

Tudo se ilumina para  
aquele que busca la luz.  
BEN-ROSH

# HALAPID

...alumia-vos e aponta-  
vos o cominho  
BEN-ROSH

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## Our Secret Heritage Crypto-Jews of South Texas<sup>©</sup> 2001

by Alberto Omero Lopez y Cadena

Descendants of Spanish Jews in South Texas? Yes, we're there and we still use some Spanish Jewish words (Ladino) all the time! First, I'll discuss research on the Cadena Jewish genealogy, then my most recent Sephardic traditions discoveries and hidden Jewish practices among some family members. Next I'll describe related events in the Post-American Civil War Period, The King Ranch and King Rangers—a tale of racism, murder and loss of our Spanish Land Grants. I'll conclude with the family oral history as told to me by my elders.

Our family links are numerous and span hundreds of years of Mexican and Spanish history. Dr. Francisco Montalvo Cadena (distant relative—great-great-great grandfathers were brothers), and his uncle have researched the family history for over 40 years. The work shows that the Cadenas are inter-related and linked to the royal houses of Europe. The five Jewish genealogical lines leading to the de la Cadenas in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth centuries are:

1. Ha Levis from Castile,
2. Truchas from Zaragoza and Calatayud, Aragon (they assumed the surname Maluenda after the town where they lived),
3. Ha Levis from Aragon (aka ibn Labi de la Cavalleria),
4. Fernandez de Guadalupe family from Granada, royal physicians to the Catholic Kings; their origins were in Burgos and
5. Our royal line linked to Estrada, Ferdinand II (V) (The Catholic King and his association with the beautiful Jewess) Paloma de Toledo.

In the seventeenth century, Antonio de la Cadena Vasquez de Bullon (b. 1552) testified before the Audencia in Mexico and said he lost his inheritance after financing three companies in the failed Oñate expedition to New Mexico. He sought refuge in Havana in 1598 and gathered people wanting to sail to the Philippines in 1600 and 1601. Antonio married Leonor de Alvarado, mestizo daughter of celebrity silver baron Bartolome de Medina and granddaughter of Pedro de Alvarado, aide to Hernan Cortes.

Most of our relations are from Nuevo Leon, Mexico or South Texas. In *The Course of Mexican History*, Michael C. Meyer and William L. Sherman claim that Spain and the conquistadores were lusting for gold and glory. Escaping the Spanish Inquisition must have been another motivating factor.

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Among the first colonizers of Zacatecas and Monterrey, the Cadenas ultimately moved further north, where they established large ranches in Mier and Agualeguas, Mexico. The Church of Nuestra Señora de Concepción de Agualeguas in Agualeguas, Nuevo Leon has Star of David dome windows beneath the Christian cross. In Texas, Cadenas live in Alice, Austin, Ben Bolt, Concepcion, Corpus Christi, Dallas, Fallfurrias, Harlingen, Houston, Palito Blanco, San Diego and other places.



photo by Cary Herz

### My Most Recent Discoveries

In researching family foods, I found a sketch for how to construct a proper *sukkot* hut in Michael Strassfeld's *The Jewish Holidays—A Guide and Commentary*. It's just like my dad's grape arbor! I recently asked mom why they don't eat the grapes. She said "because it's a sacred structure!" I replied, "Mom, Catholics don't have sacred grape arbors!" She added that the grapes were used to make wine. She thought it had something to do with the blood of Jesus Christ.

Many foods we eat are not found in Mexican or Spanish cookbooks. I found a few Tejano recipes for fideo, pan de semita and bumuelos de Hanuka in Sephardic cookbooks.

A world traveler, I've often been told that I speak an unusual Spanish. "Thank you," as you know, is "muchas gracias" in most Hispanic countries. However, my people in South Texas say "munchas gracias," the Ladino form. I made this discovery while reading ancient Sephardic verses in *The Encyclopedia Judaica* at the Library of Congress.

### My Crypto-Jewish Self

I published *My Crypto-Jewish Self* in 1997 through Kulanu, an international Jewish Organization. The paper details additional cryptic Jewish practices and appears in the web

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site in the section titled “Articles by Subject” [www.ubalt.edu/kulanu/lopez.html].

Marginally Catholic, I left the Catholic religion in 1982 because it wasn’t meeting my needs and I never felt comfortable with it. Religion had always been a topic of discussion in my family and I remember hearing a lot of arguments about Protestantism versus Catholicism. Most of the Cadena family is now Protestant and devout Christians; some are crypto-Jews like myself. I learned of my Jewish ancestry in 1992 from my cousin Olga and uncle Noe (Noah). He was in his mid-sixties and he recalled a family meeting where his mother (my grandmother Maria Esmerijilda) told them of her Jewish ancestry.

I didn’t know much about the violent history our ancestors experienced in Spain when I first visited there in April 1995 and again in spring of 1997. In *Our Secret Heritage—The Amazing History of the De La Cadena Family of Spain, Mexico and South Texas* by Francisco Montalvo and me, we present the origins of the Inquisition and how it affected the Cadenas. If the Inquisition existed today, my Mom and I would be in serious trouble. I presume Mom is mostly aware of the significance of these family traditions, although I’m not.

When she visits me, the first thing she asks is if I have any new cooking pans. If I do, she proceeds to curar las vandejas (or purify the pots). She does this by boiling them in brine water for about an hour or so, I don’t know if she says any prayers. To this day, she and I keep one particular small pot, a coquito, for brewing coffee or warming milk and nothing else. We avoid pork, or eating meat and milk or butter at the same meal. Mom places her hands on my head (a Jewish blessing) practically every time we part. She keeps a constantly lit candle (a spiritual essence) in a room without windows. My grandmother prayed before and after every meal every day of her life. Mom once noted. We eat flour tortillas, unleavened flat bread, wash and salt meat to remove any sign of blood and avoid eating eggs that have blood spots. If a calf is slaughtered at the ranch, we remove the nerve or sinew from the legs and cover the blood with earth. We do Jewish things! Are we Jewish, or do we consider ourselves so? I do.

My dad had a triple bypass a few years ago and there was a possibility that he would die. I asked mom for family prayers, prayers passed down through the generations, to help us through the ordeal and she jotted down a few notes that I later researched. I wonder if she knows that the *Semah*, a family prayer, (Deuteronomy chapter 6:4-9), is what reverent Jews say several times daily? Other prayers are Psalms 23, 27, 34:1-22, 37:1-40 and 121. (We also know Christian prayers.) In essence, without consciously knowing, we’ve been judaizing.

