



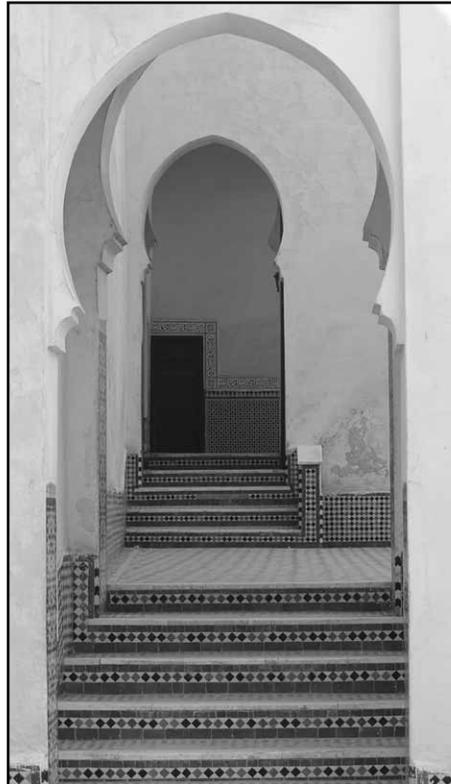
## Sephardic History Theme at 2013 Fall Conference in Taos

by Ron Duncan Hart

**S**ephardic History from Spain to New Mexico is the theme of the upcoming NMJHS Fall Conference this year in Taos. The conference will take place over the Columbus Day weekend at the Sagebrush Inn, October 12 and 13. Over the course of two days attendees will learn about the life, thought and spirituality of Sephardic Jews.

Conference highlights include a talk on Jews in Spain, Sephardic music, a visual presentation of Spanish illuminated Haggadahs and Torahs, and a discussion of the roles of Maimonides and Nahmanides in shaping Jewish thought.

Saturday luncheon keynote speaker Steve Ovitsky plans to talk about the history of Sephardic music in which he will play a wide range of selections from the Eastern Sephardim in Turkey, Greece and Israel to the Western



*Doorways of the Royal Palace in Meknes, Morocco, a city where many Sephardic Jews settled after the expulsion from Spain. The Jewish Melah (Quarter) was located next to the Palace, as was common in Morocco, since Jews were protected by the king and frequently worked for the king. Jews walked in this courtyard as members of the royal administration/government. (Photo courtesy of Ron Duncan Hart)*

Sephardim from Morocco and the Americas. One of the most knowledgeable people about Jewish music in the United States, Mr. Ovitsky will draw from his vast musical collection.

As we know, Sephardic Jews originated in Spain, which seems to have had the largest concentration of Jewish population in the world until they were expelled in 1492. [Sefarad is the Hebrew name for Spain.] Of

the thousands of Jews who chose to remain in Spain and convert to Christianity, some accepted their new religion sincerely, but others practiced Judaism in secret.

Tens of thousands of Jews fled to Portugal thinking they would be safe, only to be forcefully converted to Christianity in 1497 with no option of leaving. Perhaps 100,000 Jews went to Morocco and other countries around the Mediterranean; later some were able to travel north to Holland and England; eventually many went to the Canary Islands and the Americas.

Conference registration begins at 10 a.m. Saturday, October 12, followed by lunch at noon for attendees. Two sessions are scheduled for Saturday afternoon: "Spanish Roots of Sephardic Jewry" followed by "People to Know in the Sephardic Tradition." Dinner Saturday evening concludes with a film "The Last Sephardic Jew."

*(continued on p. 10)*

Legacy is the quarterly newsletter of the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society 5520 Wyoming Blvd. NE Albuquerque, NM 87109

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## Message from Outgoing President Dorothy Amsden

**S**erving as president of NMJHS is a most demanding yet rewarding job. During my three-year term in office I have learned a lot about New Mexico Jewish history and also about the history of NMJHS. It has been an opportunity for me to grow and learn new skills, meet many of our wonderful members, and honor the traditions set by my predecessors [see sidebar].

During the eight years or so that I have served on the NMJHS Board I have been inspired by the vision and dedication of those who preceded me and who set a high standard for programs, outreach, research, and archiving. What a remarkable organization this is. May it continue to offer programs of value to posterity.

No organization can succeed without a dedicated core of officers and volunteers. I owe a huge debt of gratitude especially to Noel Pugach, my immediate predecessor, for helping me learn the ropes and for serving as a sounding board during my term of

office. I thank past and present board members for presenting their ideas and working hard to further the mission of the organization. It has been a pleasure working with administrator Ruth Carter, who keeps the NMJHS office on track.

