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The Love Israel Family: Urban Commune, Rural Commune

By Charles P. LeWarne

University of Washington Press. Paperback. Book Condition: New. Paperback. 312 pages. Dimensions: 9.0in. x 6.0in. x 1.0in. Winner of the Malstrom Award of the League of Snohomish County Historical Organizations. In 1968, a time of turbulence and countercultural movements, a one-time television salesman named Paul Erdmann changed his name to Love Israel and started a controversial religious commune in Seattle's middle-class Queen Anne Hill neighborhood. He quickly gathered a following and they too adopted the Israel surname, along with biblical or virtuous first names such as Honesty, Courage, and Strength. The burgeoning Love Israel Family lived a communal lifestyle centered on meditation and the philosophy that all persons were one and life was eternal. They flourished for more than a decade, owning houses and operating businesses on the Hill, although rumors of drug use, control of members, and unconventional sexual arrangements dogged them. By 1984, perceptions among many followers that some Family members - especially Love Israel himself - had become more equal than others led to a bitter breakup in which two-thirds of the members defected. The remaining faithful, about a hundred strong, resettled on a ranch the Family retained near the town of Arlington, Washington, north of Seattle. There they...



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