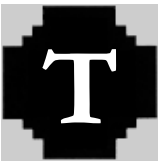




2017 Hurst Award: Acceptance Speech by Kathryn Rubin

Kathryn Rubin received the Dr. Allan and Leona Hurst Award at the NMJHS Annual Meeting in Santa Fe on June 4, 2017.



Thank you, Dr. Goff and others, for this tremendous honor that the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society is bestowing on me. I was overcome when

I received word that I am to receive this award and, truthfully, it is the greatest honor of my life. I've lived 94 years, and this comes at a pinnacle of my long life. Thank you also to Kathy Kahn Mahan, my second cousin, daughter of Walter and Lorraine Kahn, for nominating me. The Kahns owned and operated a high-quality shoe store on the plaza in Santa Fe for many years.

Would all of my relatives here today please stand and be recognized?

I'm not sure I'm worthy of being the Jewish pioneer of 2017 because I've known so many other pioneers in our state who have had a greater impact on people and institutions in New Mexico. Some of the influential pioneers who were significant citizens devoted to their communities were: the Ilfelds, Seligmans, Mandels, Benjamins, Maisels, Moises, Jaffas, Rosenwalds, Floersheims, Blatts, Gans, Spitz, Staab-Nordhaus, Danoffs, Spiegelbergs, Sternbergs, Gusdorfs, and many others. Many of these families have been highlighted by the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society in their publications. The Hurst award, named for Dr. Allan and Leona Hurst, recognizes the contributions of New Mexicans to our Jewish heritage in the Land of Enchantment. I'm so proud to be part of the fabric of what Jews have accomplished in our respective communities throughout the state.

Some of the previous awardees are friends and relatives of mine, like Walter Kahn, my second cousin and the second recipient of this award, and also Stan Hordes, Noel Pugach, Marian Silver, Sharon Niedermann, Leah Kellog, Rabbi Leonard Helman, Dorothy Amsden, Lance Bell, Naomi Sandweiss, and Betsy Messeca. These people are exemplary of individuals who have



*Kathryn Rubin with sons Ronald (left) and Randy (right)
Sharon Niederman Photos*

rendered outstanding service to Jewish society in New Mexico and to the betterment of all New Mexicans.

My life has been a tapestry of so many influences. Being born in 1923, I have witnessed great achievements in our state. After all, New Mexico was only 11 years old when I was born!

My mother, Mina (Wilhelmina) Kahn, came to the United States in 1912 – the year of our statehood – when she was 27 years old from Wiesbaden, Germany. My father, Louis Heyman, was from Ibin-Berrin, Germany, and came to America in 1910 at the age of 19. The two of them met in Albuquerque in 1912, marrying in 1915 – over 100 years ago. My sister, Bertha Heyman Danoff, lived her entire life in New Mexico. She was born in 1916.

I lived, when I was growing up during the Depression, in Albuquerque, Mountainair, and Gallup. I lived among Native Americans and in the pinto bean capital of America! Being raised during those Depression years had a significant influence on me and my family. Times were very tough, and I don't often share how poor our family was with many people. Even though we were poor financially, we opened our home to everyone, welcoming them into our lives.

My father, who was a retail merchant, unfortunately died when I was only 15 in 1939. He was aided in his new country by the Seligman family in Bernalillo to be a successful merchant.

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President's Column



While summers are meant to be for downtime and relaxation, NMJHS remains active behind the scenes to plan for the upcoming 2017-2018 Program Year. No rest for the weary!



*NMJHS President
Linda Goff*

The Summer issue highlighted the Fall Conference, "Making a Difference: 20th Century Jews and Their Legacies," and the Program Committee has been developing a slate of interesting fall and spring programs to be held in Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Los Alamos, and hopefully Las Cruces.

We are always on the lookout for program topics, and would love to hear from you with your ideas and suggestions. In fact, we welcome more member participation in any one of our major Standing Committees, such as: 2018 Fall Conference, Programs, Membership, and Publicity and Public Relations/Outreach. Contact Anne McCormick, Administrator, to obtain more information and committee chair/co-chair contacts. We are an inclusive organization and can use all the help you can offer!

Summer also brought us most welcome news from the Jewish Federation of New Mexico's Annual Allocation, which supports both New Mexico Jewish and Israeli organizations. NMJHS has been most fortunate to receive ongoing support, and this year's allocation allows us to pursue some backburner projects, such as resuming New Mexico Jewish family oral interviews, transcription, and placement on our website. We also received support to initiate website redesign and updating.