### The Post American Civil War Period

The post-American civil war period in South Texas was very significant for those of us descended from the original colonists. Dr. Montalvo and I conservatively estimate that 50 percent of the current population in South Texas, are descended from those early Spanish settlers. The 60 years before the Civil War was an era of Anglo-American expansion that included the annexation of the Republic of Texas in 1845. South Texas was never part of the Republic of Texas and its annexation by the U. S. was illegal and initiated on dubious grounds. The U.S. claimed the Rio Grande River as its border to Mexi-

co and under the pretense that Mexicans crossed the river and killed Americans on their soil, President Polk and Congress declared war against Mexico on May 13, 1846. Mexico lost the war and ceded a great deal of the American Southwest. Unfortunately, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo failed to protect Tejanos and their land grants.

This land grabbing and squatting becomes clear as community after community—new towns and counties were given Anglo names, names that had little to do with the region. Jim Hogg County was named after James Stephen Hogg, Governor of Texas in 1891. Hebbronville was named for a Californian of English descent. Duval County was named after John Duval, a veteran for Texas Independence. In fact, of fourteen counties named—over 90% of the land, Webb, Duval, Jim Wells, Live Oaks, Nueces, Kleberg, Kenedy, Willacy, Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr, Zapata, Brooks, and Jim Hogg—only four have Hispanic names. The reason is two fold: 1. Anglo-Americans named or renamed individual counties and 2. the area needed to be quickly Anglicized and incorporated into the union, this fact isn’t acknowledged by historians. Consequently, animosity grew between Texans and Tejanos and resulted in outright racism. Our ancestors, the original colonizers and pioneers of South Texas, were perceived as aliens in their own land and strangers in Mexico. South Texas remained an enigma to Tejanos and until just recently to historians as well. Scholars and genealogists are now correcting this oversight and recovering our “lost” history. Despite increased immigration by Anglo-Americans, the Hispanic population today is approximately 70 percent.

**...land grabbing and squatting becomes clear as new towns and counties were given Anglo names that had little to do with the region.**

### The King Ranch and The King Rangers

In October of 1997, I received important information from Kulanu, an organization supporting crypto Jews, regarding Hispanic Jews in South Texas and obtained a copy of Dr. Carlos Montalvo Larralde’s doctoral dissertation entitled *Chicano Jews in South Texas* (Library of Congress, Microfiche 7906177). Published in 1978, it reveals a horrific history, one not taught in public schools.

Originally from Pennsylvania, Richard King and his family did everything in their power to cover up their crimes against Tejano Jewish communities in South Texas. Some say they destroyed the last semblance of Sephardic culture since their expulsion from Spain in 1492. To what extent are they responsible for destroying our culture? It’s difficult to summarize, because they have all the records and have been careful to suppress information on crimes committed by their ancestors. According to Robert W. Stephens and José Canales, a book detailing atrocities and critical of the King family was written in the 1940s or 1950s, but was purchased by the family and destroyed. The author also disappeared.

Perhaps the worst period in our history occurred between the 1870s and the 1920s. Supported by the state government, the Texas Rangers were originally mounted riflemen organized during the fight for Texas independence from Mexico. Assigned to protect Texans from Mexican raiders and Indians, they in time became semi-independent and were the law of the land. Racist politicians gave them the power to enforce the law according to their whims. Our people feared them for their brutality, which at times included flogging, torture and mutilation. The Rangers often arrested people in the middle of the night and condemned them without the benefit of a proper trial.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Art Benveniste

154 and growing! That's the number of paid members in the SCJS. This is a new record for the organization. Most of the credit goes to our skilled and overworked Membership Chair, Randy Baca. Randy's tireless efforts are valuable resources to us and are much appreciated. We are sorry to learn that Randy has been under doctor's care lately and will not be able to join us at in San Diego. Get well soon, Randy. We want to see you next year in San Antonio.

We are also making progress in other areas. Soon we will have our non-profit status. Thanks to Attorney Martin Sosin of Santa Monica, our 501.c.3 forms are in process. This will make donations to the SCJS tax deductible and facilitate grants from academic and charitable funds. Martin is planning to come to our conference and becoming one of our family.

Another exciting development is that we finally have our own website. Please visit it at: [www.cryptojews.com](http://www.cryptojews.com). We have been going through past *HaLapid* issues and collecting articles for posting on the website. So far more than 65 are up, more will be added soon. We hope that the site will soon become a major resource for people seeking scholarly studies, personal stories, book and film reviews, links and any other information dealing with our important work. Any additions and suggestions would welcome. Please look over the site and add a comment to our guest book.

Dolores Sloan, Flavio Montoya and I were in Portugal last month for the Portuguese Jewish Heritage Conference and Tour organized by Rufina Bernadetti da Silva Mausenbaum of Saudades ([www.saudades.com](http://www.saudades.com).) See Dolores' review of the conference on page four. A highlight for me was that I finally met Inacio Steinhardt. He is a scholar on the history of Portuguese Jews and has written a biography of Arturo Carlos Barros Basto, the publisher of the original *HaLapid* (The Torch). I also met the daughter of Barros Basto and was given a copy of the November 1942 edition of his newsletter. Barros Basto was also known as Ben-Rosh. Two quotes from his publication appear on the masthead of our *HaLapid*.

We are very fortunate to have Gloria Trujillo, David Kunin and Stan Hordes who have been hard at work in organizing the SCJS Conference slated for San Diego, August 11-13. Due to their efforts, this is expected to be our best conference yet. Thanks to David there will be special events for early arrivals on Friday and Saturday, August 9 and 10. See the articles by Gloria and David on this page and the tentative program on page 11.

Please visit [www.cryptojews.com](http://www.cryptojews.com) and join us in San Diego.

## 2002 SAN DIEGO CONFERENCE

AUGUST 11-13

By Gloria Trujillo, Conference Chair,

It's hard to believe that a year has already gone by! Now we only have a month or so before the conference begins. We are looking forward to seeing everyone again and meeting new friends in San Diego.



Update! The cutoff date for reserving rooms at the Marriott Mission Valley has been extended to July 19. Please call the reservations number at (619 692 3800) if you haven't already made your reservation.

If you are planning on arriving in San Diego a few days early, please note the pre-conference events sponsored by our local chair, Rabbi David Kunin. Please read Rabbi Kunin's article below for additional information.

If you have waited until the last minute to make your travel plans, we can help. Contact Cecilia or Carlos at the Pedroza Travel Center for your travel arrangements. The phone number at Pedroza Travel is (323) 651-1982 or, for people out of the area, (800) 237 1597 and the address is 396 Fairfax Avenue, Suite 7, Los Angeles, Ca. 90036-2175.

