

# The Herald

Spring 2023

## Founders' desire redux

Following much discussion and reflection in the past several years, the museum board voted to return the word "intolerance" to our name. This is what our founders wished.

From now on, we will be known as New Mexico Holocaust & Intolerance Museum.

Please be patient as we update our printed materials and online presence to match this change. The process involves notifying government agencies, collaborators, vendors, and you. Thanks for understanding.

The Gellert Center for Education plans and sponsors many of our programs including statewide sessions of professional development for teachers and the arts-integrated curricula we use in schools.

## Concerns about Estonian Jews reflected in letters

The plight of Estonian Jews during the Holocaust can be discovered throughout the Peter J. Josselson Collection, a recent gift to the museum from his widow Angelika Josselson.

"We are so pleased to accept this generous donation," said Camelia Caton-Garcia, director of collections. "It includes vital documents such as birth certificates, travel documents, and immigration papers, as well as personal letters which belonged to Angelika's late husband Peter."



Photo from Peter J. Josselson's  
1944 Certificate of Naturalization

Peter fled Estonia with his first wife Soffi (later Sonia) in 1939. Peter was from an Estonian Jewish family and his wife from a Turkish Jewish family. They were able to immigrate to the United States due to sponsorship by Peter's brother who had immigrated to Pennsylvania a few years earlier. In 1976, Peter and his wife Angelika moved to New Mexico where Peter was able to continue his life-long pursuit of painting until his death in 1978. Peter's mother and sister also left Estonia around this time, going first to Paris in 1939 and then to Aix-en-Provence during the Nazi occupation of France. Throughout their journey to safety, Peter

kept up a prodigious correspondence with his sister and mother and the collection includes nearly 120 letters. During this time, Peter posted the letters to Hôtel Negrecoste in Aix, although it is believed his mother and sister were living in hiding at a nearby convent. Both women survived the Holocaust and eventually settled in Paris. The correspondence discusses the situation in Europe during World War II,



Letter from Peter to his mother showing both a  
German censor examined stamp and U.S. war bonds  
stamp, 1941

Peter's new life in the United States, and his anxiety about the relatives who remained after his immigration. Many of these letters to Aix show evidence of being opened and read by U.S. or German censors.

(see Letters mirror concerns, page 8)

# Museum speakers share personal stories with NM National Guard & VA health workers

*As part of Holocaust Days of Remembrance, museum volunteers Brenda Rabinowitz and Andy Holten – on two different occasions – told their family stories.*

*Brenda spoke in Santa Fe at a gathering of New Mexico National Guard (NMNG) personnel. Some of the following text was excerpted, with permission, from a story by Douglas Mallary with photos by Iain Jaramillo, both of the NMNG public affairs department.*

*Andy, who was a hidden child during the Holocaust, presented via Zoom to more than 100 VA medical health employees. That meeting, recorded, became available to hundreds of others who had to be on duty at the time of the presentation. Both Brenda and Andy are called upon often to share their stories with school children who are brought to the museum on educational field trips.*

Brenda Rabinowitz is the daughter of Jewish parents who fled Nazi Germany in 1938. Her father's lineage has been traced back to Spain which they left to escape the persecution of Jews during the Spanish Inquisition, then resettled in Germany.

Germany, like most countries, was suffering in the Great Depression. Germans were also faced with an impossible task of paying reparations for World War I and severe restrictions on maintaining a national military. This set the stage for Adolf Hitler's rise to power.

To give the people a common enemy, "Hitler selects the Jews as a scapegoat," Brenda told her audience.

She then described how the Nuremberg Laws went into effect on Sept. 15, 1935, codifying national discrimination against the Jews. Jews were permitted to shop only in stores owned by other Jews and forbidden to gather in public

places. Romantic relationships between Jews and non-Jews were outlawed. Jews were forced to wear a yellow Star of David on the front and back of their clothing "so you could see them coming and going. Nazi soldiers and Hitler Youth were allowed to abuse them."

After learning that she would not be allowed to attend college in Germany, among other restrictions, Brenda's mother fled to Holland at age 20. The Gestapo detained her at the border, but for an unknown reason decided to release her.

