



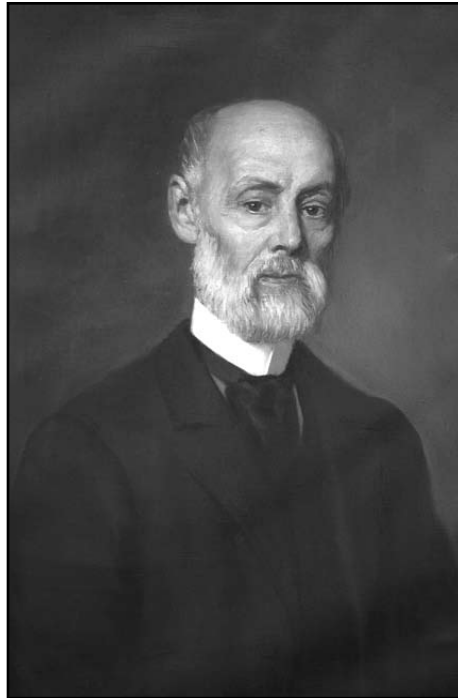
## Tracing the Steps of My Ancestors in Paderborn

by Elizabeth Nordhaus Messeca

**M**y father Bob Nordhaus always said that our ancestors left Germany to avoid Prussian conscription, which was long and particularly harsh for Jews, and to escape discrimination. As I discover more about his family and other early Jewish settlers in America, I have become interested in not only what happened once they settled in New Mexico, but also in learning about why they left Germany. What was life like in the towns they came from?

After living in France and Luxembourg for many years, I finally wanted to visit Germany to get an idea of the status of the Nordhaus family, its economic position, and its religious involvement at a time when the Jewish Reform movement was taking hold in Germany. The trip could be a sort of pilgrimage to retrace family roots in honor of my father, who died in February 2007 at the venerable age of 97. In early September 2007, my husband Michel and I drove from Paris to Paderborn, Germany, to trace my German-Jewish ancestors.

A number of Jewish pioneer families of New Mexico have been the subject of articles,



*Author's great-grandfather Jacob Nordhaus*

books, and historical research, among them my own. The most extensive exhibit about the main branches of my family (Nordhaus, Staab, and Ilfeld) opened in Santa Fe at the Palace of the Governors on October 14, 2000. Additionally, the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society conducted research and interviews leading up to the publication of thirteen booklets dedicated to these early New Mexican pioneers, including *The Ilfeld and Nordhaus Families*.

What good fortune I had to grow up with many family stories and physical sites to visit in New Mexico dating back to the late 1800s – places of business, homes and vacation spots, synagogues, and graves. In addition to being the subject of professional historians, notably William Parish and Henry Tobias, the Ilfelds, Nordhauses, and Staabs have also been written about by family members, in particular by my aunt Elizabeth Nordhaus Mincez and my father, Robert Jacob Nordhaus. Some of the stories have become legends, especially the ones about the ancestors who emigrated

from Germany to the far reaches of the West. At that time New Mexico was still a Territory, linked to the rest of the United States by covered wagons and mule expeditions.

A short genealogy is useful to understand the family and geographic connections among my ancestors. My father's parents were Bertha Staab of Santa Fe and Max Nordhaus of Las Vegas, New Mexico. Bertha was the daughter of Abraham Staab who arrived in New Mexico in 1854 at the age of 15 from Lugde in Westphalia, Germany, and Julia Schuster from the nearby town of Paderborn. Abraham and his brother Zadoc established an important mercantile business on the Plaza in Santa Fe. Abraham is also well known in the family for helping Archbishop Lamy finance the construction of the Cathedral in Santa Fe. Julia Staab is reported to still haunt the beautiful family home, now part of La Posada Hotel in Santa Fe.

My grandfather Max Nordhaus's parents were Jacob Nordhaus and Elise Benjamin. Jacob's first wife and sister of Elise, Mariana, was the mother of Adele Nordhaus Ilfeld and of her sisters, Fanny and Emma. Max's half sister, Adele, married Charles Ilfeld who established what was to become the premier mercantile house in New Mexico, the Charles Ilfeld Company. The story goes that Charles Ilfeld traveled to Germany in 1873 to look for a

*(continued on p. 8)*

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## Message from President Noel Pugach



As you read this issue of *Legacy*, I am sure you will be struck by the broad scope and the exciting new initiatives undertaken by the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society. This organization is devoted to expanding our horizons and embracing the various interests of our members.

The upcoming conference between the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society and the Texas Jewish Historical Society demonstrates that commitment. We have planned a very interesting and informative weekend in a lovely setting, and I hope to see many of you in El Paso. With the help of Dr. Stanley Hordes, we are also partnering with the Museum of New Mexico on the very exciting program, "Sephardic Voices." I think you will find the performances entertaining and enlightening.

We have also established links to the Santa Fe Jewish Arts and Culture Group, which is in the process of being organized by Lee and Susan Berk and others. I encourage our members to attend the group's first major event, a talk by attorney Ron Spencer on the controversial topic of Holocaust art restitution. We hope to develop greater

collaboration with this organization in the future.

The Society considers the support for scholarship on Jewish history in the Southwest as one of its highest priorities. This is reflected in the lead article by Betsy Messeca on her recent trip to Germany to track down information on her family, the Nordhauses, and other German-Jewish relatives who settled in New Mexico.

Other articles in this issue that you will find of interest include the publication of the latest family study in our Video Archive Project, the Loewensterns, which you may purchase along with previous studies of New Mexico Jewish families. Don't miss Naomi Sandweiss's two articles, one a review of Dr. Henry Tobias's book on New Mexico Jewry since World War II, the other a most timely Roundup column on Jews in politics.

