JEWISH SANCTUARY IN THE ATLANTIC WORLD
A Social and Architectural History
Barry L. Stiefel
With the Assistance of David Rittenberg
Foreword by Samuel D. Gruber

Jewish Sanctuary in the Atlantic World is a unique blend of cultural and architectural history that considers Jewish heritage as it expanded among the continents and islands linked by the Atlantic Ocean between the mid–fifteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Barry L. Stiefel achieves a powerful synthesis of material culture research and traditional historical research in his examination of the early modern Jewish diaspora in the New World.

Through this generously illustrated work, Stiefel examines forty-six synagogues built in Europe, South America, the Caribbean Islands, colonial and antebellum North America, and Gibraltar to discover what liturgies, construction methods, and architectural styles were transported from the Old World to the New World. Some are famous—Touro in Newport, Rhode Island; Bevis Marks in London; and Mikve Israel in Curacao—while others had short-lived congregations whose buildings were lost. The two great traditions of Judaism—Sephardic and Ashkenazic—found homes in the Atlantic World.

Examining buildings and congregations that survive, Stiefel offers valuable insights on their connections and commonalities. If both the congregations and buildings are gone, the author re-creates them by using modern heritage preservation tools that have expanded the heuristic repertoire, tools from such diverse sources as architectural studies, archaeology, computer modeling and rendering, and geographic information systems. When combined these bring a richer understanding of the past than incomplete, uncertain traditional historical resources. Buildings figure as key indicators in Stiefel’s analysis of Jewish life and social experience, while the author’s immersion in the faith and practice of Judaism invigorates every aspect of his work.

The Carolina Lowcountry and the Atlantic World
David Gleeson, Simon Lewis, and John White, series editors

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