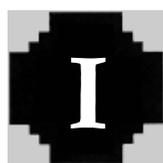




## Reminiscences of a Jewish Bride of the Santa Fe Trail – Part I

by Flora Spiegelberg

*Editor's Note: This lovely article was brought to the attention of the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society by Flora Spiegelberg's descendant, Sue Warburg. It was originally published in 1935 in the Jewish Spectator.*



I was born in New York in 1857 in the home of my grandfather, Moses Lichtenheim, and when two months old was taken via the Isthmus of Panama

to San Francisco, the home of my father, William Langerman, who was a pioneer of 1849, a Colonel of the California State militia, and a member of the Committee of Vigilantes in 1850. My parents and their children moved to New York in 1866, and after my father's death in 1869, my mother made her home in Nuremberg in order to give us a good education.

I was married in 1874 to Willi Spiegelberg, the youngest of five brothers. His oldest brother, Jacob Solomon, in 1843 joined an ox-drawn covered wagon caravan going to Santa Fe, New Mexico, which took over three months. When halfway across the famous old Santa Fe Trail he met Colonel Doniphan who took a liking to him. My brother-in-law accepted Colonel Doniphan's invitation to join his cavalry regiment that was on its way to Chihuahua, Mexico,

where he remained until 1846. Then Jacob Solomon established in Santa Fe the General Merchandise firm of Spiegelberg Brothers, the first Jewish merchants in New Mexico.

After a honeymoon in Europe, we started out for Santa Fe in 1875. We travelled, via St. Louis, in very primitive steam cars to West Los Animas, Colorado, then to the terminus of the railroad. Then we continued our journey to Santa Fe for six days and six nights in a stage coach, often drawn by four horses, across the famous old Santa Fe Trail, parts of which had already been explored by the early Spanish Conquistador Cortez in 1600. The stage coach stopped at the log house coach stations three times daily; an hour to change horses and provide a most primitive meal. Usually we had dried buffalo chips[sic], with beans, red or green peppers, coffee and tea without milk and sugar and occasional delicacies such as buffalo tongues, bear and buffalo steaks. I did not relish this food, but my hardened pioneer husband never complained. Many of the station masters were old friends of my husband. When they assisted me out of the coach, they raised their big sombreros (hats) with a hearty greeting, "Welcome Don Julian el Bonito" meaning William, the Handsome, and your pretty "Tenderfoot Bride of the Santa Fe Trail."

During one of these stops, a station master told me this story: "Recently the stage coach arrived with four passengers, three Americans and one German. After a simple meal and smoking their pipes, they stood near the coach. The driver, always on the lookout for herds of buffaloes and Indians, was carefully watching the horizon. Suddenly he saw a band of Indians slowly walking single file a short distance



Flora Spiegelberg

away. "Indians, Indians," he shouted, warning the passengers to jump quickly into the coach. Greatly excited, the station master could only find three Americans; then looking behind the log cabin, he saw the German passenger praying softly in Hebrew, a black skull cap on his head, a prayer shawl about his neck, and a prayer book in his hand. "Come, come," he shouted, "don't you see the Indians are approaching?" The German gentleman carefully wrapped up his prayer book and

*(continued on p. 3)*

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## Message from President Dorothy Amsden

### NMJHS Celebrates New Mexico's Centennial



Everyone all know 2012 is a special year for New Mexico as it celebrates 100 years of statehood. NMJHS is planning a series of programs and its Fall Conference to celebrate Jewish participation in events before and after statehood. Take a personal angle on history and it can come alive for you.

For example, the Jewish dimension can add depth and insight into the New Mexico experience. Dry facts we learned from a textbook suddenly take on a new life. I never realized how fascinating New Mexico history was until I saw it in terms of crypto-Jews, and all the associated ramifications. Likewise, the compelling sagas of the pioneer Jewish families of the later 1800s bring to life what it was like to set up stores and banks and trading posts in frontier towns.

Starting off this centennial year for NMJHS, the exhibit of the Jewish Pioneer Panels at the Jewish Community Center in Albuquerque from mid-January through the end of February attracted many visitors. An article in this issue describes the grand opening of the exhibit and the moving talks by people who had a stake in it. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to Betsy Messeca, who organized the exhibit and reception in record time. We also owe a debt of gratitude to Jeff Diamond, who organized exhibits in Carlsbad and Hobbs, also described in this issue.

It takes a dedicated group of people to put together such an incredible exhibit. The pioneer panels committee, under Betsy's guidance, continues to put together exhibits for other towns in New Mexico and to develop educational materials. Carla Freeman rescued the exhibit from destruction two years ago; she was the first to see a future for the panels that the Museum of New Mexico could not longer afford to store.

Carla convinced the board that we needed to store them until we could arrange for exhibits. NMJHS paid for their storage in Santa Fe for more than a year until we found a friendly garage in Albuquerque, thanks to Tammy Kaiser, Director of Adult Education at Congregation Albert. In addition to Carla and Tammy, other members of the Panels Committee include Betsy Messeca, Naomi Sandweiss, Noel Pugach, Anita Miller, and Norma Libman.

Sam Sokolove, Executive Director of the Jewish Federation of New Mexico, understood the significance of the pioneer panels. He supported NMJHS's request for a supplementary allocation from the Federation to fund the traveling exhibit and the preparation of a curriculum for New Mexico. Tammy wrote up two proposals in record time for the mid-year funding cycle and found a permanent place to store the panels at Congregation Albert.