Also, we learned in August that NMJHS received a grant of about \$1,968 from the State Archives and Records Commission to scan and digitize New Mexico Jewish family records, previous Fall Conferences, and other programs and documents, including administrative records. The State Archives and the Office of the State Historian are now in the process of scanning and digitizing approximately six of our family records housed in our collection in Santa Fe.

We are also working on a grant proposal to the New Mexico Humanities Council. We seek partial support of the Oral Histories project to interview four additional families whose contributions statewide provided the foundation of the Jewish communities. Wish us luck!

"We are also working on a grant proposal to the New Mexico Humanities Council. We seek partial support of the Oral Histories project to interview four additional families whose contributions statewide provided the foundation of the Jewish communities. Wish us luck!" ☆

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Mission Statement

The New Mexico Jewish Historical Society is a secular organization that promotes greater knowledge and understanding of New Mexico's diverse Jewish experiences within a broad cultural context.

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The Las Vegas Jewish Community: Then and Now

by Diana Presser



When Susie Tsyitee, director of the Las Vegas Arts Council, first approached the Las Vegas Jewish Community, Inc. (LVJC), about participating in this year's Heritage Week events on August 4-12, 2017, she thought that including "The Las Vegas Jewish Community: Then and Now" would be the perfect complement to its theme, "Crossroads of Diversity". In the 20 years I have been a part of the local Jewish community, we had maintained the delicate balance between amicable relationships with the prevailing Hispano-Christian community and unobtrusively following our Jewish traditions.

Amidst concerns of how the community-at-large would respond to a Jewish history exhibit, and ecstatic about our first such opportunity, the Jewish community began busily gathering their Judaica and setting up an exhibit showcasing the historical, cultural, and spiritual influence of Jews in Las Vegas: from the earliest arrivals fleeing the Mexican Inquisition, to today's small but vibrant Jewish community.

Meanwhile, Susie Tsyitee was busy displaying and hanging the works of area artists such as Diana Breyer and Janet Stein Romero, among others. The New Mexico Jewish Historical Society donated story boards featuring photographs of nineteenth century Las Vegas: Jewish pioneers, like the Ilfelds and Taicherts, who first settled here; Temple Montefiore, the first synagogue in the New Mexico Territory; the Montefiore Cemetery; and other early synagogues in New Mexico.

As the Torah is Judaism's Tree of Life, its central focus, so too the LVJC's Torah, in its ark, was the focus of the exhibit, draped in a tallit I donated that I purchased in Israel for my son's Bar Mitzvah.

On Friday, August 4th, as the sun set over the Sangre de Cristo Mountains,



Shabbat Service, 2017 Heritage Week

ushering in *Shabbat*, over 20 people from the community-at-large took their seats in anticipation of experiencing an *Erev Shabbat* service – as typically practiced in observant Jewish homes every Friday night. Like the "Sabbath Blessing" scene from *Fiddler on the Roof*, a table was set with a white tablecloth, candlesticks, and challah. Rabbi Chavah Carp began with the traditional candle-lighting blessing. At the conclusion of the service, there was a Kiddush, blessing the fruit of the vine and the challah, followed by an oneg.

For the rest of the reception/oneg, Mark Gottschalk, local historian and author, presented a slide show of the Taichert family, one of the many German Jewish families migrating to Las Vegas in the 1880s, expanding an already hardy Jewish mercantile economy and, as part of the Congregation Montefiore, ultimately establishing Temple Montefiore and the Montefiore Cemetery. The evening ended with a lively discussion and questions and answers.

During the remainder of Heritage Week, Jewish programs presented films and stories. On Tuesday, four short films were shown, all locally produced. *German Jewish Migration*, a KNME *Colores* episode, and *Memories of Migration*, produced by Shane Flores, depicted the immigrant experience for Jews here. *Elie's Overcoat*, produced by Erik Howell, and *Interviews: The Holocaust*, produced by Jim Terr, were a reminder that we must never again permit hate and violence to go unchecked.



Diana Presser

On Wednesday evening, storytellers shared their "Jewish Las Vegas" experiences, including one of our local crypto-Jews, Molly Longoria. Other



Shabbat Table

storytellers were Nancy Terr, longtime resident, and Ted Herburger, Montefiore Cemetery Association board member and groundskeeper.

But what Jewish celebration would be complete without an appearance by Adelle Ilfeld (perfectly portrayed by

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THROUGH THE LENS: The Jew in American Film as a Reflection of the Jewish Experience in America, Part I

by Marcia Torobin, Festival Director, Santa Fe Jewish Film Festival

Editor's note: Below is the first of two parts of Marcia Torobin's keynote address at the NMJHS Annual Meeting in Santa Fe on June 4, 2017



film is like a mirror. Sometimes it's a clear reflection of who we are. Other times the image is distorted, reflecting how we would like to be seen.