The conference begins on Sunday evening, August 11 at 5:00 PM in the meeting area, with registration and an opportunity to browse at an exhibit of photographs taken by our members at past conferences. We also hope to include photographs taken at the recent Saudades conference held in Portugal last month. Dinner and a Sephardic music Concert by Vanessa Paloma follow the registration.

Please join us for Continental breakfast both Monday and Tuesday morning at 7:30 AM in the meeting area. The conference will begin promptly at 8:00 AM each morning. Monday's schedule includes lunch and dinner at the Marriott. Free time is scheduled after the last presenter on Monday so you will be able to rest or take a walk before dinner.

Tuesday's lunch is on your own and our annual business meeting follows immediately after Tuesday's final presenter.

See you in San Diego.

## FOR PEOPLE ARRIVING EARLY, EVENTS PLANNED FOR AUGUST 9 AND 10

By David Kunin

Congregation Ohr Shalom is planning an exciting series of events in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Society of Crypto Judaic Studies.

On Friday Night, August 9th, we begin a Special Shabbat with a Sephardic Dinner at 6:00 PM (\$20 per person, reservations required) this will be followed by a traditional Shabbat Service at 7:30, and a lecture by Dr. Seth Kunin, "The Hidden Practices of the Crypto-Jews of New Mexico."

Conference attendees are also invited to the Shabbat Morning Service at 9:30 AM of August 10th. The Service will be followed by Shabbat Lunch (no charge, but please call the synagogue office to let us know if you are coming) and a Lecture by Dr. Stanley Hordes, "The Sefardic Legacy in New Mexico: A History of the Crypto-Jews."

On Saturday Evening at 8AM we will celebrate the end of Shabbat with Havdalah, this will be followed by a lecture by Enrique Lombrozo "The Crypto-Jews and the Conquistadors." Enrique is a member of Ohr Shalom.

On Sunday, August 11th at 10AM there will be a lecture and walking tour of Old Town, with a focus on the Jewish history of San Diego. There will be a \$5 charge for the tour, and space is limited. The tour will be led by Stan and Laurel Schwartz, experts on Jewish San Diego, and members of the SCJS and Ohr Shalom Synagogue.

For information, please contact the Ohr Shalom synagogue office at 619-275 9299, or e-mail [ohrshalom@aol.com](mailto:ohrshalom@aol.com).

## Portuguese Jewish Heritage Conference Tour:

### 22 PRIMOS IN SEARCH OF SACRED MEMORIES

By Dolores Sloan, HaLapid Editor

Those who gathered on June 9 in Lisbon were taking part in something very new and, at the same time, very old.

Without the modern phenomena known as cyberspace and the Saudades website, this probably could not have taken place at all, or at least, been delayed many years and not featured the same players. At the same time, their journey had the hallmark of an ancient ritual, a search for roots and spiritual renewal.

Not everyone shared this intention at the beginning. Some had come along at the invitation of friends. Others were looking to enhance their field of expertise. Yet, eight days later, when they sat in a circle and shared experiences and insights on the final evening, it was clear all had arrived at the same place.

Saudades ([www.saudades.com](http://www.saudades.com)) is the birthchild of Rufina Bernadetti Silva Mausenbaum, SCJS member, who lives in Johannesburg, South Africa. She told the story of her crypto-Jewish odyssey in *HaLapid's* Fall 2001 issue ("Saudades: a Journey Full Circle"). Now an observant Jew and community leader, she has made several times what she and her sisters laughingly call their *haj* to Portugal and the island of Madeira, where family roots are deep.

After a year of discussion with leaders of SCJS, Kulanu, Sephardic House and other organization and online correspondence, Rufina recruited Mariana Sande y Castro, a Lisbon specialist in Portuguese Jewish heritage travel, to help draft an itinerary and coordinate a tour and conference-on-the-move. Twenty-two persons were recruited, and on June 9, they met for the first time at the designated hotel in Lisbon.

The participants hailed from Central and South America (Brazil, Ecuador, Mexico), North America (U.S. and Canada), Africa (South Africa; one was a member of the Lemba people) and Europe (U.K., Belgium). The religious backgrounds included observant and "casual" Jews (Sephardic and Ashkenazi, those born Jewish, converted or "returned"); those who knew their ancestors were Jewish and those who suspected it; and practicing Catholics or Christians. At the start, only a few had met others of the group before, face-to-face; the contact had been mostly virtual. Yet there was excitement as they connected the real persons before them with their online personalities and contributions. The tour/conference group soon became a community, one might say a family, where you like most of the people most of the time, some of the people some of the time and try to love the rest unconditionally in spite of -- whatever.

With Sergio Palma, a knowledgeable and amiable guide,

and a comfortable, air-conditioned tour bus (without bathroom), the group visited over twenty cities and villages. Some of the visits were brief stops sandwiched between the larger or more significant communities where the group stayed overnight.

Twenty-six persons had been recruited as speakers, from among the specialists in Saudades ranks and from Portuguese universities, municipalities, synagogues and tourism offices. They gave their presentations in scheduled stops at universities, museums, tourist offices, and hotels, and over the microphone in the bus. This writer gave hers sitting in the front seat of the bus, mike in hand, as the Alentejo landscape spread before her through the driver's large window.

The group seemed to be made up of twenty-two knowledgeable people, each of whom had developed as questioning individuals who don't think inside the box. This led to stimulating conversations, discussions and, yes, arguments over bus aisles, in restaurants and hotel rooms. It also meant that Sergio was saddled with individuals for whom time was relative when something deemed significant delayed return to the bus on schedule. It also strengthened this writer's appreciation for the variety of the learning experience, intellectually and personally.

Then there was the spiritual element. The presence of Rabbi Leo Abrami gave leadership and meaning to kaddish and blessings said in places where

Jews had been burned at *auto-da-fés* and in visits to reclaimed, but not functioning, synagogues in communities like Castelo de Vide. In one, dancing and pillar-hugging took over after the solemnity, as the travelers expressed joy that Jewish prayers

could be said once again in synagogues, some dating from the fourteenth century. There were tears shed throughout the journey as individuals mourned the sorrow of their people and in some cases, their very families' ancestors. In the village of Cabanas do Viriato, the group planted a tree in homage to Aristides de Sousa Mendes, WWII Portuguese counsel in Bordeaux, who saved thousands of Jewish lives disobeying his government by issuing exit visas. Always, there were the hospitable Portuguese people. This writer remembers warmly the people whose laundry-festooned backyards in Guarda were invaded by eight of us, lead by a local historian and her son, of crypto-Jewish background, as she pointed out the ruins of an ancient synagogue half buried in an industrial landscape by the river. I imagined ten strangers appearing suddenly near my back door, and understood the ire of one local resident, while marveling at the general good humor of the rest.

