



## Frontier Jews of the Fred Harvey West

by Stephen Fried

**G**rowing up in the east—the product of suburban shuls and summer camp—you don’t hear a lot of stories about bubbies and zaydes on horseback herding cattle, or great uncles at rail depots fighting off dusty desperados in cowboy America.

So I was deeply and pleasantly surprised to meet so many colorful and fascinating frontier Jews while researching the life of revolutionary businessman Fred Harvey.

Harvey was the founding father of the American hospitality industry, and his multigenerational family business, running a chain of trackside restaurants and hotels along the Santa Fe railroad from Chicago to Los Angeles starting in the 1870s, was said to have civilized the Wild West.

One of the many lessons I needed to learn about American history is just

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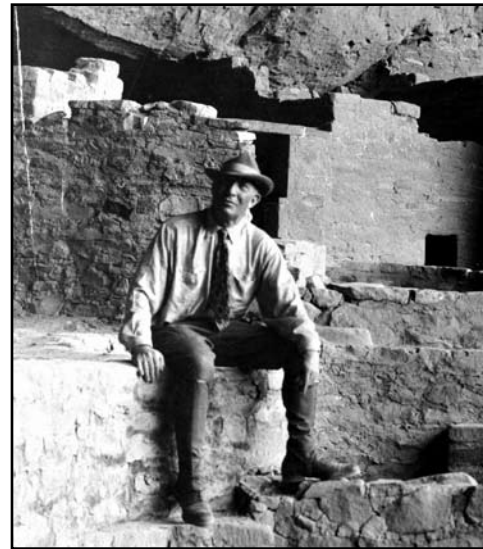
how much more diverse and multicultural this country was far earlier than many of us have been taught.

My education came through two largely unknown frontier Jews who worked for Fred Harvey, an entrepreneur who, with his dutiful son Ford (who ran the company in his father’s name longer than Fred did) and their legendary waitresses the “Harvey Girls,” changed the way we eat, drink, travel, spend our leisure time — even the way we see our country.

Fred Harvey pioneered equal-opportunity employment, since the company not only had the nation’s first core of working, independent women as waitresses, but some of its first female executives and high-level African-American employees, Iron Chefs from all over Europe, and partnerships with American Indian artisans all over the Southwest.

It is a saga of American business and culture that most Easterners, like me, are hearing for the first time, and most Midwesterners and Westerners have never before heard in depth—even in Kansas City, where the Harvey empire was headquartered in Union Station.

And the most surprising part of the story involves Dave Benjamin and



*Herman Schweitzer.  
Courtesy of Stephen Fried*

Herman Schweitzer, two Jewish immigrants to the Wild West who provided a big part of the company’s heart, soul and smarts. While there were Jewish merchants in California, Texas and in towns along the Santa Fe Trail starting in the 1820s (and conversos from Spain going back centuries earlier), Benjamin and Schweitzer were among

the first prominent Jews to do business all over the newly uniting states of the West.

Benjamin, a cherubic, serious-minded Brit with wire-rim glasses and a trim moustache, went from being Fred Harvey’s favorite young bank teller in Leavenworth, Kansas, to running the day-to-day operations of his company, *(continued on p. 4)*

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Frontier Jews of the Fred Harvey West.....1
- President’s Message.....2
- Dr. Frank Hesse.....3
- Recent Society Activities .....6
- Genealogy Corner.....7
- Jewish Themes In Classical Music.....8
- From the Archives.....9
- Niederman Receives Hurst Award....10
- Calendar of Events.....12

## Message from President Dorothy Amsden

**F**ollowing a cold, dry, and blustery spring, we looked forward to the blue skies and heat of summer with hopes for abundant monsoonal rains. The heat came as it always does in June, but instead of the wind subsiding it is bringing New Mexico smoke and ashes from the Arizona forest fires. Although 2011 is not a typical year, we know that weather cycles in its own inimitable way. Likewise, the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society has its own annual cycle. Our basic agenda revolves around the quarterly publication of *Legacy* plus the annual Montefiore Cemetery cleanup in the spring, the Annual Meeting in early summer, the Fall Conference, and membership renewal in early winter.

For the New Mexico Centennial in 2012 the Board of Directors is planning programs and joint events throughout the year. Our Fall Conference on October 22-23 this year in Albuquerque focuses on the theme of the New Mexico Jewish Experience in the Twentieth Century. To honor one hundred years of statehood in 2012, this December NMJHS will offer members a special Centennial membership rate of three years (2012 – 2014) for \$100.

The Annual Meeting, to be held June 26 this year, gives members an opportunity to meet current board members, thank those going off the board, and welcome new members to the board. It is a time to present the Dr. Allan and Leona Hurst Award that honors an outstanding person or organization. This year the award goes to Sharon Niederman, a remarkable journalist, author and researcher who has served NMJHS and the larger community with her wit, writing skill, and photography. Following the introductions and presentations, Steven Ovitsky, the director of the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, will discuss “The Influence of Jewish Folk and Religious Themes on Classical Music.”

