

HALAPID



THE SOCIETY FOR CRYPTO-JUDAIC STUDIES

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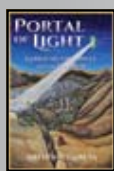
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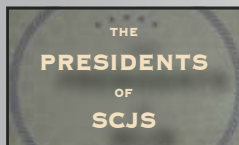


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SCJS celebrates 25 years of hope and inspiration

Nurturing a global organization for those researching the history of crypto-Jewish and Sephardic communities around the world.

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Greetings to all Society Members and Friends

I cannot believe that it has been a little over seven months since I took over the helm of the Society for Crypto Judaic Studies! At the Dallas Conference last year, I was able to meet and chat with many people who have taught me so very much. I have shared in the joy of getting to know our Board and learning that there are many descendants of crypto-Jews searching and seeking the past in order to find their future, and that we have been a beacon to them.



Genie Milgrom
SCJS President

Not too long ago, I was also one of those looking for someone to guide and help me understand where I was coming from as I searched for my own crypto-Jewish ancestors and, before I knew what had happened, I became president of the Society and in the enviable position of host of our 2015 conference in Miami as we celebrate our 25th anniversary!

What an accomplishment for those who set out on this lonely journey 25 years ago. I salute Dr. Stanley Hordes, Rabbi Joshua Stampfer and Rena Down who, in 1991 had the vision and belief that 25 years later, crypto-Jews would be a household word. Their determination to make it happen resonates to this day.

As we hold our annual conference in Miami, Florida on July 19-21, I look forward to hearing exciting speakers who will lead us through the Caribbean and much of Latin America with their presentations. (Register at cryptojews.com/miami2015.)

I am so excited for the future of the organization as we head into our next 25 years with knowledge and strength to meet the needs of the global crypto-Jewish community.

I am honored to be the president and I hope to see you in Miami!

Genie Milgrom
Genie Milgrom

President, Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies

*We salute
Dr. Stanley Hordes,
Rabbi Joshua Stampfer
and **Rena Down** who,
in 1991 had the vision
and belief that 25 years
later, crypto-Jews would
be a household word.*



FROM YOUR SCJS PRESIDENT

Reflections and Projections

FROM THE EDITOR

It brings me great pleasure to produce this 25th anniversary year edition of *HaLapid*; a chance to look back and appreciate how far we've come, while looking forward as well. Contributions of so many kinds have been pouring in; I often wonder if we don't need three issues a year. Most of all, I want to bring the thoughts and wisdom of the people who helped build this organization to the rest of you. After all, we stand on their shoulders.

With the annual conference coming up in Miami, we all look forward to seeing old friends and learning fascinating facts about crypto-Jewish history. It's a thrill to welcome new members and help them connect with academics and authors and others who share their passion. Speaking of authors, I cannot get over what an outpouring of creative writing exists in response to this subject. I hope you'll enjoy the many book reviews in this issue. Learn how one man decoded his family's true history in a Spanish passion play, and how Moroccan music



Corinne J. Brown
Editor



embodies Sephardic roots, among others. New works in print are always welcome. Send your review copies to me here in Colorado. (Reviewers always welcome.)

Of note, in these pages we glean history and wisdom from the thoughts of one of our founders and most respected leaders, Dr. Stanley Hordes, with thanks to Dolly Sloan. You'll learn more about DNA testing and why it matters through Bennett Greenspan and Debbie Wohl Isard. We continue the journey through Sepharad begun by artist Marilyn Lande in the Spring issue now expanded by SCJS board member Harry Ezratty in a compelling story about a Portuguese Gentile, Aristedes de Sousa Mendes.

As always, you can check on upcoming conferences around the world as well.

All of this and so much more. Celebrate with us and enjoy every word.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Corinne J. Brown'.

Corinne J. Brown
Editor, *HaLapid*



SPECIAL THANKS

SCJS extends our heartfelt gratitude to

Bennett Greenspan

for his generous support of our ongoing efforts to increase awareness of the Society and reach those who might benefit from it.

EDITORIAL POLICY OF HALAPID

Contributions from writers all over the world are edited for grammar, spelling and typographical errors. Content embedded in family memories may or may not be historically accurate; we reserve the right to edit material and correct obvious misstatements or historical errors. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of SCJS or *HaLapid*. Articles from *HaLapid* may not be reprinted without permission.

HaLapid is mailed in May and November each year. Please send submissions to the editor before March 15 and September 15.

An Interview with STAN HORDES



Stanley M. Hordes is well-known to those who study the phenomenon of crypto-Judaism and pursue this subject further in libraries, archives, bookstores and online. His iconic work, *To the End of the Earth*, is the foremost scholarly publication on the subject, the culmination of decades of research in the United States, in Central, South America and Mexico, and in Spain and Portugal. A founder of the Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies (SCJS), he has served as president and coordinated programs since the first conference near Taos, New Mexico in 1991.

BY DOLORES SLOAN

Stan was the first scholar to draw attention to the hypothesis that vestiges of Sephardic Judaism and its customs continued to be observed secretly for over 500 years among some descendants of Spanish settlers who had been forcefully converted to Christianity in the 15th century and made their way to what is now New Mexico.

The theory was not universally accepted. Although people with this background began to come forth, asking for more information and recognizing familial customs described in radio programs and newspaper articles, some scholars and commentators in the 1990s expressed skepticism, questioning this Sephardic heritage. SCJS was founded to research the theory and disseminate its findings.

Increasing numbers of individuals came forth from the Southwest and the Texas borderlands, from descendants of Portuguese and Spanish settlers in the American southeast, and beyond—from Latin America, the Philippines, Italy, Spain and Portugal—and declared this to be their family



Stanley M. Hordes

history. As additional research, interviews and personal stories were revealed and scholarly works and papers were published, the subject developed legs of its own. It was included in the curriculum of some Jewish, religious studies and history courses. In 2012, SCJS entered into an affiliation with the University of Colorado—Colorado Springs which resulted in the founding of a Sephardic and Crypto-Jewish Studies program, the first of its kind. It reaches an international audience with conferences sponsored by academic and cultural hosts

other than SCJS held in locations such as Tomar, Portugal; Madrid, Spain and Netanya, Israel.

A quarter century has passed since the first SCJS conference in 1991. Stan has served as president and program vice president; many know him as a colleague and friend, as well as the foremost American scholar of crypto-Judaism. Still very much among us, he led a panel at the 2014 SCJS conference in Dallas, and serves as senior advisor to the Board of Directors. In our Silver Anniversary year, it is

fitting to interview him for this issue of *HaLapid*, learn about his early background and influences, his current work, and hear his ideas for the present and future path of crypto-Judaic studies and his personal role therein.



DOLLY SLOAN: Stan, most of us reading this know something about the founding of SCJS and your efforts to document and report on crypto-Judaism in the Southwest, particularly in central and northern New Mexico. I've often wondered how you came upon the subject that has defined you to most of the public, and how you became Stan Hordes, historian and primary scholar/researcher on the topic. Can we begin, first, even further back, to where you grew up, and the influences and experiences that resulted in you as a doctoral candidate at Tulane University? What about the boy, Stanley, and his interests? Was there anything then that, with hindsight, you can see was an early indication of where you were headed?

STAN HORDES: I was raised in the suburbs of Washington, D.C. My father, a Sunday school teacher at our synagogue, possessed a love of history and filled our house with books. I recall my older brother, Don, reading to me from Roger Butterfield's *The American Past* well before my own reading skills developed. When I was about 15 years old, my father took me aside and told me that by the time I was an adult there would be so many people in this country who would be speaking Spanish and that I should prepare myself to communicate with them. So, as a dutiful son, I enrolled in high school Spanish classes. And, as you know, when we learn a language, we gain an appreciation for a culture. When I entered the University of Maryland in the late 1960s I decided to put together my two loves and started taking courses in the history of Latin America.

I became hooked and quickly realized that I wished to make this my career.

When I needed a topic for a senior honors thesis, my major professor, J. Benedict Warren, suggested that I do a historiographical study (a history of the history) of the relationship between the Inquisition and the crypto-Jews of Mexico. "Sure," I thought, "I know about all that from Sunday school." Well, after gathering some dozens of books and articles on the issue, I went back to Professor Warren and asked him to assign me a different project. I told him that I couldn't find anything decent on the topic – that the books represented one of two polemical perspectives: either that of the "Black Legend," which holds that Spanish people, culture, and religion are inherently evil (and what could be more evil than The Spanish Inquisition?) or the "White Legend," which projects the idea that Spanish people, culture, and religion are inherently positive (and if the Inquisition could only be revived

to my disappointment, Professor Scholes had retired from teaching. Two years later, after having completed my master's degree at UNM, I enrolled in the Ph.D. program at Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana, where I studied with Professor Richard E. Greenleaf who trained me in the fine skills of objective historical analysis, archival research and Spanish colonial paleography (the art of reading old handwriting). In 1975, I received a Fulbright dissertation research fellowship to conduct research in the archives of Mexico and Spain, which provided the resources to complete my doctoral dissertation on the history of the crypto-Jews of Mexico in the 17th century. At that time, I had no idea that there might have been any kind of survival of a crypto-Jewish heritage in the late 20th century, much less in a region as remote as New Mexico.

DOLLY: Many of our readers may not know the apocryphal tale of how you

When we learn a language, we gain an appreciation for a culture.

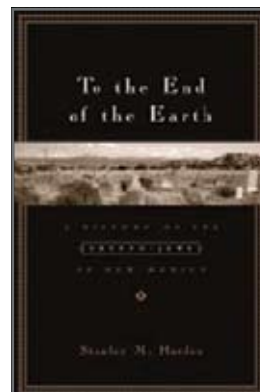
today, what a moral society we would have!). Professor Warren leaned back in his chair and asked me what I learned from the experience. The light bulb in my head went on and I responded that historians take their biases toward the present and impose them on their interpretation of the past. "You have just learned the great lesson of history," he said, "Go write it up." And so I did, and it ultimately served as the nucleus for an article that I published in *American Jewish Archives* in 1982.

In 1971, I entered the graduate history program at the University of New Mexico with the intention of working under the tutelage of Professor France V. Scholes but, much

and two colleagues founded the Society. Could you fill them in on this now?

STAN: Actually, it's not apocryphal at all. In the summer of 1990, New York playwright Rena Baron Down put together a panel for the annual conference of the American Sephardi Federation in Chicago featuring, among others, Rabbi Joshua Stampfer (who had been working with an emerging former crypto-Jewish community in Belmonte, Portugal), Anna Rael Delay (descendant of New Mexico crypto-Jews), and me. Rena, Rabbi Stampfer and I took a break from the conference to take in a White Sox game at the old Comiskey Park. As I recall, the game was not particularly





Stan Hordes – active in SCJS for many years.

Left, Stan with an attendee — and above, with Genie Milgrom — in Dallas at the 2014 conference.

exciting and our conversation in the right field stands turned to our mutual interest in the field of crypto-Judaism. After a while, Rabbi Stampfer offered a suggestion: Why not establish an academic organization devoted to the topic? “Great,” I thought, “Yet another academic society – just what we need.”

But the more I thought about it, the more Rabbi Stampfer’s idea made sense, and with the assistance of Gloria Trujillo and Mona Hernández, we decided to test the waters to see if others might have some interest in forming an organization. So in August of 1991, we held the first conference of the Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies at Ft. Burgwin Research Center in the mountains outside of Taos, New Mexico. The results were quite positive.

DOLLY: What were the early days of SCJS like? How was it organized? How did the work get done?

STAN: From the outset it became clear that the SCJS was going to be different from other academic societies. Yes, the major focus was to provide a forum for scholars to share the results of their research into the phenomenon of crypto-Judaism from a variety of regional and disciplinary perspectives. But early on the Society attracted the attention of descendants of crypto-Jews wishing to share their voyages of discovery, and to learn from the scholars and from each other. So from the beginning, SCJS was an academic society, but also something more.

In its early days, SCJS focused all its efforts on its annual conference. *HaLapid* didn’t come about until

sometime around 1995 or so, designed to function as a newsletter for the Society. Organizationally, the Society was governed by a Board of Directors who elected officers: President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. The Society’s financial situation was always a mystery to me, and I recall Rabbi Stampfer consistently supplementing the Society’s coffers from some unknown source. If memory serves correct, I oversaw the program for the annual conferences, while Gloria Trujillo handled the logistics.

DOLLY: What are some memories about the early conferences—about speakers, discussions, concerns?

STAN: I recall being surprised by the positive response generated by the second conference held in San Antonio, Texas. I think we anticipated an attendance of around 50, but well over 100 people showed up! It appeared that we had struck a nerve.

DOLLY: As we’ve indicated in our introduction, not everyone received with acceptance the concept that crypto-Judaism was indeed a phenomenon on the northern frontier of the Spanish New World empire, a phenomenon that continues unfolding to this day. What was your reaction?

How do you explain the emergence of this opposition and dissonance?

STAN: In addition to skeptics from within some quarters of Jewish academia, some within the Hispano community have resisted acceptance of the phenomenon of crypto-Judaism. There are those who are fearful that a discovery of a Jewish heritage might trigger a questioning of one’s status as a good and faithful Christian. Others base their rejection on the historical misconception that to be Spanish is to be necessarily Catholic – that Spain is, and always has been, purely Catholic (presumably unaware that for hundreds of years Spain had been home to hundreds of thousands of Muslims and Jews, as well). Still others question what makes today’s Chicanos so insecure about their Chicanismo that they have to invent a mythical Jewish past.

But I am pleased to see that some of these barriers are breaking down, resulting in a transition to acceptance.

DOLLY: In the wake of academic doubt, how did you find a sympathetic publisher for your pivotal book?

STAN: Surprisingly, thanks to the efforts of our colleague, anthropologist Seth Kunin, the publication process was relatively easy. Seth (whose excellent book, *Juggling Identities:*

Identity and Authenticity Among the Crypto-Jews, was published in 2009) had some contacts at Columbia University Press and made inquiry as to their interest in publishing both of our books as companion volumes. They did indeed, express interest and invited both of us to submit sample chapters. The peer reviews of each of our submissions were positive and they published both books, mine in 2005 and Seth's in 2009.

DOLLY: In your research, what has surprised you most?

STAN: I have been taken aback by the large number of people from within the Hispano community who have approached me wishing to discuss their *converso* family history.

DOLLY: Returning to SCJS, please describe the organization's growth and development. How do you explain the surge of interest in the topic behind it and the Society?

STAN: This question was broached a bit differently by my colleague Professor Adrian Bustamante several years ago when, following a lecture that I gave, he asked the audience (and I am paraphrasing here), "We [Hispanos] comprise many different ethnic groups – we're Iberian, Celt, Basque, Visigoth, Moor, French, African, Aztec, Navajo, Apache and Pueblo. What's all the fuss about discovering a Jewish past, as well?"

I guess it's akin to a "person bites dog" question – that no one is surprised to learn about any of the former ethnicities, but the latter represented not only a different element, but one that was the antithesis of Catholicism. And to the popular mind, weren't all the Jews expelled from Spain in 1492?

So, to discover a *converso* past among New Mexico's Hispano community attracted more than a little attention not only locally, but throughout the outside world as well.

DOLLY: What are the fundamental principles—the mission—of the

Society and do they still apply to today's organization? Is there anything you would change, add or supplement?

STAN: I believe that my President's Report published in *HaLapid* in the fall of 2007, addressed this question, and interestingly, these issues are as relevant today as they were eight years ago:

The diversity of the Society is our greatest asset. What other group combines the skills of world-class scholars from a variety of disciplines with the insights of people from all walks of life – many of whom are quite successful in their own fields of endeavor – whose common thread is their interest in exploring their Iberian crypto-Jewish origin? But

“We [Hispanos] comprise many different ethnic groups... What's all the fuss about discovering your Jewish past, as well?”

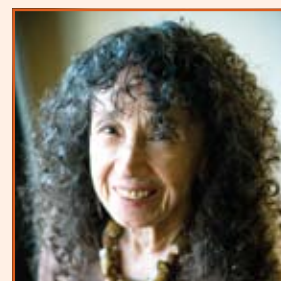
this, our greatest asset, at the same time represents our most difficult challenge.

Over the past few years I have noted a growing tension between these different constituencies, one seeking to expand the number of scholarly papers and articles in *HaLapid*, and the other preferring to concentrate more on personal stories. Moreover, the former tends to want to focus on the “studies” part of the Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies, while the latter believe that the

organization should focus more on the “Jewish” aspects of the group, and maintain a greater sensitivity to those descendants who have made a return to Judaism.