There was the former mayor of Castelo de Vide, who told us he descended from New Christians, and lead us through the streets of the *Juderia* to an ancient well, the focus of local crypto-Jewish and healing legends. Many drank from the crystalline waters, fresh and cold from nearby mountain sources.

Some of the travelers discovered family names and sites



Mr. Vasco telling about the restoration of the synagogue of Tomar



A service in the synagogue of Castelo da Vide

during the journey. One participant met at least two individuals with the same double surname who came from the same line -- *primos*. Another spent time before the tour visiting the medieval village of his ancestors. All of us knew that we had been privileged members of a pilgrimage to significant sites where our coreligionists, present and past, suspected or known, lived, worked and died. Despite differences in nationality, age, race and present religious persuasion, we were and are, indeed, all *primos*.



Rabbi Leo Abrami leads Kaddish for *auto da fe* victims in a square in Portugal

## The Inquisition Trial of Andrés González, 1486

By Vanessa Paloma

In the corner of my study in the file cabinet sits a facsimile copy of a manuscript from the 15th century. As I open that file and peruse the pages of the Inquisitional procedure against Andrés González in 1486, out streams the pain and sorrow, the confusion and anguish felt by that particular converso priest turned Orthodox Jew for the love of a woman. The language is fraught with double meanings and today, over 500 years after this indictment, I find myself wondering what really happened to Andrés González and to Ysabel, the woman who helped bring him back to the faith of his ancestors.

Composer Ofer Ben-Amots introduced me to this case. He is writing an ocalled *Viduy* based on this Inquisitional procedure. We worked on some details of the translation and to try to read between the lines and understand a deeper level of what happened during those months in Toledo.

What is this story about? Andrés González, whose grandfather taught him about Judaism as a child, chooses to continue in the Catholic faith his parents adopted to escape persecution. He becomes a priest and on a Tisha B'Av (9th of Av, commemoration of the destruction of the Temple), during the morning mass, a family in Talavera is accused of witchcraft. An older woman was seen outside her house rocking in a "Jewish" way. Andrés walked to the house and discovered them sitting on sackcloth, praying in Hebrew, wearing *kippas*. At first he is mortified to find himself in this situation, but after they mention that they know he is a *confeso* he begins to learn Torah and practice Judaism through them.

Ten years earlier, he had been tried by the Inquisition as a Judaizer and had been absolved and now carried the status of *confeso*. He meets Ysabel, the daughter of the "crazy" woman who was accused on that day in the Church. He slowly begins to learn Torah and practice Judaism in secret while officiating as priest of the community. He starts to keep *kashrut*, kosher laws; he learns Hebrew and some of the holidays. Andrés keeps Sukkot, Yom Kippur, Passover and of course Shabbat.

It seems that Ysabel moved in to the rectory; they were married and had a child who died at 10 months. Andrés

begins to disdain the Catholic Church and its ritual objects. He keeps a Jewish bible in with the Eucharist, and urinates on a Crucifix which had been painted on the wall of a street he walked down.

The Church begins to suspect his faithfulness to their religion and soon enough discovered many of his Judaizing traits. In the end, his confession includes theological apostasy in addition to Jewish behavior. He confesses to not believing that the Eucharist was the body and blood of Christ; secretly not absolving people who confessed to him; performing Christian acts out of fear of discovery, and not because of true belief.

The case is complex and has many details of which Andrés González was accused. The trial, in 1486, started on February 14 and ended on August 17. These months must have been filled with physical and emotional torture and pain for him and those close to him.

Unfortunately, it is very difficult for us to understand what his true feelings were. According to the Inquisition document, he stated that this lapse of behavior was due to a sickness from Satan and he desired to live as a Christian and leave behind his apostasy and heresy. Did Andrés really believe this? Was he saying this to not be burned alive at the stake? By confessing, he could be buying himself an easier punishment.

He was "relaxed" to the secular arm for execution. The Church could punish convicts but was not allowed to execute them. This was done by the state.

Today we have few one-sided clues to this segment of history. It is a fascinating turn of events that turns a priest into a *hozer b'tshuva* (a newly-observant Jew). Maybe in the future we will begin to understand more clearly what conversos had to endure to hide their faith.

*VANESSA PALOMA is a singer of Ladino music and a performance artist based in Los Angeles. She has a Master of Music from Indiana University's Early Music Institute in Medieval Spain. For more information go to [vanessapaloma.com](http://vanessapaloma.com) and to listen to her music, visit <http://flor.iuma.com>. Ms Paloma is scheduled to perform at the SCJS conference.*

# LA CONQUISTADORA: HER CRYPTO JEWISH CONNECTION

©2001 by Mona Hernandez

In the fifteen years since the story made headlines, New Mexico's Crypto Judaism has been a topic of research among scholars and genealogists alike. The descendants of the first Spanish colonists, who accompanied Juan de Onate in 1598 and later Diego de Vargas in 1693 into New Mexico, have questions regarding their identity that need to be answered. Were their ancestors really devout Catholics or *conversos* (Jewish converts to Catholicism) who may have practiced Judaism in secret as crypto Jews? What of their devotion to La Conquistadora, the patroness of New Mexico who is honored yearly in a procession when she is taken from the St. Francis Cathedral and carried through the streets of Santa Fe? Has she always been a symbol of Christianity or did she long ago represent crypto Judaism? Researching my family for a number of years, tracing them to the Oñate and Vargas colonists, didn't prepare me for the unexpected, nor did filling in the blanks with names, dates and places tell me who or what my ancestors were. Thanks to the research of Dr. Stanley Hordes on the crypto Jewish presence in New Spain (Colonial Mexico), I have a better understanding of my ancestors and of the person I am. My ongoing research on La Conquistadora has led me to believe that she probably symbolized crypto Judaism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Many of my ancestors migrated to Nueva España soon after the Inquisitions in Spain and Portugal were established to weed out and prosecute the crypto Jews and when Jewish mysticism known as the *Kabbalah* was popular in Spain. The *Kabbalah* may have been transplanted from Spain.

## The Kabbalah

*Kabbalah*, a form of Jewish mysticism, means receiving doctrine or tradition. To those of a mystical inclination, it is a key to immortality, the ultimate union of the soul with the Almighty. The *Zohar* or the Book of Splendor was written and compiled in Spain by Rabbi Moses de Leon at the end of the thirteenth century. It traces the *Kabbalah* to the first five books of Moses. These teachings and popularity spread throughout Spain during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and remained a movement of individuals until the expulsion of the Sephardic Jews from Spain in 1492. The Spaniards likely brought these beliefs to New Spain and New Mexico. Research into New Mexico's history reveals traces of the *Kabbalah* from the use of amulets with the *evil eye*.

