



# American Ghost: A Family's Haunted Past in the Desert Southwest

Hannah Nordhaus

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"A haunting story about the long reaches 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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