



## Distinguished Scholar Stan Hordes Shares Remarks At Tribute

by Stan Hordes

*Note: Stan Hordes was honored by the Society on April 29, 2012. Below are his remarks to the assembled group following tributes by his professional colleagues, associates and friends.*



I can't imagine any greater tribute than that offered by one's peers. I am truly honored by the very kind words expressed by my friends and colleagues

this afternoon.

I am particularly appreciative of the pains that so many of you took to travel here from so far away to be here to honor my work. I also know that events like this don't just happen. They take a huge amount of time and thought to organize and execute, and I would like to express my profound appreciation to Ron Duncan Hart, Program Chair, and Dorothy Amsden, President of the NMJHS for their extraordinary efforts to put this program together.

The great Jewish philosopher, Alan Koenigsberg (aka Woody Allen) once said, "Eighty percent of success is showing up." Well, so much of my career has been shaped by just "showing up" at the

right place at the right time – and taking advantage of the many opportunities with which circumstances provided me. I *happened* to grow up in the suburbs of Washington DC, and when it was time to go to college, there was no question as to where to attend – it was "the university down the street," or nowhere at all.

So, I enrolled at the University of Maryland, which happened to have an outstanding history department. The colonial Latin American historian, Professor J. Benedict Warren, just *happened* to have studied at the University of New Mexico under the direction of the pioneering Inquisition scholar, France V. Scholes. When Ben Warren, having stimulated my interest in the relationship between the Inquisition and the crypto-Jews of Mexico, recommended that I pursue graduate study under Professor Scholes at UNM, I "showed up" at UNM in 1971 to do precisely that.

And it just so *happened* that Professor Scholes had been deemed "too old" to take on graduate students, and then a few months later it so *happened* that another of Professor Scholes' students, Richard E. Greenleaf (THE leading historian of the Mexican Inquisition), was in Albuquerque visiting Professor Scholes at the same time I *happened* to be over there, and he encouraged me to continue my Ph.D. work at Tulane University, which I did. Under the guidance (and financial support) of Professor Greenleaf, I completed my doctoral dissertation in 1980 on the history of the crypto-Jews of Mexico in the 17th century. And, "showing up" in New



Stan Hordes

Mexico shortly thereafter, there *happened* to be a vacancy up in Santa Fe for the position of New Mexico State Historian, which I applied for and received. Santa Fe being a small town, many people whose roots went back some 400 years wondered who this newcomer was, who was going to be the historian of *their* state. And it just so *happened* that, having learned about the work that I had just done on the history of the crypto-Jews of Mexico, some people from within the Hispano community felt compelled to

*(continued on p. 3)*

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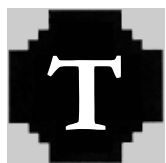
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## Message from President Dorothy Amsden



This has been a challenging yet rewarding two years that I have served as president of the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society. I have been inspired by the people who served in this office before me and by the traditions of the organization. I have learned a lot of history about the organization over its twenty-seven years. Most of all I have enjoyed getting to know our membership.

This is a most remarkable organization that has some notable accomplishments. Creating an archive was a major project that brought members together to work hard at cataloguing family papers that had been given to NMJHS. The result is an impressive collection of books, documents, and photographs of value to scholars at the New Mexico State Records Center and Archives in Santa Fe.

The second major undertaking of the Society was the Video History Project (See the article about Lisa Witt, winner of the 2012 Hurst Award for her work on this project, on page 4 of this issue.) A team of interviewers talked with descendants of the pioneer Jewish families. Those interviews were videotaped for posterity. They reside in the State Archives. As a result of those interviews,

fourteen booklets about the families were published. Those booklets are available for purchase on the NMJHS website and at Society events.

As you know, our current major undertaking is the Jewish Pioneer Panels that NMJHS received from the Museum of New Mexico. We have begun exhibiting them around the state and are in the process of creating an educational program based on the pioneer families that will go online in the next year or so.

Reading through back issues of the newsletter has given me a sense of the dedication that went into the founding of this Society, and the hard work and fun that has made it what it is today. NMJHS not only celebrates Jewish history in New Mexico, it is part of New Mexico history.

What makes this organization click? An impressive array of talents and dedication to carrying out the Society's mission. An organization is more than the sum of its parts – it is an esprit de corps that makes it thrive. We have that “can do” spirit, and we invite our members, however far

flung, to get more involved in our undertakings. We need your brains, brawn, and financial support.



NMJHS President Dorothy Amsden

I thank departing board members Carla Freeman and Tony Amsden for their years of service and dedication and welcome new board members Janet Sainers, Paula Amar Schwartz, Karen Singer, and Nurit Patt.

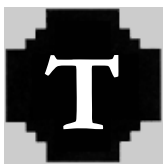
The board of directors has asked me to remain as president for another year.

I'm looking forward to seeing some of the initiatives

that the NMJHS board has undertaken in the past few years come to fruition, such as our outreach program, which soon will feature a speakers bureau.