After 10 years of service to NMJHS on the Board of Directors, we are losing an esteemed member, Harold Melnick, former NMJHS president and technical guru. We will miss him for his congeniality and his corporate memory. Thank you, Harold, for everything. We know you will be available to help with computer and Internet questions, as well as to record Society activities with your

camera, when you and aj are not off on a trip to the other side of the world.

We welcome four new board members, Patricia Carlton, Carol Venturini, Alan Neuman and Norma Libman, who will help us carry out our mission.



NMJHS President Dorothy Amsden

The Society is growing in scope, outlook and interests. Our latest initiative is to exhibit and circulate the Jewish Pioneer Panels that we inherited from the Museum of New Mexico. A notice in this issue discusses the latest developments. Sincere thanks to Betsy Messeca,

Anita Miller, Carla Freeman and Naomi Sandweiss for their dedication in rescuing this exhibit from extinction and working to make it available for educational and outreach purposes.

Last, I would like to thank the many people who have made monetary contributions to the Society in addition to their membership dues. Your generosity helps us cover costs for the newsletter, publicity, programs and administration. ☆

## Statewide Exhibit of Jewish Pioneers Panels Planned

**I**f all goes well, the Jewish Pioneers of New Mexico 1821-1917 exhibit panels, which were developed and displayed at the Palace of the Governors will be viewed across the state during the 2012 Centennial year. Funding is currently being sought to develop curriculum and programming to accompany the panels as they travel to Las Cruces, Silver City, Roswell and Taos.

The project will be coordinated with the Jewish Federation of New Mexico.

After their travels, the panels will be stored at Congregation Albert in Albuquerque. Thank you to Betsy Messeca, Anita Miller, Noel Pugach, Carla Freeman, Lance Bell, Barbara Baker, Stan Hordes, Naomi Sandweiss and former NMJHS board members for their work on this project. ☆

### Looking for Back Issues of NMJHS Newsletter

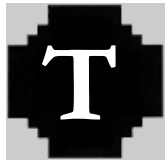
Our permanent collection of back issues of the NMJHS newsletter is incomplete. Perhaps you can help. If you have some of the following issues and are willing to send them to us or make a copy, here is what we are missing.

- Issues from 1985 through 1994 (we have Vol 5, No 4)
- 1995 (missing Vol 9, Nos 1 and 2)
- 1996 (missing Vol 10, Nos 1 and 4)
- 1998 (missing Vol 12, No 1)
- 2005 (missing Vol 19, No 2)

Please send or bring back issues to Ruth Carter at the NMJHS office, address 5520 Wyoming Blvd NE, Albuquerque, NM 87109.

# New Mexico's Dr. Frank Hesse Featured in Web Series, "50 States, 50 Stories"

by Noel H. Pugach



The following brief portrait of Dr. Frank Hesse, an Albuquerque physician and member of NMJHS, has been included in "50 States, 50 Stories." This series of short biographies of notable men and women was conceived by Abby Schwartz, the national coordinator of the Jewish American Heritage Month (JAHM), to inform the American public about the many contributions of American Jews.

The impetus for JAHM came from the Jewish Museum of Florida and from South Florida's Jewish community leaders. U.S. Representative Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Florida) and Senator Arlen Specter (D-Pennsylvania) introduced resolutions urging the President to proclaim a month recognizing Jewish citizens' legacy to American life and modeled after Black History Month.

On April 20, 2006, President George W. Bush proclaimed that May would henceforth be Jewish American Heritage Month. May was selected in line with the May 2004 celebration of the 350th anniversary of the Jewish presence in what became the United States. This April President Barack Obama issued his proclamation for this year's observance of JAHM, asking all Americans to "remember that the history and unique identity of Jewish Americans is part of the grand narrative of our country, forged in the friendships and shared wisdom between people of different faiths."

Schwartz told me, however, that JAHM is "still below the radar" for most American Jews and non-Jews. She thought that nationally distributed sketches of significant Jewish figures would encourage Jewish communities, especially Jewish historical societies, to publicize this year's JAHM. NMJHS received an invitation to participate, and I undertook the task of ensuring that New Mexico was represented.

It was not easy for me to select a figure to promote, for New Mexico Jewry has

produced a number of significant and interesting people. But I quickly decided to choose a contemporary, whom I could interview and whom I knew had made a major difference in our State. Doing so would also serve to draw attention to our rich, recent New Mexico Jewish history. "50 States, 50 Stories" does not impose time limits, and representatives range from the famous to relatively unknown gems. To read the submissions online, visit jahm.us, click on "About Us," then "50 States, 50 Stories." You will find information about all the national and local programs and celebrations marking Jewish American Heritage Month.

As of mid-May, Schwartz had obtained submissions from 30 states. She admitted that it has been an effort to interest some communities, adding that a number of historical societies are "one-person" operations. But she remains hopeful about having every state included, and believes it is a way to give Jewish historical societies greater visibility.

But Schwartz's major goal is to educate the American public about the richness, breadth, and diversity of Jewish American history. To achieve it, she is pursuing several other ideas, such as posting oral histories and diverse material for PowerPoint presentations. The important thing, she emphasized, is accessibility for all to learn.