Occasionally, it appears the silver backing is missing. There are black spots. Scratch the surface, and an even richer picture emerges. Focus the lens on the Jew in American film, and the reflection is the Jewish experience in America. It's a reflection of reality and dreams with parts hidden from view.

The Immigrant Experience

The first appearance of the Jew in American cinema was around the turn of the twentieth century, just as the movie industry was experiencing its own birth pangs. It was also during the middle of the largest wave of Jewish immigration to United States shores, one that continued until the 1924 Immigration Act severely limited entry to the U.S.

During the early part of the twentieth century, the Jewish experience was, in many respects, the immigrant experience. Coming largely from Eastern Europe, these immigrants were different from the German-speaking Western European Jews and Sephardic Jews who had preceded them. Many from Eastern Europe came to escape the pogroms sweeping Czarist Russia, and those who had lived in shtetls were often ill-prepared to live as a minority in a Christian society. Their traditions, strict and difficult to maintain in America's secular society, were a far cry from the liberal Reform traditions that the German Jews brought with them.

These were Jews who wanted to assimilate, but not if it meant loss of

their Jewish identity. If Western European Jews and Sephardic Jews viewed intermarriage as a way of becoming part of America's melting pot, with intermarriage rates approaching 30 percent up until the 1880s, Eastern European Jewry did not. They were relatively poor, often settling in the crowded New York tenements of the Lower East Side, an area that was the densest in the world at the time.



Marcia Torobin

The families were patriarchal, a structure that they would find difficult to maintain. Respect and success in the Old World was measured by the extent of Talmudic scholarship and Jewish learning. But the New World opened economic opportunities unavailable to Jews before, and the metric of success was now economic prosperity. As film scholar Lester Friedman put it, America was both "a place of economic salvation and one of spiritual peril." There may have been opportunity, but it often meant discarding traditional ways and starting at a low rung on the economic ladder.

Anti-Semitism was always present in the U.S., but it was considered a relatively minor factor in 1880 when Jews were only 0.2 percent of the population. With the influx from Eastern Europe, the Jewish population increased to 3.7 percent by 1927. With their different dress, language, religion and habits, anti-Semitism increased.

The Silent Movie Era

Immigrants were the backbone of audiences during much of the silent movie

(continued on p. 5)

THROUGH THE LENS (continued from p. 4)

era, and no more so than for films with Jewish characters. Eastern European immigrants, in particular, often saw themselves, the lives they led, and societal attitudes reflected on the silver screen. While story endings were sometimes idealized, the settings, circumstances, and story lines had a deep resonance.

Early silent movies drew on stories in literature and drama, stories that often mirrored the anti-Semitic attitudes of the period. In the seven years between 1909 and 1916, there were four silent film versions of *Oliver Twist* and a variation called *The Female Fagin*, all of which followed the Dickensian portrayal of Fagin as a conniving, sneaky, Dirty Jew. There were at least four versions of *The Merchant of Venice* showing Shylock as a “despicable and malevolent character, emphasizing Shylock’s villainy at the expense of other character and plot components.”

Even original stories sometimes portrayed the Jew as shifty and greedy, particularly those made before 1920. In *Cohen’s Fire Sale*, for example, the Jew is portrayed as dishonest when he sets fire to his own store to collect insurance money. In *Lucky Cohen*, he is portrayed as a charlatan when the main character tries to sell brass as gold. In *Levy’s Seven Daughters*, the Jew is portrayed as a trickster. Levy tricks Strauss into agreeing that his seven wealthy sons will marry seven poor shop girls.

There were more sympathetic portrayals, particularly in films based on Biblical stories, another ready-made source of material for films. Sympathetic portrayals also made their way into original dramatic scripts, such as *Old Isaacs, the Pawnbroker*. Written by D. W. Griffith, *Old Isaacs* is the story of a young girl who is desperately seeking financial aid for her critically ill mother. The daughter’s pleas for help are rejected by everyone until she takes her only doll to a Jewish pawnbroker. Isaac the pawnbroker is so

moved by the young girl’s plight that he gives her money for food, pays the bills, and obtains medical treatment for the ailing mother. The studio was obviously proud of its enlightened attitude. They advertised the film as dissipating “the malignant calumnies launched at the Hebraic race.”

It should be noted that in the early 1900s, the soon-to-be Hollywood moguls were primarily theater owners, not film producers. It wasn’t until the 1920s that the moguls, who were mostly Jewish, began to secure their places as heads of studios with the ability to affect film content. That’s not to say that the early movie production companies had no Jewish ownership, since some did. Economics seemed to rule the day, and some anti-Semitic stereotypes appeared in films from these companies, too.

