



## New Mexico History Museum Prepares Groundbreaking Exhibit

by Norma Libman

**A**t last it is happening. The New Mexico History Museum at the Palace of the Governors in Santa Fe is preparing to launch an exhibit that will fill in the gaps of an incompletely documented piece of the state's history. On May 22, 2016, "Fractured Faiths: Spanish Judaism, the Inquisition and New World Identities" will open at the museum. "The exhibit will look at the pressure that the Jewish community came under in Mexico in the 1500s and early 1600s, then move to New Mexico and look at contemporary people and how they identify today," says Ron Duncan Hart, anthropologist and publisher/owner of Gaon Books in Santa Fe, who has been working on the exhibit with museum curators from as early as 2012.

More than 10 years ago, the museum had an extensive exhibit about the contribution of Ashkenazi Jews to New Mexico culture. But never before has it concentrated on Spanish-Jewish history in this state. Now, with the help of



*Helene Merrin Singer*

Santa Fe philanthropist Helene Merrin Singer and other donors, this aspect of the Jewish story will finally be told.

According to curator Josef Diaz, the museum is borrowing artifacts from various other museums such as Museo Franz Mayer and Museo Nacional de Arte in Mexico City, Hispanic Society of America in New York, and the



*Ron Duncan Hart, anthropologist/publisher*

Catholic Cathedral Basilica de Guadalupe in Mexico City. This is necessary because, he says, there aren't enough artifacts available within our state.

"One of the challenges in organizing this exhibit," he says, "is that most of the cultural material that exists is scattered from Spain to Mexico with some in the United States. Many of these pieces have never left the country of origin and require special casework, security, and controlled environmental conditions. They are coming to a place with a very dry climate so we must create mini micro-environments for many of these pieces." The exhibit will include 17th and 18th century paintings, maps, ceramics, jewelry, books, documents, silver work, and ironwork, he says.

The project began in discussions between Frances Levine, former director of the museum; Duncan Hart; Roger Martinez-Davila, assistant professor of history at the University of Colorado-Cororado Springs and former president of the Society for Crypto-Judaic

Studies; and several other scholars, including Stanley Hordes, pioneer researcher in this field; Singer; and other donors. Duncan Hart and Martinez are also editing the book that will accompany the exhibit.

Roger Martinez-Davila, a historian of medieval and early modern Spain who has concentrated much of his work on the relationships that hold Sephardic Jews, Conversos (Jews forced to convert to Catholicism during the Inquisition in Spain, and their descendents), and Catholics together, says this exhibit is "a culmination and reflection of my dedication to understanding interreligious relationships." Now working on a book that will explore the religious and cultural blending of Jewish and Catholic families during the 15th century, he says the exhibit will be, in part, a reflection of his own family, which "helped to settle New Mexico and Texas in the 1600s and 1700s."



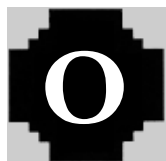
*Norma Libman*

*(continued on p. 3)*

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

New Mexico History Museum Exhibit.....	1
President's Column.....	2
A New Light on Genealogy.....	4
A Very Successful Conference.....	6
Conference Photos.....	7
Go West Young Man.....	8
Legacy Authors Receive Awards.....	9
In Memoriam.....	10
Legacy Anthology.....	11
Calendar of Events.....	12

## President's Column



Our Fall Conference in Las Cruces had an amazing turnout with 136 registered attendees. During one of the brief breaks in a tightly scheduled weekend, I was drawn into a conversation on Jewish identity. Some said that "Jewish" is an ethnicity, like Spanish, Irish, or Italian. Others said that "Jewish" is a religious identity, defined by observance of a set of ritual practices. Someone else suggested that "Jewish" is a term that has outlived its usefulness, and that definitions should be remade as Israeli, Sephardi, Ashkenazi, referring to place of origin and language spoken.



*NMJHS President  
Paula Amar Schwartz*

I would suggest that "Jewish," as it appears in our organization's name, The New Mexico Jewish Historical Society, encompasses all of these definitions, and more. Clearly, it is not our task to define who is Jewish based on degree of observance, or on which practices are or are not included. What of those who meditate daily using the Tetragrammaton, the four Hebrew letters of the unpronounced name of Divinity? Are they not Jewish? Some might not consider them so, but then even within the ranks of traditional orthodoxy, there is disagreement on what it means to be observant. Ask the Satmar, the Lubovitch, the Bratslaver.

If we define who is or is not "Jewish," how do we recognize, let alone honor, our brothers and sisters in the converso, the hidden Jewish community, who kept a remnant of Jewish traditions alive for centuries in hiding, without rabbis, texts, or even a support system? Clearly, our New Mexico history attests to the need to remain open to all of our flavors, without judgment—those who practice religiously as well as those who celebrate ethnicity. It is for this reason that our conferences may include blessings at the start of a meal, though perhaps not all meals, or the opportunity to attend a Friday night synagogue service, and rituals like Havdalah at the conclusion of the Shabbat.