"That was a miracle; it was another miracle that she caught that boat to Holland." Brenda's father, the son of a rabbi, was encouraged by his father to leave.

"Somebody has to survive," the elder Rabinowitz told his son. Brenda's parents met aboard a ship bound for the United States.

"My father was sick the whole time and my mother nursed him," she said. "That's how my parents met."

Brenda intertwined the personal story with how life for Jews in Germany deteriorated. In the United States her father wrote one or two letters to relatives in Germany and initially received replies.

"Then it went silent. They found out that Jews were being rounded up."



Brenda's parents married in New York City in 1941 and resided in a neighborhood populated by Holocaust survivors. "All of my parents' friends were Holocaust survivors."

One of her aunts, a survivor of Auschwitz, lived nearby. Brenda and her mother arrived at her aunt's home unexpectedly one day. "She always wore long sleeves. She loved to bake and this

day she was baking. When she opened the door, she had her sleeves pushed up past her elbows. I asked her about the numbers on her arms. She quickly pulled her sleeves down and said something to my mother in German."

Brenda has lived in New Mexico since 1974. She has two children and three grandchildren. Seven years ago Brenda retired from teaching, and now splits her time between taking care of her grandchildren and volunteering at the New Mexico Holocaust & Intolerance Museum.

At the end of her presentation, Brenda said, "Hitler lost. Not only did he lose the war, we're still here."

The audience, which had been quiet and attentive, gave her a standing ovation. Brig. Gen. Jamison Herrera, the Deputy Adjutant General, was first in line of those waiting to speak to Brenda. He presented her with his challenge coin as he thanked her for her lecture.

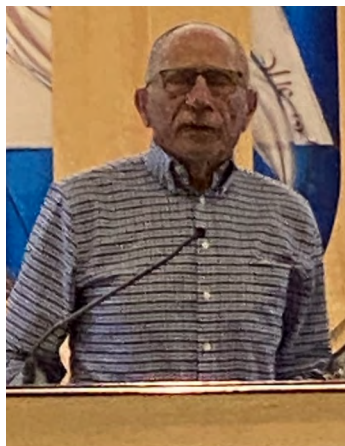
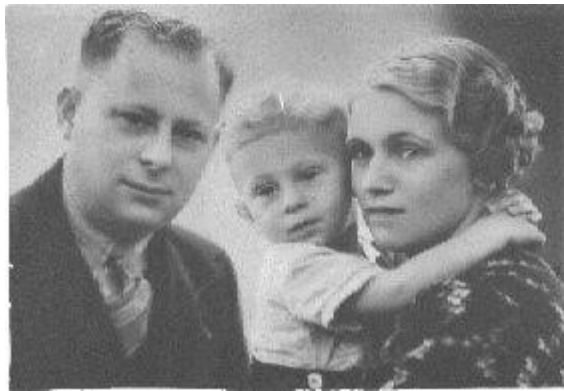
Herrera said, "History will repeat itself unless we have lessons learned."

Andy's presentation also was enthusiastically received. Following are some of the comments from the health care workers found in the Zoom chat:

- ❖ Mr. Holten, my father was about your age, first generation child of Jewish immigrants. Very grateful for your presentation today.
- ❖ Small world, we are all connected.
- ❖ As a Middle Eastern Jew, I would like to thank you for telling your story.
- ❖ Thank you! I was just proofreading my son's history/English paper on the Holocaust last night. He would have loved this presentation.
- ❖ In memory of the grandparents I never knew, and

**I**t really was a powerful presentation, and everyone needs to know, firsthand, what people experienced: the pain, the tragedy, people's willingness to put their lives on the line to help others, and the resilience to come through and do amazing things with their lives. I'd love to do programs like this with your volunteers in the future. It was well received, eye opening and appreciated.

—Lisa Pino, Equal Employment Specialist  
NM VA Health Care System



their children who would have been my uncles and aunts.

❖ Amazing the terrible things people will do to others; on the same note is it also amazing that there are brave souls who will stand and do what is right!