The dramatic films of this era often dealt with assimilation and intergenerational conflicts, themes that run through much of Jewish cinema in the decades to come as well. The generational conflict was frequently portrayed in one of two ways. In the first, the Jewish son or daughter wants to marry a non-Jew, defying the parent’s wishes. In the second, the Jewish son rejects the traditions of the father and seeks economic success by following a secular path. Many of these films had an emphasis on survival but were peppered with improbable coincidences. If the settings for these films – small apartments, sweatshops, crowded streets – were realistic, the story endings weren’t always so.

Private Izzy Murphy, made in 1926 by Warner Brothers, is an example of this mix of realism with an idealized ending. In the film, the Russian immigrant Isadore (“Izzy”) Goldberg, played by George Jessel in his debut film role, is evicted from his apartment and forced to move to a new neighborhood, an Irish one. He changes his last name to Murphy and opens a successful delica-

tessen. It’s World War I and Izzy enlists, goes off to war, and fights in an all-Irish unit, but not before securing the affections of his Irish sweetheart Eileen. Izzy serves heroically in the war. When he returns, he finds that Eileen’s parents, who only belatedly learned that Izzy is Jewish, object to the marriage. Izzy’s Irish war buddies save the day, and Izzy marries Eileen.

In *Private Izzy Murphy*, like so many films of that era, ethnic identities are easily erased as when Izzy Goldberg becomes Izzy Murphy. Izzy fights with in an Irish unit, and everyone gets along. Eileen marries Izzy, and they presumably live happily ever after.

In New York City, the Jewish neighborhoods were close to the Irish ones, but there was more likely to be a fight between the two than a marriage. This didn’t stop the studios from making a successful series of “Cohen and Kelly” films, Jew and Irish, well into the thirties. By then the Hollywood moguls were in control, and the melting pot was the image they wanted to project. As Patricia Erens observed, according to these films, the “easiest way to become Americanized is to marry a Catholic girl, enter into a partnership with an Irishman, or adopt a Gentile baby.”

There were many other portrayals of the Jew in silent films. The Suffering Mother, Prodigal Son, and Stern Patriarch are just some of the roles that reoccur.

By the end of the 1920s, the first talking picture, *The Jazz Singer*, appeared, marking the end of an era that in some sense was the Golden Age of Jewish film. By 1929, there were nearly three hundred films with a strong Jewish presence, films with unmistakably Jewish names like *A Bad Day for Levintsky*, *Busy Izzy*, *Cupid at Cohen’s*, *How Mosha Came Back*, and *The Fable of How Wisenstein Did Not*
(continued on p. 6)

THROUGH THE LENS (continued from p. 5)

Lose Out to Buttinsky. But with the dawn of the 1930s, the Jew on screen began to disappear, still there but less recognizable, not coming out in full force again until the sixties.

To understand why the Jewish presence was less visible, one need only look at the men who made the movies and the times in which these films were made.

The Thirties

By the beginning of the 1930s, the Hollywood moguls were firmly in control of the major studios. With the exception of Fox's chieftain, Darryl F. Zanuck, the heads of the majors – Louis Mayer, Harry Cohn, Samuel Goldwyn, Marcus Loew, Joseph Schenk, Carl Laemmle, Budd Schulberg, the Warner Brothers, and Adolph Zukor – were all Jewish. They were first- or second-generation immigrants with a deep desire to become part of the American fabric, despite accents and sometimes fractured English. If they couldn't belong to the Gentile country clubs, they built their own. They bought horses, frequented night clubs, intermarried, and lived lives as far away as they could from their immigrant roots.

When a director asked Harry Cohn, the much-feared head of Columbia Pictures, to use a particular actor in a film, Cohn responded: "He looks too Jewish. Around this studio the only Jews we put into pictures play Indians." In the 1930s, few parts existed for Jewish character actors, and Jewish actors "de-Semiticized" their names: Julius Garfinkle became

John Garfield, Leo Jacobi became Lee J Cobb, Marion Levy became Paulette Goddard, and the list goes on.

These were turbulent times in America and Europe. The Great Depression cast its grip on the American economy and abroad, and fascism was on the rise in Europe. American sentiment was to keep America out of war, if there was one, and the Hollywood moguls were loath to do anything that looked as if they were pushing the country in that direction. Anti-Semitism was alive and well, stoked by Henry Ford, the Klu Klux Klan, and Father Coughlin's speeches of the late 1930s. The moguls had made it in America, and they wanted to keep it that way. They may have been Jewish, but they saw themselves first and foremost as Americans.

