NEW MEXICO JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Legacy

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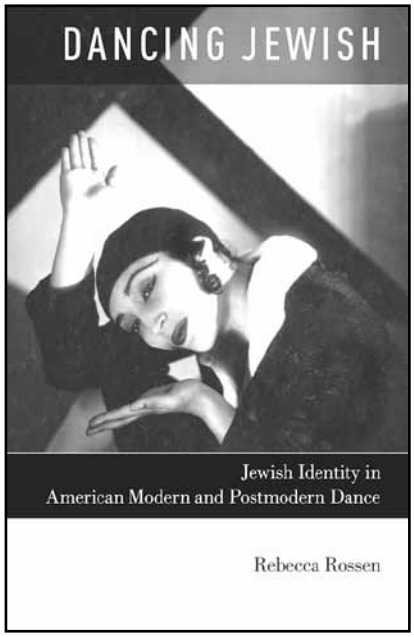
2018 Fall Conference Keynote Speaker Dr. Rebecca Rossen and Jewish Dance

by Sarah Winger

What is Jewish? And perhaps more importantly, why is Jewish "Jewish"? And since when? The answers to these questions combine to shape and form Jewish identity. "Jewish" has been created, displayed, transformed and performed throughout history. The expression of Jewish identity is the theme of this year's NMJHS Annual Fall Conference, and keynote speaker Dr. Rebecca Rossen explores this expression of Jewish identities as she discusses the impact Jewish women have made on the field of American modern dance.



Rossen became aware of Jewish expression through dance while working as a research assistant at Northwestern University. While reading dance reviews from journals in the 1930s and 1940s, she began to notice articles about dancers with Jewish-sounding names performing Jewish-sounding work, and she began reflecting on her own choreographic career and how some of her own dances had been based on her Jewish identity.

As Rossen began to contemplate and reflect, a project began to take shape: She began to develop a strategy for identifying Jewishness in dance and identified particular images or tropes that created themes of Jewish identity over time. This project expanded upon Dr. Rossen's passions for dance, choreography, history, and scholarship and eventually led to the publication of her book *Dancing Jewish: Jewish Identity in American and Postmodern Dance* (Oxford University Press, 2014).

Originally from Detroit, Rossen began dancing ballet as a young girl at her mother's direction. During her early teen years, she and her family relocated to Chicago, where she blossomed as a dancer from exposure to modern dance. She enjoyed the rich dance community of Chicago and, having always considered herself a "funny dancer," she owned with pride her "modern dancer's mind." As a high school student, she enjoyed sneaking out to take jazz dance classes on Hubbard Street, and it was during this time she transitioned from ballet to the world of modern dance. Rossen appreciated the openness of modern dance and identified strongly with the history, intelligence, cleverness, and frequent political expressions it had to offer.

Through the ever-increasing assignments of dance solos as a modern dancer, Rossen's passion grew to include that of choreographer and collaborator. Due to her background as a dancer/choreographer *and* dance historian, Dr. Rossen considers herself "bilingual". Because she understands the dancer's perspective, how a dance is constructed, and what it means to be an artist, she is very comfortable and confident in her roles as both artist and scholar. Indeed, through this dual identity, Dr. Rossen has fostered a deeper understanding of dance scholarship.

Sarah Winger

Currently associate professor in Performance as Public Practice of the Department of Theatre and Dance at the University of Texas-Austin, as well as a core faculty member at UT-Austin's Schusterman Center for Jewish Studies, Dr. Rossen is the winner of the 2015 Oscar Brockett Prize for Excellence in Dance Research. She has also published articles in *Feminist Studies, TDR: The Drama Review,* and *Theater Journal.*

Although some people unfamiliar with dance may find it difficult to discuss, Rossen insists that dance scholarship and discussion are more accessible than one would think. For example, she points out that most Jewish people are already able

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2018 HURST Awards
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President's Column

It's been a very good year, and 2019 promises to be equally good! NMJHS has been busy over the summer wrapping up its grant from the National Historical Records Advisory Board. If you visit the Archives section of our website, *NMJHS.org*, you can read about the Santa Fe Bell family history, past Fall Conferences, Hurst Award recipients, special programs, and articles from the Albuquerque B'nai Brith Lodge #336 scrapbook.

Our generous grant from the New Mexico Humanities Council, "Telling the Stories: The Personal Accounts of New Mexico Jews in Business and Community Life," has produced five interviews of individuals whose families were major community leaders in Albuquerque, Santa Fe, and Las Cruces. These interviews and others are also in the Oral Family Histories section of our website.

A 2019 grant from the Jewish Federation will allow us to conduct four new family oral history interviews, and to purchase video and audio equipment to record our Fall Conference and stand-alone programs. We can then post them on the website, not only for our members but also the public. This exciting opportunity enables us to expand our ability to share the rich, diverse history of Jewish New Mexico.

