



The Jewish Albuquerque That I Remember, 1940 - 1955

by Helen Horwitz

For the first 15 years of my Albuquerque childhood, from 1940 through 1955, I defined my geographic universe by some of the city's downtown streets:

Fourteenth Street on the west, Broadway on the east, Gold to the south, and New York Avenue (now Lomas) on the north.

My family lived on West Marquette Avenue in what is today called "The Fourth Ward" – an area just north of downtown Central Avenue with solid bungalow and cottage-style homes that were occupied by solid, middle-class families. Several larger, more elegant houses – owned by prominent physicians, attorneys, and businessmen named Lovelace, Modrall, and Seligman – dotted the neighborhood.

The front porch of our house on Marquette looked straight down Ninth Street to Robinson Park and Central. Three blocks east, at the KiMo Theatre, my older brother was an usher and proudly made the popcorn. In my child's mind,

Marquette was further bounded by Seventh and Twelfth streets. At Seventh, my great uncle and aunt, David and Anna (Markus) Elias, often welcomed me into their large, slightly dilapidated old house.

At Twelfth, a right turn on my Schwinn quickly brought me to the rambling bungalow that Julius Mandell had built in 1910. Widowed before I was born, Julius now shared the house with his son Joe, Joe's wife, Sally, and their son, Jerry. For almost 70 years, they were my family's close friends.

My parents, Leo and Betty (Markus) Horwitz, arrived in Albuquerque in May 1933 with my brother Don, then six months old. (We celebrated his 75th birthday in 2007.) My father had lost his job as a traveling salesman in the Upper Midwest, and "Uncle" and "Auntie" Elias, as we called them, introduced him to Maurice Maisel, of the now-landmark Indian crafts store.

After several years at Maisel's, my father opened and successfully operated the Navajo Indian Store at 418 Central – directly across from the KiMo. He had become a federally registered Indian trader, and my brother still recalls going with him on buying trips to Gallup. Later, my father had two more retail businesses before returning to his original vocation; he represented an El Paso clothing manufacturer, and the Albuquerque-based Bell Trading Post owned by Jack Michelson.

At first, my family lived around Fourteenth and Coal, eventually moving to

the house on Marquette. Always very sociable, my parents soon met other young, Jewish couples who also had recently settled in Albuquerque to seek their fortunes. The Horwitzes's own fortunes waxed and waned over the years, but most



For many years, West Central in downtown Albuquerque was the city's business hub. This photo, taken ca.1950 from the railroad overpass that still straddles Central, shows some of the stores, movie theatres, and general activity. (Courtesy Albuquerque Museum Photo Archives)

of the friendships they made in the 1930s and 40s lasted their entire lives.

One of my fondest Albuquerque memories is the many Jewish-owned businesses that lined Central Avenue during my childhood. The main shopping district began at about Seventh Street and ran to First. Near the western end, at Seventh,

(continued on p. 8)

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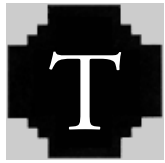
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Message from President Harold Melnick



There are many things to talk about in this column. Let me begin with our previous administrator, Bobbi Jackson. Bobbi had to resign her position in December 2006 for health reasons but remained a member of the Society.

Debbie Blackerby took over from Bobbi, working for the Society in the afternoon, after her "day job" with the JCC. However, over the past year, the activities and membership of the JCC have increased, as has Debbie's work load, so she found herself having to do the Society's work in the evening.

Fortunately, Bobbi's health has improved and she has offered to return to her job as administrator. So, by the time you read this, the NMJHS administrator will once again be Bobbi Jackson. I'm sure you'll all welcome her back. We are, of course, grateful to Debbie for the time and effort she was able to give us, and we wish her well with her responsibilities at the JCC.

You probably noticed a new banner and more visible logo for *Legacy*. Andi Kron redesigned the logo and Shelah Wilgus redesigned the banner. Many thanks, Andi and Shelah.

Elsewhere in this issue you will read about our treasurer, Bob Gale. Bob answered my call last year for someone to take over the treasurer's position when then-treasurer Phil Saltz became ill. Bob has done a Herculean job of bringing our accounts up to date and remedying several serious problems. We are most fortunate that he answered the call.

So now I'm going to call for help once again. The Society has many activities planned, but they require people to make them happen. I know there are talents out there among our members that could be useful to the Society. Would you like to be a movie producer? NMJHS plans to

show more Jewish-themed historical films. Consider working with film chair Barbara Baker to make them happen.

Have you ever planned an event? We need an event planner to arrange venues for NMJHS meetings and conferences. If you are a computer whiz and live in the Albuquerque area, it would be great



*Harold Melnick,
NMJHS President*

if Bobbi could call on you when the office computer acts up. Maybe you're a bookkeeper. Bobbi might welcome your help an hour or two each week.

Maybe your talent is fundraising or grant-writing or membership recruiting or public relations. Or maybe you would like to help but are not sure what you might do. Just let us know you want to get involved. Contact any board member or call the office and leave word with Bobbi. We'll take it from there.

Another thing you might do: write an article for *Legacy*. We are grateful to those who have contributed to the newsletter's content, but we are always looking for new material. Is there a bit of your family history that would be interesting to others? Is there a topic you want to explore? Is there an interesting historical person or event you could write about? Dorothy Amsden will welcome your ideas and submissions.