To that end, JAHM recently announced it is partnering with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA) "to share stories of Jewish American innovation, invention, entrepreneurship, and philanthropic spirit." JTA, a news service

covering domestic and international news of interest to Jews, has therefore launched the Jewish News Archive (JNA), a searchable database available to the public of all of its news articles since 1917. The partnership will also assist JAHM in promoting "50 States, 50 Stories."

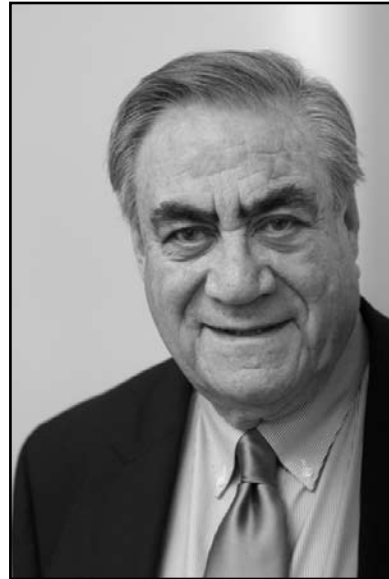
And now, the sketch of Dr. Frank Hesse, as it appears in "50 States, 50 Stories."

For almost fifty years Dr. Frank G. Hesse has been the driving force in New Mexico for public health reform and the delivery of vital health services. Frank and his immediate family were fortunate to flee Nazi Germany after Kristallnacht. He received his M.D. from the New York Upstate Medical Center

at Syracuse, spent two years in the Public Health Service treating Native Americans in Arizona, did his residency in general surgery in Syracuse, and spent a year as chief of surgery at the Public Health Service Hospital in Shiprock, New Mexico. In 1962, Frank and his wife Zora (Getmansky) moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico, where Frank established a very successful practice in general surgery, becoming an early practitioner of laparoscopy on gall bladder patients. Meanwhile, he had plunged into public health issues. Frank and Zora led the fight for implied consent legislation to combat the plague of DWI in New Mexico.

With allies in the medical community and government, Frank challenged the dysfunctional rescue system and created the highly effective modern two-tier emergency system that Albuquerque enjoys today. He led the drive to recruit medical personnel for the New Mexico's vast rural community.

*(continued on p. 6)*



*Dr. Frank Hesse, courtesy of Jason Bache, Nerds Unlimited LLC.*

**Frontier Jews** *(continued from p. 1)*

as it grew to include over sixty track-side dining rooms and lunchrooms, twenty-five hotels, a huge cattle ranch, three large dairy and poultry farms, and a beverage facility that had the only license in the nation to bottle its own Coca-Cola. To manage a staff that grew to 7,000 employees in 80 different locations before widespread use of telephones, ingenious, exacting systems had to be put into place: while Fred inspired them, Dave had to detail, execute and maintain them.

To keep employees sharp and focused, Fred made surprise inspections—which often ended with him smashing a chipped plate or dirty glass on the floor, or yanking the cloth from an imperfectly set table. While he became famous for these incidents—there was even a telegraph code to warn he was due to arrive—the truth is he became ill not long after his company's great success, and spent a good part of the year in England for his health. So it was Dave Benjamin who often rode the trains between Chicago and Los Angeles doing the inspections in his place, checking up on the Harvey cattle ranch, and also helping teach Fred's son Ford the business.

Over the years, Dave also developed a Forrest Gumpian way of being present at, and surviving, more than his share of major historical disasters. Dave was in Galveston at the Fred Harvey depot restaurant the day of the deadly hurricane in 1900 and for two days was presumed to be one of the five thousand killed; he was in San Francisco during the earthquake in 1906 (Fred Harvey had a lunchroom in the Ferry Building, but its main res-

taurants were on the ferries crossing the bay); and in the summer of 1914, he and his family were vacationing in Europe, and found themselves among the thousands of America tourists trapped when World War I broke out.

Schweizer, on the other hand, was like a bold character out of *Blazing*



*Alfred Benjamin honored as President of United Jewish Charities, 1915.  
Courtesy of Stephen Fried*

Saddles—a short, stocky, prematurely balding, cigar-chomping German immigrant who rose from selling oranges on Santa Fe trains in California to managing the Harvey eating house in Gallup, New Mexico, (a job he got after winning a fight with a tough freight train crew that refused to pay—crowning one with a Fred Harvey signature sugar bowl and pulling an unloaded antique gun on the other.) His hobby was riding by horseback to nearby Navajo trading posts and villages to acquire blankets, pottery and jewelry. While he had an eye for the most artful work, Schweizer also knew that tourists wanted lighter, less expensive pieces—so he brought the craftsman smaller pieces of turquoise and thinner silver, and commissioned the more Navajo Lite style of jewelry that most people, today, associate with

the Southwest. When the company decided to create the nation's best Indian art museum at the Albuquerque Santa Fe Railroad station—to entertain tourists during the thirty-minute meal stop—Schweizer began buying every collection he could find (many belonging to Jewish merchant families in New Mexico, such as the Seligmans and Spiegelbergs).

