



The Meyer Family in Albuquerque

by Rosalia Myers Feinstein

Meyer and Meyer men's clothing store was a fixture on the northwest corner of Fourth and Central in Albuquerque, New Mexico, for many

years. It was founded by two Jewish brothers, David and Louis Meyer, who had made their way to Albuquerque from Bauska, Latvia, with intermediate stops in Manchester (England), Philadelphia, St. Louis, and Salt Lake City. David remained in Albuquerque the rest of his life; Louis later moved to Amarillo, then to Dallas, and finally to suburban Philadelphia. My branch of the family came to Albuquerque much later.

Let's begin at the beginning. David and Louis's parents Mary and Abba Merr had at least six children, all born in Latvia. (Merr was the original spelling of the family name; their descendants spelled it variously Meyer, Meyers, Myers, and Mir.) Family tradition has it that Abba was a miller, and there is no reason to doubt this. He was generally called Abba der Rote on account of his bright red hair and beard. Their oldest son Joseph served some time in the Russian army

and subsequently learned the trade of tailoring. He traveled his native land with his sewing machine on his back as an itinerant tailor.

who quickly found work in the needle trades.

Joseph must have found life more agreeable in Manchester (or perhaps conditions were really getting bad for the Jews in Bauska), for it was not too long before his parents, three brothers, and a sister arrived in Manchester. One married sister remained in Latvia. Joseph taught his younger brothers the tailoring trade, but their ambitions went further than adding to the numbers of men employed in the needle trades in Manchester.



Brothers David (left) and Louis (right) Meyer with brother-in-law Abraham Mann (center) in Philadelphia circa 1909.

The family had set its sight on emigrating to America and had booked their passage. But Joseph was turned away by the health inspectors at the dock because they suspected he had trachoma, a blinding eye disease. Consequently, Joseph, his wife and parents stayed in England, while David, Louis, Max, and Ida (and her husband Abraham Mann) left for the United States.

They went first to Philadelphia, where Ida and her husband remained and raised a family. The three brothers made their way to St. Louis where they found work in the men's clothing factories. Along the way, the youngest brother, Max, disappeared and, despite many searches, was never located.

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Apparently Joseph had wanderlust, because the next we hear of him he is in Manchester, England, around 1905 with a wife Raisele, who came from the same Bauska area of Latvia as Joseph. At that time Manchester was a mecca for Russian and Polish Jews

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Do We Have Your Correct E-Mail Address?

NMJHS is starting to notify its members of upcoming events via e-mail to be more timely and to save on postage. Make sure our administrator Bobbi Jackson has your current e-mail address, nmjhs@jewishnewmexico.org. If you do not have e-mail, rest assured that you will receive fliers as usual through the U.S. mail.

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Message from President Noel Pugach

I welcome our readers, members and non-members alike, to the June 2009 issue of *Legacy*, the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society's newsletter, so skillfully edited by Dorothy Amsden.

The feature article on the Meyer family is an important addition to our knowledge about the Jews in New Mexico, underscoring the richness and diversity of the Jewish contribution to the Southwest. We appreciate the hard work and serious thought that Rosalia Myers Feinstein, a new contributor, invested in this piece that wonderfully captures her family's history. I invite all of our readers who have roots in New Mexico and the surrounding area to consider writing about their family's experiences.

Elsewhere in the issue, David Dunmar, our new treasurer, has given us his perspective on his foray into genealogy, which fostered his interest in the NMJHS. Our regular columnist, Naomi Sandweiss, who is the daughter of Rosalia and Stanley Feinstein, has given us another interesting "Peek into the Past."

We are very proud that our very deserving board members, Dorothy Amsden and Lance Bell, were given the Hurst Award at the Annual Meeting in May in Santa Fe.

See Stanley Hordes's article in this issue on the Hurst Award and the recipients.

Dr. Henry Tobias, the keynote speaker at the Annual Meeting, gave a graceful and informative talk, "The Jews in New Mexico: Another Look," in which he refined some of the major themes of New Mexican Jewish history that he has written about. Henry also signed copies of his new book, published by the University of New Mexico Press, *Jews in New Mexico Since World War II*.



NMJHS President Noel Pugach.

At the Annual Meeting, the nominations for officers of the Society were announced. We have a number of changes: Carla Freeman has replaced Dorothy

Amsden as vice president; Barbara Baker will take over as corresponding secretary for Anthony Amsden; and David Dunmar replaces Bob Gale as treasurer. I want to thank all of the outgoing officers for their wonderful service. In particular, I want to thank Bob Gale for his extraordinary efforts in resolving some sticky financial issues. I will remain as your president for the second year of my term.

We have a number of exciting programs and events coming up in the second half of 2009. They range from insightful lectures by Patricia Westlake (June) and Seth Kunin (July), both of which will be given in Santa Fe and Albuquerque, to

our annual Labor Day Weekend book sale in Santa Fe. Other upcoming activities include our Annual Conference (October in Santa Fe) on the timely topic of New Mexico Jewry and the Great Depression, an important conference of Latin American Jewry (November in Albuquerque and Santa Fe), and a genealogy workshop (November in Santa Fe).

