



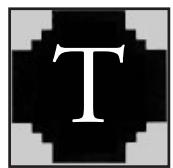
# Legacy

Newsletter of the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society

Volume 20, No. 4  
December 2006

## 2006 Annual Conference

By Noel Pugach



he nineteenth annual conference of the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society was held at the Albuquerque Hilton, November 11-12, 2006. The theme of this year's gathering was "Movers and Shakers: The Jewish Difference in the Land of Enchantment." The purpose of the three panels and keynote address was to explore the contributions which individual Jews have made in various fields to New Mexico and the nation during the twentieth century. The planning committee was very successful in securing the participation of leading figures in their respective fields, who made a very attentive and enthusiastic audience aware of the significant impact of Jews in New Mexico.

Michael (Mikey) Weinstein, a graduate of the Air Force Academy, opened the conference. Mikey has become widely known for his opposition to the practice of Christian proselytizing and intimidation at the Academy and in the armed forces in general. With a powerful array of facts, enhanced by revealing anecdotes, and a dynamic speaking style, Mikey certainly awakened his rapt listeners to the dangers posed to our basic constitutional rights and the principle of separation of church and state.

We then went into our first panel on Medicine and Science, moderated by Dr. Noel Pugach. Dr. Maurice Katz, a physicist at Los Alamos and a high official in the Department of Energy, delivered a paper which he co-authored with Dr. Louis Rosen; Dr. Rosen worked on the Manhattan Project and later became the first director of the Los Alamos Meson Physics Facility. Their paper highlighted some of the major Jewish figures who played a vital role in the development of the atomic bomb and the whole field of nuclear physics, both for military and peaceful application. These included Dr. Rosen's contributions to particle physics. The presentation was rich in anecdotes on Oppenheimer, Teller, Bethe, and other personalities.

Dr. Avrum Organick has had an illustrious career as a physician and scientist in New York, Milwaukee, Denver, and New Mexico. His presentation traced the development of drugs to treat tuberculosis, especially Isoniazid and newer Pyrazinamide. More compelling was his tale of how he and a group of Jewish doctors used them, with very good results, on their Native American patients at the Public Health facility in Fort Defiance, Arizona. Dr. Frank Hesse followed with an account of the contributions to medical practice in New Mexico by a group of Jewish doctors who started to arrive in the state in the 1950s and whose numbers increased in the following decades. He mentioned several who played important roles in the establishment of the University of New Mexico Medical School in the 1960s. He then discussed his own contributions, especially in the area of emergency medicine and rural health care, for which he has received numerous honors.



*Mikey Weinstein. Photo courtesy of Harold Melnick*

After a brief coffee break, Ms. Sarah Payne (a History Ph.D. candidate at the University of New Mexico substituting for the ailing Dr. Durwood Ball) called the panel to order on Law and Politics. Ms. Zora Hesse, a political activist who served as Democratic National Chairwoman in the 1980s and more recently on the Environmental Planning Commission, talked about the major issues that brought Jews into politics: social justice and concern for the security of the State of Israel. She related some of the major battles that she and others fought over Democratic party planks on the Middle East and the furor over the name of the student newspaper at New Mexico State University, *The Swastika*. It was an exciting and moving presentation.

Michael Sutin complemented Mrs. Hesse's talk by providing another perspective on Jewish involvement in the social justice movement in New Mexico. Mr. Sutin was a young political activist and beginning attorney with the well-known firm of Sutin, Thayer & Browne, when he got involved in the fight to secure fair housing legislation. The effort was inspired by Sheldon  
(continued on p. 3)

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**Editor:** Bobbi Jackson

**If you have any news or announcements  
of interest to our membership, please  
send it to the above address. Thank you.**

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## Message From President Harold Melnick



history.

I know it's a record snowfall because there are records - history. Someone decided long ago to record the depth of snow; it served no purpose at the time - there were no records to compare it with; it was done for the future, for posterity. Deliberate history. Much more of history was not created for posterity, just for its own time: scratchings on a cave wall, petroglyph carvings on rocks, a merchant's transaction on a stone

As I write this, I've been confined at home for the past few days by a record 30-inch snowfall. It has given me time to think about the Society, about history, about Jewish

history. Three thousand years ago our Jewish forebears recorded stories about the past and rules for the future, and we still have them today.

Most of us don't think about future historians in our day-to-day activities. I sometimes imagine someone a thousand or ten thousand years from now finding my picture or my bank records or a letter I've written, trying to understand what my life was like, just as we try to understand what life was like in New Mexico a hundred or a thousand years ago. Our Society

tries not only to retrieve the past but also to preserve for the future. Some future historian will be grateful for what we do today. Note that our newsletter now has a name befitting of our mission - Legacy.



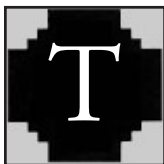
Harold Melnick, President

The ability of our Society to do this work depends on its members. Members are the source of funds and people to carry out its activities. The year 2006 has been one of our best, thanks to the work done by and funding supplied by our members.

(continued on p. 11)

## Volunteers Needed/Committee Members Needed/ Board Members Needed

By Lance Bell



The New Mexico Jewish Historical Society is a truly unique organization. We are state wide and have 350 plus members. We fulfill our mission of Jewish learning by having functions and programming around New Mexico. We have an office at the Jewish Federation of New Mexico, housed in the beautiful Jewish Community Center (JCC) in Albuquerque.

The Society functions because many of our board members freely and willingly offer their time and talent. We have many members who we want to reach out to get more involved by sharing and implementing good ideas and just helping out at events like our Book Sale, Annual Conference, and Film Programs or by helping our new administrator, Debra Blackerby, at the office.