He was the driving force behind the powerful Harvey Indian art business which fueled the growing public fascination with native culture, servicing all the major museums and private collectors, especially publisher William Randolph Hearst. (Schweizer and Hearst had an epic business correspondence, carried on over decades of arguing over prices and unpaid bills—Hearst once offered to pay his tab with a gushy article about the Harvey operation at the Grand Canyon in his papers—and complaints about Schweizer hiding

his most special pieces away in the company vault.) Schweizer represented Fred Harvey as a major player in the relationship between Native Americans and the U.S. Government.

What were these Harvey men like as Jews? Dave and his four siblings—especially his bachelor brother Alfred, who lived with him and his family and ran a large furniture company—were considered “the embodiment of the Jewish ideal of citizenship ... the highest type of the loyal and true American[s],” responsible for “in large degree, the increasing respect and understanding that the non-Jewish community maintained for the Jew,” according to Jewish press reports at the time (quoted in Frank Adler's *Roots in a Moving Stream: The Centennial History of*

*(continued on p. 5)*

**Frontier Jews** (continued from p. 4)

Congregation B'nai Jehudah of Kansas City, Missouri, 1870-1970.) Alfred ran United Jewish Charities (UJC) in Kansas City for 18 years, and was known to give up to half his salary to charity. Dave worked with his brother at UJC—which often partnered with the local Catholic Charities where Ford Harvey and his wife Judy were leaders—but was also active in the nascent YM-YWHA movement, which led to the creation of Jewish Community Centers, which he saw as havens “for those who can’t afford the more expensive form of Jewish clubs.”

The Benjamin brothers (there was another, Harry, who also worked at Fred Harvey) helped their sister Fannie found one of the country’s first Jewish summer camps for needy immigrant children, starting in 1907, which came to be known as “Bittersweet Camp.” Dave was also very involved in making sure Jewish charities helped all who were in need.

“I try to follow the teachings of Judaism,” he said, “by helping my brother, and I don’t think that help should be limited to my Jewish brother.”

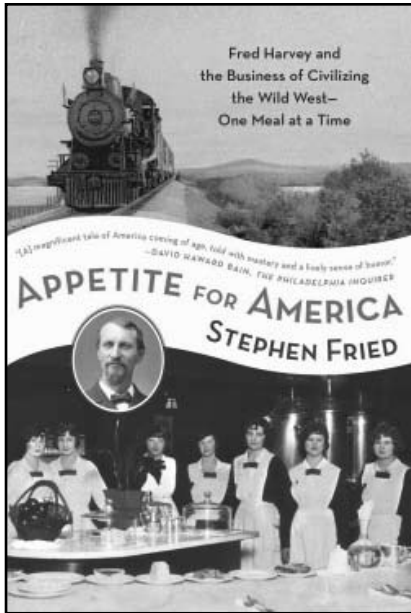
Dave was apparently not as much of a shul-goer as his brother Alfred and did, like many Jews of his day, get interested in Christian Science as an alternative form of spirituality. (He said it helped heal his eczema.) In fact, according to historian Frank Baker, the controversial rabbi at the Benjamin’s synagogue, B’nai Jehudah, Harry Mayer, was one of only two members of the Reform clergy’s governing

body to vote against a World War I-era “resolution stating one could not be both a good Jew and a Christian Science practitioner.” Most contemporary members of the Benjamin family in Kansas City, Los Angeles, and elsewhere practice Judaism, a few still practice Christian Science.

Alfred died in 1923—a rabbi and a Catholic priest presided at the funeral, and outside B’nai Jehudah a mourner was overheard saying “I would rather be Alfred Benjamin than anyone I know.” (An Alfred Benjamin Memorial fountain was erected in Swope Park in Kansas City.) After that, Dave did his best to take his brother’s place in the philanthropic community, cutting back his commitments to Fred Harvey to devote more time to good works. A decade later—on March, 10, 1933—he and his wife were in Los Angeles when that city

was rocked by an earthquake registering 6.3 on the Richter scale. They were fine—the Journal-Post headline read the next day, “David Benjamin Telephones Calmly as Earthquake Showers Plaster.” But weeks later, in the privacy of his Kansas City home, he took ill while playing cards with his wife, his sister, and one of his sons, and died of a heart attack.

Little is known about Schweizer’s religious beliefs—a lifelong bachelor (but a beloved “Uncle Herman” to his niece, Jennie Stein, in Chicago and other close family friends) he apparently



Paperback cover of Stephen Fried’s book

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(continued on p. 11)



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from Lance and Jon Bell  
and their families

### Mission Statement

The New Mexico Jewish Historical Society is a secular organization that welcomes all interested people, regardless of religious affiliation. Its mission is to promote greater understanding and knowledge of New Mexico's Jewish history within a broad cultural context.