The culmination of this Centennial year will be the NMJHS Fall Conference in Santa Fe on November 4. Its theme is “Statehood: New Mexico Jewry before and after 1912.” This is the weekend when we go back on standard time. You won't want to miss the excellent speakers and camaraderie. Pre-conference activities are in the planning stage for November 3, so please stay tuned.☆

## Dear Legacy Editor:



That's what you get when you leave history up to newcomers. That there Mr. Yellin in his article “Like It Was Yesterday: Remembering Magidson's,” appearing in the September 2011 *Legacy*, just didn't get the whole story.

Sam Stitzberg promoted Albert and Sarah Magidson to come to Albuquerque and open a delicatessen. Al's daughter Annabelle married Martin Morrison. Al, Marty and Al's son Irwin ran Magidson's.

Much later, at my father's (Lewis R. Sutin) wedding to Rose Stitzberg, Sam's widow, I jokingly jested to Marty that the Sutins had married a restaurant. That meant that Marty and Annabelle's daughter Susan Morrison (now Citrin) and I were related.

In 1992, Susan and I climbed Masada together. Susan let [her husband] Paul come along.

None of this explains why Susan (or Mr. Yellin) only listed members of B'nai Isra-

el (now, I believe, all of blessed memory) as those who sat at Magidson's Captain's Table. This is very upsetting. At lunch, when my office was in the Simms Building, I sat at a table in back of Magidson's, near the kitchen door, I suppose, relegated to the rear, with the Temple Albert crew. I ate braunschweiger sandwiches.

To make matters worst, I think Irwin was a Temple member.

Now you know the rest of the story. Thanks for reading---Mike Sutin ☆

**Stan Hordes** *(continued from p. 1)*

come into my office and whisper to me about their family, friends or neighbors lighting candles on Friday night.

Well, you all know where the story went from there. The importance of “showing up” at the right place at the right time.

My debts of gratitude are immense.

- First, to my parents and my brother, who instilled in me a love of history.
- To my father, who told me when I was about 15, that by the time I was an adult there would be so many people speaking Spanish in this country, and that I should be prepared to communicate with them. So, like a dutiful son, I started taking classes in high-school Spanish. And, when you learn a language, you gain an appreciation for a culture, and so my father’s wise advice led me to combine my love of history with my growing appreciation for Hispanic culture.
- To my mentor, Professor Richard Greenleaf, who just passed away this past November, for his wisdom, wit, encouragement, and support – financial, as well as intellectual – I owe him so much.
- To my dedicated research associates who helped me immensely on both the New Mexico book and the forthcoming work on the history of crypto-Jewish settlement of the Spanish Caribbean Islands – Richard Salazar, Rob Martínez, Janice Martínez, Martina Will, Margarita Ochoa, Frank Álvarez, Mercedes López Wooten, and Gerald González, whose untimely death in November saddens us all.
- To my colleagues – too many to mention all of them here – Seth

Kunin, Seth Ward, Roger Martínez, Tomas Atencio, Rowena Rivera, José Antonio Esquibel, Janet Jacobs, David Gitlitz, Kristine Bordenave, Orlando Romero, Adrian Bustamante, Fay Blake, Michael Perko – just to name a few – whose work has stimulated me, and whose advice kept me from ill-conceived leaps of faith.



- To the descendants of crypto-Jews – to Isabelle Medina Sandoval, Michael Atlas Acuña, Dennis Durán, Glorya Tschabold, and so many others – for the inspiration that they have shown on their voyages of discovery of their rich heritage.
- And even to my critics – they know who they are – who motivated me to question assumptions, and to exercise more care in developing my own conclusions.
- To my friends and fellow board members in the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society and the Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies, for their tremendous efforts to promote and encourage the study of Jewish history in all of its complexity.
- And most importantly to my family: to [my wife] Helen who

supported my career from the beginning, who worked to put me through grad school, who coped with my weeks-long absences, and who supported me during some difficult times.

- To my wonderful children, Shira and Paul, and their even more-wonderful spouses, Yoav and Melissa, for their love and encouragement, and for enduring the unceasing and annoying history lectures during family drives through the countryside, and to my absolutely wonderful granddaughter, Cora (as well to the two new grandbabies to arrive later this year), for teaching me about the truly important things of life.

*Stan Hordes is Adjunct Research Professor at the Latin American and Iberian Institute of the University of New Mexico, former New Mexico State Historian and past president and founder of the Society for Crypto Jewry and NMJHS. ☆*

**New Members**

Neil L. Block  
 Stuart Feen and Carol Sonnenshein  
 Holocaust & Intolerance Museum  
 of New Mexico  
 Roger L. Martinez  
 Maxine Newman

**Mission Statement**

**The New Mexico Jewish Historical Society is a secular organization that welcomes all interested people, regardless of religious affiliation. Its mission is to promote greater understanding and knowledge of New Mexico’s Jewish history within a broad cultural context.**

## Witt Receives 2012 Hurst Award



On June 24, 2012, long-time NMJHS member Lisa Witt received the Dr. Allan and Leona Hurst Award for outstanding service to the Society.

Lisa Witt's greatest contribution to the advancement of Jewish history in New Mexico was her role as Director of the Pioneer Jews Video Archive Project. Lisa took a vague idea and proposal that had been discussed for a couple of years and fashioned it into a coherent and superb enterprise and saw it to its successful conclusion.