Genealogy Corner presents a revealing story on the Jewish Online Worldwide Burial Registry, with specific information on how to access the large data file. We welcome similar articles in future issues of *Legacy*. Speaking of genealogy, a workshop will be held in Santa Fe on Sunday afternoon, November 16. Genealogy buffs will have to

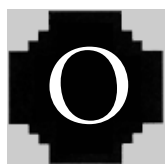
decide between the workshop and the talk by Ron Spencer, which occur on the same afternoon, or else consider attending Mr. Spencer's talk in Albuquerque that morning. Details for all events mentioned appear elsewhere in this issue.

By the time you receive this issue we hope that the Society's administrator, Bobbi Jackson will be back at work after having knee replacement surgery this summer. We wish her a complete and speedy recovery.

I am delighted to inform you that the Jewish Federation of New Mexico has renewed our grant and has given us a \$300.00 increase over last year for the coming fiscal year. We consider ourselves fortunate and take it as a sign of the Federation's appreciation of our work and confidence in our organization. This year, the Federation was forced to reduce support for some agencies because of a lack of funds. We urge you to give generously when the 2009 campaign is launched next January.

Finally, on behalf of the board of directors, I want to wish all of our Jewish members a very Healthy, Happy, Successful, and Rewarding New Year. ☆

## Sephardic Voices



On Sunday, October 19, from 1:00 to 3:30 pm, at the Lensic Theater, the Palace of the Governors will present an afternoon of music and dramatic readings performed by descendants of crypto-Jews. Entitled, "Sephardic Voices," the program will feature vocal soloists Vanessa Paloma and Consuelo Luz, both of whom express their voyage of discovery of their Sephardic roots through song.

Also participating will be poet Isabelle Medina Sandoval, novelist Mario Martínez, and playwright/actor Carol López, each of whom will read passages from their work. While Paloma's roots, on her great-grandfather's side can be traced to crypto-Jewish roots in Colombia, and Luz's to Chile and Cuba, the other performers are

nuevomexicanos, from Mora, Santa Fe, and Española, respectively.

Crypto-Jews were those people who were forced to convert from Judaism to Catholicism in Spain and Portugal at the end of the 1400s, but retained their Sephardic (Iberian) Jewish identity and practiced their ancestral faith in secret. In order to escape persecution by the Inquisition, many of these conversos fled to the far reaches of the Spanish empire, including New Mexico.

Most public programs on the topic have been conducted by scholars and performers not connected to Sephardic culture. This program is designed to give voice to the descendants, themselves, through a variety of forms of expression.

Admission is free, but donations of \$15 will be gratefully accepted. A reception at the Palace of the Governors will follow the program.

The program is funded by a generous gift from Helene Singer Merrin and Seymour Merrin and the Museum of New Mexico Foundation, and is co-sponsored by the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society and the Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies.

For more information, contact Dr. Stanley Hordes in Albuquerque at 505-255-6564, or [Smhordes@aol.com](mailto:Smhordes@aol.com). ☆

The performance of "Sephardic Voices" is part of Archives Month, sponsored by the New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, whose theme this year is "Archives and the Arts."

## Along the Royal Highway Annual Fall Conference in El Paso



For the first time, the fall conference of the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society will be held jointly with a sister society in an adjacent state. NMJHS is partnering with the Texas Jewish Historical Society for "Jews Along the Camino Real," October 24 - 26, 2008, in El Paso.

Most of the events will take place at the historic Camino Real Hotel in El Paso's revitalized downtown. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the 1912 hotel still features its original, 25-foot wide Tiffany's cut-glass dome, but the facilities have been fully renovated and modernized.

The stimulating, informative weekend will begin on Friday evening with Shabbat services at the Reform Temple Mount Sinai, which is the largest Jewish congregation in El Paso. Dinner will follow at the hotel, the first of many opportunities during the weekend to socialize with our Texas neighbors who are also attending the conference.

On Saturday morning, two separate sessions of stimulating talks and interactive sessions will be presented. At the first, "Jewish Merchants along the Camino Real," Dr. Noel Pugach and Susan Novick will discuss Jewish businesses during the 20th century in New Mexico and Texas. "Jewish Women in the Southwest," the second session, will explore the various roles that women have played in the region. Speakers will include Erin Doran, Kay Goldman, and Sharon Fried – all newer scholars.

In the afternoon, conference attendees will tour the El Paso History Museum and the rebuilt El Paso Holocaust Museum and Study Center. Henry Kellen, who founded the Holocaust Museum, and Leslie Novick, the current executive director, will be present to discuss the Museum and answer questions. This event will be followed by a reception and an opportunity to meet with some Holocaust survivors who live in the El Paso area.

The banquet on Saturday evening will be at Temple Mount Sinai. After dinner, speakers Rabbi Stephen Leon, of El Paso's

Congregation B'nai Zion, will discuss his work with contemporary crypto-Jews in southern New Mexico and west Texas, and Dr. Stanley Hordes will speak about his current research into crypto-Judaism in the Caribbean.

A continental breakfast on Sunday will be followed by separate board meetings of the



*Camino Real Hotel in El Paso*

two societies and afterwards an optional tour of two local Jewish cemeteries. The conference will officially adjourn at 10:30 a.m.

The \$80 conference registration fee includes two dinners, Sunday breakfast, and van service to conference locations. For those who do not want to attend the entire conference but want to attend one or both dinners, a separate fee of \$30 is available for each of the dinners.

