



The Passing of Henry Tobias

A pivotal member of the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society

by Harvey Buchalter

My friend, Henry Tobias died on March 28, 2021, in Dallas, Texas. He had been living with his daughter, Ann Tobias, for the past 6 months after relocating from Albuquerque. Henry was 96 years old and died of complications from a fall.

Many members of the Society know Henry as the author of *A History of the Jews in New Mexico*, still in print, after its arrival on the scene in 1990. He followed up with *Jews in New Mexico Since World War II*.

A History of the Jews in New Mexico spans the arrival of early crypto-Jews through the emigration of the pioneer Jews from Germany and Eastern Europe in the 1850s/1860s, and into the subsequent century.

Henry's sleuthing in the state archives produced *Santa Fe: A Modern History*, co-written with Charles E. Woodhouse. In addition to a colorful description of The City Different, this ever-timely book "reveals a contradiction between the commitment to preserve and expand the city's attraction for tourists and the need for employment opportunity beyond the service and tourist industry" (UNM Press, 2001). Henry was indeed prescient about the future of our state's capital city.

My personal acquaintance came long after my perusal of Henry's New Mexico histories. For the past seven or eight years, Henry was a member of the Yiddish Vinkel (Yiddish for corner, or

"spot") a group of three, four, sometimes five Albuquerque "Yiddishists" who meet on Thursday afternoons to enjoy the sounds and "tam" (taste) of our "mamaloshen" (mother tongue). We read books by grand masters of Yiddish literature, most notably the "bad boy of Yiddish literature," Sholem Asch. Thursday afternoon's reading and noshing was the high point of Henry's week.

And it was at our weekly gatherings that he revealed bits and pieces of his past. I learned that a teenage Henry played



Henry Tobias

the drums in the 40s version of a garage band at Catskill summer resorts, a story colorfully told in "Music in My Heart and Borscht in My Blood," Henry's out-of-print memoir. I also learned about Henry the GI, recounting the liberation of Paris as a 19-year-old, far from his Paterson, New Jersey, home.

In his early 20s, Henry had already mastered Russian. He also made the decision to pursue the study of European history, specifically Russian history, as his life's work. He completed his BA on the GI Bill at Ohio State University, later earning an MA and a PhD in Russian history at Yale. Henry's long career stretched from teaching at Elmira College, Kansas State University, the University of New Mexico, and the University of Oklahoma, where he authored *The Jews of Oklahoma, Newcomers to a New Land* (OU Press, 1980).



Harvey Buchalter

By far, Henry's most extensive academic work was *The Jewish Bund in Russia from Its Origins in 1905*. Bundism was a non-religious (secular) Jewish socialist movement in Russia, Poland, and Lithuania, from the 1890s to the mid-20th century. Henry was a world authority on these Jewish workers' struggles, which spawned an array of progressive, union-related movements in the early years of 20th century North America. At its

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President's Column



here's light at the end of the tunnel" has resonance as we begin to emerge from the worst periods of the pandemic.

However, we need to remain cautious to ensure we not only protect ourselves but also those around us. On behalf of the NMJHS Board, we hope each of you and your families and friends are well and in good spirits. It goes without saying, it has been a very long haul. As I mentioned in my previous message, we cannot thank you enough for your support by way of your membership, donations, and participating in our Zoom programs, which were very well attended and enjoyed by all. We were incredibly lucky to have terrific speakers and interesting topics to present. Our Program Committee will meet over the summer months to organize a slate of programs to offer beginning around late August through June 2022, our "program year."

This issue will also highlight the upcoming Fall Conference, October 30 and 31, which we will be co-sponsoring with the Texas Jewish Historical Society, as originally planned for 2020. The theme will be "The Galveston Movement: Jewish

Immigration in the Southwest." As of now, we are planning for a "hybrid" conference, an in-person as well as a simultaneous zoom in Las Cruces. Stay tuned for more information over the next few weeks as our plans begin to solidify. If we are unable to hold a hybrid conference, we will pivot to a virtual conference.



*NMJHS President
Linda Goff*

SAVE THE DATES!!!!