Under the Video Archive Project, descendants of major Jewish Pioneer families in New Mexico were video interviewed. Their photos and memorabilia were recorded. This huge body of

material was then assembled and sent to NMJHS Archives in Santa Fe. Copies were also deposited in the Southwest Collection at UNM. These materials are now in the public sphere for scholars and interested lay people to enjoy and exploit.

Lisa oversaw virtually all aspects of the project. She worked tirelessly over four years. She believed in it. She secured grants that became the lifeblood of the project. She handled numerous details. She fostered a sense of dedication among the volunteers and among her technical staff at Avista Video. She was a taskmaster, but

she was also a delight to work with. She respected the professional historians.

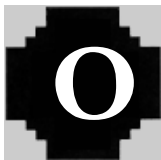
As the project was developing she understood the benefits of producing the booklets based on the interviews. Despite some doubts, Lisa urged their publication.

Lisa Witt left us with an important legacy, a wonderful complement to the Pioneer Panels Exhibits.



Lisa is President and founder of Avista Video Histories in Albuquerque, winner of 17 national Telly Awards since 1998. ☆

## Annual Montefiore Cemetery Cleanup



On Sunday, May 6, NMJHS volunteers gathered in Las Vegas, New Mexico for the Annual Montefiore Cemetery Cleanup. This year's

event, as usual, involved weeding, moving rocks, raking debris and enjoying a picnic lunch. In addition, the society

had an opportunity to honor cemetery caretaker Ted Herburger. After last summer's vandalism which included broken and toppled headstones (as reported in the September 2011 *Legacy*), Ted immediately began repair work and the cemetery was re-dedicated last winter. Dorothy Amsden presented a plaque to Ted with much gratitude for his efforts.

Montefiore Cemetery's tombstones date to 1881, when Las Vegas had a thriving Jewish community. Family tombstones include those of the Ilfelds, Herzsteins, Taicherts, Regensbergs, Moiseses, Danzigers, Rosenthals, Teitelbaums and many others. ☆



*Ted Herburger, Montefiore Cemetery caretaker, receives plaque from society*



*NMJHS volunteers rebuild a cemetery wall.*

## NMJHS Fall Conference Will Honor the New Mexico Centennial



This being this Centennial year for New Mexico, the Fall Conference of the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society will be based on the theme, "Statehood: New Mexico Jewry before and after 1912." The one-day conference will take place on Sunday, November 4, at the DoubleTree Hotel in Santa Fe. Pre-conference activities are being planned for November 3. Save those dates!

The program will focus on New Mexico Jewish families and the evolution of Jewish life and business during that

transitional period. Keynote speaker Professor Richard Melzer, professor of History at the University of New Mexico, Valencia campus, will provide a historical context of those exciting years for speakers who follow. Melzer is the author of numerous books focusing on New Mexico history, including *New Mexico: Celebrating the Land of Enchantment and Sunshine & Shadows in New Mexico's Past*.

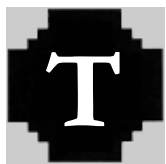
Other noted speakers will include Ramona Caplan, who has been researching the fascinating Bibo family.

*(continued on p. 8)*



*Nordhaus-Staab family in Albuquerque circa 1915, courtesy of Nancy Minces Paxton.*

## Albuquerque is Site for Conference on Crypto-Judaism



The 22nd Annual Conference of the Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies, in Albuquerque July 22-24, features more than 35 speakers and presenters from three continents on related history, culture and art, in addition to a workshop exploring Hispano family history, according to Dolores Sloan, President.

The event, open to the public at the Hotel Albuquerque, is a homecoming for the international society, founded in 1991 at Fort Burgwin Complex near Taos by former state historian, Stanley M. Hordes and other interested individuals from the Southwest.

Keynote speaker David Gitlitz, historian and author *Secrecy and Deceit: The Religion of the Crypto Jews*, will address the opening session on "Portuguese and Spaniolese? The Where of the Mexican Conversos," following the traditional Sunday opening dinner.

Isabelle Medina Sandoval, Santa Fe educator and author, *Hidden Shabbat: the Secret Lives of Crypto-Jews*, will speak on "Crafting Credible Crypto-Judaic Literature," the first Annual Martin Sosin Address to advance scholarly studies in the crypto-Judaic arts.

Frances Levine, Director, New Mexico History Museum; Stanley M. Hordes; and Roger L. Martinez-Davila, Assistant Professor, University of Colorado, Colorado Springs will speak on the exhibition that will open at the museum in May 2015 on cultural and religious history of Sephardic Jews, conversos and crypto-Jews.

"Our Roots: Exploring Hispano Family History," a special workshop on July 22, features New Mexico genealogy specialists Robert Martinez, Henrietta Martinez Christmas, Shelly Talalay Dardashti, and Mona Hernandez. A special message from genealogist and historian José Antonio Esquibel will keynote the workshop. Arnold Trujillo, SCJS Board member, is Coordinator with Gloria Trujillo, Conference Vice President.

Conference presenters on genealogical themes are Harry Ostrer MD, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, "Observations on Genetic Research Findings"; Paul R. Duncan MD, "The 185delAG BRCA1 Mutation in non-Ashkenazi Jews and in the Non-Jewish Population"; Jeffrey S. Malka, "Evolution of Jewish Surnames from Biblical Times to Sepharad"; and Shelly Dardashti, "Sephardic Research Comes of Age: Trends and Resources."

