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The German Jew and the Commercial Revolution in Territorial New Mexico, 1850-1900

William J. Parish

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At mid-nineteenth century in Taos and Santa Fe, when the German Jewish merchant took his place alongside the American- and Mexican-born storekeeper, a commercial revolution had begun. There can be no doubt that the German Jew was the moving force in this change of pace.

It is true that one can find an occasional non-Jew who made his contribution, and Franz Huning was one such person—although even he was a German immigrant. Miguel Desmarais, a French Canadian, established his store in Las Vegas before Kearny made his entry. His enterprise was carried on by a nephew, Charles Blanchard, with branches in Socorro, Carthage, and San Pedro, and perhaps these businessmen should receive credit in this regard. Trinidad Romero of Las Vegas was an in-and-out, not very successful merchant who played a minor part. Peter Joseph of Taos, who founded his store in 1840, an enterprise that was continued by his son, Antonio, for ten years the Territorial Delegate to Congress, has obscure beginnings and perhaps he was not an exception to our theme after all.

The more one seeks out the non-Jew who came to New Mexico before or during the eighteen-fifties, and who settled down to deal successfully in the regular imports of finished goods and in the exports of Territorial commodities, the more it becomes apparent that there were few of him, indeed. In fact, if one holds strongly to the word “success,” one can say that Franz Huning, the German Lutheran who arrived in Santa Fe in 1849 and who established his general merchandise store in Albuquerque in 1857, may have been the only non-Jew to have con-
tributed significantly to the early commercial revolution in New Mexico.

Before we describe the pervasiveness of the German Jewish merchant in the urban centers of Territorial New Mexico, or express the credit and gratitude due him for his contributions to the growth of the economy and for his catalytic influence in the linking of our several cultures, it would be well to make clear that his coming did constitute a spectacular change in the conduct of this frontier business.

Prior to the Mexican War, the traveling merchant from the States found little encouragement in his efforts to sell wares in the Mexican domain. Heavy taxes, the amount generally unknown until he arrived at Santa Fe or Taos, added financial risk to his enterprise and discouraged many who otherwise would have dared the dangers of thirst and death. This impediment to trade was fostered through the corrupting of public officials, principally by the merchants of Chihuahua who brought American goods through Vera Cruz and then on to Santa Fe, selling them at rather high prices. The traders from Franklin, Missouri, and later Independence, even without government protection on the Santa Fe Trail, gradually broke down this monopoly when they learned the corrupt, or perhaps just needy, Mexican officials were subject to influence.

At the time of Mexico's independence from Spain in 1821, the storekeepers of Santa Fe represented a rather immature development of retail trade. Pattie's 1827 reference to merchants can be interpreted as meaning there were a few petty capitalists, or storekeepers, operating at minor stands for the sedentary retailing of sparse goods. Gregg found merchants with a variety of wares in 1831. Allison in 1837 also wrote of the Santa Fe storekeepers.

It is apparent, however, that these storekeepers could not rely on the traveling merchants for their inventories. The early records describe the trading of the traveling merchant as having been done directly with the people with no need for wholesaling. The exception was Céran St. Vrain who, on one occasion in 1830, was forced to sell to a storekeeper because his goods were moving too slowly at his temporary stand at the customhouse.

When the adventurer-merchant, James Webb of Connecticut, was in and out of Santa Fe from 1844 to 1847, he described the store of Don Juan Sena, on the southeast corner of the Plaza, as being the second best store. Mr. John Scolly had the best because its floor was planked—the only one in the Territory so equipped, he thought, ex-
cept, perhaps, one or two in Taos. It is interesting that soon after making this observation, and being forced to leave his goods with others to be sold on a ten per cent commission, Webb chose not to deposit his goods with the first or second best store. Rather he made his arrangement with Eugene Leitsendorfer, a German Jew, whose location has been described as the "headquarters for all American traders for social and business conversation and for plans for promoting their general interests." One of the reasons he chose this merchant is significant. Webb could not speak Spanish, as indeed few English-speaking people did or still deign to do. The Jewish merchant was cosmopolitan in his outlook, experienced in languages, and not in the least inhibited by the social restrictions of economic strata.

Among the traveling merchants on the Santa Fe Trail was a Prussian Jew of some prominence and ability. His name was Albert Speyer and he was related, probably, to the Frankfort Speyers whose international banking house (with a branch in New York City) was flourishing about this time. He and Webb traveled together on occasion and sometimes extended their Santa Fe trips to Chihuahua. Speyer, according to Webb, bought out the merchandise stock of General Manuel Armijo when the General apparently had expected Kearny of the United States forces to arrive sooner than he did.

In spite of this commercial activity involving traveling and sedentary merchants, there are several reasons why we should be cautious in imagining the character of this early trade to have been much above the level generally attained by the beginning petty capitalist who deals in the products of the local countryside, supplemented on an unplanned basis by the imports of the traveling merchant. The traveling merchant—not the sedentary storekeeper—was the one who dominated the scene. This adventurer is epitomized by the names of Charles Bent and Céran St. Vrain; by Patrick Rice, James Collins, and Jesse Sutton; by the Magoffins—Samuel, James, and William with their respected Susan; by Henry Connelly, Alexander Majors, James Webb, and Albert Speyer. These merchants usually brought their goods to Taos or Santa Fe, sold what they could at retail, and then, if a balance remained, started south, retailing in small villages along the way. They would extend their tour, if necessary, and often if not necessary, to Chihuahua. When the trip was thus prolonged, they usually acquired silver bullion and gold dust as their reward and seldom took produce back with them to the States. The Mexican, Escudero, in 1825, evidently was among the first of his countrymen to make the trip to Franklin, Missouri, to
acquire goods. He, too, took his wagons empty on the eastern portion of his journey.

A second reason for not exaggerating this commercial development was the psychology of the traders. Almost entirely, these petty capitalists had no thought of a permanent business in Santa Fe or New Mexico. Like James Webb, who wrote, “I have no desire to become a resident or continue in trade except as an adventurer and the possible advantage the trade might afford of bettering my fortune,” these merchants disappeared gradually from the scene with their wealth or lack of it, as the case might have been.

A third reason for keeping in perspective our thinking on the character of this early trade is the nearness, from the point of view of time, of the old Fair which had been the dominant institution for the distribution of goods. Barter, except for strictly local currencies that sometimes existed, and which had no value outside the locale, was the chief form of trade prior to 1821. Taos Fairs were being held each July almost as late as this time and the trade there has been described as that in which “no money circulated—but articles are traded for each other.” It should be remembered, too, that society in New Mexico prior to 1821, and even to a greater extent later, was essentially feudalistic with large numbers of people living as peones in commissary fashion, constantly in debt to the large landowners or ricos. In such an atmosphere, surpluses of goods were not consistent enough to encourage many storekeepers to ply their enterprise.

