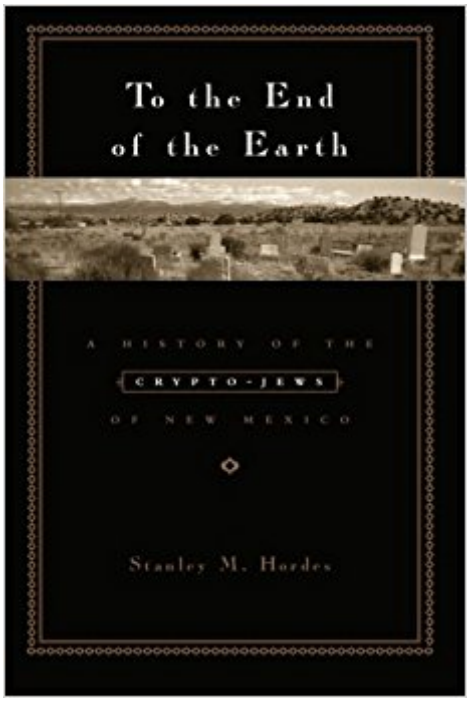
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To The End Of The Earth: A History Of The Crypto-Jews Of New Mexico



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Synopsis

In 1981, while working as New Mexico State Historian, Stanley M. Hordes began to hear stories of Hispanos who lit candles on Friday night and abstained from eating pork. Puzzling over the matter, Hordes realized that these practices might very well have been passed down through the centuries from early crypto-Jewish settlers in New Spain. After extensive research and hundreds of interviews, Hordes concluded that there was, in New Mexico and the Southwest, a Sephardic legacy derived from the converso community of Spanish Jews.In To the End of the Earth, Hordes explores the remarkable story of crypto-Jews and the tenuous preservation of Jewish rituals and traditions in Mexico and New Mexico over the past five hundred years. He follows the crypto-Jews from their Jewish origins in medieval Spain and Portugal to their efforts to escape persecution by migrating to the New World and settling in the far reaches of the northern Mexican frontier. Drawing on individual biographies (including those of colonial officials accused of secretly practicing Judaism), family histories, Inquisition records, letters, and other primary sources, Hordes provides a richly detailed account of the economic, social and religious lives of crypto-Jews during the colonial period and after the annexation of New Mexico by the United States in 1846. While the American government offered more religious freedom than had the Spanish colonial rulers, cultural assimilation into Anglo-American society weakened many elements of the crypto-Jewish tradition. Hordes concludes with a discussion of the reemergence of crypto-Jewish culture and the reclamation of Jewish ancestry within the Hispano community in the late twentieth century. He examines the publicity surrounding the rediscovery of the crypto-Jewish community and explores the challenges inherent in a study that attempts to reconstruct the history of a people who tried to leave no documentary record.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

To the End of the Earth is a true magnum opus and a fitting conclusion to decades of research. (David Caffey Prime Time)For those tracking... family histories, this may prove invaluable... For any reader interested in how culture survives, this book is an inspiring one. (New Mexico)For any reader interested in how culture survives, this book is an inspiring one. (New Mexico Magazine)The most extensively researched book on the subject to date... a compelling sociological study. (Ze’ev Glicenstein The Canadian Jewish News)This book, honestly researched and beautifully written, can enlarge understanding of the troubled road followed by our evolving Western civilization. (Marc Simmons Santa Fe New Mexican)A compelling sociological study. (Bill Gladstone AVOTAYNU)This is a well told and stunningly researched detective story. (David J. Webber Western Historical Quarterly)Remarkable-even astonishing-though, that we have had to wait until 2005 for a book to appear on a topic that is so intrinsically interesting and that so directly links North American history with that of the Iberian Peninsula. (Hispanic American Historical Review)Hordes builds a compelling case that can not be easily dismissed. (Dr. Fred Reiss The Midwest Book Review)Hordes has made an important contribution to our understanding of the religious and ethnic diversity of the Southwest and of the force that the beliefs and practices he has brought to light continues to exert in the lives of the people of the region. (Thomas M. Cohen The Americas)[Hordes] reasons from past to present, and the present back to the past, constructing a message about the role of history in understanding how we see ourselves and how others see us. (El Palacio)By both assembling the genealogical legacy of Judaism in New Mexico, and supplementing it with rich insight into the everyday practices of crypto-Jewish communities in New Spain, Hordes has made a remarkable contribution to the study of these people. (Kathleen Holscher H-NewMexico)Any scholar seriously interested in global history or putting the "American experience" in a global context would be well served to pick up a copy. (Paul Kahan Religious Studies Review)This book’s combination of traditional archival research and oral history makes it a valuable addition to syllabi. (Andrea Orzoff The Public Historian)