In my previous message I talked about how we take our personal histories for granted. That got me to thinking about how my life, my very existence, has been a product of my family's history. In fact, I exist only because of a series of tragedies.

My mother was born in what was either Poland or Russia, depending on who was winning which war. My father was born in Ukraine, during the time of the Czars. They both fled to the New World, to New York, my mother to escape abject poverty, my father to escape poverty and the Czar's army, both to escape endemic

persecution. In New York they met, married, and had two sons. Those sons died just before reaching their teens, within weeks of each other, from something that, 10 years later, probably would have been cured by penicillin.

My parents left New York, seeking someplace healthier to start a family again. They drove around the country, finally reaching Dallas. My mother said she would never live in a place so hot in the summer, but it was 1930, the depth of the Depression, and my father said he could earn a living there. That's where I was born.

The tragedy of the Jews of Eastern Europe – the poverty, the persecution, the pogroms – drove my parents to seek a new, better life in America; otherwise they would never have met. The tragedy of the death of their first two children – the siblings I never knew – meant they had to try again, and thus gave me birth that would otherwise not have occurred.

Tragedy drove my parents to Dallas, so I was born a Texan instead of a New Yorker. My history, my very existence, is the result of a series of tragedies. My grandparents in Europe could never have dreamed that their grandson would one day be living in New Mexico, a place they had never heard of.

This is my last column as your president. I shall be passing the giant aspirin to a new leader in May. There have been many outstanding events and activities during my term. They happened only because of the inspiration and work of others. No president does it alone. Please give the next president the cooperation and effort needed to continue the important work of the Society. ☆

Don't miss the next issue of Legacy. The newsletter is sent bulk mail and does not get forwarded. Let us know if you have moved so we can update your address.

Mailbox – Our Readers Respond

Harriet Rochlin, a well-known author and lecturer about Jews in the West, sent the following e-mail to Naomi Sandweiss on 4 February 2008. Rochlin lives in Los Angeles.

Dear Naomi:

I am a member of the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society and receive its newsletters. Informative as they are, I don't always have time to read them cover to cover. I would have missed some fascinating stories, yours among them, had you not sent me the December 2007 issue. Your story, "The Kochbuch," is so touching. Especially when so few American Jews, and still fewer Europeans, are aware of the Jews of New Mexico despite more recent exhibitions, books, and articles.

I also look forward to talking to Cary Herz and buying her book (I have the earlier one), and talking to her about selling it, starting in March, when we'll introduce the Roots West Bookstore on my website, www.rochlin-roots-west.com.

Thanks so much for your interest and assistance.

Harriet Rochlin

Legacy welcomes comments and feedback on articles that appear in its issues. Send to the Editor at nmjhs@jewishnewmexico.org. ☆

NMJHS thanks the following "phone friends:" Irene and Robert Gale, Helen Horwitz, Dan Sandweiss, Nancy Terr, Stephen Part, Lora Land Part, and Anna E. Part, for their participation in the PBS quarterly fund-raiser on Saturday, March 8, from 5:30 to 10 p.m., for KNME channel 5. Volunteering for special fund-raising efforts is part of the NMJHS commitment to the people of New Mexico.

New Lifetime Member
Majorie Weinberg-Berman

The deadline for submitting articles for the June issue of Legacy is May 20.

Roundup

by Naomi Sandweiss



On the heels of the PBS Series, *The Jewish Americans*, Jewish historical societies nationwide are engaged in exciting exhibits, celebrations, and new ventures.

The American Jewish Historical Society is featuring an exhibit about 311 rabbis who served as U.S. chaplains during World War II. The exhibit, entitled "Jewish Chaplains at War 1941 - 1945," includes an online component, complete with photographs (see www.ajhs.org/publications/Exhibitions.cfm). The Jewish Museum of Maryland recently opened a complementary exhibit entitled "Ours to Fight For: American Jews in the Second World War," on display through July 27, 2008.

If your travel plans take you to the West Coast, the Washington (State) Jewish Historical Society and the Jewish Historical Society of Southern California offer local Jewish tours. "Jewish Seattle: YESTERDAY AND TODAY: A Guided Audio Driving Tour" has just been released. The self-guided tour in your own vehicle takes approximately 4 hours.

Sensibly, the Southern California tour takes place by bus. The Jewish Historical Society of the Napa Valley has a permanent exhibit "The Jews of the Valley," at the Napa Valley Museum in Yountville, California. If you can't get to Napa, pour yourself a glass of wine and read the companion book, *Under the Vine and Fig Tree: The Jews of the Napa Valley* by Lin Weber, which chronicles early Jewish settlers to the Valley.

Midwestern Jewish historical societies have been active. The Nebraska Jewish Historical Society recently celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary. David Mayer Gradwohl, Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at Iowa State University, published an extensive article entitled "Iowa's Jewish Cemeteries: Mirrors of History, Diversity, Continuity and Change" in the *CHAIowan*, the newsletter of the Iowa Jewish Historical Society.

One new and one updated biography of the first Jewish governor of Illinois, Henry Horner, are discussed in the Chicago Jewish Historical Society's Fall 2007 newsletter. Horner, who served as governor from 1933 - 1940, is credited with restructuring Illinois' antiquated tax

system and enacting a permanent voter registration system.

Heading south, we learn that Natchez, Mississippi, was once home to a robust Jewish community and synagogue. With fewer than 15 Jews remaining in Natchez, the Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience is featuring an exhibit "Of Passover and Pilgrimage: The Natchez Jewish Experience."