❖ We lost most of my parents' relatives, all in Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

❖ Mr. Holten, thank you for your presence, and no doubt, as generations come and go, we all still have a lot to learn from history. There are forces out there trying to rewrite history, or altogether, deny the history of the Holocaust. As we observe events like this, I can only hope that our millennials and Gen Z generation will continue

to learn and seek the truth about our past.

❖ You are very courageous Mr. Holten; just a testament to the bravery and strength of a people who experienced one of the worst tragedies in history--thank you again for sharing your incredible story.

❖ Such an amazing, terrifying and inspiring story. I hope that people never forget, and we learn lessons from our history.

Thank you for sharing and for your service.

❖ What incredible humans.

❖ Thanks for sharing the painful memories, unbelievable story. I have read Victor Frankl's book *Man's Search for Meaning*.

❖ Thank you for sharing...What a painful and impactful story. Your gift to this country both in service and sharing your personal history is immeasurable.

*We are pleased that both the VA and NM National Guard are eager to continue relationships with us.*



Off to college

## Senior project completed

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Adriana Serna recently wrapped up her school years at Amy Biehl H.S. by completing a year-long community service project in our museum. She researched and wrote a series of posts for social media by studying entries in the 1902 edition of Funk & Wagnalls' Jewish Encyclopedia edited by Isidore Singer. The 12-volume set is part of our permanent collection.



Adriana Serna

In addition to the posts, Adriana covered the welcome desk and interacted with visitors and other volunteers.

"It has been amazing getting to work at the museum," she told us.

It was her plan to improve her interpersonal skills and to learn new things about history, and that she did. Family, friends, classmates and her museum mentor Camelia Caton-Garcia, director of collections, gathered in the school May 12 to celebrate the completion of Adriana's year-long project.

"Adriana has gone above and beyond in her time at the museum," relates Camelia. "During her time with us, she took on multiple facets of museum work from greeting visitors and answering questions to deep dive research in our collections with her social media project featuring entries from the 1902 edition of Funk & Wagnalls' Jewish Encyclopedia."

Adriana proved to be a vital part of the museum family. She will be missed.

We were there!

## Southwest archivists meet in Albuquerque

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Director of collections Camelia Caton-Garcia and museum research and program administer Lewis Twite, in collaboration with the Center for Creative Photography in Arizona, presented at the Society of Southwest Archivists (SSA) annual conference. Held at Hotel Albuquerque in April, SSA brings together hundreds of archivists each year from across the southwest and beyond to share their work, learn about the evolution of archival practice, and build their skills.

Camelia and Lewis presented

as part of the panel *Hybrid Archives: Expanding Access while Building our Skills*.

Their talk focused on using dynamic digital interactives to increase access to fragile or underused collections, promote collection accessibility for those unable to visit in-person, complement curricula and in-person research, create ancillary archival files, and build staff skills. More than 40 persons attended the session with dozens more joining online for this hybrid virtual and in-person conference.

This was the first time our museum has presented at SSA and it was clear that this conference was an excellent opportunity to collaborate with peers, spread knowledge of our collections, and incorporate the most up-to-date and inclusive archival practices in our work. We look forward to gathering again in 2024!

The SSA was established 50 years ago. In addition to the annual conferences, the organization provides relevant year-round educational opportunities for its members.

# 2023's *Upstander of the Year* will be named

The 2023 *Upstander of the Year* will be announced and honored in October at the museum's seventh annual fundraising gala.

Last year's honoree is Upstander Rachel LaZar and El Centro de Igualdad y Derechos. The organization was born to address the systemic and institutional barriers faced by the Latino immigrant community in Albuquerque. Under executive director Rachel's leadership, El Centro plays a key role in garnering support for comprehensive immigration reform and administrative relief, in combating deportation enforcement programs in Albuquerque, and in improving conditions for workers through minimum wage and anti-wage theft initiatives.

Upstanders honored by the museum in past years are Deb Haaland, U.S. Secretary of the Interior, and Brian Colón, former state auditor. Both are well known for standing up for New Mexico families.

The honoree can be an individual, an organization, or a business that shows leadership, creates positive change, and has made significant contributions in recognizing and addressing injustice.