Our Membership Committee will also be hard at work this summer, focusing on a membership recruitment campaign. If you are interested in helping with this effort, please contact the NMJHS office at 505-348-4471 or by email, admin@nmjhs.org. Our goal is to achieve and maintain 300 memberships. Do consider a gift membership for friends and family. It is easy to do online at www.nmjhs.org, or by contacting our Administrator, Claudia Bloom.

We wish everyone a happy summer reconnecting with family and friends! ✨

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Henry Tobias (*continued from p. 1*)

height, Bundism counted hundreds of thousands of members, with Yiddish as its lingua franca. Through the decades until the mid-1950s, Henry witnessed its rise and its slow decline as a force in the American labor movement.

During his tenure at UNM, Henry forged many lifelong friendships with students and faculty alike. A singular connection took place in the late 1950s, when Ed Lewis, an 18 year-old kid from the Bronx (via my alma mater, DeWitt Clinton HS) arrived in Albuquerque to enroll as one of just a handful of Black students.

"Mirage Magazine," the UNM alumnae quarterly, described him as "An earnest, serious student who supported Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X and often wore traditional African dress."

Student and teacher became fast friends, and Ed recalled the impact Henry made on his life as follows: "He taught me how this country would be much better off if it provided its citizens with equal opportunities. He helped me navigate. He also made me realize that not all whites were bad. With all the civil rights killings [going on], one could become very bitter. Because of who Henry was and what he stood for, he taught me there were good and bad people." Ed went on to become the founding editor of "Essence," a magazine that paved a path for upwardly-bound Black women. Such was his reverence for his former teacher, that five years ago, Ed invited Henry to accompany him on a country-to-country excursion through Europe – with all expenses paid.

Dorothy Amsden (nee Dorothy Corner), a familiar face in the NMJHS, was kind enough to share a memory. As a senior in the UNM General Honors Program, Fall Semester, 1963, she was invited to co-teach a Freshman Honors Seminar with Henry. Dorothy remembers, "The discussions were illuminating, opening

up young minds to new ideas. It was a most rewarding experience for all of us."

Upon learning of his death, Dorothy said, "Henry lived a full life. He was such a kind person and brought out the best in everyone he interacted with He had great depth and compassion as well as a marvelous sense of humor. I think he touched everyone he met with his humanity."

As I did the best I could to fill in the blanks in Henry's life – there was a short obituary, no funeral service – I learned that Henry grew up with five siblings in working class Paterson, New Jersey, where his father was a house painter. It was a hotbed of leftist-Jewish youth who strived for "a better and more beautiful world" through the Young People's Socialist League (YIPSELS), which held their meetings and demonstrations in Passaic, New Jersey

In an unpublished memoir from 1992, "The YIPSELS of Passaic," Henry recounts his life as a YIPSELS firebrand: "We were finding a new religion, and its name was socialism." He recounts how his youthful idealism, his "amazing innocence" in the months before WWII, led him to become a labor organizer. But as the war ended, Henry returned and America drifted into the 1950s. The YIPSELS struggle against capitalism mellowed as its young members went on to complete their educations and strive for a piece of the middle-class pie.

The memoir goes on to say that Henry was, however, heartened by the progressive acts and aspirations of the sons and daughters of the original YIPSELS, who spearheaded civil rights and worker rights initiatives in the 1960s. They passed their values on to their own children, those of us who came to adulthood in the 1960s and 1970s.

Four or five years ago, when Henry gave up driving and moved into the assisted

living facility at Las Palmillas on Albuquerque's West Side, I helped gather and pack up his hundreds of Yiddish, Russian, and English books, articles, papers, and micro-fiche files for delivery to the National Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, Massachusetts. I discovered a tattered copy of a speech Henry had written for a New York Bundist group about some long-forgotten Bundist movers and shakers, which Henry delivered in the Yiddish he carried in his head and in his heart.

Henry griped about having to relinquish his car and his home, his independence. But his caregiver and friend, Gina Jones, and the new friends he made at Las Palmillas soon became a new source of comfort for him. Henry settled into sporadic reading – his eyesight was failing, watching classic movies in the evening, and being part of a current events discussion group among the many retired academics at Las Palmillas.

