

Voyages to Freedom: A Celebration of Sephardic Jewish History and Culture in Latin America

Presenter Dr. Stanley Hordes will speak on "The Sephardic Legacy in New Mexico: a History of Crypto-Jews"
Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb of Congregation Nahalat Shalom will speak on "The Sephardic Tradition from Spain and Latin America, Through Storytelling"
Performance of Ladino and Sephardic music by the Rebbe's Orchestra
Date: Thursday March 18, 9am - 3pm
Location: South Broadway Cultural Center Multi-purpose activities room 1025 Broadway Blvd. SE, Albuquerque (Between Martin Luther King Blvd. & Lead) (505) 848-1320
Contact: Maria Casellas-Kelly 505-277-6842 mkelly@unm.edu

Annual Cemetery Cleanup

The New Mexico Jewish Historical Society and the Montefiore Cemetery Association will hold their annual cleanup of the historic old Congregation Montefiore Cemetery in Las Vegas, New Mexico on Sunday, April 25, 2004 at about 10 a.m.

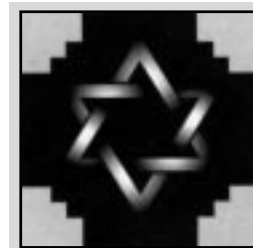
Marvin Taichert, who died in June of 2002, was the founder and benefactor of the Montefiore Cemetery Association and descendant of an old Las Vegas mercantile family. There will be an unveiling of his headstone at the cleanup.

Children and parents from Albuquerque to Taos will turn out to enjoy this spring event and, after a couple of hours of raking, hoeing and pulling weeds, the Cemetery Association will furnish a delicious lunch to the tired workers.

Those who wish to join a caravan starting from Santa Fe, should be at the parking lot of Temple Beth Shalom, 205 E. Barcelona no later than 8:45 a.m.

Please bring gardening tools such as rakes, hoes, clippers and a garden cart or wheelbarrow, if you can.....and, don't forget gardening gloves. Please write your name on your equipment.

For further information, call Gunther Aron at 505-438-0738.



16th Annual Conference Examined New Mexico Jewish Community from Gentile Perspectives

by Stan Hordes



Albuquerque's DoubleTree Hotel served as the venue for the NMJHS's 16th Annual Conference, held on Saturday night and Sunday, November 8-9, 2003. The theme of the Conference was "Views of Jews: Gentile Perceptions of Jews in New Mexico, 1598-2000," and it featured lectures and discussions analyzing how the outside community has regarded New Mexico Jews over the course of the past four centuries.

"Past conferences have focused on Jews as the subjects of history," noted Society President and Conference Chair Dr. Stanley Hordes. "This year we decided to examine Jews as the object of history, i.e. how they were regarded by non-Jews over time." Hordes was one of three historians who presented lectures on the topic over the weekend. The Conference opened with a keynote banquet speech on Saturday evening by Dr. Michael Perko, S.J., Professor of History at Loyola

University of Chicago. In his talk "Saints, Santos, and Tzadikim: Changing Attitudes of the Catholic Church toward Jews and Crypto-Jews," Perko shared with the audience his observations on the changing attitudes by the Catholic Church toward Jews globally, as well as in New Mexico. He stressed three major historical themes during the course of his presentation: the cultural affinity maintained by the two faiths; the evolution of official Catholic policy from persecution of Jews to one of respect and cooperation, and the role played by the frontier in engendering a greater sense of toleration among different faiths.



Dr. Michael Perko, SJ and Dr. Stanley Hordes

This theme was continued the next morning by Hordes, who presented a lecture entitled, "Between Tolerance and Persecution: Spanish Colonial Policy Toward Crypto-Jews in New Mexico, 1598-2000." Hordes analyzed the complex relationship between the Inquisition and the converso communities of Mexico and New Mexico, noting the changes in attitudes expressed by Spanish colonial authorities, in general, and the Catholic Church, in particular, over time and geography. The talk emphasized the fact that

the farther that the crypto-Jews and their descendants found themselves from the centers of power and authority, the greater the atmosphere of toleration, relative to the situation back in Spain and Portugal.