This tendency to "lay low" and not draw attention to one's Jewishness is a current that runs until the decade of the sixties. The thirties were the nadir of the Jew on screen. Even a film like *The Life of Emile Zola*, in which Zola famously accuses the French government of wrongly accusing the Jew Alfred Dreyfus of espionage, doesn't make clear that the false accusation is spurred by anti-Semitism.

There were other reasons for the disappearance of the Jew on the screen in the thirties. Over half of studio revenues came from the European markets, Germany in particular. Films with Jewish characters would be difficult to market abroad, and anti-fascist films would be

similarly rejected. The "don't rock the boat" syndrome, however, was the connective tissue for three decades. ✧

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Editor's note: Part II of "Through the Lens" will appear in the Winter 2018 Legacy, available at www.NMJHS.org, Legacy Newsletter link, or from Anne McCormick, Administrator, 505-348-4471, admin@nmjhs.org.

The Las Vegas Jewish Community: Then and Now (continued from p. 3)

Karyl Lyne), regaling us with stories of her adventurous journey from Germany to New York and then, with fiancé Charles Ilfeld, cross-country to Las Vegas! Thursday evening concluded with storytelling by Sharon Niederman, one of the New Mexico Jewish community's authors and photographers.

As a memorable week of film, presentations, storytelling, and local artists concluded. Lilo and Arnold Waxman, the bride and groom on a story board, observed with joy the activities of Las Vegas' present Jewish community. ✧

Diana Presser is Secretary of Las Vegas Jewish Community, Inc. Photo credits: Ralph Roberts.

2017 Hurst Award: Acceptance Speech *(continued from p. 1)*

Our family, after that tragic death, consisted of three women trying to make ends meet. Since my mom was trained as a milliner, she created and designed lovely ladies' hats. She made beautiful hats for women for everyday wear and special occasions. She and my sister – who was also a very talented and gifted milliner – opened a hat shop that also sold women's dresses, gloves, and handbags. It was called Bertha's Shoppe, and we worked at it every day and persevered through the bad times. The store eventually was on Central Avenue, the most prestigious address for merchants. It was in this store that I learned retailing. The store was the only one of its kind in the entire city for many years.

After graduating from Albuquerque High School in 1940, I worked as a secretary for a timber company, a law firm, and an insurance agency, when I was introduced to a fine looking and totally appealing man named Leon Rubin from Raton, New Mexico, whose parents were immigrants from Russia or Poland. The Rubin family was well known in the state and, after all, most Jews knew of the other Jews around New Mexico because we were so few in number. Barney and Minnie Rubin were so happy we met and started dating that they promised \$5,000 to start our life together if we actually got married.

We married on January 6, 1946, and I moved to Raton to start our lives together. It was a monumental change for me, moving from my home in a larger city to a very small town in northern New Mexico, where we were the only Jewish family. Raton thrived on cattle ranching in the area, the railroad, and coal mining.

I ensured we remained Jewish and kept our Jewish identity by associating and becoming fast friends with the Jews in Trinidad, Colorado, where there were a number of very respected, warm, and inclusive Jews. It was a windfall that

there was a beautiful and historically noteworthy synagogue in Trinidad – Temple Aaron, where we all attended services and holiday celebrations. This became my religious community that I will always cherish and remember lovingly.

Temple Aaron is the oldest functioning synagogue in Colorado, and one of the one or two oldest west of the Mississippi still operating in its original location. It was built in 1889 and, at its zenith, had over 75 members around the turn of the twentieth century. A bit of history about Temple Aaron: It was founded and organized by Sol Jaffa, the first mayor of Trinidad and also of Santa Fe when he later moved to New Mexico. Later, in 1896, the Freudenthal family moved to Trinidad – a husband and wife and two boys, Alfred and Seymour. The foundation that has sustained Temple Aaron these many years was started by Alfred Freudenthal, a graduate of Harvard Medical School and a fine doctor. In 1925, Seymour Freudenthal took the bill to the Legislature in Denver that became law and established Trinidad State Junior College – the first junior college in Colorado.

The history and our impact on southeastern Colorado and northeastern New Mexico cannot be overstated. We have always been a small congregation but we felt it was terribly important to contribute to our towns and those who lived there, regardless of faith. Our associations with so many community leaders in the area were rewarding and always cordial.

Throughout my life, I have known very little anti-Semitism and discrimination. What a different world it was then in our unprejudiced communities!!