NMJHS President Linda Goff

The newly launched "L'Chaim New Mexico Life & Legacy" program provides us with the opportunity to ensure that our work will be carried on by future generations by establishing an endowment. Our Legacy team is off to a good start, engaging in conversations with members and friends to help us achieve our initial goal to obtain 18 commitments by March 31, 2019, in order to receive a $5,000 incentive grant from the Harold Grinspoon Foundation, the Life & Legacy partner of the Jewish Community Foundation of New Mexico. Check our Life and Legacy Pioneer Society participant list, to date, in this issue. Please join us to realize our goals in the first two years of this exciting program. Call the NMJHS office for more information and to have a conversation with a team member: Lance Bell, Diane Chodorow, Naomi Sandweiss, and Linda Goff.

SAVE THE DATE: Our 2019 Fall Conference will be held in Taos, November 8–10, at the Sagebrush Inn.✡

Many Thanks for Your Contributions

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Fall Conference donations will be acknowledged in Legacy Winter 2019.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF NEW MEXICO
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March 28-30, 2019
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http://www.hsnm.org/conference-2/

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Mission Statement

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

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2018 Dr. Allan and Leona Hurst Awards: Las Vegas Jewish Community

Las Vegas Jewish Community: Introduction by Naomi Sandweiss

It is my honor today to recognize the Las Vegas New Mexico Jewish Community Inc. (LVJC) and their contributions deserving of the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society's highest honor, the Hurst Award.

The New Mexico Jewish community is keenly aware of the historical significance of Las Vegas' Jewish community – the site of the first synagogue in New Mexico, Congregation Montefiore, headquarters of the prominent Ilfeld Company and the vibrant Jewish community of the 19th century. Many who participated in last year's NMJHS conference in Las Vegas were reminded of the historic contributions of Las Vegas to New Mexico's Jewish identity.

While acknowledging the community's historical contributions, the 2018 Hurst Award honors the contributions of today's Las Vegas Jewish Community. While small, it has had many accomplishments. LVJC continues to sponsor religious observances and community events, some held in the original Congregation Montefiore building which now serves as a Newman Center at New Mexico Highlands University.

From Hanukah celebrations to Israeli dance lessons, the Jewish community is alive and well in Las Vegas.

The Las Vegas Jewish Community, including tireless leaders such as Diana Presser and the Terr family, are also dedicated to preserving their history. They donated archival prayer books from Congregation Montefiore for study and understanding, which resulted in a spirited program featuring New Mexico rabbis entitled "What Changing Editions of the Prayer Book Tell Us About the Evolution of American Reform Judaism." Finally, LVJC spearheads the annual clean-up of Montefiore Cemetery, a longstanding NMJHS Society commitment.

From left to right:: Molly Smollett; Diana Presser, Secretary; Zelda McCrossen, Treasurer; Zi Pinsley. Not shown: Sheila Silverman, President; KaarenCaaplan-Rougeux, Vice-President; Nancy Terr; Anita Finer; Johanna Keenan

Please join me in congratulating LVJC as a recipient of the 2018 Hurst Award.✡

Naomi Sandweiss

Las Vegas Jewish Community: Diana Presser

I would like to thank the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society for honoring the Las Vegas Jewish Community with the Dr. Allan and Leona Hurst Award. As a history buff, I felt compelled to preserve the rich historical, religious, and cultural legacy of the 19th-century Congregation Montefiore, as well as to nurture its continuity for the future.

Throughout my 20 years' involvement with the LVJC, people have credited me with "doing so much to keep it going," but I have always acknowledged that the rebirth of this community had many midwives: initially, a steering committee comprised of Marshall Poole, Dr. David Land, and myself; Kate and Michael Immerman and others who led lay services; and Lance Tunick who provided pro bono legal advice, along with Yael Chakind's guidance, on our journey to a tax-exempt corporation with a nine-member board of directors, now funded in part by the Jewish Federation of New Mexico.

Although deeply disappointed that we could not attend the June 3rd presentation due to scheduling conflicts, our board accepts with much gratitude the Hurst award, which one day (we hope) will be hung in our Temple! ✡

2018 Conference Keynote Speaker *(continued from p. 1)*

to recognize Jewish identity and expression in film, art, and theater, which gives them some of the tools necessary to understand and engage with concert dance. It is through the languages and lenses of a dancer, a choreographer, a dance scholar, and a historian that Dr. Rossen is able to deliver such dynamic presentations exploring American Jewish identity and expression. Her keynote address on Jewish women and American modern dance will kick off this year's Fall Conference on Saturday, 10 November, at 1:00 PM. ✡

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2018 Dr. Allan and Leona Hurst Awards: Paula Amar Schwartz

Introduction by Stu Simon

Paula Amar Schwartz, Ph.D., first moved to Albuquerque in 1957 as a graduate student in psychology at the University of New Mexico. She moved with her family to Philadelphia in 1963, completing her doctorate at the Medical College of Pennsylvania. She has published extensively in this area. She served as president of the Philadelphia Society of Clinical Psychologists, and as president of the Association of Applied Psychophysiology and Biofeedback.