Conference registration must be completed by September 24 and mailed to the Texas Jewish Historical Society. Registration forms and the conference program are being mailed to NMJHS members by the end of August. Both are also available in the NMJHS office and on the Web site, [www.nmjewishhistory.org](http://www.nmjewishhistory.org).

A special room rate, \$89 a night plus taxes, double or single occupancy, is available at

the Camino Real Hotel, with \$2 a night for parking. To qualify for the special rate, reservations should be made directly with the hotel by September 24 by calling 1-800-769-4300, or 915-534-3000. Be sure to request the conference rate for the Texas Jewish Historical Society.

El Paso International Airport is a 15-minute drive from the hotel, which has a free courtesy shuttle. NMJHS members who are interested in carpooling – either as a driver or a rider – can contact the NMJHS office. We will try to accommodate all requests.☆

### Jews Along the Camino Real

October 24 – 26, 2008

#### Conference Program

##### **Friday, October 24**

**12:00 – 4:00:** Registration at Camino Real Hotel

**6:00 – 7:15:** Shabbat services at Temple Mount Sinai

**7:30:** Dinner at Camino Real Hotel

**8:30:** Introduction by society presidents followed by informal conversations

##### **Saturday, October 25**

Breakfast on your own

**9:00 – 10:30:** Jewish Merchants Along the Camino Real

Dr. Noel Pugach

Ms. Susan Novick

Lunch on your own

**11:00 – 12:30:** Jewish Women in the Southwest

Ms. Erin Doran

Ms. Kay Goldman

Ms. Sharon Fried

**2:00 – 3:00:** El Paso History Museum

**3:15 – 4:30:** El Paso Holocaust Museum and Study Center

**7:00:** Havdalah and banquet at Temple Mount Sinai

**8:00:** Crypto-Jews

Rabbi Stephen Leon

Dr. Stanley Hordes

##### **Sunday, October 26**

**8:30 – 10:30:** Continental breakfast and separate board meetings at hotel

## GENEALOGY CORNER: Documenting Jewish Burials

by Terry Lasky

**T**he Jewish Online Worldwide Burial Registry (JOWBR) is an international project whose goal it is to document all of the Jewish burials in the entire world. It may sound like an overly ambitious goal but already there are over 1,000,000 entries in the database. The project is being run under the auspices of JewishGen, the premier international Jewish genealogical organization. JewishGen and JOWBR are both primarily volunteer organizations.

Because I live in Colorado, I decided that I would take on the task of documenting all of the Jewish burials in my state. This involved getting lists of burials from each cemetery or synagogue. Some were already in computerized form, others were printed lists, and still others were collections of card catalogues. The information from these sources was then entered into Microsoft Excel spreadsheets. The primary data consisted of name, grave location, and death date – more if more information was available.

I then walked each cemetery and took pictures of every gravestone. The data of genealogical interest was subsequently taken from each gravestone and entered into the spreadsheet. The primary data of interest was birth date, Hebrew name and patronymic, and Hebrew date of death. This data and the photos were then submitted to JOWBR and put online on JewishGen servers.

JOWBR is fairly restrictive in how it can be searched. You have to be a member of JewishGen to use it – there is no cost, you just have to register and get an ID. You can search by a surname (“partial” or “sounds like”) and/or by given name. You can limit the search by state or country

but not by a specific cemetery. Once you have found a particular record of interest you can then see the associated data and gravestone photo. There is no way to just browse a cemetery or to browse gravestone



*Orhei cemetery*

photos. This was done to make sure that people using this database were using it for genealogical purposes only.

Once I finished documenting Colorado Jewish burials (about 22,000 burials in 17 cemeteries) I decided to do the neighboring states. I picked New Mexico first because I often travel through it on my way to see my daughters and grandchildren in El Paso. New Mexico Jewish burials number about 1700 in 13 cemeteries.

Utah and Wyoming followed with six cemeteries and 2000 burials. Canadian relatives of mine live in Winnipeg, Manitoba, where the Jewish Heritage Center had already collected the data for all of Manitoba Province (through 1996). They allowed me to have the data, and I reformatted it into JOWBR format and that added eight cemeteries and 15,000 burials.

There seems to be no end to what you can do if you are motivated. My maternal family lived in Orhei (Orgeyev), Moldova before coming to the United

States. I made contact with some people over there who were willing to help me do this project for the Jewish cemetery in Moldova. I supplied them with a digital camera, and they took 2800 gravestone photos and photos of 150 pages of the cemetery book. Several of us are in the process of translating the Hebrew and Russian and putting together the spreadsheet for this cemetery. All together there will be about 3500 entries for Orhei, ranging from the early 1800s to current times.

JewishGen then asked me if I would try to document cemeteries in other neighboring states. I chose Nebraska and Oklahoma. Many people have volunteered to help me, because I do not plan to travel to those states. Currently they are taking pictures of almost every cemetery in their states. Hopefully that documentation will be completed and submitted to JOWBR before the end of the year.

*(continued on p. 9)*

### Jewish Cemeteries in New Mexico

- Fairview Cemetery, Albuquerque (five Jewish sections)
  - Congregation Albert
  - Bnai Israel
  - Jewish War Veterans
  - Fellowship of the Desert
  - Unaffiliated Jewish Section
- Vista Verde Cemetery, Rio Rancho (two Jewish sections)
  - Rio Rancho Jewish Center
  - Jewish War Veterans
- Santa Fe Memorial Gardens, Santa Fe (two Jewish sections)
  - Bais Olam
  - Shalom Garden
- Masonic Cemetery, Las Cruces
- Temple Beth El
- Montefiore Cemetery, Las Vegas
- Eretz Shalom, Taos

## The Joys of Genealogy November Workshop in Santa Fe



Attention aspiring and practicing genealogists: NMJHS is planning a joyous genealogy workshop in Santa Fe on Sunday afternoon, November 16, 2008, with historian Stanley Hordes and genealogist Nancy Greenberg.

