develops, readers will come to see the rarefied and elegant Park Avenue scene and the subtle racism that is all around them.

March 9, 2019 EJW