The NMJHS is an organization that honors and recognizes all of our strands, entwined, like the braided challah, our symbol of celebration: from the religious practicing Jew to the descendent of the hidden secret Jews, to the nonreligious secularist, whose Jewish root is ethnic or cultural. Our task is to find ways to work together, to embrace all of our traditions and to learn from one another.☆



### Mission Statement

The New Mexico Jewish Historical Society is a secular organization that welcomes all interested people, regardless of religious affiliation. Its mission is to promote greater understanding and knowledge of New Mexico's Jewish history within a broad cultural context.

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**The New Mexico History Museum** *(continued from p. 1)*

Martinez-Davila says this diasporic history “that began in Jerusalem, resided in Spain for over 1,500 years, and then concluded in far-flung New Mexico” had to be told. He credits many with helping to make it possible, including “the foundational research of Dr. Stanley Hordes, the arresting photography of the late Cary Herz, the personal mission of Frances Levine, and our exhibition committee remaining steadfast in light of many challenges.”



*Josef Diaz, curator*

Mexican crypto-Jews authentic? (Crypto-Jews are Conversos who continue to practice Judaism in secret to this day.) This is why this exhibit is so very important. We are not only able to highlight Sephardic Jewish history and culture, but also able to explore the creation of Jewish converts to Catholicism in the Americas, and present intriguing evidence that suggests the crypto-Jews of New Mexico hail from a Sephardic past.”

And, indeed, there have been many challenges, not the least of which was finding artifacts for display, institutions willing to lend them, and protecting them in our dry climate. But even more important, Martinez-Davila feels, has been the intellectual and cultural resistance to the idea of such an exhibit. Many requests for objects were just greeted by silence, which he feels is a result on the part of various institutions “of their inability to conceptualize and appreciate that there are Hispanic Jews and there is a Sep-

The exhibit, which is slated to run for six months, will contain such items as early Sephardic Talmuds and Torahs, an illuminated manuscript of Maimonides’ *Guide for the Perplexed*, an original manuscript of *The Edict of Expulsion*, Inquisition manuscripts for the Carvajal family (who were executed by the Inquisition in Mexico City) and much more.



*Roger Martinez-Davila, assistant history professor*

member our family lineages, our cultural practices, and we honor our past of two faiths—Catholicism and Judaism.”

The curators of the exhibit are mindful of the sensitivities within the Converso community of New Mexico. Duncan Hart says, “Those who will talk publicly are being interviewed and their statements will be available.” He adds that “some people are sensitive about their experience and prefer not to talk about it for family or other reasons, but historical and cultural information will be in the exhibit for those who are interested.”

New Mexico History Museum Director Andrew Wulf stresses that the exhibit is more than just a Jewish story. “It’s a human story,” he says, “that’s been repeated many times. People are still being persecuted today. The themes are universal and timely. We have heard pros and cons from the community, but largely there has been an outpouring of support from all people.”

Martinez-Davila points out that for Ashkenazi Jews “the exhibition is a reflection of the deep solidarity of all Jews, regardless of their ethnicity or origins.” And the Ashkenazi community has been very supportive of the exhibit, he says, as many have “made it their personal responsibility

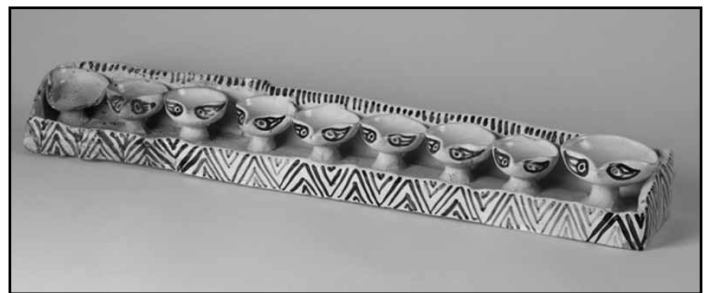


*Spain—from the former synagogue and church of El Tránsito, Toledo, 15th century*

hardic legacy in the Americas and New Mexico.”

Martinez-Davila says there is also confusion about a crucial topic: “Are New

The importance of the exhibit, Martinez-Davila says, is that it helps explain the origins of Hispano Catholics and crypto-Jews, and it demonstrates that the efforts of Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand to “eliminate the Jewish faith from Catholic Spaniards . . . ultimately failed . . . because we remember. We re-



*Spain-Chanukah Lamp, 15th century c.e.*

to preserve the Sephardic memory and to champion their causes in the United States.” ✧

# A New Light on Genealogy

by Murray Tucker



**Alex Haley's *Roots***, the story of generations of his family, celebrates its 40th anniversary in 2016. This docudrama inspired many of us to pursue

our own roots, and I was one of those so influenced. The original task was time consuming and often frustrating. For a Jew, documentation for most of my forebears did not exist before Napoleon forced all under his control to take on a family name at the beginning of the 19th century. Even after taking on a family name, records were poorly kept. Cemetery records and tombstones were often the best documentation we could get, other than oral accounts by older family members.