When Jeff Diamond of Carlsbad learned about the pioneer exhibit he wanted it for his hometown and other cities in southern New Mexico. Thanks to his financing and arrangements, another set of pioneer panels that was not on exhibit at the JCC went to Carlsbad in Tammy Kaiser's van in mid-February.

Professor Noel Pugach gave a talk on the pioneer families of eastern New Mexico to Carlsbad residents. The exhibit next went to Hobbs in March, with another lecture by Professor Pugach. This is all part of the NMJHS dream of taking Jewish history to the more far-flung corners of our state.

You won't want to miss upcoming NMJHS programs for 2012. Program chair Ron Duncan Hart is preparing a wonderful program to recognize the work of Professor Stan Hordes on April 29. August 19 Ron is planning another stimulating program about the role that NMJHS has played and continues to play in New Mexico history.



NMJHS President Dorothy Amsden

On May 6, NMJHS will host the annual Montefiore Cemetery cleanup in Las Vegas. For this mitzvah we don work clothes and help move rocks, dig up weeds, plant trees, and pick up trash. This year we will present a special award to Ted Herberger, caretaker of the cemetery, for his restoration of the broken tombstones after the vandalism last summer.

The Claire Grossman Memorial Annual Meeting will take place on June 24 at the JCC in Albuquerque. This is the occasion when we thank departing board members, introduce news ones, and present the Hurst Award to a person who has done much for New Mexico Jewish history. The speaker at this event, Pauline Eisenstadt, has served in both houses of the state legislature. She will talk about her recently published book, *A Woman in Both Houses: My Career in New Mexico Politics*.

Last but certainly not least, the Fall Conference will take place in Santa Fe the first weekend in November. The theme, "The Tipping Point: New Mexico Jewry before and after 1912," will provide a framework for fascinating talks by your favorite historians and other engaging speakers. Save the date, November 2-4. ☆

**Reminiscences of a Jewish Bride** *(continued from p. 1)*

cap in his prayer shawl, then ran to the stage coach and jumped in. Noticing the impatience and excitement of the passengers, he calmly said, "Good friends, put your trust in G-d and He will bring you safely to your journey's end." The driver whipped up the horses and they dashed away.

The next day near Dry Cimarron station, our coach was stopped to let Colonel Price, a friend of my husband, pass with a band of roving Indians he had captured. I was terribly frightened for they were the first live Indians I had seen. At the next station, Las Vegas, which was then the second largest town in New Mexico and had a population of nearly one thousand, among them some twenty American men, four Jews and three American women, I saw the old Mexican adobe house from the roof of which General Kearney in 1846 made an urgent appeal to assembled Mexicans to become loyal Americans and the United States would protect them.

We arrived in Santa Fe on a bright moonlight night. As we drove into the city, my husband told me of this incident; "When General Sibley and his Confederate soldiers from Texas occupied Santa Fe in 1862 during the Civil War, he declared martial law forbidding Mexican and American women to appear on the streets. On several occasions his soldiers invaded Spiegelberg's store and looted it, altogether of fifty thousand dollars worth of merchandise that was never repaid. One day, a crowd of soldiers entered the store; an intoxicated soldier demanding clothing from my brother Levi without payment. While he was looking for it, the soldier pointed the pistol at his head, shouting, 'Be quick or I'll blow your brains out.' I was standing nearby so I rushed to my brother's assistance just in time to throw the drunken soldier's arm up, and the bullet struck the ceiling, and thus saved his life."

My brother-in-law Levi's wife was young and very beautiful and at that time was the fifth American woman in Santa Fe. Their only pleasant recreation was a buggy ride every Sunday to visit the nearby Indian

pueblos and watch them mould pottery and make gold and silver jewelry. One Sunday as they drove past General Sibley's headquarters they noticed that some of the officers and soldiers arose and stared at them. The following day an old pioneer friend told Levi: "When you drove past military headquarters Sunday I overheard this remark 'By Gringo! What a beautiful woman in these war times. A fellow might be tempted to kidnap her.'" To protect his wife, Levi's three brothers slept in an adjoining room with loaded guns to ward off any attempt to kidnap her. My brother-in-law forbid his wife even to look out of her bedroom window, but one day she heard a woman crying and moaning under her window: "For G-d's sake, help me! I am starving and bleeding to death." Remembering her husband's warning, she ran across the yard into the store to call him, but it was full of soldiers shouting and fighting for provisions. So she rushed back to her room, and when the crying and pitiful appeals continued, she could not resist any longer and looked out the window and saw a young Negro girl who begged for help. Assisted by her Mexican maid, she dragged her into the house, washed and fed her, and sent for a doctor. The girl had been stolen from her master's plantation by General Sibley's soldiers, assaulted and abused by them. The Spiegelberg brothers not only bought her freedom, but also a man slave and adopted an Indian girl and boy the Confederate soldiers had captured. They were all sent to school and served our family faithfully for over 20 years.

Just when my husband finished telling me this story, our coach suddenly turned a curve in the road. To our great surprise, my husband's brother Lehman, joined by friends in buggies or horseback and even on burros, had come out to welcome us with a band of Mexican musicians on top of an old stage coach and amid cheers for "Don Julian El Bonito and his pretty Tenderfoot Bride." As the coach drove up main street accompanied by these friends we were cheered until we reached the home of my husband's brother. There General Devens, Commander of the Territory, an intimate friend of my husband's,

wanted to welcome us with his military band playing Lohengrin's Wedding March.