Only an occasional adumbration of the new era to come can be discovered. Manuel Alvarez had a store in Santa Fe for more than thirty years after 1824, and the tendency is to judge him as a precursor of the larger mercantile capitalist. His ledgers, however, show but three Eastern trips, some bartering in Taos and Abiquiu, but no signs of imports and exports on any scale.

Henry Connelly, having been a traveling merchant while keeping a store in Chihuahua, later established branches in Santa Fe, Las Vegas, Albuquerque, and Peralta. He became too involved in political affairs, however, to have permitted himself the opportunity of becoming a successful mercantile capitalist. His death in 1866 snuffed out even the possibility.

Eugene Leitsendorfer, who appeared as a Santa Fe trader in 1830, opened his store on the Plaza with his brother Thomas and partner Jacob Houghton in 1844. He tried to conduct a typical frontier, general merchandise business by bringing finished goods from the East and
returning the produce of the countryside in payment. He failed in 1848, an event that may be taken as some evidence that his efforts were premature. The Goldstine Brothers was a merchant house in Santa Fe as early as 1847 but it disappeared. The Leitsendorfers and Goldstines, however, were a foreshadowing of the German Jewish mercantile capitalist who, in increasing numbers, came to stay after the mid-point of the century.

The commercial revolution that was born in New Mexico following the American Occupation in which the German Jew played so large a part, cannot be thought of as a distinguished or isolated development in the far western or southwestern areas of the United States. It took place in an environment possessing a longer and more romantic history than in neighboring areas, to be sure, and it had its beginnings almost as early as other similar developments in the general region. It was similar, also, in most respects, to the observable effects of the whole German immigration wave that filtered throughout the United States following its forceful beginnings out of the European depression of 1836.

For that portion of the German immigrants who were of Jewish persuasion—roughly seven per cent between 1840 and 1880—the United States generally was as fertile a soil for their peculiar talents and training as could be imagined. As summary background for this statement we need only explore a few of the broader reasons.

The western Jew, more completely than his eastern European counterpart, had been confined in his business activities to commerce and banking. The causes of this are not particularly pertinent here, but, in passing, we should mention the intellectual aversion of Greek and Christian civilizations to the profit that arose from trading or money-lending. It was, of course, the great scarcity of and need for both goods and credit in a growing economy that offered opportunities for abusive tactics and that placed this aversion in western philosophy and within its dominant theology. Thus the Jew, a man apart, was called upon to carry these burdens to satisfy the needs of a Christian market.

Closely confined to these narrow fields of endeavor, the western Jew became expert and often wealthy in his performance of these scorned but necessary economic functions. Despised for the work he performed and for the success he achieved, continuously persecuted and frequently driven from his native land, the Jew, as a matter of economic survival, sharpened his talents for converting merchandise into money and
money into more money: in short, for becoming the world's expert in the managing of mobile capital. When the Western World awakened to its commercial revolution in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, the Jew was generations ahead in the quality of talents most in demand.

A change occurred in the organization of business in the nineteenth century throughout western Europe, and in Germany this change received emphasis. The commercial revolution had given away to industrial capitalism and with it, particularly after 1812, the lot of the Jew improved significantly. The need for Jewish capital was so great that one authority has written: "the economic development actually dictated equal rights for Jews." Yet industrial capitalism, dominated by large corporate and impersonal enterprises, found the Jew declining in influence although he had been instrumental in the founding of railroad and shipping companies, electric manufacturing firms and chemical enterprises. Monopoly increasingly excluded him by convention. The Jew excluded himself by choice.

In the wealthier provinces of Germany, largely to the south and west, the Jew remained in the smaller towns and villages where the family commercial enterprises were the center of rural activity and where the ancestors of these people had founded, in the tenth and eleventh centuries, whole Jewish towns along the Rhine and Moselle Rivers. In Wurtemburg, in 1846, eighty-one per cent of the Jews lived in villages. In Bavaria approximately the same percentage were domiciled outside the five largest communities. It was from these provinces, including Baden and Westphalia, that a heavy concentration of German Jews departed for the United States. They possessed a fair education and a reasonable amount of capital, either of their own or to which they had access. Although the depression beginning in 1836 had brought with it some political and social reaction against them, it was the loss of economic hope in Germany and the promise of economic success in America, spurred on by agents of the new Cunard, and Hamburg-American lines, and later the American railroads, that sent them on their way.

A large percentage of them were single with more than a few dreaming of the day they could return under favorable economic circumstances to marry a German girl and then to take her back to the States. These immigrants had borne far greater political and social restrictions in years past, yet they had not left their homeland. It took a higher standard of living, contributing the wherewithal to move, and the op-
portunity to emigrate to a growing economy of thousands of small villages and towns, each dominating an agricultural hinterland, to move them en masse. As one business historian has written of these same migrants, "it was to the blandishments of an economic rather than a political Utopia that the common man succumbed."

This was the supply side of the equation for the years of the nineteenth century following 1836. The demand side, on the other hand, was most absorbent and strong. By 1840 there were hundreds of small and growing centers stretching from New England through the South and from the Atlantic to the Mississippi. The United States was figuratively crying for humanity to man its towns. Furthermore, the traditional methods of wholesale and retail distribution were being strained to the limit and were in need of supplement. As we learn in the principles of economics: when such a demand schedule intersects with such a supply schedule, something is compelled to happen. Something did.

The German Jew, happy to work for himself—even to be permitted to observe his holidays if he wished, though diet was another problem—took his limited capital, turned it into merchandise and, with pack on back, trudged out across the countryside. When he had gained more than a pittance—and with his training and new environment there were few who failed to do so—he chose a small town of promise in which to establish his general merchandise store. Soon this store became a temporary training ground for relatives or Jewish friends who needed some capital sustenance before seeking independent enterprise. In many cases these newcomers drummed the hinterland using their benefactor's base as a source of supply. Scarcely a town of any importance in the eastern United States was without its German Jewish merchant by mid-century.

In the 1850's these people were beginning to repeat in the western states the same encouragement to commercial development that prior to the Mexican War and the California Gold Rush had extended itself solidly into Missouri. The Jewish movement into Texas preceded those into the Territories by a few years, although there is little evidence that the German Jew came in any numbers until after the Mexican War. In the next few years significant settlements of these people were made along the Gulf Coast, principally in the towns of Victoria and Galveston.

The California Gold Rush attracted a number of German Jews who in the years 1849 and 1850 were making the trip around the Horn, or by pack and mule across the Isthmus, and then to San Francisco. In the
early fifties they were converging from the west and the east on Salt Lake City where the Mormons, following the historical antipathies to trade, had left a near-vacuum for the Jewish Gentiles.

The movement into Colorado did not occur with any force until the 1860's when similar trends can be seen to have begun in Arizona and Nevada.