Welcome to incoming president Naomi Sandweiss, editor of *Legacy* for the past three years, with whom I traded jobs at the Annual Meeting on June 9. I hope to maintain the high quality of articles that Naomi has offered readers. Naomi inherits the president's traditional badge of office, the giant aspirin, with the hopes that she will need it only sparingly.

Our incoming president is a person of many talents. An Albuquerque native, Naomi Sandweiss is the proverbial busy woman. She writes articles and essays and recently published a book on Jewish Albuquerque. Cur-

rently she is working on a novel set in 17th century Venice. Naomi teaches university-level writing and communication courses and works at the University of New Mexico as a program supervisor for Continuing Education. Last but not least, she and her husband Dan are raising two teenagers.

I look forward to seeing many of you in Taos this Columbus Day weekend for the Fall Conference.

The feature article in this issue gives you a taste of what is in store, thanks to the vision and planning by our remarkable program chair Ron Duncan Hart. ☆



*NMJHS Outgoing President Dorothy Amsden*

### 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.

### Many Thanks for Your Contributions

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- Dorothy Amsden
- Naomi Sandweiss

### NMJHS Welcomes New Members

- Judy Greenfield
- Kathleen Mahon
- Sandra and José Toro

# Message from Incoming President Naomi Sandweiss

**I**t is with much enthusiasm that I begin to serve NMJHS as president. From participating in the Pioneer oral history project to serving on the board and editing *Legacy*, this organization has been near and dear to my heart. In my new role, I am most lucky to be able to rely on the expertise of several past presidents, including our immediate past president, Dorothy Amsden.

In addition to myself, several new members have joined our board. Welcome to new board members Harvey Buchalter, Melinda Hess, Dianne Layden, Sharon Niederman, Yehuda Patt and Stuart Simon. These individuals bring a wealth of expertise to the organization.

The coming months promise to be filled with many exciting Society activities also featured in this edition of *Legacy*. Starting August 16, be sure to view the Pioneer Panels at the Jewish Community Center in Albuquerque. You may remember seeing the exhibit at the Palace of the Governors, and a portion of the contents were previously shown at the Jewish Community Center in Albuquerque. Now, many more panels will be on display

through October 15 for your viewing pleasure. Following the High Holidays, we will celebrate the exhibit with an opening reception on September 15 from 3 to 5 p.m. at the JCC. See the notice in this issue on page 10 for more information.

The annual conference in Taos on October 12-13 (Columbus Day weekend) will be an outstanding event. The theme is Sephardic History from Spain to New Mexico, and additional details are to be found in the cover article. Look for registration materials mid-August.

Finally, the Society will end October with another exciting program on Jewish ranching families in partnership with the

New Mexico Museum of History and Santa Fe's Temple Beth Shalom. This will take place on October 27 in Santa Fe at 2 p.m. at the Museum.

I look forward to feedback and encourage your participation in the Society. Please feel free to contact me by email or phone (president@nmjhs.org, 505-514-8075) to share your ideas or, if you wish, to volunteer your time in one of our many activities. ☆



*NMJHS Incoming President Naomi Sandweiss*

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- Stuart Simon – Albuquerque
- Karen Singer – Albuquerque

## Email Contact with Our Members

To keep you informed of upcoming activities NMJHS publishes a Calendar of Upcoming Events on the last page of *Legacy* and also on its website, www.nmjhs.org. We have switched to sending out email notices of upcoming events in place of mailed notices to save on costs. If you are an NMJHS member without email and want printed reminders mailed to you, please contact Ruth Carter at 505-348-4471. If you have email and are not receiving email notices, please contact Ron Duncan Hart at hart.gaon@gmail.com to place your address on his list.

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# History Maker: Marian Silver, Recipient of 2013 Hurst Award

by Lance Bell

**S**ome people study history, some people live history and some people make history. In Marian Silver's case, as well as her parents' and grandparent's case, their contributions to New Mexico Jewish history and the community at large are notable.

This year, Marian Silver is the recipient of the Dr. Allan and Leona Hurst Award, which recognizes outstanding service to the Society and to New Mexico Jewish history. Marian was honored at the NMJHS Annual Meeting on June 9 for her outstanding contributions to New Mexico Jewish history and dedicated community service.

Marian, a Santa Fe native, arrived in a much more simple time in New Mexico history. Born in 1932 into a well-known and successful family line of merchants, the Uhlfelder, Petchesky and Silver family names earned a fine reputation in Santa Fe. Her family also helped in cementing the fair and trustworthy standing and the overall goodwill of the Jewish business community at large.