**SPONSORSHIPS AND AD SPACE AVAILABLE...**

Check our website to learn how you can support our seventh annual fundraising gala:

[nmholocaustmuseum.org/2023-fundraiser/](https://nmholocaustmuseum.org/2023-fundraiser/)

*The Herald*

Finding its way to you four times a year from staff, volunteers, and board members

# Educators offered myriad professional development opportunities

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## School children visit museum for important history lessons

Close to 600 students from more than two dozen schools have visited the museum in the span of five months, January through May. A majority of the schools are in Albuquerque while the rest are in Santa Fe.

Children learned special history lessons taught by museum volunteers. Some lessons were in the way of comprehensive tours while others were in the form of personal stories (see pages 2 and 3).

There were some last minute tours in May before summer break, and several summer camps and programs already have scheduled visits. Teachers and camp leaders interested in planning tours can sign up online:

[nmholocaustmuseum.org/book-a-tour/](http://nmholocaustmuseum.org/book-a-tour/)



CHEC workshop, February 4

## National recognition a major milestone

Last year, our museum was asked to join the CHEC program of the United States Holocaust

Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington. CHEC is the acronym of Conference for Holocaust Education Centers. This national recognition as an educational institute

*as well as a museum* is a major milestone. The selection was due in large part because of teacher training and work done on the educational front in the past. We are listed on the USHMM website as a CHEC partner as we continue to make great strides in our educational programming.

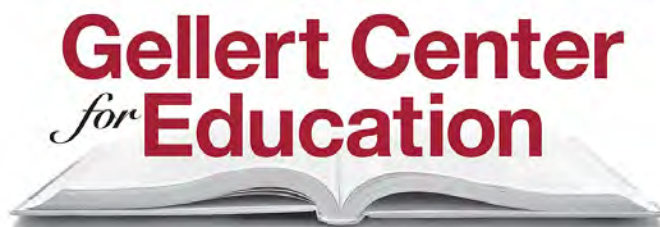
The CHEC program was established in 2014 to create an engaged network across the country. More than 60 centers are part of the system. A teacher fellow from the Washington museum worked with us to develop a professional education plan and workshops for New Mexico teachers using national resources and pedagogical models.

We are pleased and proud.

## Teachers invited to summer seminar

Experienced Holocaust educators, who also are members of the museum's education team, will conduct an advanced summer institute concerning remembrance, reconciliation, restitution. Sponsored by The Olga Lengyel Institute for Holocaust Studies and Human Rights (TOLI), the professional development workshop will be held three days in June followed by one in September and one in October. Teachers from all disciplines have been encouraged to sign up. There is no cost to educators.

Facilitators are Susan Quintana, Leslie Lawner, Michelle Thompson-Loyd, and Barbara Lazar, all seasoned Holocaust educators. Sign up at [www.toli.us/regional-program/New-Mexico](http://www.toli.us/regional-program/New-Mexico)





## May is Asian American and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Heritage Month

### Concentration camps in the U.S.

## Japanese Americans interned after Pearl Harbor

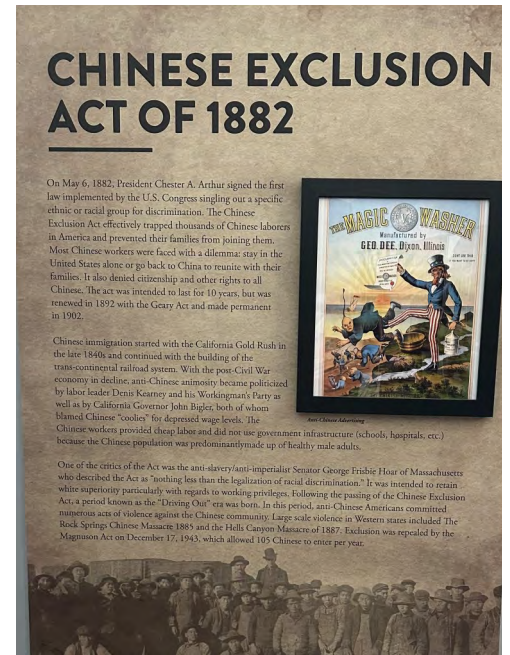
After the 1941 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt authorized the removal and detainment of more than 120,000 persons of Japanese descent. More than half of them were American citizens. The War Relocation Authority, the Department of Justice, and the Immigration and Naturalization Service established multiple camps across the United States for the purpose of “national security” by removing a population considered to be disloyal or spying for the enemy. Four of these camps were located in New Mexico: Santa Fe, Fort Stanton, Lordsburg, and the Old Raton Ranch in Lincoln County. Approximately 6,000 of the Japanese people interned between 1942 and 1945 were imprisoned in New Mexico.



