

**Jews of Florida: Centuries of Stories. Marcia Jo Zerivitz, 2020.
Charleston, SC: The History Press. 412 pp.**

Review by:
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This is the first comprehensive history of the Jews of Florida from colonial times to the present. The author is the founding executive director of the Jewish Museum of Florida-FIU [Florida International University] and is the result of field work by the author during which she traveled 250,000 miles across the state. The book is at once a serious history of this ethno-religious group and a coffee table book with 700 black and white and color images on glossy paper. The history runs from 1513 to 2019, although it was not until 1763 that Jews were allowed to live in Florida.

Jews are shown to be an integral part of Florida's growth with chapters on the contributions of Florida's Jews to agriculture, retail, other businesses and industries (including hotels, food, and fashion), entertainment, medicine, high technology, architecture, real estate, politics, law, sports, education, and the media. Additional chapters deal with Jewish rituals, life cycle events, and the infrastructure of the Jewish community. The book concludes with chapters on antisemitism and the acculturation of the Florida Jewish community.

Much of the book and many of the images describe hundreds of individual Jewish Floridians and the contributions they made. South Florida in particular is known for its Jewish population. About 75% of the state's 725,000 Jews live in the three-county area (Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties) so much of the book reports on that area. But significant material is also presented on the Jews of the Tampa Bay Area, Orlando, Jacksonville, and other places.

Anyone interested in the history of Florida, Jews in Florida, religion, or ethnicity will find this book a valuable addition to their library.