Henry is survived by three daughters, Ann, Heidi, and Ruth, and his ex-wife, Haven Tobias. To his daughters, "he was the gentlest and most devoted of fathers, instilling them with his love for the arts – musical, visual, theatrical, and literary – and regaling them with the silliest jokes known to man," according to a citation of his passing from the University of Oklahoma.

The NMJHS and his many friends will miss him. ☆

Sharing Your Family History

NMJHS continues to collect New Mexico Jewish family histories through oral interviews to share with the public and preserve in the New Mexico State Archives. If you are interested in participating, contact the NMJHS office:

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Borenstein Family History in Silver City

by Harvey Buchalter



Tucked away in southern New Mexico, Silver City and its mountains and valleys have seen it all: Mimbres culture, which produced pottery likened to that of modern art; Billy the Kid and other nefarious outlaw archetypes of the Wild West; mineral riches – copper, zinc, and silver – exploited by Eastern mining interests; a tourist boom based upon its wild beauty, and art and craft entrepreneurs whose creations lure visitors from around the globe.

Two unrelated 20th-century historical events helped put Silver City on the map. First, The New Mexico Cottage Sanitarium, founded in 1904, became famous as a national center for recu-

peration from the ravages of tuberculosis. It contributed to the growth of the city until it closed in 1924. And second, Silver City's connection to the nearby Empire Zinc Company mine. It was the site of the 1954 heralded and also controversial movie classic, "Salt of the Earth," famous for its depiction of the struggle for dignity among Hispanic miners and their wives.

However, little is known about the role Jewish Pioneers played in Silver City's commerce and civic life – even in its banking and politics. Early immigrant peddlers plied their trade from the 1870s on and eventually became prosperous businessmen playing important roles in the city's early history. One of the outstanding Pioneer Jewish families in Silver City is the Borensteins, whose history goes a long way in providing the missing

brush strokes needed to complete the portrait of Pioneer Jews in the Territory and State of New Mexico. There were also the Abraham, Schiff, and Schutz families, and possibly others who were not as well known or documented in the Silver City press.



Harvey Buchalter

On May 18, 2021, I had the pleasure of interviewing Daniel Borenstein, M.D.,



Ben, Dora, Eli, Pearl, Avrum, Fred, and Isaac in Russia

whose grandfather Benjamin and granduncle Eli arrived in the territorial New Mexico town of Silver City in 1892. Dan recalled having a great life growing up in Silver City.

The origins of the storied immigrant Ilfeld Brothers of Las Vegas and the Seligmans of Bernalillo, are in Germany. The Borensteins came to Castle Garden in New York Harbor from the Russian side of the Pale of Settlement shtetl of Shargorod, located today in the Ukrainian province of Podolia.

After some time in New York, Eli, who worked in the Jewelry District, was joined by Ben in 1890. The brothers followed the traditional, now familiar, "trail," of early Jews in America's hinterland, becoming horse-and-wagon peddlers serving miners and ranchers in the hills around Silver City.

One of the key questions asked about early Jewish settlers in New Mexico is: Why did they come to the United States in the first place? Probable reasons are

(continued on p. 5)

Borenstein Family History *(continued from p. 4)*

anti-Semitism combined with the lack of opportunity to get ahead in Podolia. Typical of early Jewish immigrants, the Borensteins spoke little about the Old Country. Nothing is known regarding a New York-New Mexico connection, and the Borensteins knew no one in Silver City, unless they had some word about mining for copper. Daniel noted, "The family was fairly prosperous." Their finery in a family portrait reveals the family's high standing in the community, and hints at the resources the family may have had before making the ocean voyage to New York.

In 1895, the brothers advanced from peddling and began selling small merchandise and varieties in Silver City on West Broadway, and then at 109 Bullard St. This location, advertised as "Borenstein Brothers Ten Cents Store," featured dry goods, clothing, shoes, glassware, and crockery. One year later, in 1896, Ben's wife Dora arrived in New York from the Ukraine with their three children: Rosa, Pearl, and Jack.

In 1898, following a number of expansions, the brothers purchased the store building. By 1900 business was rapidly taking off. The local press advertised "a sale of a carload or more of goods, consisting of boots and shoes, hats, caps, all kinds of goods, notions, etc." The Borenstein brothers decided to close their "El Paso Store" in Nogales, Arizona, and ship its merchandise to Silver City. Their half-brother, Fred, had been managing this large establishment in Arizona for a number of years. A new era in Silver City commerce had begun.