When the German Jewish merchant came to New Mexico at the close of the 1840's, his bed already had been made for him by an enterprising, free-lance American trader who in a decade and a half had come to dominate the market from Independence to Chihuahua. This adventurous trader had found a hole in Mexican business enterprise, and had quickly poured his efforts into it. He had found the Mexican merchant, with few exceptions, to possess little drive for material productiveness. With little surprise he had discovered the market, that had been served so ineffectually, to have been strongly materialistic on the consumption side. To this traveling merchant it had been worth braving the Indian, breaking the tariff wall, and bribing officials—not alone for the potential profit involved, but also for the spirit of adventure that was part and parcel of it all.

If this adventurous traveling merchant had made a bed for the German Jew, it was the more comfortable because of the military intervention that quickly followed the economic spearhead. To the Mexican nation that succumbed to this display of force, there probably seemed to be no ring of equity in it. There never is in any time or climate for those of us who seek comfort behind intellectual and economic tariff walls. It is a lasting truth that such protective complacencies are weakening to those within and strengthening to those without. The inevitability of this crumbling effect in New Mexico to the year 1846 has been described by Charles and Mary Beard, whose economic interpretations of history may be closer to the truth than many present-day historians are wont to admit: “Without capital and without stability, harassed by revolutions and debt, Mexico could not develop the resources and trade of the northern empire to which she possessed the title of parchment and seals. More than that she did not have the emigrants for that enterprise.”

Even though the traveling merchant and the United States military had made and smoothed a bed for the German Jew, it is doubtful that this bachelor alien came to Santa Fe to contemplate the comforts that had been prepared. In an atmosphere that later, and after some de-
sirable changes, could be described as “no life for a lady,” there were some domestic comforts for which contemplation would be the only proper word.

Into this land of hope and promise came Jacob Solomon Spiegelberg. Whether or not he came with the thought of settling down in New Mexico we do not know, for evidently he came as part of the manpower of a supply train for Kearny's troops. When Colonel Doniphan’s regiment went on to Chihuahua, Spiegelberg accompanied him. It was not until he returned to Santa Fe with the regiment that, upon receiving an appointment as sutler to Fort Marcy, he established his general merchandising firm. The date is generally thought to have been 1848, the same year that Brewerton described the Santa Fe Plaza as a “babel of French, English, German, and Spanish.”

A year later, or perhaps even sooner, there came to Taos another German Jewish merchant—Solomon Beuthner—although records are not available to fix the beginnings of the sizeable mercantile house that bore his family name in that town. By 1852, the merchant house of Seligman in Santa Fe was founded when Sigmund Seligman joined with his partner for the next decade, Charles P. Clever. Perhaps the latter was not of Jewish extraction although he had earlier Jewish associations.

One of the first Jewish merchants in Santa Fe was Jacob Amberg, whom we find earlier as a partner of Henry Connelly and as a prospector among some silver claims in Pinos Altos, New Mexico. In 1855, he joined with Gustav Elsberg in a mercantile partnership, Elsberg and Amberg, in Westport, Kansas, and a year later the firm moved to Santa Fe. Toward the end of the 'fifties, Zoldac and Abraham Staab established their firm.

It was not long after these pioneer firms were founded that the relatives began to arrive from Germany. The Spiegelberg brothers, Bernard, Elias, Willi, Emanuel, Levi and Lehman, together with their nephew Abraham (a New Yorker by birth), one by one, dropped into town to add to the manpower of the firm. Then a cousin, Aaron Zeckendorf, came in 1853 and clerked in the store until the Spiegelbergs financed his start in Albuquerque, in 1863. This favor appeared not to be a deterrent to the establishment by the Zeckendorf brothers of a competing branch to Spiegelberg in Santa Fe by 1865.

When we first find evidence of the Beuthner Brothers firm in Taos,
Joseph had joined his brother Solomon and, perhaps, his brother Sam­son. Joseph and Solomon had enlisted in the Union forces—Joseph attaining the rank of captain and Solomon that of colonel.

The other houses enlarged, too. Sigmund Seligman was followed by his brothers Bernard and Adolph. Albert Elsberg and Moses Amberg joined the firm of Elsberg and Amberg as did Herman Ilfeld, a cousin of the two families, and the first of the Ilfeld brothers to come to the United States and New Mexico.

Charles Ilfeld came into the fold shortly after Herman. A lad barely turned eighteen, he put in a very short stint with his older brother, and then went to Taos as clerk for Adolph Letcher to open a new firm financed by Elsberg and Amberg. Letcher and Ilfeld stuck it out in Taos for almost two years before the blossoming town of Las Vegas beckoned and enticed them off with their merchandise on muleback across the Sangre de Cristo mountains. Wending their way through the town of Mora, where three years before a traveling reporter of the Santa Fe New Mexican had described the larger portion of the mer­chants as German, the retinue reached Las Vegas and draped itself around the Plaza. This young firm had now become A. Letcher and Company, with Charles Ilfeld as partner, and its new abode was in the old store of Frank Kihlberg, a much traveled German Jew. This was early May, 1867. In September, 1874, Charles bought the interest of his partner and the proprietorship of Charles Ilfeld began, a firm that subsequently grew into the largest general merchandise wholesaler in the state of New Mexico.

The new firm of Charles Ilfeld had good cultural company on the Plaza. Emanuel Rosenwald, who had opened his general merchandise business in 1862, was across the unimproved core of the quadrangle with his brother Joseph. Marcus Brunswick, who became Charles’ closest friend, and who is now buried in the Ilfeld plot in Las Vegas, had a mercantile establishment with Ben Hecht. Charles Emil Wesche was also there. Other Jewish merchants of Las Vegas in 1870 were: May Hays, N. L. Rosenthal, Philip Holzman, and one of the Jaffa Brothers.

A large number of the clerking and drumming brothers, sons, cousins, and family friends of the major Jewish mercantilists soon found their way into proprietorships or partnerships of their own—sometimes through their hard-gained resources, but usually through the capital of their sponsors. Spiegelberg, alone, must have been responsi­ble for a dozen or more of these new stores throughout the urban centers. Henry Biernbaum was one of these protégés. He came to
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Santa Fe in 1851 and subsequently moved about; first with a store in San Juan, then Pueblo, Colorado, then San Miguel, southeast of Santa Fe, and then Mora, before he finally established a large mercantile store in Trinidad.

We have already mentioned the Zeckendorfs who followed Biernbaum by two years. In the 'sixties there were Nathan and Simon Bibo, sons of a Westphalian Rabbi who, first, with Spiegelberg capital and then with their own, established stores at Laguna, Fort Wingate, Cebolleta, Bernalillo, and Grants. Later they were joined by their brother Solomon. Nathan Bibo, with Sam Dittenhofer, another Spiegelberg protegé, started a store in the little stagecoach town of Tecolote. This was in 1873, and when Charles Ilfeld decided to have his own wayside store and corral there for the Barlow and Sanderson Stage Lines, he rented the building from Willi Spiegelberg and placed David Winternitz, later a charter member of the Congregation Montefiore in Las Vegas, as his partner-manager.