## Recent Society Activities

Over 50 Society members and guests were treated to the expertise of two internationally-recognized genealogical experts, Stephen P. Morse and Bennett Greenspan, on April 3 at the JCC in Albuquerque.



From left to right: Stephen P. Morse, Bennett Greenspan with Genealogy Co-chair Schelly Talalay Dardashti.

On April 12, under the direction of Carla Freeman, a movie and pizza night was held at the home of an Albuquerque member. This small gathering featured "The Long Way Home," winner of the 1997 Academy Award for Best Documentary. Narrated by Morgan Freeman, it told the story of Holocaust survivors' struggle after

liberation from the camps. If you are interested in hosting an informal movie night, please contact Carla Freeman at infomang@aol.com.



From left to right: Bob Gale, Nancy Terr, Ron Duncan Hart, and Ted Herberger planting a sunburst locust at Montefiore Cemetery cleanup.

On May 22, members gathered in Las Vegas, New Mexico, for the annual Montefiore Cemetery cleanup.

Board Member Marjorie Weinberg-Berman was recently honored for Lifetime Service by her alma mater, Adelphi University, where she serves on the Board of Trustees and has held numerous other leadership roles. Congratulations Marjorie! ✨

### Dr. Frank Hesse (continued from p. 3)

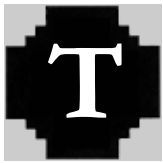
Currently, Frank is Acting Director of the state's Health Policy Commission. The Hesses believe that their extensive involvement in politics (Zora served as New Mexico's Democratic National Committeewoman) was instrumental in securing these and other advances in public health, winning friends for

Israel, erecting a Holocaust Memorial in downtown Albuquerque, and gaining support for other Jewish causes. ✨

Noel Pugach is Professor Emeritus of History at the University of New Mexico and immediate past president of NMJHS.

## GENEALOGY CORNER

### Meet Our Genealogy Co-chairs



he NMJHS recently joined the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS) and looks forward to excellent

programs organized by the co-chairs of our genealogy interest group: Murray Tucker of Santa Fe and Schelly Talalay Dardashti in Rio Rancho/Albuquerque.

Together, they plan to stimulate interest in Jewish genealogy and plan programs in both cities.

#### Murray Tucker

A retired economist who has served on university faculties and with the Federal government, Murray writes that there “is a close relationship between history and genealogy. Our personal history and much of what has shaped our attitudes and desires stems from what our predecessors endured and accomplished. Discovering our roots is more than finding distant cousins or gravestones.”

Tucker has been exploring his own genealogy for more than 40 years and looks forward to sharing his experience.

Although he isn't sure when his interest in genealogy began, he does know that he was “plied with facts about his parents' families from the age of 6, when his sister was born.”

In his decades of tracing his unique roots, he has gathered an immense picture of the lives and times of his ancestors.

“I have attended many meetings, some boring, many rich in detail and applicable either to my research methods or shedding light on how my ancestors

lived,” says Murray. “I hope to share the rich history that emerges from the study of genealogy and look forward to advancing my knowledge in New Mexico.”



*Murray Tucker*

his father, the first radio and TV announcer for the Pittsburgh Steelers.

#### Schelly Talalay Dardashti

Once a happy needlepointer in Los Angeles, Schelly caught the genealogy bug in 1990. She hasn't picked up a needle since. Today, she focuses on Jewish genealogy as a journalist, blogger, instructor and international speaker. She has been president of several Jewish genealogical societies, and served on various IAJGS committees.

Her personal research covers Spain, Belarus, Russia, Lithuania and Iran, along with Sephardic, Ashkenazi and Mizrahi families. An early proponent of DNA genetic genealogy, Schelly co-administers several FamilyTreeDNA.com projects, including the IberianAshkenaz DNA Project.

Murray and his wife JoAnne—an artist and former choreographer who directed a dance company for 30 years—moved to Santa Fe in September 2009, after stops in New York, Tucson, and Steamboat Springs. In retirement, Murray wrote and published *Screamer*, a biography of

Schelly has spoken in Hong Kong, Australia, Great Britain, Spain, Israel, Canada and at many U.S. conferences and societies, presenting on DNA genetic genealogy, creating online ancestral communities, social media for 21st-century genealogists, Sephardic research and more.

The former *Jerusalem Post* genealogy columnist (“It's All Relative,” 1999 - 2005) has numerous Jewish media credits and articles in Jewish and general genealogical journals.

In 2006, the JTA news agency asked Schelly to start a genealogy blog (“Tracing the Tribe” The Jewish Genealogy Blog”) -- now independent -- which consistently ranks among the best genealogy blogs.

Schelly also writes the Genealogy Blog for MyHeritage.com, the largest family history networking site, and serves as its U.S. genealogy advisor.