Nowhere is this tension more clearly represented than in the correspondence that has crossed my cyberspace in the weeks since the [2007] annual conference. In particular, several attendees were offended by the comments offered by one of the panelists representing a Messianic Jewish group.

As past president of the SCJS, I wish to make it clear that I recognize the sensitivities of those among the descendants of the *anusim* who have



Dolores “Dolly” Sloan is former President, Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies; Author, *The Sephardic Jews of Spain and Portugal: Survival of an Imperiled Culture in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (McFarland & Company, 2009) and *If I Forget Thee...* (historical fiction work in progress), and Editor, *Journal of Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian Crypto Jews*. She has spoken widely on the subject in the United States and Europe, since interaction with descendants of *anusim* in New Mexico in the 1990s led to research and publication of her works. Professor Sloan has taught public speaking and Women in Jewish History and Culture at Mount St. Mary's College. She lives in Santa Monica, California where she serves as a Landmarks Commissioner. See doloressloan.com.

“SCJS is a big tent; capable of including a wide range of perspectives.”



Above, Stan talks with Mr. Nuñez, a crypto-Jew from Belmonte, Portugal during the SCJS conference in 1994. Right, Stan with Ron Duncan Hart's grandchild – a new generation.



chosen to return to Judaism. Issues of faith are never easy to deal with. And as has long been discussed at our conferences, after more than 500 years of leading hidden lives, descendants in the 21st century will respond to the discovery of their background with a wide range of responses – some a return to traditional Judaism, others a comfort in their Catholicism or Protestantism, and still others in an embrace of Messianic Judaism. There is no absolute, one-size-fits-all, “correct” approach, no template that works for each individual. In the process of planning the [2007] Albuquerque conference, the Program Committee felt that this range of responses should be recognized, and that it would be of intellectual interest to hear from people representing different parts of this spectrum.

But I also realize that the Society, recognizing that it is a secular, non-religious organization, without diluting this commitment to pluralism, must develop a means of addressing the issue of sensitivity. It must make certain that all participants

in our programs understand the potential power of words to cause hurt, and to use all persuasive powers in our arsenal to minimize the chances of this occurring.

SCJS is a big tent, fully capable of including a wide range of perspectives. We will not always agree with each other and the tension among the various individuals and groups within

the Society will likely remain a constant throughout the life of the organization. Yes, we have our differences. But let us express our differences in the spirit of tolerance, understanding, and mutual respect. And

together we can move ahead to promote a greater understanding of crypto-Judaism.

DOLLY: Looking back at the Society's programs and activities all these years, of what are you most proud?

STAN: I am very proud and pleased to observe that the Society continues to generate interest in the study and greater understanding of the phenomenon of crypto-Judaism a quarter of a century after its founding. The annual conferences still attract first-class scholars, as well as articulate descendants of *conversos* exploring their families' rich heritage. *HaLapid* has evolved from a basis newsletter into a sophisticated publication focusing on critical issues facing the field of crypto-Judaism. *La Granada* has taken the Society into the digital age, and *JOSPIC-J* provides an excellent forum for publishing scholarly articles.

DOLLY: What role do you see for yourself in the Society's present? Its future?


STAN: Unfortunately health issues have compromised my ability to play a significant role in the Society's activities, but I will continue to offer advice to the officers and the board of directors.

DOLLY: The Society appears to be moving in a direction from focus on the American Southwest, beyond to the Texas/Mexico frontier, and east to Florida, the southeast and northeast, with current leadership expressing interest in holding future meetings in Portugal or Spain, in Mexico or Latin America. As you look back over its evolution, what vision do you hold for the future of SCJS and its mission? Are there fundamental principles that apply universally today as they did yesterday?

STAN: It is exciting to see growth of interest in the field of crypto-Jewish studies beyond the U.S. Southwest, and I encourage the leadership of the Society to continue exploring new avenues to tap this interest.

But despite the expansion into new geographical areas, I believe that the mission of the Society remains intact – to foster the study of crypto-Judaism from various regional and disciplinary perspectives through its conferences and publications, as well as to provide a forum for descendants of *conversos* to share their voyages of discovery with scholars and with each other.

DOLLY: What message do you have for present and future students of the field?

STAN: Keep your focus on studying the phenomenon of crypto-Judaism in all of its regional and methodological complexity. Never lose sight of the fact that SCJS is a secular, not a religious organization, and that no one spiritual path taken by descendants of *conversos* is more valid and worthy of study than any other. 



Welcome New Board Member Leonard Stein

I live in Beer Sheva, the capital of the Negev (the southern desert region) in Israel. I am currently a graduate student at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in the Foreign Literatures and Linguistics department, where I also teach Introduction to Literature to undergraduate students. My first degree was in Jewish Studies at the University of Florida and then I earned my first master's degree at Ben-Gurion in Middle Eastern Studies. After that, I decided to earn another master's degree, my current endeavor, in comparative literature before moving on to a doctorate in literature. I'm currently writing my thesis on the formation of crypto-Jewish identity in literature. Specifically, I am focusing on




Leonard Stein

accounts of their families or ancestors). Considering this literature as a creative response to some of the academic criticism against crypto-Judaism in the American Southwest, I wish to amplify the voice of the crypto-

Jewish minority culture by focusing my research on this subject.

As a musician and songwriter, I'm also interested in musical aesthetics in literature.

People are often surprised that I am Sephardic considering that my last name is Stein (when my grandmother remarried, my father adopted his Ashkenazi stepfather's last name). My father's parents were Egyptian Jews who were exiled to France in 1956 when Nasser expelled the Jewish communities of Egypt following the Suez Canal Crisis. Before that, his father's family (named Halfon) came from Spain to Morocco and continued moving eastward. My father eventually moved from France to Israel where he met my mother. After fleeing Spain, her family lived in Bulgaria for generations before her parents immigrated to Israel in 1947. (Her grandmother's maiden name is Alcalay, after the Spanish city.)

I was born in Israel, moved to Florida as a child and eventually came back to Israel to study. I live here with my wife and two children. 

We also welcome another member to the SCJS board — Ellen Premack. See page 26 for more.



Zalman Aran Library on the campus of Ben-Gurion University in Beer Sheva, the Negev, Israel.

Alcalá's *Spirits of the Ordinary* and Achy Obejas's *Days of Awe* as they relate to issues of hybrid identity, concealment and authorial transmission configured in the crypto-Jewish experience. I'm interested in the contemporary emergence of crypto-Jewish narratives in fiction, particularly as they often affirm the identity of their authors (who write auto/semi-autobiographical

MEMORIES

When I started to tell



my husband my story and the things that I had learned in my family, he always chuckled when it came to the custom of sweeping to the center of the room as I had learned. He told me it was unusual but that perhaps I should not talk about it or include it in my book. He never truly believed that it was a crypto-Judaic custom! At the Conference in Albuquerque a few years ago, I was delighted when the musicians got up, took the microphone and asked the room how many had the custom of sweeping toward the center of the room and practically everyone (except my husband) raised their hand. This was the absolute best I-told-you-so moment I have ever experienced!

-Genie Milgrom

REMINDER

The deadline for submissions for the next issue of HaLapid is **September 15**. Please send contributions to the editor at corinnejb@aol.com



Family Tree DNA

The How and Why Behind a Remarkable Company

BY DEBBIE WOHL ISARD, AS TOLD BY BENNETT GREENSPAN

The word “genealogist” usually conjures images of someone searching the past for clues about who came before us and what happened to them centuries ago. Bennett Greenspan, founder of Family Tree DNA, is an uncommon genealogist; he also hopes to find clues that will impact our future. Most queries that reach him daily via from around the world are from people who want to know if they are related to someone with a common name. Many more want to know if they are related to “this famous person or that one.” It’s a starting place.

Our conversation began as we talked about the huge surge of interest in genealogy evidenced by websites, societies and especially the television shows that have captured the public’s imagination. I asked Greenspan the obvious question: what came first, the chicken or the egg?

“The yolk!” he said. “The yolk came first. The idea of genetic genealogy was the start. In the beginning, we had academics doing population studies. Then, in 1997, the Cohanim-specific Y gene was first reported. This was followed in 1998 by the paper on the Jefferson/Hemmings Genetic Family Study. About 18 months later, I had a personal experience that evolved into my development of a new business model. The television shows on this topic emerged because of the public interest we had created.”

Greenspan’s initial foray into the field of genealogy studies was not much



Debbie Wohl Isard

different from the folks who wanted answers to their own personal questions. It was an interest born of individual curiosity. While doing some research for his own family, he accurately predicted that genetic genealogy studies might help guide him on his quest.

“It was really the ‘eureka’ moment for me,” said Greenspan. “The genetic



Bennett Greenspan
Founder, Family Tree DNA

information I found clarified some anecdotal evidence and informed the direction of my research. I conducted a genetic test on a family member and a person with the same name in Argentina. The genetic match was the proof I needed.”

His discovery of this technique for using genetic genealogy to prove ancestry spawned a new excitement. He founded FTDNA in 1999 and began selling kits to the public in 2000. He was happy to talk to anyone who would listen to him talk about what he’d discovered and how he found it.

The later proliferation of television shows was the result of historians and entertainment producers capitalizing on personalization of the story of “you.” It was the breakthrough! People wanted to know answers to questions about their identity. Am I Native American? Am I Sub-Saharan African? Am I Jewish? DNA results became a part of the public narrative.

Soon Greenspan became known as the go-to person for questions about Ashkenazi Jewish genetic genealogy. Here is where the story becomes even more interesting.

As he began to discern patterns among the types of questions, as well as motivations of the questioners themselves, he began to wonder why people were asking him about Ashkenazi Jews. What really was at the crux of their research? How would the answers help them? What would they glean or infer from the information they found? He began to develop

a mental filter to help him sort inquiries into general categories.

Family Tree DNA was established to help people globally search for their genetic roots. "People are often surprised to learn that we are more alike than we are different," Greenspan explained. "Scientific data demonstrates that African American DNA is typically comprised of various degrees of Caucasian genes as well. Go back far enough and most Ashkenazi Jews are just a percentage European."

In other words, "we know and understand that all Jews are certainly some percentage Middle Eastern; the odd item is that Ashkenazi Jews have some of the European DNA of those others with whom our ancestors comingled in Europe," Greenspan added. "People all over the world appeal to FTDNA for answers and it is incumbent upon us to find the facts and provide the data to back it up."

FTDNA researchers do this by following the science plus proven geographical and historical evidence. He acknowledges that there exist some

detractors and others who wish the Jewish people ill; those who seek to distort the facts or to use them for their own purposes. "For them, FTDNA is not inclined to provide assistance," Greenspan explained.

"If, however, someone wants to know—with a burning desire—if he or she has Jewish DNA, or if someone wants to learn about the history that he or she feels was stolen from them, or if it just helps to 'ground' one's self to follow one's DNA trail, then FTDNA exists to help find some answers."

Greenspan is often asked to speak to an assortment of interest groups. These might be academic, religious, medical/scientific or genealogical societies. They ask him to just "give us your 'regular talk.'"

"There isn't one single talk," said Greenspan, laughing. "Each presentation is tailored to the particular audience and their area of interest or study." To a group of AIPAC academics, for instance, Greenspan recently cited compelling DNA

evidence to debunk some oft-quoted authors whose geopolitical motivations were suspect.

(Author's note: One writer's stated aim in 2009 was to undercut the Jews' claims to the land of Israel by demonstrating that they do not constitute a people with a



shared racial or biological past. In 1976, another author misguidedly tried to combat rampant anti-Semitism by claiming that Ashkenazi Jews were descended from the Eastern European, nomadic Khazars, thereby removing the racial basis for anti-Semitism.)

To this group, Greenspan cited DNA statistics as a backup to historical evidence that when Rome conquered

The DNA Trail – How It Works and Why It Matters to You

When a Hispanic woman is seeking her DNA trail, FTDNA recommends using the autosomal DNA test to see if she has any percentage of Jewish DNA, and to think

about a very important test, the Full Mitochondria. According to Greenspan, this is "if (and only if) the person's mother's mother's mother's direct female line might have been Jewish."

To trace Sephardic ancestry through DNA, it is most helpful if the woman is living in a community that had other Jews who consciously married only members of the same families. "I was told to marry only someone from these 'good' families" is one indicator.

Men should take the same autosomal test, plus the Y (male), if the man thinks his father's father's direct male line was the Jewish one. Of course men have their mother's mitochondria (X) DNA too, so they can also take the Full Mitochondria test if necessary.



Judea, the prevailing armies in the first century CE brought back with them slaves captured in the Middle East and Levant. Remember the Arch of Titus under which the conquering Romans marched their captives from Judea? These slaves married other captives or found partners among

the population of existing Jews. After a few generations, “the doors were closed” and Jewish men no longer intermarried in the same numbers.

Following the trail of Y-DNA (male lineage), history tells us that when slaves were freed and Jews were banished from cities throughout Europe, they became a population of economic refugees; traveling merchants who married only

occasionally and might marry new converts along the way. Dispersal of the gene pool swelled in Italy, and the Iberian Peninsula became a melting pot for Jews, Muslims and Christians. And, as we know, the Diaspora spread once again after 1492.

When presenting to a gathering of individuals seeking to discover if secrets or actions among family members are indeed keys to a crypto-

Judaic or *converso* ancestry, Greenspan will likely ask more questions than deliver answers. Recently, a young man from Toronto approached him for help, claiming his Jewish heritage. He had been turned away from a local synagogue because he was “of too dark a complexion.” He stated that a Jewish ancestor on his father’s side came from Italy to the

People wanted to know answers to questions about their identity. Am I Native American? Am I Sub-Saharan African? Am I Jewish? DNA results became a part of the public narrative.



Greenspan performs a DNA cheek swab on Abraham Gross as Leonard Stein looks on during the SCJS 2014 conference in Dallas.

The year 1825 is a significant year for those seeking DNA connections; it is the year beyond which it becomes unlikely for DNA to be traced. Recalling my 10th grade biology class, I began to understand what Greenspan had explained. Every generation combines with new DNA contributors; therefore we may consider that our personal DNA profile is diluted or expanded depending upon the nature of one’s genetic search.

My own DNA today is 50% from each of my parents. That means that I have a 25% connection to each of my grandparents, 12.5% to each

of my great grandparents, 6% to my great-greats, and 3% to my great-great-greats. That takes most of us back to about the year 1825.

Keeping this scenario in mind, to plan for the future, our generation’s children and grandchildren should look to the past as they consider having children of their own. The burgeoning study of Jewish genetic diseases and how they are passed through the generations — as well as how they can be prevented — should be important to many young people today.

A government study from Israel recently disclosed that

in the past 10 years, no Tay-Sachs babies were born in Israel. Older generations recall the heartbreak. Tay-Sachs testing has become the norm, especially among the Orthodox whose marriages are frequently arranged. Greenspan explains, “It’s not that we have cured Tay-Sachs; we can prevent these births by planning prior to conception and the selection of partners.”

Is Bennett Greenspan a businessman who wants to sell DNA test kits? Absolutely! Building the broadest data base possible of DNA correspondence among people around the globe

serves many purposes. The more pieces of data we have, the greater becomes our understanding of populations and their movement throughout history; the more branches of a family tree that can be connected, the more information we have to guide us in the future. FTDNA is one example of a business enterprise that serves as a valuable partner to educators in many fields.

The next time you think about where you came from, and from whom, take stock of the meaning in the search. Maybe genetic testing is for you; it certainly might be a gift to your children.


Philippines a couple of hundred years ago. His mother, who was not happy about her son's delving into the past, also lit candles on Friday nights.

"That's nice," thought Greenspan, "but not enough. If he had told me that she lit the candles while hidden in the basement—that would mean something."

The young man was persistent. Greenspan patiently explained to him that to give credence to a hidden Jewish past, he would need to know about other traditions or rituals practiced by the family. Did they wash their hands after a funeral? Did they cover mirrors after a death? If the family raised and slaughtered animals, did they drain the blood and bury it? Did they salt "the heck" out of it? When rolling out the dough for making tortillas, did they pinch off a piece and throw it into the fire?"

"Yes!" the young man exclaimed, "my grandmother did that! But my mother said it was a waste of food and didn't."