The Society is having a fundraiser at Fuddrucker's restaurant off I-25 in Albuquerque on Sunday, July 12, 2009. We get a percentage of the sales from all customers who mention the NMJHS. For flyers and information, contact our administrator Bobbi Jackson at the JCC in Albuquerque, 505-348-4471 or go to the NMJHS website.

Specific dates appear in the Calendar of Upcoming Events. So please mark your calendars and make every effort to attend as many of these events as possible. To non-members, I trust that the dynamism of the NMJHS will encourage you to get involved and join the Society immediately. Your support enables us to preserve and disseminate the history of Jews in the region. A membership form may be found on the last page of the newsletter.

In closing, I invite you to submit letters to *Legacy* with your comments on our articles as well as about the Society's activities. And I wish our readers and members a healthy and enjoyable summer. ☆

Avista Video Wins Awards



Lisa Witt, owner of Avista Video Histories and a member of NMJHS, received a Telly Award in the "Recruitment"

category for its 2008 production, "Without Officials, There Can Be No Games," a 3-minute DVD produced for the New Mexico Officials Association (NMOA), an affiliate of the New Mexico Activities Association.

The New Mexico Public Relations Society of America recently gave the Silver Cumbre award to Avista for its 20-minute state-wide "Jury Orientation" video, produced for the State of New Mexico Administrative Office of the Courts. The video provides a history of the jury system, including a medieval re-enactment by volunteers from the Society for Creative Anachronism. Courtroom layout is covered along with a summary of the jury selection process and an explanation of courtroom procedures.

Lisa played a critical role in the success of the Jewish Pioneers Video Archive Project for NMJHS. She not only oversaw the technical aspects of the video production but, as project director, helped secure grants for the project and supervised the publication of the booklets.

NMJHS heartily congratulates Lisa and her staff on these two awards.

Hurst Award Recipients

by Stan Hordes



The Dr. Allan and Leona Hurst Award is given to the person, persons, or organization who has contributed to New Mexico Jewish history,

culture, and community over a substantial period of time. At the May 17, 2009, NMJHS annual meeting at Congregation Beit Tikvah in Santa Fe, 65 attendees applauded as the award was presented to Lance Bell and Dorothy Corner Amsden.

I was the first recipient of the award in 1998. Subsequently it was given to Walter Kahn, Henry Tobias, Melanie LaBorwit, Claire Grossman, the Taos Jewish Center, Leah Kellogg, Rabbi Leonard A. Helman, Noel Pugach, and Abraham Chanin.

The family of Allan and Leona Hurst has generously agreed to support the award with an annual contribution of \$200. We thank David and Vickie Hurewitz, Stuart and Kathy Iskow, Neil and Donna Iskow, and Mr. and Mrs. David Hurst.

Lance Bell

Claire Grossman submitted the nomination for Lance Bell. In her letter she notes that Lance's family was a pioneer Jewish merchant family in Santa Fe. "Not only was Lance a fine president of NMJHS, but he worked for years to bring the Society's name to residents all over the state. He has remained in contact with various Society members for many years. He arranged several walks around the Santa Fe Plaza with talks and stories of and by some people who knew and worked for his family."



Lance Bell

Lance spent countless hours for NMJHS getting advertisers for *Legacy*. He continues to be a remarkable fundraiser. He was willing to fit in the time-consuming role of president even though he traveled almost every week as a very busy young cancer drug salesperson. He personifies someone who has contributed to New Mexico Jewish history, culture, and community for a substantial period of time.

To Claire's endorsement I would like to add that I remember Lance attending NMJHS events in his twenties, with his dear mother (who sadly passed away just a couple of weeks ago). His interest continued to grow, and eventually Lance joined the Board of Directors.

Back about 8 years ago, Lance generously agreed to serve as president of the Society, which represented the passing of leadership from old people from newly arrived families to young people from old, established families.

Lance has consistently demonstrated his commitment to the NMJHS and to the cause of Jewish history, sacrificing precious time from work and family obligations. This award should be shared with his lovely wife, Julia, and his wonderful daughter, Jacqueline.

Dorothy Corner Amsden

Outgoing treasurer, Bob Gale, summed up Dorothy Amsden's contributions to NMJHS. "Having published a subscription-based newsletter for many years in the private sector, I know bet-

ter than most, the amount of time that Dorothy donates to our organization, and I can assure you that it is probably greater than any other single member of our Society, myself included. Her reward is the pride she takes in putting out this exceptional publication over the past several years. To many, *Legacy* is the Society, and Dorothy makes sure, with every issue, that NMJHS is well represented by the publication.