By 1907-1908, now in a new, two-story building on their site with a frontage of 52 feet and a depth of 75 feet, the scope

of goods for sale expanded once again. The store featured nationally advertised merchandise and was becoming one of Silver City's most successful and largest retail firms, according to the local press. "The 'Borenstein Block' sign was visible at the top of the new building". It was evident that the brothers were commercial innovators in retail sales, establishing separate departments for men's and women's merchandise and a separate shoe depart-

*Eli Borenstein*

ment featuring Florsheim shoes and cowboy boots, "making it one of the most complete in southern New Mexico." The Borenstein store was "the place" to shop, from its founding as a five and ten cents general store to its rebirth as "The Leader," subsequently as "Borenstein Brothers Department Store," and finally as "Borenstein's." The Borenstein brothers' travels included buying trips to New York, with one brother on the road while the other remained in Silver City.

The business continued to be run by the brothers until the passing of Eli in 1925. Ben continued managing the store until his death in 1935, when store ownership reverted to Ben's children, Jack (nee Yitzhok/Isaac) and Rosa. Dora, Ben's wife, died in 1926.

According to various newspaper accounts, the enterprising Rosa took charge of building "Modern Cleaners" and "Peck's Auto Works." In 1939, another store remodel doubled the retail space and featured two other Borenstein innovations: a ladies' ready-to-wear department and a children's section. There was even a new toy section, including Lionel train sets. (Dan divulged that he still has his Lionel train from the store's toy section.)

*(continued on p. 6)***TEMPLE AARON**

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Borenstein Family History (continued from p. 5)

Another innovation to the store was a section for seamstresses to do custom work. Among the clientele were apparently women who had need for custom-made costumes; - that is, women who earned a livelihood working in the town's brothels.

All told, the Borenstein Brothers Department Store was where "the most prominent families" shopped for over four decades. According to Dan, the store had high-end merchandise and a wide variety of products, and it stood out among the four or five other department stores in Silver City.

The pride that the city had in the Borenstein store is demonstrated in the following article from the *Silver City Enterprise*, July 27, 1944: "In more than half a century the store has held a leading place among New Mexico's famous pioneer firms and ... is one of the state's largest and completely modern department stores, serving the most extensive trade area in the Southwest."

The article continues, stating, "Borenstein's Department Store maintains a buying office in New York and is in daily touch with Eastern markets. The Dallas, St. Louis, Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York markets are visited several times a year by Mrs. Borenstein, Jack Borenstein, and Mrs. Kaye." By 1947, Silver City's customers could shop for such well-known brands as Pendleton and Levi Strauss western shirts, and Nacona cowboy boots.

The year 1964 brought a major change to the Borenstein brothers' store with

the death of Jack Borenstein, at age 63. Survivors included Jack's spouse Marjorie Borenstein and his two sons, David and Daniel. Store management shifted to Rosa and Barney, Eli's son.

Two years later, Rosa made the decision to sell the business, "... because we are not able to carry on." Initially, the store was leased to Robert P. Alexander. Dan explained "Alexander's stated policy was to make Borenstein's the leading department store in Silver City by adding many new brands

of merchandise in all departments. Not only did he fail to achieve what he stated, [but] he sold off the store merchandise and defaulted on his lease. Subsequently, the store and building were sold to the owners of Smith Music and is currently for sale" (4/2021).

The Borenstein story is not complete without filling in some of the blank spaces in the

lives of the Borenstein brothers. They were astute businessmen and risk-takers who *also* wanted the kind of things they could only dream about. For example, in an era when car ownership was the exception rather than the rule, we find Eli making his dream of automobile ownership a reality. He purchased one of only 75 automobiles in Silver City, a five-passenger Chalmers, which he sported in the 1912 Fourth of July parade.

