

Contact: Darcy Maher, 732-729-9877; Email: dbmbildner@comcast.net
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**“HANUKKAH IN AMERICA”
PUBLIC LECTURE AT RUTGERS ON DECEMBER 10**

NEW BRUNSWICK/PISCATAWAY, N.J. – How did Hanukkah, a minor holiday in the Jewish tradition, become the most widely celebrated Jewish holiday for American Jews? While many think that the holiday became important in America primarily to give Jewish children a fun event during the Christmas season, Dianne Ashton, a professor of religion studies and American studies at Rowan University, will show how American Jews began magnifying Hanukkah’s significance long before Christmas trees and presents became widespread in the United States. Ashton will draw on the findings of her new book *Hanukkah in America: A History* (New York University Press, 2013) at the lecture “Hanukkah in America” on December 10 at 7:30 p.m. at the Douglass Campus Center, 100 George St. in New Brunswick.

The lecture is free and open to the public, and free parking is available behind the Campus Center. (For GPS search, use “57 Lipman Drive.”) Advance registration is requested by contacting 848-932-2033 or csjlrsvp@rci.rutgers.edu. Sponsored by the Allen and Joan Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life at Rutgers University, the talk is supported in part by the Sagner Family Foundation. For more information, visit the website BildnerCenter.rutgers.edu.

Ashton is currently the editor of the scholarly journal *American Jewish History*. Her other publications include: *Rebecca Gratz: Women and Judaism in Antebellum America*; *Jewish Life in Pennsylvania*; and *Four Centuries of Jewish Women's Spirituality*, co-edited with Ellen Umansky.

The Allen and Joan Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life connects the university with the community through public lectures, symposia, Jewish communal initiatives, cultural events, and teacher training.