

Maria Apodaca



Maria Apodaca's family has been in New Mexico since 1598 when Captain Juan de Onate brought the first colonists to what was New Spain. The family had previously been forced to convert to Catholicism. As the family historian, she became interested in DNA. Her paternal Y-DNA is J2-M172 with the Cohen Modal Signature. Her research goes back to Diego Blandin Gonzales (b.1558 Coimbra, Portugal; d.1598 Nueva Espana). His sons came to today's New Mexico with Onate in 1598. However, even more important than dry dates and names is her compelling personal journey.

As the first returnee in her family, she is active in Jewish community life. A former board member of Congregation Nahalat Shalom, she is a leader of Casa Sefarad New Mexico, and event coordinator, annual Festival Djudeo-Epanyol/Resiliencia. She is co-vice president of membership, Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies; steering committee member, Jewish Genealogical Society of New Mexico; speaks for Road Scholars on New Mexico's *conversos* and crypto-Jews; and has presented at the conferences of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS) and the Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies. Now retired and busier than ever, Maria has 30 years' experience in hospital patient care coordination.