For all of those who have helped the Society with their time and financial contributions,

I say "thank you so much." For our members who have the time, talent, ideas or willingness to contribute financially to help us fulfill our mission, I say, "Please join in our excitement of a truly unique Jewish Historical Society."

Wait, I forgot to mention all the committees that we are seeking help from our members, which are: Annual Conference, Membership, Finance, Book Sale, Allan Hurst Award, Publicity, Administrative Support, Web Site Development, Film/Lecture and other Programs.

We graciously want to thank those who have already filled the following committees: Archives (Stan Hordes) and Cemetery Clean-Up (Gunter and Geri Aron).

Please contact the Society office (505-348-4471) and talk to Debra to share your interest about getting involved, and once again, thanks! ★

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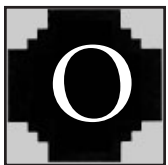
## 2006 Annual Conference - (continued from p. 1)

Steinhauser, the head of ADL in Denver. He also recounted his involvement in the civil rights movement by his younger brother, Jonathan, who now sits on the New Mexico Court of Appeals. Robert Schwartz concluded the session by fielding questions on "Law and Order." Mr. Schwartz is very well qualified to enter this arena. A career crime fighter, Mr. Schwartz has served as Bernalillo County District Attorney, was justice correspondent for KOAT-TV, and was Governor Bill Richardson's crime policy advisor. Mr. Schwartz received a barrage of questions, which he answered with aplomb.

We reassembled for a fine dinner in the evening. After being introduced by NMJHS President Harold Melnick, Former Governor David Cargo, the keynote speaker, carried on the theme with his address "Influential Jews in New Mexico Politics." Well versed in New Mexico history, Governor Cargo first reached back into nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to highlight the continuous presence of Jews in New Mexico politics and public life. A fixture in politics and public affairs for almost five decades, Cargo then talked about the political activity of Jews in more recent times.

## Dr. Allan Hurst Award

By Lance Bell



On November 12, 2006, the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society presented the 2006 - 2007 Dr. Allan Hurst Award to NMJHS board member Dr. Noel Pugach during the Society's annual fall conference.

The award, named in memory of one of the Society's earliest founders, recognizes a person, persons, or organization that has contributed to New Mexico Jewish history, culture, and community for a substantial period of time. Previous recipients of the award include historians Dr. Stanley M. Hordes and Dr. Henry Tobias; long-time Santa Fe resident, Leah Kellogg; and former Society president Claire Grossman. Last year the award was given to Rabbi Leonard Helman.

Playing an instrumental role in the Society's Video History Project that brought to the public 13 booklets on pioneer New Mexico Jewish families, Dr. Pugach helped train the

He knew many of them intimately. The governor then took questions on a wide variety of subjects. The proceedings were then adjourned for the night.

On Sunday morning, the focus shifted to The Arts. Ms. Naomi Sandweiss moderated a panel that included two active artists. The first was sculptor Harvey Buchalter, a transplanted Yiddishist from New York. Buchalter began his fascinating presentation by talking about the negative atmosphere and limited models for Jews in the plastic arts. But then, with the use of dramatic photos, he showed how tombstone carvers used their freedom to express their imagination and creativity and in turn, inspired him to pursue his love of sculpture. He provided samples of his own work, including several of his more recent abstract pieces in wood.

Diana Bryer, a prolific painter from Los Angeles, showed dozens of slides of her work as she traced her development as an artist. Bryer was drawn to New Mexico by its beautiful natural environment and rich multicultural heritage. She showed how she fused her Jewish influences with Hispanic and Native American themes.

volunteers, conducted some of the interviews, did fund raising, and most importantly wrote the scholarly articles for the booklets. (These booklets are available for purchase through the Society office.)

Dr. Pugach began his career as an instructor at Kent State University in 1965 and received his Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin in 1967. He began his long and successful career as a professor at the University of New Mexico in 1968. In regard to Jewish history, he has taught classes on early Jewish history to 1492; modern Jewish history, 1492 to the present; and the history of the Holocaust. He has published numerous articles and reviews relating to Jew-

To conclude the session, David Steinberg brought these presentations into the larger context of Jewish involvement in the arts in New Mexico. A newspaperman with the *Albuquerque Journal* for many years, David is currently its arts writer and book review editor. Mr. Steinberg provided a broad and enlightening survey of the more outstanding figures in fields ranging from music, dance, and the representational arts.

The goals of the program committee were fulfilled. Nancy Terr did a remarkable job in organizing the entire weekend. She was ably assisted by Noel Pugach and Phil Saltz. The speakers covered a lot of ground, but it was impossible to treat all fields of activity in which Jews made contributions. At each session, the audience engaged the speakers with interesting questions. The conference ended with an excellent buffet and brief program chaired by President Harold Melnick. At the end of brunch, the Dr. Allan Hurst Award was given to Dr. Noel Pugach. We look forward to intellectually stimulating and convivial conferences in the future. ★

ish history, specifically to New Mexico Jewish history and Southwest Jewish history.



Lance Bell and Dr. Noel Pugach.  
Photo courtesy of Harold Melnick

Bringing history to a general audience, Dr. Pugach gives numerous presentations in New Mexico and elsewhere with regard to Jewish history, Holocaust studies, the Middle East, United States history, and China. Try to catch him performing his notable and acclaimed Chautauquas on President Harry S Truman or New Mexico territorial governor Lew Wallace. Dr. Pugach receives rave reviews for bringing to life the characters that he portrays.