During the Gulf War in 1991, Dr. Amar Schwartz spent several weeks in Israel at the invitation of the Israeli government, which was developing programs for mental health professionals to work with children who were afraid to wear gas masks, a skill no child should ever need to learn.

In 1991, Paula, with her husband, Mel Schwartz, returned to Albuquerque to retire. Her community activities include service on the boards of directors of Congregation Albert and the Jewish Family Service, Jewish Community Center of Greater Albuquerque, New Mexico Jewish Historical Society, International Organization of Noetic Science, and Albuquerque Open Space Alliance.

She has been a member of the NMJHS for over 20 years and served in various positions, including vice-president for organizational development and president. She was one of the original interviewers of pioneers in the oral history project and helped with the middle school curriculum project. In 2016, Paula and her husband Mel received the Harold B. Albert Community Service Award from the JCC.

Stu Simon

Paula's interests include skiing, tennis, hiking, poetry, meditation, literature, and history. She has published two poetry books, *Beyond Time and Space* in 2008 and *Unfolding Universe* in 2013. Her film, *Challah Rising in the Desert*, completed in 2017, highlights our Jewish history of New Mexico and is in national distribution. She has been listed in *Who's Who in America* for more than 20 years.

Based on a lifetime of giving and support for the Jewish community, I believe Paula is a person who exemplifies the spirit of the Dr. Allan and Leona Hurst Award.

Paula Amar Schwartz's Acceptance Speech (Excerpt)

Thank you, Stu, President Linda Goff, members of the board of directors, and NMJHS members. I am incredibly honored to receive this award.

Mel and I made Albuquerque our home in 1991, and a year later we attended the Fall Conference of the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society in Santa Fe. Stan Hordes was president, keynote speaker, and greeter, and he even doubled as rabbi, leading optional Shabbat morning services before the conference program began.

I joined NMJHS at that conference and soon after volunteered for the Oral History Project, headed by Lisa Witt, videographer, and Noel Pugach, historian, conducting videographed interviews of descendants of Jewish pioneers. It was through that experience

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Awards: Paula Amar Schwartz *(continued from p. 4)*

I learned how to conduct the kind of interviews that told New Mexico's story through the eyes of those who lived it or heard it told in their families, a skill which, although I did not know it at the time, would lead into filmmaking as a means of documenting our fascinating New Mexico Jewish history.

Stan was the first person I consulted when asked to join the board, when I was asked to serve as president, and when my film, *Challah Rising in the Desert: The Jews of New Mexico*, was beginning and I was forming an advisory committee. We spoke about the five-strand challah as a symbol of New Mexico Jewish history. Thank you, Stan, for your leadership and mentoring!

Going further back in time, I must also thank my childhood rabbi, Solomon B. Freehof of Temple Rodef Shalom in Pittsburgh. It was his scholarship and love of history that inspired in me the love of historiography. His assistant rabbi, Floyd Fierman, my Sunday School director and teacher, later published two groundbreaking books, *Guts and Ruts*, and *Boots and Roots*, which told some stories of Jewish pioneers in the Southwest, including conversos or anusim.

Many of you have heard me say that my life has been shaped by things that seem to happen by coincidence, things that were *b'shert*, fated, meant to be, kismet! That is certainly true of my experience in the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society. It was *b'shert* that a friend's mother asked Mel and me to drive her to that Fall Conference where we met Stan, and that Lisa Witt called for volunteers for the Oral History Project, I was assigned the Seligman family, and Randy and Eleanor became good friends.

It was *b'shert* that at the NMJHS 100th anniversary of statehood conference,

Paula and Mel Schwartz NMJHS Annual Meeting June 3, 2018. Photo by Gila Yaniv

I won the raffle and an anniversary t-shirt, prompting my friend Betsy Nordhaus Messeca to say, "You are so into this history of New Mexico, you ought to join our New Mexico Jewish Historical Society board. Would you be willing?"

Rabbi Lawrence Kushner, a mentor in Jewish mysticism and meditation, wrote that "coincidence is God's way of staying invisible!" In our Jewish tradition, there is a blessing said at special moments. My grandchildren know that each time they visit, or at the first visit to the ocean after a year away, or upon seeing the mountains, they will hear "Nana's prayer." Many of you have also heard this at the showings of *Challah Rising*. I like to call this our Jewish mindfulness prayer. Please join me in the "shecheheyanu," if you know it.

I could not conclude acknowledgements and thanks without naming the force behind everything I accomplish, Mel Schwartz. My Mel has two speeds – fast forward and stop. Mel has been on fast forward with NMJHS since 1992; whether selling raffle tickets, setting up silent auction tables, or helping me make the film, *Challah Rising*.

