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ALLIANCE DOCUMENTARY DEPICTING FIRST SUCCESSFUL JEWISH FARMING COLONY IN AMERICA TO PREMIERE AT STOCKTON UNIVERSITY ON APRIL 16

Galloway, New Jersey (March 22, 2023) — Stockton University will host the premiere screening of **ALLIANCE**, a new documentary about the first successful Jewish farming colony in America, on Sunday, April 16 at 12:30 p.m. The feature-length film is the directorial debut of Susan Donnelly, a descendant of one of the founding families of the Alliance Colony.

The film shares the stories of the journey of 43 immigrant families from tyrannical Russia to the desolate fields of southern New Jersey in 1882. Over the next few decades, hundreds of other immigrant families joined the settlers. By 1908, the colony had grown to 1,000 people and developed into several neighboring villages.

The film tells the improbable story of the settlers, who were forbidden to own land in the old country so knew nothing of farming when they arrived in America. But with the business acumen of carpenters, grocers, tailors, and salesmen, and a strong commitment to education and culture, the expanding group of refugees was able to claim the land, harness its bounty, and create a legacy that has been reborn six generations later.

Ms. Donnelly is memorializing the story of her ancestors on the heels of an Alliance colony resurgence. A new nonprofit, Alliance Community Reboot, is dedicated to rebuilding a Jewish farm-based community in the original area of Alliance.

“My great-great grandfather was one of these original settlers who arrived on America’s shores in 1882 with no idea what awaited him but certain that this was the opportunity of a lifetime,” said Ms. Donnelly. “I am grateful to be able to share the settlers’ stories as told by Alliance descendants and scholars. I am especially thrilled that Stockton University has committed to turning a spotlight on the significance and contributions of the Alliance colony to American history.”

The film’s premiere is accompanied by several events over the weekend, including a Q&A with historians and descendants, a post-screening reception, a descendant “family” dinner, and a bus tour of the Alliance and Woodbine colonies. The premiere coincides with the release of a new book, *A Farmer’s Daughter: Bluma*, about one of the original settlers, and the launch of a new digital museum by the Alliance Heritage Center at Stockton University.

“The Alliance Heritage Center is dedicated to preserving the history of the Alliance Colony and telling the stories of the families who lived there,” said Thomas Kinsella, director of the Alliance Heritage Center at Stockton University. “Our plans for the future are ambitious and we believe our new digital museum will become a major asset to share the history of Alliance, its surrounding communities, and Jewish farming in the Garden State.”

The film will premiere at Stockton University’s Main Campus Center Theatre on Sunday April 16 at 12:30 p.m. A 3:00 p.m. reception will follow. Tickets are available at [Eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com).