Now the young man had Greenspan's attention. His family had performed three out of the (incomplete) list of identifying markers of possible Jewish heritage. He, like so many others, didn't know these were Jewish practices. Rather, he'd thought these were just things that "we did in my family." For Greenspan, these were affirmations of a hidden, Spanish Jewish heritage. "Now," Greenspan concurred, "there's more smoke than just a candle."

From our point of view at SCJS, and with yet another idiom, we may also say that there finally was more than just smoke; there was fire—fire from a candle that was lit in the dark; a flame that continues to shine. 

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A call for poets;
might compromise our traditions.
However we could add some poetry
To entertain our coterie;
it depends on the current conditions.

Art Benveniste



I looked at Autumn/Winter 2014 HaLapid with a nostalgic smile. The cover features a photograph of the door of a neglected home called Passal, (Palace) in the Portuguese village of Cabanas de Viriato. It once belonged to Aristedes de Sousa Mendes who, at the start of World War II, was a member of the Portuguese Diplomatic Corps, a veteran of more than 30 years. Today, the old home he was forced to sell is in disrepair, as once was the reputation of this remarkable and selfless man. Although I was never privileged to meet him, he became an important part of my life.

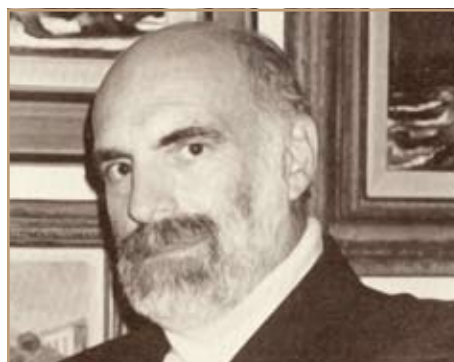


My connection with Sousa Mendes' career began in 1962. Although I had recently earned my law license, I also freelanced, writing magazine articles. One story I tried to sell was how the efforts of Francisco Franco, the Spanish dictator and Fascist, attempted to save Sephardic Jews from Hitler's death camps. Research led me to Ilja Dijour, an Eastern European Jew in his late 50s who, during World War II, worked for The Hebrew Immigration Aid Society (HIAS), assisting refugee Jews escape from Europe.

Dijour was knowledgeable about the refugees' dilemma during World War II and a great source of primary information. When I met him in 1962, he was still working for HIAS at their lower Manhattan offices. On our last interview, over a cup of coffee, Dijour said to me, "Ezratty, you're wasting

An Old Memory Restored

THE STORY OF
ARISTEDES
DE SOUSA
MENDES



BY HARRY A. EZRATTY

your time with this story about Franco. I have a better one. I know a family here in New York who is trying to get some recognition for what their father did for refugees, especially Jews, during the War. Let me give you their address. I'm sure you'll get a good story."

That's how I met Joana and Cesar Mendes, two of Sousa Mendes' 13 children.

Among the youngest, they lived then in a small, modest apartment on West 21st Street in Manhattan's Chelsea neighborhood. When I told Joana I was interested in her father's story, her eyes lit up. For years she had been trying to get the Jewish community to recognize her father's efforts in saving Jews during World War II. Her own family may have had Jewish roots going back to the 15th century, and she hoped that because of the family's history, and the assistance her father extended during World War II, they might listen. Records estimate he saved 10,000 Jewish souls.

I knew little of his story. I did know, however, that many Jewish families with the names Mendes and Sousa attended my New York synagogue and were within our social circle. Others had survived the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions by melding into Iberian culture, covering their past. By the 20th century, they were good Christians. Perhaps, I thought, Sousa Mendes belonged to one of these

families. According to his children, they had documentation dating back to the 15th century showing ancestry connected to Portuguese military and administrative records.

Joana, in her 40s, was a slight, dark-haired, dark-eyed woman with alabaster skin. Youthful in appearance, she spoke with a Portuguese accent. At first impression, she seemed shy and quiet, but when it came to restoring her father's honor, she became a dynamo. She explained how she and her siblings helped Mendes bring refugees into neutral Portugal, and later introduced me to many he had rescued.

I interviewed individuals who owed their lives to Sousa Mendes. He refused to follow specific orders of the Portuguese Foreign Office to not issue visas to Jews, Poles, Hungarians, Rumanians and other stateless persons considered undesirable by the Portuguese Foreign Ministry. Some survivors, such as Marguerite Galimir, a Viennese refugee, were now living in upscale neighborhoods; others had fared less well. All had escaped the death camps, and expressed thanks to Joana for her father's decision to save their lives instead of forcing them to remain in Europe, one step ahead of the German Army. A small group, living in New York, maintained contact with each other throughout the years. Through their stories, I understood that not only did Mendes perform these selfless acts; remarkably, he stood alone doing them.

I began to understand that he was fully aware of the punishment he could receive for ignoring specific orders. Despite that, he continued to help refugees. Unfortunately, his decision marked the end of a distinguished career and the start of a life of penury for his family, long used to upper class privilege.

Aside from Raoul Wallenberg, no diplomat who issued mass visas to save refugees was ever punished by his government. In fact, his punishment

was meted out by another government altogether. Sousa Mendes was first warned, and then refused to follow that warning, at a heavy price.

In June 1940, the German army advanced into France as the French army crumbled under attacks by the Wehrmacht. The Gestapo followed, armed with long lists of unfortunates destined for arrest and concentration camps. The roster included Jews, intellectuals, the political opposition, Communists and others.

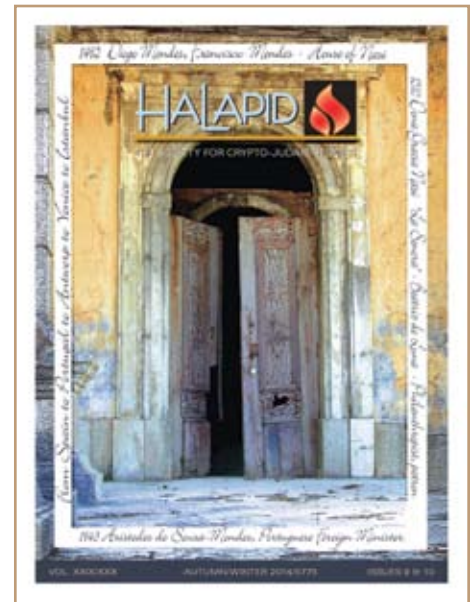
Portugal's dictator, Antonio Salazar, was "neutral," in favor of Germany. Like the Nazis, Salazar sported black shirts and boots, used the Fascist salute, and dealt with Germany's foes as enemies. To prevent these "undesirables" from entering Portugal, Salazar issued "Circular 14," preventing Portuguese diplomats from issuing permits or transit visas to Jews and other Europeans – many who were already on the Gestapo's arrest lists.

Sousa Mendes served as Consul in Bordeaux, France. The city was choked with refugees fleeing the German army. Chaotic, it became easier to move on foot than by machine. Each refugee sought to cross into Spain, then Portugal, and finally to freedom in the United States, Canada or South America.

A month earlier, Mendes had begun issuing visas in violation of Circular 14. Since the order required Consuls to contact Lisbon for permission for such visas, and that permission was late in coming, he issued them on his own recognizance. Occasionally, if a visa was not issued in time, the French police would arrest that person. But on this day in June, on Bordeaux's *Quai Louis XVI*, where Mendes housed his Consular offices, he saw thousands of desperate people on the streets below. How could he help? In spite of a chronic illness, he resolved to do whatever he could.

In violation of Circular 14 and a dictatorial head of state, Mendes began issuing visas to anyone who

applied. During June, with the help of his assistants and his children, it's estimated he issued a total of 200,000 visas – 10,000 to Jews. He eventually refused to accept visa fees as many applicants could not pay them. He opened his home and office to strangers who slept wherever they could. His wife dispensed food and clothing. When he ran out of forms, he issued passes on identity or index cards, working around the clock. To save time, he signed the visas merely "Mendes." Joana, who assisted her father, described his physical decline.



... I looked at Autumn/Winter 2014 HaLapid with a nostalgic smile. The cover features a photograph of the door of a neglected home called Passal, (Palace)... It once belonged to Aristedes de Sousa Mendes...

—Harry Ezratty

Thanks so much; a great article by Harry. I am familiar with the Sousa Mendes story. Our travel to Jewish Portugal was conducted by a Portuguese professor who, in the late 1990s, was trying to rehabilitate this Mendes home, now in disrepair, which we saw when we visited there. The photo I have of an old woman in my "Ode to Kasmunah" collage was of a woman who claimed to be a relative of the Mendes family. In any case, it's so great to see someone trying to follow up on this intriguing and uplifting story.

Thanks so much for sharing with me.

—Marilyn Lande

“He grew thin, his hair turned white. Red-eyed, he needed sleep. He ignored wires from Lisbon telling him to stop. When Lisbon sent emissaries to his office with orders to cease, he put them to work signing passes. He



Mendes escaped to French Morocco to fight with the Free French Air Force against the Nazis. Two decades later, this man, Pierre Mendes-France, would become Prime Minister of his country.

When the Germans were only hours from Bordeaux, and Mendes could no longer help there, he drove south to Hendaye, a village straddling the French-Spanish border. He led a caravan of hopefuls who followed him anyway they could. Once in the city, he set up in the town square and dashed off more life

reduced in pay. But Salazar declined the decision and unconstitutionally overruled it, forcing Sousa Mendes to retire. Then Salazar ordered the trial records sealed, and they remained sealed until the late 1970s. Salazar remained dictator of Portugal until 1974. After his death, the records were opened by a government official, Dr. Nuno Alvares de Besso Lopes.

Without an income, Sousa Mendes, now a pariah, faced a slow decline. His wife died and he remarried a longtime female friend. The furnishings at Passal were sold off to meet the mounting debts incurred by his huge family. The house became uninhabitable. They burned furniture for warmth in the winter. Mendes moved to an apartment in Lisbon where he suffered two strokes and subsisted in poverty.

Mendes' twin brother Cesar, also in the Foreign Service as an ambassador, petitioned Salazar to reconsider. Cesar asked for pity as his brother had to support many children and was penniless. Sousa Mendes himself pointed out that Portugal's constitution forbade requiring a person to reveal his religion, or discriminating against anyone because of their national origin or religion. Portugal was a Christian nation and as such, Christian values overrode the unconstitutional directive of Circular 14. But to no avail: Aristedes de Sousa Mendes was persona non-grata.

The Lisbon Jewish community maintained a communal soup kitchen. Mendes, who had always invited people to dine in his home, was now reduced to eating with those he had saved. Once, when directed to a dining room set aside for Portuguese, apart from the stateless, he remarked, “We are all refugees.”

Kitchen workers packed food to be delivered to his apartment, thereby sparing him further embarrassment. In his home village of Cabanas de Viriato, where his family had been honored for generations, Mendes was

“

I could not have acted otherwise, and I therefore accept all that has befallen me with love.

— ARISTEDES DE SOUSA MENDES

”



Above, haunting photos of the deceased lost in the Holocaust span the domed walls and ceiling of the Hall of Remembrance at Yad Vashem, Jerusalem. Right, a bust of Sousa Mendes in the Mériadeck quarter in Bordeaux, France.

ordered the Honorary Consul in Toulouse, Emile Gisset, to issue permits to all refugees.”

On June 20, 1940, Sousa Mendes, a Portuguese Catholic, issued a transit visa to a Jewish Mendes whose family had resided in France since the 1600s as crypto-Jewish refugees from the Portuguese Inquisition. The Jewish

saving passes on memo pads and sheets of blank paper. His children helped him maintain this lightning pace for days. Forced to stop as the Germans now occupied all of France, the totally spent Sousa Mendes was recalled to Lisbon.

Salazar, furious, called for a hearing. At its close, the Board of Inquiry declared Sousa Mendes demoted and

ignored. But throughout it all, he maintained his dignity. He dressed as a Consul of his country, not lamenting what he had done. He understood that as a Christian, his acts were not only necessary, but morally imperative. Sick from the debilitation of his strokes and ongoing pneumonia, and burdened with insurmountable debt, Sousa Mendes died on April 3, 1954.



Letter from Yad Vashem advising the award of a Righteous Gentile to Aristedes de Sousa Mendes, February 6, 1967.

its Jewish connections came full circle in southern France in June 1940. I often wondered if Salazar, who must have known of the contents of the sealed documents, was not anti-Semitic. He admired Hitler and Mussolini. Salazar's stonewalling all petitions for clemency in the face of Mendes' precarious situation, and his overruling of the Review Board's decision, seem Draconian considering that Sousa Mendes was



This story was first published in *The Jewish Digest* in 1964 titled "The Portuguese Consul and the 10,000 Jews." I wrote to the Israeli Consul in New York, enclosing a copy. I strongly suggested that Sousa Mendes be designated a Righteous Gentile by the Israeli government. They replied, indicating the requirements for consideration. Mendes' actions qualified. I left the rest of the details required by the Israeli government to the Mendes family. In 1967, Israel granted Mendes the status of Righteous Gentile and inscribed him thus at Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Museum. I attended the ceremony with some of the Mendes children. For them, it was the first step toward their father's redemption.

Sousa Mendes' sealed file was opened during the late '70s. Lopes was appalled at the injustice of the hearing.



Often the next generation understands better the actions of the previous and honors them.



No witnesses were permitted on Mendes' behalf. Illegal violations of due process and Salazar's unconstitutional act of overruling the review board were erased. Sousa Mendes was reinstated by the Portuguese government with honors for his humanitarian acts in 1988. But for him, it was too late.

Part of the sealed report notes that the Mendes family descends from Portugal and the 1497 forced conversion of all Portuguese Jews. Thus the story of the Mendes family and

only a Consul, not a major functionary, and no threat politically. Otherwise, why put into the record the family's history which occurred 450 years earlier?

Often the next generation understands better the actions of the previous and honors them. This is the case of Sousa Mendes. From what I have read and learned about him, he performed these acts of mercy because he felt compelled to. He could not ignore the cries for assistance. Not only have Yad Vashem and Portugal honored Aristedes de Sousa Mendes, but he is remembered with a Tel Aviv square named in his honor and 10,000 trees planted in the Negev. In Portugal, eight streets bear his name, and the United States Congress struck medals in his honor.

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i. Parade of Saints and Coffins

Clear call of trumpet, dawn kettledrum—praise.
Vanguard of priests bearing banners before
men and women wearing cones, flamed like poor
devils, missing one horn. Terror parades,
followed by empty coffins (*Jews should blaze,
even if absent.*) Steps of confessor,
Padre Medrano, shadowing power—
Luis de Carvajal, bellowing waves
of prayers to Hashem to inspire
his sisters and mother. It took a bit-
gag to silence him. Behind—aureate
cross-capped crimson standard. Inquisitor.
Dignitaries. Throng of citizens lit
processional tail. Of zeal, fear.



SONNETS

for Luis de Carvajal
(El Mozo), his Mother
and Sisters

for Juana de Carvajal, born ca. 1620,
my ancestor from at least six
genealogical lines

© 2014 Karen S. Córdova

ii. Burning Ash, Aroused

Young Luis, nephew of the governor
of New Kingdom of León, died today,
December 8, 1596. Say
prayers for him; his sisters, Leonor,
Catalina, Isabel; their mother,
Doña Francisca. Stripped of clothing, save
loincloths. Last light, pyre—their act of faith.
Garrote. Final breath—twist of horror.
Fresnillos of Carvajal family
were scattered in wilderness that embraced
Ciudad de México to erase
their bodies, Faith, and even memory.
These words—burning ash, aroused and unchaste—
may they flower with sorrow and fury.

iii. Yo Soy Juanita, Hija de Juan de Vitoria Carvajal y Isabel Holguín

In 1590, Father yoked his life
to the crime of Castaño de Sosa—
diaspora disguised as *carretas*,
cabras y churros. Whatever would drive
the entire town, Almadén, to fly,
like thrushes, to *fin de la tierra*,
but bird of ill omen in our *puebla*?
(Arrest of Sosa's *primo* and ally,
Governor Carvajal.) Botched exodus
to New Mexico—priest and *soldados*
raked us home. *Papá, astuto como
zorro*, then walked north with Oñate. Flesh
who gave me flesh settled where *El Malo*
could only ask doves where we say Kaddish.



KAREN S. CÓRDOVA

Businesswoman and poet, Karen Córdova, lives in California, however, much of her writing reflects her love of her New Mexican heritage. She weaves stories

about individuals, villages and customs of the Spanish who settled the Southwest, and those with whom they intermarried.