At that time I was the eighth American woman in Santa Fe. There were about fifty American men, officials and merchants, and a Mexican population of two thousand. My two daughters were born there. ☆

**Call for Papers**

New Mexico Jewish Historical Society Fall Conference 2012 "The Tipping Point: New Mexico Jewry before and after 1912 New Mexico Centennial Celebration"

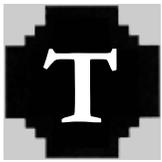
The New Mexico Jewish Historical Society invites proposals for papers to be given in the Fall Conference, 2012. The subject of the Conference is: "The Tipping Point: New Mexico Jewry before and after 1912", and it is a part of the New Mexico Statehood Centennial.

The Conference will be held in Santa Fe on the week-end of November 2-4. People are invited to submit proposals for individual papers that should be between 15 and 20 minutes in length. People are also invited to submit proposals for complete sessions with 3 or 4 participants with papers, or people may submit proposals for panel discussions with lengths of 1 to 1.5 hours. The deadline for the submission of proposals is July 1. The preferred form of submission is by email to [admin@nmjhs.org](mailto:admin@nmjhs.org), but proposals can be sent in hard copy to: NMJHS, Jewish Community Center, 5520 Wyoming Blvd. NE, Albuquerque, NM, 87109.

Subject matter for proposals can include information on Jewish life in New Mexico before or after the 1912 date, including information on Jewish families, Jewish businesses, Jewish contributions to scholarship and literature, Jewish participation in the statehood process, Jewish participation in government, synagogue life and Jewish learning, and other related subjects.

For further information or clarification write to [hart.gaon@gmail.com](mailto:hart.gaon@gmail.com) or call 505-920-7771. Program co-chairs are Profs. Noel Pugach and Ron Duncan Hart.

# Pioneer Panel Opening Launches New Mexico Centennial



The New Mexico Centennial got off to a great start on Sunday, January 15, when over 100 people filled the Jewish Community Center

of Greater Albuquerque to view the exhibit, entitled "Adventure, Adversity, and Opportunity: Our Jewish Pioneer History in New Mexico."

The panels, developed and donated by the New Mexico History Museum, were originally exhibited at the Palace of the Governors for four years beginning in 2000. The initial exhibit was proposed and partially funded by Susan and Felix Warburg of San Francisco. Susan Spiegelberg Warburg is a descendant of the Spiegelberg family, one of the earliest Jewish immigrant families in the New Mexico Territory. (See lead article, *Reminiscences of a Jewish Bride on the Santa Fe Trail*, in this issue.)

Through collaboration between NMJHS, the Jewish Federation of New Mexico, and the New Mexico History Museum, the panels were redesigned for travel. In addition, Tammy Kaiser, Education Director at Albuquerque's Congregation Albert, introduced a

companion Jewish Pioneers curriculum on immigration, economic opportunity and assimilation that will be launched this year in classrooms throughout the state.

Dr. Noel Pugach, Immediate Past President of NMJHS; Dr. Frances Levine, Director of the New Mexico History



*Susan Spiegelberg Warburg and Felix Warburg. Photo by Harold Melnick*

Museum; Sam Sokolove, Executive Director of the Jewish Federation of New Mexico; NMJHS President Dorothy Amsden; and pioneer descendants Susan Spiegelberg Warburg and Betsy Nordhaus Messeca addressed the audience. Special thanks were extended to NMJHS committee members, the Jewish Community Center, the Jewish Federation of New Mexico, and the

New Mexico History Museum. It took several years and the efforts of the Panels Committee under the direction of Betsy Messeca to prepare the traveling exhibit and curriculum. Among those who contributed their time and effort include Carla Freeman, Noel Pugach, Tammy Kaiser, Anita Miller, Sandy Brintnall, Naomi Sandweiss, and Norma Libman. Special thanks are also extended to Ruth Carter, Paula Schwartz and Harold Melnick for their assistance.

Another set of panels has traveled to Carlsbad (see article on page 5), and plans are in the works to exhibit the panels in other parts of New Mexico. ✧



*Julia Seligman, of the pioneer Seligman family, enjoys the exhibit. Photo by Harold Melnick*



*Betsy Nordhaus Messeca, pioneer descendant and panel project organizer (r) with Dorothy Amsden, NMJHS President (l). Photo by Harold Melnick*



*Grandchildren\* and great-grandchildren\*\* of Max and Bertha Staab Nordhaus. In background: photo of Charles Iffeld, brother-in-law to Max Nordhaus, and husband of Adele Nordhaus Iffeld. From left to right: Michel Messeca, Betsy Nordhaus Messeca\*, Lorri Skidmore\*\*, Kenny Ankeny\*\*, Sherryl Quint\*\*, Nancy Mince Paxton\*, Dick Nordhaus\*, Mary Nordhaus, Dave Paxton. Photo by Harold Melnick*

# Jewish Pioneer Panels Exhibit Welcomed in Carlsbad, New Mexico

by Noel Pugach



On February 19, 2012, a large and admiring crowd filled the attractive large auditorium and exhibit hall at the Museum & Art Center in Carlsbad, New Mexico. They had come to view thirty panels from the Jewish Pioneer Panel collection and to learn about the Jewish experience in 19th Century New Mexico.