To end this Roundup, we note that PBS has created a space for Jewish Americans to share their own experiences, adding to the material offered by *The Jewish Americans* documentary. To share your stories, recipes, or traditions or to read about those of other Jewish Americans, visit the site at www.pbs.org/jewishamericans/share/index.html. ☆

A new Jewish Arts & Culture Group for Santa Fe is now in its formation stage. Its purpose is to bring cultural events with Jewish themes to Santa Fe in collaboration with the Jewish Community Center of Greater Albuquerque. To receive notification of events via e-mail, please contact Lee and Susan Berk at Lee217@comcast.net.

GENEALOGY CORNER: Swimming in the Sea of Azov

by Barry Gaines

It has been almost fifteen years since I traveled to present-day Ukraine to visit the tiny village of Genichesk, north of Crimea, where my late father was born. I will not relate the details of how I arranged this trip except to say that I was



The author poses with a statue of Lenin in the Genichesk town square.

incredibly fortunate to have the help of many kind people both here and abroad. Instead, I will share some moments from the visit in hopes that my experience may spur others to visit “the old country” in search of family history.

In the summer of 1994 my interpreter and I traveled by train from Kiev to Kherson, the capitol of the region that includes Genichesk. Our train was met in Kherson by four health officials of the region whose broad smiles revealed the stainless steel crowns typical of the Soviet era.

I learned that my benefactor had told everyone I was a high-ranking official of the World Health Organization (WHO) who must be treated with the highest regard. Our driver took us to breakfast with the local health officials; we had the entire dining room of the best hotel in Kherson to ourselves for a massive meal (which I hesitate to call breakfast since it included shashlik, or lamb on a skewer). And plenty of vodka.

Our driver set off for the town of Genichesk, where my father — named Grigori Ginzburg in 1907 — lived his first sixteen years. It was a three-hour trip toward the coast of the Black Sea. I later learned that I was the first American to visit the town since the First World War.

The local hotel was not considered worthy, so I was housed in a “rest home” (a better term than “resort”) outside of town on the *Arabatskaya Strelka* (Fortress Arrow), the narrow strip of land that connects Genichesk with the Crimea. The two-story buildings housed various workers on vacation. I was served my meals in a special dining room, usually with local officials and dignitaries. And plenty of vodka.

Once we were settled into our rooms, I put on my bathing suit and sandals and headed for the water. At last I could swim in the Sea of Azov, the small arm of the Black Sea where my father had frolicked as a child and where my grandfather had drowned seventy years before.

Genichesk is a town of about fifteen thousand. It had been, at the turn of the century, a prominent port, but it now has no real importance. It is very poor but representative of similar size towns throughout the country. Although it had been occupied by the Nazis, much of the town remains as it was when my father lived there. (The joke in Kherson was that when the party official who had been in charge of Genichesk for forty years retired, he was congratulated for returning the town *exactly* as he had received it.)

We found a young physician who had become the informal town historian with special interest in the Jews of Genichesk since his sister had married one. He took us on a tour of old Genichesk. When I explained that my grandmother, Klara Yampolska, had died while nursing others during the typhus epidemic of 1920-21, he took me to the building where typhus sufferers

had been quarantined and thus where my grandmother probably died. I took photos and silently recited the Kaddish.

On a happier note, I also saw the movie theater where my father described seeing silent films projected on a bed sheet, and the old lighthouse that has remained unchanged from the turn of the century. Last, we visited where the synagogue and Jewish school, destroyed by the Nazis along with the Jewish cemetery, had stood.

At the local museum we were greeted by the museum’s deputy director, who offered her help. She showed me photographs of early Genichesk then brought out a document of several pages. “I have some news for you, but it is sad news,” she said. She showed me the list of 244 Jews executed north of town by the Nazis in 1941. There was a Ginzburg couple on the list.

I asked the librarian if anyone had copied the death records, and she said no. I then explained the project at Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem, to bring together all the death records of the Holocaust, and I asked permission to photograph the records. Bravely, she agreed, and the list is now at Yad Vashem and the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. This I did for the dead Ginzburgs and the others who died in Genichesk.

The next morning I met the Director of Vital Records for the town. She, too, was touched by my quest and was more than happy to help! She explained that Jewish records had been kept separately from Christian records, and most had been destroyed. She did, however, have the book of births from 1908 to 1920, and she looked at every entry in that book, each written in a florid Yiddish hand as well as in Russian, searching for Ginzburgs and Yampolskis. We found the birth of two of my father’s cousins, Aaron and Aleksandr Ginzburg.

(continued on p. 5)

Swimming in the Sea of Azov (continued from p. 4)

The Director was not satisfied, however, simply to look in records. Knowing, as she did, everyone in town, she was determined to find someone who had known my family. She simply left the office and the line of people waiting to see her to take me to meet the elderly of Genichesk.

She phoned the only Jewish survivor in Genichesk, and soon I met a wrinkled old lady with piercing black eyes and virtually no teeth who was supporting herself on a cane. When I came in, she exclaimed, "Oy, Ginzburg, I knew your grandfather!" She sank down on the sofa behind her and started to weep. Eventually I explained that my grandfather had drowned around 1916, but she maintained that that I bore a family resemblance to the Ginzburgs that she had known. It's nice to think so.

