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Lone Stars of David: The Jews of Texas (Brandeis Series in American Jewish History, Culture, and Life)

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Jewish life in the United States is too often told from an East Coast perspective. Lone Stars of David presents a different panorama, with narratives of Jews who ventured to Texas before the battle of the Alamo, who fought for the Confederacy, who herded cattle up the Chisholm Trail, who drilled for oil, and who forged Jewish communities far from New York's Lower East Side. These essays also describe how Texas Jews faced the Ku Klux Klan and how they respond today to Christian fundamentalism.

This anthology examines the famous, with a close-up look at Neiman-Marcus, the chain synonymous with remarkable luxuries. It profiles Zale jewelers, founded by a young immigrant who grew into an international business icon. Another essay opens a window to the Dell Computer Corporation, with the story of Michael Dell, the college dropout whose philanthropy changed the course of the Austin Jewish community.

Written by historians, journalists, and rabbis who have experienced Texas firsthand, these essays challenge stereotypes. One chapter discounts the impact of crypto-Jews who fled the Spanish Inquisition for the New World. Another defies conventional wisdom about southern views toward Zionism. El Paso emerges as the unlikely home of a Holocaust museum. The book's essay on Jews in Texas politics analyzes the import of populist candidate Kinky Friedman and introduces Marjorie Arsht, a grassroots organizer whose living room was the setting for Republican George H. W. Bush's first foray into politics.

The Jewish population of Texas totals 131,000, a mere 0.6 percent of the state's residents, yet its impact has been widespread. This anthology explores the resiliency, diversity, and adaptability of Jews in the Lone Star State, a place with its own powerful sense of identity.

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