



Dear Reader,

From time to time **La Granada** mobilizes to publish an interim issue bringing important and timely news to our subscribers and to members of SCJS. This is one of those issues!

Please share the editorial interview with Joseph Lovett among your colleagues and friends. Interest in the stories of the Jews who left Spain is building! The impact of what happened to those individuals and families transcends generations, centuries, and international borders. Joe Lovett and his documentary film crew want to tell these long hidden stories and to document the testimonials of those who are still searching for their truth.

Growing numbers of crypto-Jews and others who suspect that they are descendants of *anousim* or *conversos* are seeking recognition. Others are not so sure that it is yet safe. The choices that people made in 1492, and the choices made by people now, offer glimpses into identity studies, religious and cultural practices, historical record-keeping, language and linguistics, arts and culinary traditions, and more.

What is it about SECRECY that intrigues authors of historical fiction? Why the fascination with hidden relics and forgotten memories? What is it about human nature that is revealed in the wake of the journeys of people who chose life paths that separated parents from children and siblings from one another?

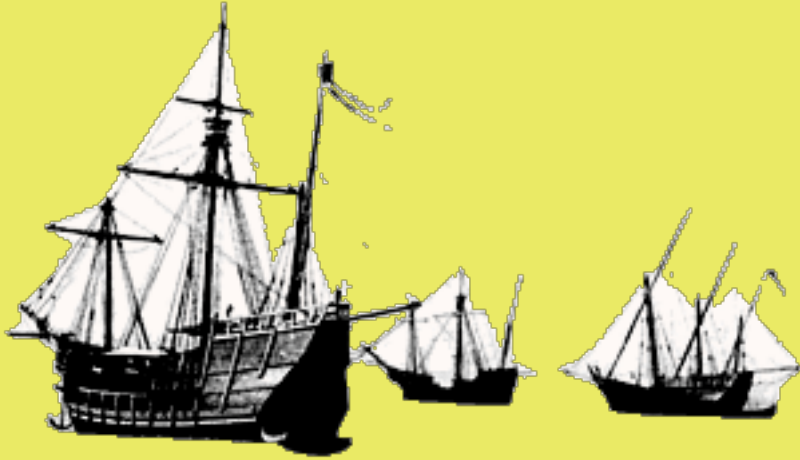
These questions connect us all.

Best wishes during this season of Spring.

Debbie



CHILDREN OF THE INQUISITION



Interview with Joe Lovett

A fascinating trans-media project has been brewing for the past four years.

Award-winning film journalist

Joseph Lovett, well known for a distinguished career producing ground-breaking documentaries on emergent public health issues, now turns his journalist's attention to a subject that has fascinated him for many years, the legacies of the Jews who fled the Inquisition and Expulsion from Spain in 1492.



Joe Lovett

CHILDREN OF THE INQUISITION, Joe Lovett's newest documentary, will take viewers along on a journey with the descendants of Jews persecuted during the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions. He and his crew have already been recording the stories of individuals who tell about their personal quests to confirm their distant Sephardic Jewish roots. The foundation of the film will be shining a light on these individual and family journeys in order to "reveal a history of masked and buried identities created by the torture, forced conversions and secrecy of the Inquisitions and ensuing diaspora." The film will explore how the "profound historical, cultural and personal impacts of these events can still be felt in our 21st century world."

Four years ago, the crew at **LOVETT STORIES + STRATEGIES** began filming interviews with a variety of individuals including descendants of crypto-Jews in New York, El Paso, Texas, and even Jamaica. They interviewed authors of personal genealogical research, religious leaders, and scholars from a variety of academic fields. The documentary CHILDREN OF THE INQUISITION began to take shape.



Debbie Wohl Isard

As Joe and his crew gear up for the next phase of filming in Spain and Portugal, he made time to talk with me. **I had questions about what makes this documentary different from all other documentaries.** (Passover on my mind?)