Everything leading up to making the film was magical, and now we are in national distribution, with weekly calls from New Mexicans whose cousins saw the film in Atlanta, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Tucson, and other cities. I am so proud to have played a role in telling our story to the world. It is quite likely that *Challah Rising in the Desert* is not the whole enchilada, and we will tell more of New Mexico's Jewish story in a second film. Stay tuned.

Thank you for your belief in me. I am grateful and humbled. ✡

Editor's note: To read Paula's full speech, contact her at paulaamarschwartz@gmail.com, 505-345-8308.

Welcome New Members

Congregation Albert
Dirk Wassner
Neal Paul
Russell Toal
Temple Beth Shalom

In Memoriam

Leonard Pritikin, 1920-2018
Silver City, New Mexico

Karen Singer, 1945-2018
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Debra Winegarten, 1957-2018
Dallas, Texas

Sharing Your Family History

NMJHS will continue to collect New Mexico Jewish family histories through oral interviews to share with the public and preserve in the New Mexico State Archives.
If interested in participating, contact the NMJHS office:
5520 Wyoming Blvd. NE
Albuquerque, N.M. 87109
505-348-4471, admin@nmjhs.org

When Harlem Was Jewish: 1870-1930

by Justin Ferate, New York City Urban Historian

Editor's note: Justin Ferate presented an NMJHS program about Jewish Harlem in February 2018 at the JCC in Albuquerque

What do Harry Houdini, Richard Rodgers, Fanny Brice, Arthur Miller, Solomon Nunes Carvalho, Bennett Cerf, Yossele Rosenblatt, Milton Berle, Roxy Rothafel, Art Buchwald, Lena (Lane) Bryant, Fiorello La Guardia, J.D. Salinger, Sophie Tucker, George Gershwin, Gertrude Berg ("Molly Goldberg"), Sholem Aleichem, Oscar Hammerstein II, Henry Roth, Henrietta Szold, and Arthur Hays Sulzberger all share in common? These individuals, among countless other noted Jewish-Americans, lived in Harlem when Harlem was the third largest Jewish community on the planet Earth. These names provide only a glimpse of the extensive roster of creative individuals who transformed the world while energizing Harlem.

Prior to the creation of the nation state of Israel, New York boasted of not one, but two of the three largest Jewish communities in the world. Indeed, from about 1870 to 1930, after the Jewish populations of Manhattan's Lower East Side (350,000) and Warsaw in Poland (337,000), Harlem – with over 175,000 Jewish residents – comprised the world's third largest Jewish settlement. Harlem was a vibrant hub of Jewish religious and social institutions, cultural venues such as legitimate theatres and elegant opera houses, multiple industries, musical and visual artistry, educational institutions, and oftentimes considerable affluence. Today, just decades later, most people are unaware of the important role that Harlem's Jewish community played in American history.

A few decades ago, while I was conducting Urban History tours of New York City for New Yorkers, I became aware of numerous indicators of a Jewish presence in Harlem – mostly seen in buildings that are currently churches. Signs that these church buildings were former synagogues are the frequent images of the Star of David and depictions of the Tablets of Moses. One church even has a cornerstone indicating that it was built in 5668, or 1907 in the Gregorian calendar typically used in the United States. Near Harlem's Mount Morris Park – once the center of Harlem's more affluent Jewish community – is today's Mount Olivet Baptist Church. On the marble pediment over the gateway to the baptismal pool (similar to a mikveh), one can still see inscribed a quotation from the Jewish prophet Habakkuk: "Jehovah is in his holy temple; be silent, before him, all the earth."

Jewish Harlem: Shearith Israel, 1907

When I began my research, the only published material dedicated to Jewish Harlem was a dissertation written by a Columbia University student, Jeffrey Gurock. While the text provides a valuable sociological study, for my purposes I needed more information about individuals, more personal connections, and more stories.

As an age-old Jewish adage states: "Why did God create humankind?" The answer is "Because God loves stories."

Justin Ferate

To capture the essence of Jewish Harlem, I wanted to learn the human stories, so I did what historians do. My years of research resulted in a slide presentation in Albuquerque earlier this year for the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society. I had followed countless strands and numerous leads: a sentence in a book here, a reference there, or a conversational mention of someone's Jewish relative who "once lived in Harlem." I trawled through synagogue histories and biographies, records of educational institutions, recordings, and, much to my delight, I often discovered enlightening and sometimes humorous stories. It was as if I were creating a gigantic jigsaw puzzle.

At one time, the most important Jewish shopping district in the United States was along Harlem's 125th Street. Harlem's Mount Sinai Hospital remains world-renowned. At one time, over half of all American Jewish university students (and an impressive number of Nobel Prize winners) studied at Harlem institutions. Even today, Harlem's Jewish Theological Seminary remains the primary educational and religious center of Conservative Judaism. Harlem's religious and social organizations, such as the Rabbi Herbert Goldstein's Institutional Synagogue ("Shul with a Pool"), transformed how American Jews connect today through such organizations as the Jewish Community Center (JCC). The services provided by Harlem's independent Young Women's Hebrew Association (YWHA) defined what services comparable organizations – Jewish or non-Jewish – provide today.