"Beyond the newsletter, Dorothy is always prepared to give a little more including, when appropriate, considerable monetary support to the Society way beyond her dues. In addition to her direct contributions to the Society she has never submitted an expense reimbursement request for anything; not postage, not supplies, or mileage. She also contributes keeping the NMJHS website visible, updated, and championing its continuation and modernization." Bob writes that he can think of no one who is more deserving of this award for multiple and consistent contributions to our organization.



Dorothy Amsden

To Bob's endorsement, let me add a few comments of my own. I remember when I first met Dorothy four years ago. She was concerned that the Society was missing a bet by not paying more attention to genealogy. Well, that was the beginning of Dorothy getting hooked on the Society, and the begin-

ning of the Society getting hooked on genealogy – and Dorothy.

She has given and given of her time in so many areas, modernized and professionalized our newsletter, and as an extra-added bonus, brought along her husband Tony, who served on the board as corresponding secretary. ☆

GENEALOGY CORNER: Your History Awaits You

by David Dunmar

History was always of great interest to me as long as I can remember. While I was growing up my parents sometimes talked to me about their families coming from Russia and England, and I was curious how their choices resulted in some of their descendants ending up in Santa Fe, New Mexico, over a hundred years later.

From the time I was about 20 years old I encouraged my parents to write down what they knew and to research our genealogy further. After patiently waiting for 28 years it suddenly dawned on me that they weren't going to accede to my desires, and if anyone was going to preserve the family history, it would have to be me.

Since that epiphany my life took on a new focus. I resolved to find out everything possible about the family history, the places they lived, and to determine why they chose to leave their homelands and move to this strange new country called the United States of America. As my father's health was failing, I wanted to connect with him as much as possible in the time that was left, and so chose to research his side of the family first.

With no knowledge of how to proceed I started with the little information that was available. The family was Jewish, they emigrated from Russia and ended up in Cleveland, Ohio, in the early 1900s. And oh, by the way, sometime way back when, the family decided to change their name from Ploshansky to Dunmar, an easily understandable derivation.

Armed with this "abundance" of information the search began. I turned on the computer, googled my great-grandfather Samuel Ploshansky, and quickly received a hit from the Ancestry.com web site. I immediately took out an Ancestry subscription. The hit turned out to be the 1900 census from Columbus, Ohio, which included such information as year of birth, country of birth, profession, and year of immigration. I was hooked.

After the first encounter with my great-grandparents, Samuel and Rebecca Ploshansky, in the U.S. census I started asking friends what knowledge they had of the subject. Many gave me numerous tips, and one recommended reading *From Generation to Generation* by Arthur Kurzweil, which covers genealogy research for people of Jewish descent. The book was of great help and gave an incredible amount of useful advice on tracking down vital records, accessing the National Archives, finding Jewish shtetls in the old country, and basically how to begin researching one's roots.

My approach at that point became multi-pronged. I spoke to every close and distant member of my family trying to obtain any hints that could lead to further investigation. During the next few months I learned that Samuel was born in April 1860 and lived in Odessa, Russia, which is now in Ukraine. He immigrated to the United States in December 1884 and became a fruit peddler in various cities in Indiana prior to moving to Cleveland, Ohio. Samuel's wife Rebecca, also from Odessa, arrived in the U.S. approximately one year after he did. They had five children, one of whom was my grandfather, Abraham, who died long before I was born.

All in all, the Ploshansky family did not easily surrender information about its past. However, the research techniques I have learned along the way have proven invaluable. In the future I hope to substantially increase my knowledge of this family when the State Archives in Odessa become a little (actually a lot) more user friendly.

A much older third cousin, who had met Sam and Rebecca in the early 1930s, made a helpful remark. He said that conversation was not easy with them, and that there was a somewhat stern side to the Ploshansky family. At this point let us segue to my father's mother's side of the family, the Sterns.

While researching the Ploshanskys I started putting out feelers about other parts of my family, and information

slowly dribbled in. With the Sterns I hit pay dirt! Through conversation with an 87-year-old second cousin, I learned about some previously unknown handwritten notes from the father of an unknown third cousin now living in



Rebecca and Samuel Ploshansky, Cleveland, Ohio, 1937.

Texas. I tracked my cousin down (via the Living People Finder on Ancestry.com), introduced myself, and learned he had been to Santa Fe several times. (That's where I have lived for the past 40 years.) He did not even know he had any cousins there.

My cousin sent me the notes his father had written, which traced the Stern family history back to 1814 in what is now Janovce, Slovakia. My great-great-grandparents were both born in that small village, which even today has only about 400 inhabitants. In censuses conducted by the Austro-Hungarian Empire subsequent to 1814 it was noted that eight Jewish families lived in this town around 1850.