With the mass migrations of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, familial associations became fragmented. As a result, we lost track of relatives. We are not as fortunate as many of our Hispanic friends and neighbors who can trace their families to the 16th century.

**Enter DNA testing.** New Mexico has an interesting and unique historical record locked up in heredity. Until recently, the key to unlocking that record relied on hearsay, oral testimony and documentation that was often indecipherable or misleading. The secrets we might uncover through DNA testing include the connection of current New Mexico residents to residents of Mexico, and even further to ancestors from Spain.

Relevant for Jews with a northern European nexus is a potential linkage to ancestral roots. The wandering Jew has an analogy, wandering chromosomes. A simple test of an individual's DNA can aid in establishing both contemporary relationships with people in these communities as well as historical ones. It involves a swab of cheek cells from inside a person's mouth.

**The male Y-chromosome** provides the most definitive information as to the probability of two males having a common male ancestor within the past few generations. While this chromosome is relatively constant, over time mutations do occur. Thus, brothers generally have the same Y-chromosome, but a male cousin, with the same paternal grandfather, may either be the same, or have one or more deviations. As the generations separate, the similarity diminishes and the potential for having a common paternal ancestor becomes less probable.

An enhancement of genetic study goes into the components of this chromosome called SNPs (pronounced "snips") or single nucleotide polymorphisms. SNPs are the most common variant among people. Nucleotides are the building blocks of DNA. There are four that come together and separate and recombine throughout life. The portion of the Y-chromosome used for genealogical testing does not recombine. It changes or mutates slowly, allowing the researcher to postulate probability of rather long-term relationships.

Studying SNPs provides a picture of possible ancestral relationships that go beyond immediate family as seen in the Y-chromosome taken separately. This component test provides clues as to the movement of people, for example, from Spain to Mexico, and when combined with historical data, the possible reason for such moves.

Today Syrians are immigrating to Germany. In the future, perhaps a millennium, descendants will be able to detect their Syrian origin even though intermarriage and further migration have totally blurred this origin. A man might be living in Ireland and be totally surprised to learn of his kinship with another male living in Hawaii. Through generational mutations, known as STRs, Short Tandem Repeats, the Y-DNA might be as different between these two men as to make any

claim of relationship dubious. However, because SNP mutations are less frequent, the relationship can be revealing.



*Murray Tucker*

I ordered the SNP panel for myself and was surprised to find that my ancestral relationships extended to men in Spain, Switzerland, the British Isles, Italy and France. We each had a nearly identical marker (SNP). Maybe we had a common paternal ancestor. Perhaps their ancestor was Jewish and somewhere along the line a male ancestor converted. Or, perhaps the reverse was true and a male in my line converted from some other religion. Unless documents exist, this question will probably never be answered.

**Maternal DNA (mtDNA).** Each cell in our body, male or female, contains mitochondria that come from our mother and her maternal line. While our mother has two X-chromosomes, one from each parent, only the mitochondria from the maternal line is used to trace the direct maternal line, the one from the mother's mother's mother, etc. While X-DNA partially recombines, mitochondrial DNA or mtDNA does not, making it the most stable inherited factor. An in-depth study leads to a long and broad set of relationships.

The Jewish Diaspora of two millennia has led to a great deal of confusion as to our origins and to the assimilation of Jews into non-Jewish cultures, particularly the conversion to various Christian faiths, and the reverse.

Of particular interest to some residents of New Mexico is the forced conversion of Jews to Catholicism during the Spanish Inquisition. Many of those so forced kept their original faith in secret, the so-called "crypto-Jews." Not to dispar-

*(continued on p. 5)*

**A New Light on Genealogy** *(continued from p. 4)*

age their current religious practice, many New Mexicans would like to know if they could be descendants of such people or of the native population. The historical record indicates that some families fled the Inquisition's persecution to the northern part of Mexico, (known then as Nuevo Mexico) from the 16th century until the mid-19th century when New Mexico was ceded to the United States. The drawn border between the two countries is literally a line in the sand.

**Bennett Greenspan**, founder of Family Tree DNA (ftdna.com), has been a pioneer in exploring and expanding the search for our roots through testing various aspects of the maternal mitochondrial DNA and the paternal Y-chromosome. Greenspan will provide some insight on both levels when he presents a genealogy workshop on Sunday, February 28 at the Albuquerque JCC. He'll also explore the impact that direct-to-consumer DNA testing for ancestry and genealogy has had on discussions of Jewish identity.