As readers of *Legacy* know, the original collection of some eighty panels on New Mexico Jewish Pioneers, together with physical objects and memorabilia, were displayed at the Palace of Governors from 2000-2004. With the cooperation of the Museum of New Mexico and the generous financial assistance of the Jewish Federation of New Mexico, the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society rescued the panels with the intent of exhibiting them around the state and employing them in the New Mexico school curriculum. Much progress has been made in achieving these goals. Tammy Kaiser is writing a curriculum for school children, and about forty of the panels were exhibited at the Jewish Community Center in Albuquerque.

Meanwhile, Jeff Diamond, the head of a prominent law firm in Carlsbad, with offices in other New Mexico cities, offered to bring part of the exhibit to southeastern New Mexico in order to educate its citizens about the little-known history of New Mexico Jewry. Within a short period of time, the ebullient, imaginative, and determined attorney and civic leader (and incoming president of the New Mexico Anti-Defamation League) secured venues in Carlsbad and Hobbs, involved their directors and staff, arranged for the opening program and reception in

Carlsbad, and publicized it effectively. He and his wife Evy generously underwrote the costs of the exhibit and the opening day's event.

That Sunday afternoon, Jeff Diamond formally launched the exhibit, which traveled under the title, "Adventure, Adversity & Opportunity: Our Jewish Pioneer History in New Mexico," by welcoming the audience, explaining how it came to Carlsbad, and giving credit to all those who played a role. Then the Museum's director, Ms. Patsy Jackson Christopher, offered her greetings and underscored its importance to the community. I was then introduced and spoke for about forty-five minutes about the characteristics and nature of the Jewish Pioneer experience in New Mexico. In the last section of my talk, I discussed how the Wertheim family fitted into the scheme I had outlined.



*Jeff Diamond*  
Photo by Dirk Roberson

Joseph and Emma Vorenberg Wertheim were among the first Jews to settle in Carlsbad, originally known as Eddy. Joe had come from Germany as a teenager while Emma Vorenberg was born into an important mercantile family that started in Mora County and then moved to Wagon Mound. Joe opened a general store in downtown Carlsbad in 1916 in partnership with Emil Kaufman, who he later bought out. Like other Jewish merchants who saw opportunities in other fields as the economy changed, Joe later moved into cotton brokering, insurance, and real estate. But Carlsbad remained their

home, and there they raised daughter Jeanette and son Robert.

Despite their isolation, they remained committed Jews. Joe and Emma nurtured Jewish life in Carlsbad, welcoming Jewish servicemen stationed at the air base established during World War II. Joe assumed the role of chaplain and unofficial rabbi. When more Jewish families settled in Carlsbad, a Jewish congregation was formed, and Joe served as its president. Like other New Mexico Jews (the Ilfelds, Nahms, and

Seligmans), Joseph and Emma rescued their German Jewish relatives, who were threatened with persecution and death by the Nazi regime in the 1930s. They brought over Joe's sister Franziska, her husband Isidore, and their son Arthur, who Americanized their family name Koenigsthal to Kingston. Art Kingston was a butcher who served as the Director of Food Services for Carlsbad Public Schools for many years. Kingston's son Bill, who returned to Carlsbad as a high school teacher, attended the panels program and was introduced to the audience.

To this day Carlsbad continues to have a small functioning Jewish community. Over the past four decades, a number of Jews have made Carlsbad their home. As elsewhere, they are no longer merchants, but professionals – doctors, lawyers, and WIPP employees. Meyer (known as Mike) Rosenberg established a law office in 1940 and was a highly regarded attorney in New Mexico. His son Michael, also a lawyer, met Jeff Diamond in Washington and was responsible for bringing him to Carlsbad.

Temple Beth El of Carlsbad, which I toured, occupies a small building in a

(continued on p. 6)



*Dr. Noel Pugach addresses the audience.*  
Photo by Dirk Roberson

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Special thanks to Diane Schaller, President of Historic Albuquerque Inc., for her donation of the memoirs of Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Maisel and video interviews with Jewish businesspeople Wayne Pollack, Lee Blaugrund, Sol Taylor, and Skip and Norman Maisel to the Society.

**Jewish Pioneer Panels Come to Carlsbad** (continued from p. 5)

residential section of the town; it had been a Seventh Day Adventist Church. Interestingly, the first *Brit Milab* in many years was going to be celebrated within its walls on the day I left Carlsbad. Still, for many Jewish events, Carlsbad Jews drive to Las Cruces and El Paso.



Jeff and Evy Diamond pictured in Carlsbad with Noel Pugach (center). Photo by Dirk Roberson

The small Jewish community has excellent relations with the Christian community. Earlier Sunday morning I was invited to speak at the Carlsbad Family Fellowship, an evangelical church headed by Pastor Rick Ketterling. I was given a gracious welcome as I spoke appropriately on the relative absence of anti-Semitism in New Mexico. I later met a number of the congregants at the museum in the afternoon.

During my short visit, I discovered that Carlsbad had a lively cultural life, and I encountered a number of individuals who were engaged in interesting and challenging projects. Thanks to Jeff and Evy Diamond, NMJHS and its partners were fortunate to be able to bring the intriguing and educational Jewish Pioneer exhibit to Carlsbad. I sensed that the community really appreciated it. NMJHS looks forward to opportunities to showcase this remarkable project elsewhere in the state. ✧

*Noel Pugach is the immediate past president of NMJHS and professor emeritus of history at the University of New Mexico.*

**Jewish Camp Memories: recollections and experiences in Jewish residence and day camps west of the Mississippi (& Chicago) 1920s-1970s are sought by Western States Jewish History. Essays from former campers, staff, counselors, directors and founders who attended or worked in camps prior to 1979 are welcomed. For more information visit the web site at [www.WSJhistory.org](http://www.WSJhistory.org)**

Eminent Southwest historian Dr. Stanley Hordes will be honored by the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society on Sunday, April 29, 2012, at 2:30 pm at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Albuquerque, 5520 Wyoming Blvd., NE.