## La Conquistadora

La Conquistadora was brought to Santa Fe, New Mexico in 1625 by Fray Alonso Benavides, Commissary of the Inquisition in Mexico City, New Spain. The leader of the wagon train that brought La Conquistadora was Francisco Gomez. A native of Portugal and orphaned at a young age, Gomez had been raised by an older half-brother who was a Franciscan priest and a Commissary of the Holy Office. After arriving in New Mexico, Francisco Gomez established a successful military career and rose in the ranks very quickly, eventually leading to the position of acting governor. Gomez was seen as an outsider because of his Portuguese birth and was envied because of his rank and position. He was eventually denounced as a Jew by birth and by practice to the Inquisition in Mexico

City. Informants claimed Gomez was observed preparing for the Sabbath on Fridays, didn't eat pork, and circumcised his sons. In spite of his enemies' claims, he and his family established, sometime between 1630 and 1640 a confraternity in Santa Fe in honor of La Conquistadora, christened "Our Lady of the Rosary." He married Ana Robledo, an Española born in Yunque (San Juan), New Mexico. Research in the archives in Spain has revealed Ana Robledo's grandmother Maria de Adeva came from a family of suspected Jews. Francisco Gomez and Ana Robledo had several children, including Francisco Gomez Robledo, born in 1628 and Andres Gomez Robledo, born circa 1640 in Santa Fe. I descend from both of these men.

Albeit no action was ever taken against his father, Francisco Gomez Robledo was not so fortunate. Also a military man, Francisco Gomez Robledo began his military career at the age of thirteen and rose in the ranks very quickly. He later served as councilman and municipal magistrate in Santa Fe. Like his father, he was also accused of Judaizing (crypto-Jewish practices). On May 4, 1662, at the age of 34, Francisco Gomez Robledo was arrested in Santa Fe and transported to Mexico City to stand trial before the Inquisition. After his arrest, his brother-in-law, Pedro Lucero de Godoy, was designated to assist in the attachment of his property. Attached was his Santa Fe house, his *encomiendas* and other properties. A variety of his possessions brought about 325 pesos at auctions held from June 30 through July 2 in Santa Fe. This was necessary to pay for his journey to Mexico City, his imprisonment, and his trial. All costs, including food and shackles were the responsibility of the prisoner and paid out of the sale of his possessions. The Holy Office required 300 pesos in security to cover prison expenses. In April, 1663, Francisco Gomez Robledo was checked into the prison of the Holy Office. Eighteen charges had been brought against him, most were for the crime of Judaizing. He would not be informed of the charges made against him for more than a year. Although he was brought before the Inquisition Tribunal several times, his trial did



La Conquistadora without the child Jesus

not begin until May 16, 1663. Hordes' research of the Inquisition records in Mexico City uncovered testimony given at Gomez Robledo's trial, which revealed his brothers, Juan and Andres Gomez Robledo, were circumcised. Two separate medical examinations by Inquisition surgeons discovered Francisco was also circumcised. Somehow, he was able to explain this away! He used as a part of his defense his family's establishment of Our Lady of the Rosary and their devotion to La Conquistadora. This gave the appearance the Gomez Robledos were sincere Catholics. In spite of an overwhelmingly convincing case of crypto Judaism against Francisco Gomez Robledo and his family, he was finally released in 1664 and returned to Santa Fe. The ordeal cost him three years, four months, and fourteen days of his life. He also lost several thousand pesos. However, he did get back his personal belongings that had not been sold, his house on the plaza, his titles to his lands, and his *encomiendas*.

Why did the Gomez Robledo family establish this confraternity? In the *History of the Marranos*, there is a passage that reads: "Victims of the Inquisition were revered as martyrs. In honor of certain outstanding figures, religious confraternities were formed, very much as though some Christian saint were in question."

## The Pueblo Revolt

The Pueblo Revolt in August, 1680 forced the Spanish colonists out of New Mexico. Santa Fe was under siege by the

Pueblo Indians for ten days. Santa Fe and its church were burning to the ground, but that didn't stop Josefa Lopez Zambrano, niece of Francisco Gomez Robledo from entering the church and rescuing La Conquistadora. Knowing the danger, why would Josefa Lopez Zambrano risk her life? Why was it so important to save La Conquistadora? A possible answer may be in the following passage "The Conversos formed religious associations with Catholic objects and under the patronage of some Christian saint used this as a cover for observing their ancestral rites." The Jews in time of persecution would flee their homeland and take their Torah with them into the unknown. Was La Conquistadora hollow and could she have concealed a Torah scroll? Did the early Spanish colonists practice the Kabbalah? Did they believe La Conquistadora was their *Shekinah*? Known in the Kabbalah as the Sabbath Bride, the *Shekinah* is the female aspect of God. By Divine decree the *Shekinah* was sent into "exile" to abide with man until the time when he purifies himself. When she is in exile, her light is diminished and the restoration of her full light can only come through the observation of the 613 commandments. As a result of the Pueblo Revolt and their expulsion from New Mexico, the Spanish colonists settled in present day El Paso and remained there for thirteen years. La Conquistadora remained in "exile" with them. It was during this time of exile that Francisco Gomez Robledo died and did not return to New Mexico in 1693 with the don Diego de Vargas reconquest.

Some of Our Lady of the Rosary's members before and after the Pueblo Revolt were individuals who were blood related or who had married into the Gomez Robledo family. They were the Gomez Robledos and their immediate family, including Francisco Lucero de Godoy, nephew of Francisco Gomez Robledo and husband of Josefa Lopez Zambrano. Interest in Our Lady of the Rosary diminished after 1760 but when the Comanche raids began again in 1768, a revival was set in motion and La Conquistadora was declared the Patron Saint in 1770. In that same year a celebration was held in honor of Our Lady of the Rosary and La Conquistadora and by 1776 the celebration had become a three-day affair. La Conquistadora had been given a new purpose, which was for intercession to protect New Mexico from further Indian attack. Throughout the 1700's, the Comanches and the Apaches, who were considered their enemies, often besieged the Spanish colonists. In Carlos Larralde's *The History of the Jews of Texas*, Larralde quotes a prayer, which was recited among crypto-Jews living along the Rio Grande, for protection against the Indians. The prayer is as follows:

*Oh God, Lord of Israel, protect us from the Comanches, Devils from the Depth of Hell! Lord we beseech for safety; that we may survive to serve Thee. Protect us from the contemptuous ridicule, of the pagan gentile, and Love us as you did, for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, for David and for Solomon."*