Many northern New Mexicans shopped in downtown Santa Fe at Jewish-owned businesses because of families like the Silvers who were fair and offered quality goods for reasonable

prices. It was common knowledge in Santa Fe that quite a few of the downtown merchants were of the Jewish faith. Marian's family operated a business on the Plaza from 1912, the year New Mexico achieved statehood, until the day the store closed 1988.

Marian's grandparents, Johanna and Emil Uhlfelder, emigrated to the United States from Koblenz, Germany, in the late 1880s and ended up in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. They moved to Albuquerque in 1905, and seven years later they relocated to Santa Fe. Marian's grandmother, Johanna, who had a vision and a keen business sense, took the risk of purchasing a building on the Plaza in 1927. Of historical note, her husband Emil was the first treasurer at Temple Albert in Albuquerque.

The Uhlfelder family business, originally called the White House and later the Guarantee, was later owned and operated by the Silvers and Marian's brother Gene Petchesky. The Guarantee was a ladies ready-to-wear and shoe store that sat prominently on the northeast corner of the Plaza (the nucleus of downtown Santa Fe) within the building known as the Catron Block. It was known as "the store with more."

Marian Petchesky met Abe Silver, Jr., in New Orleans, where she was attending Sophie Newcomb College, part of Tulane University. Abe was a sports writer and golf editor for the *Times-Picayune* newspaper. They married that same year, 1951, in Santa Fe, at Mar-

ian's grandmother's house because there was no temple in Santa Fe. They helped run the family store for many years until it closed.

In fact, the Silver family still owns and leases out this beautiful retail and of-

fice space today. On the front of the building (west side) under the portal you will find a historical plaque with the address 53-55 Old Santa Fe Trail.



*Lance Bell presents Hurst Award to Marian Silver.*

Today the Catron Block is occupied by retail stores, and an attorney, John Silver, who is Abe and Marian's son. The Silvers also have two daughters, Margaret and Carolyn.

When I asked Marian for her thoughts on how the diverse Jewish population has grown here in Santa Fe and throughout the state, she replied, "There is a 180 degree difference." She remembers back before there was a synagogue in Santa Fe. The Jewish community would gather in people's homes. "We all had respect for each other." Usually meetings occurred with other Jewish families at the poker table. "We never considered ourselves competitors, we were all in business together!"

Barney Petchesky, Marian's father, who had studied to be a cantor, acted as lay leader before a part-time rabbi was hired. Barney was known for his ability to speak and sing Hebrew beautifully.

*(continued on p. 5)*



*Marian Silver*

**Marian Silver** (continued from p. 4)

Marian and her family were instrumental in helping to make Temple Beth Shalom a reality and a special place to worship. "Now there are at least five committed and organized Jewish places of worship right here in Santa Fe. To me that shows our explosive growth and success."

Marian sums up her life thus, "Santa Fe is a utopian and wonderful community, and I love to give back to it because of all that my family has received." Marian's community service, along with that of her husband and soul mate Abe, is quite long. She has been known to serve many organizations with passion, commitment, leadership and generous patronage. The list includes: a directorship with the United New Mexico Bank, St. Vincent Hospital Auxiliary, St. Vincent Hospital Foundation Board, The Santa Fe Opera Guild, United Way, Chamber of Commerce, Temple Beth Shalom Board, Rodeo de Santa Fe, Museum of New Mexico, and the Santa Fe Children's Museum.

Marian was also on the committee that helped select the New Mexico state quarter in 2008. In 1992, Marian and Abe were awarded the Distinguished Community Service Award from the Anti-Defamation League. In 2008 they were both named as Santa Fe Living Treasures. The Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts was awarded to this great duo in 2010 by Governor Bill Richardson, who recognized them as major contributors to the arts.

One project Marian is especially proud of is her involvement with the exhibit "Jewish Pioneers of New Mexico," which opened at the Palace of the Governors in 2000 and ended in 2004.

I co-chaired a committee where we launched the exhibit that featured an amazing amount of Jewish history from the State of

New Mexico. To make this exciting we hired a fiddler who played on the roof of the Palace of the Governors to the many invited guests who attended the opening gala. It was a fascinating exhibit that highlighted many wonderful stories gathered from so many Jewish families who helped build our great state.

In fact, the photograph of Marian's grandparents Johanna and Emil Uhlfelder is part of the permanent exhibit at the New Mexico History Museum in Santa Fe.

One summer afternoon in 2006, Marian and Abe gave an informal Jewish historical walk and talk in downtown Santa Fe to participants from the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society. During that walk Marian shared her memories of growing up in the "City Different." She and Abe talked about their store as well as the stores of other Jewish merchant families whose businesses were located in downtown Santa Fe.