In the 'seventies and 'eighties the Spiegelberg brothers kept up their commercial proselyting through the Grunsfelds (Alfred, Albert, and Ernest) who first managed and then bought the Spiegelberg branch in Albuquerque, evidently after the Zeckendorfs had decided to embark in their own enterprise. In the 'nineties, the Grunsfeld brothers established a branch in Santa Fe after the Spiegelbergs had chosen to retire, one by one, to New York City. Two other clerks of the Spiegelbergs, Henry Lutz and Morris J. Bernstein, had moved on to Lincoln, New Mexico.

Other sponsoring firms also did their bit. The Seligman brothers gave Bernard Ilfeld his first employment in New Mexico. Later this brother of Charles had his own store in Albuquerque. Herman Ilfeld, upon the failure of Elsberg and Amberg, revived the enterprise as a proprietorship and soon took in as partners his brothers Noa and Louis. Louis founded a branch of the firm in Alcalde, and with Noa, established another outlet on the Plaza in Old Albuquerque in the 'seventies.

By way of further illustration of this moving, pervasive force of new German Jewish mercantile firms following short training periods with older established houses, we need mention but a few. Alexander Gussdorf, successful merchant of Taos, received his first training with C. Staffenberger of Santa Fe. His brother Gerson, who followed Alexander, worked for Z. Staab and Company. Carl Harberg, Sigmund Nahm, Simon and Adolph Vorenberg all owed allegiance to the suc-
cessful Mora firm of Lowenstein and Strausse. Herman Wertheim, Solomon Floersheim, the Goldenbergs (Alex, Hugo and Max) and many others were originally or later employed in New Mexico by Charles Ilfeld.

We could go on and on. What the Jaffas and Pragers of Roswell, or the Price brothers of Socorro may have done in furthering new proprietorships and partnerships we do not know. Yet a similar story could be told of the launching of enterprises by Henry Lesinsky whose prominent firm in Las Cruces gave Phoebus Freudenthal and others their start. Charles and Morris Lesinsky played similar roles. In Silver City the firms of Cohen and Lesinsky and Weisl, Lesinsky and Company appear. The Freudenthals, solid in Las Cruces, also had commercial interests in Silver City, Clifton, Arizona, and El Paso, Texas. Isador Solomon, brother-in-law of Phoebus Freudenthal, went on from Las Cruces to found Solomonville, Arizona, where he built a mercantile firm and where, with help from the Freudenthals and others, incorporated the Gila Valley Bank, a forerunner of the Valley National Bank of Phoenix.

We have not mentioned the Kahns and the Kleins, the Eldodts and the Eisemanns, or the Seligmans of Bernalillo. There were the Golds and the Rosenthals, the Neustadts and Hirsches. We should not overlook the Jacobs and the Sterns; the Lohmanns, Lessers and Levys, or the brothers Schutz and the brothers Spitz. To close the century we must include Julius and Sigmund Moise, born in Oberstein, German, who founded a mercantile firm in Santa Rosa. Without laying any claim to exhaustion of opportunities, and only including those who became proprietors, partners or managers of retailing or wholesaling firms handling goods of one kind or another, three hundred sixty-eight have been documented over the period 1850 to 1900. If separate establishments are counted without regard to duplication of personnel, there were more than five hundred.

The German-born residents of New Mexico made up approximately six-tenths of one per cent of its total population according to the census figures of 1860, 1870, and 1880. In 1870, slightly less than one-fourth of the Germans who were occupied in one business or another, were listed in trade. Nearly one-third were so listed in 1880. Inasmuch as Jewish businessmen were predominantly in trade, we might conclude from these data that the German Jewish population grew substantially faster in the decade of the 'seventies than the total German population but that by 1880 the German Jewish people, obviously less than one
hundred per cent of all Germans, probably comprised less than one-half of one per cent of the inhabitants.

However, unless the birthrate for the Jewish population greatly exceeded that of the Territory—and this is not probable—the proportion of German Jews must have been considerably less than one-half of one per cent. Even at three-eighths of one per cent, the apparent rate of German Jewish immigrants, relative to total German immigration, would have been three times the national average.

However small the proportion of these people may have been, they had a tendency to spread themselves throughout the territory. A sample of more than three hundred and fifty merchants known to have been in New Mexico at various specific dates and periods between 1850 and 1900 indicates that the concentration of these people in the larger towns fell sharply as the century progressed—a pattern quite contrary to the experience of total Jewry for the nation where heavy concentrations occurred in the larger metropolitan centers—particularly in New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago.

Sixty-five per cent or more of the German Jewish population in New Mexico was concentrated in Santa Fe before 1860. In the next decade this percentage fell to fifty per cent and declined further to about fifteen per cent by the end of the century. In total, the three largest cities, Santa Fe, Las Vegas, and Albuquerque, as well as the ten largest, showed a steady decline in percentages of the German Jewish population from 1850 to 1900. At the end of the period approximately forty per cent of these people lived in the more rural communities.

This small group of people was a ubiquitous lot. Howard W. Mitchell's 1877 journal describes Las Vegas as "made up chiefly of Mexicans although quite a number of Americans and Jews." Santa Fe he found to have "mostly general stores kept by Jews." Ex-Governor Arny in a public speech in Santa Fe in 1876 described that town as of two classes—Mexican or Spanish-speaking and American or English-speaking. The latter class he described as being composed "really of a majority of foreign born persons, among them a large proportion of Jews."

The Illustrated History of New Mexico, published in 1895, made the following comment: "The merchants of New Mexico at the time of the advent of the railroad were largely composed of [the Hebrew] nationality, and this ancient people still hold their own in all mercantile concerns. There is scarcely a village having any trade at all in which they will not be found." Our sampling of the Territory, principally
through newspapers and the invaluable correspondence and records of Charles Ilfeld, prove this statement to have been quite accurate.

In plotting eighty-seven New Mexico communities in which one or more German Jewish merchants resided at one time or another during the last half of the nineteenth century, we find these urban centers to have been concentrated in that larger half of the Territory from the Rio Grande eastward. The heaviest grouping, of course, was in the northeastern part and west to the San Luis Valley. Most of the balance were strung out along two river routes: The Pecos from Bado de Juan Pais through Anton Chico, Puerto de Luna, Fort Sumner, and Roswell, and the Rio Grande from Belen, Los Lunas, Socorro and Las Cruces. A few centers fell between these strings, but these were largely to be found in the Lincoln, White Oaks, Tularosa area. A number of these towns are located west of the Rio Grande along the route to Arizona through Deming, the mining district around Silver City, and the settlements between Albuquerque and Gallup. Those areas where settled Jews do not appear are found in the northwest quadrant and most of the southwest, where few commercial centers would have existed anyway because of Navajo lands in the northern part and difficult terrain to the south together with sparse population throughout.