Perhaps the *Kabbalah* played a part in the revival of Our Lady of the Rosary. The *Kabbalah* originates from man's sense of inadequacy in dealing with problems. This leads man to look to outside sources for strength. The *Kabbalah* speaks of God as the "infinite or limitless" creation, evil, the soul, Israel, exile, and the Messiah, meaning the people of Israel, not an individual redeemer. *Kabbalah* seeks to explain the connection between God and creation, the existence of good and evil, and to show the road to spiritual perfection. The re-

sult of the expulsion of the Sephardic Jews from Spain awoke messianic longings and caused mass interest in the *Kabbalah* with its doctrine of the redemption of Israe. This interest and popularity may have been the result of the misfortunes that befell the Jews in Spain, their "Golden Age" forcibly brought to an end and their future uncertain. The Jews sought to understand the reasons for their affliction and suffering; why were they expelled from Spain? Messianic longings laid greater stress on man's journey toward redemption.

My ancestors are responsible for much of New Mexico's history; one of their many contributions include establishing this confraternity. Therefore, La Conquistadora has a special meaning for me. She is what remains of the Gomez Robledos and all my ancestors who were members and contributors of her confraternity, Our Lady of the Rosary. Although I thought about becoming a member, I never joined because I am no longer a practicing Catholic.

La Conquistadora has been described as the oldest depiction of the Virgin Mary in the United States, but has she always been a symbol of Christianity or did she long ago represent crypto Judaism? What is known regarding La Conquistadora:

In 1776, a priest visiting New Mexico described La Conquistadora in detail and made no mention of the Child Jesus in her arms. This was odd in view of the fact that he described in complete detail all the churches he visited.

Sometime in the 1930's, an artist/architect visited Santa Fe for the purpose of studying La Conquistadora to determine when she was made and by whom. He interviewed many elderly locals; to their recollection dating back to childhood, La Conquistadora did not hold the Child Jesus in her arms.

In 1991, I visited La Conquistadora for the first time. On Saturday afternoon she was not holding the Child Jesus. I saw her a second time on Thursday afternoon; this time she was holding the Child Jesus.

La Conquistadora has many dresses and her devoted change her dress every Friday. This is a tradition that began with the Gomez Robledo family.

*MONA HERNANDEZ has researched her family roots in New Mexico and southern Colorado and has reported on the results at SCJS conferences.*



La Conquistadora holding the child Jesus

Here is a quote from page 90 of our book:

Actually, to be a Ranger a man was chosen for his overbearing manner and his capacity for cruelty. The consequences of the Rangers' barbarization [sic] had had a decisive significance for present-day Chicanos....

The Texas Rangers devastated much of the Chicano . . . Jewish culture, especially their records and religious items. Many Rangers were sympathetic to the Ku Klux Klan. As Captain Frank Hammer once said, 'We don't arrest our own kind.'

A New York Times editorial published on November 18, 1922 stated "the killing of Mexicans without provocation is so common as to pass almost unnoticed."

Richard King supported the Texas Rangers and hired Ranger Sam Pickett and others to brutally force Hispanic ranchers away and get their lands, writes Robert W. Stephens in *Texas Rangers Sketches*, a privately published work (1972). Pickett, a handsome youth with deceptively sensitive eyes, slaughtered many innocent people.

Rangers Walter Durbin and Ben Lindsey were also King deputies, Stephens continues. By hiring them to wage a continuous war exterminating all Hispanics regardless of on what side of the border they lived, the King family expertly concealed their dirty deeds and kept the appearance of decent law-abiding citizens. They secured all witnesses or documents exposing their wrongdoings and ascertained that none of their accomplices wrote their memoirs.

As the King Ranch grew, so did Richard King's power and soon he controlled most of South Texas, its politics and economy. Charles Stillman, Sam Belden and Mifflin Kenedy soon joined the land grab, writes O. Douglas Weeks, in "The Texas-Mexican and the Politics of South Texas," from *American Political and Social Science Review*, August 1930.

Weeks quotes a February 6, 1975, letter from Robert W. Stephens to Carlos Larralde:

The ranch owners traditionally employed ex-Texas Rangers as protection men, then called 'King Rangers,' to cope with the numerous cattle thieves in that area . . . [and those] who dare stand against King's abuses.

If Hispanics accidentally got lost within King land, they were murdered and buried in unmarked graves or simply tied and buried alive. This is documented in several Ismael Montalvo interviews (*Brownsville Herald*, May, September and October 1902 and May and November, 1910; *Corpus Christi Weekly Caller*, from *El Porvenir* or *Brownsville*, October, 1912). Many Mexicans fleeing the Revolution of 1910 and in route to Corpus Christi or San Antonio disappeared while in the King Ranch. This was still true during World War II, according to a Stephens letter to Carlos Larralde in 1976.

A fire of mysterious origin destroyed King family records during a federal government investigation of King family abuses in 1863. Another fire occurred in 1912.

When interviewed, King family employees gave favorable interviews about the family. Mexican records kept by the corrupt Porfirio Diaz government also proved favorable. The King family involvement with the Texas Mexican railway and the cattle industry no doubt greatly influenced the outcome of the investigation. In fact Diaz's rurales patrolled the Mexican side of the border in spring of 1911 and aided tracking Tejano enemies of the Kings.

### **Racism in South Texas**

Walter Prescott Webb, a noted Texas scholar and writer, was an avid racist. He headed the Southwestern Writers' Conference and the Texas Institute of Letters. Caneles describes how this effectively negated any effort to investigate Tejano Jewish culture and studies in South Texas:

Walter Prescott Webb simply thought that minorities, especially Jews, should be living on another planet. I spoke to him about Latin Americans [Chicanos] of Texas and especially those of Jewish background. What I wanted to see was a study done on Latins in Texas with his approval. You see, his influence could have promoted a research center on Texan Latins. Instead it was like talking to a statue.

Webb ultimately must have had a guilty conscience and realized the harm he had done to the Tejano community. In an article in *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, January 1971, Llerena B. Friend quotes him:

The unfortunate fact is that the Mexicans were not as good at keeping records as were the people on this side . . . I have often wished that the Mexicans, or some one who had their confidence, [implying Hispanics weren't able to record their own history], could have gone among them and got their stories of the raids and counter-raids. I am sure that these stories would take on a different color and tone.

In fact, Francisca Reyes Esparza, from a Jewish family, wrote about her people and preserved family relics. The material was housed in a Chicano library known as The Esparza Collection. Professor Américo Paredes also wrote about Hispanic Jews in the 1950s, but was disliked at The University of Texas in Austin because of his criticism of the Texas Rangers and Walter Prescott Webb.