The workshop has become an annual event of the Society, alternating between Santa Fe and Albuquerque, and occasionally in Taos.

### Genealogy Workshop

Sunday, November 16, 2008

**Century Bank Customer Service Center**  
2108 Warner Avenue  
(off St Francis Drive)  
Santa Fe, New Mexico

1:00 p.m. registration  
1:30 to 4:00 workshop  
No advance registration.

Pay at door.  
NMJHS members \$5  
Non-members \$10

More information:  
505-348-4471 or  
[nmjhs@jewishnewmexico.org](mailto:nmjhs@jewishnewmexico.org)

This year's workshop will start with a combined session for all, after which attendees will break out into two groups. The Sephardi group will be lead by Dr. Hordes and the Ashkenazi group by Mrs. Greenberg. In the Ashkenazi session, Mrs. Greenberg is going to present a couple of case studies to show how one goes about researching one's ancestors. There will be examples of documents, as well as handouts and discussion about available resources and research methods. In the Sephardic session Dr. Hordes plans to outline sources and methods for conducting genealogical research into the history of those families who trace their origins to the forced conversions of the 15th century in Spain and Portugal.

Nancy Ward Greenberg, currently president of the Albuquerque Genealogical Society, has done a great deal of teaching in genealogy during the past few years. An Albuquerque native, she married her high school sweetheart Paul Greenberg, with whom she has two grown boys and five grandchildren. Judaism became an important part of Mrs. Greenberg's life when she became involved with the Greenberg family of Albuquerque, and she converted to Judaism after her marriage to Paul.

A graduate of the University of New Mexico in nursing and a Master's in education, Mrs. Greenberg spent most of her professional career in school nursing and retired as the Director of Nursing for the Albuquerque Public Schools. During her last few years of working, she served on several national nursing boards and did consulting work.

After retirement Mrs. Greenberg has been involved in several family history projects that encompass many ethnic groups. She nearly always makes the annual trip to the LDS library in Salt Lake City with the *Avotaynu* group to research her family and attends the annual conference sponsored by the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies, which was held this August in Chicago.

Dr. Stanley Hordes is a noted historian of crypto-Judaism in New Mexico who has researched the archives in Mexico and Spain to trace roots of several New Mexico Hispanic families back to their Jewish roots. He is an Adjunct Research Professor at the Latin American and Iberian Institute of the University of New Mexico. Hordes received his Ph.D. from Tulane University in 1980. His doctoral dissertation, "The Crypto-Jewish Community of New Spain, 1620 - 1649: A Collective Biography," was based on research conducted in the archives of Mexico and Spain, supported

by a Fulbright dissertation fellowship. Dr. Hordes's book, *To the End of the Earth: A History of the Crypto-Jews of New Mexico*, was published by Columbia University Press in 2005.

Dr. Hordes's study on the secret Jews of Mexico revealed a considerable amount of information about the religious customs and career patterns of the descendants of those Spanish Jews who were forced to convert to Catholicism in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Many of these *conversos* continued to practice their old ancestral faith in secrecy, and moved to the Spanish colonies in the New World in order to avoid detection by the Inquisition.

When Dr. Hordes assumed the position of New Mexico State Historian in 1981, he began to encounter Catholic and Protestant Hispanic New Mexicans whose families observed customs suggestive of a Jewish background, such as maintaining dietary laws, celebrating the Sabbath on Saturday instead of Sunday, and performing ritual male circumcision. Interviews with several dozen informants revealed that while many of these people engage in these practices without knowing why, others, indeed, express an awareness of a Jewish heritage, and regard themselves as secret Jews. Preliminary documentary evidence, conducted in the archives of New Mexico, Mexico, Spain and Portugal, indicate that some of these individuals descend from secret Jews who had been persecuted by the Inquisition in Mexico and Spain.✪

### Visit Jewish Portugal & Spain

This 12-day escorted tour, sponsored by the Texas Jewish Historical Society, departs March 6, 2009. Deadline for reservations is September 30. For more information check with Vickie Vogel in La Grange, Texas, at 979-247-4504 or [txjhs@yahoo.com](mailto:txjhs@yahoo.com).

## Cary Herz – In Memoriam

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**New Look for Legacy in 2008**

Two outstanding designers contributed their time and talent to create a new banner and logo for our newsletter.

**Shelah Wilgus of Ventura, California, redesigned the banner.**

**Andi Kron of Los Alamos, New Mexico, created a new logo.**

NMJHS extends its heartfelt thanks to these talented volunteers.

**NMJHS offers its condolences to the family of Harold Gardenswartz on his recent death.**

**C**ary Herz, born in New York City to parents who managed to get out before the Holocaust, spent the last 24 years of her life as a professional photographer in New Mexico. Her productive life cut short by ovarian cancer, she passed away on September 1, 2008.

Cary started out recording the women's movement in the early 1970s for *Ms. Magazine* and other publications and covering the "new" phenomenon of women's sports. Later, her arresting photographs appeared in the most prestigious newspapers, news organizations and magazines in the country, including *The New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Associated Press*, *TIME*, *PC World*, and *People*. Her photos have been published in nearly a dozen books, and some have been exhibited at the Smithsonian Institution.