There will be two parts to his presentation. In part one, from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m., Greenspan will discuss the Y and

mtDNA tests as well as their significance for finding close relatives now and within five or six generations. He will share his personal genetic connections to New Mexican Hispanic families.

In part two, from 1:30 to 2:45 p.m. Greenspan will discuss in-depth SNP



*Bennett Greenspan, president and CEO of Family Tree DNA*

testing that puts a new light on Jewish history and the Diaspora. Kits for testing DNA will be available for purchase.

A fee of \$20 for one session and \$30 for two will help defray the costs of bringing him to the NMJHS. For those staying through lunch, a box lunch can be reserved for \$12.00.

We encourage you to pre-register early for this unique opportunity to ensure your participation. Please go to the NMJHS website, [www.nmjhs.org](http://www.nmjhs.org), download a registration form, and return it to the NMJHS office. Payment by check is preferred but you may also use Pay Pal on the NMJHS website. ☆

*For more information, please contact Isabelle Medina Sandoval (505-474-5221) or Murray Tucker (505-982-3451).*

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## A Very Successful Conference

by Linda Goff

**T**he New Mexico Jewish Historical Society celebrated its 30th birthday, marking its official founding in 1985. The birthday party coincided with the 2015 Fall Conference held in Las Cruces on November 14 and 15. The New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum provided the setting.

None of us planning the conference and celebration imagined that we would draw approximately 135 people; our original target was 80 attendees. The presence of members of the Texas Jewish Historical Society contributed to our success. They traveled from Dallas, Austin, Houston, Temple, and Richardson and brought with them a beautiful display of pictures of Jewish settlers arriving in Texas in the 20th century. Jan Siegel Hart played the role of Anna, her maternal grandmother, who followed her husband to Texas; Debra Winegarten, past president of TJHS, participated in a panel on the “Jewish Legacies of the Southern Southwest.”

While NMJHS is a state-wide organization, the bulk of its membership is based in Albuquerque and Santa Fe. It was especially gratifying that so many of the Las Cruces and Carlsbad area Jewish communities turned out in great numbers. Temple Beth-El, its board, and Rabbi Larry Karol welcomed many of us at Friday night services and hosted a lovely Oneg. We are grateful for their support of our planning efforts over a period of 18 months. Susan Michelson, NMJHS and Temple Beth-El board member, worked extremely hard to encourage the Las Cruces community to support us.

Rick Hendricks, state historian, opened the conference with his keynote presentation: “Go West Young Man: Jewish Migration to the Southwest in the 19th Century.” (See page 8 for story.) He provided a broad context of what drew immigrants to the United States, particularly from Germany. A small number of these immigrants eventually reached the New Mexico Territory.

All of our speakers added an enormous body of knowledge about the Jewish communities of the southern Southwest. Rabbi Stephen Leon of Congregation B’nai Zion in El Paso, in particular, spoke with great emotion about his long-standing work with the Converso and crypto-Jewish communities in his city.



*NMJHS President Paula Schwartz chatting with Bettie Harvie*

Also celebrated at the conference was the 25th anniversary of the publication of Henry J. Tobias’s groundbreaking book *The Jews of New Mexico*. Henry was able to join us and presented a thought-provoking paper entitled, “A Sense of History and the Jews of New Mexico.”

Ron Duncan Hart provided an overview of an upcoming exhibit, “Fractured Faiths: Spanish Judaism, the Inquisition, and New World Identities,” at the Museum of History/Palace of the Governors in May. (See story, page 1, for details.) His presentation included slides of some of the rare pieces of artwork and artifacts that will be on display. Next year’s NMJHS Fall Conference, with a working title of “Jewish Identities: Lost, Rediscovered and Reclaimed,” will be closely tied to this exhibit. The conference will be held in Santa Fe on November 12 and 13—save the dates!

Jon Hunner, history professor at New Mexico State University, served as the Saturday dinner keynote speaker and focused on his long-term research about the life of J. Robert Oppenheimer. Jon grew up in Los Alamos and consequently holds a very special interest in the history of the city and of the Manhattan Project.



*Linda Goff*

Following Sunday’s opening presentation, “The Las Cruces Jewish Community in a National Context” by NMSU history professor Jeff Brown, a panel of seven people representing the Las Cruces and the Carlsbad Jewish communities, spoke about their family members who settled in the Mesilla Valley area and established strong Jewish family roots in the business, professional, political, religious, cultural, and agricultural sectors. Jeff Diamond of Carlsbad also spoke of the long-overdue establishment of Temple Beth-El and the dedicated work of the late Rabbi Gerald Kane.