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Christian-Jewish Interfaith: YAD B'YAD

By Susie Sandager

Protestants aren't known for having epiphanies but, on occasion, even a Baptist can receive a sudden revelation. It happened to me in 1992. The message clearly communicated to me during that extraordinary experience was this: "Love Israel and the Jewish people unconditionally. Don't try to make them into Christians." As the exhilaration of that brief happening faded, my husband John, also a Christian, wisely suggested we do something special to mark and remember what had been so strongly impressed upon me during that unusual experience.

John and I chose to make a modest donation to the Hadassah Hospital in Israel. To my amazement, Michaela Karni, then president of the local chapter, insisted I become a member of the organization even though I was not a Jew. She explained that supporting Zionist ideals was the only criteria necessary for membership, and I agreed to join.

Working with Hadassah opened a door into the Jewish community, a community I previously knew nothing about. Those Jewish women taught me a lot about what it might be like to be a Jew. Perhaps I taught them some things, too. They seemed not to know of any other Christians who loved Israel. This was disturbing because my interest in Israel was not unique. Many committed Christians truly cared for, studied, and supported Israel. I wanted the Hadassah women to know I was not so exceptional.

Asking a group of Christian friends to make a collective donation to the Hadassah Hospital seemed like a good idea. It would serve as an expression of goodwill and friendship across our faith divide and benefit a very worthy cause at the same time. In October 1994, the letter I sent to 15 Christian friends generated $2,000 for Hadassah Hospital, but the donation was met with suspicion. Sylvia Goffe said, "You're telling me you wrote a letter to 15 people asking for money and the response was 18 donation checks?! What did you say in that letter? We'll need to see a copy of it!"

The history of Christian efforts to evangelize Jews had called my motives into question. As she read a copy of the letter a tear formed in the corner of her eye, and she reached over to take my hand. We could be friends. There was no hidden agenda. Many members of the Jewish community assume Christian love for Israel is wrapped up in some kind of end-time scenario, but they are mistaken. Christians who take the Bible seriously are trying to live out the Biblical mandate to support and bless Israel and her people.

Michaela Karni, Diane Chodorow
YAD B'YAD Meeting, C. 1998

Sylvia introduced me to Rabbi Paul Citrin, who from the very beginning encouraged our efforts to form a group aiming to develop respectful relationships between Christians and Jews. In 1996, *The Link* quoted his strong statement of support: "It's important, even vital, to Israel and its American Jewish supporters to have friends in the Christian community who have only the love of Israel behind their support….YAD B'YAD speaks to reconciliation with the Jewish people."

He and many other members of the Jewish clergy in New Mexico and elsewhere became speakers at the monthly meetings we organized in our homes. Shlomo Karni gave us our name: YAD B'YAD. Hand-in-Hand seemed to be the only Hebrew words we gentiles could master, and we were set on finding a Hebrew name.

Susie Sandager

A simple statement of purpose has guided our course:

It is our goal to relate to Israel and the Jewish people with kindness and respect, to be a source of solace and comfort and to be a blessing to them by standing in solidarity with them in their times of need. We strive to reverse the tainted record of Christian Witness toward Israel and to demonstrate in its place the genuine, unconditional love God asks of us. We will raise Israel often in our prayers, develop sensitivity to Jewish concerns, and become knowledgeable of her land, people, history, and faith. We will lend our talent, resources, and cooperation for important Jewish endeavors, including raising awareness of anti-Semitism and the plight of distressed Jews immigrating and resettling their homeland. The activities we organize must not be a vehicle for any activity that could be interpreted as proselytizing, but rather a hand extended to our Jewish neighbors both here and in Israel in deep apology, promised support, and love that does not require anything in return.

The statement is read at every gathering and we try to faithfully follow it. ✡

Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies Annual Conference, November 2017

by Estelle Quain

On November 5-7, 2017, the Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies held its 27th Annual Conference, an extraordinary three days of scholarly presentations, film screenings, performances, artist panels, and genealogy studies. For the first time, the conference was held in the Northeast, in the historic district of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Events were held at the National Museum of American Jewish History (NMAJH) and at Mikveh Israel, the historic Spanish and Portuguese synagogue established in 1740. Exploring the crypto-Jewish experience, international presenters shared their research, varying from ethnomusicology to literature to history, complementing personal narratives by descendants of crypto-Jews. The theme of the conference was "The Crypto-Jewish Experience in the Americas." Approximately 125 registrants attended.