Karen participates in formal spoken word performances across the United States and has

proudly participated in the 2010 *Festival de Flor y Canto* at USC and many *ekphrasis* events—collaborations of poets, visual artists and performing artists. Her work has been widely published. Karen's first book, *Farolito*, a true story, casts a Hispano light on the dark subject of elder abuse and neglect, while illuminating a jagged path to solution and unexpected healing. (Release date: Spring 2015, Three: A Taos Press.)

Through her study of genealogy, Karen continues to learn that many of her Spanish ancestors were *conversos* or crypto-Jews, or suspected of being so. To further her research,

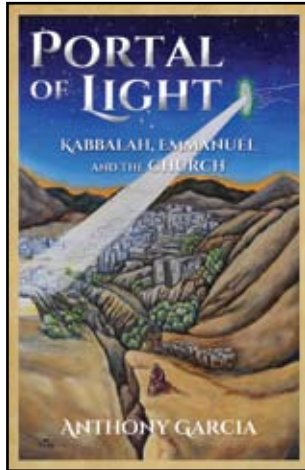
she joined SCJS several years ago and is now working on a collaborative, yet-to-be named, second poetry book about the subject with three other poets: Dr. Carol Aronoff, Joan Ryan and Andrea L. Watson. The manuscript, already under publisher's consideration, is scheduled for completion in 2016.

Many of Karen's poems are dedicated to specific ancestors or members of their family. An example is the trilogy printed above. The main historical source was *The Martyr: Luis de Carvajal, a Secret Jew in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* by Martin A. Cohen.

Portal of Light: Kabbalah, Emmanuel and the Church

BY ANTHONY GARCIA
2014, AMAZON
DENVER, COLORADO

BOOK REVIEWS



You might not think of Anthony Garcia as man with a mission, but in spite of his soft-spoken demeanor, he is a relentless sleuth, determined to set at least one record straight regarding his family's genealogy and the meaning of a rare traditional passion play.

Born in northern Colorado, one of eight children, Garcia was raised in a deeply

Catholic Hispanic environment. Today, he's a father, a business man with an MBA specializing in the insurance industry, an award-winning writer, and also, a meticulous historian.

"Although I was born in Colorado, our extended family came from New Mexico; they brought their culture with them explained Garcia. "Anyone doing migrant work in those days went north to Wyoming or west to California, wherever the chance of employment took them. I remember growing up," he continued, "and learning about the special places of worship, the *moradas*, in New Mexico.

Services were conducted there under the cloak of secrecy. I believe my family and many of my people brought a need to worship that way. Those who worshipped therein were called *Hermanos*, part of a brotherhood. They all knew and trusted each other. Certain families also stayed closer to one another than others.

"I learned as I grew up that some were descendants of Ladinos – a term I use to describe those of Jewish descent who spoke the old tongue: Spanish with Hebrew. My grandfather was an *hermano* and I remember him singing the *alabados* or sacred songs of praise. Some who broke away from Judaism cleaved even closer to the church, but I believe still kept some rituals from the old days— Jewish rituals."

Garcia wanted to understand more about this complex society and its seeming contradictions. He never dreamed he'd find a series of clues about a Jewish past and some challenging ideas when he set about translating a passion play (*Las Pastores*) he received in 2011; a small notebook with roughly 7000 words, written in Spanish. Within it was yet another book, a Judaic play titled by Garcia as the *Jornado de Exodo* ("Journey of Exodus") hidden in the original. The secret play is riddled with characters from diverse cultures and references to Jewish places and history; clearly a coded message. Finding traces of Kabbalistic imagery, numerous words in Ladino, (even Hebrew), plus poetic and symbolic references to Jewish ideas and more, Garcia reinterprets this play as a hint to a great lineage, leading back, perhaps, to the Kabbalists of the Middle Ages.

Portal of Light is a journey from curiosity to awakening, as Garcia plumbs the depths of a story told for decades, hiding its true message in plain sight. Without giving away the fascinating finds within the words and "between the lines," it would be sufficient to say that Garcia can never

really go home again. Not in the old sense, to a place with convenient stories to cover what he believes is the real truth, for in his mind, this legacy, passed down for a reason, was meant one day to be rediscovered for what it is; a way of defining some Spanish Catholics as hidden or cryptic Jews.

The translation requires seeing the world as the original author (authors) must have seen it, through the template of astrology and other beliefs, an added element in the book's development that allows the reader a fascinating insight into another time. Adding yet another piece to the ongoing search for a hidden culture within a culture, Anthony Garcia sheds new light with a non-fiction work that reads like a tale of spiritual adventure.

— Corinne J. Brown

The Duel for Consuelo

BY CLAUDIA H. LONG
2014, BOOKTROPE EDITIONS
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON



It always amazes me how a writer can focus on a time and place and use historical fact to germinate a rousing tale that illustrates the times. Claudia Long's fictional tale of a young woman, Consuelo Costillo, in 1700s New Spain, comes to life in the throes of the Spanish Inquisition where corrupt clergy resort to despicable

acts. Targeting Consuelo's father, the mayor of a town near Mexico City, vicious church thugs are determined to replenish their semi-bankrupt coffers by extortion and persecution of New Christians; Catholics who once lived as Jews, long before in Spain.

Consuelo herself is a comely woman of marriageable age. Her attraction to one man, Juan Carlos, is offset by a marriage agreement proposed by her father to another suitor, Leandro, a poet from Spain, thereby hoping for a substantial dowry to postpone his pending financial ruin. Consuelo meanwhile, finds herself sexually compromised by both men, leaving her vulnerable and confused. Her heart longs for Juan Carlos, but she must not disobey her father who, by custom, owns her fate.

To further add to her conflict, and that of her father, Consuelo's aged mother, Leila, suffers from dementia and continues to demand the lighting of Sabbath candles. This is an obsolete custom from long ago, and one that father and daughter agree to only in the darkest confines of Leila's sickroom. Sadly, they are given away by a house servant, leading to the accusation of Judaizing by the Church and Leila's subsequent punishment at the hands of merciless Inquisition priests.

At the close of this gripping novel, which comes to a cinematic finale with a rescue from the dark dungeons of the Cathedral where Consuelo has been imprisoned, and where her mother languishes near death, the reader understands the true treachery of the Church.

Returned at last to safety, away from evil henchmen, Consuelo's future is determined by a subsequent midnight duel between her two suitors. Juan Carlos triumphs over Leandro after drawing first blood. An official marriage between him and Consuelo saves her from any future unhappy alliance.

Following the story's climactic ending, the author treats the reader to a

historical analysis of the times and circumstances that might have led to this imagined plot. I wish this significant back story had been at the beginning as a forward, but nonetheless, I found it a most fascinating addition, and a new window into crypto-Jewish history. A fast read, well-researched, well-written, and absorbing, Ms. Long adds a significant piece to the crypto-Jewish library.



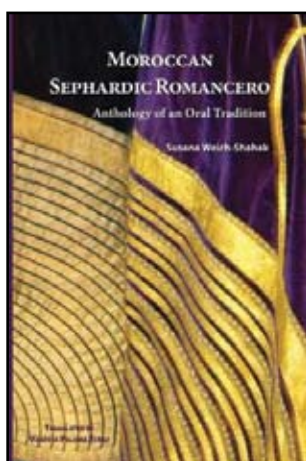
Author Claudia Long grew up in Mexico City and New York, and now resides in California. She writes about early 1700s Mexico, and

modern day and the Roaring '20s era in California. This is her third book.

— Corinne J. Brown

Moroccan Sephardic Romancero: Anthology of an Oral Tradition

BY SUSANA WEICH-SHAHAK
2013, GAON BOOKS
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO



Moroccan Sephardic Romancero: Anthology of an Oral Tradition presents a scholarly study of Moroccan Sephardic romance (folk

ballads) poetry and music. The work is especially important in the literature and study of Moroccan Sephardic culture through the context of oral transmission of values and traditions. Although this detailed study focuses on Moroccan Sephardic people, the concepts, themes and findings have universal application in a much broader spectrum of cultural anthropology.

The author is an ethnomusicologist: Ph.D. in Musicology, teaching at the Tel Aviv University. Her major research focus is on the Sephardic musical tradition, with work at the Jewish Music Research Center of the Hebrew University (Jerusalem). In this book, Professor Weich-Shahak collected and published 204 ballads with 90 thematic variations from Sephardic people living in various countries of the Moroccan diaspora. Her research extended over four decades of collecting authentic samples.

The book's first part provides a detailed analysis of the Sephardic *Romancero*. The second part provides examples of ballads complete with music, text and in some cases, commentary and explanations.

The first part provides an in-depth understanding of history through oral tradition, linguistic aspects, versification and poetic analysis, and music in structure, rhythm, social function and manner of interpretation. The transcriptions of music and language are truly impressive and merit close study to more fully grasp and understand the Moroccan Sephardic culture thematically and in transmission. The analyses reach to the depths of identification of language use and terminology from the vulgate to more contemporary Hebrew. Music is provided with detailed structures, rhythms, keys and notations. After reading the work, I realized that each short chapter opened a door to a vortex of possibility for considerably more study to fully appreciate the knowledge provided in the

understanding of this genre of poetry and music as culture.

The romance is usually sung without instruments. Most often, the song is a lullaby that is sung by a mother. In the romance narrative all the central figures are female. The author explains how the Sephardic *romancero* is linked to the cycle of life: birth, circumcision, marriage, death, mourning, love, deception, and envy, among many more – 90 to be exact. The discussion of the Moroccan *Romancero* is enhanced by comparison with the Eastern Sephardic *Romancero* and the Spanish *Romancero*.

This is an essential work for ethnomusicologists to deepen their understanding of the Moroccan Sephardic *Romancero* as a powerful and timeless transmission of culture among a people throughout centuries and across international boundaries. My *abuelita* (grandmother) would always tell me that “your land and your possessions can be taken but never your knowledge.” This is a living example of what my *abuelita* told me.

— Dr. Lorenzo A. Trujillo, Ed.D., J.D

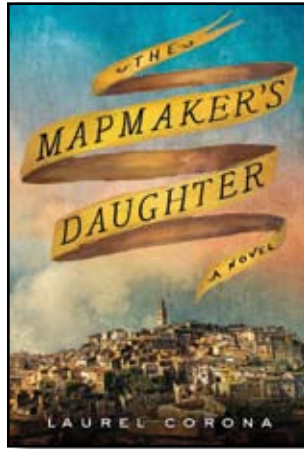
“

The Sephardic Romancero is linked to the cycle of life: birth, circumcision, marriage, death, mourning, love, deception and envy among many more...

”

The Mapmaker's Daughter

BY LAUREL CORONA
2014, SOURCEBOOKS LANDMARK
NAPERVILLE, ILLINOIS



Bouncing between Seville, 1432, and the final year of expulsion, 1492, *The Mapmaker's Daughter* follows the life experiences of Amalia Cresques. The daughter of *conversos*, Amalia's mother does everything she can to instill a sense of Jewishness in her daughter, despite the considerable risks in that time and place. Her father, however, a mapmaker to the royal family, would just as soon leave such things behind.

A blow to the head leaves her father deaf, and the young Amalia moves to Portugal as his translator. There, he provides maps of Africa for Henry the Navigator, who eventually turns to slavery for the incredible profit. He is later pensioned off by the kindly King Afonso. Amalia lacks the artistic gift to continue her father's profession, but her knowledge of languages and familiarity with court life enables her to serve as a tutor to various royal families.

We follow Amalia through her life in these “interesting times,” during which she is taken in by the influential Abravanel family and has a variety of adventures calculated to take us through the full historic arc from the harsh conditions for suspected Judaizers in Seville to the still Muslim caliphate of Granada at the tail end of

Convivencia. Amalia, with her daughter in tow through most of the book, enjoys a lot of freedom for a woman of her times, although a hallmark of Jewish women has been to take hold of such freedoms as they can. Through all of it, she manages to hang onto a map originally started by her grandfather and passed down through the family, filled in as more was known of the world. It embodies her understanding of an idealized world, a better world, one with a place in it where she can feel safe and at peace.

One of the treats of writing historical fiction is to develop fictional characters alongside of historically documented persons. Even with these, there is so little detail about the women, Corona says in an interview at the end of the book, that much of what she wrote about people like the young Isabella before she became Queen of Castile, had to be invented.

Told in first person, the narration risks the limitations of a child retelling her own experiences.

Since I couldn't have the life I wanted, I didn't think about my future at all when I was young. I suppose that's why I couldn't see at first that a man was courting me. Diogo was a wave that began offshore as a bump in the water, then rose to a crest, hanging for a moment before tossing me, his shocked and gasping victim, onto shore.

Luckily, Laurel Corona successfully adjusts the age of the narrator to keep up with her increasingly problematic situation as a woman and a Jew. The dilemma posed throughout the book is whether or not the now aged Amalia should attempt to flee yet again, or submit to inevitable death at the machinations of the Inquisition.

Corona, the author of three previous novels and a professor of humanities at San Diego City College, emphasizes the sensory details of the time in a “you are here now” sort of way. She does a great job of bringing these stories to life once again.

— Kathleen Alcalá



ROGER MARTINEZ
FALL 2013 – SUMMER 2014



GENIE MILGROM
AUTUMN 2014 – PRESENT



DOLLY SLOAN
SPRING 2011 – SUMMER 2013



KATHLEEN ALCALÁ
FALL 2009 – WINTER 2010

THE
PRESIDENTS
OF
SCJS



STANLEY M. HORDES
FALL 2007 – SUMMER 2009



ABE LAVENDER
SUMMER 2004 – SUMMER 2007



ART BENVENISTE
SPRING 2002 – WINTER 2003



GLORIA TRUJILLO
SPRING 1999 – WINTER 2001



The Society for

THE FIR

1991

Stanley M. Hordes, Joshua Stampfer and Rena Downs found the Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies; first SCJS meeting is convened at Fort Burgwin, near Taos, New Mexico.

1992

HaLapid, SCJS quarterly publication founded; Bob Hattem, editor.

1994

Annual conference held in Portugal in the cities of Belmonte, Guarda, Tomar and other towns; the only conference held outside the U.S.

Note: The crypto-Jews of Belmonte came out only a few years earlier, in 1987. Their first synagogue was set up in two adjacent apartments. Services took place in one apartment where the men were seated; women sat in the second apartment and viewed the services through a cut in the wall.

2013

SCJS affiliates with University of Colorado, Colorado Springs; establishes Sephardic and Crypto-Jewish Studies program.

AND...

Establishment of *La Granada*, the SCJS online newsletter, with Debbie Wohl Isard as manager.

AND...

SCJS joins Facebook, manned by Miriam Herrera and other administrators to include Genie Milgrom and Schelly Talalay Dardashti.



AND...

Receipt of the gift of the 1792 edition of *The Whole, Genuine and Complete Works of Flavius Josephus, the Learned and Authentic Jewish Historian and Celebrated Warrior*, (above) donated to SCJS archives by the children of Myrtle M. Christensen Bucholtz, in her memory.



Significant Scholarly Member Publications

1996 publication of *Secrecy and Deceit: The Religion of the Crypto-Jews*, by David Gitlitz; documents religious customs of Iberian Jews.

2000 publication of *Silent Heritage: The Sephardim and the Colonization of the Spanish North American Frontier*, by educator/historian Richard G. Santos; crypto-Jews settlement in the Rio Grande borderlands.

2005 publication of *To the End of the Earth: A History of the Crypto-Jews of New Mexico*, by historian Stanley M. Hordes; definitive report on archival research and interview with descendants.

NEW CHRISTIANS ☆ MARRANOS ☆ ANUSIM ☆

Crypto-Judaic Studies

LAST 25 YEARS

1995

SCJS launches its website -
cryptojews.com.



2001

Pueblo, Colorado
conference approves
first set of bylaws
providing for
membership-elected
officers and board
of directors.



2007

...to present: SCJS receives first annual
grant from Sosin-Stratton-Petitt
Foundation to enhance arts
presentations at annual conference.

2012

...to present: SCJS receives first annual
grant from Stratton-Petitt Foundation
to advance scholarship in the crypto-
Judaic arts.



2009

*Journal of Spanish, Portuguese and Italian
Crypto-Jews (JOSPIC-J)* begins annual
publication; Abraham D. Lavender, Editor-
in-Chief and Dolores Sloan, Editor.



**HERE'S TO
THE NEXT**

2014

HaLapid changes to
magazine format for
easier worldwide
distribution.



25



2007 publication of *New Mexico's Crypto-Jews: Image and Memory*, photographs and text by Cary Herz, with essays by Ori Z. Soltes and Mona Hernandez.