My great-great-grandparents Markusz and Leny Stern were inn keepers in Janovce and lived at least 80 years in this mountainous area prior to moving to

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Genealogy Corner: *Your History Awaits You* (continued from p. 4)

Esperia/Eperjes (now Presov), Slovakia, around the turn of the 20th century. Both were nearly 100 years old when they passed away. Through research on Jewishgen.org and the help of some paid researchers in Slovakia, (a rather challenging experience due to language problems, distance, and different perceptions of customer service and sustained focus), it was possible to track down family marriage information from the original Parish Books from the 1800s. I also learned about new members of the family and new cities in the Czech Republic to research at a later date.

One of the researchers I hired actually traveled to Janovce, spoke to some of the citizens, and was able to locate the original inn of Markusz and Leny Stern. It is still standing today, but now houses a small school. I received photos that the researcher took of the Stern inn and houses of different family members. He also located the long-forgotten graveyard for Jewish inhabitants of that area.

The small Jewish graveyard is in a forest that is completely overgrown from neglect and shrouded with thick trees, long grass, and thorny plants. Another future project would be the reclamation and restoration of this forgotten resting place that no doubt holds additional family secrets and perhaps the names of my great-great-grandparents, who would have been born in the 1700s.

The more recent history of the Sterns who stayed in Slovakia was not a happy one. No one of Jewish ancestry who remained in Europe during the 20th century escaped that history. Unfortunately, they did not emigrate to the U.S. like my great-grandfather Frank Stern did in 1878. The history details how three of the Sterns managed to hide from the Nazis during World War II. Several other family members, each one named, were sent to two infamous concentration camps; the dates are noted when they were taken. None of them ever returned.

When I began my quest to research the family history I thought it would be complete in a few months. It has now

been nearly two years, and it would appear that it will take many more. I have located several previously unknown family members, discovered cities of the family's past, and encountered many helpful people around the world who I now consider friends. There were fruit peddlers in the family, cigar makers, teachers, farmers, innkeepers, and even officers who fought for



Frank and Cecilia Stern, Cleveland, 1895.

the Confederacy during our own Civil War. The search has been fascinating and filled with hundreds of hours of enjoyment (thanks to my wife Anita for being so patient and understanding).

Today I feel an interconnectedness with the world that was not present when I began this project. The whole experience has also brought all of my family closer together as we share the history of our past, and it will provide many great field trips together in the future.

One does not have to spend thousands of dollars or know a lot of specific genealogy techniques to research and build a family tree. All you need is curiosity, a computer, and a telephone. Call an older family member tonight and get started!

David Dunmar grew up in Santa Fe and studied for a degree in economics at New Mexico State University. He currently manages the loan department at a Santa Fe bank. David is married to another banker, Anita, and they have a 4-1/2 year-old son. David serves on the NMJHS board as the new treasurer. ☆

Legacy Mailbox

Old Times in Las Vegas

In 1939, just after I was married, my new inlaws gave us a Yei rug that had been theirs for many years. The Waxmans operated a trading post in Mora, New Mexico, where my husband and I also lived. The rug is about 2 foot 10 inches wide by 3 feet long and has three Yei dancers woven into it. It is still beautiful and colorful and I use it as a vertical wall hanging in my condo in St. Louis.

A few months ago I felt I should have it appraised. I saw an advertisement, "Buy-Sell Indian Rugs in any condition," in the St. Louis newspaper. I called the number and a man came to my place. He examined the rug thoroughly, measured it, and wrote notes in his book.

After that we started talking about New Mexico and "old times." He asked me if I remembered Gross-Kelly, the wholesale company in Las Vegas. Of course I did. My inlaws bought their goods from either Gross-Kelly Co. or from Charles Ilfeld Co. (my relatives) for their store. It turned out that this man's wife's maiden name was Gross. She was a descendent of the people who owned Gross-Kelly in Las Vegas. Small world, isn't it?

Lilo Waxman, St. Louis

Mrs. Waxman wrote "A German-Jewish Refugee Finds Love and a Home in New Mexico," for the June 2008 issue of Legacy.

In memory of
Matthew Schwartzman
owner of the Candyman in Santa Fe
from Barbara Baker

In memory of
Dano Bell
son of Leah Kellogg,
from Lance and Julia Bell

In loving memory of my parents
Irving and Marilyn Bell
from Lance Bell

In memory of
Marilyn Bell
mother of Jon and Lance Bell
from Judy and Hal Abrams

In memory of
Gerald Spiro
of Teaneck, New Jersey
NMJHS member and
author of article on Henry Grant
from Lilo Waxman

**NMJHS Welcomes
New Board Member**
Elizabeth Nordhaus Messeca

**NMJHS
Lifetime Members**
Hal & Judy Abrams
Anthony & Dorothy Amsden
Paul Berman &
Marjorie Weinberg-Berman
Claire Grossman
Drs. Yehuda & Nurit Patt
Sally Nazarayah Thayer

New NMJHS Members
Fredric & Rosalyn Cohen
Rose Daneman
Jessica Herzstein
Stephen & Jane Hochberg
Deborah Michels
Christy Royce
Carol Spector

Any Day Above Ground is a Good Day

by Nancy Terr

It turned out to be an unseasonably cold, blustery day for the annual Montefiore Cemetery cleanup in Las Vegas, New Mexico, on April 26. Although the weather kept away many participants, about 16 hardy souls performed the mitzvah of tending to the cemetery grounds. The cleanup tasks this year involved less debris removal than in previous years, due to the brilliant move of caretaker Ted Herberger to install a fence and gate at the north end, thus preventing people from driving in to dump in the arroyos near the cemetery.