Johanna and Emil would no doubt be proud of their granddaughter. Santa Fe has been blessed with a strong, courageous and passionate woman. Marian has dedicated her life to her family, her community and her faith. In essence, Marian Silver has lived a modern version of the life of Jewish pioneers full of historical footnotes, passion, religious growth, philanthropy and involvement with the growth and success of the City of Santa Fe. ☆

*Editor's note: the Dr. Allan P. and Leona Hurst Award recognizes a person, persons, or organization that has contributed to New Mexico Jewish history, culture, and community for a substantial period of time. The first award was bestowed in 1998.*

## THE ALLAN P. AND LEONA HURST AWARD

- 1998 Stanley M. Hordes, PhD
- 1999 Walter Kahn
- 2000 Henry Tobias, PhD
- 2001 Melanie LaBorwit
- 2002 Claire Grossman
- 2003 Taos Jewish Center
- 2004 Leah Kellogg
- 2005 Rabbi Leonard A. Helman
- 2006 Noel Pugach, PhD
- 2007 Abraham S. Chanin, PhD
- 2008 [none]
- 2009 Lance Bell and  
Dorothy Corner Amsden
- 2010 Naomi Sandweiss
- 2011 Sharon Niederman
- 2012 Lisa Kaplan Witt
- 2013 Marian Singer

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# More than a Historic Cemetery: Montefiore Cemetery Cleanup, May 5, 2013

by Dorothy Amsden

**O**n a chilly Sunday morning in early May the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society sponsored its annual cleanup of the Montefiore Cemetery in Las Vegas, New Mexico. Approximately 35 volunteers showed up with work gloves, mulch, rakes, shovels, pails, large garbage bags, and a willingness to do some serious work. Board members of the Montefiore Cemetery Association joined the work party before firing up the grill to prepare a picnic lunch for the participants.

Cemetery caretaker Ted Herburger, who is also the vice president of the Montefiore Cemetery Association, told the volunteers what needed doing. Some got busy with rakes to remove weeds and underbrush that were encroaching on the grounds. Others worked on moving rocks to make room for digging a shallow circular trench around newly planted trees in which they placed sand and then a decorative brick edging before adding mulch to the enclosed space.

Members of the Cemetery Association expressed their appreciation for the NMJHS volunteers, whom they depend on to help with this annual cleanup. They just don't have the manpower to accomplish the tasks that need to be done.

NMJHS took on the task of cleaning up the historic Montefiore Cemetery in 1986, and has followed through

every year since then. At that time the cemetery was in a sorry state of neglect with vandalized headstones. An amazing transformation has taken place since then, thanks to the efforts of the Cemetery Association and NMJHS.

Ted Herburger shared some of the plans the Cemetery Association has for future improvements. He has been rebuilding the wall around the cemetery on the north and west sides, which was in disrepair over many years. This past year he constructed a handsome two-sided gazebo in the Southeast corner overlooking the cemetery. He plans to plant more trees. On his agenda is an attractive iron gate at the entry to the cemetery to identify what it is; at present there is no sign of any kind. An ambitious plan is to drill a well on the upper part of the cemetery grounds for irrigation. The Herzstein Foundation is funding some of the projects.

The Jewish congregation in Las Vegas was established in 1884 and a synagogue built and dedicated in 1886. The land for

the historic Montefiore Cemetery was purchased by the Las Vegas Jewish community in 1888. But this is more than a historic cemetery. Families today have plots in the cemetery, and their loved ones have been buried there. It is touching to see small stones placed on the more recent graves. It is also moving to see the names of

the many Jewish families who lived and died in Las Vegas when it was a boomtown from the 1880s through the 1920s.

The cleanup event took place from 10 to 12, after which they gathered to hear a few talks about the cemetery and its history by Ted Herburger and Dorothy Amsden, with details provided by Las Vegas residents. Ron Duncan Hart said Kaddish and then participants enjoyed a picnic lunch prepared by the members of the Cemetery Association. ✨



*Jim Terr reflects before the grave of his sister Dana Terr Kono.*



*Matriarach Mildred Terr of Las Vegas and some younger members of her family enjoy the picnic lunch.*



*Volunteers Helen Hordes, Dorothy Amsden, Stan Hordes, and Tony Amsden take a break.*

# Behind the Scenes of New Mexico History: Jewish Pioneer Tips Off Pat Garrett

by Sharon Niederman

**A**bout ten years ago, during a lunch at The Shed in Santa Fe, Dr. Randy Seligman shared with me a story about his father-in-law, northeastern New Mexico rancher and businessman Sol Floersheim.

While enjoying an ice cream soda at the Springer Drug Store with a friend one afternoon, the friend said, "Sol, there's a fly on the end of your nose."