2009 publication of *Juggling Identities: Identity and Authenticity Among the Crypto-Jews*, by anthropologist Seth D. Kunin; presents criteria for evaluating validity of crypto-Judaic phenomena. AND...

... Publication of *The Sephardic Jews of Spain and Portugal: Survival of an Imperiled Culture in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*, by journalist/writer Dolores Sloan; crypto-Jewish historical and cultural foundations.

2012 publication of *My Fifteen Grandmothers, and How I Found My 15 Grandmothers*, by lecturer/genealogist Genie Milgrom; personal journey and research instruction.

CRYPTO-JEWS ✧ CONVERSOS ✧ RETORNADOS

Welcome New Board Member Ellen Premack


Ellen Premack will be retiring mid-2015 as the executive director of the Mizel Museum, Denver, Colorado, an institution that she has been involved with for 23 years. She has served on the Board of Governors, been director of education and acted as executive director for 15 years. Ellen's leadership, vision and creativity brought the museum from a small display synagogue-based space to a nationally recognized museum of Jewish art and culture, with multifaceted programs serving the community at large. Previously, Ellen worked at the Denver Art Museum in an educational capacity and has served on multiple boards but will continue to serve on the Colorado Holocaust Educators, the Colorado Coalition for Genocide Awareness & Action, and the Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies boards.

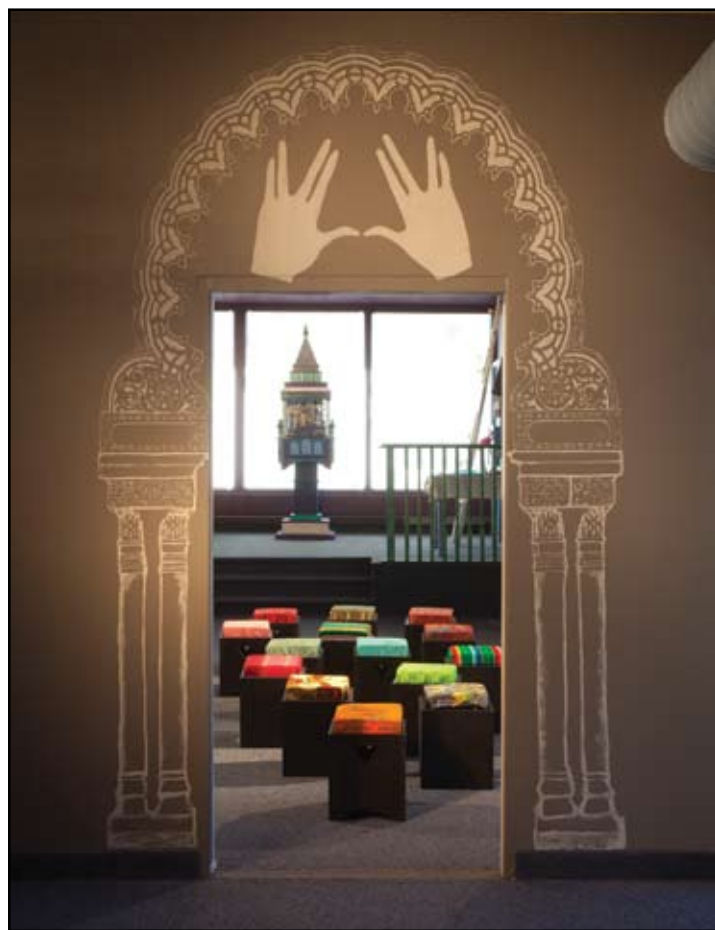


Ellen Premack

"Serving on the SCJS Board will keep me involved with the Jewish phenomenon that has been part of my life through the museum all these years. The crypto-Jews is both an exciting niche of our Jewish past and current history and that will keep me involved with interesting people on a national basis. I am happy to serve on this particular board because of the position, The Arts Coordinator for the annual conference, as it will keep me in-the-loop with visual and performing artists, which is intriguing and edgy. I am always star-struck by talented artists! To learn about any scholarly content through the arts has always been a wonderful way to glean knowledge and this educational capacity will be a fun and contributing way to be involved!"

On a personal note, Ellen has three passions: arts, aviation and animals. "My involvement in the arts goes without saying from my own creativity in bronze casting, weaving and textiles work, which I will now have a chance to get back to! Collecting art, meeting artists and traveling to museums

is in my DNA. I love aviation and want to get back to flying and the aviation field in some capacity! And animals... well, they are our life's breath, making every day worth living. I love our rescue birds (an Amazon and two conure parrots) along with our doxie Katie. Ellen and partner Charlie plan on relocating to Santa Fe in the near future, where life can be reinvented, explored and re-discovered! 



The Mizel Museum in Denver, Colorado is home to the permanent exhibit, 4,000 Year Road Trip: Gathering Sparks.



Biscochitos & Jewish Genealogy in New Mexico

BY SCHELLY TALALAY DARDASHTI

We may be the only Jewish genealogical society where *biscochitos* – the yummy New Mexican state cookie – are on our refreshment table. Those served at the Jewish Genealogical Society of New Mexico (JGSNM) of course, are made with vegetable shortening!

Last year, Judy Willmore, a board member of Congregation Nahalat Shalom in Albuquerque, asked me to set up a genealogy group at the congregation, which has long included a crypto-Jewish group holding monthly Shabbat dinners, an annual Sephardic/Djudeo-Espagnol Festival and a scholar-in-residence program.

With everyone's busy schedules, however, it has taken some time to get this off the ground. We will meet the fourth Sunday of each month (barring holidays) from 1:30-3:30 p.m.

We met for the first time in January – the steering committee includes Judy, Maria Apodaca, Chris Mueller and myself – and more than 30 people showed up, with both Ashkenazim, Sephardim and those of *converso* background. At this organizational meeting, we asked about major topics of interest. Overwhelmingly, DNA genetic genealogy appeared on that list.

Our February meeting was a live webinar on DNA genetic genealogy with consultant Elise Friedman (Boca Raton, Florida). With another excellent turnout, there were many questions for Elise. FamilyTreeDNA.com also provided test discounts and a free Family Finder test.

Our March meeting featured a presentation on Jewish genealogy resources, covering both Ashkenazi and Sephardic sources.

We are currently planning our programs for the next few months and will address relevant topics while also covering the unique history of New Mexico.


In early March, I presented a beginning Jewish genealogy program in Santa Fe for a women's group at Congregation



Beit Tikvah and discussed the possibilities of holding JGSNM programming there as well.

I began the presentation asking how many of their family names were changed at Ellis Island. Nearly every person raised her hand. They were shocked when I told them it never happened and proceeded to give them the correct information, that people could change their names the minute they arrived in the city.

So at least there is one group of beginning genealogists that knows this is perhaps the biggest myth in genealogy.

Our mailing list is now at more than 70 individuals. Please email jgsnm@tracingthetribes.com to be added to the mailing list for program announcements. 

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Blessed Is The Match



Blessed is the match consumed
in kindling flame.
Blessed is the flame that burns
in the secret fastness of the heart.
Blessed is the heart with the strength to stop
its beating for honor's sake.
Blessed is the match consumed
in kindling flame.

Hannah Senesh
Sardice, Yugoslavia
May 2, 1944

SCJS



Outreach

Sharing Our Message

BY SCHELLY TALALAY DARDASHTI

RootsTech 2015, a genealogy/technology conference, took place in February in Salt Lake City, Utah. It was combined with the Federation of Genealogical Societies' conference with more than 24,000 attendees. I presented "Sephardic Resources: The Other Side of Jewish Genealogy" to a large audience and was well received. Following my talk, I met with many who attended the presentation, answering additional questions and providing resources. I reminded all about the SCJS conference in Miami in July and also presented two booth demos for MyHeritage.com (where I am the U.S. Genealogy Advisor) on "General Newspaper Research" and "Jewish Newspaper Research" (focusing on the U.K.'s Jewish Chronicle, in publication since 1841, including much information on both the Sephardic and Ashkenazi communities in the U.K. posted through the years).

On April 12, I spoke at the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Boston on "Sephardic Resources: The Other Side of Jewish Genealogy" and "Research in Belarus," at Temple Emanuel, in Newton. I also spoke on the importance of recording family stories following Shabbat morning services at Beit Sasson Sephardic Congregation, also in Newton. At the kiddush, congregants of all ages – particularly the younger people – commented on how my short talk had inspired them to speak to older relatives.

I will also speak at the 12th Sephardic Anusim Conference in El Paso, Texas, July 31 – August 2, 2015.

Hats off to our members who tirelessly promote the efforts and mission of SCJS. Their passion and commitment deserves recognition.

Philadelphia Outreach

BY CHANA COHEN

After much planning, I recently completed a direct mail effort to Hispanics in Philadelphia, sending out 100 introductory SCJS packets. These were hand addressed, bore butterfly stamps and a gold seal, and included a handwritten personal note inside. The packet contained a cover letter, SCJS brochure, an excerpt from *HaLapid* (front cover, table of contents and the Outreach page), a membership form, and an addressed, stamped envelope. It also had the conference call for papers, plus location and dates. One important personal response came from the media person at AL Día, the largest Latino newspaper in Philadelphia. I anticipate this will be a gateway to more exposure.

At the National Museum of American Jewish History: the first mention of crypto-Jews of the Southwest written by me was recently added to the new "Pioneer Tour." I also trained 10 people for this tour. My docent activity there includes a regular monthly tour during which time I highlight Southwestern crypto-Jewry.

I also attended crypto-Jewish lectures where I promoted SCJS via brochures, conference announcements and calls for papers to speakers. One of these featured Dr. Annette Fromm and Dr. Tony Ramos and two others were given to Dr. Abe Gittleman. I also attended the International B'nei Anusim Conference in Netanya, Israel where I shared our news.

A Presentation to HOGAR

BY RACHEL BORTNICK

On March 14, I had the pleasure to speak about the parallels and shared roots of Sephardic and Latino cultures to Dallas HOGAR, the Hispanic Organization for Genealogy and Research. To my knowledge, this was the first time a genealogical organization of Hispanic Americans invited a speaker of Judeo-Spanish background to learn about the Sephardic culture of Spanish exiles who had migrated to the Ottoman Empire.



Above, HOGAR offers insight, information and fellowship.

Right, Rachel Bortnick in Dallas at HOGAR, the Hispanic Organization for Genealogy and Research.



Sulema Ramos, the Vice President of HOGAR, contacted the Dallas Jewish Historical Society seeking a speaker on the subject, and Debra Polsky, Executive Director of the DJHS, referred me to her. At the event, held at the Lockwood Library in Dallas, a series of genealogical reports in binders on display reflected its members' methodical research and interest. After being introduced to the group of some 40 members and guests, I presented a talk titled "Sephardic Jews and Hispanic Americans: Could We Be Cousins?"

I hoped to illustrate the many parallels and convergences between Sephardic and American-Hispanic history and culture. Starting with my own experience as a foreign student in the United States, I explained that until I left Turkey, I had never heard non-Jews speak Spanish, since in the Ottoman Empire (and in its successive states, including Turkey), it had been the Jewish language, now known as Ladino or Judeo-Spanish.

I gave a quick historical overview of Jews in Spain, starting with the 1391 pogroms that forced thousands of Jews to choose between conversion to Christianity or immediate death; the rise of a Spanish crypto-Jewish population, and the establishment of the Inquisition in 1478. I included the 1492 Expulsion of the Jews who refused to convert; the initial passage of some into Portugal, and the 1497 expulsion which allowed only the option of conversion. A map showing the Sephardic exiles into the various areas of Europe, North Africa and the Ottoman Empire illustrated where they formed new Jewish communities or became part of existing ones. I spoke of the *conversos* who

came to the New World in the 15th century and later, and of the Inquisition that followed there as well. Nods of recognition in the audience confirmed awareness of the culture of secrecy that developed in some families, a legacy of the fear of the Inquisition and the stigma attached to a Jewish past.

Focusing on my own heritage, the Sephardic culture that developed in the Ottoman Empire, I summarized the many Hispanic aspects including language, family names, food, music, proverbs and sayings. Sephardic surnames (*alkunyas* in Ladino) such as Amado, Ventura, Castro, Franco, Carmona, Navarro and others are, of course, popular among all Hispanics, and although in Turkey these belonged only to Jewish families, in themselves indicate only Spanish ancestry, not necessarily Judaic. During the forced conversions and expulsions in Iberia, many Jewish families split up, some members converting and staying and others leaving for more tolerant lands. Most of those who left, including my own ancestors, went east and settled in the Ottoman Empire. Many who converted later came to the Americas, keeping their Judaism a secret.

"Your genealogical research may reveal this ancestry and reveal that you are also, indeed, one of the long-lost cousins of Sephardic Jews," I concluded.

The Golden Age of Jewish Spain

BY DR. ELISHEVA IRMA DIAZ

The Coalition for Ladino Legacy held their first Historical and Cultural Conference on the campus of the American Jewish University in Los Angeles on February 8, 2015.

The day began with lectures by Art Benveniste from the Society of Crypto-Judaic Studies and author Claudia Long, on the Spanish Inquisition and its impact on Jewish history. The lunch hour included Ladino entertainment by the *Kol Ha Emeck* Choir of San Gabriel Valley directed by Cantor Judy Sofer, vocalists Rabbi Galit Levy Slater, Gavriela Perez, members of the Coalition, and Leeav Sofer and Janice Mautner Markham from the award-winning Jewish culture revival band, *Mostly Kosher*. The afternoon included a panel discussion, followed by a wine and cheese reception culminating with a performance by flamenco company, *Arte Y Pureza*, directed by Ethan Margolis. >>



The Coalition for Ladino Legacy is a branch of Ayekah Jewish Foundation (ayekah.org) striving to preserve both a language, Ladino, and a people forced to convert to Catholicism or suffer. The conference was the beginning of a strong force uniting attendees with other like-minded efforts here in the United States and abroad. The president and founder, Dr. Elisheva Irma Diaz has, together with many others, embrace the numerous issues facing *anusim* today. Many *b'nei anusim* are either finding their Jewish identity after many years of not knowing about their roots and/or hiding and ignoring the reality of them. Either way, they are experiencing the epiphany that most Jews do when exiled: their life and journey might not be complete without embracing their heritage and honoring their ancestors. (coalitionforladinolegacy.org).

B'nai Anusim — What and Who Are the Crypto-Jews?

SCJS president Genie Milgrom, FIU professor Abe Lavender, Ph.D., and Rabbi Marc Phillippe spoke at Temple Emanuel in Miami Beach on Sunday, March 15. An enthusiastic audience gathered for brunch and a chance to hear fascinating personal experiences from all three. The lecture

prompted positive feedback and inquiry about SCJS.

Genie also spoke in Netanya in March at the B'nei Anusim Conference at Israel's Netanya College Campus featuring two full days of speakers, receptions with the Spanish and Portuguese ambassadors and an award to Inacio Steinhardt for his work in Portugal. Genie also hosted the Genealogy Round Table with Daniel Horowitz, chief genealogist of MyHeritage.com, Spanish genealogist Fernando Gonzalez and others.

And more...

Rabbi Stephen Leon of B'nai Zion Congregation in El Paso, Texas, recently spoke about *anusim* at Darchei Noam Reconstructionist Synagogue in Toronto, Canada.

Corinne Brown spoke in February to Congregation B'nei Havurah in Denver, Colorado on the topic "Understanding Crypto-Jews: Why It Matters to the Rest of Us."



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Stefanie Beninato

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UNITING HISTORY AND RECONNECTION

*Institute for Sefardi and
Anousim Studies in Israel*

BY ABRAHAM GROSS, PH.D.

Last July, I had the pleasure of participating in the annual SCJS conference in Dallas, Texas. I had only recently begun my role at the Institute for Sefardi and Anousim Studies (ISAS) at Netanya Academic College (NAC) in Israel, along with my ongoing work and career at Ben Gurion University of the Negev.

In my conference address, I focused on the general vision of the ISAS and our planned programs and projects. I spoke about the need for a center that will serve as a coordinating agent for the growing number of organizations dealing with the history of crypto-Judaism on the one hand, and with present day *retornados* on the other. There is a definite need for academic research on the cultural aspects of contemporary *b'nei anousim* to complement the rich existing and ongoing academic attention to the history of Iberian crypto-Judaism in the Early Modern period. I proposed our ISAS as the vehicle to serve as that uniting agent. Equally important is the need to address the practical concerns of those who desire to reconnect with the faith of their forefathers, which is a huge undertaking. By combining both the research and applied aspects of the *b'nei anousim*, the ISAS is adopting a more comprehensive approach than our fellow centers, institutes, and societies in the field.