Stan Hordes spoke briefly about the cemetery and noted that the new wall, which Ted has been constructing,



Brother and sister Nancy and Lewis Terr are regulars at annual cleanup.

After a couple of vigorous hours of cleaning up, participants were

holds such different symbolism from many other walls. This wall is inclusive and expands the cemetery's boundary, rather than separating it from the surrounding area, as though it is an organic extension of the grounds.



Barbara Baker (left) and Nancy Terr (right) get into the act.

The group concluded by saying Kaddish, which was an especially sad moment this year as we remembered Dana Terr Konno, a steady cleanup participant, who passed away earlier this year.

treated to a bountiful picnic lunch, courtesy of Lewis Terr and Kate Immerman of the Montefiore Cemetery Board.

Following the cleanup, NMJHS members toured the new Ilfeld wing of the Plaza Hotel in Las Vegas, a remarkably well-restored building where we hope to hold future NMJHS events.☆

Tracing the Tribe

Renowned genealogist Schelly Talalay Dardashti, who lives in Tel Aviv, writes a blog called Tracing the Tribe [<http://tracingthetribе.blogspot.com>] that promotes Jewish genealogical activities around the world. On May 7 she wrote an e-mail to NMJHS, "I have just found the link to *Legacy* and the NMJHS site and was pleasantly surprised to read the journal and other information about NMJHS." She posted a summary of NMJHS activities, replete with our logo, at <http://tracingthetribе.blogspot.com/2009/05/new-mexico-jewish-historical-society.html>.

Meyer Family *(continued from p. 1)*

David and Louis met two Jewish Lithuanian sisters, Annie and Yetta Pruss, and the two brothers married the two sisters. Annie gave birth to her only child, Jack, in Madison, Illinois (just across the river from St. Louis), in September 1911, and her sister Yetta had her oldest, Shirley, around the same time. Annie, unfortunately, suffered from very bad asthma. In search of a better climate than humid St. Louis, the two young families headed west to Salt Lake City, but the social climate there was not welcoming to non-Mormons.

In 1914, they made their way to Albuquerque, which, at the time, had a reputation for having an ideal climate for people with respiratory problems. Shortly afterwards, the Meyer and Meyer Tailor business was listed in the 1915 Albuquerque Directory at 114 West Central Avenue.

At the time the two families lived at 706 Santa Fe Street. They had a small plot of ground on which they kept chickens and where Dave liked to grow fruit trees. He would bring the excess fruit into his store to sell. They kept a kosher home and, periodically, the kosher meat would arrive from Denver on the train, packed in dry ice. They kept it frozen in commercial meat lockers.

The two families joined Temple Albert, although they would have preferred a more traditional synagogue rather than the Reform temple. There were not many Jewish families in Albuquerque at the time; those who lived there were generally very close-knit, and that was the core of their social life. Most of the families were involved in retail business.

The 1920 census reveals that the families of the two brothers were still living together and that Yetta and Louis had had a second child. But sometime in the 1920s, Louis and Yetta left for Amarillo. Perhaps they saw better opportunities there. It was not likely due to a disagreement – the two sisters and two brothers remained close all their lives.

Before the days of quick and cheap long-distance telephone service, they

kept in touch by mail, writing in Yiddish, although they all could read and write English. For many years, however, they had a mail subscription to a Yiddish newspaper. They must have been prospering in their business because in the late 1920s they had enough money for Dave, Annie, and Jack to go to England to visit Dave's brother Joseph and his family.

Jack's entire schooling had been in Albuquerque. He started school speaking only Yiddish, which was spoken at home, plus a little Spanish. At school he quickly had to learn English. A good



Fiftieth anniversary celebration in Albuquerque for Yetta and Louis Meyer (left) and Annie and David Meyer (right).

student, Jack graduated from Albuquerque High School, which then was located at the corner of Broadway and Central near his house. He went on to the University of Southern California, where he began work toward a degree in medicine.

By 1930, David, Annie, and Jack were living in the newly fashionable area of town at 225 N. Walter, a few blocks east of downtown, across the railroad tracks. Three years later Meyer and Meyer had moved to 324 West Central, and the following year it moved to

401 W. Central where it remained for almost 30 years. Because of the Depression, Jack had to drop out of college and return to Albuquerque to help in the family business. At some point during their partnership Dave and Jack started to sell men's wool ties woven by Indians. For a short time they had a small factory to produce them.

