The Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies was founded in 1990 by Dr. Stanley Hordes of Santa Fe, New Mexico, and Rabbi Joshua Stampfer of Portland, Oregon. The SCJS is the major academic organization conducting and encouraging research on the Crypto-Jews of Spain and Portugal and their descendants today. Of course, this also involves significant attention being given to the Inquisition and to its ramifications for Sephardic Jews as well as for the general Jewish community. The well-known Judaica author Cecil Roth popularized the term marranos in his 1932 book *A History of the Marranos*, but, because of the negative meaning attached to the word marrano by supporters of the Inquisition, today the term preferred by descendants and scholars is Crypto-Jews (i.e., Secret Jews), or anusim (Hebrew for forced ones).

Membership in the SCJS is composed of scholars interested in crypto-Jews, descendants of crypto-Jews, and others interested in the topic from a historical, sociological, anthropological, religious, ethnic, literary, philosophical, or other perspective. The Society is nonreligious, and membership is open to all. Today, there is much interest, both academic and personal, in the history and contemporary status of crypto-Jews, and a number of distinguished scholars have published in the area. Especially in recent years, a number of people, especially, but not limited to, Hispanics, have returned or converted to Judaism, frequently in part because of knowledge of a previously-suppressed Jewish heritage. Especially the southwestern United States, and secondarily Miami, Florida, both areas with many Hispanic residents, are two areas of special activity, as is Portland, Oregon. This contemporary phenomenon of returning/converting also is of specific interest to some researchers.

The SCJS, with Dolly Sloan as editor, publishes *HaLapid: The Journal of the Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies*, a combination newsletter and journal. Published four times per year, *HaLapid* (Hebrew for The Torch) mostly includes refereed academic research articles, personal stories by descendants of crypto-Jews, and news items, but also includes occasional poetry, links for related websites, and other items of interest. The SCJC also hosts a website, under the leadership of former president Art Benveniste, and helps answer questions and make referrals for numerous people.

The Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies meets annually for a three-day conference which includes a keynote speaker, sessions on recent research findings, personal stories of returnees, business sessions, and various forms of entertainment. At the 2003 annual conference in San Antonio, Texas, the keynote speaker was retired Rabbi Samuel Lerer who spent much of his 51-year career working with anusim in Mexico. The SCJS has taken a lead in interest in DNA studies, especially as it applies to crypto-Jews, other Sephardim, and the Jewish community in general. The 2004 annual conference will be held in Portland, Oregon, on August 8-10. Information will be published in *HaLapid*.

For more details on the Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies, including membership information, contact information, many articles and personal stories which have been published in *HaLapid*, officers, and links to other websites, go to [www.cryptojews.com](http://www.cryptojews.com).
Thank you for your interest. We would welcome you as a member. Annual membership of $25 includes four issues of *HaLapid* and discount registration for the annual conference, but also, of importance, helps advance interest in and encouragement of further research in this exciting area.

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