Moreover, operating a store opened the brothers to further enterprise. In 1914, Eli closed what the local press called, "The biggest real estate deal of the year." In a transaction involving \$150,000, he became the owner of the Orient Hotel property on Texas Street. (In 1924, it was

(continued on p. 7)



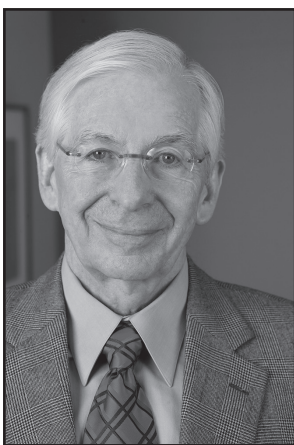
Benjamin and Dora Borenstein

Borenstein Family History (*continued from p. 6*)

renamed the Clark Hotel and was extensively remodeled. According to Dan, Ben was Eli's silent partner in the deal.)

In 1916, the once-peddler, now successful merchant, Eli became an incorporator and director of the new Union Exchange Bank. He also counted membership in the Grant County Chamber of Commerce, and was a lifelong Mason. Dan stated that lodge membership appeared to be a substitute for temple or synagogue affiliation, mainly because such institutions did not exist in or near Grant County at the time.

A year later, in 1917, half-brother Fred Borenstein, who became the proprietor of the "Ideal Laundry," purchased a Ford Runabout. Fred was a real estate developer, "selling stock with the promise of good, fat dividends" in his land holdings, while also starting a Buick and Chevrolet dealership, according to the local press.



Daniel Borenstein, M.D.

From 1933 to 1951, Jack became quite the model of a civic leader, complementing his stature as a highly successful merchant. He sparked the creation of the Silver City Merchants' Association in 1951, served on the City Council and in the Chamber of Commerce, and was a leader in the construction of the new Silver City Hospital. Dan recalls his father being a "forward thinking" businessman. He carried on the family tradition of lodge membership, as Past Exalted Ruler of the Silver City Elks and Past Grand Master of AF & AM Masonic Lodge.

The Masonic Lodge, not only for the Borenstein Brothers, but for many Jewish merchant families in the far-flung smaller cities of New Mexico, served as a substitute for organized religion. It was difficult to raise a *minyan* to recite Kaddish or have the wherewithal to celebrate a seder at Passover. For Dan and other coming-

of-age Jewish youths, outdoor pursuits in the nearby mountains replaced religious practice. Dan recalls having "not much of a religious upbringing," but several blank spots were filled in when he entered college and learned more from his fellow Jewish students.

The local press notes that Jack was "known for his amiable disposition and quick wit." Noteworthy in Jack's story, other than his accomplishments in business and civic affairs, was his

World War I service after enlisting in 1917. Aside from serving overseas, he was also a Spanish language interpreter at Camp Cody in Deming, New Mexico, having mastered Spanish in the day-to-day work of the store. Jack also served as the VFW Commander in Grant County.

The economy of Silver City boomed following World War II as the price for minerals, especially copper, took off. The town's population reached 7,500, and the time was ripe for a new enterprise. Evidently Jack and his business partner WJ (Josh) Brent, "two of Silver City's best known and successful businessmen," according to the local press, believed a new movie theater would also prosper.

After approximately two years of construction and an expenditure of \$140,000, the Gila Theater was completed, with a premier showing of "On the Town." Newspaper reports touted the Gila as a "Magnificent new theatre building ... [with] the latest in both projection and sound ... one of the finest in the Southwest."

According to Bob Graham of the *Silver City Enterprise*, the theatre's "flamboyant marquee is an unusual design of myriad neon tubes and white [which] proclaimed The Gila." He goes on to

say, "The interior of the auditorium is both beautiful and breathtaking ... and is a monument to Silver City and Grant County progress."

Showings at the Gila continued until its closing in 1964. Dan and his brother David then donated the Gila to the city in hopes it would be used as a performing arts center, and it was so used for a while. The city then sold the property, and it was converted into retail space for two stores.

The Borensteins were not the first Jewish pioneers in the Silver City area. Indeed, the Grant County area was rife with well-known (and not so well-known) names of early Jews who either lived in Silver City or had commercial ties to the area, such as the Freudenthals, Lesinskys, and Levinsons. Members of the Freudenthal and Lesinsky families served on the board of the Silver City Bank in 1884. The bank closed in 1890.

