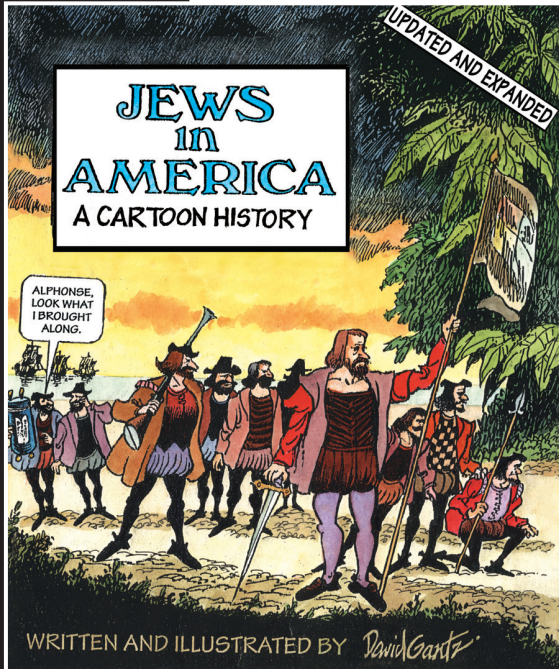


A Q & A with Author/Illustrator David Gantz

Q: Why did you choose the comic book format for *Jews in America: A Cartoon History*?

A: I didn't choose this project – it chose me. I'd been preparing my whole life to write a book like this. But the idea for *Jews in America* began with Bruce Black who was then the Children's Books Editor at the Jewish Publication Society.



Q: *Jews in America* is pretty sophisticated to be a children's book.

A: When the Editor-in-Chief, Ellen Frankel, saw the first samples she decided *Jews in America* was really a work for young adults and adults. She took over the editorial process and brought in Chaim Potok to help her.

Q: Chaim Potok?

A: Chaim Potok was a painter as well as a writer, and was very interested in graphic media. So you see, I was in excellent hands throughout the editorial process.

Q: Did you have any previous experience with cartooning when you set out to create *Jews in America*?

A: A lifetime of experience. I started as a cartoonist in 1940 – the early days of the comic book business. Now they call that time the "Golden Age."

Q: You've also been involved in politics for quite some time. When did that interest start?

A: In the 1970's, during Watergate, I became very politically active. In those days, I wrote and illustrated a few pieces for Mad Magazine, mostly on political topics.

Q: And you had a political cartoon strip for The New York Times.

A: My strip "Don Q" was syndicated by the New York Times Special Features Syndicate and ran from 1975 -1981. In its time, Don Q appeared in over 100 newspapers throughout the world, daily and on Sundays, but it never actually appeared in The New York Times.

Q: Why not?

A: I was told that because The New York Times was distributed nationally, if the strip appeared in the Times it would hamper sales of other papers throughout the country. I remain skeptical about this explanation because I know that The New York Times published a comic strip in 1906 to compete with Pulitzer's "World." It was called "Roosevelt's Bears" and it flopped after 6 months. The publisher, Adolf Ochs, vowed that the Times would never again publish a comic strip. Not even "Don Q."

Q: Did you ever go back to political cartooning?

A: Yes, in the early 1990's I did a political cartoon panel, "New York – New York," which was featured in five weekly papers – one in each borough.

Q: In this, the third printing of *Jews in America*, you've updated the book. Why did you decide to add to this new section?

A: The first edition of *Jews in America* ended in 2000. At the time the turn of the millennium seemed like a great place to end. But then so much dark history followed... 9/11, the War in Iraq – these are events that will have their effect on the future of Jews in America, Israel, and the world for a long time. It seemed important that they be included to give the full picture of the Jewish experience in America. Adding the new pages also gave me the opportunity to take the story all the way through to the 350th Anniversary of Jews in America - that in itself seemed to suggest an interesting ending.