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For Immediate Release

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## 1654, A PIVOTAL YEAR IN THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN JEWS

*Lecture To Take Place at the Center for Jewish History*

*Tuesday December 7, 2004 at 7:00 PM*

*Exhibition viewing prior to the lecture*

The year 2004 marks the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of Jewish communal life in North America. The American Sephardi Federation with Sephardic House and Yeshiva University Museum will present two the second in a series of two lectures exploring the origins of the first Jewish settlement in the Americas at the Center for Jewish History. On December 7<sup>th</sup>, Dr. Wim Klooster, Assistant Professor of History at Clark University, will deliver a lecture entitled, *1654, A Pivotal Year in the History of American Jews*, on the almost forgotten epoch of Dutch rule in Brazil, the scattering of its Jewish residents after the Dutch defeat in 1654, and the subsequent establishment of Jewish communities in other parts of the Americas. These lectures will be held in conjunction with the exhibition, *Pernambuco, Brazil: Gateway to New York*.

In his lecture, **Dr. Wim Klooster**, a specialist in Atlantic History, will follow some of the Jewish sojourners in New Amsterdam and reveal their travels, connections, and migrations in the Atlantic world. What were their European origins and where did they end up, if not in New York?

Dr. Klooster has published numerous articles and four books, including *\*The Dutch in the Americas, 1600-1800\** (1997) and (with Alfred Padula) *\*The Atlantic World: Essays in Slavery, Migration, and Imagination\** (2004). Klooster earned his doctorate at the University of Leiden and has been a Fulbright fellow, a fellow at the John Carter Brown Library, and a Charles Warren Fellow

at Harvard University. He is currently president of the Forum on European Expansion and Global Interaction.

The lectures will take place at the American Sephardi Federation with Sephardic House at the Center for Jewish History on December 7<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM. General admission is \$10; \$5 for ASF & YUM members, students and seniors. The price of admission will include entry, from 6:30 to 7:00, to the exhibition *Pernambuco, Brazil: Gateway to New York* that examines the lives led by the original Jewish settlers in Brazil during the brief period of Dutch sovereignty from (1630 -1654), before coming to America. The Center for Jewish History is located at 15 West 16<sup>th</sup> Street between 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenues. Support for these lectures has been generously donated by the New York Council for the Humanities and VARIG Airlines.

The **American Sephardi Federation *with Sephardic House*** is a national Jewish organization dedicated to ensuring that the history, legacies and traditions of the great Sephardic communities throughout the world be recorded, remembered and celebrated as an integral part of Jewish heritage through lectures, exhibitions, publications, *The Sephardi Report* and a dedicated Sephardic library and archives. Visit [www.asfonline.org](http://www.asfonline.org) for more information about the American Sephardi Federation with Sephardic House.

Since its founding in 1973, **Yeshiva University Museum's** changing contemporary art and historical exhibits have celebrated the culturally diverse intellectual and artistic achievements of over 3,000 years of Jewish experience. In 2000, Yeshiva University Museum moved to the Center for Jewish History, where it occupies four spacious galleries, a children's workshop center, a docent room, and an outdoor sculpture garden. Visit [www.yumuseum.org](http://www.yumuseum.org) for more information about Yeshiva University Museum.

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