

CONTENTS

Preface ix

Acknowledgments xix

Translation and Romanization xxi

1. The World of the Brivnshteler 1

Encountering Modernity 1

The Brivnshteler and Traditional Education 8

The Brivnshteler and the History of Model Letters 29

Yiddish Language, Yiddish Publishing, and the Brivnshteler 33

The Brivnshteler and Yiddish Literature 42

What Makes the Brivnshteler Jewish? 47

2. From the Pages of Brivnshtelers 66

Modernity and Mobility 66

Parents and Children: Russia 83

Parents and Children: America 101

Courtship and Marriage: Russia 111

Courtship and Marriage: America 124

Business 138

Judaism and Jewish Identity 152

Imagining America 168

3. Beyond Letters 192

Bibliography 201

Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Brivnshtelers 201

Other Sources 204

Index 213