As the years progressed, these Jewish friends and Leon and I became the officers and directors of the Temple, ensuring it would never fall into disre-

pair and lose its identity. Professionally, Leon and I bought the store in Raton, "B. Rubin And Sons" at that time, from my in-laws in 1948 with Leon's brother, Irvin Rubin. We eventually bought out his interest in 1953, after which he and his family moved to Denver. Barney and Minnie Rubin had four boys and the other two, Sidney and Henry, had already moved away.

We operated the store, along with three or four other stores in Raton at various times, with our sons until 2010, when Leon was 90 years old and was probably the oldest merchant still in business in the State of New Mexico, going to work every day.

We lived in Raton and New Mexico almost our entire lives, until we moved to Colorado Springs in 2012. My wonderful husband died on New Year's Day in 2013, one day short of his 93rd birthday. Other than the war years and his final year in Colorado, Leon lived his entire life in Raton, most of it five blocks from where he was born.

We felt that being Jewish was always paramount to our lives, inheriting that belief from my mother and father. I felt that raising our two boys as Jewish as possible was also imperative to our cultural identity and background and heritage. Our Jewishness becomes even more vital when living in an outpost and away from the Jewish mainstream.

Realizing that if we want to have them be proud of their religion, I determined that I had to introduce them to as many other Jewish kids their ages through as many ways as possible. We sent them to Albuquerque to live with my sister's family for a summer when each was studying for his bar mitzvah, in 1962 and 1964. They studied with a rabbi there, Abraham I. Shinedling, and they had their bar mitzvahs in Temple

(continued on p. 8)

2017 Hurst Award: Acceptance Speech *(continued from p. 9)*

Aaron, the last celebrations of this sort until our son Randolph's children had theirs 30 years later.

As they were growing up, we traveled to Albuquerque, Pueblo, Colorado Springs, and Denver to be with Jewish kids in Jewish organizations. They went to a Jewish camp, Shwayder Camp in Idaho Springs, Colorado, for many summers. Their identity with their faith has remained throughout their lives and I am so proud of that fact. It continues to this day and getting together for Jewish holidays means the world to me.

Today, Randy is still the president of Temple Aaron, having inherited the position from me. That legacy for me began in 1987, when I assumed the role of the primary caretaker of Temple Aaron until 2012. I inherited that function from Beatrice Sanders, who was the "lay rabbi" from 1951 until her passing in 1987. Being Jewish

has given me immeasurable satisfaction, keeping the tenets of the faith as much as possible. As I look back over my life, I see the candle of Judaism burning brightly. My relatives, especially Gustav Kahn, Albert Kahn, and Walter Kahn,

breadwinner.

Rabbis who had great influence on me were Rabbi Abraham Lincoln Krohn, Rabbi Solomon Starrels, and Rabbi David Shor, all leaders of Congregation

Albert in Albuquerque. I have such intense, rewarding, and vivid memories of the times in Mountainair, Gallup, and Albuquerque that helped shape my existence. I could probably entertain you for hours with stories of my childhood, riding horses, roller skating down the sidewalks, and to reminisce is to realize I have so many Jewish and non-Jewish friends growing up and still today, as well. I'm cognizant that friendship is more important

than religion. No one has a corner on goodness, faith, or truthfulness. We are all commanded to love one another and hold others in respect. Every day I am thankful for my life, and this honor will live with me forever.✡



*Temple Aaron, Trinidad, Colorado
Sharon Niederman Photos*

stepped in when my father died, keeping our family safe and not destitute. How do you thank them for all they did? So many people came together to maintain our well-being, health, and mental stability during those rough years growing up without a primary

Welcome New Members

New Members

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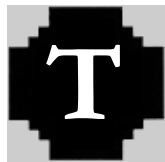
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The *Converso* Experience in Spanish Literary Expression

by Estelle Quain, Ph.D.



The *converso* experience in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Spain played a central role in the development of the modern novel. An outstanding example of this is *Lazarillo de Tormes*, which first appeared by an anonymous author in 1554. For its secularism, realistic characters, and criticism of injustice, *Lazarillo de Tormes* is considered by many literary historians to be the first modern novel. It is also the prototype of what would become the picaresque genre, which tells the story of a rogue, or “*pícaro*” in Spanish – a wandering knave, a poor adventurer, who lives by his wits on the fringes of a class-conscious society and must subordinate any sense of ethics to the necessities of survival.

The full title of the work is *The Life of Lazarillo de Tormes and His Fortunes and Adversities*, and it tells the story of a young boy from society’s lowest class who is thrust out of his home to make his way in the world on his own. On his journey through Old Castile, Lazarillo serves a series of cruel and stingy masters who nearly starve him to death. He survives only by learning to outwit them and to conform to the mores of his society.