Presenting personal stories on exploring crypto-Jewish legacy are Jo Roybal Izay, "Sephardic New Mexico"; Genie Milgrom, "Unlocking the Secrets of the Past: Jews of Feroselle"; Sonya Loya, "Footsteps of a Converso's Discoveries"; and Alia Garcia, "Defending My Mother's Honor."

Exhibiting and presenting artists, whose works reflect influences of crypto-Judaism, are Anita Rodriguez and Diana Bryer; filmmaker Howard Woolf, showing excerpts from his feature film, "Marranos"; poet M. Miriam Herrera; and musical artists Daniel Elias and Maurice Sedakka, of the Daniel Elias Sephardic Ensemble.


Elias and Sedakka will perform at the annual Judy Frankel Memorial Concert the evening of July 23 and present a workshop earlier in the day on "Songs of the Sephardic Diaspora."

Other presenters cover linguistic, historical, sociological, anthropological, cultural and literary aspects of crypto-Judaism in New Mexico, the Southwest, the Sephardic diaspora and medieval/early modern Spain.

For further information and registration, see [www.cryptojews.com](http://www.cryptojews.com) or write [GTRUJ@aol.com](mailto:GTRUJ@aol.com). ☆

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**In Memory of  
 Trudy Coca  
 From  
 Faye Blake**

# A Woman in Both Houses: My Career in New Mexico Politics

Reviewed by Noel H. Pugach

*Editor's Note: Pauline Eisenstadt was keynote speaker at the NMJHS Annual Meeting on June 24.*

**I**t is only in the past thirty years that women have played a significant role in New Mexico legislative politics. And Pauline Eisenstadt is certainly among the pioneers and major figures in this development. Ms. Eisenstadt's memoir, recently published by the University of New Mexico Press, delightfully charts her illustrious career and the considerable impact she has had on our state.

Gender serves as an undercurrent of her account. "I was and am a feminist," she candidly states in the first pages, which meant that a woman "should not be prohibited from achieving her highest goals because of her gender." Gender influenced her thinking and behavior and affected the response of others. She proudly emphasizes, as the book's title tells us, that she was the first woman to serve in both the New Mexico House and Senate. But Eisenstadt's story also shows clearly how she rose above this issue to advance the concerns and meet the needs of constituents and all the people of New Mexico.

*A Woman in Both Houses* is actually three books in one. First, it is the personal story of Pauline Eisenstadt, her husband Mel, and her family in New Mexico; it is an account of the major forces that shaped Pauline's thinking, her public career, how she grew and how she changed over the years. Second, it is a primer on New Mexico politics, especially the legislature; how it functions and what it takes to be a successful legislator. Third, Pauline provides glimpses of New Mexico

political history in the 1980s and 1990s.

Pauline begins with some basic biographical data on herself and her family and sprinkles additional details in the rest of the book. We soon get a picture of a highly intelligent, well-educated woman, a keen observer, an eager learner with broad interests, sophisticated and yet at home in New Mexico. She is tough-minded, not easily intimidated, principled, and willing to confront controversial issues. A Democrat with a liberal inclination, Eisenstadt is above all a proactive pragmatist who possessed the ability to work with people having a wide range of views. She always wanted to get things done.



Pauline notes her Jewish upbringing and affiliations, including her membership in Congregation Albert and the Anti-Defamation League (she is also a member of the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society), but provides only occasional hints as how these influenced her actions. A far more important factor was her concern with consumer affairs (she was director of Energy Consumers of New Mexico), which directly led to her entry into electoral politics. Pauline won election to the House of Representatives in 1984, serving there from 1985 to 1993. Pauline lists the committees she served on and notes that she served as Chairwoman of the Democratic Caucus. She then took a four-year break to think about her family commitments, "the direction of my future career... and what my major challenges would be in the future." But in 1995, Eisenstadt plunged back into politics and won a seat in the New Mexico Senate, where she gained another perspective on New Mexico

*(continued on p. 7)*

## A Woman in Both Houses *(continued from p. 6)*

politics and engaged in controversial matters.

Ms. Eisenstadt was an effective legislator; she had a presence in both Houses. Pauline discusses the major pieces of legislation she sponsored and fought for, her successes and her failures. Among her greatest achievements was securing funding for the Paseo del Norte bridge. On that issue she had to maneuver around the influential Raymond Sanchez, whose North Valley constituents strongly opposed the bridge, and obtain the support of Governor Toney Anaya. She is also very proud of the establishment of the Petroglyph National Monument, an archeological treasure, a sacred Native American ground, a welcome public Open Space, and a tourist attraction. With the help of state Representative Danice Picraux, she also rescued the Nurse Midwifery Program at the University of New Mexico.

However, she also suffered defeats. Among the issues dearest to her heart was ethics legislation, which failed on numerous occasions. Ethics, she notes, is an ongoing matter. While the Senate supported her strenuous effort to encourage the teaching of evolution in high schools, the Christian Coalition blocked it in the House. In the end the pro-science forces won the war with the election of Marshall Berman to the state school board, which changed the standards to support teaching evolution.