An internationally known historian, Dr. Hordes is widely recognized for his work on the boundaries of Jewish identity. His work on crypto-Judaism in New Mexico has brought that experience increasingly to light in recent decades. He is a widely sought speaker across the United States.

Among those present to honor Dr. Hordes will be Dr. Seth Kunin, Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Arts and Humanities of Durham University in England; Dr. Seth Ward of the Program in Religious Studies at the University of Wyoming; and Dr. Roger Martinez from the University of Colorado.

Hordes's work with crypto-Jewish and Sephardic traditions will be recognized in performance of Ladino music by Consuelo Luz.

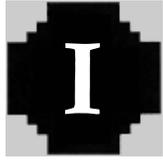
Dr. Noel Pugach, professor emeritus, University of New Mexico, and Jim Mafchir, President of the New Mexico Book Association, will discuss Dr. Hordes's work and influence.

This event is free and open to the public.

# My Religion in New Mexico

by Ian Kaiser

*Editor's Note: The essay that follows is the winning entry in the Rosalia Myers Feinstein Creative Writing Contest for New Mexico youth. We congratulate Ian on his fine writing and understanding of New Mexico Jewish history*



I was born fourteen years ago in Bellevue Washington. I then lived in Seattle for twelve years. Then, at age twelve, I moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico. It was hard moving to a new place and new environment. At first I was scared. I wasn't sure how people would treat me because I was Jewish. I didn't think people would understand me.

I then learned of New Mexico's vast Jewish population. I was afraid that people wouldn't like me at first. But then I got to know some of the people here and they were very nice to me and just wanted to make me feel as comfortable as I could in my new home. They taught me all about Jewish culture in New Mexico and the amazing history of Jewish pioneers that once traveled New Mexico. After I went to go see the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society exhibit at the JCC I became very involved with research about the Jewish pioneers.

I was already aware that some Jews had escaped from Spain and traveled to Mexico and then traveled to New Mexico to escape [the] Inquisition, but there were a lot of things I didn't know. For example, I learned that a lot of Jews came from Germany, and that's where my family is from! The Jews and Jewish families entered America through Ellis Island in New York. After that, some chose to travel to New Mexico over the Santa Fe Trail which began in Independence, Missouri. But most Jews came to New Mexico through wagon train. The trip could take three or more months to complete!

I've noticed some of the desert ground these wagon trains could have traveled on, when I've been on trips around New Mexico. These grounds were so rocky

and different than what I would see in Washington! I wonder how hard these trips must have been on a wagon train. These Jewish pioneers must have been tough to be able to make it through trips like this! The Jewish pioneers would



*Ian Kaiser*

have to survive off of only the supplies they had brought. The Jewish pioneers would also trade goods with not only other travelers, but with Native Americans as well.

Many of the natives loved the lace that was made in Europe. The Jewish men often bought beads and sent them back to their families in Germany. The first Jews to arrive in New Mexico were men, but they later brought their families. Sadly, there wasn't much for the Jewish children to do in the middle of the desert. So, they invented new games to play. They also learned some games from the Native American children. There were no Jewish schools either, so the children attended Christian and even Native schools. But they still learned Judaism from their families and, eventually, their synagogues.

I've learned to love New Mexico. I've made a lot of friends, I have a cool new house, and I go to a great school! So from me to you, Shalom. ☆

*Ian Kaiser is an 8th grade student at Cleveland Middle School in Albuquerque.*

## Thank you to the following individuals and organizations for their generous contributions:

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### Pioneers

Lance Bell  
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Jerry & Joyce Levine  
Laura Shaw Murra (in honor of Stanley Hordes)  
William & Irene Roberts  
Janet Sainers  
Eugene & Carol Venturini

## Behind the Dollhouse Walls

by Lilo Waxman



My miniature dollhouse rooms finally found their way to the Holocaust and Intolerance Museum of New Mexico in Albuquerque. Why there? The story

begins.

In 1853 in Bad-Homburg near Frankfurt on the Main River, Frederika Frohman was presented with a “Puppen Kueche” doll-kitchen by her parents. It was small but sturdy with wallpaper, kitchen cabinets, dishes, small table, and a butcher block with cleaver and meat-cutting knife. It even had a little mousetrap and two mice.

Frederika married Wilhelm Iffeld, brother to Charles Iffeld, Herman, Noa, Louis, and Bernard, who immigrated in the 1870s and 80s from Germany to settle in New Mexico. Wilhelm was the only brother who did not go to America.

Wilhelm and Frederika had two children, Ludwig Iffeld and Laura (my grandmother). Laura inherited the little doll-kitchen from her mother, and they added

a beautiful sitting-dining room for her. Laura Iffeld Schoenberg’s daughter Edith (my mother) was given a third room, a perfectly lovely bedroom that was fully furnished, even with a chamberpot in the night table.



*Puppen Kueche*

I, Lilo, was born in 1920. About 1925 or 1926 a friend of the family created a new, very large doll-kitchen for me. It had running water and electric lights. At that time they must have installed electric lights and chandeliers in the other rooms as well. The former small kitchen of great-grandmother Frederika was made into a school room with podium and holding many

old dolls. There were maps on the walls, wooden benches, and an ABC in German script that was framed and hung on the wall. The contents of the first room, the little kitchen, were incorporated into the new large kitchen.

