



La Familia, Inc. Adoption Services Department Newsletter

History of the African American People in Albuquerque

Summer 2005

Overview and Brief History:

At the time of the 2000 Census, 13,854 African-Americans lived in Albuquerque, representing 3% of the city's population. The African continent was the original home of this ethnic community, but most of its members are many centuries and multiple generations away from their African roots. Although there are a few overt remnants of African tribal cultures that remain at this point in the United States, most notably among the Gullah people in East Georgia, most African Americans have assimilated into American culture. However, there are a few outward manifestations of African culture that do remain, many of which manifest themselves in foods still common in African-American cuisine.

Immigration to the United States and Albuquerque:

The sad history of the forced immigration of the African American people to the United States is well-known at this point in time. Almost all were brought to this country as slaves, first by the Spanish and the Dutch West India Company, and later by a multitude of other slave traders, including the Portuguese, British, and the Americans themselves..

The first African to arrive in New Mexico was the slave, **Esteban**, who after his capture by the Spanish in Morocco, accompanied the few survivors of the shipwrecked exploration led by Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca in his epic 1530's journey across the American Southwest to Mexico. Esteban, also known as Estevanico, returned to New Mexico in 1539 as a guide for the Franciscan priest Marcos di Niza in his unsuccessful search for the legendary Seven Cities of Cibola, and was killed at the Zuni Pueblo of Hawikuh.

According to surviving Spanish documents, there were several African slaves on the Coronado Expedition. Only two of them, another Moor named Esteban who served under Alarcón, and one named Sebastián, who remained behind at Tiguex, are identified. There were five unknown male and three unknown African slaves, and male mulatto named Cristobal Lopez, in Don Juan de Oñate's party of settlers in 1598. One of these five Negroes, possibly named Juan, fought alongside Vicente Záldivar at the battle of Acoma. A mulatto female named Isabel de Olvera (Continued)

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It is time for
parents to
teach young
people early on
that in
diversity
there is beauty
and there is
strength.
~Maya Angelou

accompanied by two Africans, a Congolese named Francisco Rico, and an Angolan named Sebastian Rodriguez Brito. Brito served as De Vargas' personal drummer and accompanied him on many military campaigns.

In 1828, shortly following its independence from Spain, Mexico outlawed the practice of slavery in the Southwest. The few blacks who came to New Mexico under Mexican rule were typically fur trappers like the legendary **James Beckwourth**. Beckwourth resided in Fort Vasquez 1836-40 and married a Santa Fe woman. He left the state but returned as a member of Kearney's conquering army in 1847. Soon after New Mexico became a part of the United States, an unratified constitution drafted in 1850 banned slavery in New Mexico. Slavery was officially abolished in New Mexico in 1861, one year before the U.S. Congress outlawed it.

In the 1870's, the town of Dora, in the Cimarron Valley, was first settled by freed slaves. Black cowboys, and **Buffalo Soldiers** were some of the late nineteenth century African-American who came to New Mexico. At the turn of the twentieth century, an ex-slave named **Francis Boyer** from Georgia established an all black town near Roswell named Blackdom whose eventual populace of 500 was recruited from the surrounding states of Oklahoma, Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. Sadly, Blackdom was a victim of the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression and was abandoned; but Boyer successfully recreated the experiment south of Las Cruces in a town named Vado, which survives to this day.

The first significant wave African-Americans immigration to Albuquerque occurred in the late 1870's with the coming of the Santa Fe Railroad. Black railroad employees mostly lived in the downtown area. A Negro man was involved in helping to establish the University of New Mexico. By 1910, when the Black population reached 244, they had expanded to all quadrants of the city except for the southeast Huning Highland neighborhood, which was predominantly occupied by Anglo railroad workers. Hispanic railroad worker's primarily lived in the barrio of Barelvas south of downtown but also in an area known as San Jose across the tracks. Those African Americans not occupied by the railroad became entrepreneurs by necessity, starting up their own businesses when discriminatory whites refused to employ them. These small business people offered a broad spectrum of services, from contracting and construction to housing travelers in boarding houses. They even published their own newspapers, such as the Plain Dealer.

In the 1930's-40's, Black families began moving into the Huning Highland neighborhood as Whites migrated eastward. Aided by a community network of informal financing, they were able to purchase homes. This entrepreneurship was necessary as local banks refused to offer mortgage loans to African Americans. Discrimination was still quite common and legal. Many of the properties were in need of repair and their values were dropping; but the new Black owners were unable to obtain loans to renovate them. Eventually most of them sold the houses and moved into newer houses that were being built south of Huning Highland and east of South Broadway. For many years the black community was segregated and was only "allowed" to live in a few neighborhoods in the city, notably South Broadway and the Kirtland Addition although there was a small Black neighborhood north of Lomas. This began to change in the 1950's, even before the Civil Rights Act came into being.