Sol replied with a line worthy of Jackie Mason: "Why don't you brush it off? It's closer to you than to me!"

Quick wit, gumption and chutzpah got Sol through many a situation when the West was truly wild, perhaps most notably, his encounter with Billy the Kid. A version of this encounter first appeared in print in Floyd Fierman's classic book of Jewish pioneers, *Ruts and Guts*.

*Roswell Magazine* referred to Sol as "The Biggest Little Man in New Mexico." Although only 5'4", the feisty German immigrant had a reputation for taking on and teaching much bigger men a lesson, all the way up into his 70s. He had no problem throwing a punch whenever someone made a disparaging remark about Jews in his presence.

Born in Hamburg, Germany in 1856, Sol immigrated to the USA at age 22. From the humblest beginnings, he eventually built the Jaritas Ranch in Colfax County, where at one time he ran 100,000 head of sheep. In addition, he was a successful merchant with dry goods stores in Roy and Springer.

According to a 1959 family history by Sol's son Carl Floersheim, Solomon Floersheim arrived in New York in 1878, where he found work at a matzoh factory earning \$5 a week. He soon traveled west in search of better opportunities. Early in 1879, he arrived in Trinidad, Colorado, where the Rosenwald Brothers merchants hired him as a clerk, paying him \$12.50 a month. To get by, he slept in the store.

Following a bout of typhoid fever, Sol journeyed to Las Vegas, New Mexico, in late 1879. There he obtained work with a wholesale liquor distributor, Albert Vigil y Valdez, earning \$60 a month by distributing to itinerant saloonkeepers along the Santa Fe Railroad right-of-way as the line extended west. So employed, he was able to save \$1000. In 1880, he began working as an account collector for Charles Ilfeld, a position he held for seven years.

As Carl recounts, "It was on one of these collecting trips that my father had occasion to encounter the Southwest's infamous outlaw Billy the Kid."

He goes on to say that on July 10, 1881, Sol headed for a sheep ranch about 15 miles southwest of Fort Sumner. While looking for a place to spend the night, Sol noticed a light in the distance. He drove toward it,

found it, then knocked on the door. A young man about my father's age answered.

"My father inquired of him the road to take to the ranch where he was to collect some sheep, and he also inquired of the young man where there was a good place to get a room and something to eat. Turning to go out, the young man asked him to take a drink of whiskey. My father told him he did not care for any. The young man drew a pistol, pointed it at my father, and said 'You drink,' and drink he did. . . . While they were talking, he asked my father to take another drink. Of

course, my father did not know until then that he was facing Billy the Kid. . . . My father had on him a very fine Winchester 45 Colt pistol, with pearl handles and steel barrel, hand engraved.

My father started kidding the outlaw and even offered to trade guns with him, but Billy preferred the pistol that had killed at that time 21 men. . . . My father even had the nerve to ask Billy to come and see him when he came to Las Vegas. . . .

My father did not stay in Fort Sumner that night. At about 5 a.m. the next morning, he arrived at a ranch house occupied by the famous Sheriff Pat

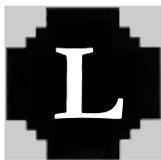
(continued on p. 11)



Sol Floersheim

## In Memory of Rabbi Leonard A. Helman

by Dorothy Amsden and Lance Bell



Leonard Helman was larger than life. He was fondly known as Santa Fe's "town rabbi" or the "rabbi different".

Rabbi Helman served longer than any other rabbi in our state's history. The Cathedral Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi in Santa Fe, where his funeral service was held on June 10, was the only place in town that had sufficient room for all those who wanted to pay their last respects to him.

A traditional Reform Jewish service was performed to a capacity audience at the Cathedral by Rabbi Martin Levy and Cantor Michael Linder followed by a reception at La Fonda Hotel just across the street. Many of Santa Fe's top musicians offered their respects to Rabbi Helman with a performance of a song or dance to honor his memory. Notably, Antonio Mendoza and Doug Montgomery played at the reception.

The lifetime bachelor, born in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1926, became a rabbi, attorney, master contract

bridge player, chess aficionado, and soft-shoe dancer replete with straw hat and cane. He moved to Santa Fe in 1974 to practice law full time and serve as part-time rabbi of Temple Beth Shalom. Later he helped found Congregation Beit Tikva and served as its founding rabbi.

Helman worked 60- to 80-hour weeks. He served as an attorney for the New Mexico Public Service Commission and then as an administrative law judge from 1974 until 1987. He served as chaplain for the New Mexico Legislature from 1995 to 2010. To recognize the unique abilities of this remarkable man, Governor Bill Richardson proclaimed February 3 as "Rabbi Leonard A. Helman Day." Helman was a recipient of the prestigious "Santa

Fe Living Treasure" award and is included in Alice Bullock's book *Living Legends of the Santa Fe Country*.