Throughout her memoir, Ms. Eisenstadt, acknowledging the help of veteran legislatures, shares some of her accumulated knowledge and wisdom. She learned how committee chairs killed bills by tabling them or not scheduling them, that it was easier to block a bill than to pass one, and how to pass bills and shepherd them through committees. There was a lot of tension between the House and Senate, especially in the closing days of the sessions, as the House waited for Senate consideration of House-passed bills. She explains the differences between how the Senate and House operated and tells us that she much preferred serving in the Senate. Building friendships and networks was critical, as well as trading votes on “pork” and other kinds of legislation. Ms. Eisenstadt also notes the importance of the Legislative Council Services.

Ms. Eisenstadt was also a very astute politician. She reveals how she campaigned for office and how she won. Organization, the help of friends and neighbors, family networks, hard work, and attention to the needs of constituents, provided her with victory. She is very generous in acknowledging the assistance she received from her many supporters. Pauline also learned not to take any campaign for granted and to be watchful for underhanded, last-minute tactics by opposing candidates.

Notably, Ms. Eisenstadt sets her career in the context of the political history

of the era, a major topic that scholars and journalists have neglected. She captures the significant issues and gives us a feeling for the period. These range from infrastructure projects, to reapportionment, to hate crimes, to terrorism. In the process, she paints portraits of the leading political figures of the day: Raymond Sanchez, Bruce King, Manny Aragon, Max Coll, Toney Anaya, and Marty Chavez. With a few exceptions, Eisenstadt is very generous in her evaluations of them.

Finally, Ms. Eisenstadt shows us that for her there was a rich life after politics. She is a painter and a founder of the Corrales Society of Artists, a world traveler, and a member of many non-profit boards.

*A Woman in Both Houses* should therefore interest a wide variety of readers. Ms. Eisenstadt personifies the emergence of the generation of traditionally raised (Jewish) women who carved out careers for themselves and shaped public life. Further, her memoir is an especially important contribution to the study of New Mexico politics and cultural life in the last third of the twentieth century.

*Noel Pugach is Professor Emeritus of History at the University of New Mexico and immediate past president of NMJHS. ☆*

## Parted Waters



*Parted Waters*, Robert F. Benjamin's contemporary, humorous drama about crypto-Judaism in New Mexico, produced by Teatro Paraguas

(Santa Fe), is an official New Mexico Statehood Centennial Event ([www.teatroparaguas.org](http://www.teatroparaguas.org)). During 2012, the play has had Centennial performances in Santa Fe and Albuquerque. Upcoming Centennial performances will be

at the Tool Shed in Dixon, NM on Saturday, August 18, 2012, and in Los Alamos and Santa Fe this fall. Tax-deductible donations to support the Centennial performances may be sent to: Parted Waters Centennial, Teatro Paraguas Studio, 3205 Calle Marie, Santa Fe New Mexico 87505.

Commissioned by the Arizona Jewish Theatre Company, this drama about three generations of New Mexicans

grappling with their religious identity had three full productions during 2009-2010. Barry Gaines reviewed the Albuquerque and Santa Fe shows in the March 2010 issue of *Legacy*. In addition, it has been performed nationally in Los Angeles, El Paso, Philadelphia, Phoenix and Clearwater, Florida. ☆

## Upcoming Program Explores Legacy of Rabbi Abraham Klausner

Dr. Avinoam J. Patt

Philip D. Feltman Professor of Modern Jewish History and Director of the Museum of Jewish Civilization University of Hartford

“Our Chaplain: Rabbi Abraham Klausner and the Surviving Remnant in Germany” Sunday, August 5, 4:00 p.m., Temple Beth Shalom, Santa Fe



Prof. Avinoam Patt will give a talk on the life and work of Rabbi Abraham Klausner, who lived in Santa Fe after his retirement from Temple Emanu-El in Yonkers, New York, in 1989 until his death in 2007.

Rabbi Klausner is widely known as one of the first rabbis to enter the concentration camps at the end of World War II, when he arrived in Dachau. He had a major role in organizing former prisoners and helping their transition to normal life afterward. Rabbi Klausner advocated on behalf of survivors with American military authorities and secured much-needed medical, food, and clothing supplies for them after liberation. Klausner, together with other chaplains, conducted prayer services, buried the dead, created lists of survivors (published as the “She’erit Hapletah”), and acquired land for farms. With Zalman Zalman Grinberg, a survivor

of Dachau, he established the Central Committee of the Liberated Jews in the U.S. Zone of Germany as the official representative body of the Jewish Displaced Persons (DPs). Klausner was consistently lauded by the survivors themselves as their most trusted advocate, as “our chaplain” and, unlike any other Jew from the outside world, a



Dr. Avinoam Patt

man who had become for the survivors, “one of us.” In this presentation, Prof. Patt will examine Klausner’s work in postwar Germany, his impact on the survivors, and his historical legacy.