She ran her own business, Cary Herz Photography, in Albuquerque since 1987. She also served as a photo correspondent for *The New York Times* since 1985.

In late 2007, her book, *New Mexico's Crypto-Jews: Image and Memory*, was published by the University of New Mexico Press to wide acclaim and excellent reviews. The book pulls together photographs from her many years chronicling the Crypto-Jews, Jewish immigrants who fled Spain and Mexico to escape persecution and hid their heritage in the New World. The photographs in the book previously had been published alongside newspaper and magazine articles in

the United States, Israel, Switzerland, and Mexico, and had appeared in exhibitions in the United States and Mexico.

To take the pictures, she traveled with former New Mexico State Historian Dr. Stanley Hordes to the Portuguese/Spanish border as he and a colleague researched families from New Mexico in the border towns' archives. She also traveled with a *New York Times* reporter to Portugal to meet with the descendants of crypto-Jews.



Cary Herz

Cary first heard about these "other people" in 1985, when she was photographing the Jewish cemetery in Las Vegas, New Mexico. Response to her book has been phenomenal; the book sold more than 800 copies in its first six weeks at local signings. For her work, New Mexico Press Women honored Cary with its "2008 Communicator of Achievement Award."

Cary is also recognized in New Mexico as being the part of a group involved in the rehabilitation of the Jewish sections of the Las Vegas, New Mexico, cemetery. Her haunting photographs of these sections, some of which had been vandalized or left in disrepair, led to restorative efforts, and she herself took part in cleaning up many of these grave sites. ☆

## 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.

# New Book by Henry Tobias

by Naomi Sandweiss

**E**ighteen years after the publication of his seminal work, *A History of the Jews in New Mexico* (UNM Press, 1990), Henry Tobias's latest book, *Jews in New Mexico Since World War II*, has been released by UNM Press. *A History of the Jews in New Mexico* covered the region's Jewish history through 1980, with a particular focus on the pioneer period that corresponded with the arrival of the railroads in the 1880s.

In his latest volume, Dr. Tobias, professor of history emeritus from the University of Oklahoma, focuses on the post World War II era within the state, acknowledging that "The rapid expansion of organized Jewish communal activity in New Mexico after World War II produced a plethora of new (historic) sources. . . . [S]uch matters make the postwar era in New Mexico far more complex than its prewar history."

Tobias documents New Mexico's considerable population increase between 1940 and 2000 — an increase of 350% — and the corresponding rise in Jewish population. Not only did the post-war population increase, according to Tobias, but professional opportunities made possible by federal initiatives (National Labs, GI bill) changed the face of New Mexico's Jewish citizenry. Despite differences between the pioneer families, who primarily made their livings as merchants, and the newcomers, who worked as scientists, engineers, and in other professions, Jewish citizens worked together to create a variety of institutions. In Tobias' words, whether "pioneer" or "newcomer," Jewish New Mexicans shared a sense of "strong

common purpose . . . despite any local social differences."

From Chabad to kabbalah and from Carlsbad to Los Alamos, Tobias chronicles the growth of New Mexico Jewish congregational and communal organizations and the increasing variety of Jewish religious expression in the post-war era. In addition, Tobias introduces many of the personalities of Jewish post-war-era New Mexico such as Rabbi David Shor, artist Judy Chicago, and author Henry Roth.



One of the changes of the post-World War II era was increased interfaith involvement. Organizations such as the Temple Albert Men's Club (now the Brotherhood) opened their membership to Jews and non-Jews alike. Events such as the Jewish -

Catholic Dialogue and interfaith Thanksgiving services were established and institutionalized, often under Jewish leadership. In the same period, contacts between American Indians and Jews increased, and awareness of crypto Jewry in both Jewish and Hispanic communities expanded.

Tobias concludes that "it has been a remarkable half-century" of New Mexico Jewish history. One only hopes that the next half-century will be as vital and productive.

Tobias is a resident of Albuquerque and long-time member of the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society. His publications include *Santa Fe: A Modern History 1880 - 1990*; *The Jewish Bund in Russia from Its Origins in 1905*; and *The Jews in Oklahoma*. ☆

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

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**My Ancestors in Paderborn** *(continued from p. 1)*

bride, where he became re-acquainted with the lovely Adele Nordhaus; the two became engaged and then were married a year later in New York or Baltimore.

Max Nordhaus went to Las Vegas, New Mexico, from Paderborn just before his eighteenth birthday in 1883, to work for his brother-in-law, Charles Ilfeld, and lived with Charles and Adele. Max was so successful that he later became manager, then partner, and finally president of the Charles Ilfeld Company. End of genealogy lesson.

Jacob Nordhaus of Paderborn, my great-grandfather, was always known in our family as "Rabbi Jacob." An undated painting of him, salvaged from the Charles Ilfeld warehouse in Albuquerque, hangs in my brother Dick's living room. Could I find more traces of Jacob and other family ancestors in Paderborn?

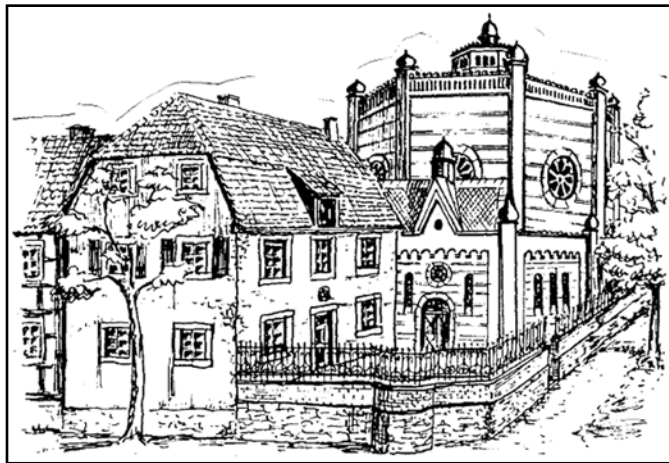
Through help from friends in Albuquerque, some persistence on my part, and certainly a degree of luck, I made contact with Shmuel and Tanja Rubens who live in Paderborn and who are active in the newly built synagogue, which replaced the one burned down in 1938. They introduced me to Margit Naarmann, a non-Jewish German, who has been studying the Jewish community of Paderborn and its surrounding region for over 30 years.