*Rabbi Leonard Helman*

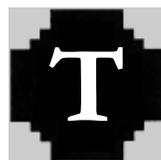
Rabbi Helman was most proud of the many successful marriages and family events he performed throughout his rabbinical career. In his role as State Chaplain of the New Mexico legislature, which he took very seriously, he forged many important religious friendships.

He made a point of asking pastors, priests, imams and rabbis throughout the state to help provide the opening prayer at the New Mexico State capitol.

Rabbi Helman was one of the founding members of the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society and 2005 recipient of the Hurst Award. ✧

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## Nice Jewish Cowboys and Cowgirls



The New Mexico Jewish Historical Society, in conjunction with the New Mexico History Museum and Temple

Beth Shalom in Santa Fe, will present a program entitled "Nice Jewish Cowboys and Cowgirls." The event will take place on October 27 in the auditorium of the New Mexico History Museum in Santa Fe at 2 p.m. It was prompted by the current special exhibit, "Cowboys Real and Imagined," showing at

the New Mexico Historical Museum.

Professor Emeritus Noel Pugach will introduce the topic of the largely unknown presence of Jews in New Mexico ranching and sheep raising and provide historical context. These Jewish ranching families played a prominent role in the second half of the 1800s, which they continue to play in New Mexico's rich and diverse economic and social landscape. Meredith Davison, a curator at the Museum, will

then show slides from the Wurmser photo collection.

The central focus of the program will be a panel of representatives of Jewish families who have been actively engaged in ranching in New Mexico. They will explain how and they got involved in this enterprise and provide some fascinating stories. The audience will then have an opportunity to engage the speakers and share experiences. ✧

## From the Archives: Santa Fe Jewry

by Patricia A. Carlton

*“Jews have been in northern New Mexico forever. They have been here so long, you can hardly tell them from anyone else [overheard at the Santa Fe Baking Co.]” This quote appeared in the “Santa Fe Eavesdropper” section of the May 2013 issue of the weekly Santa Fe Reporter.*

*NMJHS Archivist Pat Carlton didn’t know whether to be amused, offended, or gratified by the comment, but thought it added a certain resonance to an article she had recently read by Alfred Rosenfeld, “In Santa Fe, the City Different: Old Jewish Settlers and New,” which follows. First published in the May 1954 issue of Commentary Magazine the article was later reproduced in the May 1994 NMJHS Newsletter. Not so coincidentally, 1954 was the year that the first Temple Beth Shalom was built in Santa Fe.*



Pat Carlton

**J**ewish families have trickled into the ancient City of Holy Faith, particularly during the last two decades. This year, with the dedication of a new temple and community center on old Barcelona Road – a small building simply designed by famed architect John Gaw Meem – Santa Fe will have officially acquired a Jewish community for the first time in its long history.

Even though there is only the one small structure for Orthodox, Conservative and Reform, and only one combined service for all, there has been a remarkable lack of family squabbling.

Always completely accepted as full-fledged members of the community at large, Santa Fe’s Jews have never before felt the need to form a specific Jewish community. Most of the town’s Jews have more Gentile friends than Jewish, possess only the vaguest sort of Jewish consciousness, and are largely uninterested in Jewish affairs as such.

The founding fathers of the new temple hope to change all this. But they have been faced with peculiar difficulties, even in organizing a

temple. How many Jews, for example, are prospective members – fifty, a hundred, three hundred? No one is sure. For how can you tell, in Santa Fe, who is a Jew? Wherever Jews have found themselves so unreservedly accepted, as under ancient Hellenistic civilization, a certain number of them have disappeared into the surrounding population.

“The Jewish community of Santa Fe,” a wag once said, “is composed largely of Gentiles.” This is only a slight exaggeration. The “typical Jewish merchant” in the clothing store turns out to be a staunch Catholic or a Christian Scientist. The blue-eyed, blond-haired lady is not only extremely active in Hadassah, you discover, but also an officer in the B’nai B’rith ladies’ auxiliary. Of the two Rosenthals in the telephone directory, only one turns out to be Jewish. Your mail carrier, whom you assumed to be Spanish, confides one day, “I, too, am a yehudah.” His father was Jewish, his mother an Indian converted to Catholicism.

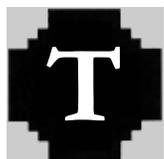
Here it is difficult indeed to distinguish between the descendants of Shem and those of Japhet. Once, in the home of a woman I would not have guessed to be Jewish, she motioned to the adobe wall containing a

lovely santo whose missing halo left a space on top of his head. “This,” said the lady fondly, “is Saint Loch-in-kop.” The City Different, indeed.