Virtually everyone I met in Genichesk was moved by my story and anxious to help me in any way. The editor of the local newspaper asked to interview me for an article. And people in Genichesk also told me their stories.

The poet laureate of Genichesk, whose long poem about the town was presented to me, had a Jewish mother and a Ukrainian father. She and her brother had been passed through the window to neighbors before the Nazis came. Her father had been out of town when the order to round up the Jews was issued. He returned and joined his wife when the Germans led her away. The Germans told him he was free to go, but he said he would stay. They shot him with his wife.


I did not find any living Ginzburgs or Yampolskis, but I did find traces of them

and saw a glimpse of their world. I was able to confirm the few stories that I remember my father telling me. Strangest was that his father could dive into the sea and come to the surface holding a fish. You can imagine the sense of wonder and pride in a youngster with such a magical father. "It is an old trick," said my guide's elderly father. Apparently a variety of fish called "bychok" could be picked up out of crevices or the ocean floor at low tide. These details made my father's youth come alive to me.

Genealogical study has many appeals and uses; but when such studies are combined with travels to ancestral villages and homes, the results can be both edifying and moving. My visit to the world of my ancestors was powerfully meaningful for me.

Not only did I confirm the early settings of my grandparents' and my father's lives, but in some way I confirmed my own. I walked the streets that my ancestors had walked and smelled the smells my ancestors had smelled. I did not essentially change, and yet I did. For a few days I joined my father and his father and his father's father and swam with them in the Sea of Azov.

Barry Gaines lives in Albuquerque where he has taught Shakespeare at the University of New Mexico since 1979. He has made many trips to the National Archives in Washington, DC, and to the Family History Library in Salt Lake City to pursue genealogical research. His four grandparents lived within a hundred miles of each other in what was then Russia yet met and married in the United States. ☆



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NMJHS is launching a partnership with The Santa Fe Film Center on St Michael's Drive with the screening of Santa Fe Film maker Laurel Chiten's brilliant film, *The Jew and the Lotus*, an intense personal journey that leads author Rodger Kamenetz back to his Jewish roots. This film was "the most popular independent film ever" at the MFA in Boston, where it opened in 1999.

The NMJHS partnership with the Film Center will screen a film the second Sunday of each month at 4:15 p.m. *The Jew and the Lotus* will be shown on April 13, followed by *Memory Thief* on May 11.

Abraham S. Chanin – 2007 Recipient of Dr. Allan Hurst Award

by Naomi Sandweiss

Abe Chanin knows how to tell a good story. Luckily for those with an interest in Southwest Jewish history, he has made it his business to unearth and save numerous stories of the Jewish Southwest. In recognition of his accomplishments, Abraham S. Chanin received the 2007 Dr. Allan Hurst lifetime achievement award at the December 2007 New Mexico Jewish Historical Society annual meeting in Santa Fe.

The award, named in memory of one of the Society's founders, recognizes a person, persons, or organization that has contributed to New Mexico Jewish history, culture, and community for a substantial period of time. (See sidebar for previous recipients.)

Born and raised in Tucson, Arizona, Chanin's family includes some of the earliest Jewish residents of Tucson. Chanin traces his family from Tucson to their rabbinical origins in Eastern Europe. In the book, *Cholent and Chorizo: Great Adventures of Pioneer Jews on the Arizona Frontier*, Chanin recalls how his father, Isadore Chanin, son of an Orthodox Rabbi, trained a Mexican-American butcher to keep a kosher section in his Tucson meat market. One side of the butcher shop sold kosher meat, while the other sold ingredients for chorizo.

Determined not to let the stories of other pioneering Western families get lost, Abe and his wife of sixty-one years, Mildred, crisscrossed the state of Arizona interviewing historic figures for an earlier book, *This Land, These Voices: A Different View of Arizona History and Those Who Lived It*. "As we traveled some 7,000 miles," Chanin recalls, "we came to the

realization that the stories of pioneer Jews not only were great but they were being lost." In 1988, with the funding of Leona G. and David A. Bloom and support of the University of Arizona College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Chanin established the Bloom Southwest Jewish Archives.

The Bloom Archives gathers the Jewish history of Arizona, New Mexico, and West Texas into a research center, along with crypto-Jewish resources. The collection includes family histories, original memoirs, and historic photographs and is open to scholars and the public. In addition to continuing research into pioneer Jewish history of the Desert Southwest, the Bloom Archives also serves as a repository for



Abe Chanin

materials on crypto-Jews who are tracing their family histories back to Spain and Portugal. In 1998, the Archives were transferred to the University of Arizona Library.

Chanin has been an active member of the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society since its founding in 1985, serving as a board member and newsletter contributor. Along the way, many have admired Chanin's contributions, including Stan Hordes, who is an NMJHS board member, former president, and first recipient of the Dr. Allan Hurst Award. "I admire Abe's absolute devotion to gathering materials and making them available to scholars," notes Stan. "Abe is a pioneer in Southwest Jewish history with a Midas touch."

Amazingly, Chanin's accomplishments in Southwest Jewish history took place alongside a very successful journalism

career. In 1941, Chanin began reporting for the Arizona Daily Star where he worked in a variety of positions for 36 years, including sports editor and editorial director. Later, he taught journalism at the University of Arizona from where he retired as Professor Emeritus. In 1979, Chanin authored the book *They Fought Like Wildcats: A Reverent, Sometimes Irreverent History of Athletics at One American University — the University of Arizona*.