A native New Yorker who has lived in Iran and Israel, as well as Miami, Los Angeles and Las Vegas, she and her husband Albert arrived in New Mexico in November 2010. ☆



*Schelly Talalay Dardashti*

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Schelly Talalay Dardashti, Rio Rancho, [dardasht1@yahoo.com](mailto:dardasht1@yahoo.com)

## Jewish Themes in Classical Music Subject of Annual Meeting Address



Steven Ovitsky, Executive Director of the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, will deliver a keynote address at the NMJHS Annual Meeting on Sunday,

June 26 at 2:30 p.m. at Congregation Beit Tikva at 2230 Old Pecos Trail in Santa Fe. Ovitsky will speak on "The Influence of Jewish Folk and Religious Themes in Classical Music."

Steven Ovitsky has been active in the world of Jewish music since his university days when he conducted concerts of music by Salomone Rossi and was Ba'al Tokeah and choir director for the University of Michigan Hillel Foundation. In Chicago, Ovitsky sang in professional choirs at Congregations Rodfei Zedek and B'nai Zion and was choir director at Anshe Emet. He also has served as Ba'al Tokeah in Seoul, Chicago, Milwaukee and Santa Fe.

As a faculty member for the Chicago Jewish Community Center's Elderhostels, Ovitsky taught a wide variety of courses on Jewish music as well as symphonic music and opera over a ten-year period.

Ovitsky is music director for the "Audie" Award-winning Hollywood Theatre of the Ear recordings of "The Dybbuk"

starring Theodore Bikel, Edward Asner and Carl Reiner, and "Sweeney Todd and the String of Pearls".

Ovitsky's career in music administration includes President and Executive Director of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, Vice President and General Manager of the Minnesota Orchestra, and Artistic Director / General Manager of the Grant Park Music Festival in Chicago.

Ovitsky spent eight years in broadcasting as Program Manager at WMHT-FM, a public classical music radio station in Schenectady, New York, and Fine Arts Director at WNIU-FM at Northern Illinois University at De Kalb. Steve is a horn player and has recently played with the Santa Fe Symphony, New Mexico Symphony, Opera Southwest, Santa Fe Concert Association Orchestra and San Juan Symphony in Durango, Colorado.

As a performer of Baroque music on original instruments, Ovitsky has played recorder with the Lyric Opera, Basically Bach and The City Musick

in Chicago, and natural horn with the Lyra Concert in Minneapolis and Ensemble Musical Offering in Milwaukee. His arrangement of Giovanni Gabrieli's massive Sonata No. 20 was performed 14 times by the Minnesota Orchestra, including concerts at Carnegie Hall and Boston's Symphony Hall. Ovitsky is shofar soloist in the recording of "Tekiatot" by Hugo Weisgall with Gerard Schwarz and the Seattle Symphony Orchestra on a Naxos CD as part of the Milken Foundation Archive of Jewish-American Music.



Ovitsky is currently vice-President of Chamber Music America and is on the board of The American Composers Forum. He has chaired and served on numerous panels including the National Endowment for the Arts, Aaron Copland Fund, American Symphony Orchestra League, Illinois Arts Council and the Wisconsin State Superintendent of Public Instruction's Blue Ribbon Panel on Arts Education.

Steve is married to Camille Levy and is father to a 20 year-old son, David, who will be a junior at Colorado State University. ☆

### Welcome New Members

Adrienne Barbara Asarch  
Michael & Patricia Barger  
Cliff & Nancy Blaugrund  
MaryElla Buckland  
Schelly Talalay Dardashti  
Catie Dixon  
Pauline and Mel Eisenstadt  
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### WELCOME BACK

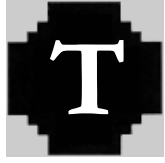
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### NEW LIFETIME MEMBERS

Carla Freeman  
Gerald González

## From the Archives

by Patricia A. Carlton



he NMJHS archives collects and maintains a collection of materials relating to Jewish New Mexico history. Before you throw out a business record, membership card or any other historic document, please contact NMJHS to discuss donating it to the archives.

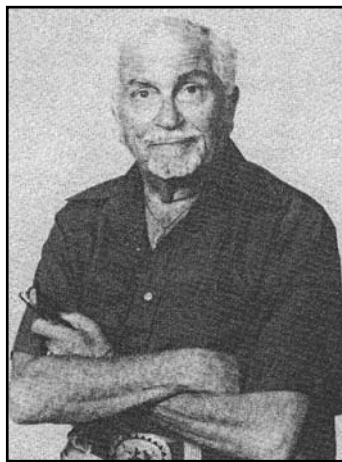
### Remembering Dr. Allan Hurst

It is timely to remember the contributions of Dr. Allan P. Hurst to the Society. At the Annual Meeting in June, the Dr. Allan and Leona Hurst Award will be presented to a person who has rendered outstanding service to the Society and to New Mexico Jewish history. Allan and Leona Hurst played an active role in the early years of NMJHS, moving to Santa Fe in 1983, where Allan served in 1986 as one of the founders of the Society.

The excerpt that follows recounts Dr. Hurst's early years in New York City. It first appeared in a 1989 issue of *Legacy*.

Allan Hurst was born in New York City on August 23, 1909, the fifth of six children. When he was just six years old, his father died, leaving his mother to raise the children.