As a young girl on a trip to Scotland, Margit was shocked to learn the truth of World War II and of the horrible fate of her country's Jewish population. By a twist of circumstances, she was contacted by my distant cousin, Wolfgang Mueller, in search of his Paderborn relatives and, consequently, had done research on the Nordhaus-Ilfeld-Staab families for many years. To my utter surprise, Margit greeted me excitedly: "Are you really the granddaughter of Max, great-granddaughter of Jacob Nordhaus?"

It was thus with great pleasure and interest that Michel and I were able to visit ancestral sites, some still standing and others not. Paderborn is an attractive town of 144,000 inhabitants, 60 miles southwest of Hanover, which is mostly rebuilt after the World War II bombings by the Allies. In the center of the town, we traced the lives of Jacob and Elise Nordhaus.

We learned that Jacob was tested and found qualified to teach elementary school and give religious (Jewish) instruction by the State Rabbi of Hildesheim. In 1857, he assumed the office of cantor and teacher in the community of Paderborn where he taught some 60 Jewish children who previously had attended Catholic schools. His reputation was such that after he joined the synagogue, "peace reigned," in Margit's words.

I also learned that Elise Benjamin Nordhaus, who was Jacob's second wife and mother of my grandfather Max, trained as a secondary school teacher and wanted to start a Jewish girls' boarding school. When candidates were



*Paderborn synagogue and home of Jacob and Elise Nordhaus*

lacking, she nonetheless taught as a substitute in the Jewish school and privately tutored students in French and English.

With Margit as our guide, we walked to the site of the former synagogue, school, and house of Jacob and Elise, all built in 1881. This site now stands empty except for a memorial to the Jews, a sober monument listing all the names of those from Paderborn who perished during the Hitler era. The home where Jacob, Elise, and their son Max lived was burned down on the day after "Kristallnacht" in 1938, along with the synagogue.

We learned from Margit that the Chief of the Paderborn Fire Department had apparently, and courageously, countered Hitler's order to destroy the synagogue on the infamous day of November 9. Yet the next day residents in a hospital across the street saw a fire start in the

synagogue. Amazingly, the Paderborn firemen attempted to put it out, and indeed Margit showed us pictures of the burning structure, taken by a fireman who probably had a camera hidden under his coat.

Continuing on our visit, accompanied by Shmuel, we toured the present-day synagogue, where we found several remnants of the former synagogue: a cushion with embroidered Hebrew writing and part of the original Sefer Torah. On the wall I noticed an original framed document dated March 15, 1881, which commemorates the cornerstone dedication of the old Paderborn synagogue. After prayers and declarations, the document cites the names

of the officials present at the ceremony, including "des Kultusbeamten und Lehrers Herrn Jacob Nordhaus" [the religious functionary, or synagogue employee, and teacher Mr. Jacob Nordhaus].

What an incredible "find" that document was. Our "Rabbi Jacob" was probably not an official rabbi, but was in fact a teacher and cantor. After all, the term "rabbi" also means

teacher. In addition, that could explain why my grandfather Max became a proficient musician who insisted that my father and aunts practice and play their musical instruments, even when summering in the mountains above Las Vegas, New Mexico.

After visiting the town center and cathedral, Margit drove us out of town to the Jewish Warburg Street Cemetery where we found the gravestones of Jacob and Elise, a very moving experience. The cemetery is beautifully maintained, and the gravestones are impressive. My husband Michel said Kaddish (the Jewish prayer of mourning) for my great-grandfather and great-grandmother. We put pebbles on their graves.

As I think back on our three days in Paderborn, some questions have been answered. The Nordhaus family was certainly well

*(continued on p. 9)*



**My Ancestors in Paderborn** *(continued from p. 8)*

educated and respected. It appears that the family did not suffer from the discrimination or persecution that other Jews experienced in Eastern Europe or Russia in the latter part of the 1800s. Jacob Nordhaus's reputation appears to have been that of the diplomat and bringer of peace to the Jewish community he served. This is quite another side to the very stern image projected in the family portrait that we have of him. He and Elise were important leaders and teachers in the Paderborn Jewish community.

But one question remained. Why did my ancestors leave Germany? I surmise it was a combination of two factors: avoiding the harsh German conscription and the lure of a better life in America. Just as there was political turmoil in Germany during those times, and especially after the failed revolution of 1848, there was also real economic hardship in Germany in the 1800s, attested to by the massive German immigration, not just of Jews, to the United States. While our family and other Jewish families had established businesses and professions in Germany, there were clearly more opportunities in America, where brothers and cousins who had emigrated encouraged younger members of the family to join them.

My family's story, while unique in its own way, confirms some findings about other German-Jewish families who came to New Mexico in the second half of the nineteenth century. From my readings, I have learned that most of the original immigrants were teenage boys, who left Germany to avoid conscription. Once established, many returned to Germany to marry, as Charles Ilfeld did. Related families lived in neighboring villages and towns where the nexus was strong and very tight, both in the social and business realms.