Lazarillo de Tormes is one of number of works from this period in Spain generally recognized by scholars to have been written by *conversos*. The anonymous author of *Lazarillo* expresses painful feelings of being an outsider and being excluded from established society. Spanish society of the time was very structured and movement between social classes practically impossible. The Inquisition was in full force with elaborate public ceremonies denouncing convicted Judaizers. The statutes of purity of blood, issued first in the mid-fifteenth century, were in wide usage, excluding anyone of Jewish descent from positions of authority in both government and the church.

Animosity against the *converso* population, probably numbering between 400,000 and 500,000, had completely changed the social environment.

Through the use of irony, parody, and satire, the author of *Lazarillo* mocks the hypocrisy and class consciousness that resulted from the discrimination of the

hypocrisy and church corruption. In telling us Lazarillo’s “fortunes and adversities,” the author is also expressing the pain and frustration probably felt by many *conversos*. *Lazarillo* was the first *pícaro*, but the



Estelle Quain



mode of amusing the reader while criticizing injustice, including racism and anti-Semitism, inspired a whole group of such works both inside and outside of Spain: in England, France, and Germany in the eighteenth century (Henry Fielding’s *Tom Jones* is an example), and into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with books like Mark Twain’s *Huckleberry Finn* and Isabel Allende’s *Eva Luna*. The *converso* experience of exclusion and marginalization pushed the boundaries of literary creation and launched a new style of narration that lives on to this day.

Estelle Quain is an independent researcher who has a Ph.D. in Spanish literature and is currently exploring her Sephardic heritage and *converso* literature. She presented a more in-depth version of this article at the NMJHS Fall Conference in November 2016. ✨

statutes of purity of blood. The focus on lower-class or criminal characters provides the perspective of those who have been denied economic prosperity, and gives the author a platform from which to criticize authority and corruption, especially of the church. Lazarillo and his motley series of masters are not the heroic knight errants whose brave deeds spurred the imagination of readers in the very popular novels of chivalry of the time. *Lazarillo*’s story grabs us for its exposure of injustice in the face of basic human needs. While its ironic tone amuses us, it seems to be a real-life story of survival against many odds.

Lazarillo de Tormes is a short book – today it would be considered a novella – but its concise prose packs a punch at society’s

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Jewish Girl Scouting

by Naomi Sandweiss



When most people think of Girl Scouts, they picture a smiling youngster at their door selling a box of Thin Mint or Samoa cookies.

But Girl Scouts was—and is—much more than cookies and camping. Few people realize that Jewish women played an important role in the Girl Scout movement both nationally and in New Mexico.

Girl Scouting in the United States was founded in 1912 by Juliette Gordon Low in Savannah, Georgia. Low had been introduced to scouting when living in England where the movement originated. In the U.S., scouting grew out of the goals of the progressive era, which was at its height during the early twentieth century. With the migration of families from rural to urban centers and an influx of immigrants, many youth organizations developed at this time in an effort to guide young people. Early girl scouting emphasized citizenship, provided career preparation, and trained girls to “take their rightful places in life, first as good women, then as good citizens, wives and mothers.” (Levey & Degenhardt, 2002) Many early Girl Scout badges were work-oriented and included aviation, telegraph skills, and farming.

Savannah had a well-established Jewish community, and three members of Savannah’s Sephardic synagogue, Mickve Israel (organized in 1735), served as Low’s first Girl Scout troop leaders. By 1923, girl scouting had branches in every state in the union and territories, with a total membership of over 125,000.

Jewish girls and leaders were early to embrace the scouting movement. Troops were established in settlement houses, synagogues, and living rooms throughout the country. Among the early leaders was Jessie Bloom (1887-1980), a Jewish native of Ireland who moved to Alaska 34 years before it became a state and established the Fairbanks Girl Scouts in 1925.

The cookie fundraising program that we know so well began in 1917, and the first commercial bakery to produce Girl Scout cookies was Gottlieb’s Kosher Bakery in Savannah, owned by the Gottlieb family who worshiped at Savannah’s Orthodox synagogue, B’nai B’rith Jacob. While other bakeries eventually took over production, all Girl Scout cookies have been certified kosher since 1995. The iconic cookie program helps girls to build their skills in planning, budgeting, and goal-setting as they raise funds for troop activities.