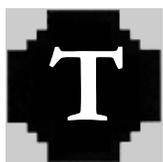
In 1964 my temple in St. Louis had a fundraising drive. The sisterhood of Temple Israel showed the dollhouse rooms for that purpose. The husband of one of my sisterhood members who helped on the project thought my daughter Lora should have an up-to-date bathroom. He created that room with tiled floors and walls for her, the fifth-generation owner. The contents included a German-made lavatory, toilet, bathtub, shower curtain, and dresser, which he bought from the Jefferson Memorial Museum store in St. Louis.

It was the custom of my family to store the dollhouse rooms during the year and bring it out on December 6, St. Nickolas Day, and of course for Chanukah, which is usually in early December. We children were allowed to play with the rooms until

*(continued on p. 9)*

## Call for Papers

22nd Annual Conference, Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies, Albuquerque, July 22-24, 2012



The Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies will be holding its 22nd Annual Conference Sunday, July 22, through Tuesday

July 24, 2012, in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

We invite papers on crypto-Judaism from any discipline (e.g., anthropology, history, sociology, philosophy, literature, music) and from any geographic location or time period. We also welcome papers on all aspects of the Sephardic experience and that of other communities exhibiting crypto-Jewish phenom-

ena. Papers breaking new ground in research on New Mexico and Southern Colorado are particularly welcome.

Interested scholars and professionals, including advanced graduate students, are invited to submit proposals for papers, presentations or workshops. Proposals are also welcome from individuals with personal stories or other personal research relating to crypto-Judaism. Proposals may be for individual papers/presentations or for complete sessions on specific topics. Please indicate if presentation represents completed research or work in progress.

Conference presentation proposals must include a 200-word abstract and a brief bio. Please send proposals or inquiries to Seth Ward, Religious Studies, University of Wyoming, at: [sward@uwyo.edu](mailto:sward@uwyo.edu), or submit electronically at <http://www.uwyo.edu/sward/scjs/submit22.htm>

Proposal Deadline: April 16, 2012

For more information on the society, on this conference and on past meetings, see: <http://www.cryptojews.com/>

## New Members

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## 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.

## Behind the Dollhouse Walls *(continued from p. 8)*

they were stored away after New Year's Day. Therein lies the secret why these rooms kept so well for so many years.

Here is another story about these miniature room and why I call them "Hidden Treasures." In 1936, three years after Hitler and his Nazi Party took control of Germany, laws were passed limiting what Jews could do. My father, who had been a dental surgeon for 26 years in Bad Homberg, was no longer allowed to practice dentistry because he was a Jew. He could not keep his unmarried female assistant. Our family was no longer allowed to live in our nice, spacious home or retain unmarried women as household help.

Later on there were more and more federal rules that made it impossible for us to live decently. For instance, we could not listen to the radio or receive newspapers. We worried daily that Hitler's Storm Troopers might come to arrest us. We *had* to leave the country. But where should we go?

My mother's uncle Ludwig Ilfeld, who by then had immigrated to Las Vegas, New Mexico, sent us an affidavit that assured the U.S. Government that he would take care of our family when we arrived so that we would not be a burden on the United States. We were allowed to take clothing with us and a fair amount of household goods, but our dollhouse rooms had to be left behind.

My mother packed the rooms and their contents and somehow they were smuggled to a good friend of hers, Frau Geyer, a gentile woman the same age as my mother. At one time Frau Geyer had been a secretary to my mother's father. Frau Geyer kept the rooms in the attic of her house, unbeknownst to anyone else in her family. Her husband and children were all members of the Nazi Party.

In 1946, after the defeat of Germany, Ludwig Ilfeld's son Carl, who served in the U.S. Army, was stationed in Frankfurt, Germany, near where Frau Geyer lived.

He contacted her, and the rooms were shipped, as his own goods, to St. Louis, Missouri, where I lived with my family.

Terrific! My treasured inheritance, my dollhouse rooms were back in my possession. As we unpacked the crates, the rooms and their contents were still wrapped in German newspapers dated 1935, just as my mother had packed them. They arrived in fairly good condition. However, some pieces had dried up, and the floors in the rooms were buckled. We had to install new linoleum floors in all the rooms. The large kitchen chair that could also be used as a stepladder had many detached rungs, which could not be glued back.

My husband Arnold took the chair and the loose rungs to his dental office where he drilled holes into the rungs and sides of the chair. Then we were able to drive small pins into them to restore the chair-stepladder to its original purpose.

I kept up the tradition of storing the rooms during the year and brought them out at Chanukah. When we moved to a condominium in St. Louis we had one closet fitted with shelves to accommodate the rooms on a permanent basis for friends and neighbors to see. It was always "Dollhouse Showtime."

Now, at the age of 91, with no family member alive or able to keep up the tradition, I felt it was time for the rooms to go to a Holocaust museum. After many inquiries to museums all over the country, the Holocaust and Intolerance Museum of New Mexico turned out to be the perfect repository. These rooms, which delighted several generations of my family, then hidden for ten years before traveling to America, finally found a permanent home where they can delight future generations.