The trip to Paderborn was rewarding in many ways. I was most fortunate to meet Shmuel and Tanja Rubens, and especially Margit Naarman. In addition to Margit's studies in history, philosophy, and theology, she has published books and articles on the history of the Jewish community in the region of Paderborn. She has helped survivors and their families from all over the world trace their German heritage and family history. She provided me excerpts from her book *Von Paderborn nach New Mexico: Eine Generation wandert aus – Die Geschwister Nordhaus* [From Paderborn to New Mexico: A generation emigrates – the Nordhaus siblings], written in German, which I had translated.

When I started this project with help from friends, especially Noel Pugach of the NMJHS, I realized I might not find anything

tangible about my family origins. With the help of Margit, Shmuel, and Tanja, my trip was rich in history as well as in real places and objects from the 1880s. I thank all who helped and encouraged me.

Ultimately, no trip through history can solve all the mysteries of previous eras but can certainly give us a truer sense of the past and connect us to those who went before us. For me, and I hope for those who read this account, the history of my German-Jewish ancestors is now more than dates and far-away cities. It is made up of real places and real people who are connected to my life through music and memories, education and family, people who will hopefully remain a presence in my life – our lives – for many years to come.

*Betsy Nordhaus Messeca was born and raised in Albuquerque. After schooling in the United States and work in New York City, she spent 30 years with her husband and children in France and Luxembourg. In 2000, she and Michel moved back to New Mexico to enjoy the sunny southwest and be closer to her family. She remains active in Albuquerque community affairs, especially with the Jewish Community Center, and has participated in many events of the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society. Those interested in more information, pictures, and the list of names on the Paderborn Memorial may contact Betsy at messeca@hotmail.com. ☆*

**Genealogy Corner** *(continued from p. 4)*

At present, the one million plus records in JOWBR (more are being added this month) are broken down by country: USA 400,000; Canada 126,000; Austria 150,000; Israel 103,000; South Africa 44,000; England 30,000; Poland 27,000; Romania 26,000; Ukraine 21,000; Others 80,000. As you can see, this is truly an international effort! You can register on JewishGen at [www.jewishgen.org](http://www.jewishgen.org), and then you can access JOWBR at [www.jewishgen.org/databases/cemetery](http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/cemetery).

There have been no expenditures of money so far on what I have done except for the cemetery in Orhei, Moldova. The Jewish community in Orhei is dwindling; fewer than 100 people remain, most are



*Orhei cemetery Holocaust memorial*

very old, and the cemetery is deteriorating. So we raised funds through JewishGen to pay members of the community to take pictures. They will also use the money for a cemetery restoration project. With other money that we have raised we

hope to document Jewish cemeteries in other Moldovan cities; that money will go toward helping those Jewish communities restore their cemeteries and synagogues.

*Terry Lasky lives in Centennial, Colorado, in the Denver metropolitan area. A database architect for Lockheed-Martin Aerospace Corporation for 30 years, Terry retired six years ago to pursue his genealogy hobby. Besides the JOWBR cemetery project, Terry has worked on several translations and is currently building a database of all obituaries in the Intermountain Jewish News from 1918 to the present. For more information and photos concerning Orhei, go to [www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org/Orhei](http://www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org/Orhei). ☆*

## Loewenstern Family Booklet Just Published

**A** new booklet in the series of New Mexico Jewish pioneer families has just been published about the Loewensterns of Nara Visa, New Mexico, and Amarillo, Texas. Written by Dr. Noel Pugach, it joins 13 existing studies sponsored by the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society.

Hugo Loewenstern Sr. was only 14 years old when he came to the United States from Germany in 1904. Shortly after his arrival he was brought to the New Mexico territory by his uncle, Morris Herzstein, the most prominent merchant in Clayton. After a brief apprenticeship in the Clayton store, Morris Herzstein sent him to manage his store in Nara Visa, then a sizable, rowdy cow town located a few miles west of the Texas border.

Hugo was hard-working, intelligent, a quick learner, and a risk-taker. He would prove to be a brilliant and resourceful businessman. Within a few years Hugo was made a partner in the store and later bought it from Morris. Over a period of 20 years, Hugo made it a very successful enterprise. He also went into ranching and became famous for his prized Registered Herefords, which he sold to Indian tribes throughout the Southwest and Florida.

Hugo married Mildred Henderson, a gentle woman from Iowa. They were wed in a Jewish ceremony conducted by Rabbi Leopold Freudenthal of Temple Aaron in Trinidad, Colorado, in the home of Simon Herzstein. Mildred agreed to raise their three children as Jews: Morris, Julia, and Hugo Jr. Two other children died in childbirth. In 1929, Hugo sold his store in Nara Visa back to the Herzstein family and moved to Amarillo, largely out of concern for the education of his children.

When he moved to Amarillo, Hugo abandoned merchandising for real estate. He

quickly learned the business and was engaged in many aspects of it. Along with partners, Hugo developed major residential subdivisions, built apartment houses, and constructed warehouses and commercial space. He established a bank and other enterprises.

Hugo became a recognized expert on real estate, especially tax law. Later his sons Morris and Hugo Jr. joined the firm, and together they shaped real estate development in Amarillo for over five decades. They became respected members of the community and were active in civic life.



*Hugo Loewenstern, Sr.*

The story of the Loewensterns mirrors in many ways the experiences of other New Mexico Jewish families NMJHS has studied. Each one of these families was unique and special, but

the Loewensterns certainly had their own fascinating qualities and tales.