If you have someone in mind whom you would like to nominate for next year's Dr. Allan Hurst award, please write to the Society's office. Tell us the person's name, special qualifications, and why you feel this individual should receive the award. ★



## Breadcrumbs and Magic: A Story of Tashlich

By Amichai Lau-Lavie



When I was 6 years old, my family moved from Moscow to a little town in the center of Israel. There was a park with a pond in it not far from our new house.

My brother and I spent many hours playing in the park, but the pond, we were told, was off-limits. Once, on a really hot day toward the end of the summer, we climbed the wooden fence that surrounded it, anxious for a refreshing dive, but suddenly an old man, one of the park guards, appeared out of nowhere and ordered us out.

"The pond," he frowned, "is for the Holy Fish only!" The old man refused a further explanation. "You'll see," was all he was willing to say. "Soon they'll be here."

So we began a pond watch, convinced that some magical fish family, complete with wish-fulfillment kits, would rise out of the pond. We lasted a week, finally admitting our boredom. Nothing seems to swim in that miserable pond and we soon forgot about the whole thing.

A few weeks later, Rosh Hashanah came. We didn't grow up traditionally Jewish and didn't know much about the holidays, but at school, they told us it was the Jewish New Year, a good time for new beginnings. For the first time in my life, I went to a synagogue on the first day of the holidays. Afterwards, my family went to have lunch with the Katz family, new friends who lived a few houses away.

When lunch was over, Mr. Katz stood up and said, "Well, I suggest we all gather up the leftover challah crumbs and go over to the Holy Fish Pond."

My brother and I looked at each other stunned, then stared suspiciously at our host and at everyone else around the table. Everybody was excitedly collecting crumbs from the left-over bread and putting them in paper napkins. My mother noticed our excitement and confusion and turned to Mr. Katz with a shy smile. "What are you talking about?" she asked.

He burst out laughing. "Don't you have holy fish in Russia? Haven't you ever heard of Tashlich?"

We all looked at him like he was crazy. "Don't worry," he said, "it's fun. Come with us to the park and you'll see."

I never saw the park as crowded as it was that day. Hundreds of people crowded together around the usually desolate pond. Chasidic men in full black garb, women with kerchiefs and babies and children everywhere. Everyone was facing the pond, holding prayerbooks and mumbling. People took breadcrumbs from their pockets and threw them in the pond, still mumbling. When done, they squeezed their way through the crowd, leaving someone else to take their place at the pond's edge.

I tugged at my brother's arm and we crawled through the throngs to our spot. There they were. Big silver fish, dozens of them, swimming in a frenzy, trying to gulp down every crumb thrown in. The Holy Fish! The old man hadn't lied. But I wondered why were they holy? What did they have to do with Rosh Hashanah? So many questions buzzed through my head that afternoon. I didn't know it at the time, but I had witnessed one of the oldest Jewish rituals.

On our way back from the park, Mr. Katz explained that this ritual was called Tashlich, which in Hebrew means "throw away." Traditionally done on the first afternoon of Rosh Hashanah, Tashlich is an act that symbolizes throwing away our sins so that we can have a fresh start for the New Year. Usually one throws away bread crumbs into a natural body of water, preferably one with fish that will eat the sins and make them disappear.

"So what happens to the fish?" I asked. "Don't they die from eating everyone's sins?" He laughed again. "It's not REALLY sins, you know and they are just ordinary fish. Don't take it so seriously; it's just a ritual."

Over 20 years have passed since that Rosh Hashanah. We moved out of that town shortly after that day and I never visited the "Holy Fish Pond" again. I have celebrated many Rosh Hashanah since then and every time I go to Tashlich, I remember Mr. Katz's words: "Don't take it so seriously, it's just a ritual."

So are rituals serious or are they just a game? Do rituals have any special significance below the surface? If so, many people throw crumbs representing their sins, maybe it does work and Mr. Katz is wrong.

*(continued on p. 6)*

### Know someone who is not a member?

A friend or relative? Ask that friend or relative to join the NMJHS! Every "old" member, please get busy and sign up a "new" member. A membership to the NMJHS makes a great and unexpected GIFT!

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## Genealogy Corner

### Getting the Most out of Census Records - Part I

By Nancy W. Greenberg



The year was 1998. I had found out all I could from relatives, and it was time to do some serious searching for original records. I was sitting down at the microfilm reader at our local library to see if I could find the Greenberg family in the 1920 Federal Census. Just getting there and finding the courage to figure out how to find the right film (I hoped) and then to get help threading the film on the machine was actually quite an accomplishment. I began to scroll down through the film. Wow, all these names and all of this information - some of it was hard to make out, and I didn't know what all the marks in the columns meant.

Then - there they were! What a thrill to see the familiar names all lined up as a family group, recorded with all of their neighbors. At that instant, I was transformed into a genealogy addict. They say that the most addictive things of all are the things that give us an "occasional hit." I had just gotten my first hit, and I was hooked. Since then, I have gone on to find our family members in every census that I can. I nearly always find some snippet of information that I did not know, and I have found lots of misinformation that was recorded for many reasons. (For example, Grandmother Rachel got younger throughout the years.)

