



Fractured Faiths: Spanish Judaism, The Inquisition, and New World Identities



HERITAGE
SANTA FE

Sun, May 22–
Sat, December 31, 2016

Venue

New Mexico History Museum, 113
Lincoln Avenue, Santa Fe, NM
87501

[View map](#)

Phone: 505-476-5200

Admission

\$12 (general admission)

More information

[New Mexico History Museum](#)

Credits

Presented by the New Mexico
History Museum

The exhibition reunites Spanish artifacts with their New World counterparts for the first time to reveal the history of the Spanish Sephardim and their long heritage within the Americas.

In the 10th through 13th centuries, Spain flowered into waves of golden ages, as Muslim, Jewish and Catholic peoples achieved new heights in science, philosophy and the arts. That triculturalism, though, endured repeated challenges, first by fundamentalist Islamic Almohads in the 12th century, then by Christian kingdoms in the late-14th century, when it finally deteriorated into dissent, segregation and riots.

By 1492, when King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella unified the nation under the Catholic crown, cultural chaos roared forth. A royal edict ordered all Jews to either leave the country or convert to Catholicism within four months—or else. (A similar edict befell Muslims in 1502.) For those who converted, the Spanish Inquisition (and later, the Portuguese and Mexican Inquisitions) stood ready to prosecute any Christian who failed to abide. Violators would endure prisons, torture and death.

What would you do? Repudiate the language, religion and customs of your people in order to stay in your home and with your family? Or walk away from all you owned, all you knew, and embark upon treacherous journeys across land and sea toward a life you could barely imagine?



Fractured Faiths: Spanish Judaism, The Inquisition, and New World Identities stands on the brink of that chasm and leaps into a diaspora that dates to biblical times. For the first time, a major institution tells the comprehensive story of how Spain’s Jewry found a tenuous foothold in North America. Despite continued persecution, its people persisted—sometimes as upright Catholic conversos, sometimes as self-identifying “crypto-Jews.”

Emblems of that struggle for cultural identity appear even today: A menorah carved into a tombstone in a Catholic cemetery; oral histories of tangled roots; Hispanic villages where genetic clusters speak to Jewish lineage. A global story that played out on New Mexico soil, this monumental exhibit details one of history’s most compelling chronicles of human tenacity and the power of cultural identity.