

# Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Boston

presents

## From Iberia to the Pale: Sephardim in Eastern Europe

David Gitlitz

Sunday, May 19, 2013, 1:30 pm

Temple Emanuel, Newton

In the waning years of the 15th century the Iberian kingdoms forced their Jews to convert to Catholicism or go into exile. Those who left Spain and Portugal in the chaotic 1490s were joined over the next 200 years by a steady trickle of *conversos*, converted Jews and their descendants, who hoped to escape the traumatic secrecy of crypto-Judaism in someplace where they could practice their religion openly and safely. The largest segment of the early Sephardic diaspora sought their new homes in the countries of the Mediterranean; many in the second, third, and later generations migrated to the commercial centers of Western Europe. While eastern Europe was never a major magnet for Sephardic immigration, some Spanish and Portuguese Jews and *conversos* did settle in the countries of the east. **Professor David Gitlitz** will explore why, and when, and by what route they got there, and what has happened to them.

Gitlitz will also explore the idiosyncrasies of Spanish and Portuguese names, how the special circumstances of crypto-Judaism established the obfuscation of genealogy as a survival strategy, and suggest some approaches to working through these complexities.

**David Gitlitz**, recently retired from his long career as a university professor, has written extensively on Iberian crypto-Jews, focusing on the history, religious customs, and migration patterns of the Sephardic Jews and converts from that period. Gitlitz received his undergraduate degree from Oberlin and his PhD in Hispanic Studies from Harvard. His books on Jewish themes have garnered two National Jewish Book Awards and the Lucy Dawidowicz Prize for History.

Temple Emanuel is at 385 Ward St, Newton Centre, MA.

For detailed directions and maps, visit our web page at <http://emanuel.jgsgb.org>.

Admission is free for members, \$5 for non-members.

Refreshments will be served.

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### Upcoming programs:

Jun 9 1:30 pm, JGSGB Panel,  
How to Get the Most Out of the Upcoming International Jewish Genealogy  
Conference

Come to the 33d IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy  
in Boston, August 4-9, 2013. Registration is now open at  
[www.iajgs2013.org/register\\_conference.cfm](http://www.iajgs2013.org/register_conference.cfm).

Volunteer for the conference at [www.2013.jgsgb.org](http://www.2013.jgsgb.org).

The JGSGB is dedicated to helping people discover and research their Jewish family history. We offer monthly education programs and a comprehensive beginners' course, maintain an extensive collection of research materials, and publish the award-winning journal *Mass-Pocha*.

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