Dan Borenstein eventually entered medical school after a stint in the army, and he ultimately became a clinical professor of psychiatry at UCLA and President of the American Psychiatric Association. There is no more elevated role in a Jewish family than to have their offspring become a Jewish doctor.✧



IN MEMORIAM

Julie Gordon Yanez
1976-February 19, 2021

Henry Tobias
March 1995-March 28, 2021

Harold Melnick
1930-May 29, 2021

Wayne Bobrick
1939-May 23, 2021

History of Temple Beth El of Carlsbad

by Leon Cohen



In 2001, Irene Goldminz, current name Irene Roberts, found a small house in run-down condition in a residential area of Carlsbad, New Mexico. She, and others, thought it might be utilized as a synagogue. Until this time, the Jewish community in Carlsbad had been gathering in the homes of members of the congregation for religious services, major Jewish holidays, and congregational meals. Irene looked into the possibility of purchasing this building. It was originally built in 1952 as a church for the Seventh Day Adventists and had been vacant for some time. After Irene examined the building, members of the congregation decided it would be a good location for a future synagogue.

Irene purchased the 1,300 square-foot building and consulted a contractor for renovating it to meet the needs of the congregation. Plans included creating a worship area with pews, and a small office and library. Upon examination, she discovered the building was infested with termites, the roof needed repair, all the windows had to be replaced, and a deep cleaning of the building had to be done. It took almost one year before the building was completely repaired. Irene updated the building with a totally new kitchen, the existing two bathrooms were repaired, and one bathroom was modified for handicapped use. The entrance to the building and flooring in the kitchen were re-tiled. All the improvements were done at Irene's expense. Irene had the building insulated, as well as air conditioned and heated. The exterior of the building was originally wood, and the congregation made the decision to cover it completely with stucco, in true New Mexico fashion. A large steel Star of David was placed on the roof facing the street.

Former members Leon and Hindy Cohen, of Carlsbad, donated a refrigerator, bookcases, two leather chairs, and concrete lawn benches. Leon updated the parking area behind the synagogue and paid for a storage shed in the parking area. Jeff and Evy Diamond, also of Carlsbad, furnished the bimah, furniture to go along with it, and the



Exterior of Temple Beth El

Aron ha-Kodesh. In addition to this gift, the Diamonds provided carpeting for the synagogue a couple of years after the building was purchased. They also arranged for landscaping around the synagogue with a red flagstone walkway on one side of the building.

Three large, beautiful wrought iron Stars of David were fabricated and donated to the synagogue by Dr. Frank Westfall, a retired dentist. Unfortunately, the Stars of David were stolen, and only two were recovered.

Temple Beth El of Carlsbad was dedicated on August 24th, 2002. Carlsbad was the third city in southeast New Mexico to have a synagogue. The dedication ceremony was attended by close to 130 people. Many residents of Carlsbad were present, including almost the whole Jewish congregation and members of the City Council. Jews from Las Cruces, Ruidoso, and Roswell also arrived for the dedication.

Mark Sanford, President of the Carlsbad Jewish Congregation, read a letter sent by the Union of the American Jewish Congregations and read a proclamation by Carlsbad's Mayor, Bob Forrest.



Leon Cohen

It was also noted that the Roswell Synagogue lent their Torah to Temple Beth El for the occasion. Thanks were extended to members of the congregation, as well as to non-members, for the many donated gifts (prayer books, library books, art, etc.). Brian Taylor donated a plaque, which is mounted to the wall above the Torah. It reads in Hebrew what, translated into English is, "Know before whom you stand." Eventually, the congregation was able to purchase a used Sephardic Torah from Israel.

Religious services, and the official dedication, were conducted prior to the opening of the entrance to the synagogue. The doors were then opened, and people entered the sanctuary. Brian Taylor, who had served for several years as Carlsbad's spiritual leader, held the Torah and walked it inside as the procession gathered to view the newly constructed Ark donated by the Diamonds. A light, an eternal light above the Ark, was lit, and it remains lit for 24 hours a day. Rabbi Gerald Kane, of the Las Cruces synagogue, was one of the speakers who explained the religious services he conducted and would conduct in the future. Other participants in the services included local congregants Jeff and Evy Diamond and Irene Goldminz. Michael Cohen was introduced as having had the very first Bar Mitzvah in the whole of Eddy County. Rabbi Kane led the group in the ceremony with responsive readings, songs, and prayers. Some Jewish traditional Sabbath rituals were

(continued on p. 9)

West of Hester Street: 2021 NMJHS Fall Conference



If the stars align, we will be in Las Cruces October 29 – 31 for our postponed Fall Conference, co-sponsored with the Texas Jewish Historical Society. It focuses on the theme, “West of Hester Street and the Galveston Movement: Jewish Immigration in the Southwest.” As of now, we are planning on a “hybrid” conference with in-person attendance and a simultaneous streaming/zoom option. The venue will be the Hotel Encanto. If the public health landscape should change, we will be prepared to pivot to a virtual conference.