For this booklet, Professor Pugach conducted video interviews of descendants of Hugo and Mildred Loewenstern. He identified other people who knew the Loewensterns and interviewed them on audio tape, by telephone, and by mail. He did additional research in family records and newspapers.

Avista Video Histories, under the direction of Lisa Witt, ably provided the professional videography, technical assistance, and supervision of the booklet's publication. This project was made possible by a generous grant from the Albert and Ethel Herzstein Charitable Foundation. ☆

### New Mexico Jewish Pioneer Families NMJHS series in print

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Booklets for New Mexico Jewish pioneer families are available for \$10.00 each from the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society.

For orders, please contact NMJHS at 505-349-4471, send an e-mail to nmjhs@jewishnewmexico.org, or write to NMJHS at 5520 Wyoming Blvd. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87109.

#### Welcome to new members

**Pam Ashley**  
**Dr. Robert Rubenstein**  
**Baron Wolman**  
**Mr. & Mrs. Henry Watkins**

**NMJHS welcomes new board member Carla Freeman.**

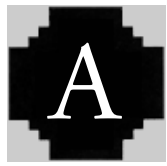
### Untouched by Nazi Hands, but Still . . . .

Noted art attorney Ron Spencer will speak on Holocaust art restitution twice on Sunday, November 16, first in Albuquerque at 11 a.m. in the Jewish Community Center and then in Santa Fe at 4 p.m. at the St. Francis Auditorium. Admission is \$10 paid at the door.

This event is being co-sponsored by the Jewish Community Center of Greater Albuquerque and the Santa Fe Jewish Arts and Culture Group. For more information contact Lee Berk at 505-988-1326 or Lee217@comcast.net.

## Roundup – Jews in Politics

by Naomi Sandweiss



As the current political season sizzles, let's take a brief look back at Jews in American political life. Since pre-Revolutionary times,

Jews have taken an active role in American policy and politics. Paving the way were early settlers such as Francis Salvador (1747 - 1776) who served in the South Carolina colonial government and was the first Jew to be killed in the Revolutionary War.

The path to political office wasn't an easy one for Jews. In 1797, Solomon Etting and Bernard Gratz petitioned the Maryland General Assembly to modify the Maryland constitution's Christian oath requirement for public office, initiating a struggle for Jewish civic equality in Maryland that didn't end until 1826, when Mr. Etting and Jacob Cohen were elected to the Baltimore City Council.

By the time of the Civil War, Jews served in both the Union and Confederate governments. Judah P. Benjamin was Confederate Secretary of State and Secretary of War. An upcoming exhibit, Jewish Life in Mr. Lincoln's City, will tell stories of Jewish Civil War life in the nation's capital and across the river in Confederate Virginia. The exhibit, developed by the Jewish Historical Society of Greater Washington (D.C.), opens in February 2009.

Most NMJHS Members are aware that New Mexico elected a Jewish Governor, Arthur Seligman, who served from 1931 -

1933, when he died in office. Fewer people know that Jewish governors have served Georgia (1801), Idaho (1915 - 1919), and Territorial Alaska (1939-58).

Utah's only non-Mormon Governor (1916 - 1919) was Simon Bamberger, a Jewish mine owner and railroad investor who helped establish a Jewish agricultural colony in Clarion, Utah. A supporter of prohibition, Bamberger saw most of his initiatives voted into law. For more information on the "Yentile" Governor of Utah, visit the American Jewish Historical Society online at <http://www.ajhs.org/publications/chapters/chapter.cfm?documentID=292>.

California currently has two Jewish women Senators. The first Jewish woman to serve in the U.S. Congress was also a Californian. Representative Florence Prag Kahn (California, 1925), assumed her husband's seat after his death in 1925 and was elected to five subsequent terms in office. Ms. Kahn's papers are housed at The Western Jewish History Center in Berkeley, California. <http://www.magnes.org/>

By the mid-twentieth century, Jewish Americans had served at state, local and national levels, in Presidential Cabinets, and on the Supreme Court. The Solomon Project, <http://thesolomonproject.org/index.php>, a companion website to the book *Jews in American Politics*, maintains a comprehensive index of Jews who have served in American politics. ✧

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### Booksale Kudos

HUGE BOOKSALE proclaimed the sign at the busiest intersection in Santa Fe, steering drivers to the Wild Oats Community Room during the Labor Day weekend. This annual event is a major fundraiser for NMJHS, and this year was another stellar success, thanks to the Herculean efforts of Shirley Jacobson and Sheila Gershen.

Thanks also to the many people who donated books and other items, who picked up the books from where they were stored during the year, who organized them by category on display tables, who helped with the sale, and who boxed up whatever remained. To all of you, we say many thanks for volunteering. But most of all, for doing a major service to the Society year after year, we thank our two leading lights, Shirley and Sheila.

### Calendar of NMJHS Upcoming Events

Check online calendar of Upcoming Events for more details at [www.nmjewishhistory.org](http://www.nmjewishhistory.org).

**Sunday, October 19, 1:00 to 3:30 p.m., "Sephardic Voices," at the Lensic Theater in Santa Fe, \$15 donation appreciated. Reception following performance at Palace of the Governors.**

**October 24 – 26, "Jews Along the Camino Real," annual NMJHS conference held jointly with the Texas Jewish Historical Society, Camino Real Hotel, El Paso, \$80 conference registration fee. Register and make hotel reservation before September 24.**

**Sunday, November 16, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m., workshop "The Joys of Genealogy," Century Bank Customer Service Center, 2108 Warner Avenue, Santa Fe, \$5 NMJHS members, \$10 non-members.**

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Membership expires on December 31

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