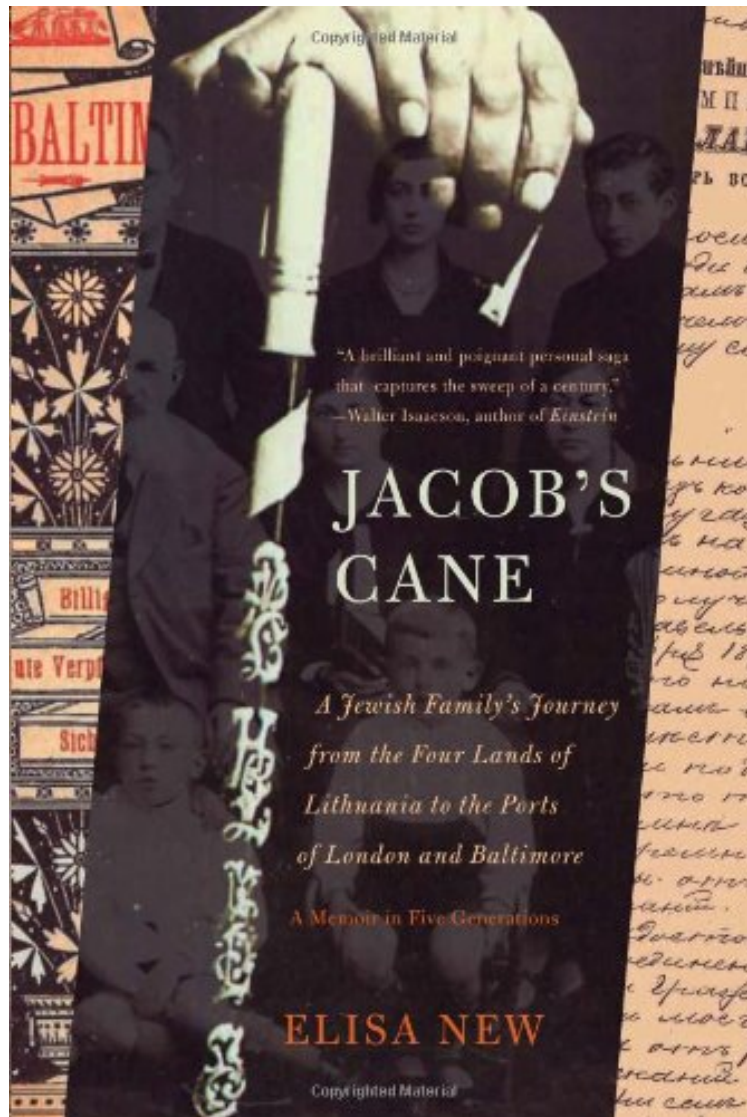


(Download pdf ebook) *Jacob's Cane: A Jewish Family's Journey from the Four Lands of Lithuania to the Ports of London and Baltimore; A Memoir in Five Generations*

Jacob's Cane: A Jewish Family's Journey from the Four Lands of Lithuania to the Ports of London and Baltimore; A Memoir in Five Generations

Elisa New

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Elisa New : Jacob's Cane: A Jewish Family's Journey from the Four Lands of Lithuania to the Ports of London and Baltimore; A Memoir in Five Generations before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Jacob's Cane: A Jewish Family's Journey from the Four Lands of Lithuania to the Ports of London and Baltimore; A Memoir in Five Generations*:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. *Jacob's Cane* - Wow, this book hit home for Me! By Heidi Hamberg
 When I saw the review by Aaron Leibel on the author's web-site, [...] I knew I had to explore this tale of Jewish immigration from Lithuania to America and elsewhere -- my grandparents also grew up in Riga and, like the author's family, they too lost most of their family to the Nazis. I was so moved by the similarities that I immediately started to look through my old family papers. By the time I finished reading the book however, I realized that this was the work of a literature scholar -- I could not compete with her. Professor New's research took almost ten years she says, visiting Europe three times, England, Israel, and many stops on the Atlantic Coast interviewing her USA descendants. On many of these trips her various daughters were in tow, the oldest one, Yael, translated for her in French and Russian. Professor New herself speaks fluent Hebrew from her early childhood visits to Israel she says, and it was then used to find, converse and hold hands with the only living family member from Riga family whom had escaped the Nazis and had not previously been found. She (Rivka) is now 86 and well! This memoir is extraordinary. One or two chapters were difficult to get through, but in retrospect I see now their importance as background to the various family business ventures in the USA and London. I have read a great deal about the Holocaust and the Nazi era; this family memoir by the author provides a new perspective, painful again to recall, but so touching for me, and the emotions cause the tears to flow. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. *Poetic history* By Brad Bunnin
 I was interested in the setting and the personal history because my family came from the same part of the world. The book didn't disappoint: it's well written, engaging, and fun to read. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. *Jacob's Cane* By Myrna Broschinsky
 I loved this book. I like to read about other cultures and learn more about their traditions. This is an excellent book.