It is worth noting, however, that even after Farmington began to grow in the rich agricultural region of the San Juan River, German Jewish merchants were not to be found there. A heavy concentration of them, however, served this area out of Durango as, indeed, from Trinidad they also held much of the trade of Raton and Cimarron.

The fewness of Jewish merchants in the western part of the Territory did not mean that these people were ignoring the trade that was to be found there. Willi Spiegelberg had a Navajo Trading Agency. The Bibos specialized in commerce at Acoma and other Indian pueblos. The Seligmans of Bernalillo did the same. Louis and Noa Ilfeld dealt with the Indians extensively but concentrated on the Zuñis.

Magdalena was an outpost for the Price Brothers of Socorro, as it later became for Charles Ilfeld, for the trade to the west along and around the route to Springerville, Arizona. The Jewish drummers from the Spiegelberg and Staab houses of Santa Fe, and the Ilfeld and Grunsfeld brothers of Albuquerque, left little of the Territory untouched.

Thus, a relatively small group of German Jewish merchants permeated the Territorial economy with their influence by no later than the last two decades of the century. They shared it not at all with the eastern European Jews who did not come to the United States in any
numbers until the 'nineties and rarely, prior to 1900, to New Mexico.

It is evident, therefore, that a great change took place in business capitalism in New Mexico after the American Occupation, and that the German Jew was the key man in encouraging and developing its growth. How, in general terms, would we describe this commercial revolution?

The traveling merchant, who was almost always on the move, was replaced by the sedentary merchant who sat down in administration. In the sitting-down process he became dependent on regular deliveries, ordered ahead of time, from distant areas. In New Mexico this meant the East—first Baltimore, then Philadelphia and New York, and for heavier bulky goods that needed to be moved cheaply, St. Louis.

We are picturing, too, an economy with a strongly unfavorable balance of trade that resulted in money being a scarce commodity—an economy that placed the merchants under great pressures to acquire monetary exchange. The most important single factor giving the initial momentum to sizable amounts of monetary exchange in New Mexico was the public works project of the day: the army forts. These institutions not only had payrolls that had a way of being spent, but they had great need for supplies of local produce. Solomon Spiegelberg, as we mentioned earlier, was encouraged to start his Santa Fe mercantile business upon his appointment as sutler to Fort Marcy. In later years Marcus Brunswick, almost an alter ego of Charles Ilfeld, tapped the trade of Fort Stanton with a store in Lincoln. Other Jewish merchants at one time or another who were sutlers in New Mexico were Nathan Bibo at Fort Wingate, Arthur Morrison at Fort Union, Ferdinand Meyer at Fort Garland, and William Gellerman at Fort Bascom.

When a close connection with an army fort existed, cash sales to military personnel were high. Adolph Letcher found this to be true in Taos where his store was a convenient stopping place for the traffic between Fort Marcy and Fort Garland. The cash could then be converted into Federal drafts on Eastern banks which were deposited with wholesaling houses in New York City. These Eastern drafts could also be obtained, and in larger amounts, by filling supply contracts for the forts and for the Superintendent of Indian Affairs. These contracts were particularly valuable to the merchant because they meant the purchase of local produce—corn, wheat, lumber, and meat—which permitted the merchant’s customers to reduce their balances with him.

It was this latter source of exchange that further encouraged the large
mercantile houses to establish branches in small rural towns in order to
gain access to the produce of the countryside. Elsberg and Amberg had
sent Letcher and Ilfeld to Taos for just this purpose. Spiegelberg sent
the Dittenhofer brothers to Anton Chico and later, Sam Dittenhofer
and Nathan Bibo to Tecolote. Abraham and Zoldac Staab used Gerson
and Alexander Gusdorf in Taos, Arroyo Hondo, and Red River. Charles
Ilfeld had this in mind in financing William Gellerman in La Junta
(now Watrous), William Frank in El Monton de los Alamos, David
Winternitz in Tecolote, the Goldenbergs in Tularosa and Puerto de
Luna, and Philip Holzman in Fort Sumner, and later in Pastura and
Corona.

Much of the monetary exchange could be gained by freighting raw
materials to the eastern markets. Metal ores and Mexican silver dollars,
the latter bought at a discount and sold in the east to help replenish
the shortage of silver money, were prominent items. The basic export,
however, was sheep and wool. In this trade Jews and non-Jews were
prominent. Those who specialized in the raising of sheep with a small
store on the side, like the Bond brothers, were more likely to be non­
Jews. Those who specialized in merchandise with sheep on the side
were more likely to be Jews, although Jacob Gross of Gross, Blackwell,
and later Gross, Kelly, was content that this activity became the prov­
ince of Harry Kelly. However, Meyer Friedman of Las Vegas and the
Ilfeld Brothers of Albuquerque became specialists in sheep and wool
after ventures in mercantile trade, and Louis Baer and the Eisemanns
started as wool merchants. The big Jewish houses, however, kept their
investments in this activity in reasonable proportion to their mer­
chandise business.

The firms of Rosenwald and Ilfeld of Las Vegas were among those
mercantile houses who put the greatest emphasis on the sheep and
wool trade. In fact, they found it advantageous, in order to guarantee
an adequate supply of these exportable goods, to subsidize many of their
customers through a substantial expansion of the old Spanish partido
system where the partidarios paid a rent on a flock of sheep in either a
fixed amount of wool per head or through a percentage of the flock’s
increase. Although, contrary to belief, this was not a very profitable in­
vestment for the merchant, it did succeed in carrying many a Spanish­
speaking customer through the difficult days of the depression of the
’nineties. It also, of course, permitted a greater extension of credit to
these customers than could otherwise have been granted prudently.

It took more than the export of sheep and wool, however, to pay the
current bills of the merchants, especially in the early development of this system and in the depression of 1893 to 1897. Sources of credit for the merchant were all important. In this respect the German Jew had no peer. His connections were far and wide and the non-Jewish merchant must have found it extremely difficult to duplicate this advantage.

Many of these Jewish merchants in New Mexico may not have been as fortunately situated as Charles Ilfeld in this regard, but it is doubtful if the other leading ones were far behind. In the beginning, Ilfeld had a direct connection with Adolph Letcher's brother in Baltimore who had an established wholesale mercantile firm and who could serve as his agent for the purchase of any eastern goods. Actually before this, when Elsberg and Amberg was still a going concern in Santa Fe, Gustav Elsberg remained in New York as the purchasing agent for his firm as well as for Letcher and Ilfeld. After a short time of dependence upon a Samuel Rosenthal of Baltimore, Charles Ilfeld switched his allegiance to Solomon Beuthner who had chosen to specialize in New York City as a purchasing agent for firms in New Mexico. Beuthner, too, had excellent family connections in Germany and on the Continent that could have been of real help to Ilfeld if needed.