All this does not mean that the Jews of Santa Fe take their Judaism lightly. The handful of faithful who built the temple hope to see a resurgence of interest in all phases of Jewish activity, now that there is a temple. One of the temple’s founders was worried about his children. “They were beginning to want to go to Mass and Sunday services with the neighbor kids. I want them to know what they are, and not be ashamed of it.”

Like the lonely priestless community in the French movie *God Needs Men*, Santa Fe, seven thousand feet up in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains of New Mexico, is without a rabbi. Barney Petchesky, a transplanted New Yorker who runs a department store in the Plaza, has volunteered to fill the gap temporarily. No one is afraid that he, like Nadab and Abihu, might be consumed by flames for failing to dot a few i’s and cross a few t’s of the ritual. Everyone is pleased that here at last is a physical gathering place to give the Jewish community an identity of its own. ✧

## Jewish Pioneers Part II: Reception and Program Scheduled for September 15



The opening exhibit of the Jewish pioneer panels sponsored by NMJHS in January 2012 attracted 150 enthusiastic participants and speakers.

That exhibit only had room for half the panels that NMJHS acquired from the New Mexico History Museum. Now Part II is being prepared for exhibit in the auditorium at the Jewish Community Center in Albuquerque for two months from August 16 to October 15.

NMJHS invites you to attend the reception and program at 3 p.m. at the JCC on Sunday, September 15. Speakers will include descendants of the Jewish pioneer families.

These panels featuring photos and text about Jewish pioneer families are now in the possession of the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society. They are owned in common with the New Mexico History Museum, where they were displayed

as part of a major five-year exhibit on Jewish history in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

The Part II exhibit coincides with the completion of Part II of a curriculum for middle school students on New Mexico's Jewish History, entitled "Adventure, Adversity and Opportunity: Our Jewish Pioneer History in New Mexico." Part II of the curriculum is entitled "Social and Family Life and Religion."

At the September 15 reception and program, Tammy Kaiser, Education Director at Congregation Albert, and author of the curriculum, will discuss the components of the curriculum, which will be available online on the

New Mexico Jewish Historical Society's website, [www.nmjhs.org/educationalresources.html](http://www.nmjhs.org/educationalresources.html) . . . . Part I of the curriculum, "Immigration and Occupations," is already posted online, and is being marketed to New Mexico's religious schools as well as public schools.

Plans are in the making for a permanent exhibit at the JCC of selected Jewish pioneer panels that will be hung in a prominent location for the larger community to view over the coming years. This project represents a collaboration between the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society, the Jewish Community Center, and the Jewish Federation of New Mexico. ✧



*Jake Gold, dealer in Indian and Mexican curiosities.*

### Fall Conference *(continued from p. 1)*

Two sessions are scheduled for Sunday morning: "New Mexico and the Sephardic Diaspora" and "Jewish Roots in Northern New Mexico." The conference concludes by 1 p.m. Sunday.

The four conference sessions on Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning include the following talks and speakers:

- "Sephardic Music in the Diaspora," Steve Ovitsky, Executive Director of the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival
- "Jews in Spain," Roger Martinez, PhD, Professor of History, University of Colorado
- "Jewish Illuminated Manuscripts in Spain," Gloria Abella Ballen, former Professor of Art

- "Maimonides and Nahmanides and the Sephardic Tradition," Rabbi Jack Schlacter, PhD, Los Alamos National Laboratory
- "The Mendez/Nasi Family Dynasty," by Sandra Toro, Professor of Creative Writing, University of New Mexico
- "The Sephardic Diaspora in the Americas," Ron Duncan Hart, PhD, former Professor of Anthropology
- "Sephardic Family History," Michel Messeca
- "The Coca Family and the Gusdorfs: Crypto-Jewish and Ashkenazi Transition," Mona Hernández
- "The Gusdorfs: Pioneer Jews of Taos," Naomi Sandweiss
- "The Cohn Family," Yvette Stoor

Look for the conference registration brochure in your mailbox by mid-August.



*Sagebrush Inn*

Room reservations can be made from now to September 4 at Conference rates at the Sagebrush Inn; be sure to indicate that you are attending the NMJHS Fall Conference. ✧

**Behind the Scenes** *(continued from p. 7)*

Garrett, a good friend of my father and mother.

After a good breakfast and a few hours rest, Garrett said to my father, "Sol, let us go back to Fort Sumner and get Billy."