Nearly a year has passed since my conference address and I would like to relate to SCJS members our progress.

After some delays, the Sefardi heritage museum project is on its way. To be built on the Netanya Academic College campus, it will be named after the late Professor Benzion Netanyahu, whose lifelong academic work was dedicated mainly to the fate of the Judeo-Spanish *conversos* and to the forces and ideology behind the establishment of the Inquisition in the 15th century. The section dedicated to Professor Netanyahu will include his vast library and archive. A special section will house a rare collection of artifacts related to the voyages of Columbus and his era.



Abraham Gross




The legacy and culture of Sefardi Jewry will occupy another major section in the museum.

In our education component, the ISAS will design and operate instructional programs for youths and adults alongside cultural events and performances. The education of Israeli youth is a priority of the Institute. A significant percentage of the Israeli population is of Sefardi descent and consequently, we are planning a program of heritage trips to Spain and Portugal for high school students, along similar lines as the existing Holocaust-centered trips to Poland.

In a very short while, our Genealogical Research Unit will start operating. Its primary purpose will be to assist individuals looking for their Jewish roots. We will employ a professional genealogist who will supply preliminary answers and further guidance

for those who request it. A presentation focusing on this new department was made at our conference in March 2015 and included a workshop on Sefardi genealogy with Genie Milgrom.

Our annual international conference, entitled "Mapping the Anousim Diaspora," took place March 23–24, 2015. More than 25 papers were presented. Our aim was to convey the extraordinary scope of both the historical and contemporary *retornados* phenomenon, in keeping with our comprehensive approach to the issue. Furthermore, while people associated with SCJS are naturally well aware of all that, most of the Israeli public is not. And it is here, in Israel, where some of the most important decisions concerning these *retornados* are being made, and we want to be involved in the decision-making processes in every possible way.

We invite you to visit our new website, netanya.ac.il, "like" us on Facebook, and share your expert comments. After all, we are partners, perhaps "brothers-in-arms." We invite everyone to our the next annual conference: *le-Shanah ha-Ba'ah bi-Netanya*. 

Center for Latino-Jewish Relations

...and a special pilgrimage to Israel

BY RABBI PETER TARLOW, PH.D. • DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER FOR LATINO-JEWISH RELATIONS

In December 2014, the Center for Latino-Jewish Relations (CLJR), in conjunction with the Face of Israel, took nine Latino leaders on a spiritual and educational pilgrimage to Israel. Here is the story of this amazing journey and what it means both for the Jewish and Latino communities.

A brief history of the CLJR

Over the past 10 years, Rabbi Emeritus Peter Tarlow, former director of Texas A&M Hillel, ran several programs on the Jewish roots of many Latinos (often called Hispanics) living in Texas, other Southwestern U.S. states and the states of northern Mexico.

Despite the political border separating Mexico and the U.S., we may consider many of these people as part of the same family. Many share the same traditions, language and to a great extent, cultural mores.

What is less known is that many of these people are descendents of what Jews call *anusim* and academics often call crypto-Jews. These are the descendents of Spanish and Portuguese Jews forced to convert during the Inquisition and whose ancestors came to the lands along the Rio Grande River or to the U.S. Southwest deserts as a means of escape.

Their history has inspired several academic conferences at Texas A&M and the hope to develop a center to meet the

academic needs of this growing population. The center sought to understand the common cultural, academic, musical, culinary and historic roots linking contemporary Latinos with their Jewish brethren.

In summer 2014, several Jewish and Latino leaders met. They reinvigorated the center and changed its name from the Center for Crypto-Jewish studies to the Center for Latino-Jewish Relations (CLJR) now located in Houston, Texas.

The CLJR's purpose is not religious and it does not in any way attempt to change anyone's religious affiliation. Instead, this non-political, bilingual organization seeks to unite two peoples who share a common heritage and histories, and whose roots run deep into the Iberian Peninsula. As such, the center seeks to explore the historic, linguistic and cultural roots binding thousands of American Latinos and Jews. CLJR accomplishes its goals through a wide variety of lectures and programs. Among these:

- Viewing and preserving Inquisition documents from colonial Mexico.
- Development of a historic understanding of the common roots binding many Mexicans and people of Mexican heritage to their Jewish heritage.
- Conferences on the common cultural bonds uniting these two groups.
- Trips to Israel, Mexico, Spain and Portugal to remind the Latino and Jewish



Rabbi Peter Tarlow (in white shirt) and his group in Israel.

populations of their common Iberian roots.

- Dialogue series where Jews and Latinos can discuss common problems and seek common solutions.
- Promotion of Iberian Jewish and Latino cultural heritage within Texas and the rest of the U.S.
- Development of bilingual texts on the intersection of Mexican–American and Jewish–Mexican culture and history.
- Working with dignitaries from other centers of Iberian Jewish and Mexican culture.

Israel pilgrimage

One of the center's goals is to acquaint Jews and Latinos with places symbolizing common cultural roots. The first journey was in December 2014. With a grant from The Faces of Israel and fund raising by CLJR, we took nine key Latino leaders on an all-expenses paid trip to Israel. The leaders represented all areas of life: academic, business, entertainment and media—a cross-section of American–Latino culture coming from Texas, Tennessee and California.

CLJR's goals for this trip were to:

- Show Latino leaders the reality of modern Israel.
- Provide Latino leaders with a spiritual journey.
- Create dialogues between American Latinos and Israeli Latinos.

Due to the trip's brevity and the fact that Israel is one of the great tourism destinations, the trip was limited to Tel Aviv and modern Israeli hi-tech; to the Galilee and its important Christian sites; and Jerusalem and environs (the Dead Sea and the Qumran caves where the Dead Sea scrolls were discovered). Throughout the trip, Israeli experts briefed the group which met with Israel's political, business, academic and military leaders.

Here are a few highlights:

On the way to the Galilee, they learned about the great strides Israel has made in medicine, in orthopedics, in water reusage and desalinization. This was a taste of Israel of the future interacting with today's world.

The group traveled from Tel Aviv's hi-tech area to the ancient city of Nazareth where they met with Father Naddaf who briefed them on the plight of Christians throughout the Middle East. The group visited many places important to the life and ministry of Jesus, and also learned how Israel is the only Middle Eastern nation where Christians can practice freely and live their lives without fear.

For many, this was their first encounter with the stark reality of the Middle East where spirituality is never more than a stone's throw from violence and death. This harsh reality became clear as we traveled to the Golan Heights. Not far



Attentive participants soak up every word.

from the Syrian border, the group received more than a military briefing as they were able to hear the fighting and understand that the Middle East is a place long on history and short on geography. The trip continued to Jerusalem where we entered the city at dusk on Thursday afternoon. As the sun set, the buildings turned golden and a sense of the spiritual soon mixed with Jerusalem's modernity.

The complexities of the next few days could fill another article. For the moment, it is enough to say that perhaps more than in any other place, the Latino delegates understood the relationship of Israel and its people; that Jews are the land's indigenous people reunited with their ancestral homeland.

They saw the modern miracle of Israel—the place from where Jews hail—and a place where Latinos and Jews share hopes and dreams. With the silence of a Jerusalem Sabbath, they saw Israel as a symbol of human vigor and renewal in a world that has produced the horrors of the Inquisition and the death camps of Nazi Germany.


Here in Jerusalem the Latino delegates began to realize that in their own way, they too were part of the people of Israel and that Israel is more than a mere place, it is a living symbol and a spiritual home.

To paraphrase the Book of Isaiah (56): “For My house, Jerusalem, will be called a house for all peoples.”

Afterward

This trip was both a modern and spiritual journey. Since our return, a film has been made, media articles have been published, and Israel has won new friends.

Perhaps—importantly—the wounds inflicted by Torquemada and the Inquisitors of medieval Spain have begun to heal and there is the hope that tomorrow may be a bit closer to a world of *shalom*. During 2015, we will be taking other journeys, providing lectures and offering conferences.

If you would like to help us in our work, visit latinojewishrelations.org or contact Rabbi Peter Tarlow at ptarlow@hispanicjews.com or ptarlow@tamuhillel.org. 

Children of the Inquisition follows a group of descendants of the Jews persecuted during the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions, each on a quest to determine and embrace their distant Sephardic Jewish roots. We will use their individual and family journeys to reveal a history of masked and buried identities created by the torture, forced conversions and secrecy of the Inquisitions and ensuing Diaspora; and explore how the profound historical, cultural and personal impacts of these events can still be felt in our 21st century world.

ON FILM

It is a story that can only recently be told because, for centuries, the fear of discovery and persecution was so great that converted families did not want to admit to a drop of Jewish blood in their lineage. But in the past few decades, a new openness has occurred. Relaxed Church policies, government actions, access to genealogical and historical research and ever-developing technology are giving descendants the opportunity to discover their Jewish heritage. Many are even reclaiming and celebrating this part of their identity that was stolen from them hundreds of years ago.

The characters in our film are from different countries and are at various stages in their relationship to their Jewish identity. Some, whose families fled Iberia 500 years ago, were raised as traditional Jews, while others, whose ancestors converted, never imagined the secrets hidden in their family trees. They are all asking life-changing questions about who they are and where they come from. The answers they find are leading them back to the 15th and 16th centuries.

As director, Joseph Lovett will join them around the world as they uncover evidence of their Jewish heritage—in town cemeteries, long-practiced family rituals, even in their own genes. They will each grapple with how this heritage influences how they define themselves and how others define them. Each character's unique story will highlight

CHILDREN OF THE INQUISITION



Joe Lovett, Director
Children of the Inquisition

the rich diversity of experience within Jewish culture and together, provide multiple perspectives for our audience to connect with and learn from.

We believe the project will move people to explore their family origins. For those on the trail of Sephardic roots, or others who may be unaware of their lost Jewish identity, our multi-platform project will offer windows and connections to that community. We will invite the public to contribute their own stories to our project, exchange experiences and perspectives and make supportive connections. We will, in effect, be building a wider and more inclusive Jewish community across the globe.

Lovett Stories + Strategies is committed to *Children of the Inquisition*, a compelling multi-platform project of personal exploration and discovery. Designed for public television and educational outreach, our 90-minute format intersects history, culture and issues of identity in ways that will inform and intrigue an international audience of all ages and backgrounds.


And the story continues...

In April, while on location, we shot a Goya painting in Spain and two original Los Caprichos prints at the Academy of Fine Arts to illustrate the dread and shame people felt during the Inquisition period. Then at the National Archive, we shot the reading of a testimony against Isabel Nunes Alvarez from 1632 for "judaizing." She went before the Inquisition in Toledo, was brought to an *auto da fé* at the Plaza Mayor in Madrid, a spectacle which Philip II and his wife attended. She was "relaxed" to civil authorities and burned at the stake.

Next stop was shooting Rizzi painting of the Plaza Mayor at the Prado as well as the Plaza itself.

We also photographed a 1492 testimony against Diego Arias Davila (Doreen Carvajal's 16th great grandfather) brought posthumously before the Inquisition by Torquemada to defame his son Juan, the bishop of Segovia.

Each step proves — you can't make this stuff up!

For more, visit childrenoftheinquisition.com. 

Many of the Italians living in Calabria (Southern Italy) have Jewish roots going back to the Inquisition. When an American rabbi of Italian descent, Barbara Aiello, returns to her ancestral village in Calabria to encourage the locals to discover their Jewish heritage, not everyone (Jews and Christians) welcomes her. *The Secret Jews of Calabria* is a one-hour documentary film by Carl Perkal.

Born in New York and living in Israel since 1973, Perkal moved originally to Jerusalem and currently lives in Netanya. In recent years he has been producing less and working more in the field of Arab-Jewish relations in Israel. "But I always keep my eyes open for interesting film projects to develop," says Perkal.

"One day almost five years ago, I read an article in *Haaretz* about Rabbi Barbara Aiello and put it aside thinking it would make a nice film. In addition my grandparents were Sephardic Jews from Salonika who came to

THE SECRET JEWS OF CALABRIA




Rabbi Barbara Aiello



**Carl Perkal, Producer
The Secret Jews of Calabria**

American in 1913 so I'm always interested in stories connected to Spanish Jewry. My grandparents were "Capons" which is a well-known Sephardic name; there are Capons in Italy to this day (Laura Capon was the wife of Nobel Prize-winning physicist Enrico Fermi).

"Subsequently, the future director of the film, Manuela Procaccia, contacted me from Milan to ask if I had any work for her as she was planning to make *aliyah* (returning home to Israel). And thus the project was born. The next film in the series will be *The Secret Jews of the American Southwest*, currently under development. Just need to find the funding.

Facebook.com/pages/The-Secret-Jews-of-Calabria. 

JUST RELEASED

Rabbi Barbara's new book, *The Cat That Ate The Cannoli - Tales of the Hidden Jews of Southern Italy*, is now available at Amazon.com.

MEMORIES

It goes to the core question of what is our mission. Is it the same now as it was when SCJS formed 25 years ago? Should it be? Should it be changed, and if so how?

The crypto culture that grew out of those hideaways who sailed to the New World in the 1400s and 1500s is a true phenomenon; it has not been

considered safe ever to come out as being a Jew. That's why SCJS was formed, to study this particular phenomenon. The founders did such a great job that their research opened the eyes of people who never even thought to ask the personal questions. Once those people started exploring, others around the country and the world began to think about it. Soon they began to ask about

their own heritage. Now there was a question that could be asked. So our challenge is how to balance the needs and interests of everyone, or at least as many people as possible who are interested in the questions for a variety of reasons. We have lots of stake-holders.

— Debbie Wohl Isard



Do you have a converso in your past?

BY ANDRÉE AELION BROOKS

The bus was clearly in struggling mode, climbing higher and higher along a steep hillside until it felt as though we had almost touched the stars. It was early spring. We were on our way to the medieval hilltop village of Ayllón, some 40 miles north of Madrid, Spain. The passengers—all descendants of Jews who had once lived in that village and still carry its name proudly as a family name, albeit with different spellings—began mumbling in amazement. Why had our ancestors chosen to live and work in such a remote location?

The 48 people on that bus had come from 12 countries to explore our mutual Spanish-Jewish past. If you ever thought that the past lives of crypto-Jews, or *conversos* in general, were primarily of academic interest, this journey would soon change your mind.

This would be true not only of our reactions, but for the lectures that I would later give about that journey. I have written and spoken about *conversos* for nearly 10 years. But this visit made me suddenly realize it was not simply about



Our group stands in the middle of Plaza Meyon, Ayllón, Spain, on April 26, 2014.

“them.” It was about my past, too. And this is no doubt true of anyone who traces their family back to pre-Expulsion Spain or Portugal. Once you start to explore the individual reality, the thought of real ancestors making agonizing choices becomes very personal.

For us, it started with Jack Aghion of Melbourne, Australia. His most recent predecessors had lived in Alexandria, Egypt, having gone there in the 19th century from Salonika, Greece, where it is

believed the Jews expelled from Ayllón—whom research shows, all came from the same extended family—had first settled. Aghion is an Arabic version of Ayllón. Wouldn't it be interesting, Aghion thought, to ceremonially return to the village to explore our communal past together and celebrate Shabbat after 522 years?

Though most of us—who had heard about the anticipated gathering on Facebook—were eager to sign up, nobody knew what to expect. Aghion had arranged meetings with the mayor, workshops, discussions and guided tours. But there was little known about those who had lived there



A sojourn to Ayllón, Spain offers insight — and poses even more questions

Left, gazing across the rooftops—and the centuries—of Ayllón, Spain

over 500 years ago. Unlike the major centers of Spanish-Jewish life, almost no research has been done in these smaller towns and villages.

Surprise: Nothing is left along Ayllón's cobblestoned alleyways, or in its guidebooks, that hints at a Jew. There are no known ruins of formerly Jewish houses or churches converted from synagogues, as in other parts of Spain. Not even a Jewish burial ground that anyone could identify.

By contrast, in the nearby regional capital of Segovia where we made a stopover on our return to Madrid, we were honored with a special ceremony when the deputy mayor of Segovia, Claudia de Santos Borreguero, clearly tried to suggest the Spanish do care. She offered us a memorable gift: the "return" of the keys to our houses. Over the centuries, those keys have become the most enduring symbols of the Expulsion, as families took their keys along, initially to prove ownership of the homes they had been forced to abandon. Later they preserved them as heirlooms through

An award-winning journalist, author and lecturer, Andrée Aelion Brooks now specializes in lesser-known aspects of Jewish history. She is a popular speaker, known for her style of storytelling, humor and insights she brings to her topics.