The credit terms available to Ilfeld through such agents were fairly liberal but, of course, they did not match the credit extensions of one year or more that he was forced to give to his New Mexico customers. High profit margins on merchandise sales helped to keep many merchants in a profitable position. Yet when slow times came, as they did frequently, he needed credit to tide him over. This the Jewish merchant often received through Jewish merchant bankers in New York City. Ilfeld relied heavily during the depression of the 'nineties upon his cousin Emil Wolff, of the substantial firm of Einstein and Wolff, for this aid. There can be little doubt that ready access to credit, once the Jewish merchant proved he was worthy, was one of the contributing factors to his successful dominance in the mercantile trade in New Mexico prior to 1900.

The commercial revolution in New Mexico, as elsewhere, always carried with it another aspect—the bringing of greater liquidity into the economy. Here again the Jewish merchant had a distinct talent. Several of them naturally turned toward banking as was the case of the Spiegelbergs, Jaffas, and Freudenthals. Generally, however, these merchants held exclusively to their own merchant credit system. Having sent many a trained relative or friend into the hinterland to found a "branch" and to gain access to produce, he also used this outlet, in many cases, as a
kind of branch banking device. New Mexico lost a productive branch credit system when the commercial bank, operating under an unfortunate unit banking law, took over. Ilfeld, for instance, kept these satellite stores on the lookout for new business—principally in the sheep and cattle industry—which in those days offered the brightest hope for economic expansion. In effect he made these people loans by giving reliable ranchers check books which they could use up to reasonable amounts to pay their labor and operating costs. Labor then could buy merchandise with these checks in Ilfeld-appointed stores.

The banking function expanded into attraction of savings deposits at interest. Even when the establishment of commercial banks became general—and except for Santa Fe, Las Vegas, and Albuquerque this was after the coming of the railroad and principally after 1900—the bankers found continuing reason to complain that people were entrusting their savings in disappointingly large amounts with the merchant. Yet neither a highly restrictive law in 1902 nor a special gubernatorial message in 1909 could curb the flow of these funds to the merchant who was an integral part of the lives of the customers he served.

It was the larger general merchant who conducted this intimate trade with the hinterland in a two-way flow of imports and exports with the financing mechanism built in. With some notable exceptions, like John Becker of Belen, and Harry Kelly of Las Vegas, it was the Jewish German merchant who, in competition with his own immigrant people, had risen to a pre-eminent economic position. He was the commercial revolution.

It would be wrong, however, to drop him so summarily and thereby imply that his contributions were limited to trade and capital formation. Just possibly he was also the most significant catalytic agent in the reasonably peaceful convergence of New Mexico’s three cultures and other ethnic groups. Of one culture he was a part, though an independent, eclectic, and adaptable part. These qualities were peculiarly fortunate for New Mexico.

It might be argued that the term “catalytic agent” is too weak; that his force in fusion of the cultures would be more appropriate. The inter-faith marriage between the newly-arrived bachelors and native girls has received prominence in stories of frontier phenomena. The pictured loneliness of these young male immigrants and the difficulties of distance and cost in returning to the fatherland for purposes of
wedlock have lent credence to these romantic tales. The United States census of 1880 could be interpreted as supporting these stories for it enumerates that forty-two per cent of the offspring of German-born fathers had native-born mothers—a figure, of course, that is applicable to both Jewish and non-Jewish fathers. The marriages of such prominent merchants as Henry Biernbaum, Louis Kahn, and Solomon Bibo to New Mexican women of Mexican-Spanish descent, and of Simon Bibo to the daughter of a Pueblo Indian official, also serve as basis for the generalization.

Actually inter-faith marriages must have been very few in number. After all, the Jews comprised less than one-half of one per cent of the population and a much smaller proportion than this could be classifiable in the adult, male, single stock variety. They were opposed, too, by a formidable number of Indian-Spanish and Spanish-Indian folk classifiable as maidens and señoritas. It would be embarrassing to all concerned if we were to assume any significant fusion of cultures in such an imbalance of the sexes. In a listing of thirty-eight marriages involving Jewish merchants, only thirty per cent were inter-faith and twenty per cent inter-cultural. Among the seventy per cent of intra-faith marriages, more than two-thirds were with native-born girls, daughters of Jewish merchants—usually from the eastern part of the United States.

It was not through mixed marriages that the Jew made his significant intercultural influence felt. It was rather through his penchant for seeking out business wherever it could be found, his ability to create economic opportunities for large numbers of the less fortunately situated people, and his willingness to assume social and political leadership.

His penchant for seeking business wherever it could be found is another way of saying that he held a minimum of cultural inhibitions in dealing with anyone in any walk of life with methods and terms that showed acute sympathy for the habits and modes of life of different groups of people. His ability to create economic opportunities for the less fortunately situated served to crack, at least, the cultural barriers of conditioned minds—barriers that in the long run can never stand immutable against the probing force of commerce. His willingness to assume social and political leadership was part of his intuitive fear of social and economic instability which has cultivated within him over centuries a sensitive social consciousness.

The fact that wherever there was hope for commerce in New Mexico,
there was most likely to have been a German Jewish merchant—usually the dominant trader—certainly holds more significance than merely that of a ubiquitous business man. The Jewish pueblo trading post; the Jewish sutler; the Jewish storekeeper in almost every settlement; the Jewish sedentary merchant of the cities who sat at the peak of the business hierarchy; the Jewish drummer peddling his way through every village and town and as often as not to every ranchhold; in total these businessmen had both social and economic influence far beyond their numbers.

The goods he possessed or commanded, and the understanding and sympathy that came with his cosmopolitanism, brought easy entrance to every door. His solid education and his acuteness in its use made it second nature for him to exert leadership in family and community problems. Solomon Floersheim, while traveling the countryside in the collection of sheep accounts, became widely known as “Doctor” because of his commonsense application of a minimum of medical knowledge. All these merchants were scribes for a population that was more than half illiterate. Any serious family problem from sickness to divorce or murder to burial, was as likely as not to produce a call to the man who had helped them so many times in so many ways before. The dominant position that these merchants held for so many years, and their direct and rather intimate relationships with all segments of the economy, suggests the probability of their more than casual influence on the peaceful mingling of Spanish, Indian, and American cultures.

Although trade has long been recognized as a powerful force in the mingling and enriching of cultures—who in the history of the world has a more glorious accomplishment in this regard than the traveling Jew of the ninth century A.D. and before?—one aspect of this phenomenon has seldom been emphasized. This is the compulsion that expanding trade brings economies to accept the talents of men with a lessening of emphasis upon social status—or upon racial, religious, or cultural differences. Economic lead is a strong force in shortening the social lag. A study of the Charles Ilfeld records has thrown some teasing lights upon this premise.