Stanley M. Hordes explores the remarkable story of crypto-Jews and the tenuous preservation of Jewish rituals and traditions in Mexico and New Mexico over the past five hundred years. He follows the crypto-Jews from their origins in medieval Spain and Portugal to their efforts to escape

persecution by migrating to the New World and settling in the far reaches of the northern Mexican frontier. Drawing on individual biographies, family histories, Inquisition records, letters, and other primary sources, Hordes provides a richly detailed account of the economic, social, and religious lives of crypto-Jews during the colonial period and after the annexation of New Mexico by the United States in 1846. He concludes with a discussion of the reemergence of crypto-Jewish culture and the reclamation of Jewish ancestry within the Hispano community.

The Spanish Inquisition was no joke. Jews fled to Portugal when the Inquisition started in Spain. They moved to Mexico when the Inquisition came to Portugal. They moved to New Mexico to get away when the Inquisition came to Mexico. All of this is being confirmed with DNA evidence as well as the historical record. The author has made a thorough search of the extensive Spanish colonial records. I particularly enjoyed the story of the Governor of New Mexico who was originally convicted by the Inquisition, but won on appeal. He convinced the judges that the nick in a certain area was a war wound, not a ritual circumcision.

This book has a lot of history that was not taught to us in school. Many of my grandparents were living in this territory before the revolutionary war with England, the civil war between the states and when New Mexico became a state. It is interesting how the English from the east affected the language and culture out here in New Mexico. I still remember getting into trouble for speaking Spanish while in school out in the playground. It is worth buying.

Interesting reading for someone very interested in early southwestern history of the United States or history of Spain in the 1500's through the 1700's. There is a wealth of information on the history of the Spanish Inquisition and how Judaism, the Catholic Church, and settlement of what is now New Mexico, Colorado, and Kansas were affected.

This would fall just a bit outside my normal reading, but my spouse's last name is a Sephardic Jewish word that is Spanish in origin. She has a Catholic upbringing. Her DNA is linked to a great Spanish General in Mexico. My interests in Islammic Spain and Mexican history lead me to this interesting and esoteric specialized study. How authoritative or how specualtive it all is was not really my concern. I sought information on how a Sephardic Jewish word from Spain could wind up as a Catholic Mexican name and be associated with the migration northward, across the El Paso of the Jews into New Mexico, USA and be associated with the founding of Sante Fe. In between it all

are Jews being mistreated and displaced, Mexican’s being mistreated and displaced, Native American’s being mistreated and displaced, Spanish settlers in the America’s hiding their Star of David insignia’s and teaches a lesson in survival and escaping the horrors of the Spanish Inquisition. Jews suddenly became Catholic at the point of a sword and left Spain for a better situation. Unfortunately the Inquisition followed them to Mexico, so they headed for the most remote location known in order to escape and settled the town of Sante Fe, New Mexico. It also includes many disturbing accounts of well educated and wealthy Spanish noblemen being run off their ranch estates by illiterate land grabbing cowboys who somehow felt it was their birthright to rob, steal and murder if they really wanted something badly enough. An all too familiar story in the founding of the so called "New World."

More than 700 footnotes add up to an extraordinary story well worth the telling: quite a few "manitos" of Northern New Mexico were probably crypto-Jews who preserved parts of their own culture through centuries of isolation. So we discover that Hispanos and Hebrews are both part of Chicano history in the American Southwest. Since these individuals covered their tracks well and most are long dead, the trail was cold and neglected. However, Dr. Hordes did not take the easy, glamorous and lucrative route to selling their extraordinary history. Instead, he and his colleagues spent years and years pouring over thousands of documents. As one who has looked at a little of this "paleography," let me testify that a person can go blind staring at that terrible, ancient, blotched and blotted handwriting. I appreciate such careful scholarship; it lays out all possible evidence without overreaching. Thanks to this book, a vast number of dots have been laid out on the map of New Mexican history. While each by itself is not conclusive, when I connect the dots I see the fascinating faces of religious dissidents who courageously preserved their own beliefs in the face of enormous social pressure. They went "To the Ends of the Earth" to preserve their integrity. I find their story inspiring.

Excellent read for any one with Spanish roots. Clearly written!

The book is more a scholarly work than a good read. Too much detail on ancestry and too much speculation on background of families.

Since it features my family as one of the northern NM families with Jewish roots in Spain, I found it most interesting! Hordes research seems thorough.

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