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**Once We Were Slaves: The Extraordinary Journey of a Multiracial Jewish Family
Virtual Public Talk, February 1**

NEW BRUNSWICK/PISCATAWAY, N.J. – A descendant of one of the most prominent Jewish families since the American Revolution, Blanche Moses firmly believed her maternal ancestors were members of the Sephardic elite. Yet she found herself at a dead end when it came to her grandmother’s maternal line. Award-winning historian Laura Arnold Leibman spent a decade unraveling the mystery of Moses’s ancestry, discovering that her grandmother and great-uncle began their lives poor, Christian, and enslaved in Barbados. Leibman’s work illuminates how they transformed their lives, becoming free, wealthy, Jewish, and—at times—white.

This family’s fascinating story is the subject of Dr. Leibman’s virtual talk on Tuesday, February 1, at 7:30 p.m. Based on her new book *Once We Were Slaves: The Extraordinary Journey of a Multiracial Jewish Family* (Oxford University Press, 2021), Leibman examines family heirlooms and other artifacts they left behind in Barbados, Suriname, London, Philadelphia, and, finally, New York. Her work sheds important new light on the diversity of early American Jewish communities, the fluidity of race, and the complex dynamics of race and religion in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Free and open to the public, the talk is sponsored by the **Allen and Joan Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life** at Rutgers University, and is made possible through an endowed gift from Toby and Herbert Stolzer. Advance registration is required at **BildnerCenter.Rutgers.edu**.

Laura Arnold Leibman is Professor of English and Humanities at Reed College. She has published widely, and her previous book *The Art of the Jewish Family: A History of Women in Early New York in Five Objects* (Bard Graduate Center, 2020) won three National Jewish Book Awards.

The Allen and Joan Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life connects the university with the community through public lectures, symposia, Jewish communal initiatives, cultural events, and teacher training.

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