My grandparents told me that during the 1920's, a handsome Mexican-American teen and a local Anglo girl fell in love. He was warned to stay away from her, but the two continued to meet secretly until they were caught. He was hung on a mesquite tree not far from the Town Square in Falfurrias, Texas.

As a child, I knew we lived differently. TV showed me we weren't treated as other Americans. I could get haircuts in Hispanics only barbershops. Restaurants, theaters, grocery stores and whole neighborhood were segregated. Anglos lived north of the railroad tracks in the better section of town. Their streets were lighted, paved and they didn't have out-houses. We weren't allowed to speak Spanish on school grounds; I was once spanked for doing so.

Today, I speak Spanish quite well and understand Italian and Portuguese and have studied German, French and recently learned the Hebrew alefbet. Growing up was difficult; North America doesn't have pyramids, I told myself as a child. Anglos it seemed controlled everything; they were the only viable culture. It was a psychological nightmare, which I survived. I didn't grow up in dire poverty, we lived in the best Hispanic neighborhood in town, but I empathize with the poor because I've witnessed miserable poverty. I now understand that one may be good and honest, yet poor.

We've lost most of our land, but many of us lost even more—we lost our cultural traditions and self-esteem. Many of our people turned to gangs, drugs and alcohol. U.S. social services made many virtual slaves to the American handout. Like the American Indian and African-American cultures, many came to believe that Anglo-American culture was supreme. Tejano children were taught an anglo-centric history and made to believe that Anglos tamed the land and brought culture and civilization to South Texas and most of North America.

In fact, some Mexican-Americans fleeing poverty and tyranny did settle in South Texas after the Mexican Revolution of 1910, but many descendants of Spanish settlers have lived in South Texas since the early 1700s.

### Cadena Family Oral History

According to oral history in Rosendo Cadena's family (my maternal grandfather), Cadena relations arrived in Premont, Texas in 1800. However, Rosendo, his wife Maria H. and his brother Polonio II fled the Mexican Revolution from Agualeguas, N.L. and settled in South Texas sometime between 1910-11. They essentially left the little they had behind at Rancho el Tanque. Most of the Mexican haciendas were looted and destroyed; we don't know what happened to Hacienda de Ventura, mentioned in family records. I visited our ancestral panteón in El Tanque in 1994 and found approximately two hundred gravesites. The marble and glass headstones faced east, toward Jerusalem.

Mexican revolutionaries confiscated the Gonzalez maize crop to feed their armies. Pancho Villa's men ordered my grandfather Rosendo and his brother Polonio to fill a wagon with corn and take it to Villa's men fighting the Federales across the hills from their rancho. The two knew they would be killed if they disobeyed the rebels or were caught by the Federales. At dawn amid shootings and bombings, they followed through with the instructions they were given.

Abuela Maria told how soldiers came on mounted horses, and forced their way into their home and pointed at rifle at her belly. A feisty young woman; she stood up to them, but after they left her family feared for their lives. They fled Mexico. Later in route to Texas on a mule driven wagon, my great-grandmother Mama Lola had her first encounter with a steam locomotive. Frightened, she jumped off the wagon and ran in the opposite direction fearing the train would follow!

My grandparents returned to Mexico several times thereafter. My grandmother described how they would cross the Rio Grande in a galvanized washing tub and on one occasion the tub overturned and she saved her husband's life.

Rosendo, Maria H. and Polonio lived in Falfurrias, Texas for the rest of their lives. They periodically and hesitantly returned to Mexico from time to time. They feared border guards and a possibly difficult re-entry into the U.S., although they were naturalized citizens. Perhaps they remembered the past difficulties our people have endured in both countries?

Rosendo was a quiet and dignified gentleman with an enterprising spirit. He was one of the first men in Falfurrias to own a Model T Ford. He and his sons practically owned a whole town block. He died in Alice on Christmas 1968, soon after I returned from Vietnam. When the mortician indicated he was placing a Catholic cross on his casket, a family member cried "No!" and grabbed it! Rosendo left a modest inheritance for his youngest son, Noe, a U.S. civil engineer. It was to educate his children. Maria Esmerijilda, the driving spirit that had kept the family together, died in January of 1971 of Alzheimer's disease. She died peacefully in her sleep, as she had wanted. Polonio lived to be almost 101 and died at a rest home in Falfurrias in 1995. My mom and several Mexican relatives attended his funeral. It was a humble end to a heroic struggle.

*This article is adapted from a copyrighted presentation given by ALBERTO OMERO LOPEZ CADENA at the 2001 Conference of the Society. Lopez and Dr. Francisco Montalvo have recently completed The Amazing History of the De La Cadena Family of Spain, Mexico and South Texas.*

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Many contributions are memoirs or retelling of family stories and legends. They may or may not be historically accurate, although they are indeed valid, sacred memories that have been passed along through time. We do not attempt to change individual perceptions as long as they are reported as such, but we do change obvious misstatements or historical error.

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# THE ROMANCE OF THE EXPULSION OF THE JEWS FROM PORTUGAL

by Moshe Shaul

For the Jews of Spain and their descendants, the expulsion was a trauma that still affects them more than 500 years after 1492. Less known but harder and more cruel was the destiny of the Jews of Portugal, those who lived there before 1492 and those who came from Spain in that year, looking for a temporary shelter. In the case of the latter, they had to pay considerable sums, and their admission became a trap much more cruel than the bad luck of their brothers who sought other solutions.

Five years after these Jews arrived in Portugal, King Manoel ascended the throne and wanted to marry Princess Isabella, daughter of the Catholic Kings, Fernando and Isabel. A principal condition to the marriage was that Jews who would not convert to Christianity would be expelled within a month.

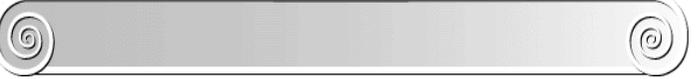
King Manoel, to whom this marriage was most important, accepted this condition but he wanted to accomplish it in a different manner than was done in by the Catholic Kings. The latter at least gave the Jews who did not wish to convert the option of leaving the country, albeit stripped of everything after selling their houses and goods for the equivalent of a mouthful of bread.

He was not ready to give up the economic benefits that Portugal, and his own purse, gained from the Jews, who were a significant base of the economy. Refusing to passively allow thousands of these profitable subjects to depart, he took special measures so they could not leave on the ships which would take them to other countries, forcing them to renounce their religion through forced conversion.