Our joint planning group has been meeting via Zoom since early this year to organize what promises to be a program of interesting topics and good speakers. Most of the latter had planned to join us in Las Cruces in 2020 before we went virtual with a different theme.

While the Galveston Movement itself was shortlived, its impact was widespread. Many of the new arrivals remained in the area, but others continued their journey to settle not only in Texas but also northward into Kansas, for example, or westward to El Paso, New Mexico, and Arizona. They were a different set of pioneers in the early 20th century who did not travel down the Santa Fe Trail.

“West of Hester Street” film producers Allen and Cynthia Salzman Mondell, Dallas, will serve as our keynoters on Saturday afternoon after a showing of the film. Conversation about the impact of the Movement, then and today, as well as a Q&A opportunity, will follow.

After the Mondells, a panel session will be held with TJHS and NMJHS members who are descendants of the Galveston Movement, to reflect on the effect of the Movement on their families and nearby communities over time.

As of now, other program sessions include:

- “The Legacy of the Druxman-Klein Families in Las Cruces”
- “Jewish Communities of Mexico”
- “The Meyers Brothers”

For many of us, this will provide a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with friends who we have not been able to see in person for over one year. A welcome change.

Over the next month, more detailed information will be available about the “hybrid” program, regarding hotel accommodations, program schedule, possible pre-conference activities, conference and Zoom meeting registration, and registration fees, meals, and socializing opportunities with our Texas colleagues. ☆

Temple Beth El of Carlsbad *(continued from p. 8)*

performed, including the lighting of the Sabbath candles. Rabbi Kane explained the message of Judaism – that it is a universal religion that emphasizes peace and healing.

After the dedication services, subsequent services were conducted by Brian Taylor, until a few months prior to his death in June 2009. In 2005, Brian encouraged Leon Cohen to have a Bar Mitzvah several decades past his 13th birthday. Brian prepared Leon for the Bar Mitzvah by teaching him enough Hebrew to perform the ceremony.

Several months after Brian Taylor passed away, services were conducted for a few years by Joel Siegel and Howard Katz. After they moved from Carlsbad, Leon Cohen conducted Reform services for three to four years, primarily in English, until 2014, when he relocated to Lubbock, Texas. Bill Kingston has been con-



Interior of Temple Beth El

ducting services since that time. There have been a few occasions when people temporarily residing in Carlsbad and working at WIPP and other industries would also conduct services as they were well-versed in Hebrew. Sabbath services

continue to be held bi-weekly (first and third Fridays of the month), along with major holidays.

At one time, at the height of its Jewish population, Carlsbad had between 25-30 Jewish families. The population began to dwindle in the late 1990s. Currently, as of June 2021, the known Jewish population in Carlsbad is around seven or eight individuals. Services are still held, and several non-Jews attend. The congregation enjoys commonality of services. Irene calls all of the participants to remind them of forthcoming services. One of the non-Jewish women makes a fresh Challah for each Friday night service. For many years Temple Beth El – “House of God” – has been a safe haven and desirable community for many Jews and non-Jews alike. ☆

The Passing of Julie Gordon Yanez

by Lance Bell

In memory of Julie Gordon Yanez, who touched the lives of all who knew her and worked with her. Julie held the vitally important role of Administrator for the NMJHS under past Presidents Claire Grossman, Stan Hordes and me personally. When I accepted the presidential role from Stan and took the reins of leadership of the NMHJS, I had one source of comfort: I would get to work with Julie Gordon. I was thrilled when I learned that Julie was going to stay on to handle the

important role of part-time position Administrator. Claire Grossman hired Julie and quickly integrated her into all

aspects of the NMJHS. It was only a short time before she fit right in. Everyone who crossed paths with Julie enjoyed her kindness, her caring heart, and her company. Julie had a passion for learning about New Mexico Jewish history and most importantly helping to fulfill the NMJHS



Julie Gordon Yanez

mission. When Julie announced that she was moving to Arizona, it was a sad day for us, yet we were happy to see her start the next chapter of her life.