Dr. Henry Tobias, author of *History of the Jews of New Mexico* (University of New Mexico Press, 1993), offered a presentation, "We're All in This Together: Jews as Anglos in New Mexico History," in which he, like fellow speakers Perko and Hordes, discussed the importance of the frontier on relationships among the diverse ethnic groups in New Mexico from the assumption of sovereignty by the United

States over Mexico in the mid-nineteenth century, through the early years of statehood in the twentieth. The German Jewish merchants who immigrated to New Mexico in the 1840s, 50s, 60s and 70s, Tobias pointed out, had more in common culturally with both the new Anglo-American elite and with the French clergy imported by Archbishop Jean Baptiste Lamy. As a consequence, these Jews were

considered by both these elements and by Hispanics as comprising part of the new

continued on p. 3

Calendar of Upcoming Events:

- Voyages of Freedom Sephardic Jewish History Program, March 18, Albuquerque (see above).
- Annual NMJHS Cleanup of Congregation Montefiore Cemetery, April 25, Las Vegas (See article top right this page)
- Annual Membership Meeting and Screening of *Adio Kerida*, featuring guest presentation, June 13, 2004, Albuquerque
- Book and Art Sale, September 4 & 5, 2004, Wild Oats Community Room, Santa Fe
- Annual Conference, November 2004

The NMJHS is soliciting historical papers and photographs for inclusion in its archival collection at the New Mexico Records Center and Archives. For more information contact The NMJHS at (505) 348-4471 or nmjhs@jewishnewmexico.org

For a membership form, please call the NMJHS office at 505-348-4471 or visit our website: www.nmjewishhistory.org.

Mission Statement

The mission of the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society is: to promote greater understanding and knowledge of New Mexico's Jewish history. The Society's programs examine the state's Jewish heritage in all its diversity, and strive to present this heritage within a broad cultural context. The Society is a secular organization and solicits the membership and participation of all interested people, regardless of religious affiliation.

New Mexico Jewish Historical Society
5520 Wyoming Blvd. NE
Albuquerque, NM 87109

New Mexico Jewish Historical Society



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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 16th Annual Conference Recap.....1&3
- Flora Spiegelberg: Jewish Bride of the Santa Fe Trail.....2
- Photo Gallery.....3
- Upcoming Events.....4

Flora Spiegelberg: Jewish Bride of the Santa Fe Trail

by Sharon Niederman

Flora Spiegelberg probably knew the boast was not entirely accurate, but she proudly referred to herself as “the first Jewish woman in New Mexico.” She left her mark on the territorial capital, not only with her particular down-to-earth brand of European sophistication, but as a teacher, writer, society hostess and the founder of Santa Fe’s first nonsectarian school.



Flora Spiegelberg photo by Will Freigsmann

While receiving her education in Germany, Flora was introduced to Willi Spiegelberg, youngest of the prosperous and influential Spiegelberg brothers who made their mark as merchants and bankers during Territorial days from their Santa Fe base. As was the practice of men in Willi’s social class, once established in business, he returned to Germany to find an appropriate bride.

He could not have chosen better than the American-born Flora Langerman. The beautiful red-haired young woman brought her collection of Romantic paintings and her talent on the piano with Chopin and Mendelssohn to the rough-edged territorial capital, where, by means of charm, curiosity and gumption, she thrived. Of her husband she said, “I was

young and he was handsome, and I soon became Mrs. Willi Spiegelberg.”

Following a honeymoon trip through Vienna, Paris and London, in 1875 Flora and Willi followed the Santa Fe Trail by stagecoach and army ambulance. Of the trip fare she wrote, “Usually we had dried buffalo chips, with beans, red or green peppers, coffee and tea without milk or sugar, and occasional delicacies such as buffalo tongues, bear and buffalo steaks. I did not relish this food, but my hardened pioneer husband never complained.”

During the 1880s, while her husband occupied several high civic posts, Flora hosted visiting celebrities General Philip H. Sheridan, General Ulysses S. Grant and President and Mrs. Rutherford B. Hayes. Perhaps her most splendid celebration was the 1885 gala honoring her dear friend, Jean Baptists Lamy when he was named archbishop. The two shared a passion for gardening and enjoyed conversing on the subject in French. When the Spiegelberg home on the corner of Palace Ave. and Paseo de Peralta was completed, the Archbishop planted two willow trees in the front lawn. The stumps of these trees are still visible.

Flora also hired a teacher from the Presbyterian Mission to begin a nonsectarian school – Santa Fe’s first – for girls, raised money for and had built in 1880 a three-room schoolhouse with children’s gardens.