A Japanese American displayed this banner in Oakland, CA, the day after the Pearl Harbor attack. Photo by Dorothea Lange



The San Francisco Examiner February 1942



## Chinese exclusion act restricted immigration

This year marks the 140th anniversary of the Chinese Exclusion Act which was signed May 6, 1882. The legislation made it nearly impossible for Chinese nationals to immigrate to the United States and it placed punitive restrictions on people of Chinese descent who were already living in the United States. Eventually the policy was fully nullified but not until 1965.

### A workshop for teachers

## Complex issues of the Holocaust can relate to the present

In addition to the CHEC professional development seminar pictured on the previous page, the museum partnered with the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) to offer a daylong workshop for teachers on March 4. The seminar focused on state standards.

Using curriculum from *Echoes & Reflections*, this opportunity gave participants useful techniques needed to teach the complex issues of the Holocaust and how

these issues relate to the present.

Educators examined how lessons from history can instill the importance of civic action in young people from all backgrounds. Justice, intolerance, and the importance of democratic liberties were some of the topics explored.

*Echoes & Reflections* is a joint venture of the Anti-Defamation League, the USC Shoah Foundation, and Yad Vashem, the Holocaust museum in Jerusalem.

# Letters mirror concerns over family members left behind

(continued from page 1)

## Archives *Alive!*



The materials that form the Peter J. Josselson collection give insight into the plight of Estonian Jews during the Holocaust, immigration in the U.S., the journey of Eastern European Jews seeking protection in France, life in hiding, and the multifaceted experiences of those forever changed by genocide.

“We are so grateful to Angelika Josselson and our many other museum collections donors throughout the years. Gifts such as this enable us to tell the personal stories of the Holocaust and are crucial to fulfilling our mission to educate the next generation of upstanders,” commented Caton-Garcia.

### Holocaust survivors honored at Yom HaShoah

Darian Kapelianis-Donado, pictured at left, graciously stepped in to share the memories of Holocaust survivor Raya Kovensky at Yom HaShoah on April 16 in Congregation Albert. The event, which honored Albuquerque survivors as well as second generation, represented the importance and power of sharing the past. In addition to Raya’s personal memories read by Darian, a student at the Cottonwood Classical Preparatory School, museum volunteer Andy Holten told about being a hidden child.

Yom HaShoah this year was a joint venture of the museum, Congregation Albert, and New Mexico Human Rights Projects (NMHRP). The committee was chaired by Regina Turner, founder and executive director of NMHRP.

### *Addressing hate and intolerance*

The museum uses lessons and personal stories of the Holocaust and other genocides to educate and inspire communities of upstanders. Our visitors are reminded how to approach hate and bigotry in order to make a difference.

We envision a world in which individuals respect and stand up for the differences in others. We aspire to be agents of change by encouraging dialogue, building mutual understanding, and taking appropriate actions within our diverse communities to develop and encourage upstanders.

#### New Mexico Holocaust & Intolerance Museum

Location: 616 Central Avenue SW, Albuquerque

Phone: (505) 247-0606

Website: [nmholocaustmuseum.org](http://nmholocaustmuseum.org)

Mail: PO Box 1762, Albuquerque NM 87103-1762

### Is this a good fit for you?

Want to give us a hand?

Kayla Abeyta-Lopez, our volunteer coordinator, will be happy to sign you up. You can apply online at [nmholocaustmuseum.org/donate-volunteer/](http://nmholocaustmuseum.org/donate-volunteer/) or you can call the museum and ask for Kayla: (505) 247-0606.