Abe and Mildred Chanin moved to Albuquerque in 2003 to be near their daughter. They remain involved in Society activities and committed to sharing the stories of Southwest Jewish history. "Whether Jewish or not, everyone should know about Southwest Jewish history," asserts Abe. "Jewish pioneers are forerunners of the building of the Southwest". ✧

NMJHS Recipients of Dr. Allan Hurst Award

NMJHS created the Dr. Allan Hurst Award to honor a prominent member of the Society and one of its founders who died in 1989. The 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.

- 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

Meet our Treasurer – Robert N. Gale

Bob Gale joined the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society in 2006 because of his interest in the newly emerging story of New Mexico's crypto-Jews. When he saw an ad in *Legacy* for someone to volunteer as treasurer, he stepped up to the bat and has been serving the Society in that position since June 2007.

A retired pharmacist and corporate executive, Bob was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He attended the University of Minnesota, receiving a BS in pharmacy, and undertook a year of graduate training in pharmacology. It was here, in pharmacy school, that he met his wife, Irene. The two, who have been married for 44 years, have two children, both of whom still reside in Minnesota with their spouses and children.

Bob practiced community pharmacy for a number of years prior to entering the corporate world where he eventually became president of Pharmacy Corporation of America, a publicly traded corporation with multiple operations throughout the United States that specializes in providing pharmaceutical care to nursing-home and hospital patients. After merging this company with another, Bob became a senior vice president at Beverly Enterprises, which, at that time, was the largest nursing-home company in the U.S.

In 1993, after completing an assignment as group vice president of RedLine Medical's Medicare billing division, Bob moved to Albuquerque where he became president of the pharmacy division of Horizon-CMS Healthcare. Eventually he left Albuquerque for northern Kentucky and yet another \$2 billion NYSE company, Omnicare, where

he accepted a three-year assignment as vice president of operations. Other business accomplishments include founding a pharmacy software company and a unit-dose-medication packaging company, both of which are still active.

In 2003, Bob and Irene (also a pharmacist who "home offices" as a clinical account executive with Medco Health Solutions, a pharmacy-benefits manager based in New Jersey), moved back to New Mexico. For the first time in his career, Bob accepted a position with a not-for-profit health-care company, Presbyterian Medical Services, based in Santa Fe, that provides medical, dental, social, and pharmacy services to New Mexico's uninsured and underinsured residents.



Bob Gale, NMJHS Treasurer

For more than 12 years, Bob served on the Board of Directors and Executive Committee of the American Society of Consultant Pharmacists, a professional organization of pharmacists serving nursing homes, based in Washington, DC.

Over the years, Bob served in numerous positions with the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Auxiliary. One time he was a member of the Presidential Security Detail in support of the U.S. Secret Service agents protecting former president Jimmy Carter and his family as they vacationed on the *Delta Queen* between St. Paul and St. Louis. In addition, Bob and Irene have performed hundreds of search-and-rescue missions in Minnesota and Wisconsin on behalf of the USCG.

Bob has received numerous awards, both professional and civic, including the Richard S. Berman Service Award, the Samuel W. Melendy Memorial Lecturer Award, and the USCG Award of Administrative Merit and Unit Commendation Award. Another award that he is quite proud of was the

honor (together with the family Doberman Pinscher, Whiteside's Baron v. Brighton) of having the Highest-Scoring Doberman in Minnesota for a number of years.

Since retiring, Bob fills his time with landscape and travel photography, bike touring, downhill skiing, his three grandchildren in Minnesota, classes at the University of New Mexico in art and photography, studying history, gourmet cooking, and his duties as NMJHS treasurer. Bob and Irene now reside in Placitas, New Mexico, with their 3-year-old Standard Schnauzer, Plata. ✧

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Drop-off points in Albuquerque and Santa Fe will be specified in the June issue of *Legacy*.

The Jewish Albuquerque That I Remember *(continued from p. 1)*

were: H. Cook Sporting Goods (Harold and Shirley Gardenswartz); Maisel's (Maurice and Syma); The Gizmo Store (David and Frances Katz); Simon's (Si and Becky Goldman); and The Army-Navy Store (Morris and Belle Downin). (Marilyn Reinman, also an Albuquerque native, helped me clear a few mental cobwebs for this article. Among other things, she recalled that the Downins lived behind their store.)

Walking east, other stores included: William and Ann Redak's jewelry store; Jordan's (Louis and Mary Cohen); F. Mindlin Jewelers (Frank Mindlin); Mandell & Dreyfuss (Leon, Julius and Joe Mandell, and Julian and Paul Dreyfuss); Accessories by Jean (Harry and Jean Markus); People's Flowers (Max and Ruth Pollack); Magidson's Delicatessen (Irwin and Lola); Pay-Less Drug (Abe and Walter Cohen); Car-Lin Casuals (Lou and Ann Leby); Meyer & Meyer (David and Jack); Kilroy's (David Cooper); and Freed's Gifts (Max and Marcia).

On First Street, across from the ill-fated Alvarado, Joe and Dora Spector owned souvenir and pawnshops, and my cousins Ben and Ida (Tananbaum) Markus had a general store that sold everything from footlockers to handkerchiefs. Like the Downins, who lived behind their store, the Spectors could have dwelt in a swanky, residential neighborhood, but for years they resided above Joe's pawnshop.

