



American Ghost: A Family's Extraordinary History on the Desert Frontier

Hannah Nordhaus

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“A haunting story about the long reach of the past.”—Maureen Corrigan, NPR’S *Fresh Air*

“In this intriguing book, [Nordhaus] shares her journey to discover who her immigrant ancestor really was—and what strange alchemy made the idea of her linger long after she was gone.” —*People*

La Posada—“place of rest”—was once a grand Santa Fe mansion. It belonged to Abraham and Julia Staab, who emigrated from Germany in the mid-nineteenth century. After they died, the house became a hotel. And in the 1970s, the hotel acquired a resident ghost—a sad, dark-eyed woman in a long gown. Strange things began to happen there: vases moved, glasses flew, blankets were ripped from beds. Julia Staab died in 1896—but her ghost, they say, lives on.

In *American Ghost*, Julia’s great-great-granddaughter, Hannah Nordhaus, traces her ancestor’s transfiguration from nineteenth-century Jewish bride to modern phantom. Family diaries, photographs, and newspaper clippings take her on a riveting journey through three hundred years of German history and the American immigrant experience. With the help of historians, genealogists, family members, and ghost hunters, she weaves a masterful, moving story of fin-de-siècle Europe and pioneer life, villains and visionaries, medicine and spiritualism, imagination and truth, exploring how lives become legends, and what those legends tell us about who we are.

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