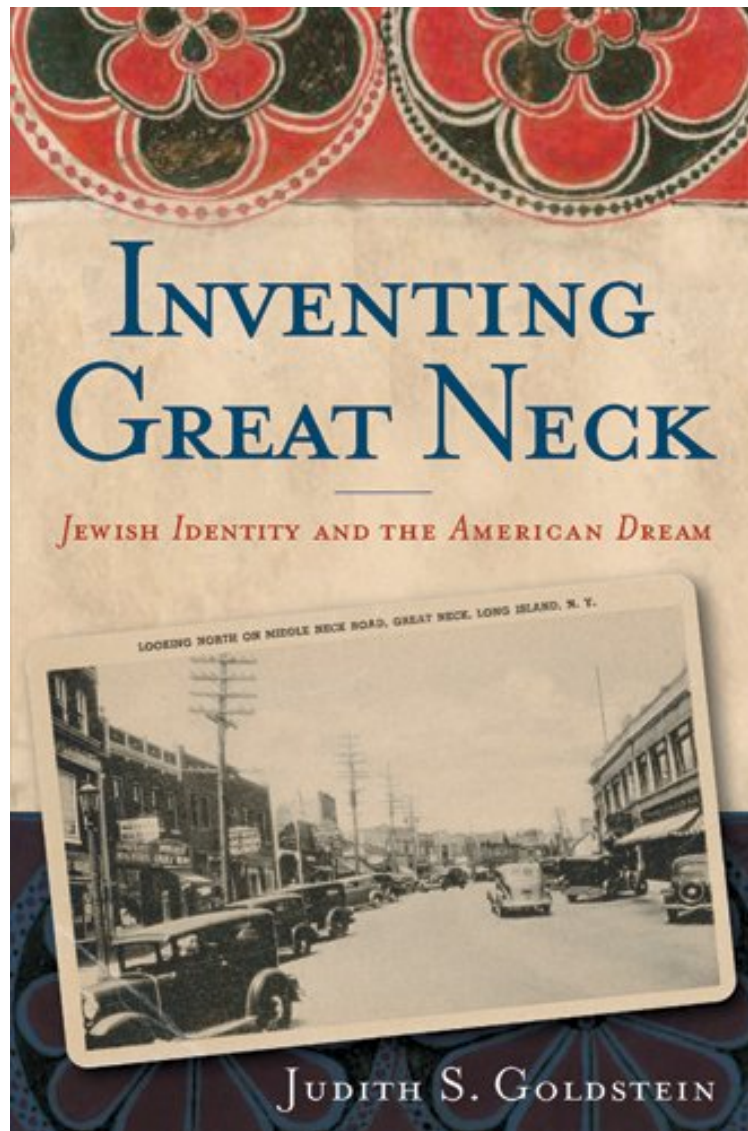


Inventing Great Neck: Jewish Identity and the American Dream

Judith S. Goldstein

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Judith S. Goldstein : Inventing Great Neck: Jewish Identity and the American Dream before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Inventing Great Neck: Jewish Identity and the American Dream:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great Neck, Long Island: A Predominately Jewish Suburb and how it came to be. By Alan Gregg I lived in my formative years on the North Shore of Long Island, so I was very intimately aware of the Great Neck peninsula and its history, myriad of incorporated villages and unincorporated hamlets. I thought Judith Goldstein did a very good job in weaving Great Neck's formative suburban history to the present day,

and how the Jewish community played such a vital part in that role. The only thing I could think that would improve upon this book would be a detailed map of the Great Neck area, so those unfamiliar with the community could better orient themselves as to where Saddle Rock is located, Kings Point, Great Neck Estates, Great Neck Plaza, Kensington, Lake Success and Spinney Hill and so on. This would help in understanding the dynamics and development of the Great Neck peninsula.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I thought this book would be more about the great neck in the 50's and 60's but it is ...By joan goldmanI thought this book would be more about the great neck in the 50's and 60's but it is more about Great neck in the 20's- 40's. Nevertheless, well written and interesting for what it is.3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. An American OriginalBy Sally SteinbergGreat Neck emerges as a personality, an American Original, in Judy Goldstein's fascinating tale of a place that might look like just another bland pocket of sprawl. But Great Neck has a rich, star-studded history set against a variegated panorama of social and ethnographic elements, from mogul to maid, from the American South to the Middle East to Eastern Europe. Who knew that behind the split-level facades, complex sagas of life on earth were taking place? It gained part of its mythology from Fitzgerald and his use of it as the locale of *The Great Gatsby*. Then came Eddie Cantor and Jock Whitney and the Iranian Jews. This book details these stories and others and everything else you might want to know about Great Neck in scholarly, eloquent, accessible prose. The more you read, the more you do want to know about what happened there. One of America's multi-faceted habitats, disguised as a suburb, comes to life in these pages.

Great Neck, New York, is one of Americas most fascinating suburbs. Since the mid-nineteenth century, generations have been attracted to this once quiet enclave for its easy access to New York City and its tranquil setting by the Long Island Sound. It became an illustrious suburb, home to numerous film and theatrical luminaries, among them Groucho Marx, Eddie Cantor, Oscar Hammerstein II, and Alan King. Famous writers who lived there include Ring Lardner and, of course, F. Scott Fitzgerald, who used Great Neck as the inspiration for his classic novel *The Great Gatsby*. Although frequently recognized as home to well-known personalities, Great Neck is also notable for the conspicuous way it transformed itself from a Gentile community, to a mixed one, and, finally, in the 1960s, to one in which Jews were the majority. In *Inventing Great Neck*, Judith Goldstein recounts these histories in which Great Neck emerges as a leader in the reconfiguration of the American suburb. The book spans four decades of rapid change, beginning with the 1920s. First, the community served as a playground for New Yorks socialites and celebrities. In the forties, it developed one of the countrys most outstanding school systems and served as the temporary home to the United Nations. In the sixties it provided strong support to the civil rights movement. *Inventing Great Neck* is about the allure of suburbia, including the institutions that bind it together, and the social, economic, cultural, and religious tensions that may threaten its vibrancy. Anyone who has lived in a suburban town, particularly one in the greater metropolitan area, will be intrigued by this rich narrative, which illustrates not only Jewish identity in America but the struggle of the American dream itself through the heart of the twentieth century.

About the AuthorJudith S. Goldstein, a Great Neck native, is the founder and executive director of Humanity in Action, a foundation that sponsors educational programs for university students in Europe and the United States. She lives in New York City.