*Lilo Waxman donated her dollhouse to the New Mexico Holocaust and Intolerance Museum in 2011 where it is on permanent exhibit. ☆*

## From the Archives - Bertha Gusdorf, from Immigrant Bride to Bank President

by Patricia A. Carlton

*Note: The following has been excerpted from an article by James A. Burns written in 1936 for the NMWPA Folks-Ways Project, Ina Sizer Cassidy, State Director, and reprinted in the December 1991 Newsletter of the NMJHS.*



March is Women's History Month. What better time to remember and honor one of those courageous Jewish women who accompanied their husbands to the Southwest in the 1850s and later in the 1880s?

Mrs. Bertha Gusdorf was among the pioneer women who came to New Mexico, first to Santa Fe, and a little later in 1878 to Taos. At that time an immigrant girl bride of 18 years, she made the long arduous journey from New York to Trinidad by train, and then to Taos over an almost impassable trail, the latter part of the journey taking four days.

Bertha F(erse) Gusdorf was born of Jewish parents in 1860 in the village of Oberlistungen, near Cassel, in the central part of Germany. She attended school in her native village, similar to our primary and grammar grades. She was married in the spring of 1878 to Alex Gusdorf, who had returned to Germany after fourteen years in America, most of which time was spent in business for himself, operating a large flour mill and other mercantile business. The young couple came to New York on May 1, 1878, and traveled by train to El Moro, Colorado, about five miles east of Trinidad, which at that time was the terminal of the Santa Fe railroad while the contractors were boring the tunnel through the Raton Range. They then traveled by stage coach to Santa Fe where they lived for a short time and then moved on to Ranchos de Taos to make their future home.

The young German woman was needed to learn two languages: Spanish, to be able to talk to her neighbors and maids, and also English to talk to the few other

Anglos in the village. This she accomplished mainly by the trial-and-error method, aided by Mr. Gusdorf, who had already spent about sixteen years in New Mexico.

Mrs. Gusdorf's two daughters were born and spent their childhood years in Rancho de Taos. In 1894, after the destruction of the Gusdorf flour mill at Ranchos de Taos by fire, believed to be arson, the family moved to Taos where Mr. Gusdorf went into business with Gerson Gusdorf and J.B. McCarthy. The family lived for some time on the lot in the rear of their store in Taos.

In 1909 they erected their new home on the Santa Fe road on the brow of the hill overlooking the lower Taos valley with the north slope of Picuris Mountain in the distance. At that time, adobe houses and Pueblo architecture were not customary; the new building was sheathed with steel and the interior finish was of hard wood. In later years, Mrs. Gusdorf installed steam heat, fired with oil burners. Trees planted on the lot, along with apple and cherry trees, shrubs, and flower and vegetable gardens made a most attractive home site.

The two Gusdorf daughters were married here, and when Alex Gusdorf died in the fall of 1923, Bertha continued to make her home in Taos, mostly alone, except for a cleaning woman and a gardener. She took charge of the business of her husband's estate, consisting of about 12,000 acres of land south of Taos in the Cristobal de la Serna Land Grant, surrounding the villages of Ranchos de Taos and Talpa, and extending up the timbered north slope of Picuris Mountain to the summit.

In 1924, Bertha Gusdorf was elected a Director of the first State Bank of Taos,

of which Mr. Gusdorf had formerly been President, and continued in that capacity until 1935, when she was elected President of the bank upon the death of Dr. T.P. Martin. (becoming one of the first woman bank presidents in New Mexico). During all those years, she was anything but a "dummy" director, visiting the bank almost daily, consulting and advising with the Cashier and other officials on loans and other business matters.

[In 1936] Mrs. Gusdorf still maintains the same routine as her health and advancing age permit. She is now one of only two women bank presidents in New Mexico, the other being Mrs. H.B. Sammons of Farmington. In 1935, her daughter, assisted by other ladies of Taos, gave a banquet to celebrate her mother's 75th birthday, attended by some fifty of the prominent women of Taos. Upon being congratulated and wished seventy-five more birthdays, she remarked that she did not care to live that long, that "15 or 25 years would be plenty."

So Bertha Gusdorf, who came to America in 1878 from Germany, a Jewish girl bride, lived to see her children's children, and to gain the respect, love and affection of the entire community, which when she came to it was entirely foreign in language and customs. (Editor's Note: Bertha Gusdorf died in 1946). ☆

*Patricia Carlton is the NMJHS Archivist.*

## PEEK INTO THE PAST

# Opposing Views: New Mexico Territory's Jews and the Statehood Debate

by Naomi Sandweiss



Most of us in New Mexico recognize how the Inquisition and resulting Diaspora impacted the New World, but less recognized is the impact of the Spanish and Portuguese expulsions upon the Jewish community of Italy.

In 1492, at the time of the expulsion from Spain, Italy was a collection of city-states, each with its own rules regarding Jewish residents. Jews had lived in Rome since a Maccabee delegation made its way to the city in 161 BCE, and Italian-born Jews maintained small communities throughout the region.

The first impact of the expulsion was felt in what is now southern Italy. Sicily was in the hands of the Spanish at the time of the Inquisition; according to historian Cecil Roth, approximately 20,000 Jews lived on the island. On June 18, 1492, an edict of banishment was sounded. Jews had three months to leave the island; otherwise they would be killed. Furthermore, all property was seized. The Jews of Sardinia also met the same fate.

After the 1492 expulsion, many moved eastward into the Turkish Empire. Several Italian city-states also welcomed the Jewish refugees, including Naples, Ferrara and the port town of Ancona. According to some accounts, 9000 Iberian Jews sought refuge in the Papal States. Pope Paul III invited Jews and New Christians (recently baptized Jews) there for trade. But in 1555, as a result of the Papal Bull of Pope Paul IV, fifty-one Jews were arrested and tried in Ancona. Ultimately twenty-five Jews

were burned at the stake between April and June 1555.