In New Mexico, the Seligman family helped to support New Mexico scouting movements. Husband and wife Siegfried (1878-1967) and Meta Block (1883-1976) Seligman operated the Bernalillo Mercantile Company in Bernalillo, New Mexico, where they raised their three children, Carl, Milton, and Elza. Daughter Elza enjoyed girl scouting, and attended Albuquerque High School and the University of New Mexico but tragically died at age 20. Following her death, the Seligmans donated 14 acres of land they had originally given to the local Boy Scouts council to the Girl Scouts to establish a camp. Camp Elza Seligman, located in the Jemez Mountains, was founded in 1937 and served hundreds of New Mexico girl scouts for over 30 years. In the late 1960s, when the New Mexico Girl Scouts outgrew Camp Seligman, the Seligman family donated \$6,000 to help purchase Rancho del Chaparral, which opened in 1969 and still operates today.

Many women leaders, including Jewish leaders from Betty Friedan to Adele Zinberg, were involved in girl scouting and credited it with helping them to develop leadership skills. Special awards were established for Jewish Girl Scouts, and in 1972, the National Jewish Committee on Girl Scouting was founded, providing information about camping for observant Jewish girls and Sabbath resources. The mission of today’s Girl Scouts – 2.7 million strong – is to build girls of courage,

confidence, and character who make the world a better place. Girl Scouts of New Mexico Trails engages New Mexico girls in activities that range from mechanical engineering to entrepreneurship to community service. The next time you purchase a box of cookies, remember the Jewish connections to Girl Scouting.



Naomi Sandweiss

Resources

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- Tedesco, L. (2006). Progressive Era Girl Scouts and the Immigrant: Scouting for Girls (1920) as a Handbook for American Girlhood. *Children’s Literature Association Quarterly*, Volume 31, Number 4, pp. 346-368

Websites

Camp Rancho de Chaparral blog, <https://ranchorendezvous.wordpress.com/>; Girl Scouts of New Mexico Trails, nmgirlscouts.org; National Jewish Committee on Scouting, <http://njcgs.org/>; Girl Scout Online Museum, vintage-girlscoutcamp.com

*Naomi Sandweiss is a former Girl Scout and worked as program director for the council of Girl Scouts of New Mexico Trails. She has served as president of NMJHS and is the author of **Jewish Albuquerque: 1860-1960**.*

Challah Rising in the Desert: The Jews of New Mexico

A film by Isaac Artenstein and Paula Amar Schwartz
New Mexico Museum of Natural History & Science, June 24, 2017
Museum Photos: Deborah Weagel, Elizabeth Weagel



Mel and Paula Schwartz's Family



Stu Simon, Tanya Bobrick, Betty Harvie



Paula Schwartz and Isaac Artenstein



B'nai Israel Service, Albuquerque



Challah Bakers, Congregation Albert, Albuquerque



Hannah Nordhaus interview, Taos



Mel and Paula Schwartz, Acoma Pueblo



*Cameraman Sergio Ulloa and Isaac Artenstein
with Acoma Pueblo Governor Fred Vallo*



Paula Schwartz with Film Crew, Nahalat Shalom, Albuquerque

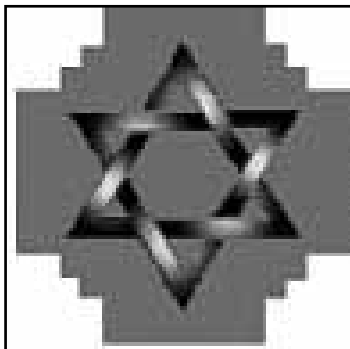


Rabbi Shefa Gold Interview, Jemz Springs

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

Membership in NMJHS

For information contact the NMJHS office at 505-348-4471 or admin@nmjhs.org to request a membership brochure. Alternatively, you can download a membership application from the NMJHS website www.nmjhs.org



Calendar of NMJHS Upcoming Events

Check for future events at www.nmjhs.org

October 22: New Mexico Jewish History: Panel of *Legacy* Authors, Anthology of Articles from *Legacy*, NMJHS award-winning newsletter, Temple Beth Shalom, Santa Fe, 2:00 PM

October 25 - December 10: Santa Fe Jewish Film Festival, www.SantaFeJFF.org, 505-216-0672, information and tickets; Literary Jewels – Gems from America, Eastern Europe, and Israel; talks, and films exploring some of the greatest Jewish writers, with National Book Award finalist Nicole Krauss, Man Booker Prize winner Jessica Cohen, Ali McGraw introducing “Goodbye, Columbus,” and more

November 4/5: NMJHS Fall Conference, Plaza Hotel, Las Vegas; **November 3:** Optional Shabbat Service and Oneg, 7:00 PM. Contact NMJHS, 505-348-4471, www.NMJHS.org

February 18: Visiting Scholar, JCC, Albuquerque, 2:00 PM: Justin Ferate, “Back When Harlem was Jewish: An Illustrated Lecture”