Prior to his current position, Avinoam J. Patt was Miles Lerman Applied Research Scholar for Jewish Life and Culture at the Center for Advanced Holocaust

Studies of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM). He received his Ph.D. in Modern European History and Hebrew and Judaic Studies from New York University. His first book, *Finding Home and*

*Homeland: Jewish Youth and Zionism in the Aftermath of the Holocaust* (Wayne State University Press, 2009), examines the appeal of Zionism for young Holocaust survivors and their role in the creation of the state of Israel. He is also the co-editor (with Michael Berkowitz) of a collected volume on Jewish Displaced Persons, *We are Here: New Approaches to the Study of Jewish Displaced Persons in Postwar Germany* (Wayne State University Press, 2010). He is a contributor to several projects at the USHMM, and is co-author of a recently published source volume, *Jewish Responses to Persecution, 1938-1940* (USHMM/Alta Mira Press, 2011). He teaches courses on modern Jewish history, American Jewish history, the Holocaust, the history of Zionism and the State of Israel, Jewish film, and modern Jewish literature, among others.

Temple Beth Shalom is located at 205 East Barcelona Road in Santa Fe. For further information, call NMJHS at 505-348-4471 or 505-920-7771, or email [ronjoseph18@gmail.com](mailto:ronjoseph18@gmail.com). ✧

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### NMJHS Fall Conference (continued from p. 5)

Seven members of the Bibo clan came to New Mexico where they traded with the Navajos to supply military posts at Fort Wingate and Fort Defiance. Nathan Bibo established a store in Bernalillo and became an advocate for local Hispanos and the Pueblo Indians. You may recall that Solomon Bibo married into the Acoma community and eventually became governor of the pueblo.

Professor Henry Tobias will tell us about Dr. Randolph Seligman, scion

of a pioneer Jewish family, who had an illustrious medical practice in obstetrics and gynecology. Additional speakers are firming up the scope of their talks.

A light bagel breakfast will be available before the conference begins. Attendees will have time to socialize and discuss the presentations during a sit-down lunch, at coffee breaks, and at a reception following the formal presentations.

Why do we care about New Mexico Jewish history? Because it is fascinating, it’s fun, and it’s full of surprises and heart-warming stories. Don’t miss this conference. You’ll have something to think about and talk about for months afterward.

The Statehood conference is an official event of the New Mexico Centennial. Conference registration materials will be mailed in early September. ✧



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## From the Archives - The White House

by Patricia A. Carlton

*Note: The following has been adapted from NMJHS Archivist Patricia Carlton from "Johanna Blatt, Styling Pioneer," which appeared in the May 7, 1960 issue of the Santa Fe Scene.*



In this election year, the White House is very much in the minds and on the lips of most Americans. In 1912, the year of New Mexico's

entry into statehood, another White House drew the attention of Santa Feans when Johanna Uhlfelder and her husband Eric, recent Jewish immigrants from Germany, opened the White House women's millinery store on the Plaza. The White House occupied the beautiful Catron Building, erected in 1891 by attorney Thomas Benton Catron. Because of his efforts to admit New Mexico to the Union, Catron was elected the state's first senator by a wide margin and sworn in on March 27, 1912. An eventful year indeed for New Mexico and Santa Fe.

Johanna Shubach Uhlfelder Blatt was known as Santa Fe's first lady of merchandising, a fashion pioneer who introduced ultra-chic styling to the City Different. After finishing public school in Koblenz country, Johanna Shubach traveled alone to Pine Bluff, Arkansas, where she had relatives to receive her. As a young woman she moved to Hot Springs, where she met and married Emil Uhlfelder, and where their daughter Pauline was born. They moved to Albuquerque after hearing of an opening for a store manager, but once there, they made frequent hazardous trips over La Bajada up to Santa Fe looking for a location for their own store. And thus the White House was born on the corner of Palace Ave. and Shelby St., specializing in smart ready to wear, millinery, shoes and dry goods.

Sadly, Eric Uhlfelder died in 1916, leaving Johanna with overwhelming responsibilities. The young widow engaged Morris Blatt from Chicago to help

manage the thriving business and tend the store when the "boss lady" went on one of her frequent buying excursions. Johanna and Morris Blatt were married in 1918.

When it came time for daughter Pauline to receive a higher education, she was sent to Bishop Thorpe Manor in the East, where she was already well acquainted with people, having made many junkets to the seaboard with her mother. Pauline met sports writer Barney Petchesky in New York and after the proper romancing they were married in New Mexico in 1922. The groom was immediately smitten with the Land of Enchantment and almost at once severed his connections with a Manhattan wholesale firm to establish the Guarantee On the Plaza, a shoe store next door to the White House. After seeing her daughter and son-in-law firmly entrenched in business and a grandson, Gene Petchesky, soon ready to carry on, Johanna Blatt dissolved the White House in 1939, but continued to assist her relatives, who had added ladies' ready to wear to the shoe line.

The Guarantee thrived for many years under the guidance of Gene and Jane Petchesky and Jane's sister Marion and her husband Abe Silver, until it closed in 1988. The Catron Block, as the Catron Building came to be called, still stands at 53-55 Old Santa Fe Trail, an example of the "railroad commercial" style, meaning that the architect used material brought to town by the railroad after 1880. Several retail stores and offices now occupy the two-story structure.

Johanna (1877-1965) and Morris Blatt (1884-1944) are both buried in the historic Fairview Cemetery in Santa Fe.

*Patricia Carlton is the NMJHS Archivist. ☆*

# PEEK INTO THE PAST

by Naomi Sandweiss

**W**hen I was a youngster, raised in a secular community by Reform Jewish parents, a question used to arise between my sister and me. “Are you Jewish first or American first?” we queried each other. In truth, the hyphen could go one way or the other--Jewish-American or American-Jewish--depending upon the circumstances each one of us presented.