Julie died on February 19, 2021, in Long Beach, California, after an eight-

year, hard-fought battle with cancer. Julie was born in 1976 to Robert and Joanne Gordon in Los Angeles, and was the

youngest of four siblings. After graduating with honors from USC Business School, Julie spent six years in Albuquerque, and two years in Tucson. Then Julie met the love of her life and partner to the very end, Juan Yanez. Julie and Juan were married in 2013 and moved to Long Beach. They both loved their home and agreed that their new residence would be their retirement home.

Julie lived her life to the fullest, and in the process, she enriched the lives of family and friends. Her strong, adventurous, and caring spirit led her to take trips, explore, and try new things. She inspired all who knew her and will certainly be missed by her NMJHS family. ☆



Lance Bell

Recollecting Harold Melnick

by Lance Bell

It was my pleasure to meet and work with Harold when we were both board members of the NMJHS. Harold was “sharp as a tack” and full of useful historical thoughts and information. He wore many hats while he was actively involved with the NMJHS. His final role was to proudly serve as its president. Harold was from the Greatest Generation, and although he had lived through

so much change, it was noted by many that he was as tech-savvy as just about any young person. I could count on Harold to digitally restore my old faded photographs and recommend a certain way to position myself to take an optimal picture.

Harold would share many stories of how he grew up in Texas. I remember him saying his family had an actual icebox to keep their food cold.

Harold’s favorite subject was his love and wife, “aj.” They were a team, always together and always willing to lend a hand. Harold was heartbroken when aj passed away and he did everything he could do to keep her memory alive. I will always remember Harold – may his memory be for blessing for all who knew him and loved him. ☆

Wayne “Biff” Bobrick

by Linda Goff

NMJHS board member, and pillar of the Albuquerque Jewish and business communities, Wayne Bobrick passed away May 23, 2021, after a series of health issues exacerbated by the pandemic.

Biff joined the board in 2018 and contributed to our programs and membership; he supported our mission over many years.

Wayne’s service to the community included three stints as president of Congregation B’nai Israel and volunteerism in various organizations. He was a successful owner of Wright’s Indian Art, established

in 1907 by his in-laws, Marguerite and Sam Chernoff.

Biff arrived in Albuquerque in 1957 to attend UNM, where he met his wife Tania. They were married for 61 years. As a family member and friend, he will be missed by many. ☆



NMJHS “Pioneer” Society Donors

The following members have made their commitment to ensure our Legacy will be passed down to the next generations by contributing to our Endowment Fund. We continue to work on identifying additional participants. Won't you join us today?

As of June 30, 2021

Rick & Kathy Abeles
Dorothy Corner Amsden
Anonymous (4)
Gloria Abella Ballen &
Ron Duncan Hart
Lance & Julia Bell
Wayne Bobrick, z”l
Jeffrey Brown &
Cherri Hudson Brown
Harvey & Chris Buchalter
Patricia Carlton
Alan & Diane Chodorow
Sandra & David Dietz
Stuart Feen &
Carol Sonnenshein
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NMJHS Legacy Team

Lance Bell
Linda Goff
Naomi Sandweiss

Legacy

NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW MEXICO JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Membership in NMJHS

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



Future Events

“West of Hester Street and the Galveston Movement: Jewish Communities in the Southwest” Co-Sponsored with The Texas Jewish Historical Society
October 30-31 in Las Cruces, New Mexico, via Zoom or in-person TBD



SAVE THE DATE!
Mark Your Calendars and
Watch for More Information!



NMJHS FALL CONFERENCE

“West of Hester Street: The Galveston Movement and Jewish Immigration to the Southwest”

October 30 & 31

In collaboration with the Texas Jewish Historical Society



Hotel Encanto
LAS CRUCES

In-person - Zoom
“hybrid conference”
to be confirmed