

Hasidic Williamsburg: A Contemporary American Hasidic Community

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Hasidic Williamsburg recounts the dramatic emergence of this unique community in the face of major crises. It is the story of the loyalty of its members to their rebbes and their teachings and to the milieu they created in an old Jewish neighborhood in Brooklyn, New York. Based on his previous book Williamsburg: A Jewish Community in Transition, which reported the transformation of this moderately Orthodox Jewish community and its rise to prominence after the influx of numbers of refugees from Nazi persecution and the Holocaust, George Kranzler presents the findings of a decade of research into the survival and life-style of Hasidic Williamsburg as a functioning community. Hasidic Williamsburg portrays the desperate struggle and relentless efforts of its leaders, foremost among them the Rebbe of Satmar and other prominent hasidic rebbes, to stem the progressive disintegration of the Jewish neighborhood. It presents their valiant attempts to provide the vital resources for its survival in the face of persistent poverty and other grave problems and to develop programs that would secure the future of this unique hasidic community. Kranzler concludes with the assertion that at the beginning of the '90s its inhabitants are hopeful of being able to weather the present crisis and to continue to function as one of pluralist America's viable religious communities.

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