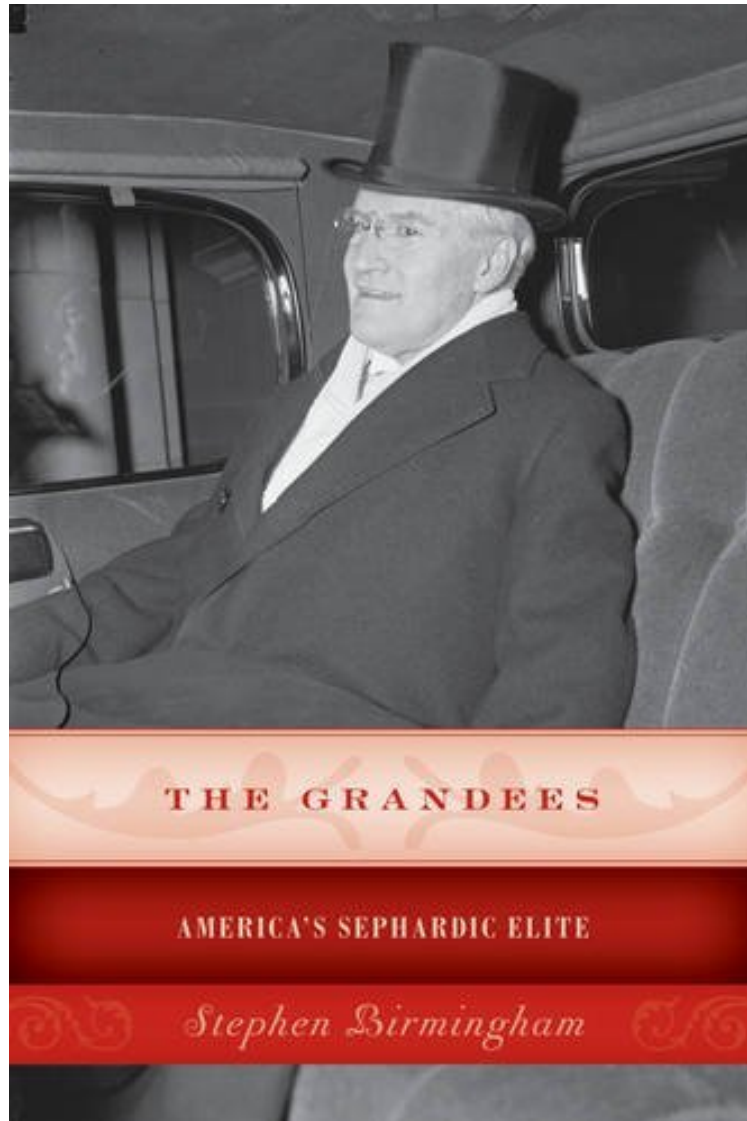


[PDF] The Grandees: Americas Sephardic Elite

## The Grandees: Americas Sephardic Elite

*Stephen Birmingham*

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**Stephen Birmingham : The Grandees: Americas Sephardic Elite** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Grandees: Americas Sephardic Elite:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great take on early US history By Dwayne Dickerson Connects many disparate themes I only vaguely connected. Spain's loss, our gain. New light on immigration. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Another great work as always. By Marie J. Rogers Stephen Birmingham is always a great read. His understanding of human action and thought always increases his writings. He is always a pleasure to read. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An excellent book, one of several By D. J. Singer An excellent book,

one of several, that Birmingham has written about very wealthy immigrant families that have changed America, and been influential in business, industry and government. a great read.

Tracing their origins to medieval Portugal and Spain, the Sephardic Jews consider themselves the nobility of Jewry, in contrast to their pushier and more aggressive German counterparts. They were also the first Jews to inhabit the new world first exiled from Spain and Portugal, and then forced out of Brazil, a ship bearing 23 Sephardic Jews was blown off its course to Holland, beset by pirates, and then captured by a French captain before being ransomed for the payment of their freight in the City of New Amsterdam. And so the American Sephardic Jewish story begins. Here Stephen Birmingham tells the rich and varied history of this insular group of bewilderingly interrelated families, spiced with gossip and the gentle rattling of family skeletons. We find tales of fortunes made in the fur trade long before the Astors, revolutionary heroes and heroines, and poetic spinster Rebecca Gratz, thought to be Scott's model for Rebecca in *Ivanhoe*. Through it all emerges a picture of a proud haughty people, who have chosen to remain aloof from the later-arriving Jews from Europe, and have staunchly refused to be swept up in the movement of Reform Judaism, preferring to adhere to their Orthodox rituals. Stephen Birmingham weaves a vibrant tapestry of the Sephardic experience in America, working in threads of their history in medieval Europe as he depicts the lives of these extraordinary Americans.

[A] page turner . . . [that] offers a little bit of the best of everything . . . One zippy read . (New York Times) A rags-to-riches saga with several twists and switchbacks . . . Clever and satisfying. (Booklist) When it comes to the folkways of the rich, the powerful, and the privileged, Stephen Birmingham knows what he's talking about. (Los Angeles Times) About the Author Stephen Birmingham is a preeminent social historian, known for his books *The Right People*, *Real Lace*, and *The Grandees*. He allows his reader unparalleled access to the most exclusive society sets, and tells their stories with great warmth and wit.