

[Free read ebook] A Separate Circle: Jewish Life in Knoxville, Tennessee

A Separate Circle: Jewish Life in Knoxville, Tennessee

Wendy Lowe Besmann

**Download PDF | ePub | DOC | audiobook | ebooks*

 Download

 Read Online

#4889721 in Books University of Tennessee Press 2001-04-24Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.32 x .93 x 6.33l, .0 #File Name: 1572331240216 pages | File size: 39.Mb

Wendy Lowe Besmann : A Separate Circle: Jewish Life in Knoxville, Tennessee before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Separate Circle: Jewish Life in Knoxville, Tennessee:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great book about East TNBy elizabeth jordanGreat book for me since I am not from Knoxville or Jewish learned a lot has been fun discovering the old spots in the book as they are now.2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Tunnel visionBy A CustomerI ordered this book because I grew up in Knoxville as a part of the Jewish community. However, I returned this book after a review of the context, due to its lack of substance. The author was extremely weak on reporting the events which are now a part of the history of this Jewish community. There were many people who were an important part of the past that were not even mentioned. It was very obvious that the writer relied on personal friendships to gather the "facts" for her novel. If you are looking for a book concerning the history of the Jewish population in Knoxville, TN, don't look here. For those looking for a book that mentions their name, this book is perfect for you. My opinion is that it was tragic that some tree had to be wasted for the paper needed to print this book. Purchase at your own risk!2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Yes, there are Jews in Knoxville!By Mrs. B.This is a delightful history of the small, but growing and ever present Jewish community of Knoxville, including Oak Ridge. Ms. Besman's book is not only enjoyable for those of us who have been connected with this community over the years, and know many of the individuals she writes about, it is also for anyone interested in the history of this beautiful southern city. "A Separate Circle: Jewish Life in Knoxville, Tennessee" is an affirmation that where ever Jewish roots are sown, significant

contributions are made to the community as a whole.

For more than 135 years, Jews living in and around Knoxville, Tennessee, have maintained the rituals that define them as a separate people, even as they managed to blend quietly with their Christian neighbors. Surprisingly, the Jews of this area have often wielded an influence on local affairs that far outweighed their tiny numbers. Wendy Lowe Besmann paints a vivid portrait of this small community, showing the complex bonds of kinship, ethics, and culture that unite its many intriguing characters. Using interviews and documentary sources, she describes how successive waves of immigrants have adapted to East Tennessee, gradually evolving from a close-knit society of peddlers and merchants into a geographically diverse community of doctors, lawyers, engineers, and university professors. Here are the stories of a Knoxville newsboy who built the New York Times into the nation's leading newspaper; a quiet record-store owner who helped make Elvis a star; and a man with political connections who told FDR what to call the New Deal. Here are the belles of Purim balls at the old Knoxville Jewish Community Center and the basketball heroes who dashed down the court with the Star of David emblazoned on their jerseys. Here are the northern businessmen who came south to create a furniture industry in nearby Morristown and the young Jewish scientists who poured into Oak Ridge for the top-secret Manhattan Project of World War II. Here are the wheeler-dealers who made fortunes and the struggling shopkeepers who raised their children to be affluent Jewish professionals. With broad historical sweep, Besmann places this local story in the larger context of American industrial expansion, urban migration, and the emerging importance of southern university towns. She examines the forces of social exclusion that encouraged local Jews to become a "separate circle" as well as the rapid postwar changes that dissolved such barriers. The result is a vibrant, fast-moving narrative that establishes Knoxville's place in the tapestry of southern Jewish history.

About the Author An insightful and well-written book. One of the best studies of local Jewish history extant. Leonard Dinnerstein, University of Arizona For more than a century and a half, the Jewish citizens of the area in and around Knoxville, Tennessee, have maintained the rituals and traditions that define them as a separate people, even as they have blended quietly with their non-Jewish neighbors. Wendy Lowe Besmann paints a vivid picture of this community, bringing alive the stories of merchants, grocers, immigrants from Eastern Europe, and scientists and university professionals who have come to call the area home. Drawing on interviews and other sources, she traces the growth of local synagogues, explores the role of Jewish community centers, looks at how children were shaped by school and Temple life, and even recalls the community's summer vacations at nearby Neibert Springs. With broad historical sweep, Besmann examines what life was like for Knoxville's early Jewish community and how the events of their lives were affected by American expansion and depression, by social upheaval and urban migration. Successive waves of immigrants, from the traveling peddlers of the late nineteenth century to the doctors, lawyers, and engineers of the late twentieth, have both adapted to the culture of East Tennessee and shaped it in subtle ways. As they did in cities all over the South, Knoxville's Jewish population followed jobs, meaning that most of them did not grow up in the region. Besmann looks at topics as diverse as patterns of chain migration, the role of Jewish merchants in the Civil War, and the contributions of a Jewish-owned music store to the career of Elvis Presley. She describes the vital role of ritual and celebration in the community, from the importance placed on religious education to the songs played at bar mitzvahs.