In 1888 the Spiegelbergs returned to New York City, where Flora took up several causes. She became an advocate of modern sanitation and crusaded for updated garbage disposal methods, acquiring the nickname of “The Guardian Angel of the Street Cleaners.” In 1912, Thomas A. Edison made a film based on her incineration plan. She served on several New York City commissions, wrote radio scripts and fiction.

This extraordinary woman retained her unabashed individuality throughout her life. She died in 1943 at age 86.

Sharon Niederman is an award-winning Albuquerque journalist and author. This article on Flora Spiegelberg is excerpted from her book, “A Quilt of Words: Women’s Diaries, Letters & Original Accounts of Life in the Southwest, 1860-1960.” She is currently working on a collection of Jewish pioneer journals. Visit her at www.sharonniederman.com or email her at sherites@swcp.com.

continued from p. 1

Anglo elite.

In contrast to the earlier speakers, Susan Seligman, director of the Anti-Defamation League of New Mexico, stressed the way in which Jews are threatened by expressions and acts of anti-Semitism, a danger that she believes has been accelerating in recent years, both throughout the country, and in New Mexico. While acknowledging the recognition accorded to Jews as public officials and other prominent members of the community, as well as the long tradition of excellent interfaith relations, Seligman, in her talk entitled, “Looking In, Looking Out: A Reflection on Jews, Anti-Semitism and the Place of Jews in New Mexico Today”, lamented the changing demographic situation in New Mexico, where many new immigrants to the state have been bringing with them the prejudices of their places of origin.

Sunday afternoon’s program featured a

panel discussion comprising scholars and members of the Gentile community who have interacted with New Mexico Jews over the course of the past several decades. Gary and Jeannie (Martinez) McKinley discussed their relationship with the Taichert family of Las Vegas, leading up to the purchase of the Taichert store from the late Marvin Taichert in November, 1981. Mary Eduvigen García, who traces her ancestry back to nineteenth-century German Jewish immigrant Solomon Bibo and his wife Juana Valle, granddaughter of the chief of Ácoma Pueblo, related her family’s dealings, both personal and professional, with the Seligman and Bibo families of Cubero and Bernalillo. The discussion was moderated by Melanie LaBorwit, Curator of Education for the Albuquerque Balloon Museum, who drew upon the expertise of Dr. Tomas Jaehn, Librarian at the Fray Angelico Chávez Library of the Museum of New Mexico in Santa Fe.

Throughout the Conference, four distinguished New Mexico artists displayed their work, Diana Bryer of Santa Cruz; Pamela Messer of Santa Fe; Miriam Gendron of Albuquerque; and Katya Miller of Santa Fe. Each artist generously contributed one or more of their pieces to a Silent Auction, the proceeds of which were donated to the NMJHS.

Purchase price of the video taped proceedings of the Conference is \$10 for 1 tape or \$40 for a set of 5. For more information, please contact Julie Gordon at 505-348-4471, or via e-mail: nmjhs@jewishnewmexico.org.

Special thanks is owed to the Conference Committee, composed of Stan Hordes, Claire Grossman, Sharon Herzog, Judy Weinreb, Melanie LaBorwit, and Henry Tobias, assisted by the wonderful organizational ability of Society Administrator Julie Gordon.



Melanie LaBorwit



Dr. Henry Tobias



Susan Seligman



Claire Grossman and Helen Hordes



Tomas Jaehn, Jeannie & Gary McKinley and Mary Eduvigen García

Governor Bill Richardson’s office has issued a proclamation declaring February 22, 2004 JEWISH PIONEER DAY

To celebrate the publication of *Jewish Pioneers of New Mexico*, several descendants of pioneer families will speak at an event on February 29, followed by a book signing with Tomas Jaehn and Dr. Henry Tobias.

This volume - based on the exhibition of the same name at the Palace of the Governors (Museum of New Mexico) in Santa Fe - represents the first effort to document this piece of New Mexico social history with never-before-seen family photographs, personal possessions, oral histories, and reminiscences.

The story of New Mexico’s 19th and early 20th century Jewish pioneers has all the drama of an epic novel—a rags-to-riches saga peopled with larger-than-life characters, set in a vast, challenging landscape. —New Mexico Magazine

Sunday, February 29 - 3:00-5:00 pm - Solomon Schechter Day School (Jewish Community Center Campus) 5520 A Wyoming NE, Albuquerque. Contact: Kathryn Weil 505-232-2325