

# New Mexico's Crypto-Jews

## *Image and Memory*



Photographs by **Cary Herz**

EDITED BY ORI Z. SOLTES AND MONA HERNANDEZ

*Named the best nonfiction book of 2016 by The National Federation of Press Women*

Cary Herz

## New Mexico's Crypto-Jews: Image and Memory



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While photographing the Congregation Montefiore Cemetery in NEVADA, New Mexico, in 1985, Cary Herz first heard whispers about "the other people." Thus began a twenty-year search for descendants of crypto-Jews, the Sephardic Jews who were forced to convert to Catholicism during the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions centuries back. Herz's photographs and the accompanying essays honor the people whose ancestors, through families' oral histories and genealogical information, understood about their heritage. Many openly professed Catholicism, but continued to apply the Jewish faith privately. To help full her exploration, Herz sought out symbols--gravesites, artifacts, and icons--that might stage toward the presence of the descendants of crypto-Jews who found the New World. Additional New Mexican Hispanics possess recently started to explore their families' customs and so are only beginning to examine their possible blended lineage. There's been recently a renewed interest in crypto-Jews, as DNA exams have revealed the Jewish heritage of a number of Hispanic New Mexicans.



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Initial Hispanos in New Mexico were frequently "Hidden Jews" When Sephardic Jews still left Spain following the Inquisition, some visited the Americas. Add seeing to hearing I'll admit I am biased but this publication finally puts a real human face on this southwest phenomena. This publication has plenty of photos, personal stories and background about the highland areas where these Jews tried to hide. I must say i enjoyed it, especially since I worked as a caseworker in the past due 1960's in the area. I would recommend it to anybody interested in Jewish background, Sephardic Judaism, Crypto-Jews, Spanish culture and New Mexico background. Things such as traditions that can't be explained or symbols on mind stones, brands from Holy Scriptures and others.It is worth reading. Wonderful book Beautiful story as seen in person at exhibition in Sante Fe. Five Stars Informative narrative but, more importantly, the book is filled with the fabulous photographs of Cary Herz. Lots of pictures. This book has lots of nice pictures and does bring out a whole lot of interesting points one can look for in their own family. Very

well done photographic background of just one more persecution of the Jews- our oldest & most precious faith A Great Book! This is a well crafted and very informative book about the survival of a tenacious people and about part of the hidden history of the state of New Mexico. However they soon discovered that the Inquisition experienced a branch in Mexico Town and had been imprisoning, torturing and killing Spanish Jews who were trying to hide their identity. Haunting pictures of a full time income glimmer of an nearly forgotten people. Cary Herz performs a mitzvah by remembering us and in a small way provides help along the street to redemption of the small remnant. Love the pix includes picture of the temple where we were married. Brings back lots of recollections. Interesting sights in this book. beautiful and intriguing photography Very interesting read, beautiful and intriguing photography!

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