In fact, Grandmother Rachel was a puzzle. The family story was that she came to the U.S. at the age of 16 from Canada, after being raised in England. However her family was supposed to have originally been from Posen, a part of German Prussia (now Poland). Her maiden name was Lipman, and she married a distant cousin, Morris Haas, also from Posen. Her death certificate stated that her father was Gabriel Jacob Lipman, and so I started searching the census records for his family. Finally, after trying many combinations of names and spellings, I discovered Jacob Lipmann living with his wife Rebeca and daughter Rachel in the 1880 census for New York City. Bingo!! When I discovered that he had arrived in 1872, was naturalized, and was a tailor, I then knew what other records could be searched. My next "stop" was the 1871 English census, and there they were, living in Manchester with another daughter, Yetta, and Jacob was working as a tailor. One of the old stories that I have since heard was that Rachel sewed handkerchiefs for Queen Victoria. Perhaps that was true too.

Just from that first 1920 record, I was able to discover or confirm the following information: address, names, relationships, ages, marital status, rental or ownership of home, "race," year of immigration, country of origin, naturalization status, year of naturalization, ability to read and write, mother tongue, ability to speak Eng-

lish, trade, place of employment, and whether the head of household earned wages or owned a business. What great information! Each census gathered different facts on family members. For example when I looked in the census for 1910, I also found out how many years the couple had been married and how many children had been born to the mother, as well as how many of those children were still living. The 1900 Federal Census even gives the month and year of birth. What a great record system to use as you start the search for your family.

So, how does one go about finding these records? The availability of the Federal census records has gotten better each year, and they

(continued on p. 7)

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## Some Fun Facts About Candles (From *Being Jewish Magazine*)

By Rena Fruchter

Chandler was the funny, sarcastic guy on the TV sitcom "Friends," but did you know that his name means "candle maker"? Jacob Rodriguez Rivera (1717-1789) certainly was not a famous TV star, but he was the most famous chandler in American Jewish history. He used sperm-whale oil to make candles that were firmer than tallow candles and therefore less likely to melt in the summer.

Until about 180 years ago, Jews tended to

use oil lamps rather than candles to celebrate Chanukah because most candles like Jacob Rivera's were made from the fat of non-kosher animals. Also, oil lamps reminded people of the seven-branched menorah in the Beit Hamikdash (the Holy Temple), which symbolized God's presence.

Since the invention of paraffin (a waxy substance made from petroleum) in the 1850s, candles have become central to

Jewish ritual practice. We light candles to inaugurate and conclude Shabbat and holidays, to search for hametz before Pesach, to memorialize the dead, and some congregations even use candles to accompany the Torah from the aron kodesh to the bimah on Mondays and Thursdays.

We light one additional candle each night of Chanukah in accordance with the principle that holiness should only increase. ★

### Breadcrumbs - (continued from p. 4)

I started researching the history and meaning of Tashlich, which led me into the world of symbolism, Jewish mysticism and many unanswerable questions. Tashlich, I've discovered, is indeed a mystery. Nobody knows for sure when, how or where the custom developed.

During the High Holidays, we are involved in the verbal process of acknowledging who

we are and how we wish to change ourselves for the better. But beyond the words we use, we "do" many things and experience the season through our bodies and not just our minds. We eat certain foods, like apples and honey and remember the taste and the mood of the holiday. We hear certain sounds, like the shofar and we re-experience something inside that goes beyond words. The sights, the smells and the feelings all amount to one

thing: an integrated awareness, in our bodies and our minds, of the New Year.

Just as our holidays would not be the same without their special foods, they would be very dull without the other "acts" we do, anything from spinning dreidels, wearing masks, or throwing breadcrumbs. Very often, the things we do, rather than the things we say, are what we remember most. ★

**Congratulations to Ann Armoza of Oakdale, New York, for winning our Name the Newsletter Contest. She will receive a one year complimentary membership to the Society.**

**In honor of the wedding of John and Liza White**  
Lance and Julia Bell

**Congratulations to Marilyn Bell On Her Special Birthday**  
Marvin and Sue Berman

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#### *Jewish Pioneers of New Mexico*



The Danoff Family

Published by The New Mexico Jewish Historical Society

**Leona Hurst, widow of Alan Hurst, has been seriously ill. NMJHS wishes her a speedy recovery.**

### The NMJHS WELCOMES the following New Members

Winifred Jacobs	Richard Lubin
Howard Jacobs	Avrum Organick
Alice Pomeranz	Robert Schwartz
Diane & Barry Wax	John & Liza White
Michael Edelman	Michael Weinstein
Maurice & Betty Katz	David Steinberg
Louis Rosen	Rita & Sandy Siegel
Frank & Zora Hesse	Rhea Bertelli
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Leon & Kathryn Rubin	
Diane Miller	

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



## Getting the Most Out of Census Records - (continued from p. 5)

are now available locally and on the Internet for many people. These are the census records that are the most familiar to us, but almost all countries had the need to find out who was living within their borders. There are other kinds of census documents that can be researched, including many from larger cities and individual states. In order to help researchers find their families, many of these have been indexed so that one does not usually have to look at every name in the census district. (Once in a while, I still have had to resort to doing this time-consuming task.)

The United States began conducting a regular census soon after the formation of our country. Since 1790, there has been one done every ten years, and most of these records have survived. (The 1890 census was burned in a fire, and very few sheets survived. The very early years also have missing records.) Federal law requires that these records be made public after 72 years, so the 1930 census did not become available until 2002, and the indexing was only recently completed.

Many names have been mis-indexed for a variety of reasons, so if you cannot find a person, it is good to check another index if you can find one. Almost all of the census years for the U.S. census and many of the English census years, have been fully indexed by Ancestry.com. This is a website that has many original records that are easily accessed from the Internet. It is a paid subscription site, but it is free to library patrons in many parts of the state. If one wants to look at the original microfilm rolls of the U.S. census documents, they are available through many libraries and the Family History Centers of the LDS Church (Church of Latter Day Saints). There are now several sites that also offer direct access through the Internet. Start by checking out cyndislist.com and rootsweb.com. Many of these sites also have general information about how to use census records effectively.

