Sacred Heart University

From the Selected Works of Peter Gavin Ferriby

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Cyrus Adler, 1863-1940

Peter Gavin Ferriby, Sacred Heart University

Available at: https://works.bepress.com/peter-gavin-ferriby/6/
3) Name contemporary entertainers who have had the type of longevity in their careers enjoyed by Chevalier. (for example: more than 50 years as a headliner.)

4) Name current entertainers who can perform both on stage and in film with great success like Chevalier.

Sources of Further Information:
The Billy Rose Theatre Collection
The New York Public Library
Performing Arts Research Center
111 Amsterdam Avenue
New York, NY 10023
(212) 870-1639
Dorothy L. Swerdlow, Curator

Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences
The Margaret Herrick Library
8949 Wilshire Boulevard
Beverly Hills, CA 90211
(213) 278-4313
Linda Harris Mehr, Library Administrator

Cross-Reference Dates:
19 September 1930: Chevalier received two Academy Award nominations for Best Actor, for his performances in The Love Parade and in The Big Pond.
15 May 1958: Gigi opened to great acclaim in New York.
6 April 1959: A special Oscar was awarded to Chevalier for his contributions to the world of entertainment over more than half a century.
21 April 1968: Chevalier won a special Tony Award on Broadway.
1 January 1972: Maurice Chevalier died in Paris at the age of 83.

This resource guide has been prepared by Brian E. O'Connell, Conservation Librarian, The Billy Rose Theatre Collection, The New York Public Library at Lincoln Center.

Other Events on this Day:
1912: Release of An Unseen Enemy, the film debut of Lillian Gish and Dorothy Gish. (Please see the guide on March 11.)
1977: James Garner was awarded Best Actor in a Drama Emmy for The Rockford Files. (Please see the guide on April 7.)
1980: Third military coup in Turkey. (Please see the guide on October 29.)

September 13

(125 years ago)

Cyrus Adler, 1863-1940

by P. Gavin Ferriby

On 13 September 1863, Cyrus Adler, educator, orientalist, and a major force in Conservative Judaism, was born in Van Buren, Arkansas. He later attended a Hebrew preparatory school and the University of Pennsylvania, both in Philadelphia. His education in addition to his involvement in the Sephardic Congregation Mikveh Israel shaped Adler’s love of learning and Jewish tradition. Following his study of Assyriology at Johns Hopkins University, where he became assistant professor, Adler also served as librarian of the Smithsonian Institution in 1892. There he discovered the “Jefferson Bible” (an edited New Testament compiled by Thomas Jefferson), published with Adler’s introduction.

With a dry sense of humor, Adler worked tirelessly to adapt traditionalist Judaism in a society which was emerging as a world power. His vehicle was Conservative Judaism, a middle path between the Reform rabbis (whom Adler felt eviscerated Judaism’s central moral power) and Orthodoxy’s great refusal of modernity. Bringing together a cluster of cultured, wealthy German-American Jews (including Louis Marshall, Adolph Lewisohn, and Daniel and Simon Guggenheim), Adler engineered and financed the reorganization of Conservative Judaism’s central institution, Jewish Theological Seminary of America (for which he served as President 1924-1939).

Adler helped to found several major Jewish organizations, including the Jewish Publication Society of America (1888), The American Jewish Historical Society (1892), Dropsie College (1907), United Synagogue of America (1913), and the American Jewish Committee (1906), which he represented at the Paris Peace Conference (1919). Despite reservations about Zionism, Adler participated in the Jewish Agency for Palestine. He died on 7 April 1940.

Reference Sources:

Works by Adler:

A literary sensation, and Adler’s grasp of Jefferson’s polymath mind assured Adler’s scholarly reputation in secular academia.
  Adler anthologized the chorus of national protest against the pogrom of 6-7 April 1903 (Easter) against the Jews of Kishinef (Chisinau), Russian Bessarabia (now Moldavia S.S.R.).
  This collection and analysis of diplomatic papers represents a major source for the study of the formal history of the United States, and an important contemporaneous world-wide index of persecutions of the nineteenth century. It exemplifies Adler's multiple interests and professional affiliations in Jewish, diplomatic, economic, and scholarly circles.
  The first catalogue of one of the earliest significant collections of Judaica in a secular museum of the United States.
  This plea to the world is the apex of Adler's diplomatic career.
• Lectures, Selected Papers, Addresses, by Cyrus Adler. Collected and published by his colleagues and friends on the occasion of his seventieth birthday 13 September 1933. Philadelphia, PA: privately printed, 1933.
  This important collection of papers, most written in temperate haste, includes a bibliography of Adler's writings 1882-1933 by Edward D. Coleman and Joseph Reider.
  This is a charming autobiographical memoir, especially evocative in its earlier chapters. The later chapters offer an amazing testimony to the wide variety of people in Adler's life.
  An updated analysis of Jews in the Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States, which provides special insight into American majority attitudes before the Holocaust.
  Since Adler's best insights into current events and his busy life occur in his letters, this collection renders a lively portrait of the man and his times.

Adult Works about the Subject:

  This is the only full-length treatment of Adler's life, but suffers from being too laudatory.
  This critical history is the best critical history of the movement to which Adler gave so much energy.

Young Adult Works about the Subject:

  This can be used with the teachers' guide cited below.

Children's Works by Adler:

  This delightful collection may need slight adaption for present-day young readers.

Discussion and Project Suggestions:
1) Cyrus Adler seems to exemplify an assimilated Jew of the early twentieth century. Is such a career possible now, or desirable? How do you think Adler balanced the traditional virtues of Jewish community leadership with the virtues of secular scholarship?
2) Does the future of Conservative Judaism lie in the institutions which Adler so carefully built, or in smaller groups and/or individuals?
3) Why might Cyrus Adler not think that the return to Israel was a good idea? What happened since Adler died that might have changed his mind?
4) What do you think it would have been like to live in Adler's family?

Sources of Further Information:
Boesky Library
Jewish Theological Seminary of America
3080 Broadway
New York, NY 10027
that good conduct should be rewarded by as many privileges as were consistent with life in a prison environment. At Sing Sing, Lawes instituted such progressive reforms as paying prisoners for their work, providing vocational and educational training, and sponsoring athletic and entertainment activities.

He strongly opposed capital punishment, which he did not consider a deterrent to crime. Lawes' ideas gained recognition and support through his books, lectures, radio broadcasts, and even a play about prison life. After retiring as warden in 1941, he served as president of the Boy Rangers of America and director of the Boy's Club of America. He died on 23 April 1947 in Garrison, New York.

Reference Sources:
  Both volumes contain brief biographical sketches of Lawes.
  Both works provide two to three page overviews of Lawes' life and career.

Works by Lawes:
  Lawes traces nearly a century of penal reform and development by following the lives of four successive prisoners housed in Sing Sing's cell 202 from 1826 to 1911. Although the characters are little more than stereotypes, Lawes does present a fascinating picture of Sing Sing's radical swings in prisoner treatment.
  Besides describing what goes on behind the walls at Sing Sing, Lawes discusses his theories on criminology and prison reform. Criticizing the variations in sentencing imposed for the same crime, he argues that prisoner treatment and release should be determined by the prisoner's response to rehabilitation efforts.
  Lawes argues against capital punishment, claiming that it has not succeeded as a deterrent to crime. Although this basic premise may be sound, the book suffers from an inconsistent use of statistics and over simplification of complex issues.
  Drawing on cases he was personally familiar with, Lawes describes the last days of several prisoners on Death Row. He also analyzes different types of murderers, emphasizing that over two-thirds of those in Sing Sing had previously been law-abiding citizens.