On nearby streets, other Jewish merchants included: American Furniture (Mannie and Frieda Blaugrund); Ravel Brothers (Arthur and Louis); Sandia Clothiers (Helen Sands and Ruth Mager); and Sam Shalit's and Jack Levick's pawn shops.

Around 1950, Albuquerque's Jewish community totaled about 250 families. Almost everyone knew, or at least recog-

nized, everyone else. I felt secure and well looked after when I went downtown on a Saturday afternoon. Indeed, "downtown" was the hub for everything; some residents doubted that Nob Hill, the new shopping center at Central and Carlisle, would succeed because of the driving distance. A little north of Menaul and Wyoming, where an adventurous new development was going up, only a few dirt roads stretched across the East Mesa toward the foothills.



The author in 1947 with her parents Leo and Betty Horwitz and brother Don.

Outside my own home, Temple Albert (now known as Congregation Albert) was where I felt surrounded with warmth and Jewishness; it was the external symbol of my budding faith. Although my mother had grown up in a traditional Jewish home, my parents joined the Reform congregation soon after moving to Albuquerque. The small building then at Seventh and Gold was where I began attending religious school; in due time, I was confirmed and married in the congregation's next building at Lead and Mulberry.

At Seventh and Gold, an imposing dome sat atop the second-floor sanctuary, and this dome probably stood out on the city skyline – although the only place that offered such a view was the First National Bank Building, then the tallest structure in town. Our sanctuary walls had round, stained-glass windows, each centered with a blue and opalescent *Magen David*, and smaller windows were set in the dome. The New Mexico sunshine beamed brightly through all of them during High Holiday and other daylight services.

In the Jewish Albuquerque of my childhood, most families attended services almost every Friday night. Women wore dresses or suits, high heels and hats; men had on suits and ties – without a *talit* or

a *kippah* in sight. Also true to the Reform tradition of that time, an organist and small choir were part of Rabbi Solomon Starrels's services.

Afterward, the congregation usually gathered for an *oneg* in the basement social hall, which we reached by navigating a wooden staircase from outside at street level. There, the Horwitz family visited with the Ginsberg, Cohen, Mandell, Dreyfuss, Weiller, Hillson, Lewinson, Kligerman, Stern, Sutin, Moise, and Seligman families, and elderly members including Mrs. Noa Ilfeld and Max and Tillie Fleischer.

In 1920, a small group within the Albuquerque Jewish community who felt the need for more traditional religious services and community service, as well as organizing a Hebrew school, had incorporated as Congregation B'nai Israel. The five charter members of the Conservative synagogue included my great uncle, David Elias, and my cousin, Ben Markus. In the early 1930s, according to Marilyn Reinman's B'nai Israel histories, the fledgling congregation began meeting for services and occasional dinners in rented space at 116-1/2 Central Ave., above the Sunshine Theatre.

Arthur Ravel, who was Marilyn's father, served as president of B'nai Israel from 1935-1942 and was key to the fundraising efforts that led to breaking ground, in 1941, for their first *shul*. Located at Coal and Cedar, the beautiful new synagogue's exterior was white, trimmed with Pueblo-style *vigas*, and the sanctuary had warm, wood paneling.

Unfortunately, a great divide between Albuquerque's Reform and Conservative congregations lasted for many years – including during my childhood. One of the rare occasions that united most of the Jewish community took place in November 1953. Auntie and Uncle Elias celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with a gala dinner in the Alvarado Hotel's Grand Ballroom, and family photos that I now have show the capacity crowd of happy guests.

(continued on p. 9)

The Jewish Albuquerque That I Remember *(continued from p. 8)*

Over the couple's many years in Albuquerque – the Eliases had moved to New Mexico for Auntie's health soon after they married in 1903 – they owned clothing stores on Central and First Street, among other businesses. They strongly supported Congregation B'nai Israel and the State of Israel, and they befriended much of the entire community. That night at the Alvarado, as Auntie and Uncle renewed their vows under the *chupah* held by some of their nephews, everyone applauded and cheered together.

But other than major *simchas* like this, socializing was limited between members of Congregation B'nai Israel and Temple Albert. Except for Magidson's Delicatessen, which was the lunchtime magnet for Jews and Gentiles alike, members of the two congregations did not regularly mingle. Magidson's fragrant, juicy corned beef and pastrami sandwiches often drew everyone together, if just for lunch.

Non-traditional dining experiences awaited me in the spacious kitchen of Mrs. Leopold Seligman. She and her husband, with their two sons, had escaped from Berlin in the late 1930s and settled in Albuquerque amid their many Seligman relatives. Hanni was a splendid woman with exquisitely refined, upper-class, German-Jewish style. In the early 1950s, she tried to impart some of her sophistication to a group of local Jewish girls, and for some months we met in her elegant home at Tenth and Marquette.

There, amid her European tapestries and precious antiques, she taught us the arts of sewing and embroidery, setting a fine table, storing table linens, and preparing continental cuisine. Understandably, my mother did not permit me to serve one of Hanni's specialties in our home – *filet minute*, strips of steak that were browned in butter and finished with heavy cream. Also understandably, the number of girls diminished as we found other teenage pastimes. Even so, I adored Hanni for her graciousness, generosity and great, genuine warmth. Hands down, she was our *grande dame*.