The religious fanaticism of Isabella, who actually lived in the country only a few years after her marriage, was also manifest in her sister, Maria, to whom Manuel was married in a second marriage. In June of 1508, she convinced the king to annul the severe penalties imposed on the city of Lisbon for the massacre, in 1506, of the New Christians of the city. Before this she had also managed to annul the penalty of exile to São Tome, of a band of ruffians who had attacked a group of New Christians.

These events became the theme of one of the most interesting of the Judeo-Espanyol ballads, *A La Ekspulsion de los Djudios de Portugal* (The Expulsion of the Jews of Portugal). One can find differing versions of the song in Salonika, Tangier and Ashila and in the former Spanish Morocco.

In his article "A History and Traditional Narrative: The Judeo-Spanish Ballad of the Exile of the Jews of Portugal," Samuel G. Armistead analyzed these versions and selected the following as the best one. It had been sung for him in 1959 by Esther Varsano Hassid of Salonika.



*Dies del sielo iDies del sielo iDies del sielo, azed konmigo!  
I k'eramos tres ermanas ijas de un rey Dolorido  
I ke las dos ya estan kazadas i a eya no le dan marido.  
I no es por falta de ashugare ke de oro tien'el kozido;  
No's por falta de kontado Sus vias da mi padre por migo;  
I sino's por falta de ventura ke del Sielo no l'ay venido,  
Nestas palavras diziendo lazaberdjis ke l'ay venido  
ke se murio la ermana i en su lugar la ay metido  
Ya la visten, ya l'adornan ya l'asuven al kavayo,  
Kon siento i sus donzeaas ke la yevan de lado a lado;  
Kon dos mil kavaleria ke le ivan aguadrando'l paso.  
Los turkos en las meshkitas, los gregos van a la klisa;  
Los djidios a la Ley Santa la ke la sivda mos guadra.  
Viene la reyna i dize kon grandezas ke a tomado  
"I si d'aki entri en reyno, los djidios primero mato"  
Non ayegesh, la mi nuera, non alkansesh en talos grados.,  
Si a mi ijo entrash en sangre ke no suvash en el palasio.*

*God in heaven! God in heaven! God in heaven, be with me!  
We were three sisters, daughters of a doleful king;  
Two married, the other without husband,  
not for lack of a dowry embroidered in gold  
not for lack of fatherly praise  
not for lack of heavenly luck.  
These words bring news that a sister is dead  
and you have been put in her place.  
She is dressed and adorned and placed on horseback  
with hundreds of ladies in waiting alongside  
with 2,000 horsemen guiding the way.  
The Turks in the mosques, the Greeks in the church,  
The Jews with the Holy Law which guards the city,  
the arriving Queen says with royal grandeur seized  
"If I enter as ruler, I will first kill the Jews."  
Do not approach my daughter-in-law, do not go so far,  
If you wound my son, don't enter the palace.*

*This article is reprinted with permission from Aki Yerushalayim, with translation by Flavio Montoya.*



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[www.cryptojews.com](http://www.cryptojews.com)

The SCJS is proud to announce that we now have our own website with our own domain name. The site contains: announcements of upcoming events, registration information, links to other sites of interest, our bylaws and, most important, an archive of most of the articles that have appeared in **HaLapid** since 1995. Included are scholarly studies, personal stories and reviews of books, films and other conferences. A guest book is provided for comments. See the site at: [www.cryptojews.com](http://www.cryptojews.com)

## PROGRAM, 2002 CONFERENCE

### Sunday, August 11

5:00 - 6:00 -- Registration

6:00 - 9:00 -- Dinner & Sephardic Musical Concert"

### Monday, August 12:

7:30 - 8:00 -- Continental Breakfast

#### **Morning Session -- History:**

8:00 - 9:00 am: Andrée Brooks, Yale University, *New Findings on Doña Gracia Nasi*

9:00 - 9:30 am: Charles Meyers, Lake Worth, FL, *Alien Diplomat: Hector Nuñez*

9:30 - 10:00 am: Dr. Stanley M. Hordes, University of New Mexico, *Franciscans, the Inquisition and Secret Judaism in New Mexico: 1610-1680*

10:15 - 10:45: Gerald González, Santa Fe, NM, *Doña Teresa de Aguilera y Roche and the Inquisition of Mexico*

10:45 - 11:15 am: Dr. Charles Carrillo, Santa Fe, NM, *Old Testament Symbolism on an Eighteenth-Century New Mexico Altar Screen: La Parroquia de Santa Fe*

11:15 am - 11:45: Elena Fissman de Saad, San Diego, CA, *Francisco Rivas Perigerver y los judios en el México liberal e independiente: causas y proceso de las inmigraciones*

#### **Afternoon Session I -- Genetic Questions:**

1:15 - 2:00 pm: Dr. Abe Lavender, Florida International University, *DNA: The Implications for Sociological and Genealogical Research*

2:00 - 2:45 pm: Dr. Seth Ward, Denver, *Genetics and Jewish Demography*

#### **Afternoon Session II: Representations of Crypto-Judaism in Literature and Film:**

3:00 - 3:45 pm: Dolores Sloan, Mount St. Mary's College,

Los Angeles, *Grace Aguilar and The Vale of Cedars*

3:45 - 4:30 pm: Dr. Theresa Camacho, UCLA, *Blood and Vengeance: Crypto-Judaic Images in Los siete infantes de Lara*  
4:45 - 5:15 pm: Mario Martínez, Albuquerque, NM, *Converso: A Writer's Journey*

5:15 - 5:45 pm: María Espinosa, Lafayette, CA, *Incognito: Journey of a Secret Jew*

**Evening Session:** Dinner, presentation by Myron Fink, San Diego, *Making Opera from History: The Conquistador*

### Tuesday, August 13:

7:30 - 8:00 -- Continental Breakfast

#### **Morning session: Where Are We, and Where Are We Going?**

8:00 - 9:00 am: Dr. Seth Kunin, University of Aberdeen, *The Structuring of Crypto-Jewish Identity*

9:00 - 10:00 am: Dr. Michael Perko, Loyola University of Chicago, *Crypto-Judaic Studies at the Crossroads: A Proposal for Future Inquiry*

10:15 - 11:15 am: Rabbi David Kunin, Congregation Ohr Shalom, San Diego, CA, *Welcoming Back the Anusim: A Modern Halakhic Examination*

11:15 - 12:00 noon: Dr. Steven L. Gomes, *My Journey Back to Judaism after 500 years - My Forty-Year Search for Self, Identity, and Heritage*

12:00 noon - 2:30 pm: Lunch and Business Meeting

Check our website for any changes: [www.cryptojews.com](http://www.cryptojews.com)

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