As part of the birthday celebration, several past presidents and recipients of the Dr. Allan and Leona Hurst Award were recognized by Paula Schwartz, NMJHS president. We were fortunate to have with us past presidents Stan Hordes, Lance Bell, Noel Pugach, Dorothy Amsden, and Naomi Sandweiss. These leaders also served on a retrospective panel moderated by past board member, Harvey Buchalter.

Finally, our wrap-up panel featured Dianne Layden, Richard Melzer, and Noel Pugach who offered ideas on how we, the NMJHS, can contribute to the writing of the next 30 years of New Mexico’s Jewish history. ✧

# Fall 2015 Conference Photos



*Doña Ana County Historical Society*



*Star raffle ticket salesman Mel Schwartz*



*Conference chair Linda Goff reviews the schedule with Sally Drayer*



*Stu Simon examines a plate at the silent auction*



*Conference registration*



*Texas Jewish Historical Society exhibit*



*Paul Rhetts of LPD Press/Rio Grande Books/ Tradicion Revista*



*Henry Tobias, a distinguished conference speaker*

# Go West Young Man: Jewish Immigration to the West in the 19th Century

by Rick Hendricks



When looking at the 19th century European immigrant experience, it is useful to consider it a push-pull phenomenon.

There were factors in Europe that pushed people to emigrate from their homes in search of a better life in the United States. Some of these factors were economic stagnation, societal upheaval, and technological innovation. At the same time, there were factors pulling people to the United States, such as economic opportunity, technological innovation (particularly the steamboat), family ties, and chain migration (the process by which immigrants from a particular village follow others to the same place in a new country).

## Era of German Jewish Immigration to United States

The period between 1820 and 1880 is usually considered the era of German immigration to the United States. It is important to note that the term “German” is convenient if imprecise. Most of the approximately 150,000 Jews came from within what became in 1871 a unified Germany or from the area of influence of German language and culture, which included Alsace, Lithuania, Galicia, Moravia, Bohemia, Hungary, Poland, and Russia.

The Napoleonic Wars (1799-1815) caused widespread ruination of much of the European economy. The social revolution that swept Europe in 1848 saw calls for German unity and popular freedoms, but it failed, and the aristocracy prevailed. By the 1840s, the Industrial Revolution had brought about a transformation of manufacturing processes. One of the most important innovations of the Industrial Revolution was the introduction of the steam engine. Although the question of whether the Age of Steam displaced labor is

open to discussion, there is no question that it often reduced the need for skilled workers and therefore resulted in lower wages.

To a significant extent, gender and family issues influenced Jewish emigration from Germany. Because of limitations placed on Jewish marriage, it became an increasingly remote option for poor men and women. One significant obstacle to marriage was that in many cases it was permitted only when a place opened on the community roster. This had the effect of limiting the absolute number of Jewish marriages. This restriction had class implications, given that prospective brides and grooms had to prove their economic prospects, which effectively meant that wealthier Jews were more likely to be allowed to wed.

Another factor influencing Jewish emigration from Germany was the effect of modernization, which tended to undermine traditional Jewish economic activity, principally ambulatory entrepreneurship or peddling. Jewish peddlers acted as intermediaries between the rural peasantry and urban manufacturers. Rapid industrialization, improved production techniques, and efficient transportation all worked against peddlers. As a result of limitations on marriage and modernization, thousands of young Jewish men and women could not marry or make a living.

It is in this context that the Jewish migration from Germany to the United States began in the 1820s and 1830s. Initially, this movement was mostly young, single men, although there were also single women and some families in this early period. One interesting effect of this movement of young men was the development of female majorities in some European communities, particularly in rural areas. This contrasted with

Jewish communities in the United States that consisted of male majorities. The classic pattern that emerged was for these young men to write letters and rely on friends and relatives to find suitable mates from their home villages.

Over time, as these young women joined young men in the United States, something like equal numbers of men and women came to make up German Jewish communities in their new homes.

## German Immigrants to New Mexico

It is useful to think of German Jewish immigrants to New Mexico in the 19th century as *matryoshkas* or nesting dolls. This is because they were a very small element of a larger German immigrant population, which was, in turn, only part of an even larger movement of people into New Mexico after it opened to the United States following Mexican independence from Spain in 1821. In the early decades of this movement—the 1820s to 1840s—Jewish immigrants to New Mexico embraced Mexican culture. German men chose Mexican wives and often learned to speak Spanish. Their children grew up much the same as other young Mexicans. In terms of percentage of the population, this group had more skilled laborers than other German immigrant populations in the United States, but a smaller group of entrepreneurs accumulated most of the capital and property.