Young Hurst had a keen intelligence and inquiring mind; he especially loved history, literature, and the theater. Active in school dramatics, he frequently was cast in female roles in school productions because of his small stature and high voice. This caused problem with playground bullies, which he solved by befriending the school athletes. He tutored them; they protected him.



Dr. Allan P. Hurst.  
Courtesy NMJHS Archives.

Despite the family's hardships, Hurst's mother, Fanny, recognized the value of a good education and worked along with her children to provide for their educations. Allan really wanted to be a history teacher; he loved books and history. But a cousin of his had become a doctor and there was a lot of competition between his mother and her sister. His mother came home one day and asked Hurst, "How would you like to be a doctor?" He thought for a minute, then replied, "Oh I guess I don't mind. But we can't afford it. How are we going to do it?" and she said, "Don't worry about it; we'll make it."

His mother worked as a baker at a resort in the Borscht Belt. She also owned a mink cape and a diamond ring. During the summer, she would make enough money as a baker for the children's support and education. Then, at the end of the summer, she would get her mink cape and diamond ring out of hock. When the money was used up, back into hock they would go. So the diamond ring and the mink cape kept going in and out of hock until Hurst and his brother had finished their schooling. It was a tough period, but his mother was determined and Allan felt a responsibility to her.

He graduated in 1932 with honors from Long Island College of Medicine, became a member of the medical honorary society, and, according to his wife Leona, was "just bright and determined." He developed a devotion to medicine that remained with him throughout his career.

Following his residency at Montefiore Medical Center in the Bronx, Dr. Hurst became Director of Outpatient Clinics in New York City. Then from 1945 through 1952, he was

medical director at Denver's National Jewish Hospital. In the early 1950s, he also served as medical director of the Ex-Patients' Tubercular Home and the National Jewish Home for Asthmatic Children in Denver.

While serving the National Jewish Hospital, Dr. Hurst published more than 50 articles, papers, and book chapters on all aspects of tuberculosis treatment. Working with other pioneering surgeons and physicians, he helped develop advanced surgical techniques for treating tuberculosis.

In 1952 Dr. Hurst entered private practice in Denver, specializing in allergies and diseases of the chest. Until his retirement he was on the staff of Rose Medical Center where he founded and headed the Department of Inhalation Therapy. He was a nationally recognized expert in black lung disease, and in 1950, at the invitation of the Israeli government, he toured that country to

### *Heart and Soil*

NMJHS archives thanks Yetta Bidegain of the T4 ranch near Tucumcari for her donation of *Heart and Soil* a large, beautiful leather-bound volume about the Kohn family and its descendants in eastern New Mexico. Sharon Fried researched and wrote the text, incorporating numerous photographs, maps, newspaper clippings, personal letters, and accounts.

(continued on p. 11)

## Niederman Receives 2011 Hurst Award



On June 26, 2011, long-time NMJHS member Sharon Niederman received the Dr. Allan

and Leona Hurst Award for outstanding service to the Society. Sharon's contributions to the Society and community are numerous. She served as president in 1993-1994, and held positions as board member, archivist, conference chair, conference presenter and *Legacy* contributor. Niederman, who lives in Raton with her husband, Charles Henry, in a 1906 home designed by Isaac Hamilton Rapp, is the

author of a dozen books, four of them illustrated with her own photos and one novel, *Return to Abo* (UNM Press, 2005). Her most recent book is *New Mexico's Tasty Traditions: Recollections, Recipes and Photos* (New Mexico Magazine, 2010). Niederman writes a column for the *New Mexico Jewish Link* and is a founding member of Congregation Nahalat Shalom in Albuquerque.



Sharon Niederman

Sharon has two books due out in 2012: *Signs*

& *Shrines: Spiritual Journeys across New Mexico* (Countryman Press) and *100 Year History of Santa Fe's Scottish Rite Temple*. Sharon is also working on a grant from New Mexico's Historical Records Advisory Board to preserve and make accessible original photos and manuscripts related to the Maxwell Land Grant, discovered in the Arthur Johnson Memorial Library in Raton. In addition to her other many activities, Niederman serves as president of the New Mexico Press Women's Association. To learn more about Sharon and her projects, visit her website at [www.sharonniederman.com](http://www.sharonniederman.com). ☆

## NMJHS Thanks Contributors

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**Frontier Jews** (continued from p. 5)

did become more active in the Jewish community in Albuquerque as he grew older, both with the local chapter of B'nai Brith and the Reform congregation Temple Albert (in whose cemetery he was buried.) But he played a crucial role in one of the most famous Jewish-American events of the 20th Century.

In December 1930, Albert Einstein left Germany to spend the winter lecturing at Cal Tech just as Hitler's Nazi Party was making its first significant election showing. He first sailed to New York, where he celebrated Hanukkah with a huge throng at Madison Square Garden, and then spent time on the west coast. In March, 1931, he decided to make what had become the quintessential American pilgrimage—to see the Grand Canyon.