This was my first experience attending an SCJS conference, and I was impressed by the variety and quality of the presentations and the overall organization. Philadelphia with its rich colonial American history was the perfect backdrop. On the morning of the first day, participants were treated to a tour of the historic district by Ben Franklin impersonator par excellence Mitchell Kramer, who told about the important role played by prominent Philadelphian Jews in the American Revolution and the founding of the United States. Among others, we learned about Haym Salomon, lead financier of the war against Great Britain, and Rebecca Gratz, the first woman in America to get a college degree (at Franklin and Marshall College) and founder of the first sectarian charity in the U.S. The afternoon featured a Genealogy/DNA Workshop with Shelly Talalay Dardashti and Adam Brown, who offered an update on recent genealogy resources and tools for those researching their Sephardic or converso background.

The conference featured two distinguished speakers: Dr. Ronnie Perelis and Dr. David Gitlitz. Dr. Perelis, who gave the keynote address, is Chief Rabbi Dr. Isaac Abraham and Jelena (Rachel) Alcalay Chair and Associate Professor of Sephardic Studies at the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies of Yeshiva University.

With cases of crypto-Jews from his new book, *Narratives from the Sephardic Atlantic: Blood and Faith*, Dr. Perelis revealed the social and spiritual complexities of crypto-Jewish life in the New World. He presented in particular the example of Luis de Carvajal, the Younger, who was an ardent believer in Judaism and risked his life – and the lives of his family – in 16th-century Mexico to help fellow conversos follow their spiritual beliefs. Carvajal was burned at the stake by the Inquisition, along with his mother and five sisters, in 1596 in Mexico City.

Dr. David Gitlitz is Professor Emeritus of Hispanic Studies at the University of Rhode Island and well-known for his books, *A Drizzle of Honey: The Lives and Recipes of Spain's Secret Jews* (co-authored with Linda Key Davidson) and *Secrecy and Deceit: The Religion of the Crypto-Jews*. Dr. Gitlitz presented "The First Practicing Crypto-Jewish Family in Mexico" about Gabriel de Castellanos and the role he and his family played in colonial crypto-Jewish life in the last two-thirds of the 16th century. Through their stories, Dr. Gitlitz told us much about the religious and economic lives of early Mexican crypto-Jews and challenged the commonly held notion that conversos came to the New World primarily to practice Judaism openly. Instead, they came for financial gain.

Estelle Quain

Conference presentations highlighted many aspects of Sephardic and crypto-Jewish culture and experience, from music to food. An artist panel featured Mark Shanker presenting his family history and spiritual journey through the etchings of Ladino proverbs for his book, *Traces of Sepharad*; Deborah Baer Mozes discussing how the crypto-Jewish themes of secrecy and dual identity are portrayed dramatically in contemporary plays performed by Theater Ariel in Philadelphia; and Hazzan Jack Kessler singing traditional and original Ladino songs to demonstrate the historical context of Sephardi music. The Robyn Helzner Trio performed a repertoire of Sephardic

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Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies
Call for Papers
Deadline: December 15, 2019
28th Annual Conference
Denver, Colorado
June 30-July 2, 2019

For full information, visit https://cryptojews.com/2019-conference-denver-colorado/

Society for Cryto-Judaic Studies *(continued from p. 5)*

and world Jewish music on the first evening of the conference. Dr. Judith Cohen, ethnomusicologist and internationally recognized Sephardic music specialist, explained and demonstrated the evolution of musical traditions in Sephardic and crypto-Jewish communities and the effect on those traditions of present-day factors like the internet and continued migration.

Helene Jawhara-Piner, culinary historian, discussed two collections of recipes from medieval times on the Iberian Peninsula. While written in Arabic, not in Hebrew (Jews read and wrote Arabic at the time), these collections from the first third of the 13th century include Jewish recipes for chicken, partridges, and adafina (a medieval Sephardic dish like cholent), which have evolved over the centuries and survive even today in Venezuelan and Colombian Jewish cuisine.

On the second and third day of the conference were presentations of personal narratives and experiences of crypto-Jews' descendants' search for identity in different regions of the Americas. Rabbi Stephen Leon spoke about his own journey from New Jersey to El Paso, Texas, where over the last 30 years he became the leading voice to which hundreds of descendants in the area and further afield have turned to in their return to Judaism. Other speakers told family stories of Portuguese-descendant crypto-Jews in South Carolina and African-American descendants of crypto-Jews from Spain; related the role of conversos and Sephardic Jewish merchants in the 17th-century sugar trade; and traced Cuba's long history of crypto-Jewish and Jewish migrations to its tiny but thriving Jewish community today.

Other presentations focused on crypto-Jewish expression in literature, including two contemporary novels about crypto-Jewish women in the Caribbean: *Days of Awe* by Achy Obejas and *The Marriage of Opposites* by Alice Hoffman. Leonard Stein spoke about writer Emma Lazarus' relationship to her Sephardic heritage and her longing for Spain, which she applied to translating medieval Sephardic poetry. Lazarus, whose poem graces the Statue of Liberty, was the most famous Jewish woman in America in her time. She connected the expulsion of the Jews with the opportunity that America offered to make a new home.