During the 'nineties in New Mexico, some concern was being expressed for the influx of Los Arabes, a Middle-Eastern gypsy-like people who had come to the United States along with the new waves of immigration from central, southern, and eastern Europe. With pack on back they trudged from place to place trading, principally, in sheep. They were centered at first in the Puerto de Luna area where they came in
contact with a number of Charles Ilfeld’s partidarios. They were alleged to have had tendencies toward sharp practices. Max Nordhaus wrote his big, burly sheep manager, Max Goldenberg, to let him know the names of the Arabs in that area that he might warn them not to buy any of Ilfeld’s mortgaged sheep. A month later Nordhaus was buying sheep from Los Arabes. His relationship with these people became closer and resulted in his renting to one of the families an Ilfeld storeroom on Bridge Street in Las Vegas. It is interesting to note that when the Ilfeld brothers of Albuquerque presented an applicant who sought to rent these storerooms (presumably because he would be a more orderly and socially desirable occupant—an issue that had been raised by Meyer Friedman with Nordhaus on an earlier occasion), Nordhaus replied that the Arabs had been tenants for years and “we do not think it advisable to put them out.” Many of Los Arabes became steady tenants of New Mexico and the progenitors of several of our prominent, present-day families.

The economic freedom of the frontier that turned into social freedom for these people as they proved their worth, may be seen in another and more exceptional case in which Charles Ilfeld unhesitatingly played a part. One of this merchant’s confidential agents, who was used as a go-between in cattle and sheep dealings where price and quality were subjects for bargaining, was Montgomery Bell, a Negro who seems to have begun his New Mexico days as stable manager for the Santa Fe Railway’s Montezuma Hotel at Las Vegas’ Hot Springs. Ilfeld was building a hotel there about the same time and perhaps it was then that he became acquainted with Bell. Montgomery Bell acquired his first capital, evidently, from the goat business at Lamy in association with the Onderdonck family there, and through cattle and sheep ranching at Los Tanos. He became a lender of small and large sums of money throughout northeastern New Mexico, bought a two-story home that is still a landmark off the northwest corner of the Old Town Plaza in Las Vegas, and retired to the business of being a capitalist. Charles Ilfeld early recognized the ability of Montgomery Bell, who has been described by A. T. Rogers as “a man of great probity,” and showed no hesitancy in making clear to all who would do business with the mercantile firm, Ilfeld’s confidence in and respect for this Negro citizen of New Mexico.

Charles Ilfeld and Max Nordhaus were the most successful German Jewish merchants in the Territory, but it is not likely that they were atypical in their promptness to accept abilities wherever and in
whatever bodily case they could be found. The nature of Ilfeld's business and the nature of the man caused him to operate on the broadest economic and social base. His balancing of imports and exports, each involving a wide variety of goods and opportunities, afforded him the luxury of shifting his efforts easily from less productive to more productive activities. The result was to encourage social and economic associations that were productive to people in all walks of life. There was nothing unusual in the variety of able friends that Charles Ilfeld had gained in this manner. The same could be said of the Spiegelbergs, the Staabs, the Jaffas, and the other Ilfeld brothers.

Ilfeld could command the same loyal response from Stephen Elkins, Senator from West Virginia and former delegate from New Mexico to Congress, as he did from his trusted agent and friend, Montgomery Bell—most probably an ex-slave. H. L. Waldo, Solicitor for the Santa Fe Railway, was a close friend and frequent aid in business matters, but no closer than Alexander Grzelachowski, the ex-priest, fondly known throughout the Territory as Padre Polaco, who, like Montgomery Bell, was often used by Ilfeld as an intermediary in livestock dealings. There was Thomas Catron who seemed willing enough to help with national and extra-New Mexico problems. The prestige of Wilson Waddingham, of Bell Ranch fame, was useful. The Territorial reputation of Pat Garrett, killer of Billy the Kid, was of frequent aid to Ilfeld in business matters in southern New Mexico. There was Richard Dunn, the Yankee from Maine, who, between personal adventures in alcohol and partnerships, would manage capably the Ilfeld enterprise while Charles went off to New York City to the auctions and the opera. Wherever Ilfeld was, thousands of pounds of his freight were entrusted to respected Spanish-speaking majordomos who, with full responsibility, conducted their cargos across lonely land. This was in contrast to the corporate railroad employees who worked by the hour and not by measures of self-accountability. These and many others represented a great variety of non-Jewish agents and personalities who extended Ilfeld's normal range of Jewish-merchant and merchant-banking associations. The interdependence of all who took part in this institutional system was deeply felt by each participant.

To Charles Ilfeld, the differences between these individuals were factually clear enough but, in the deeper view, one was as valuable as another. Each possessed singular talents. All these men, as long as they produced responsibly—and this was the sine qua non—were free to pursue economic opportunities unimpeded by social restrictions. Ilfeld
was typical of the German Jewish merchant who held hegemony over a mercantile system that gave impetus to these forces.

The influence of the Jewish merchant was great, too, through his enriching of frontier life. In the urban centers he was likely to be the leader in social affairs. If he was not always the beau of the ball, he often was the most entertaining musician. Of one gathering in Santa Fe, Howard W. Mitchell, in his 1877 journal, described his pleasures that led him to comment that "the few worthwhile people in Santa Fe are nearly all Jews" and that the excellent music had been furnished chiefly by Jews. Dramatic, literary, and reading clubs were recipients of the active support of the Jewish merchant. The Territorial newspapers are full of his cultural contributions and participations.

An economic and social leader could not have avoided the call of community responsibility and, fortunately, the Jew was willing to expend his energies in this direction, too. The beautifying of the Old Town Plaza of Las Vegas came as a result of the driving force of Frank Kihlberg with the strong support of the almost solid square of Jewish merchants facing the oval. Some of these merchants, including Charles Ilfeld, led a temporarily successful campaign to unite the old and new towns. In Santa Fe it was Zoldac Staab who, with the principal backing of Jewish merchants, raised the funds to build the new La Fonda Hotel when the railroad came. Albert Grunsfeld gave the momentum to the founding of the Commercial Club in Albuquerque. It was Charles Ilfeld, through his New York State political connections, who brought the crucial influence to name Las Vegas as the reunion center for the Rough Riders. It was this merchant, too, who seems to have made the necessary approaches to bring Governor Theodore Roosevelt to the first gathering in 1899.

Political positions, elected and appointed, were held in rather substantial numbers by the German Jewish merchant. The first Territorial Auditor, as well as an early Territorial Treasurer and a Secretary were the highest rank although a second generation son, Arthur Seligman, became governor of the state to duplicate similar achievements elsewhere of Moses Alexander of Idaho and Simon Bamberger of Utah. Many were members of the Legislature and a goodly number served as County Commissioners. Henry Jaffa became the first Mayor of Albuquerque and he was followed within a decade by Mike Mandell.