Jack had not found a wife among the Jewish girls in Albuquerque. While he was in Philadelphia on a buying trip for the store he made an effort to meet suitable girls. As luck would have it, he met Ethel Lubin, a lively petite brunette, and married her in 1934. Most of their courtship was by mail, and the engagement ring came through the U.S. mail.

Jack and Ethel's wedding was held in Chicago, a halfway point between her home and his. Their son Michael was born in 1935, followed by a daughter Marjorie in 1940. At some point in the early 1940s Jack opened a store in Alamosa, Colorado, briefly. Jack, Ethel, and the two children moved to Alamosa during this time. They moved back to Albuquerque a year or so later, perhaps because of the extremely cold winters.

The Meyer family had never felt truly at home at Temple Albert. They wanted a more traditional synagogue than the classical reform Temple. At first, in 1920, a similar-minded group of people started getting together for services in the living room of the Meyer house and at other homes. They often met for high holidays in store fronts.

In 1921 they founded B'nai Israel and rented a permanent home for it upstairs at 116 ½ West Central above an insurance company in the loft of the Mission Theater. Dave Meyer was one of the signers of the original charter for the synagogue. Times were precarious for the Jewish community, at both B'nai Israel and Temple Albert. People were slow with their dues and there was

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Meyer Family *(continued from p. 7)*

talk of Temple Albert having to sell its building.

The two congregations were rescued by the relative prosperity of the war years when the influx of Jews at the military bases helped them out of their financial dilemma. Congregation B'nai Israel was able to break ground for its first building at 417 S. Cedar in 1941.

Jack, meanwhile, went into the service as a medic in 1943. In 1945 Jack and Ethel were living at 433 North Ash near the University of New Mexico while David and Annie had a new home at 905 North Girard. Their social lives still revolved around the Jewish community. They would have kosher dinners at the old upstairs location of B'nai Israel on Central.

Once in a while they were able to arrange a kosher dinner at the Women's Club. There were fundraisers for B'nai Israel featuring stars such as Ella Fitzgerald and Duke Ellington. (Luckily, Albuquerque was on the main east-west train line, so entertainers did not have to go out of their way to come to town.) The women would get together for teas and other socials. Ethel belonged to a sewing circle that met weekly for over 30 years. At first the ladies were involved in the war effort, later they did their personal handiwork.

The families were also involved in the general community. Dave belonged to such groups as B'nai B'rith, Rotary, and Shriners, and worked with the Community Chest (forerunner of the

United Fund). Annie belonged to the Order of the Eastern Star. Like his Dad, Jack belonged to Kiwanis. He sang with the Shriners Chanters and was a member of the choir at B'nai Israel for many years.

Business was good after the war. People wanted new clothes, tired of the drabness of the war years. Meyer and Meyer did very well. By the late 1940s David and Annie had moved to the new and upscale area around the Albuquerque Country Club on Laguna SW. By the mid 1950s Jack and Ethel had opened a combined men's and women's store, still called Meyer and Meyer, on Central near the growing Nob Hill area. They closed the downtown store in 1962 when Dave finally retired.

Jack and Ethel built a lovely house a little north of Lomas and Carlisle on La Hacienda. Their children, who had graduated from Highland High School, married and moved away. Michael married a California girl, Goldalee Kochman, in 1958. After he graduated from UNM they settled down to graduate school life in Lincoln, Nebraska, as he earned his PhD in history at the University of Nebraska. That same year Marjorie married a young man from Mississippi, Sam Schur, and they left Albuquerque for married life in the South.

As David and Annie grew older, they were less and less able to take care of their big house in the Country Club area. They sold that house and moved to an attractive apartment on Zuni SE, where they lived until final illnesses precluded them staying together in their own place. Annie passed away in 1965. Dave stayed in the apartment for a while, then moved in with Jack and Ethel before his death in 1971.

Change was in the wind. New malls opened up in the northeast part of town, and suddenly the Nob Hill stores were no longer the place to be. Jack and Ethel closed their store and opened a Meyer and Meyer men's store in the new Princess Jeanne Shopping Center on Eubank in 1960 or 1961, intending for it initially to be a business for their son-

law Sam Schur to run. It did reasonably well for a while, but the era had passed for mid-level men's stores because the large department stores were taking over that part of the market. It was clear that they would have to close.

Jack and Ethel also found it a burden to keep up their large home and garden, and they moved to a new townhouse on Spain NE. Jack, who had been a medic in World War II, would have liked to become a doctor if the money had been available for him to finish his education. To pursue his earlier interest, he worked for several years in the cancer research respiratory laboratory at Lovelace Hospital.

After retiring from Lovelace he put in over 6000 hours at Presbyterian Hospital, first as one of the volunteers, and later as supervisor of all the volunteers. He passed away from cancer in 1990. Ethel was lost without him. Except for selling ladies' dresses in the Nob Hill store and helping out occasionally in Princess Jeanne, she had been the traditional housewife while her husband took care of business matters and paid the bills. In 1993 she, too, passed away.