Two films about Sephardim and crypto-Jews were screened. The first was Paula Amar Schwartz's *Challah Rising in the Desert: The Jews of New Mexico*, well-known by many *Legacy* readers. Paula told the story of making the film and led a discussion with the very enthusiastic audience. The second was film clips presented by Joe Lovett from *Children of the Inquisition*, a unique film, website, and educational outreach project. The film explores the events leading up to the Spanish Inquisition and the subsequent diaspora to Portugal, the Ottoman Empire and the New World. The story is told through six present-day descendants of conversos, many of whom are just discovering their Jewish roots. Among the characters telling their stories is Doreen Carvajal who has written extensively on her converso ancestors descended from Bishop Juan Arias Dávila in 15th-century Spain.

A tour of Mikveh Israel Synagogue and visit to its sanctuary with Rabbi Albert Gabbai were also part of the conference, as well as two delicious dinners catered by the synagogue chef. These dinners were preceded by social hours.

With such a varied program and so many excellent presenters, SCJS conferences are not to be missed! In 2018, a one-day conference in collaboration with the St. Augustine, Florida, Jewish Historical Society will be held on December 9, 2018. The next annual conference will be held in Denver, Colorado, on June 30-July 2, 2019. Visit the SCJS website, *cryptojews.com*, for further details. ✡

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NMJHS announces its LIFE & LEGACY "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 new Endowment Fund. We need your help to reach our first year goal of securing 18 Letters of Intent by March 2019.

Won't you join us today?

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Anne Frank Exhibit Returns to New Mexico in 2019

by Dianne Layden

New Mexico Human Rights Projects has partnered with the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, to participate in a worldwide tour of their exhibition, "Anne Frank – A History for Today". The exhibit will be shown in 40 countries.

Regina Turner, Photo by NMHRP Staff

Regina Turner, NMHRP Founder & Executive Director, announced the exhibit would be shown from January-March 2019 at four schools in Albuquerque, one in Sandia Park, and one in Las Cruces. Anne Frank House staff will train students to be exhibition guides for fellow students. Three NMHRP-sponsored Anne Frank exhibits came to Albuquerque in 1995, 2000, and 2010, reaching more than 200,000 visitors, primarily students.

Turner initiated and served as the first coordinator of the Jewish Family Service Holocaust Survivor Services program in 1996-2007. She has organized and participated in numerous programs about the Holocaust for students and the general public, including the Yom Ha'Shoah programs in 2003, 2012, and 2018, "Day of Remembrance" in 2006, at which students heard the stories of six Holocaust survivors at the Albuquerque Convention Center, a 2014 UNM student special events program featuring local survivors' testimonials, and in 2016, the Global Embassy Activists for Peace recognition ceremony for local Holocaust survivors at the State Capitol.

Turner's many awards include a 2006 Governor's Award for Outstanding New Mexico Women, a 2010 New Mexico Humanitarian Award from the Jewish Community Center of Greater Albuquerque, and the FBI Community Leadership Award in 2013.

Dianne Layden

Established in 1995, NMHRP provides speakers, workshops, essay contests, and other activities, including programs for teachers and students to combat racism, prejudice, bullying, and violence. NMHRP has trained more than 600 teachers, counselors, and social workers, and its programs have reached more than 400,000 students.

Anne Frank House, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

For information about NMHRP and the schedule for the 2019 Anne Frank exhibit, visit NMHRP.org, or contact Regina Turner, 505-730-1060, info@NMHRP.org.✡

When Harlem Was Jewish *(continued from p. 6)*

Tremendous superlatives abound for the many different histories to be found in Jewish Harlem. So what happened?

As a community, Harlem was upwardly mobile. As housing discrimination relaxed somewhat, Jews were permitted to move to Washington Heights, to parts of the Bronx, and even to a few neighborhoods in Brooklyn. Many of today's Jewish congregations located in today's Upper West Side – formerly a restricted neighborhood – originated as Harlem congregations. New York City is the second largest Jewish city in the world – surpassed, only in 2006, by Tel Aviv, which is now home to the world's largest settlement of Jews.

I am often asked, "Did the Jewish presence have any long-term impact on the community of Harlem?" Curiously, the answer is, "Not really." Today, one must truly search carefully to discover the remnants of Harlem's once tremendously rich Jewish heritage.