At about this time, I joined Job's Daughters, a Masonic-based youth service group. Temple Albert was too small to offer a similar program and I was seeking out new activities. For several years, I sang in the Job's Daughters choir – which included performing during Easter sunrise services at the old Masonic Temple on Central. Around 4:30 a.m., while it was still black outside, I would quickly down a plate of my mother's *matzo brei* and then hurry off to sing *The Hallelujah Chorus* of Handel's *Messiah*.

For me, there were few concerns about anti-Semitism or of losing the identity my parents were cultivating in me. I learned Jewish rituals and practices but I also experienced other religions. With my parents' approval, a Roman Catholic friend took me to Mass at St. Mary's, and I attended, with another friend, Vacation Bible School at the Fruit Avenue Baptist Church. They were my classmates at Lew Wallace Elementary and Washington Junior High schools, and we exchanged each others' religious traditions. Also, like almost every local family of that era – of any faith – mine got into the family car every Christmas Eve and we rode through the Country Club and Ridgecrest neighborhoods to enjoy the *luminarias*. (I would gleefully point out the occasional Jewish home with a Christmas tree in the window.)

At home I learned not only about Jewish rituals and customs, but also how to accommodate some of them in then-remote New Mexico. The nearest kosher butchers were (and still are) 450 miles away in Denver and Phoenix. Refrigerated deliveries were terribly expensive, so only a few especially observant local families routinely kept *kashrut*. Pesach, however, was an exception for some others, including mine.

Until my mother started working full time in the 1950s and some traditions were scrapped for lack of her time and energy, the approach of Passover signaled great activity in our kitchen. After ridding it of all *chometz*, she used a feather

to whisk the shelves, washed them, and changed cooking pots and tableware. She and several friends also jointly ordered kosher meat and poultry to see everyone through Seders and the coming week. (My brother and I learned to abstain from *chometz*, and my late mother did her job well. About ten years ago, I refused a business trip to Japan during Passover; it would have been too difficult to maintain the dietary requirements.)

Today, the Jewish Albuquerque of my childhood seems as distant as the view from the wrong end of a pair of binoculars. When I go downtown, I feel sad – and old – remembering the sites and people of my earliest years. Parking lots, bars and boarded-up storefronts are all that mostly remain. But what an unforgettable time and place this was to grow up and call home! And what I wouldn't give for a Magidson's corned beef on rye – extra lean, of course! I'd even share it with you.

Helen Horwitz, who recently rejoined NMJHS, remembers the Alvarado, going with her family to watch planes take off and land at the old Albuquerque Airport, and Temple Albert religious school at Seventh and Gold. After a 40-year career in New York and Chicago as a communications executive, she returned in 2000 to Albuquerque. Now semi-retired, she has more time to reminisce about Albuquerque's Jewish history. She graduated from Highland High School and the University of Missouri School of Journalism. ☆

Barbara Baker wishes Legacy readers a Happy Passover. Welcome to Spring!

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 NMJHS at (505) 348-4471 or nmjhs@jewishnewmexico.org.

Film Review – *Jews of Iran*

by Neal Behrendt

Jews probably settled in present day Iran in the Sixth Century, BCE, after Cyrus the Great, ruler of the Persian Empire, conquered the Babylonian Empire and liberated the Jews, who had been exiled there in 596 and 586 BCE. Over the millennia, Persian Jews developed unique practices and customs, even as they adhered to Talmudic Judaism. Although periodically persecuted by Zoroastrian and Muslim rulers, not to mention mobs, Persian Jews flourished in a relatively tolerant atmosphere. They were well treated under the Shah of Iran, who had an unwritten alliance with Israel.



amin Farahani's film *Jews of Iran* was screened on Sunday, December 16, 2006, at the Cinema Café in Santa Fe to a full

house. Following the film was a talk by Houshang Youbim, a Santa Fe art-gallery owner and Iranian Jew who left Iran as a young child.

The film dealt primarily with the lives of Jews in three major cities of Iran following the Islamic Revolution of 1979, which established Iran as an Islamic state under the rule of Ayatollah Khomeini.

Over two thousand years ago, Jews established roots and community in the country that is now Iran. Today, *de facto* discrimination as well as rampant prejudice threatens the Iranian Jewish community.

The film takes the viewer first to Tehran, the capital and also the city with the largest Jewish population in Iran. Tehran still has many Jewish ghettos and the families there remain tight-knit.

An interesting dynamic is shown in the Iranian Jewish community; Jewish institutions and schools are still managed by Muslim Iranians. Even in their own specific institutions, Jews still have little role in the upper echelon.

Locations visited in Tehran range from both secular and Jewish high schools in the city's center to traditional music shops on Baharestan Square. A striking interview is given by a Persian girl who attends a predominantly Muslim secular high school even though she is Jewish. She soon transfers to a Jewish high school after an incident where, as she leaves the class to use the restroom, her teacher tells the class that she is impure

because she is Jewish. The notion of ritual uncleanness (*najas*) is applied to Jews, in particular, but also to Christians and Zoroastrians.

One of the more compelling interviews in Farahani's documentary takes place in a modern, middle-class flat in Tehran. Two teen boys, as well as their parents, have formed a tight friendship despite the fact that one family is Jewish and the other Muslim. Perhaps Farahani is trying to show us two very disparate facets of the Jewish experience in Iran: the government's discriminatory front versus the private interpersonal relationships amongst Iranians.