"Making this film CHILDREN OF THE INQUISITION," Joe told me, **"gives us a chance to reframe history and identity. It forces us to really define our view of the world, of ourselves and others."** Along his career, Joe has talked with people all over the world and his experiences have informed his beliefs that **"people share more commonalities than differences. We need more platforms to engage in harmonious discussions."**

Joe and I spoke about the distinct components of CHILDREN OF THE INQUISITION. Before reaching out for participation, financial and otherwise, Joe knew that it was important to tell the story first. His instinct about this



was apparently spot on and reinforced by the launch of the film's trailer last month at Congregation Shearith Israel in New York City.

During the final moments of Q & A, Joe told me, a young black man named Giovanni, wearing a yarmulke, revealed some of his personal connection to the story as a descendant of banished Jews. Before seeing the film, might some of those gathered that evening not taken seriously this young man's recounting of his family's history? Now that they know more, is it more likely that they could now be open to the possibility? "Yes," Joe says, and more.

In published remarks, Joe has said of CHILDREN OF THE INQUISITION, "We believe this project will personalize history and move people to explore their family origins. For those on the trail of Sephardic roots, or others who may be unaware of their Jewish identity, our multi-platform project will offer windows and connections to that community. We will invite the public to contribute their own stories to our project, exchange experiences and perspectives and make supportive connections"

Joe mentioned an interactive website and a board-game for families as subsequent phases of the ultimate project that he envisions. The first phase of CHILDREN OF THE INQUISITION is making the documentary film. Until recently, the production costs have been borne by Joe's company LOVETT STORIES + STRATEGIES. Realizing that it was not financially feasible to

continue without additional resources, Joe partnered with The Independent Filmmaker Project and Fractured Atlas, two companies that provide professional resources for film artists. Most recently, Joe enlisted the popular crowd-sourcing platform Indiegogo to help raise awareness and funding specifically for the crucial next phase of filming in Spain.

I asked Joe if there was a reason that he is seeking funding according to the various phases.

"Yes, only because I think we have to prove to people that this is a subject that all people can relate to and find fascinating. Most Jewish histories are Jews talking to Jews about Jews. CHILDREN OF THE INQUISITION is much more inclusive than that. Everyone has been affected by these migrations."

Joe conceived this far-reaching multi-platform approach during the course of the past twenty years, but the kernel of inspiration indeed can be traced as far back as the time of his Bar Mitzvah in the mid-1950's. As he told me, his imagination was sparked when the rabbi who he held in high esteem traveled to Spain to do original source document research on the subject of the Inquisition and Expulsion. [click here to see the video of Joe's personal story](#)

During his long career as a journalist covering all sorts of subjects, Joe developed the sense that *"research in almost any subject often digs deep into a narrow silo, but not side-to-side."* Continuing with the image, Joe expressed emphatically, *"We need to collaborate across fields of specialty. We need to dig broad and deep, down and around, until we figure out how things come together."*

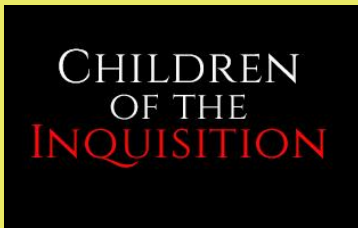
It's like asking a group of people to close their eyes and name the animal in front of them, we agreed as our conversation progressed. They each feel a different part of the body and are sure of their independent conclusions, even though they are wrong-the true answer is revealed to be an elephant.

"Ok, so what is the elephant here and now, as you tell the stories of CHILDREN OF THE INQUISITION?"

Joe replied, *"We've got to bring things together-get people to talk to one another. It really is a small world when we consider our parallel roots. The human story IS history. Telling the stories of the 'little people' opens the opportunity to explore not just the facts about famous names and events, but to ask questions -- to conjecture -- about what could have happened!"*

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In subsequently published remarks, Joe Lovett answers another anticipated question: Why crowd-funding?



"Because we want as many people participating in Children of the Inquisition as possible. The success of the project depends on your engagement with the journeys of our characters (and of their ancestors), and with the idea that identity is dynamic and shaped by an often perilous history.

The possibility of being forced to trade identity for safety affects us all in some way. These stories must be told." --Joseph Lovett

[Click here](#) to find out how you can participate in the history-making and history-preserving documentary project: CHILDREN OF THE INQUISITION. Your financial contributions as well as your contributions of personal stories are both invited and appreciated.

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Debbie

Debbie Wohl Isard,
Editor