"You go get him. I will go back to the ranch to receive the sheep." My father came back to Las Vegas via Garrett's ranch and there learned that the very same day of his previous arrival there

that Pat drove to Fort Sumner and killed Billy the Kid.

And now you know "the rest of the story."

*Sharon Niederman lives and writes in Raton, New Mexico. Her most recent book, Signs & Shrines: Spiritual Journeys Across New Mexico, recently received the Gold travel guide award from the Society of American Travel Writers. She was recently appointed by Governor Susana Martinez to*

*the board of directors of the New Mexico Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum, and she serves on the NMJHS Board.*

*Editor's note: This delightful story is one of many legends about encounters with Billy the Kid of which different versions abound among descendants of Jewish pioneer families. These stories are interesting and significant because of what they tell us about New Mexico Jews and New Mexico society at that time. ☆*

**More on the Floersheims**

by Noel Pugach

**S**olomon Floersheim was the *pater familias* of an important Jewish Pioneer family in New Mexico. Solomon himself was related to two other pioneer families, the Bibos and the Seligmans. That was a common feature of Jewish pioneer families, who attracted their relatives to the territory. It was true of the numerous relatives of the Spiegelbergs, the Wertheims, and the Mandell-Weiller-Benjamin-Dreyfus clan.

Because of the commitment of many of them to marry Jews and the tiny Jewish population in the territory, they often took cousins as spouses. Indeed, Jewish law allowed the marriage of even first cousins. They thereby repeat-

ed in New Mexico the endogamous pattern in small Jewish communities in Western and Eastern Europe.

Solomon Floersheim's granddaughter Eleanor proudly noted in an interview by Congregation Albert in 1997 that all of Sol's children married Jews, even though they were raised in a small, isolated community in northern New Mexico. She herself married Dr. Randolph Seligman of Bernalillo and Albuquerque. Randy and Eleanor shared the same great grandparents, Isaac Bibo and Blumchen Rosenstein. They were therefore third cousins.

It was a marriage of love. But Eleanor quipped about the relationship. "I always have said that I was the only

relative who was a relative before I was a relative." Later in the interview she remarked, "I myself feel very fortunate that I not only married someone who was so acceptable to my family. As a matter of fact, my father (Ben Floersheim) always used to tell me that if his daughter married someone like Randy Seligman, his worries would be over. I really thought the poor man didn't know what he was saying." ☆

*Noel Pugach is Professor Emeritus of History at the University of New Mexico and a scholar of New Mexico Jewish history who has published on Jewish pioneer families.*

**IN MEMORIAM: Lorraine Kempenich Kahn**

Lorraine Kempenich Kahn, widow of Walter S. Kahn, passed away on May 25. She was born in Alameda, New Mexico, a suburb of Albuquerque, on July 25, 1927, to a family that came to New Mexico in the 1870s. She moved to Santa Fe with her family during the 1930s, when her parents came to work with her Uncle

Julius and Aunt Elsie Gans in their Kahn's Shoe Store on the Plaza, next door to The Guarantee. She attended Louisiana State University, then came back to Santa Fe. She worked with her parents when they founded Kemp's Gifts and Curios. She was one of the founders of Temple Beth Shalom and of Temple Beit Tikva.

**In Memory of  
Professor Norman E. Budow  
Former NMJHS board member**

### 2013 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
- Individual Senior (+55) \$35
- Family \$55
- Senior Couple \$45
- Library \$20
- Fulltime Student \$25
- Nonprofit Organization \$40
- Business \$100
- Life Membership \$1000  
(payable over two years)

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your check payable to:  
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 Albuquerque, NM 87109

## Calendar of NMJHS Upcoming Events

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

Adventure, Adversity & Opportunity Exhibit, Part II. Reception and Program, September 15, 3 p.m., Jewish Community Center, Albuquerque. This is Part II of the Jewish Pioneer Families exhibit that was shown in January 2012 at the Jewish Community Center in Albuquerque. It will be on display in the JCC auditorium from August 16 to October 15 (see page 10).

NMJHS Fall Conference: Sephardic History from Spain to New Mexico, October 12 and 13 at Sagebrush Inn in Taos. Conference highlights include a talk on Jews in Spain, Sephardic music, a visual presentation of Spanish illuminated Haggadahs and Torahs, and a discussion of the roles of Maimonides and Nahmanides in shaping Jewish thought (see page 1).

Nice Jewish Cowboys and Cowgirls, speaker Professor Emeritus Noel Pugach, Sunday, October 27 at 2 p.m. in the auditorium of the New Mexico History Museum in Santa Fe. His talk ties in to the current special exhibit, "Cowboys Real and Imagined," showing at the New Mexico Historical Museum (see page 8).

New Mexico Jewish Historical Society  
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