Next the film takes us to Isfahan, a city founded almost two thousand years ago by Jews, as an interviewee proudly tells the filmmaker. Today it is the seat of the Iranian mullahs who rule the country. The city, long renowned for its beauty, sits along the Zayandeh River.

When the film travels to Shiraz, the true level of government persecution and harassment is bared with its concomitant Jewish fear and insecurity. The film follows thirteen working-class Jews, all of whom have been accused of espionage. Regardless of extorted confessions and much coercion, they are still sentenced to prison terms. None are willing to discuss their treatment with the filmmaker.

Despite being shot in almost guerrilla film-like quality, the film captures the viewer's attention mostly by the interviews and dialogue; many times was I caught off guard by matter-of-fact deliveries of things by several interviewees that made my Western sensibilities cringe. A Jewish music shopkeeper lovingly preserves ancient Persian music and instru-

ments in a country that forbids music. Although his store has been forced off a main square into a back street by the authorities, he seems to accept the new way of life under Islamic law.

Farahani is interested in minorities in his native country, especially the Jews. He is an independent filmmaker based in Amsterdam and Tehran. *Jews of Iran* cannot be shown in Iran, but it has been shown in many international film festivals in the West. The film unsuspectingly creeps into the tidy lives of relative comfort that Jews in America lead as a religious minority to show us something from which we can not look away. Here is a blatant and disturbing reality of Jews who are systematically disadvantaged and discriminated against by their own government and fellow Iranians.

The message, or hope rather, that can be garnered from *Jews of Iran* is perhaps that of the resilience of a small community after years of struggle. Perhaps a microcosm of the diaspora, the Jews of Iran at times have nothing else but each other, but they are still surviving with their culture somewhat intact.

Despite the fact that many Jews have left Iran, others remain in their native land because it is home. Iranian Jews look just like Iranians; they love the country and the culture. Only time will tell whether this pocket of the Jewish diaspora can hold out much longer or if they will succumb to government and social pressures. Even if the Jews of Iran choose to leave, they will have left their mark.

Neal Behrendt is an Albuquerque native who attends Whittier College in California. ☆

Jews Along the Camino Real

by Noel Pugach



Mark the following date on your calendar to head down the Camino Real to El Paso for a joint conference with the Texas Jewish Historical Society: October 24 - 26, 2008. A real treat is in store for participants, starting with the lovely and historic Camino Real Hotel in downtown El Paso, which will host the conference.

The theme is "Jews Along the Camino Real." Speakers are being engaged for this most exciting conference that will also include tours of several museums. All conference locations are located within walking distance of the hotel.

So far the plans include Friday evening services at Temple Mount Sinai, followed by a dinner and an exchange of ideas and experiences by members of both the Texas and New Mexico historical societies.

The Saturday morning session will have panels on Merchants and Immigrants in Texas and New Mexico. A box lunch will be served at the refurbished Plaza Theater while several immigrants to Texas and New Mexico discuss briefly their experiences and how they wound up where they did. Saturday afternoon will have sessions on crypto-Jews (at the El Paso History Museum) and "Saving

Jews from the Holocaust" (at the rebuilt Holocaust Museum).

Saturday evening, conference participants will gather for a banquet at the hotel and talks on Jewish organizations, with an emphasis on women's groups and their role in civic life. Sunday morning, after the respective societies hold board meetings, there is a possibility of a tour of two beautiful Jewish cemeteries before the conference adjourns at noon.

Details on cost and reservations will appear in the June issue of *Legacy* as well as on the NMJHS web site, www.nmjewishhistory.org. Please make plans to join us for an exciting and delightful educational and social gathering. It would be wonderful to have our New Mexico members turn out in large numbers to meet their Texas "cousins."

The agenda has room for several additional speakers. Do you have a presentation you would like to make at this conference? We await your proposal. In addition, if you are an immigrant to the United States and would like to tell your story at the Saturday luncheon, please contact me, Dr. Noel Pugach, with your proposals and suggestions, at npugach@unm.edu, or telephone me at 505-323-2067.

Noel Pugach is serving as co-chair of the joint conference. ☆

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The New Mexico Jewish Historical Society is a beneficiary agency of the Jewish Federation of New Mexico.

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.

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Calendar of Upcoming Events

Check online calendar of Upcoming Events for newly scheduled activities at www.nmjewishhistory.org.

Sunday, April 13, 4:15 p.m., *The Jew and the Lotus*, Santa Fe Film Center.

April 17 - 18, "The Crypto-Jews and the Inquisition in New Spain," a symposium at Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas. For more information and to register go to <http://cushing.tamu.edu/symposium>.

Sunday, May 11, 4:15 p.m., *Memory Thief*, Santa Fe Film Center.

Sunday, May 25, 10 a.m. to noon, Montefiore Cemetery Cleanup, Las Vegas, New Mexico. Contact Nancy Terr, 505-856-8353, nterr@hotmail.com.

August 3 - 5, Eighteenth Annual Conference of the Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies, Scottsdale, Arizona. For more information, go to www.cryptojews.com.

August 30 - 31, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., Seventh Annual Book & Etc. Sale, Wild Oats Conference Room, Santa Fe.

October 24 - 26, NMJHS Joint Conference with Texas Jewish Historical Society in El Paso, Texas. Contact Dr. Noel Pugach at npugach@unm.edu, 505-277-2701.

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