It is important to note that, in general, German Jews in New Mexico appeared to identify more as Germans than as Jews, at least to the extent that this is knowable. Censuses for the second half of the 19th century illustrate the



**Rick Hendricks,**  
New Mexico state  
historian

(continued on p. 9)



**Go West Young Man** (continued from p. 8)

significance of German immigration to New Mexico, of which German Jews formed a very small part. In 1850, the population of New Mexico was 61,547. Of these, 90.9 percent were *nuevomexicanos* (native-born New Mexicans), 5 percent Indian, .06 percent Mexican (born in Mexico), 2.6 percent (approximately 1,600) Anglo and European, and 3.3 percent foreign born. Of the latter category, Ireland and Germany provided most of the immigrants. After the 1846 annexation of New Mexico by the United States, a change in the German marriage pattern emerged, and German men chose by preference Anglo women. In 1860, the population of New Mexico was 87,304, 7.1 percent of whom were foreign born: 827 from Ireland and 569 from Germany. A decade later, in 1870, the population rose to 91,874 of whom 6.1 percent were foreign born. In this census, Germany surpassed Ireland as the home for most European immigrants to New Mexico.

At this time, most newcomers from the United States arrived from New York, Pennsylvania, Missouri, or Texas. The 1880 census recorded 119,565 residents in New Mexico, of whom 6.6 percent were foreign born. Ireland retook the lead over Germany in supplying immigrants.

The arrival of the railroad quickened the pace of immigration to New Mexico. By 1890, the population had soared to 153,593 of whom 7.3 percent were foreign born. Germany led the way in supplying immigrants, followed by England and Ireland. From 1880 to 1910, the population of New Mexico almost tripled, rising from 120,000 to 327,000. The 1900 Census noted 195,310 residents of whom 6.9 percent were foreign born, with Germany and then England leading the way. In 1910, there were 327,301 New Mexicans of whom 7 percent were foreign. For the first time, Italy was home to most

European immigrants to New Mexico, followed by Germany and Austria. German immigration to the United States was in decline by this time. The advent of World War I brought about strong anti-German sentiment, and significant German immigration did not resume until the 1930s.

By 1880, however, a new wave of Jewish emigration from Eastern Europe had begun, lasting until the imposition of immigration quotas in 1924. During this period, more than two million Jews from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Romania, and Russia fled discrimination, overpopulation, pogroms, and poverty. But that is a story for another day. ☆

*Editor's note: This keynote address was delivered to the 30th annual meeting of the NMJHS in Las Cruces on November 14, 2015.*

**Two Legacy Authors Win 2015 New Mexico/Arizona Book Awards**

by Dianne Layden



Authors Claudette Sutton and Rosemary Zibart, who wrote articles for *Legacy*, won 2015 New Mexico/Arizona Book Awards for the books

they wrote about in their articles.

Zibart's book, *Forced Journey: The Saga of Warren Berlinger*, won the award for "Fiction – Historical." *Forced Journey* tells the story of an imaginary boy who escaped Nazi Germany and found refuge in the United States. Her *Legacy* article in the spring 2015 issue told of how she came to write the book.

Zibart also contributed her poem about Gunther Aron to his "In Memoriam" in the fall 2014 issue. Aron was a Holocaust refugee who escaped as a child. When preparing *Forced Journey*, Zibart met with him and other child refugees to

hear first-hand accounts of escape and resettlement.

Sutton's book, *Farewell Aleppo: My Father, My People, and Their Long Journey Home*, won the award for "History Book – Other." Her *Legacy* article in the winter 2015 issue summarized the book in describing the life of her Syrian father, Meir Sutton. In 1941, when conditions in Syria were worsening for Jews, his family sent him to Shanghai, and he was able to enter the U.S. in 1947.

Sutton noted to me that she had no idea how extensive and fascinating Syria's Jewish history was, perhaps "because the Jewish community left Syria under such traumatic circumstances that they didn't want to get nostalgic for it."

Also, for a fall 2015 article, she interviewed Werner Gellert, co-founder with

his wife Frances of the New Mexico Holocaust and Intolerance Museum, and wrote about the lives in Shanghai of both Gellert and her father during the Holocaust years.



Dianne Layden

Kudos to Claudette and Rosemary! ☆

**The New Mexico Jewish Historical Society**  
**Call for 2016 Fall Conference Papers and Sessions:**  
**"Jewish Identities: Lost, Rediscovered, and Reclaimed"**  
**November 12 & 13, 2016**  
**New Mexico History Museum and The Lodge at Santa Fe**  
**DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION:**  
**Postmarked by March 1, 2016**  
**Email Conference Chair**  
**Ron Duncan Hart for details**  
**hart.gaon@gmail.com**

# In Memoriam David Steinborn—The Mensch

by Frances F. Williams

**T**here are people who are legends in their own minds but David Steinborn was a true legend in his time. He epitomized the realization of the American Dream, changing a small town into a thriving metropolis. Pioneers came to the Mesilla Valley well before David and left legacies and monuments. David's contributions to the development and growth of this valley were just as monumental. He changed the face of this valley, leaving his large footprint in the sand and his imprint on the landscape below the Organ Mountains. David came to Las Cruces in the early sixties and began his real estate career. With his energy, creativity, keen intellect, leadership and vision, he saw the potential of this little hamlet, reaching out to capture the potential of what Las Cruces could become. As Jeremiah prophesied in the Bible, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord. Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." And so it was with David.