Some things to keep in mind, and information that you will need to successfully find people: Start your search with some preparation. You will need exact names (or best guesses), as well as birth and death dates. Remember that the spelling of names was extremely variable and fluid until recently. Individuals even changed the spelling of their names many times, and it is often misinterpreted by clerks and others. Birth, death and marriage dates are helpful to know, as you don't want to be searching for a family unit before it was created or if individuals are not living. If you do not have that information, make an educated guess about dates; it really will help.

The most important thing to know is LOCATION. Census records are organized by state, county, township/city and then by enumeration district. (These enumeration districts change with each census.) If you can find out the page number of the E.D. (enumeration district),

it will help you find your family faster. There might be many people with the same name in an index, so having an idea about the location and ages will save you lots of time. Write down all of this information for later reference.

Get a copy of a blank form that matches the census year. It will give you the different headings, and you can use the form to copy the information as you find it. I always copy everything onto a blank form, even though I have a photocopy of the record. Not everything is so legible on a copy, and I find that I pay more attention to the information if I write it all down.

The big genealogy rule is to start with what you know, and then go back from there. However, if you can't find a person/family in one census, go to another year. The information found in one year might help you find them in others.

There are many reasons why a person or family can't be found. Mis-indexing, mis-spelling, mis-interpretation, and poor legibility problems abound in these records, so you need to be open-minded and creative about how to seek your relatives. Remember that there might be language and literacy issues in the years following immigration that make it more likely that errors occurred. Consider asking for assistance from a more experienced genealogist; I have always found them eager to help.

Exploring census records is something that all genealogists do, and all of us are able to discover wonderful information in these small snapshots of our families as they lived in their

early homes, neighborhoods and communities. Even if you have no ambition to be a "genealogist," it is worth looking for your people so that you can get a sense of their lives in a particular time and place. Happy Hunting!

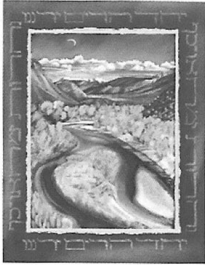
*Nancy Greenberg is an amateur genealogist in Albuquerque. She became involved in doing family history after her retirement from a professional nursing career.*

*She is active in local genealogy societies and is often called upon to teach about family history. She became heavily involved in this pursuit after a NMJHS trip to Salt Lake City in 1998. ★*



*Rachel Lipman Haas (on the left) and sister Yetta. Census information helped to identify Yetta and place this tintype as being done in Manchester, England in 1870.*

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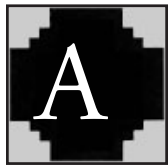
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What Seems Far Apart

Albuquerque

## Victory Ranch Alpacas

By Ken & Carol Weisner



A visit to Victory Ranch Alpacas in the New Mexico Mora Valley is like a trip to the South American *alta plano* where alpacas thrive in their natural environment. At an altitude of 7200 feet, hundreds of alpacas graze as visitors take photos.

A rare find, Victory Ranch is the only hands-on operation in the United States the public can visit 365 days a year. It is a true vertical operation where alpacas are bred and shorn, fiber is sorted and sold to spinners, fleece is spun into yarn, and garments are created.

A 3,000 square foot store doubling as a visitor center is filled with men's and women's garments, yardgoods, blankets and more - all made from soft, warm, durable alpaca. Visitors can watch spinning or weaving demonstration as well as a video on alpacas and their cousins, the llama, vicuña and guanaco.

Born and raised in Chicago, Ken and Carol had visited northern New Mexico many times. It was their dream to have a ranch where Ken could play cowboy. The 1100-acre ranch was purchased in 1990 as a cattle operation, which was unsuccessful. A visiting friend told the Weisners alpacas were becoming popular as a sheep replacement in Australia.

Knowing nothing about them, Ken and Carol bought a starter herd of 10 hucaya alpacas. "We learned by the seat of our pants and made lots of mistakes - ones that

we do not want our customers to repeat," says Carol laughingly.

A working ranch requires a lot of attention, so daughter Darcy manages the livestock and clothing store operation. She knows every alpaca by name, lineage and personality. She has been responsible for acquiring and producing top studs and improving the stock. Her husband Rudy was a medic in the Marines, a vet tech, and an expert with alpaca health care who also oversaw the operation of the store before his untimely death last year.

Ken shears the almost two hundred alpacas and handles the financial aspects of running the ranch. Carol is in charge of the fiber - sorting it and deciding what type of yarn will be made. Together they work on advertising and public relations. They make periodic trips to Peru for additions to the store and now have connections that allow them to have their own designs created exclusively for Victory Ranch. Darcy, as a professional photographer and artist, creates many of these designs.

"We have seen first hand that investing in alpacas is truly a profitable, fulfilling adventure. We have much to offer with our competitive process, prize-winning bloodlines and extensive on-going services," says Ken. Carol adds, "The joy of working hard, experiencing success and doing it all with family is priceless!"

In addition to selling prize-winning alpacas, Victory Ranch boards alpacas and llamas from southern states during hot, summer

months, as summer is mild with cool nights in the Mora Valley.

Victory Ranch Alpacas has grown and flourished over the years. Enhanced by its proximity to Taos, Angel Fire, Santa Fe and Las Vegas (New Mexico), it is rapidly becoming one of the most popular tourist attractions in northern New Mexico.