My father, Phillip Myers, was the son of the oldest brother Joseph who had remained in England. He married my mother, Sarah Reich, in 1939. Nine years and four daughters later they went to Australia for 10 years and then, with the sponsorship of Uncle David Meyer and Cousin Jack Meyer, came to Albuquerque in 1958, primarily for the health of their second daughter, Stephanie.

Since Philip and Sarah had been in the food business in Australia, they naturally looked for a business opportunity in that field in Albuquerque. They bought a bakery/restaurant at Fifth and Copper (where there is now a parking garage.) After a few years, they bought a wholesale bakery, Union Bakery, which had been located for years on First Street (then a run-down district next to the railroad tracks). Soon afterwards they sold the restaurant/bakery to concen-

(continued on p. 9)



Meyer Family (continued from p. 8)

trate on wholesale breads and rolls; they moved to a new location on Sierra SE and got rid of the old building on First Street.

My parents joined B'nai Israel and were active in the congregation. My mother also was busy with Hadassah. We spent holidays with Jack and Ethel and their friends and extended family. We always joked that there were enough left-handers for one whole side of the table.

I met Stanley Feinstein at a Hillel costume party, and we married at Temple Albert in 1960. My three sisters also found Jewish husbands, which was considered quite a feat in those days. Like many young people in Albuquerque, my sisters moved away with their new husbands as they chose more schooling or new jobs. Our parents kept the Union Bakery until 1970 when they sold it and moved to Denver.

My husband and I have two grown children, Naomi Sandweiss and Debra

Ross, who were born in Albuquerque and named in Temple Albert, where we were members. In 1969 we went to Washington DC for job opportunities. Our hope was always to return to Albuquerque. We visited many times over the years to see the few relatives who were left and our many friends. Finally in 1995 we moved back to Albuquerque where we happily renewed our involvement in Congregation Albert and enlarged our circle of friends.

Albuquerque resident Rosalia Myers Feinstein is the sole member left in Albuquerque of the Meyer/Myers family. Born in England, raised in Australia, Rosalia came to the United States in 1958 with her family where she attended the University of New Mexico. She worked for many years as a legislative liaison to county government in Maryland. Her interests include her grandchildren, reading, and history. She belongs to several knitting groups and collects yarn for use at the women's prison in Grants. ☆

NMJHS is now on Facebook!

Type in New Mexico Jewish Historical Society and add the organization as a "friend" Check it out!

The Spiegelberg Shop

The gift shop at the newly opened New Mexico History Museum in Santa Fe is to be called the Spiegelberg Shop in honor of the Willi and Flora Spiegelberg family. The shop will feature New Mexico artists and artisans, showing their work in home furnishings and accessories, such as ceramic tableware, contemporary glassware, iron candlesticks, and furniture. The Spiegelbergs established a mercantile on the south side of the Santa Fe Plaza in 1846 that was known for its attractive display windows and for stocking everything "from a pin to a piano."

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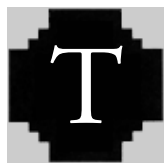
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PEEK INTO THE PAST: Epidemics

by Naomi Sandweiss



he recent H1N1 "Swine flu" scare piqued my curiosity as to how Jews fared in earlier epidemics. Let's look back and see how Jews were affected by and dealt with outbreaks of disease from biblical to modern times. Dr. Howard Markel, author of *Quarantine!*, notes that "a now-forgotten-function of a ram's horn or shofar was as a signal that a case of diphtheria or another highly contagious disease had been noted in the community." [1] The isolation of the afflicted person, followed by purification rituals, was customary practice. [2]

During the Black Death epidemic in 1348-49, a flea-borne illness killed 25 million people worldwide, including one-third of the population of Europe. Not only were European Jews victims of the plague itself, but they also suffered terribly from accusations that they caused the plague. Tortured into "confessing" that they poisoned wells in order to kill their Christian neighbors, Jews were rounded up and burned in retribution for their supposed crimes. [3]

Over three hundred and fifty years later, not much more was known about how diseases were transmitted. In 1798, a Yellow Fever epidemic threatened Colonial settlements in the new American nation. Philadelphia and New York were particularly hard-hit. The Jewish community was active in the effort to help those stricken with the disease. The leader of New York's Congregation Shearith Israel urged his congregants to donate to a special fund to aid the poor and sick during the epidemic. [4]

Humanitarian Rebecca Gratz (1781-1869) cared for Yellow Fever orphans, sensitizing her to their plight. [5] The first American-born Jew to attend medical school (King's College, now Columbia University), Walter Jonas Judah treated Yellow Fever patients during the height of the crisis in New York, likely utilizing the standard treatments of the time – blood-letting, administration

of mercury, and emetics. [6] Unfortunately, Jonas Judah himself succumbed to the disease at age 20.

