



Photo by Patrick McFarland

New book chronicles Jewish life in Nevada and the West

A Jewish, Latvian-born tailor patented the design for the world-famous Levi's blue jeans. An industrious Jewish casino pioneer with a dubious past played an important role in the development of Las Vegas. A Jewish immigrant succeeded against all odds in constructing a four-mile-long tunnel to gain access to the riches of the Comstock Lode. These and hundreds of other historical figures helped to shape the American West, with the one common bond of Judaism and their commitment—in one form or another—to their ancestry and their faith.

For over 150 years, Jews have been involved in virtually every part of the state of Nevada: as businessmen; agrarians; scholars; educators; artists; politicians; and civic, professional, and religious leaders. But until now the history of Jews in Nevada has been only rarely touched upon in history books. As John P. Marschall,

the author of *Jews in Nevada* recalls, "I intended to write a critical history of religion and politics in Nevada... I chose the Jews, only to find that virtually nothing had been written on them." This fascinating historical study provides readers with an understanding of Jews and their place in American history, and in particular the important roles they played and contributions they made in communities throughout Nevada and the West.

Marschall is an emeritus professor of history at the University of Nevada, Reno. Hailing from Chicago, he was an ordained Catholic priest from 1961 to 1972. He earned his Ph.D. in religious history and constitutional law in 1965 at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.

He began working in the Department of History in 1969, becoming an associate professor in 1980. During his career at Nevada,

John Marschall poses in the Honor Court's Rose Garden on the southern end of campus.

he served in several administrative capacities, including chair of the Faculty Senate, interim director of Finance and Administration, director of University Services, director of Intercollegiate Athletic Drug Education, Testing & Treatment Program, and associate vice president of Student Life. In addition, he was the associate pastor at Our Lady of Wisdom church and the director of the Newman Center. In 1969, he helped create the Center for Religion and Life, working with students and faculty to address important societal issues of the time. Marschall retired in 2002.

Jews in Nevada, published in 2008 by University of Nevada Press, includes 456 pages and 83 black and white photographs. It is available from your favorite bookseller.