For 18 years she was a contributing columnist and news writer for the *New York Times* where she covered personal finance, the women's movement and real estate investment, among other issues. Later, she wrote occasional guest essays on life as an older American for the Encore section of the *Wall Street Journal*. She also regularly contributes to *Hadassah* magazine, among other publications, winning First Place in 2012 in the magazine division of the annual awards of the American Jewish Press Association. In September 2014, she was appointed to the advisory board of the *Connecticut Jewish Ledger*.

Brooks is an Associate Fellow at Yale University and the founder and first president of the Women's Campaign School at Yale (wcsyale.org). The purpose of the non-partisan, non-agenda based school is to train more women worldwide in the skills needed to win elective office. In November 2013, in recognition of this work, she was honored by the Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame.

She is also a consultant and board member of the Gomez Mill House historic site in Marlborough, New York, the oldest surviving Jewish residence in the United States (gomez.org).

In recent years, she has been concentrating on unusual aspects of Jewish history, writing and lecturing widely around the country on a number of these topics. She has just completed a private commission, writing contextual history to accompany the genealogical research for a noted American Jewish family from Poland and Romania.

Brooks is the author of *The Woman Who Defied Kings*, the first comprehensive biography of Doña Gracia Nasi, the Renaissance banker. In 2013 she served as a historical adviser for a pilot script for a



Andrée Aelion Brooks

planned television miniseries based on Nasi's life.

Some years ago, she coordinated and edited a multimedia educational program in Sephardic history and culture called "Out of Spain" for 5th-7th graders in Jewish congregational and day schools. A later book of Jewish history, *Russian Dance*, a romantic thriller based on the true story of a Bolshevik spy, has been described as a "gripping narrative" by *Publishers Weekly* and was "highly recommended" by the American Library Association. It won first place in the history/biography category for 2005 from the National Association of Press Women.

In 1990, Brooks received the American Jewish Woman of Achievement award from the American Jewish Committee. In 2001, she received a special award from the Consulate General of Israel in conjunction with the American Sephardi Federation for her work in Sephardic Jewish History. And in 2003, she received the Mark Twain Award from the Connecticut Press Club, as well as it being named a finalist in the National Jewish Book Awards. She has also received an outstanding achievement award from the National Federation of Press Women, among other writing honors.

In the late 1980s she was the author of another award-winning book, *Children of Fast-Track Parents*, which was featured on the Oprah Winfrey Show and later made into a PBS hour-long documentary with Brooks' advice, input, script outline and consulting services. The documentary, available from the author, was nominated for a regional Emmy.

the generations. To be symbolically offered the return of those keys—even in reproduction—was an important act of reconciliation. Borregeuro then took us to the nearby house of Abraham, the Jewish leader who tried to persuade Isabella and Ferdinand to rescind the Expulsion. In the courtyard of the house, now Segovia's new Jewish cultural center, officials have erected a plaque in honor of our particular "return."

What about those Ayllón *conversos*? Though it appears to be a matter of honor among many Sephardic Jews to insist their ancestors had clung fast to Judaism and left Spain in 1492, this was not necessarily so. It seems the Ayllón forebears may have split down the middle. Exploring one's heritage opens the mind to exploring all sides of a family.

We were fascinated to learn that sometime in the late 1500s, brothers Juan and Francisco Ayllón had traveled to Rome to personally beg the Pope to save their father, Pablo Ayllón, and their other brothers, Luis and Augustin, from the Inquisition. This, according to *Culture and Control in Counter Reformation Spain*, edited by Anne J. Cruz and Mary Elizabeth Perry.

Then there was Lucas Vazquez de Ayllón, who spearheaded the first European settlement on the North American coast in 1526, according to a report in *National Geographic* (March 1998). At the time, he had been living on the Caribbean island of Santo Domingo. It was rumored that the Inquisition was on its way to the New World. Why else would Lucas suddenly take 600 European settlers out of harm's reach and obtain a charter from the king to claim the southern portion of the eastern seaboard from Florida to the Chesapeake Bay as "The new Land of Ayllón." Was it his way of bringing other *conversos* to safety? Or was he simply after gold? Either way the settlement soon failed.

Still in Ayllón, a local historian took us to see an imposing stone house, saying it was once owned by a prosperous Ayllón merchant who had stayed and converted, although he gave no clear proof. He offered a suggestion that the two rectangular indentations in the stone façade on either side of the front door had once housed mezuzot. We thought they looked more like a parallel shelf to support a beam. Still, the villagers were trying.

[This pilgrimage] put a human face on generalized history, raising ideas and identifying people who might otherwise have remained in obscurity.



This plaque honors our particular "return" to Ayllón, now Segovia's new Jewish cultural center.




Likeness of a rabbi and my father, 400 years later.

In addition, we saw a play—part of an afternoon of street theatre—that fictionally recreated a possible dilemma that might have faced any local crypto-Jewish family. In the narrative, the father had just died; his relatives were anxious to bury him according to Jewish rites, but they had to find a secret, makeshift way of doing so.

What do the audiences at my lectures think of this pilgrimage? They thought it was neat. It put a human face on generalized history, raising ideas and identifying people who might otherwise have remained in obscurity.

It wasn't only lay people who were intrigued. Luis Fernando Esteban, honorary consul of Spain in Seattle, who heard about the visit from my daughter, Allyson, now wants to initiate research into the Jewish past of these villages. He has begun talks at the University of Washington to see if one or two graduate students can be sent to Spain for a semester or so, perhaps using Ayllón as a pilot project.

In addition, our group later decided to sponsor a plaque (or something similar) so there would at least be a token commemoration of the contribution of Jews to the town during medieval times. Local officials have since offered us a small stone model of the original gateway to the old town. In May, it was ceremonially installed near the main gate; a personal family project creating the impetus for so much more.

Contact Brooks at andreebrooks@outofspain.com or outofspain.com. 



Welcome to MIAMI!



Miami, a city that never sleeps, alive with Latin rhythms and big city sophistication, while offering every luxury of a world-class resort. Known for its beaches, its architecture, the art scene, its grand hotels, designer fashion, international cuisine and posh neighborhoods, this historic place has blossomed into a sophisticated community that's full of visitors no matter the season.

Come early and make a vacation out of this conference. You can take a stroll on the edge of the beach; wake up in an ocean-front boutique hotel in a restored art deco building, or treat yourself to a full-blown resort. Later, visit museums (the Jewish Museum is worth seeing) and take a walk or a jog in a park with 360-degree views of the Atlantic Ocean. Play 18 holes at a nearby golf course. The food everywhere is spectacular; the seafood caught daily. Sophisticated kosher restaurants abound too. If you're ready to turn in early, we understand, but if your evening is just starting when the sun goes down, you can find a party every night.

Miami has evolved into an urban metropolis with all the amenities of a beach town and a big city; a grand mix of vibrant cultures surrounded by a natural wonderland with turquoise waters and skyscraper palms. Discover for yourself why Florida is the dream of many. Explore our treasures and see for yourself.

Go to cryptojews.com/miami2015 and register now for the 2015 SCJS annual conference, July 19-21.

25
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SOCIETY FOR CRYPTO-JUDAIC STUDIES
JULY 19-21, 2015



SOCIETY FOR CRYPTO-JUD

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Ainsley Cohen Henriques



Jamaican Jewish history comes alive in Kingston, Jamaica, where images of families, art and ritual artifacts are found at the Jewish Heritage Centre. Jamaican genealogist **Ainsley Cohen Henriques** researched his own family tree and helped found the Jamaican Jewish Archives at the Center. He further founded the Jamaica Jewish Genealogical Society in 1999; a database with 25,000 names. Henriques' first

Jamaican forebearer, a Hebrew teacher, arrived from Amsterdam in 1745, followed by others in his Bellanfante family line. He is English, German, Sefardic and Ashkenazi. His last name is Portuguese.

In 2010, Henriques co-chaired The Jewish Diaspora of the Caribbean International Conference, attended by 200 scholars. Essays from the conference—on history, art, slavery, cemeteries, archaeology, architecture and religious authority—have been gathered in *The Jews in the Caribbean* (The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization), edited by conference co-chair Jane S. Gerber, director of the Institute for Sephardic Studies at the Graduate Center of the City, University of New York.

MARTIN SOSIN ADDRESS

David A. Wacks, Ph.D.



This year's speaker for **The Martin Sosin Address to Advance Scholarship in the Crypto-Judaic Arts** is **Dr. David A. Wacks**, associate professor of Spanish and acting head of Romance Languages at the University of Oregon. His talk, "Crypto-Judaism and the Question of Human Agency in Sixteenth-Century Jewish Thought," addresses how the experience of living as a Christian openly and as a Jew inwardly during the 16th century left a profound impact on Jewish thought, and how human action, not mere providence, drives the historical process.

FEATURED SPEAKER

Ruth Behar



Known for her writing about the search for home in our global era, **Ruth Behar** is the author of *The Presence of the Past in a Spanish Village*; *Translated Woman: Crossing the Border with Esperanza's Story* and *The Vulnerable Observer: Anthropology That Breaks Your Heart*. She is the co-editor of *Women Writing Culture*, a classic text on women's literary contributions to anthropology. Writing in both English and Spanish, and always aware of her Jewish roots, she explores the convergence of cultures in ways that open new avenues for self-expression, especially for those who find themselves "in the between," searching for meaning in diasporas and exiles.

Our 25th year comes to fruition in Miami with a stellar assembly of speakers and artists. "This year's conference promises to be a memorable one," says conference chair Matthew Warshawsky, "thanks in part to the location and flavor of the convention site. Miami, after all, is the gateway to Central and South America and a great resource of crypto-Judaic history currently under exploration."

We appreciate the many speakers and participants with Spanish language heritage who have contributed abstracts or committed to attend, all bringing their cultural legacy with them.

This year's conference starts at noon Sunday with the SCJS-sponsored Genealogy Workshop presented by Schelly Talalay Dardashti, Bennett Greenspan and Genie Milgrom; and concludes on Tuesday at 4:00 p.m.

Panels and round table discussions with SCJS members and other academics sharing their experiences, insights and personal stories is the foundation of the conference. This year, among our many honored participants, one panelist of note joining us is **Jo Ann Arnowitz**. The executive director and chief curator of the Jewish Museum of Florida-FIU, Jo Ann will present a brief history of the Museum and an overview of more than 250 years of Jewish life in Florida. Through exhibitions and programs on the immigration and acculturation experience of one ethnic group as the example for all American families, the stories about the contributions of Jews to all areas of Florida's growth inspire understanding and tolerance.

In addition to the intellectual stimulation we guarantee, we know you'll find our arts contributors among the most captivating to date. Many thanks to our newest board member and conference arts coordinator, Ellen Premack, for adding such rich value.

Another highlight—and attendee favorite—is the Judy Frankel Memorial Concert, a musical program after dinner Monday evening. Open to the public; additional tickets sold at the door.

Meals and beverages are included with registration fees, beginning with the Sunday dinner event through lunch on Tuesday. Partial registration options are also available. Add to all this the sheer delight of Florida and its beautiful weather and surroundings, the excellent cuisine created for our attendees, and the camaraderie that's always part of our reunions, and we feel confident you'll be counting the days!

MATTHEW WARSHAWSKY, CONFERENCE PROGRAM COORDINATOR • ELLEN PREMACK CONFERENCE ARTS COORDINATOR

Join us for our 25th annual conference —
a secular venue for the descendants
of crypto-Jews, scholars and other interested
parties to network and discuss pertinent issues.

SUNDAY ARTISTS' PANEL

Visual artist **Marilyn Lande** is an active member of the Denver Jewish community as an educator and cultural arts specialist. As an accomplished sculptor and mixed-media artist, her goal is to broaden the view of what can be considered Jewish art.

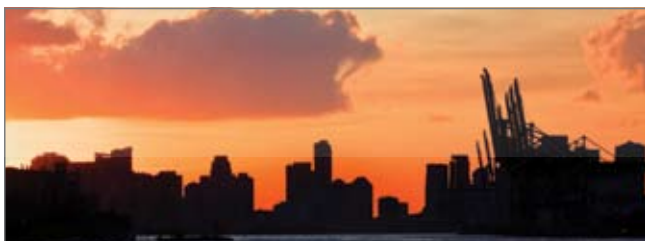
"The Haggadah Transcending Time – The Story of Sephardic Jews," is Lande's art book created to tell a story of Sephardic Jewish life in Spain and Portugal from the 10th century to today, reflecting where Jews and conversos lived creating positive Jewish lives. Montages and photographs from this book share her perspective of the past as seen from today. Lande is also known for her "Jewish History in Miniatures," a view into Islamic life in the 1100s as well as Doña Gracia's home in the 1500s.

Jonatas Chimen D. DaSilva-Benayon is a painter, sculptor, and performance artist. One of his main subjects is the Sephardic displacement of XV Iberian Peninsula and its contemporary consequences. He is also a published writer, with articles focusing on the crypto-Jewish experience. He is a contributing writer to the *Journal of Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian Crypto-Jews*.

"An Artist's Representation of the Crypto-Jewish Narrative: Displacement, Memory, and Legacy - 1500s to 2015 & Far Beyond," provides a memoir-style chronicle of the crypto-Jewish legacy of migration, persecution, adaptation, and return. Jonatas uses his own family as a starting point in the narrative, combining his family's archives, memory, painting, sculpture, photos and performance-art into one installation piece.

MONDAY NOON CONCERT

Performance artist and scholar **Neil Manel Frau-Cortes** specializes in the Jews of Sepharad, their literature and music. His recital, "Lights and Shadows in the Songs of Sepharad" is a journey through the life of those who lived and loved, those who yearned, those who were lost in time, and those who struggled through the night without losing their identity and their connection to the Divine. From centuries of peace and prosperity to years of hiding and fear, the history of the Sephardic Jews has been marked by lights and shadows. Through the songs of these Jews, we will walk the path of exile and discover our own life in their experience.



JUDY FRANKEL MEMORIAL CONCERT MONDAY EVENING

Susana Behar



The **Judy Frankel Memorial Concert** highlights artists whose music has been influenced by their *converso* experience. For 2015, this favorite concert features vocalist **Susana Behar**. A world renowned recording artist and performer at prestigious music and folk life festivals, her captivating style ranges from intimate to engaging intensity. A rich Cuban/Turkish/

Venezuelan heritage fuels Susana's passion for her ancestral music: the old Ladino language, the harmonies and rhythms of island music, and the echoes of exile of faded Sephardic songs. This heritage demonstrates that all members of diasporas use music to remember who they are and that music has the power to unite cultural influences, innovations, traditions — and hearts. The public is invited.

