



A Place of Our Own: The Rise of Reform Jewish Camping (Judaic Studies Series)

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The history of educational summer camps in American Reform Judaism. Reform Judaism is not the only religious community in America to make the summer camp experience a vital part of a faith community's effort to impart its values and beliefs to its adolescents, but perhaps no group relied more on summer camp as an adjunct to home and community for this purpose. Summer camp became an important part of Reform group identity, a bulwark against the attraction of assimilation into the greater society and mere nominal Judaism.

These essays, which commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the first Reform Jewish educational camp in the United States (Olin-Sang-Ruby Union Institute [OSRUI], in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin) cover a wide range of topics related to both the Reform Judaism movement and the development of the Reform Jewish camping system in the United States. Donald M. Splansky's chapter on "Prayer at Reform Jewish Camps" documents changes in prayer services that took place both at OSRUI and in the Reform movement in general; Michael Zeldin's "Making the Magic in Reform Jewish Summer Camps" describes the educational philosophies employed at many camps and analyzes their effectiveness; and Jonathan D. Sarna's "The Crucial Decade in Jewish Camping" explains how social, political, and cultural conditions paved the way for the Reform camping movement.

Contributors: Judah M. Cohen, Rabbi Hillel Gamoran, Michael M. Lorge, Jonathan D. Sarna, Rabbi Donald M. Splansky, Michael Zeldin, Gary P. Zola

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