"I said goodbye to retirement long ago and haven't been on a horse for pleasure in years," says Ken. As winners of the first Grand National Championship Alpacas Obstacle prize, Ken and Carol are proud of the gentleness of their alpacas. See for yourself - it is worth a visit. ★

### The NMJHS THANKS the following Contributors

Outpost Performance Space  
Stan & Nancy Handmaker  
Jewish Community Center  
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Jewish Federation of New Mexico

Jill Levin  
Bobbi Jackson  
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Scalo's Restaurant  
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Leona Hurst

Claire Grossman  
Diane Bryer  
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Nancy Terr  
El Fidel Hotel

You make a difference because we cannot survive on membership alone. The NMJHS also wishes to thank ALL current Society members for their continued support and generosity.

**WANTED: Las Cruces NMJHS member to help with programming in Southern New Mexico. Please call 505-348-4471 or email: nmjhs@jewishnewmexico.org**



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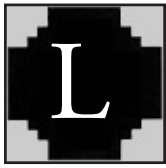
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## New Mexico – Déjà Vu. My Recent Trip to the High Country of the Land of Enchantment

By Lilo Waxman



Las Vegas, New Mexico, was my first home, in 1936, after being rescued from the Nazi regime in Germany, along with my parents and brother, by my great uncle,

Ludwig Ilfeld.

I married Arnold Waxman from Mora in January 1939 at age 18. It turned out to be one of the worst winters ever. Mora, then, was a beautiful little village of about 1,000 inhabitants. Mora Valley, surrounded by the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, part of the Rocky Mountain range, located 10 miles north of Las Vegas and about 30 miles south-east of Taos, became my second home.

Recently, my friend and companion Marie Klein and I traveled to the High Country to visit with all the people I had met (by telephone only). We flew to Albuquerque from our homes in St. Louis. On the first day, we were welcomed by one set of cousins on my side of the family, Bob and Pearl Ilfeld, the grandson of my great-uncle Ludwig. Evie and John Woods, my husband's cousin, visited with us late that evening. Evie was a "hidden child" for 10 years during the Holocaust.

Bobbi Jackson, the wonderful administrator of the NMJHS, came that day and met with Barbara Pijoan, my old friend from Corrales. Barbara lives on a mini-ranch with two horses and a huge friendly dog as her companion. Her house is adobe, with an adobe fence and gate and looks like an old hacienda. I loved it every time I visited her.

Bobbi and Barbara (who is also a board member of the Corrales Historical Society) hit it off at once and promised to visit again to exchange some vital information on Barbara's past. She was the wife of a doctor who tended the Navajo Indians on several reservations.

Lance Bell, the immediate past president of the NMJHS, visited in the afternoon. We had many telephone conversations leading up to this meeting. The next morning, before leaving Albuquerque, we had breakfast with Alice Stern Keck. I knew Alice's father

when I first arrived in Las Vegas in 1936. Alice's grandfather came to Philadelphia in 1873 as a 12 year old from Germany. His relatives there sent him on to Mora, New Mexico, to work for his uncle, Benjamin Lowenstein, in the trading post, which years later was owned by my husband's family, the Waxmans. Alice brought pictures of her ancestors which were taken in Mora at the time.

Later that morning, we drove to Chimayo, a village 25 miles northeast of Santa Fe. It was a typical New Mexico day, sunny and scenic. In the past, we always had lunch and margaritas at the Rancho de Chimayo, but this time, we also stayed overnight in their ancient adobe hacienda (no television). Seven guest rooms surrounded the patio, updated from what I feel were once living quarters, kitchen and bedrooms. The unusual restaurant was built into a mountainside on several levels. It was Marie's first time there, so we had to do the typical sight-seeing: the famous weavers (the Ortega family), who originated in Spain, and the Santuario de Chimayo (the renowned church noted for its "healing soil").

That evening, the president of the NMJHS, Harold Melnick and his wife aj, drove from their home in Santa Fe and met us for dinner. Louis Terr, who also lives in Santa Fe, joined us. I met Louis by phone months ago when I sought help in restoring the little Jewish cemetery in Mora. My ancestors, the Ilfelds, are buried there as well as Arnold's parents and relatives, the Waxmans and the Steinfelds.

The five of us spent a long, wonderful evening in the sunroom of the restaurant. We enjoyed fine, authentic Southwestern/Mexican food; a guitar provided us with an unforgettable evening.

After a leisurely breakfast with sappopollas, the small version of sopapillas, we headed for Mora. We took the High Road towards Taos, but went south at Peñasco. Again, we were impressed by the beauty of the land, the azure blue sky, the cool weather during the morning hours and the New Mexico landscape, so wonderfully painted by Peter

Hurd, husband of Henrietta Wyeth. As the highway ascended to 10,000 feet, the scenery again changed with tall pine trees mixed with golden Aspen everywhere. We stopped at the village of Tres Ritos and at the ski lodge there, called Sipapu, with mountain homes, chalets and stores. I, of course, remembered Tres Ritos from when I lived in Mora. My husband Arnold and I skied there using a rope tow that was driven by an old Studebaker (automobile) engine.

On we went and soon came to the famous "Holman Hill" (eight miles of curves and switchbacks. At the next look-out, we could see down to the town of Holman at 7,000 feet from our impressive 10,000-foot spot on the mountain. We finally reached Cleveland (a village 3 miles north of Mora) and our motel and RV Park, the Mora Inn.