REGISTER ONLINE • cryptojews.com/miami2015

Registration - \$195 • Kosher - \$270 • Partial Registration Also Available

HOTEL RESERVATIONS DOUBLE TREE BY HILTON HOTEL MIAMI AIRPORT

711 NW 72nd Ave, Miami, Florida 33126 • 305-260-8935 • SPECIAL RATE - \$109. Mention group code SOC;
or online at doubletree.hilton.com/en/dt/groups/personalized/M/MIAMADT-SOC-20150718/index.jhtml?WT.mc_id=POG



CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

FEATURED SPEAKERS

Ainsley Cohen Henriques
David A. Wacks
Ruth Behar

PANEL SPEAKERS & SOSIN ARTISTS

Kathleen Alcalá
Eugenio Alonso
Jo Ann Arnowitz
Stacy N. Beckwith
Susana Behar
Sonia Bloomfield
Corinne Joy Brown
Leonel Antonio
Chevez Fuentes
Jonatas Chimen D.
DaSilva-Benayon
Joshua Comenetz

Schelly Talalay
Dardashti
Yehonatan Elazar-
DeMota
Harry A. Ezratty
Marcia Fine
Neil Manel Frau-
Cortes
Annette B. Fromm
Anthony Garcia
Bennett Greenspan
Abraham Gross

Gustavo Adolfo
Guerra Reynoso
Silvia Hamui Sutton
Jesús Jambrina
Yitzhak Kerem
Marilyn Lande
Abe Lavender
Genie Milgrom
Joseph R. Maldonado
Yliana Tuck
Enrique Valle
Matthew Warshawsky

SUNDAY, JULY 19

9-11:30am	Pre-Conference SCJS Board Meeting
11:30am-12:30pm	Break
12:30-3:30pm	Pre-Conference Genealogy Workshop with Schelly Talalay Dardashti , Bennett Greenspan and Genie Milgrom
3:30-5pm	Conference Registration
5-5:30pm	Welcoming Remarks - SCJS President Genie Milgrom
5:30-7pm	Panel 1
7-8:15pm	Buffet Dinner
8:15-9:30pm	Keynote Address Ainsley Cohen Henriques , "From Sepharad to Jamaica Over Half a Millennium: The Uncertain Road of Return"

MONDAY, JULY 20

Registration: 8-9am and 10:30am-Noon

7:30-8:45am	Breakfast Buffet & Monday Morning Welcome
8:45-10:00am	Panel 2, featuring Sosin Artists:* Marilyn Lande , "The Haggadah Transcending Time – The Story of Sephardic Jews" Jonatas Chimen D. DaSilva-Benayon , "An Artist's Representation of the Crypto- Jewish Narrative: Displacement, Memory, and Legacy - 1500s to 2015 and Far Beyond"
10:00-10:15am	Break
10:15-11:45am	Panel 3
11:45am-1:00pm	Lunch and concert music* by Neil Manel Frau-Cortes , "Lights and Shadows in the Songs of Sepharad"
1-2:15pm	Fourth Annual Martin Sosin Address to Advance Scholarship about the Crypto-Judaic Arts:* David A. Wacks , "Crypto-Judaism and the Question of Human Agency in 16th Century Jewish Thought"
2:15-2:30pm	Break
2:30-3pm	Special feature presentation by renowned author Ruth Behar , "The Jews of Cuba: A Journey from Crypto-Judaism to the World Stage"
3-4:30pm	Panel 4
4:30-4:45pm	Break
4:45-6:15pm	Panel 5
6:15-7pm	Break
7-8pm	Buffet Dinner Annual membership meeting & announcements
8-9:15pm	Judy Frankel Memorial Concert featuring Susana Behar , Judeo-Spanish songs of life, love and longing; a musical journey from Spain to the Ottoman Empire and beyond.

TUESDAY, JULY 21

Registration: 8-9am and 10:30am-Noon

7:30-8:45am	Breakfast Buffet & Tuesday Morning Welcome
8:45-10:15am	Panel 6
10:15-10:30am	Break
10:30am-Noon	Panel 7
Noon-1:15pm	Lunch
1:15-2:45pm	Panel 8
2:45-3:00pm	Break
3:00-4:30pm	Panel 9
4:30pm	Conference Adjourns

*Made possible by grants from the Martin Sosin-Stratton-Petit Foundation.

Information is subject to change. Please visit our website for updates and complete panel participants — cryptojews.com



2015 SCJS CONFERENCE July 19-21

Please register online
(preferred)
cryptojews.com/miami2015
by July 13, 2015



OR

Complete this form* and pay by
check or PayPal via our website,
cryptojews.com/payol.php,
*Whether paying by check or PayPal,
please mail this form before July 13 to
SCJS Mail Box • Art Benveniste
333 Washington Blvd. #336
Marina del Rey, CA 90292 USA

FULL CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

☐ **REGISTRATION (3 DAYS)** — includes two non-kosher dinners & two non-kosher lunches; the two breakfasts & all breaks are non-kosher. Also includes Sunday Genealogy Workshop.

☐ **KOSHER REGISTRATION (3 DAYS)** — includes two kosher dinners & two kosher lunches; the two breakfasts & all breaks are non-kosher. Also includes Sunday Genealogy Workshop.

PARTIAL CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

☐ **MONDAY AND TUESDAY** — includes two non-kosher lunches, one non-kosher dinner; one breakfast and all breaks are non-kosher.

☐ **MONDAY ONLY-WITH DINNER** — includes non-kosher breakfast, lunch, all breaks and dinner.

☐ **MONDAY ONLY-NO DINNER** — includes non-kosher breakfast, lunch and all breaks.

☐ **TUESDAY ONLY** — includes non-kosher breakfast, lunch and all breaks.

Kosher meals available only with full Kosher Registration (\$270).

ADD THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS

☐ **Sunday Genealogy Workshop** — \$45.00 (Free with both 3-day registration options only.)

☐ **Vegetarian meals** (no additional charge)

☐ **Fish entrees** (no additional charge)

QTY	X RATE	TOTAL
_____	x \$195	_____
_____	x \$270	_____
_____	x \$140	_____
_____	x \$110	_____
_____	x \$75	_____
_____	x \$75	_____

TOTAL CONFERENCE PAYMENT

If you wish to sell your books at the conference, please contact Genie Milgrom at hatul72@aol.com, by July 1 for details.

Names of Registrants _____

Address _____

City, State, ZIP/Postal Code, Country _____

Primary Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Email (important) _____

Please describe any disabilities or special access needs. _____

HOTEL RESERVATIONS

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or online at doubletree.hilton.com/en/dt/groups/personalized/M/MIAMADT-SOC-20150718/index.jhtml?WT.mc_id=POG

SOCIETY FOR CRYPTO-JUDAIC STUDIES

A 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization

For more information visit cryptojews.com or contact Genie Milgrom • hatul72@aol.com

Details subject to change. For updates, please visit our website cryptojews.com.

**JULY 31–AUGUST 2, 2015
EL PASO, TEXAS**

Congregation B'nai Zion, El Paso, Texas



12th Annual Sephardic Anusim Conference

Providing heritage, education and spiritual guidance to the descendants of Spanish Jews throughout the American Southwest

Speakers

Dr. Abraham Gross, Israel
Schelly Talalay Dardashti, New Mexico
and more

Registration and Details

Rabbi Stephen Leon
915-526-3693 • 915-833-2222
rabbisal@aol.com
congregationbnaizion.org

“

The mission of the Jewish people has never been to make the world more Jewish, but to make it more human.

— Elie Wiesel



”

**NOVEMBER 14–15, 2015
LAS CRUCES, NEW MEXICO**

New Mexico Jewish Historical Society



2015 FALL CONFERENCE Legacies of the Jewish Communities of the Southern Southwest: Celebrating 30 Years of the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society

New Mexico Farm and Ranch
Heritage Museum
Las Cruces, New Mexico

Come celebrate our birthday and focus on Jewish settlers and communities in the southern Southwest, crossing state lines to include the rich history of Texas, Arizona and New Mexico.

CONFERENCE TOPIC HIGHLIGHTS

- Crypto-Jews in the Region
- A Spotlight on the Las Cruces and Southern New Mexico Jewish Communities;
- Undergraduate and Graduate Student Research Projects from Major Southwest Colleges and Universities.

FEATURED SPEAKERS

Rick Hendricks, New Mexico State Historian
Rabbi Stephen Leon, El Paso, Texas
Nan Rubin, Las Cruces, New Mexico
Dr. Jon Hunner, NMSU
Dr. Jeffrey Brown, NMSU
Dr. Henry Tobias, Emeritus,
University of Oklahoma
Dr. Richard Melzer, UNM-Valencia
Debra Weingarten, TXJHS

MORE INFORMATION

Dr. Linda Goff, Chair
2015 NMJHS Fall Conference
lagoff@hotmail.com • nmjhs.org

DECEMBER 2-4, 2015
LISBON, PORTUGAL

Social and Political Sciences
Institute
University of Lisbon

International Congress on The Jews and New Christians of the Lusophone* World

CALL FOR PAPERS

The International Congress on The Jews and New Christians of the Lusophone World brings together researchers on the Jewish and *converso* presence in Lusophone territories and on Jews who interacted with them. Testimonies remain of their presence in culture, history, language, heritage and social practices. Contributions that consolidate and increase the knowledge about the Jews in the Lusophone world in the fields of the Jewish studies, cultural studies or social and human sciences are welcome.



FOCUS TOPICS

- Modern and contemporary history of the presence of Jews and converts in the Lusophone World
- Philosophy, religion and mysticism
- Anthropology, sociology, ethnomusicology, gender and cultural studies
- Modern and contemporary Jewish literature, *converso* and Jewish topics related to Lusophony
- Colonialism, post-colonialism; transculturality, transtextualities, circulation and mobility
- Material and intangible cultural heritage of the Jews and *conversos* in the Lusophone World spaces in modern and contemporary periods.

These topics refer to the presence of Jews and *conversos* in the Lusophone World or to those directly connected to them. Panels will be organized according to received proposals.

MORE INFORMATION

judeuslusofonia.com
judeuslusofonia@iscsp.ulisboa.pt
1213619430

**People that are culturally and linguistically linked to Portugal*

ON VIEW THROUGH JUNE 2015
NEW YORK

The American Sephardi Federation Records, Remembers, and Rejoices in the rich mosaic culture of Jews from the Middle East and greater Sephardic Diaspora.

ON VIEW THROUGH JUNE 2015
IN THE DAVID BERG RARE BOOK ROOM



A NEW EXHIBITION AT THE CENTER FOR JEWISH HISTORY

The Sephardic Diaspora extends from Shiraz and São Paulo to Salonika, Seattle, and Sheepshead Bay. What unites the beautiful, complex, and diverse mosaic culture of Sephardim is a history of journeys—sometimes by choice, too frequently by force—that have driven Sephardi travelers and traders, publishers and philosophers, scientists and singers to transcend borders and barriers as they pioneered today's globalized world.

The rare books and artifacts in this exhibit, *Sephardic Journeys*, reflect a rich tradition of scholarship and culture shaped by migrations, and they invite, in turn, reflection upon the physical, emotional and spiritual journeys of Jewish history.



The giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai, Seder HaTikkun Leil Hoshana Rabbah (Venice, 1741)

Sephardic Journeys was created by the Center for Jewish History with American Sephardi Federation, and made possible by a generous grant from The David Berg Foundation

CENTER
FOR JEWISH
HISTORY



15 West 16th Street, New York, NY
cjh.org

VIEWING HOURS

Sunday, 11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Monday & Wednesday, 9:30 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Tuesday & Thursday, 9:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Friday: 9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

IN REMEMBRANCE

John Bilezkjian

Those who attended the SCJS San Diego Conference some years ago may remember the evening of riveting, haunting and remarkable music performed on the oud by John Bilezkjian. A charming and amiable individual, he was a great friend of SCJS and loved by many. His music circled the globe. May his memory be a blessing. Our hearts reach out to embrace his beloved Helen, his children and their spouses and the rest of his community.

John Bilezikjian died on January 19, 2015 at his home in Mission Viejo, California, surrounded by his family. John was a world renowned Master oud player, singer, composer and music teacher. Countless people have enjoyed his artistry for many years, especially those in Southern California. He loved playing for folk dancers, as he did just a few months ago in Anaheim at a celebration in memory of Greek-American folk dancer, Diki Shields.

John was very involved in the Armenian community as a musician, scholar, teacher and church deacon. His prodigious contribution to preserving the musical heritage of the Armenian diaspora is truly invaluable. John's many wonderful recordings of traditional Armenian



(Photo by Terry Whitley)

John Bilezkjian and his oud.

and Greek tunes, as well as Turkish, Arabic and Sephardic Jewish music, are treasures of the musical culture that continues to flourish in the countries of Eastern Europe and the Middle East situated at the crossroads of travelers and traders for many centuries. You can learn more and hear some of

John's music on his website, dantzrecords.com.

Cards may be sent to his widow, Helen Bilezikjian, P.O. Box 3204, Laguna Hills, CA 92654.

Contributions to the John Bilezikjian Foundation are appreciated, johnbilezikjianfoundation.com

Watch two of John's performances on YouTube: youtube.com/watch?v=BwqoXmCIgfo&list=PLDDMBuCh6gqkrXwBSz27pF8d5XjtIDpwF&index=2

youtube.com/watch?v=ShsJj-R4CUY&list=PLDDMBuCh6gqkrXwBSz27pF8d5XjtIDpwF&index=5

The oud is a pear-shaped stringed instrument commonly used in Arabic, Greek, Turkish, Persian, Jewish, Byzantine, Azerbaijani, Armenian, North African (Chaabi, Classical and Spanish Andalusian), Somali and Middle Eastern music. The oud is similar in construction to the lute. The modern oud and the European lute both descend from a common ancestor via diverging paths. One instrument that has been suggested as ancestral is the Barbat. The oud is readily distinguished from the lute by its lack of frets and smaller neck. Alongside the lute, it is considered an ancestor of the guitar.

YOU are part of a milestone!

Through your support of our studies of the history, cultures, arts and current status of crypto-Judaism in the United States and throughout the world, we proudly celebrate our Silver Anniversary.

Our first conference, held near Taos, New Mexico in 1991, was organized by a small, dedicated group of people who established SCJS to foster research and the exchange of information about *conversos* who settled in the outer regions of the Spanish empire. The secret observance of Sephardic customs and traditions by many descendants continue until today.

Today, SCJS is regarded as the primary body of scholars, artists, crypto-Jewish descendants and interested individuals investigating this phenomenon and inspiring new research directions. Although our roots are in the American Southwest, our horizons have expanded world-wide, with enriched conferences, exciting new media and affiliations.

Our newly updated website, cryptojews.com, has archival status, as scholars and interested individuals may access over 230 articles and papers from past issues of *HaLapid*. It also features stories and news of SCJS and related events.

For 25 years, we have attracted members from the United States, Canada, Latin America, Spain, Portugal, England, France, Israel, South Africa, New Zealand, Scotland, Australia and other countries. Your continued membership and donations make it possible for us to continue our mission. We welcome new members and those who are renewing. We are all active participants in this important field of study.

In addition to membership, donations are welcome to our other funds. The Randy Baca/Dennis Duran Fund provide assistance for those researching possible Sephardic ancestry but cannot afford to attend conferences. A donation to our Conference Fund ensures the participation of outstanding keynote speakers and support special conference programming. In addition, your contribution supports year-round mailing and publication expenses.

With continuing support, we look forward to a long future of outreach, encouragement and discovery!

Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Membership benefits include: Our journal *HaLapid*, the annual Journal of Spanish, Portuguese and Italian Crypto-Jews and our online newsletter *La Granada*. In addition, members receive registration discounts for the annual conference.

Please mark your membership status, category and contribution amount.

STATUS ☐ New Member ☐ Renewing Member

CATEGORY ☐ Student \$10
 ☐ Individual (Standard membership) \$45
 ☐ Senior Citizen \$40
 ☐ Institution or Business \$50
 ☐ Sustaining \$100
 ☐ Patron \$1,000

CONTRIBUTION Baca/Duran Fund \$ _____
 Conference Fund \$ _____
 General Fund \$ _____

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Telephone _____
In USA, include Area Code. Outside USA, include Country Code

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Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Check Number _____

Please make check payable to **SCJS-Treasurer**
and mail to: Art Benveniste
 333 Washington Blvd. #336
 Marina del Rey, CA 90292


Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies

Clip and mail the form above with your check.
To pay with a credit card, please register online
cryptojews.com/membership



- HALAPID -

*Tudo se ilumina
para aquele
que busca
a luz*



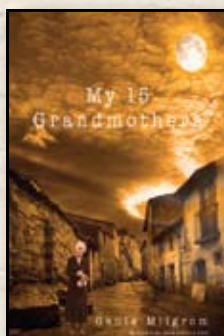
*All is
illuminated
for those
who seek the light*

- Avram Ben Rosh -

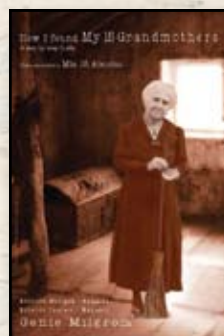
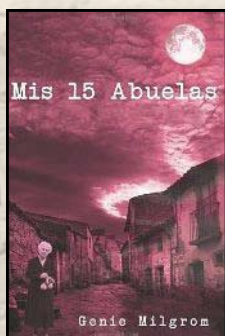
STEP INTO THE PAST

Let Genie Milgrom be your guide!

From the first glimmer to the final confirmation,
own the books that give you hope, guidance and
encouragement for your personal search.



My 15 Grandmothers / Mis 15 Abuelas
uncovers 15 generations of an unbroken
maternal lineage to Pre-Inquisition
Spain and Portugal.
Separate volumes in English and Spanish.



***How I Found
My 15 Grandmothers***
provides a step-by-step guide
to help you in your search.
English & Spanish in one edition.



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her story with genealogical
societies, organizations,
universities and colleges.

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