*David Steinborn*

Nothing comes easy in life, but adversity develops strength and character. David knew about hardship and adversity, because his childhood introduced him to these lessons. Armed with the devotion to his faith and his community, he set out to be all that he could be, fueled by hard work, perseverance and energy and his superb intellect. He was an ardent "do gooder" and provided jobs and economic development, served on the hospital board, bank boards, and state boards, not to mention starting the teen program at Temple Beth-El. His students learned the lesson of mitzvot, giving to others, and many went on to have careers in medicine, business, education and banking, to name a few. David served as President of the Temple

for seven terms, and was instrumental in the development and building of the new Temple Beth-El, and helping to pay off the mortgage so that there was minimum debt involved. He was an avid supporter of Hospice from its beginning, as well as other charitable organizations, locally, state-wide and nationally. David served as Mayor of Las Cruces. The town had begun to expand with the influx of new industries and retirees. *Forbes* magazine named Las Cruces one of the best places to live in the United States. Under his stewardship, new services and facilities were added and expanded, and he never lost his focus on making Las Cruces a better place to live, and was active in many educational programs. Under his masterful guidance and

leadership, he led the city with transparency, insisting on open and honest government. He always remembered the tenets of his faith. He gave back to his city and his country, and left this town better than when he initially came into office. Our city flourished and continues to do so today. He has left a giant footprint in the sand, and his hard work and good deeds are reflected in many corners of this community as lasting monuments to his presence on earth. His legacy continues and we have been blessed to have known him. May his memory be for blessing.

*Editor's note: This article originally appeared in the Las Cruces Bulletin on November 13, 2015.*

## Esther Rapoport

Esther Rapoport, 95, died on October 3, 2015. She was the youngest child born to Bess and Aaron Harman and was married for 64 years to Sydney Rapoport until his death in 2003.

She worked with her husband in their hardware business for 40 years and was an ac-

tive volunteer for Jewish and other causes. She was instrumental in building synagogues in Santa Fe and Chicago. She loved to travel and made friends wherever she went.



*Frances Williams*

She is survived by her daughter Cookie and husband James Svingos of Walnut Creek, California; Eliot and wife Gail Rapoport of Santa Fe; and Alan Rapoport and partner Tess Chappuis of Santa Fe; five grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Burial took place in Chicago.

## William (Bill) Roberts

William "Bill" Lee Roberts, 83, of West Pierce Street, Carlsbad, passed away on Wednesday, August 19, 2015, at the VA Medical Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

He was born to Harry A. and Pearl M. (Bartmess) Roberts on August 22, 1931, in San Jose, California. He was raised in California and served in the United States Air Force for 16 years. Bill worked as a computer systems analyst for many years before taking early retirement and moving to Carlsbad in 1993. He and Irene J. (Goldminz) Roberts were married on February 14, 2001.

Bill was a member of the National Model Rail Road Association, Eddy County Model Rail Road Association, 7 Rivers Regulators Cowboy Action Shooting, American Legion and St. Edward Catholic Church.

He is survived by his wife Irene and daughter Margaret Roberts of Carlsbad, brother Robert Roberts and family of Napa, California. His wife is a member of NMJHS. ✦

## New Anthology of *Legacy* Articles

by Richard Melzer

**I**t was my pleasure to join the board of directors of the NMJHS in May 2014. I soon realized that I was in the company of some of the most intelligent, talented men and women I have ever met. I wondered what I could contribute to such an impressive group.

I wondered no more when I began to read old copies of the society's newsletter, appropriately named *Legacy* by its former editor Dorothy Corner Amsden. For many years the editors of *Legacy*, especially Dorothy, Naomi Sandweiss, and Dianne R. Layden, had included short historical articles in each edition of the newsletter. The articles' subjects varied, but I soon noticed that many focused on Jewish contributions in New Mexico history. I made an initial list of these articles and realized that they were like pieces of a puzzle which, when placed together, created a greater whole. The larger picture showed the significant economic, social, cultural, and political impact of Jewish individuals and families in New Mexico's past.

I had had some experience with publishing anthologies about New Mexico history. Eight of my 21 books have been anthologies, including a trilogy entitled *Sunshine and Shadows in New Mexico's Past*, published by the Historical Society of New Mexico for the state's centennial celebration in 2012. Until recently I didn't know that there's even a name for what I do. I'm called an anthologist.