In 1940, there were 547 African Americans and by 1950, only 613. From this point forward the population grew exponentially, reaching 3,563 in 1960, 6,689 in 1970, 11,487 in 1990, and 13,864 today. Most people interviewed in our survey came to Albuquerque after 1970 and many of these people learned of New Mexico and Albuquerque during military service in the state. Many stayed or relocated to Albuquerque from other bases following their discharge from the service.

Cultural Traditions:

As mentioned at the beginning of this report, except for small remnants of phrases still found among the Gullah people of the Georgia Sea Islands, modern African-Americans have long lost their African tribal linguistic heritages. English is the predominant language, although one encounters many bilingual (Spanish and English) African-Americans in the Southwest. Food traditions have survived considerably longer. Okra and watermelon are two examples of early African contributions to the American diet that remain to this day. While barbecue has not been historically traced to Africa, it is a very popular staple in the African American diet. There are many different types of barbecue styles and sauces that are usually identified regionally, such as Kansas City or Texas style. Two entrepreneurs, **Pete Powdrell** and **Henry Clopton** separately pioneered barbecue (or BBQ) restaurants in Albuquerque in the 1960's.

Artistic Traditions:

African Americans are well known for their creativity and have added much in the way of music, dance, theater, and visual arts to American culture. While many of the African artistic traditions have largely disappeared with the assimilation of Blacks into mainstream American culture, the roots of them still show in the distinctive output of this community.

With the exception of **gospel singing** which remains quite strong in Albuquerque churches, most of the earlier traditional musical styles, such as string band music, are no longer practiced in the community. There were Black swing musicians in the 1920's-40's and there was a restaurant and lounge called Chet & Pert's that catered to the African American residents. Since the 1950's, after segregation laws began to be relaxed, there have been many Black jazz players playing in local clubs. But not all African Americans simply play Black music, and Albuquerque has produced some very talented classical players as well. Albuquerque has also produced some award-winning African American storytellers. There is an organization called **Communi-Culture Performing Arts Company** that produces mostly Black theater, although they present other cultures as well. They have organized a **Multi-cultural Storytelling Festival** and have joined the State Fair Committee and the Juneteenth Committee to try to tie in with community events.

There are also quite talented visual artists in the community. A directory published in 1976 listed seven artists and an African wood carver. Currently there is a **New Mexico African-American Artists' Guild** which supports many local artists. It has been in existence for approximately 10 years. Members have shown their work jointly at the Kimo Theater, the South Broadway Cultural Center, Magnifico. The Guild was involved in planning for the African-American Pavilion at the New Mexico State Fair. In our survey we discovered painters, potters, and woodcarvers all actively and professionally plying their trade.

Of all of the traditional visual arts once practiced, **quilting** still remains among African American women. Besides simply creating functional art, quilting circles also provide a social atmosphere for women to exchange information and aid each other.

Annual Events and Celebrations:

Predominant among all current celebrations in the African American Community in Albuquerque is **Juneteenth**. The celebration of Juneteenth traces its roots to Texas in on June 19, 1865. That is the day that one U.S. Army Major General Gordon Granger landed at Galveston, Texas with news that the Civil War had ended and that slaves were now free. It is typically celebrated on whatever June Saturday falls on a date between the 13th and 19th. Speakers, musicians, dancers, and more typically perform on stage while concessions, especially food concessions like BBQ, are sold. In Albuquerque, the event is usually held at a city park or Community Center, although it has been held at the Fairgrounds as well. **Kwanza** is a winter festival that coincides with Christmas that is celebrated by a few African Americans in Albuquerque, but most celebrate the Christian Christmas.

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The TAPESTRIES project
is made possible by an
Adoption Opportunities Grant from the United States
Department of Health
and Human Services.

*Jazz Concert & Benefit
for Adoption Associates International's
Layla House Orphanage in Ethiopia*

Sheraton Old Town's Spanish Garden

August 6, 2005

7:30-11:30pm

***\$10 per person
All proceeds go to the orphanage***



is now online!!!

The topics are:

Motivations for Choosing Transracial Adoption & Assessing Parental Readiness & Exposure

Celebrating ALL Cultures: Developing a Multicultural Perspective

Medical & Grooming Needs

Cultural Heritage/Identity Development Planning

Creating a Support Network/ Cultural Community

Please call or email Elaine (766-9361 or ecsharp@la-familia-inc.org) if you are interested in participating in this exciting project!

Get out there and have some fun this summer:

January 19 - August 31, 2005 The Stamm Family, New Town Pioneers

Exhibition at the Albuquerque Museum of Art and History, East Hall, 2000 Mountain Road NW. Tuesday through Sunday, 9 am – 5 pm. 243-7255. www.cabq.gov/museum

January 29 - August 21, 2005 Art Exhibition: Inspirados

This exhibition celebrates three New Mexican artists and explores their inspirational images, art materials and techniques. National Hispanic Cultural Center Art Museum, 1701 4th Street SW. 20 am-5 pm. Admission: Adults-\$3, Seniors-\$2, Children 16 and under-Free. 246-2261. www.nhccnm.org