Concurrently, some Spanish and Portuguese Jews moved directly into the northern Italian states. In 1549, Cosimo I of Florence invited persons from Portugal to settle in his domain, including Pisa. Still other Jews of Spanish and

ghetto. During this period, communication and business networks persisted between Spanish and Portuguese refugees. From Amsterdam to Constantinople, Iberian refugees and their descendants maintained contact.

Ultimately, most of the Jews of Italy—whether of French, German or Iberian

descent—were segregated into ghettos. It took until 1789, when Napoleon and his army arrived in Ancona, Rome, Venice, and Padua, to tear down the “ghetto doors” or walls or gates.

Resources consulted:

*A Drizzle of Honey: The Lives and Recipes of Spain's Secret Jews*, David Gitlitz, 2000.

*Emancipation: How Liberating Europe's Jews from the Ghetto Led to Revolution and Renaissance*, Michael Goldfarb, 2009.

*Hebrews of the Portuguese Nation, Conversos and Community in Early Modern Amsterdam*, Miriam Bodian, 1999.

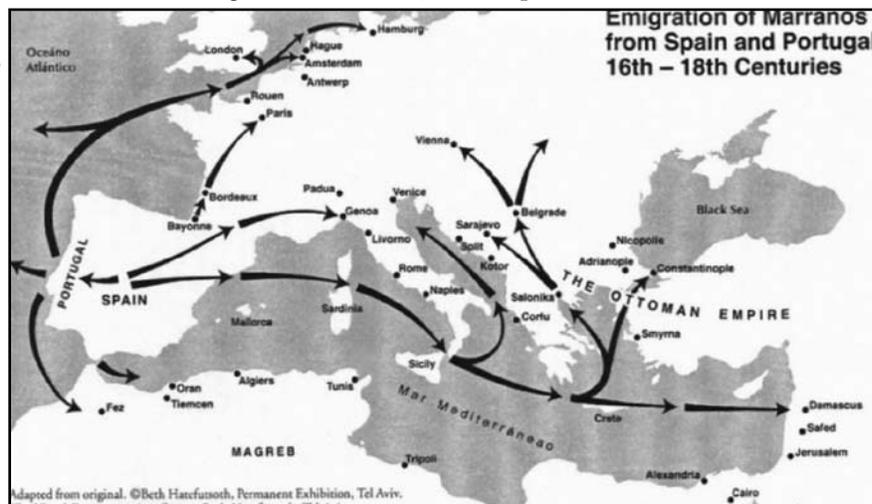
*The History of the Jews of Italy*, Cecil Roth, 1946.

*The Sephardic Jews of Spain and Portugal*, Delores Sloan, 2009.

*Studies on the Jews of Venice*, Benjamin Ravid, 2003.

*The Venetian Ghetto*, Riccardo Calimani and Anna-Vera Sullam, 2005.

*Naomi Sandweiss is the editor of Legacy.*



Mapred from original. ©Beth Hatfuzoth, Permanent Exhibition, Tel Aviv.

Portuguese ancestry made their way to Venice. The Venetian Ghetto, established in 1516, was home to Jews of Italian, German and French descent who worked as moneylenders and second-hand dealers. After the war between Venice and the Ottoman Empire ended in 1573, Jewish traders from Spain and Portugal, along with their Ottoman counterparts, were welcome to live and conduct business from the ghetto. While the merchants who arrived would have to wear the identifying yellow hat and live within the ghetto, Venetians made no distinctions between Spanish Jews and New Christians.

The Jews from the East were referred to as Levantine and those from the west were recognized as Pontentine. Each group established its own synagogue in Venice. The Pontentine synagogue was known as the Schola Spagnola and joined the French, German, Italian and Levantine houses of worship within the

### 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)*

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### Calendar of NMJHS Upcoming Events

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

**Sunday, April 29, 2:30 p.m.**, special event honoring internationally known historian Dr. Stanley Hordes will be held at the Jewish Community Center in Albuquerque, 5520 Wyoming Blvd. NE. A host of eminent historians will discuss Dr. Hordes's work on crypto-Judaism in New Mexico. Attendees will be treated to Ladino music performed by Consuelo Luz.

**Sunday, May 6, 10:30 a.m.**, annual cleanup of the historic Montefiore Cemetery in Las Vegas, New Mexico. Picnic lunch provided by the Montefiore Cemetery Association. Bring shovels, dollies, and wheelbarrows to move rocks for wall reconstruction. Sturdy shoes, gloves, and hats are advisable. Special tribute to Ted Herburger for restoring cemetery after vandalism last summer. RSVP 505-348-4471 or [admin@nmjhs.org](mailto:admin@nmjhs.org)

**Sunday, June 24, 2:30 p.m.**, Claire Grossman Memorial Annual Meeting, Jewish Community Center in Albuquerque. Introduction of new board members, presentation of the Hurst Award. Speaker Pauline Eisenstadt will discuss her recently published book, *A Woman in Both Houses: My Career in New Mexico Politics*.

**Sunday August 19, 2:30 p.m.** Temple Beth Shalom in Santa Fe, program about the role that NMJHS plays in New Mexico history.

**November 2-4**, NMJHS Fall Conference in Santa Fe, "The Tipping Point: New Mexico Jewry before and after 1912." SAVE THE DATE.

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