Approximately one hundred years later, in 1892, Jews were at the center of another New York-based epidemic. Immigration from Eastern Europe was near its height. While health officials could detain incoming citizens and even close the entire port of New York for medical inspections, immigrants with illnesses still entered the country. Suspected diseases (typhus and cholera) combined with ethnic stereotyping of "filthy Hebrews" led to a quarantine of approximately 1200 people, 50 recently-arrived Russian Jewish immigrants and 1150 healthy individuals, mostly Eastern European Jews, who were rounded up by New York City health officials. The quarantined individuals were sent to North Brother Island in New York's East River, best-known as home to Typhoid Mary. [7]

In 1918, the world-wide influenza epidemic killed between 50-100 million people. Massive troop movements associated with World War I extended the reach of the disease. In some areas of the U.S. Jewish charities organized to help stricken families. For example, in Hartford, Connecticut, United Jewish charities worked with other organizations to transform the Hartford Golf Club into a hospital. The organization opened a kosher kitchen and provided domestic assistance and short-term loans to the afflicted. [8] Jewish hospitals throughout the nation treated patients regardless of background or creed.

Following the influenza epidemic, the Jewish hospital movement continued to expand; between 1850-1955, Jewish communities in twenty-four American cities founded hospitals, [9] mitigating the anti-Jewish discrimination that pervaded the medical establishment. Some of the hospitals, including Denver's Jewish hospital, were established as early as 1890 in order to treat tuberculosis patients with sunshine and fresh air.

(continued on p. 11)

Peek Into the Past (continued from p. 10)

Dr. Allan Hurst (1909-1989), a founder of the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society, served as Medical Director at the Denver institution. [10]

Here in New Mexico, Dr. Wilhelm Rosenblatt (1913-2004) served as attending physician at the Ft. Stanton TB Sanatorium and later became chief of the Chronic Disease Control Bureau of the Public Health Division of the New Mexico Department of Health. [11] Rosenblatt received his medical training in Germany, but because he was half-Jewish he was prohibited from practicing medicine and later was incarcerated in a German-forced labor camp. Rosenblatt immigrated to the United States in 1953.

In more recent times, Jewish organizations were established in response to the AIDS pandemic. In the 1980s, leaders of the Reform movement denounced the ostracization of people living with AIDS and gave them support. [12] The Conservative movement also responded, passing a resolution applying traditional Jewish concepts to the AIDS crisis. Services such as the Los Angeles Jewish AIDS Service continue to prepare and deliver kosher meals to people living with HIV/AIDS. Worldwide, groups such as the American Jewish World Service partner with other organizations to address the AIDS epidemic in Africa. [13]

These few examples illustrate that Jewish experience with epidemics has been multi-layered. There is no doubt that Jews have been the victims of both disease and anti-Semitism. However, in times of crisis, Jewish organizations and individuals mobilize to fulfill Biblical edicts to heal and care for the sick. ☆

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Calendar of NMJHS Upcoming Events

Check online calendar of Upcoming Events for more details at www.nmjewishhistory.org.

Friday, June 19, 12 noon, New Mexico State Records and Archives, 1205 Camino Carlos Rey Santa Fe, lecture by Patricia Westlake, "Treasures and Tombstones: Preserving a Jewish History in New Mexico through Archives and Commemoration."

Tuesday, June 23, 7 p.m., Jewish Community Center in Albuquerque, 5520 Wyoming Blvd. NE, Patricia Westlake repeat lecture "Treasures and Tombstones."

Sunday, July 26, 2 p.m., at the newly opened New Mexico History Museum in Santa Fe, 113 Lincoln Avenue, lecture and book signing by anthropologist Seth D. Kunin, professor at University of Durham in England, *Juggling Identities: Identity and Authenticity among the Crypto-Jews*.

Tuesday, July 28, 7 p.m., Jewish Community Center in Albuquerque, 5520 Wyoming Blvd. NE, Seth D. Kunin, repeat lecture and book signing, *Juggling Identities*.

August 2-4, Denver, Annual Conference of the Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies. For more information go to www.cryptojews.com.

Labor Day Weekend, September 5-6, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., NMJHS 8th Annual Book & Etc. Sale at the Wild Oats Community Room, Cordova Road between St. Francis Drive and Cerrillos Road, in Santa Fe.

October 23-25, Hotel Santa Fe, 1501 Paseo de Peralta, Santa Fe, NMJHS Annual Conference, "New Mexico Jews and the Great Depression."

November 8-15, Albuquerque and Santa Fe, "Celebrate! The Jewish Experience in Latin American Countries," lectures, films, and musical events. [times and places to be announced]

Sunday, November 22, 1-4 p.m., genealogy workshop, Temple Beth Shalom, 205 East Barcelona Road, Santa Fe.

Sunday, December 6, New Mexico History Museum seminar on genetics of crypto-Jews. [time to be announced]

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