He was met there by a contingent of Hopi Indians—who Einstein assumed were local natives, not realizing that

most of them worked for Fred Harvey. (He had recently told a class at Cal Tech, “there lies deep meaning in the fact that children of all civilized countries are so fond of playing Indians.”) Herman Schweizer was also there, both to meet the renowned scientist and to act as translator, since Einstein was still more comfortable speaking German.

As with all visiting dignitaries, the Hopi planned to present Einstein with a headdress and make him an honorary chief of the tribe. But they had no idea who he was.

So they pulled Schweizer, their boss, aside.

“What’s his business?” one of the Harvey Indians asked.

“He invented the Theory of Relativity,” Schweizer replied.

“All right, we’ll call him ‘Great Relative.’” ✧

Stephen Fried’s book, *Appetite for America: Fred Harvey and the Business of Civilizing the Wild West—One Meal at a Time* (Bantam 2011), was just published in paperback. Recent events for the book have featured bubbies dressed as Harvey Girls, and kosher Fred Harvey food.

Fried is an adjunct professor at Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism and the author of four other books, including *The New Rabbi*. [www.stephenfried.com](http://www.stephenfried.com) This article first appeared in “Text/Context: Fresh Encounters with Jewish Tradition,” a supplement to *The Jewish Week*, published by *The Jewish Week* in partnership with Nextbook.org.

**From The Archives** (continued from p. 9)

consult with national health leaders on the establishment of tuberculosis treatment facilities there. Dr. Hurst was an innovator who associated with hospitals and programs involved in pioneering efforts. “Allan was always ahead of his time ... a remarkable man who left his mark wherever he went,” recalled his wife.

Dr. Hurst and his wife Leona moved to Santa Fe in 1981 after retirement in Florida proved stultifying to both of them. Leona joked that the most exciting conversation of the day would be “where are we going to eat dinner tonight?” When they moved to Santa Fe, there was no New Mexico Jewish Historical Society. Allan had been active in founding the Colorado Jewish His-

torical Society, and was fascinated by what little New Mexico Jewish history he had been able to pick up. Because of that, he felt that there should be a society [in New Mexico] because of the many erudite people here who would be interested in the subject, and because he sensed a need for it.

Allan saw that the growth of the Society proved the need, and he was very proud of the Society’s accomplishments. He continued to contribute to the Society into the last year of his life. Those who knew Dr. Allan Hurst remember him as someone who was fun, interesting, bright, very kind and very giving. Dr. Hurst passed away in 1989. In 1998, Leona Hurst honored her husband’s memory by presenting the first annual

Dr. Allan Hurst award to Stanley M. Hordes. Leona Hurst continued the couple’s commitment to the Society, working on behalf of the organization until her death in 2007. The award, presented at the annual Membership Meeting, has been renamed the Dr. Allan and Leona Hurst Award. ✧

*This article was researched from the Archives and first appeared in a 1989 issue of Legacy. It was uncovered and edited by Patricia Carlton, member of the Board and archivist for the NMJHS. Patricia came to Santa Fe in 2007 from Washington, D.C., and a career in Art Cataloging for the Library of Congress. She is most proud of her adult Bat Mitzvah in May 2010.*

### NMJHS Annual Dues

*New members who join during the last four months of a year will have their membership extended through the end of the following year.*

- Renewal  New
- Individual \$40
- Individual Senior (+55) \$35
- Family \$55
- Senior Couple \$45
- Library \$20
- Fulltime Student \$25
- Nonprofit Organization \$40
- Business \$100
- Life Membership \$1000  
*(payable over two years)*

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*and mail it with this form to:*

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*Your contribution is tax deductible.*

### Calendar of NMJHS Upcoming Events

*Check for future events at [www.nmjhs.org](http://www.nmjhs.org)*

**NMJHS Annual Meeting.** Sunday, June 26, 2:30 p.m., Congregation Beit Tikva, 2230 Old Pecos Trail, Santa Fe. Presentation by Steven Ovitsky. For further information contact [hart@gaonbooks.com](mailto:hart@gaonbooks.com) or call 505-920-7771.

**Social Media for 21st Century Genealogists.** Sunday, July 17, 10 a.m. to noon, Jewish Community Center, 5520 Wyoming Blvd. NE in Albuquerque. Noted genealogist Schelly Talalay Dardashti will present "Social Media for 21st Century Genealogists." After the presentation attendees will be invited to form a steering committee to plan monthly meetings of the NMJHS Genealogy Group.

**From the Spanish Expulsion to Shylock: Jewish Experience in the Sixteenth Century.** Sunday, August 28, 12:00 p.m., Taos Jewish Center, 1335 Gusdorf Road, Suite R. Taos. Sandra Toro, author of *By Fire Possessed: Doña Gracia Nasi and Princes, Popes and Pirates*, historical novels on 16th century Jewish life. For further information contact [hart@gaonbooks.com](mailto:hart@gaonbooks.com) or call 505-920-7771.

**Fall Conference: New Mexico Jewish Experience in the Twentieth Century.** Saturday and Sunday, October 22 and 23, Albuquerque. Further details available soon.

New Mexico Jewish Historical Society  
5520 Wyoming Blvd. NE  
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