Before their World War I service, my grandfather, Benjamin Feinstein, and my husband’s grandfather, Joseph Sandweiss, probably never would have considered such a question. Immigrants who left their homes in Eastern Europe to escape poverty, persecution and conscription, both men lived in America’s Jewish ghettos, segregated and identified as Jews whether they liked it or not. Just a handful of years later, both young men spent 1917-1918 at war. Benjamin served with the American army in France, while Joseph joined the Jewish Legion and served with the British forces on the Middle Eastern Front. I am left to wonder about their military service and how it might have influenced their acculturation.

In 1897, four-year-old Benjamin journeyed from his native Warsaw with his mother and sister to join his father in Philadelphia. By the time he was six, Benjamin’s parents, Annie and Nathan, added a second son, Louis. The family moved to New York, entering the garment business like so many other Eastern European Jewish immigrants. But Benjamin wasn’t interested in his father’s corset shop. The young man, short and compact, was a skilled street fighter with a temperament to match. It was only to honor his mother’s wishes that Benjamin retired his boxing gloves. Still, the fiery young man was known to pick bar fights, which frequently ended in brawls. Family legend has it that he even beat fu-

ture lightweight professional boxer Benny “Ghetto Wizard” Leonard in a street fight. Benjamin’s education ended at about age 10, when he went to work as a painter.

Joseph Sandweiss, my husband’s grandfather, was, by all accounts, also a strong-willed young man. Born two years after Benjamin, Joseph grew up in the Russian town of Bereznitz. Sent by his family to *Cheder* with the intention of educating a cantor, Joseph was more interested in the penny broadsides hidden inside his texts than the religious texts he was supposed to study.



*Yiddish-language recruitment poster for the Jewish Legion, published in American Jewish magazines during World War I. Transition Daughter of Zion (representing the Jewish people): Your Old New Land must have you! Join the Jewish regiment.*

By age 15, Joseph was eager to leave the village where boys his age were routinely rounded up and conscripted by the Russian army, a dire circumstance for any Jewish boy. Staying in Bereznitz wasn’t an option either. Joseph’s older brother hid in a cellar to avoid the Czar’s draft, eventually dying from an illness he contracted there. Instead, young Joseph made his way to Warsaw, working and walking his way across Europe. Finally, he saved enough to reach England, where a Jewish refugee agency helped him travel to the United

States in the hopes of being reunited with his uncle, Shlamie Sandweiss, who lived in Detroit and ran a rooming house. Once he arrived, Joseph took a job sorting glass in a bottle yard and attended night school to learn English.

Joseph and his fellow roomers were idealistic young men with Zionist ideals. Perhaps influenced by the Yiddish-language posters recruiting men for the Jewish League, 21-year-old Joseph was first in line to enlist in the British-led unit at Detroit’s recruiting office.

Meanwhile, in November 1917, Benjamin, like some 40,000 other New York men, began his military training at Camp Upton in Suffolk, New York, which he described

as a “second cold to the North Pole.” Benjamin’s parents and siblings sent socks and gloves, along with pleas to come home when he had a day off. His sister, Frances, bought him a wrist watch and, in addition to exchanging letters, the family visited Camp Upton on several occasions. That December, Rabbi Schulman of New York’s Beth-El Synagogue addressed the Camp Upton recruits:

“The Maccabean spirit is the spirit of what is best in Israel’s history....The Almighty is testing it in this terrible furnace of this great world-war. Death is not the worst evil. The worst evil is so to degrade life as to cling to it like a whipped slave rather than to rise and fight for everything that makes life worthy.”

Benjamin didn’t try to hide some of the realities of warfare from his family. He wrote his brother, Louis, about the equipment he encountered during training.

“Dear Brother, as I see you take an interest in warfare, let me explain a few things. About the gas mask. It is made of rubberized goods and the eyes through which you look are made of glass. You breathe through your mouth as there is a pair of pinchers which is the mask which fits tight about your nose. And right under your chin, there is a rubber pipe, which is connected to a tin box. It can protect you for 17 hours. After that it is no good. I had it on for about a half-hour and I nearly choked. But the average time they wear it is eight hours, which is the rule on the European battle front.”

By February 1918, Benjamin and his unit were in active service in France, where they kept the railroad tracks in good shape and supplied the boys in the trenches with ammunition and supplies. On August 2, 1918, he reported, “As I am writing this letter, I can hear the roar of the artillery.”

Meanwhile, Joseph began his Jewish Legion training just across the Detroit River at Fort Edward near Windsor, Canada. Among his 5,000 fellow North American enlistees were David Ben-Gurion, future Prime Minister of Israel. Joseph’s master

*(continued on p. 11)*

**Peek Into the Past** (continued from p. 10)

sergeant, a burly Irish fellow, frequently taunted and berated his Jewish charges, provoking them to fight him. Finally, one day, Joseph agreed. Outsized and out-skilled, Joseph had to rely on his wits to have any chance of winning the fight. As he faced his rival, Joseph bent down and threw a fistful of sand in his opponent's face, followed by a quick punch to the blinded fellow. The Irishman's response was not what Joseph expected; from that moment on, Joseph received his respect. Still, confused by the strong English and Irish accents he encountered, Joseph and many of his fellow soldiers reverted to speaking Yiddish and Russian, which divided them from their British counterparts. By August 1918, Joseph and the rest of the 39th Battalion of the British Fusiliers arrived in Egypt, one of three Jewish Legion groups in place in order to capture Palestine from the Turks.