Drawn to an image of her great-grandfather's ornately carved cane, scholar Elisa New embarked on a journey to discover the origins of her precious family heirloom. Treading back across the paths of her ancestors, she travels from Baltimore to the Baltic to London in order to find and understand an immigrant world profoundly affected by modern German culture, from the Enlightenment through the Holocaust. Deeply ambitious in its narrative sweep, *Jacob's Cane* captures the rich texture of life on several continents as New's family searches to establish itself in the tobacco trade. A fascinating history of one family's story of progress, innovation, and struggle, *Jacob's Cane* will change the way we think about the Jewish American experience.

From Publishers Weekly
 Harvard English professor New (*The Line's Eye*) wife of former Harvard president and current Obama adviser Larry Summers traces the journeys of two family patriarchs from Eastern Europe as she unravels the mysterious etchings on her great-grandfather's elegant cane. Great-grandfather Jacob Levy and great-great-uncle Bernhard Baron, both Jewish immigrants from the Baltic states, met in Baltimore, become friends and joined their families through marriage, but later became bitter rivals. Bernhard moved to London, where he became a tobacco magnate and legendary philanthropist who implemented a progressive set of workers' benefits. His Black Cat London factory is hailed today as a great art deco achievement. Jacob was a scholar, inventor and businessman who made a quixotic 1914 congressional run as the Socialist Party candidate. He founded a firm that today is a giant textile processor. But three of his sons chose to join Bernhard in London and changed their names to Baron. Although meandering and wordy, this engrossing memoir/family history vivifies the singular successes and tragedies of a memorable clan and should inspire readers to seek out their own family stories. Bw illus. (Oct.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.
 From Booklist
 The danger in writing personal family chronicles is that they can become the literary equivalent of home movies. New, who is a professor of English and American literature at Harvard, largely dodges this trap, although she does provide a few superfluous, even confusing details. For the most part, this is an engrossing and fast-moving story that traces her family's joys and heartaches over five generations and two continents. Her search was provoked by the puzzling, intricate carvings she found on her great-grandfather's cane. He was Jacob Levy, who left Lithuania for Baltimore, where he gained success as an entrepreneur and later sought a political career. In Baltimore, he met Bernhard Baron, another Jewish immigrant. It was the friendship, and later the enmity, of these two ambitious and creative men that drives this narrative, especially after Baron moved to London, where he prospered in the tobacco business and attracted three of Levy's sons to join him there. News account of these men and their progeny is often emotionally stirring, especially as they interact with the great events of the last century. --Jay Freeman
 In *Search of American Jewish Culture* Elisa New has managed to honor the past while also showing how the research to recapture it is done. Because *Jacob's Cane* is not only an historical detective story, but is also novelistic in its evocation of character and circumstance, Professor New's book is singular, poignant, and compelling. Paul Hendrickson, National Book Critics Circle Award-winning author of *Sons of Mississippi*
 Here is a Harvard professor of literature, who goes in search of her family's Lithuanian Jewish story, and finds it, and brings back something that she may not have previously realized she owned: a rich poetic voice. Steven J. Zipperstein, author of *The Jews of Odessa*
Jacob's Cane is an intricate, beautifully rendered mesh of memoir and genealogical enthusiasm. New describes places, possessions, even the rhythms of business with vividness, even sensuality. Jonathan Wilson, Professor, Tufts University; author of *A Palestine Affair* and *The Hiding Room*
 A lovely,

fully grounded, yet lyrical family memoir *Jacobs Cane* wonderfully transcends its back to my roots genre; its narrative is loving yet objective, informative, beautifully written and a pleasure to read. Susan Mizruchi, author of *The Science of Sacrifice* Cultural history at its best. An engrossing exploration that reveals in its affectionate breadth the intimate ties between a Jewish family and major American manufactories. Suzanne Wasserman, Director, Gotham Center for NYC History/CUNY Graduate Center *Elisa News* wonderful memoir adds a rich layer to the tapestry of American Jewish history. Henry Rosovsky, Professor Emeritus, Harvard University A family narrative of great fascination that includes in-depth social and economic history, all written with the pen of a poet. Walter Isaacson, author of *Einstein and Benjamin Franklin*; CEO of the Aspen Institute A brilliant and poignant personal saga that captures the sweep of a century of Jewish life. Holding her great-grandfather's cane and her daughter's hand, Elisa New travels from Baltimore to Lithuania to London exploring the meaning of love, family, and history. Its astonishing social history wrapped in a thrilling investigative adventure. *Publishers Weekly* engrossing vivifies the singular successes and tragedies of a memorable clan and should inspire readers to seek out their own family stories. Louis Menand, author of *The Metaphysical Club* Like Andre Acimans *Out of Egypt* and Rich Cohens *Sweet and Low*, *Jacobs Cane* is a history of a Jewish family that is so much more an imaginative recreation of two vanished worlds, Latvia and Baltimore from the 1880s to the 1940s; a natural, economic, and cultural history of tobacco, the product from which some of this family's fortune was made; and a moving personal quest. And it's a wonderful piece of writing. Edward Serotta, Director of *Centropa.org*, a Jewish historical institute; author of *Out of the Shadows*, *Survival in Sarajevo* and *Jews, Germany, Memory* In this poignant and wise study, New recreates that lost world for us, rebuilding it through memories, stories and archives, and presenting it through the prism of a single family. Stephen J. Whitfield, Professor of American Studies, Brandeis University; author of