The advent of the German Jew to New Mexico was singularly fortunate. At the time a near-vacuum of commercial leadership was being
threatened. The excitement that had accompanied the sporadic departures of caravans from Missouri to plod along the storied Santa Fe Trail into the capricious markets of New and Old Mexico, had calmed to the humdrum of regular deliveries. The merchant-adventurer, in the order of things, was choosing to settle down in his older and more comfortable Eastern haunts. If it had not been for the German Jew who took the place of this traveling merchant, one can speculate that the commercial revolution would have moved at a slower pace. Furthermore, one can be certain that the amalgam of commercial trade would not have possessed the same adhesiveness in its intercultural attractions.

There would have been, of course, the German Protestant who most likely would have assumed commercial leadership though he still would have come later and in much fewer numbers than his Jewish countryman. Along with him would have appeared the Canadian- and the United States-born merchant, as well as the Irishman who seldom was a merchant. With these individuals we can envisage the establishment of similar large mercantile houses in the more important urban centers. It is not so easy, however, to assume that under such leadership the villages and minor towns would have gained the necessary economic strength to serve as substantial supporting satellites to the dominant urban centers. Nor is it easy to picture the peddlers and drummers tramping the semi-arid land or beating the sparsely spotted brush for the last fanega of business from provincial Spanish and Indian settlements. Rather, one is inclined to believe there would have been more commercial contentment with greater tendency to accept than to ferret out the trade.

It is almost certain there would not have been present in the same degree the appreciation for and adaptability to the stark landscape with its dusty and, in some eyes, dirty people. For instance, the typical traveling merchant of earlier days would have found sympathy with the recorded thoughts of Lt. Henry M. Lazelle as written in his diary in 1857 during the campaign against the Apaches. In rising one morning and in throwing open the flaps of his tent to look out on southwestern New Mexico, he thought in marvelled cynicism: "[this] deformed and wretched fetus of creation. This antedeluvial surface, belonging to an era of a thousand ages below the famous old red sandstone deposits, and which seems but a half finished work from the mighty hand of Jehovah, thrown aside in utter disgust at its worthlessness." His comments, too, concerning the people he had seen throughout New Mexico were no different than many a judgment of other visitors. The "indolent
worthlessness of their population, and the cursing idleness and superstition of the whole degraded Mexican, or rather, Spanish-Mexico-Indian-Negro race—Incapable of further advancement and totally unconscious of their present degraded position."

The Englishman, George Frederick Ruxton, in New Mexico in 1846, gave his impressions of the people of Socorro as "dirty, mean, lazy, beggardly." Typical, also, of travelers' responses was Mitchell's comment on the little settlement of Tecolote which he described as "shockingly impure"—"almost purely Mexican." One can not read the diaries and other firsthand impressions of the early Territorial period of New Mexico without knowing these quotations to be fairly representative of the views of those who came from a more ordered western civilization—if we except the more hopeful outlook of the German Jew.

This immigrant merchant, from Solomon Jacob Spiegelberg on, seized upon this land as a place where the breadth of his services would find demand; where the very meanness of the economy would offer opportunity for material services; where the minority and—majority groups could be led in sympathy and not exploited in contempt. This new settler envisaged an expanding economy that should bring freedom of views and a minimum of revulsion to those whose success would come in spite of obvious distinguishing characteristics. This man who had grown to manhood in the expanding industrial economy of Germany and who had seen freedom attach itself to all as the spreading demand for talents took hold; who had seen this happen in spite of the theories of Friedrich List, or the railings of Richard Wagner—found New Mexico a peculiar complex of economic and cultural forces that promised far more than the merely adventurous or the smug could see.

When the world-wide depression of the 'seventies brought a definite reaction against the Jews in Germany and elsewhere in Europe, the German Jew in New Mexico was assuming strong leadership. In the difficult 'eighties and depressive 'nineties when an economic collapse again had hit the western world, the pogroms against the Jew in Russia violated all conscience. At the same time the German Jew in New Mexico was carrying an economy (not entirely alone) upon his back with the credit he extended and with the faith he displayed in the native population of the countryside.

Yet the leadership he manifested transcended the commercial success of his undertakings. When Erna Fergusson, acute interpreter of people and things in Territorial New Mexico, who is also the granddaughter of the pioneer merchant Franz Huning, was asked who there may have
been in Albuquerque who would have been capable of bringing the people together in amicable settlement of a threatened Catholic-Protestant quarrel over the education of the community's children, she quickly answered: "Why, of course, it would have been Louis Ilfeld." If this question, involving any other serious community problem, had been posed in Santa Fe, the answer would have evoked the name of Abraham Staab. In Las Vegas the names of Marcus Brunswick, Charles Ilfeld and others, would have been close to the tip of the community tongue. In Roswell, Henry Jaffa, formerly of Albuquerque, would have stepped forward. In Las Cruces it would have been Henry Lesinsky. And thus would the response have been in town after town, and in village after village, as the German Jew proved his mettle through the most valued of all human attributes—a social conscience buttressed with economic effectiveness.

PRESENTED ABOVE is the main text of the University of New Mexico Sixth Annual Research Lecture, delivered on May 1, 1959, by Dr. William J. Parish. Dean of the University of New Mexico's College of Business Administration, William Jackson Parish is teacher, writer, lecturer, historian, scholar, economist, and tireless worker in community and University affairs. Born in Franklin, Pennsylvania, Dr. Parish attended Brown University (Ph.B., 1929), and Harvard University (M.B.A., 1931, and D.C.S., 1950). In the 30's he was on the staff of a Cleveland bank, and subsequently was associated with business firms in Cleveland, then in Albuquerque. In 1943 he joined the Economics and Business Administration staff of the University of New Mexico, becoming Professor of Business Administration in 1952. Dr. Parish's publications suggest the diversity of his interests and his awareness of the joining corners of the various shelves of scholarship: "The Small Loan Problem in New Mexico" and "The Spiritual Significance of the Economic Value of Man" were printed in NMQ; "With Due Respect to Adam Smith" appeared in the Southwestern Social Science Quarterly; "Merchant Banking Showed the Way in Early New Mexico" was published in Mid-Continent Banker. In 1956 Dr. Paris discussed "The Relationship of Democracy and Free Institutions to Production" before the Institute of World Affairs at the University of Southern California. Under a grant from the Business History Foundation in 1951-52, Dr. Parish continued his study of a pioneer New Mexico firm which Harvard University Press is issuing under the title, the Charles Ilfeld Company; a Study of the Rise and Decline of Mercantile Capitalism in New Mexico. The present article is to be reprinted in the January, 1960, New Mexico Historical Review, with footnotes added.