We were supposed to meet our friend Jacob Regensberg from the village of Guadalupita, at 6 p.m. Since we arrived by 2 p.m. we did some sightseeing on our own and ended up at the famous Victory Ranch, known for raising Alpacas, the smaller version of llamas. The ranch is 2 miles north of Mora on the way to Guadalupita. We arrived in time for the 3 p.m. feeding and guided tour. The guide, a woman in her thirties, was terrific. She was the daughter of the owners who, we learned later, were Jewish people from Chicago. The seven Great Pyrenees dogs are gentle with visitors and staff. At night, they are the protectors of the herd against coyotes, mountain lions and wolves.

As we returned to our motel, going through Mora's main street, one city block long, with boarded-up buildings completely devastated and not rebuilt, we were appalled. We could not even locate where our store, granary and homes were once located. It seems that what was once the main street has made way to the new generations who have moved or relocated on the road from Mora to Cleveland to live on small ranchitos.

Jacob met us at 6 p.m. at the Kristi Café which is run by the wife of the motel owner, Mike Wolf. She was born in Mora. There

*(continued on p. 10)*

## Jacob Stern (March 19, 1861 - September 7, 1921)

By Alice Stern Keck



According to the 1880 Mora County Census, Jacob Stern (age 19) was living in the household of Maurice Strauss. Census reports the relation between Maurice and Jacob as "other".

Following are extracts from a 1988 letter written by my mother, Eva Stern. Jacob was a twelve year old boy when he came to this country. Jacob's uncle, by the name of Lowenstein, had a store in the little town of Mora. Jacob came by mule train from Kansas City.

The young boys who came from the state of Hessen in Germany wanted to go East to get wives. When Jacob Stern went East (Philadelphia), he came home with his bride, Julia Lavenson, by train.

The older son, Morton, was born in Mora. Then when Jay came along, they thought it better to go East to have the baby, which they did. Jay's mother told me about bringing home the baby. Of course, there was little Morton only two years old, so you can see what a trip that was. Jacob had a carriage waiting at the train in Las Vegas and she said they had a driver and she and Jacob tried keep-

ing the children warm. On the way out to Mora, they stopped at the Priest's house so she could feed the baby and they could all get warm. Jay's birthday was the 20th of January. Those big buffalo robes came in handy. I have a picture taken of Morton, Jay and Regina taken at their home in Mora in 1896.

Jacob and family moved to Las Vegas in 1897 and started the Stern and Nahm business. Jacob died in Las Vegas in 1921. Julia lived in Las Vegas until her death in 1943. My parents, Jay and Eva Stern, lived in Las Vegas where Jay worked in the family business until it closed in the 1930s. ★

### New Mexico Déjà Vu - (continued from p. 9)

was a lively conversation between her and Jacob, mainly about their ancestors and the "crypto-Jews" in the Mora Valley. Another added attraction was seven hunters from Wisconsin who spent the night at the motel and also had dinner and conversation at the Café. They had been successful in bagging a huge elk and showed us pictures.

The next morning, which was Sunday, Marie went to St. Gertrude's Church where the Mass was predominantly in Spanish and new to her. We then went on our way to meet with Jacob in his Guadalupe home, which is 14 miles towards the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, north of Mora. At the moment, he owns 14 horses; some are trained for the rodeo and some are race horses. We left our car and changed to his big pick-up truck, and he took us another 32 miles north to Angel Fire, which is now a famous ski resort located northeast of Taos. We had lunch there and returned to Mora.

We then visited with Manual Alcon who is the author of a book about Mora and its peo-

ple of yester-year. Jacob took us to the "little Jewish cemetery" located at the edge of the Catholic cemetery on the road to Ledoux. Jacob's Jewish pioneer grandfather is buried there as well as the first people (the Lowensteins), who ran the trading post in Mora, that was owned by my husband's family.

Jacob, who is a Jack of All Trades and Master of All, appointed himself as cemetery keeper. He even put a Star of David on the new gate.

Patsy Sanchez, an old friend from long ago, was not available to us that day. Her great grandfather, Louis Kahn, is also buried there.

We left Mora for Las Vegas in the late afternoon and Jacob followed us in his truck to have dinner at the Plaza Hotel in Old Town. This adobe structure is a few hundred years old, but the inside furnishings are of the late 1890s - very comfortable and cozy.

Good yester-year conversation, good food and lively music from the bar made this an-

other outstanding evening.

The next day, Monday morning, Louis Terr, his mother Mildred, and his sister Dana met us in our hotel

lobby for breakfast. Mildred Terr has lived in Las Vegas since 1958 and knew my uncle, Ludwig Ilfield, and many of my other Ilfield relatives.

On we went another 100 miles back to Albuquerque to our motel, this time near the airport. We enjoyed wonderful weather the whole trip until Monday afternoon when a heavy rainstorm arrived along with our guests: Alice Stern Keck came to visit once more in the late afternoon and also Nancy Terr, who is a working board member of the NMJHS and her teen-aged son Neal.

Finally, last but not least, Dr. Noel Pugach, History Professor at the University of New Mexico and a board member of the NMJHS, arrived amidst the worst part of the thunderstorm, dripping wet. I had met Noel by phone and we exchanged many stories: old settlers, Holocaust, Mora Cemetery and the NMJHS. We had dinner and talked into the night. The next day was an uneventful flight back home to St. Louis.

Reminiscing and knowing - at 86 years old - that was probably the last time I would see the land, the wonderful people, the sun, the azure sky and moon, the landscape with piñon trees and sagebrush. I feel comfortable now, having once more experienced all that I love about this state - The Land of Enchantment. ★

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## President's Message - (continued from p. 2)

As I look forward to 2007 I think of many things that the Society needs: We need someone in Albuquerque with computer knowledge who can take care of occasional maintenance and help our office staff with advice and problem solving. It would be great if we had someone who could do web site creation and maintenance.