Private Benjamin Feinstein

From the European front, Benjamin still wrote frequently to his parents and siblings, even dispensing brotherly advice. "Sister...it is my greatest wish that you take an example of married life from our dear mother and father....And follow their advice in everything they tell you, as they know the game from A to Z. And this should be followed by my dear brother in college life and later in married life."

Benjamin's service was not without its pleasures. Like other doughboys, he used his time off to travel to Paris, Nice, and Monte Carlo. "Oh, boy, oh, joy what a time," he wrote his brother. It is apparent that the joyful times included a girl. Marie Giane Galleti, an Italian girl, wrote to the American serviceman, "I think night and day of you and I believe that you also think of me. It would give me a lot of pleasure to have news from you. A thousand kisses." In addition to the excitement of the romance, it might have been a revelation to the Jewish boy that he was fully accepted as an American soldier, tran-

scending the religious and ethnic divides that had characterized his childhood.

The war drew to a close amidst fierce fighting. On September 19, 1918, Joseph's battalion attacked and beat the Turkish army in the Battle of Megiddo. It was only another month before Turkey surrendered. Within days, Benjamin's division in France began preparing for the Argonne offensive, a three-month-long battle that took place in the rugged French terrain. The battle was to be one of the last of the war, and one of the deadliest.

Over 100,000 Americans lost their lives. Fighting alongside the French and British, American men were surrounded by the sounds of machine guns and airplanes. The Allies progressed, capturing areas held by Germany.

Finally, on November 11, the Armistice was signed; celebrations in Paris included marching, singing and shouting. In his book *The Long Way Home*, David Laskin recounts the experiences of immigrant soldiers who represented one-

fifth of the U.S. Armed Forces in World War I. He writes, "In many cases just a few years or even months separated their arrival at Ellis Island from their induction in the American Expeditionary Forces. The coincidence profoundly altered the course of their lives." For Benjamin and Joseph, did their experiences in the Great War shift their perceptions of themselves as Jewish or American?

After his discharge, Private Benjamin Feinstein returned with his unit to New York. He worked for the rest of his life as a commercial painter, a patriotic and proud American to the core, stopping only for a time during World War II to work at the Brooklyn Naval Yard. Benjamin married Bessie Silverman in and the couple raised two sons. His elder son was drafted and served in the Pacific during World War II; his younger son, my father, served stateside in the Air Force during the Korean conflict. Like many young men, both used the GI Bill to help

them complete college and to attend law school.

Joseph, like many of his fellow Jewish Legionnaires, contracted malaria and suffered from shell shock. After some time in British military hospitals, he was discharged in 1919 and returned to Detroit, where he resided for the rest of his life, running a grocery store. Joseph's war memories were mixed, filled with both pride and distress. At one point, he traveled to Israel and received a medal for service from then-Prime Minister Golda Meir. Ultimately, however, Joseph's daily life was punctuated by jumpiness, outbursts and sensitivity to loud noises, undoubtedly the legacy of shell shock. Joseph married fellow immigrant Sarah Norber and fathered two girls and two boys, several of whom became committed to Zionism, perhaps inspired by their father's military service.

While Benjamin and Joseph served in different armies and on different fronts, they shared a key experience, that of democracy and belonging. The words of Yitzok Liss, a Jewish Legion member, express this sentiment well:

April 29, 1919: Today is the anniversary of a year of my service, a good year for me. I don't think I will forget it, ever. A year of joys and suffering in full measure. It seems that only yesterday I said good-bye to my dearest....The best I saw of army life is that one can live in equality, in the battalion, especially our Jewish battalion where people from all corners of the globe with different views, knowledge and trades live together, sleep, eat, dress alike, a true democracy in this respect.

Looking back, I now realize that when my sister and I played the "American first or Jewish first?" game, we forgot something critically important. We forgot to thank our grandfather, Benjamin, and men like him, for making the choices that allowed two little Jewish girls to ask the question in the first place.

*Naomi Sandweiss is editor of Legacy and author of Jewish Albuquerque. ☆*

### NMJHS Annual Dues

*New members who join during the last four months of a year will have their membership extended through the end of the following year.*

- Renewal    New
- Individual \$40
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### Calendar of NMJHS Upcoming Events

Check for future events at [www.nmjhs.org](http://www.nmjhs.org)

**Sunday, August 5, 4:00 p.m.,** Professor Avinoam J. Patt, Philip D. Feltman Professor of Modern Jewish History and Director of the Museum of Jewish Civilization at University of Hartford, will speak on *“Our Chaplain”: Rabbi Abraham Klausner and the Surviving Remnant in Germany.* Temple Beth Shalom, Santa Fe.

**Sunday, November 4, NMJHS Fall Conference, Doubletree Hotel.** Statehood: *New Mexico Jewry before and after 1912.* Save the Date!

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