Perhaps a more germane question would be, "What was the impact of Harlem's Jewish community on American Jewry and the United States as a whole?" The answer is clear. One can begin to grasp the influence by simply reviewing the earlier list of just a few of Harlem's noted Jewish residents. Unequivocally, the answer is, "The impressive and long-lasting cultural, social, and religious influences of Jewish Harlem remain incalculable." ✡

Rabbi Ben Morrow, 1928-2018

Adapted from New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs Press Release, February 23, 2018

Editor's note: This article is based on a Santa Fe New Mexican *article on August 29, 2018, by editor Phill Casaus, with his permission, "Rabbi with 'sizable' presence in Santa Fe community seemed indestructible," at http://www.santafenewmexican.com.*

Rabbi Ben Morrow passed away at age 90 on August 27, 2018, in Santa Fe. He and his second wife Lara moved to Santa Fe in 1987. He served as interim rabbi at Temple Beth Shalom from late 1998 until 2000, when Rabbi Marvin Schwab was appointed. Rabbi Morrow promoted interfaith relations with Christian churches during his tenure and long after.

He was born in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. Lying about his age to enter military service, he became a bombardier for the U.S. Army Air Corps in World War II. In 1953, he was ordained as a rabbi, and spent many years teaching courses in Judaism and English literature at the University of Pittsburgh, where he earned his bachelor's degree.

Rosh Hashonah at Temple Aaron

Photo Credit: Temple Beth Shalom

He and Rabbi Schwab enjoyed a deep friendship. Rabbi Neil Amswych, the current rabbi at Temple Beth Shalom, spoke of Rabbi Morrow's sizable presence in Santa Fe, saying it was extraordinary to be with him.

Rabbi Morrow was preceded in death by his wife Lara in 2011 and by his children, Jeff and Susan. He is survived by two stepdaughters, Kim Wagner and Heidi Shala, and 11 grandchildren.

Santa Fe New Mexican editor Phill Casaus noted in his article that Rabbi Morrow "survived two plane crashes, crushing heartaches and several bouts with cancer – living a life so big and bold that maybe an action hero like Harrison Ford could've played him in the movie." Rabbi Schwab added, "if Harrison could do that with great intellect." ✡

HELP GUARANTEE THE FUTURE OF THE NEW MEXICO JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Sandra Dietz
Chair, Membership Committee

IT'S TIME TO RECRUIT YOUNGER MEMBERS

The future of the NMJHS, as well as remembrance of the past, depend on attracting a new generation of members.

A gift of membership to your child, grandchild, or great-grandchild will introduce your family's next generation to the colorful history of the Jewish people in our state. Consider membership as a wedding or Bat or Bar Mitzvah gift. And an invitation to an old friend or new acquaintance to attend an NMJHS function is a way to attract members. Help us grow our membership.

Lisa May and Hal Aqua
Rosh Hashonah at Temple Aaron
Trinidad, Colorado
Sharon Niederman Photos

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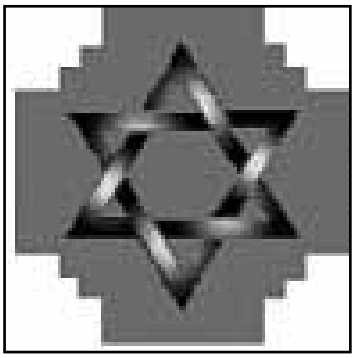
Membership in NMJHS

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



Calendar of NMJHS Upcoming Events

Check for future events at www.nmjhs.org

October 30: "Telling the Stories: The Personal Accounts of New Mexico Jews in Business and Community Life." Panel with Dr. Noel Pugach, Harvey Buchalter, Debra Wechter Friedman, and Howard Friedman. New Mexico Humanities Council Grant Program. Temple Beth El, 3980 Sonoma Springs, Las Cruces, 7:00 PM.

November 4: *Challah Rising in the Desert*. Reel Deal Movie Theater, 2551 Central Ave., Los Alamos, 1:30 PM.

November 9-11: "Jewish Identities: Challenges and Accomplishments." Annual Fall Conference, Sheraton Uptown Hotel, 2600 Louisiana NE, Albuquerque. Visit *NMJHS.org/blog/2018/06/24/2018-nmjhs-fall-conference/*, or contact Anne McCormick, 505-748-4471, admin@NMJHS.org.

March 10: "The Swastika in New Mexico History." Dr. Richard Melzer, NMJHS Speakers Bureau Program. Temple Beth El, 3980 Sonoma Springs, Las Cruces, 2:00 PM.

November-December: *Children of the Sun*, 11 AM, November 18, CCA, about children of the early kibbutzniks who were raised in collective homes, with special guests to be announced; *Ben-Gurion: Epilogue*, 11 AM, December 9, The Screen, features an interview with David Ben-Gurion and a post-film discussion with his grandson, Alon Ben-Gurion. Santa Fe Jewish Film Festival, 505-216-0672, *https://www.santafejff.org/*, admin@santafejff.org.

November-February: Elias-Axel Pettersson Concert, November 11, 2:00 PM, JCC, 5520 Wyoming NE, Albuquerque; Nosh Fest, January 13, Sandia Resort, I-25/Tramway East, 12-4 PM; Comedy Night with Keith Barany, February 9, 7:30-9:00 PM, JCC. Visit *JCCABQ.org*, or contact Phyllis Wolf, 505-348-4500, Phyllis@JCCABQ.org.