Someone with newsletter or publishing experience could help with creating our newsletter. We badly need someone to do publicity for our events; and someone to handle facilities arrangements for those events. Our

showings of films with Jewish themes have been quite popular; we need someone to find more films, and arrange several showings a year. If you are able to help with any of these projects, please, contact any board member or me. You don't have to be a board member to help with these tasks, but if you would consider becoming an active board member, I want to hear from you.

We also need - of course - money. Members provide the energy to get things done; dues and contributions provide the means to get things done. We had to replace our outdated, slow, crash-prone computer; a backup drive was added

so we won't lose data in case of a crash; our "borrowed" software has been replaced with legal, licensed programs. The cost was nearly \$1,500. I would like to see us move to a "paperless" office, which would make record-keeping far more efficient; to do so we need a document scanner that costs several hundred dollars.

Have you renewed your membership yet? Have you responded to our year-end request for donations? Your contribution toward these extra, one-time expenses will help assure continuation of the Society's work, and preservation of Jewish New Mexico history for future generations.

## On the Road to Zelva. Stan Hordes explores his roots in the Baltics

By Dorothy Corner Amsden



Did you know that noted author and UNM professor history, Stanley Hordes, widely known for his research on crypto-Jews in New Mexico, has family roots that go back to the

Baltics? In the spring of 2005, Stan explored his family's ancestral towns in Lithuania and Latvia.

"After doing the family histories of so many other people, I wanted to take some time and research my own genealogy," Stan said. "I rummaged through all of the miscellaneous notes gathered from my parents and cousins over the years and tried to connect the various threads." These threads enabled him to identify the towns where his immigrant grandparents originated and he planned his itinerary accordingly.

Accompanied by his wife, Helen, his niece, Amy and her husband Max, they began their search in Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania, where they engaged the services of a bilingual guide. "Off we went in search of Zelva, the home of my paternal grandmother, Sara Feiga Weinstein, about two hours north of the capital." The tiny agricultural village, with no more than sixty homes, mostly constructed of wood, seemed untouched by the passage of time. "An elderly resident told us that the town had been inhabited almost exclusively by Jews until the summer of 1941, when Nazi troops gathered all of the Jews, brought them to the edge of the cemetery and shot them to death."

Zelva's cemetery remains intact, containing hundreds of headstones in Hebrew and Yiddish. The old synagogue still stands, although in a much deteriorated state. "We were thrilled to

find a small museum, located in a classroom of the local school, dedicated to the Jews who used to live in the town." Among the museum's holdings were photographs of the religious school and some ledger books containing names that Stan recognized as his grandmother's cousins.

"Next we boarded a bus to Riga, capital of Latvia, where we stayed in a charming bed and breakfast on the north side of town." Stan cajoled the son of the innkeeper, who was fluent in Russian, Latvian and English, to drive the party three hours up the Dvina River to a town now called Jakobpils. "My material grandparents, the Abramowitzes and Wassermans, know that town as Yacobstadt." A far larger community than Zelva, Jakobpils's population today numbers in the tens of thousands.

"While in Jakobpils, we stopped at the Latvian equivalent of Allsup's to purchase a map, which included a reference to a Hebrew Cemetery," so off we went. "The cemetery gravestones with their Hebrew and Yiddish engravings extended as far as the eye could see. "As fate would have it, within ten minutes of our arrival, we encountered a Jewish couple who had left the town years earlier for New York City." They had

just returned to visit relatives still living in Jakobpils. "Before we knew it, we found ourselves in the apartment of the leaders of the remaining Jewish community, an octogenarian couple who had lovingly cared for the two Jewish cemeteries."

Stan had originally planned on visiting Myadel, in Belarus, the town from which his paternal grandfather (Bernard Hordes, originally Chodosch) emigrated. Unfortunately, logistical difficulties relating to visas, insurance and long delays at the border prevented him from doing so at that time. He hopes that conditions will become more conducive to tourism before long and that he will be able to make another trip back.

Before he left Vilnius, Stan visited the Lithuanian National Archive. "The director was most helpful in facilitating access to information on the history of the two branches of my family that had lived in the area." He provided her with as much data as he could and she promised to send him whatever leads she could find. It took a year, but just recently, Stan received over a dozen citations to prospective family members in both Zelva and Myadel.

### The NMJHS Board's Appeal to Its Members

Our continued existence depends on the interest and support of our members. We need your cooperation to interest others to join our Society; we need your help to obtain archive material and your ideas. We urge you to please renew your membership when due. If you are already a 2007 member, please encourage your friends and family to join!

We are proud of our accomplishments, but we cannot rest on our laurels. It is your Society – we appreciate your continued interest and support.



The NMJHS is soliciting historical papers and photographs for inclusion in its archival collection at the New Mexico Records Center and Archives. For more information, contact The NMJHS at (505) 348-4471 or nmjhs@jewishnewmexico.org.

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

Taste of Honey event at the Jewish Community Center in Albuquerque on February 11, 2007, from 12 noon to 4:45 p.m., cosponsored by NMJHS. Keynote speaker will be Arthur Kurzweil, an authority on genealogy.

## Mission Statement

The mission of the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society is to promote greater understanding and knowledge of New Mexico's Jewish history. The Society's programs examine the state's Jewish heritage in all its diversity and strive to present this heritage within a broad cultural context. The Society is a secular organization and solicits the membership and participation of all interested people, regardless of religious affiliation.

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Membership fees are as follows:

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