I presented my proposed anthology to the NMJHS's board of directors and

could not have received a warmer reception. I knew I would need plenty of help and I received it in abundance: overall support and five chapters from then-president Naomi Sandweiss, technical assistance from Melinda Hess and Stuart Simon, and editorial assistance from Dorothy Amsden, Harvey Buchalter, and Linda Goff. Judy Basen Weinreb of the Israel C. Carmel Archives at Congregation Albert provided excellent photos, as did Harvey Buchalter at Congregation B'nai Israel. Noel Pugach contributed an excellent introduction, as well as two impressive chapters.

The easiest task was to find a title for our work. It was appropriate, given the chapters' origin in our *Legacy* newsletter, and fitting, given the project's main theme, to call the book, *The Jewish Legacy in New Mexico History*. All agreed.

Of course, most of the work had been done by the 16 authors of the 23 chapters in the book. Many were local historians, but others lived far afield, in Missouri, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, New Jersey, and even Israel. All were pleased to contribute

their works, with the understanding that 100 percent of the royalties would go to the NMJHS.

The book is divided into five sections: Religious Communities; Jewish New Mexicans on the Territorial Frontier; Trade and Tourism in the 19th and 20th Centuries; Jewish New Mexicans and World War II; and Jewish Life and Death. Chapter topics range from Abraham S. Chanin's "Billy the Kid—He Wasn't Jewish, But..." to Barbara Sofer's "Letter from Los Alamos: The Nuclear Jew-

ish Family." The book concludes with a list of suggested readings, for those who would like to learn more about Jewish history in the state.

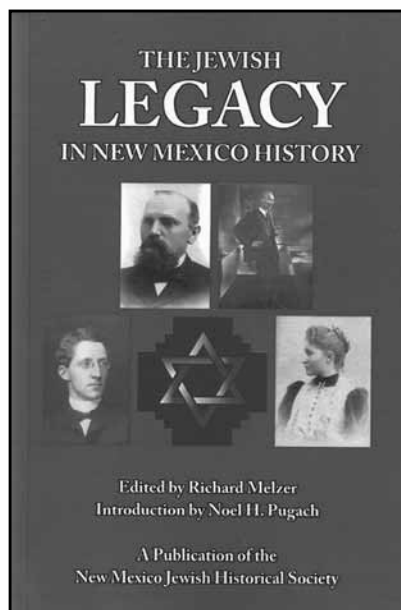
Rio Grande Books published our book ahead of schedule last summer and sales have been brisk, including at the NMJHS's recent conference in Las Cruces. The book has been nominated for several regional and national awards. In November, the book received the Best Religious Book Award from the New Mexico/Arizona Book Awards.

The finished product is a beautiful testimony to the diverse, significant contributions of the small, but important Jewish community in New Mexico.

But there is more work to be done. As Noel Pugach concluded in his introduction, *The Jewish Legacy in New Mexico History* "points to the need for future studies and investigation that the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society hopes to encourage and disseminate" with equally great success. Fittingly, the book is dedicated "To all who have told the story of New Mexico Jewry. May they inspire others." ☆



**Richard Melzer,**  
history professor  
and author



### HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF NEW MEXICO

2016 New Mexico  
History Conference  
April 14-16, 2016

Farmington Civic Center,  
Farmington, New Mexico

\*Visit [www.hsnm.org](http://www.hsnm.org) for more  
details\*

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](mailto:admin@nmjhs.org) to request a membership brochure. Alternatively, you can download a membership application from the NMJHS website [www.nmjhs.org](http://www.nmjhs.org)



## Calendar of NMJHS Upcoming Events

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

**February 28:** Genealogy Program with Bennett Greenspan, President and CEO of Family Tree DNA. JCC, Albuquerque. Two sessions: 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 to 2:45 p.m. Pre-registration is strongly encouraged.

**March 13:** What Changing Editions of the Prayer Book Tell Us About the Evolution of American Reform Judaism: A Conversation with Rabbis Citrin, Rosenfeld, and Feldman using recently donated siddurim from New Mexico's first synagogue, Temple Montefiore, as a springboard. (time and place to be announced)

**May 1:** Montefiore Cemetery Clean Up, Las Vegas, NM, 10 a.m.

**May 15:** Annual Spring Meeting, JCC Albuquerque. (time to be announced)

**May 22:** "Fractured Faiths: Spanish Judaism, the Inquisition and New World Identities." New Mexico History Museum/Palace of the Governors, Santa Fe. Opening to the public at large.

**June 5:** Special tour of the "Fractured Faiths" exhibit for Santa Fe Jewish communities. 1 p.m.