March 15 - December 31 , 2005 Sculpture Garden Tours and Old Town Walking Tours

Docent Guided Old Town Walking Tours. Tuesdays-Sundays: 11 am. Albuquerque Museum of Art and History, 2000 Mountain Road NW. Tuesday-Saturday. 10 am. 243-7255. www.cabq.gov/museum

April 4 - December 31 , 2005 Passport to the Universe

LodeStar's planetarium is equipped with a million-dollar projection system and, at 55 feet in diameter, the biggest screen in New Mexico. Passport to the Universe is a 20-minute grand tour of the observable universe. Showings: 12 Noon, 1 pm, 2 pm and 3 pm. LodeStar Astronomy Center, 1801 Mountain Road NW in Old Town Albuquerque. Admission: Adults-\$6, Seniors-\$5, and Children-\$3. 841-5955. www.lodestar.unm.edu.com

April 2005 - October 2006

Albuquerque Tricentennial Celebration –

Celebrate Albuquerque's 300th birthday with fantastic festivities including two exclusive Spanish art exhibits at the Albuquerque Museum, special events and more starting in April 2005.

June 10 - July 29 , 2005

Salsa Under the Stars

Every Friday. This is the first in a series of eight salsa dance nights taking place at the Albuquerque Museum of Art and History's new amphitheater, 2000 Mountain Road NW. 7-10 pm. 243-7255. www.cabq.gov/museum

June 11 - August 27 , 2005

Downtown Growers' Market and Festival

Every Saturday. Robinson Park. This is where Albuquerque area farmers and growers market their fresh picked crops directly to the public. 243-2230. www.downtownabq.com

July 1 - 4, 2005 Tender Loving Fine Arts & Crafts Show

Summer Festival at Balloon Fiesta Park, 4401 Alameda Blvd., NE. 832-1077. www.tenderlovingcrafts.com Anasazi Fields Winery is also participating in this summer festival. 866-494-6366. www.nmwine.net/festivals

July 6 - 10, 2005 15th Annual Mariachi Spectacular Concert

Spectacular workshops, concerts and competition of mariachi groups from several location in New Mexico and Texas. 255-1501 or 795-7500. www.mariachispectacular.com www.sandiacasino.com

July 9 - 10, 2005 Santa Fe International Folk Art Market

Featuring master Folk artists and artworks from around the world. 476-1203

July 17-18, 2005 - Million Dollar Ride for Children

A coast-to-coast motorcycle ride in order to increase awareness and funding for children's advocacy centers across the country, National Children's Alliance. The ride starts in Los Angeles and ends in Washington, DC. The riders will be in Albuquerque on July 17-18. MCM Elegante, 2020 Menaul NE. For more information: 719-686-7775.

www.milliondollarride.org

June-July, 2005 "Sizzlin' Summerfest, Celebration of Cultural Diversity"

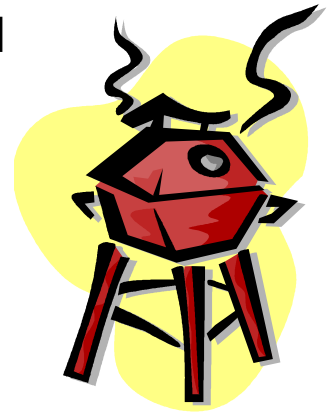
Civic Plaza, 3rd Street and Marquette NW. Different musical theme each Saturday night. 6-10:30 pm. 768-3556.

www.cabq.gov/crs/specialevents

July 2005 "Saturday Night Wild at the Zoo" Call: (505) 764-6200

Thank You to Rudy's BBQ

Rudy's BBQ generously donated their yummy bbq
to
La Familia for a staff appreciation picnic.
Thank You so much !!!



Best Wishes to a Treasured Member of our Department



It is with mixed emotions that I announce that Amy Hayes will be leaving La Familia on July 29, 2005. I am sad for our staff and families because we have been so blessed by Amy's compassionate nature, generous heart and highly developed counseling skills. However, I am thrilled for Amy that she is starting a new job that will give her more time with her husband and two beautiful young children. She will be continuing her amazing work with children through the public school system in Rio Rancho. Amy has been a wonderful addition to La Familia's Adoption & Pregnancy Counseling Services and we will miss her friendly smile, her ability to advocate for her clients and her willingness to work as a team!

Transracial Adoption Conference

Sponsored by La Familia, Inc.'s Tapestries Project & Family Matters

We are excited to announce a 1 1/2 day conference for professionals and families focused on Transracial Adoption

September 30

9am-4pm

Professionals and Parents

October 1

9am-1pm

Parents

National Hispanic Cultural Center

Albuquerque New Mexico

Salon` Ortega

"Being a Multiracial Family" examines diversity and how it relates to your family and your environment; role-playing situations other parents have experienced; and ways to incorporate the changes into your life.

This seminar is aimed at preparing prospective parents for transracial adoptions. This seminar provides a variety of perspectives on multiracial/multicultural families and transracial adoptions. It includes interactive exercises, open group discussions and the opportunity to hear from individuals living the multicultural/multiracial family experience.

Please call Elaine at La Familia for more information



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