

THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY of SOUTH CAROLINA

WINTER 2006 VOLUME XI - NUMBER 1



From the Presidents: Bernard Warshaw and Belinda Gergel	2
NCJW Celebrates 100 th Anniversary.....	3
Mystery of Sumter's Temple Sinai.....	4
JHSSC meets in Sumter and Columbia: March 3-5, 2006.....	5
Flight or Captivity: Four Teenagers under Nazi Rule.....	6-7
Spotlight on Jewish History and Culture.....	8
Scholars' Conference in Charleston: June 5-7, 2006.....	9-10
Books of Interest.....	11-12
News Notes.....	13
Center for Southern Jewish Culture	14
Our Pillars, Our Strength.....	15



From the Presidents

Bernard Warshaw

You will never know how much I have enjoyed being your president for the past two years. When electing me to this position, you added a great deal of pleasure to my life, and I want to thank you all. We have had many successes in these years, and we will be remembered for them.

Our October 2004 three-day joint meeting with the Southern Jewish Historical Society brought together Charleston's three synagogues to help accomplish our goals for harmony. The weekend concluded with a fabulous Celebration of Diversity at Marion Square. A major work in progress is our Cemetery Project, aimed at documenting Jewish burial sites across the state. Our most capable chairman, Stanley Farbstein, heads the project, assisted by a committee of hardworking and efficient volunteers.

When I took office, my goal was to establish a statewide grassroots program so that the Jews of South Carolina could come to know one another. We have accomplished this thus far by having meetings and celebrations in Georgetown, Spartanburg/Greenville, Beaufort, and Columbia, where we awarded the JHSSC Arts and Cultural Achievement Award to Dr. Selden Smith, chairman of the South Carolina Council on the Holocaust.

The Society will now be in the hands of Dr. Belinda Gergel of Columbia and her slate of officers and board. With tremendous respect and admiration for Dr. Martin Perlmutter and Ms. Enid Idelsohn, without whom I could not have accomplished my goals—I give them a great big thank you!!!!!!!

Sincerely,



Belinda Gergel

What an honor to serve as your president and to follow in the footsteps of such outstanding leaders as Bernard Warshaw, Jeffrey Rosenblum, Robert Rosen, Klyde Robinson, Richard Gergel, and Founding President Isadore Lourie.

The Historical Society, now in its second decade, has had a remarkable record of achievement. In ten short years it has helped create an archives of significant historic artifacts and documents pertaining to Jewish life in the South; mounted a major exhibition that toured nationally for two years; supported the publication of research on South Carolina's Jewish history; and served as a powerful network linking members.

Our challenge now is to build on these successes and to define our mission and goals for the next decade. I see on the horizon several critical issues that require attention, including the preservation of artifacts and historic structures, particularly in small towns with declining Jewish populations; the documentation of Jewish cemeteries; and the designation by historic markers of places of significance to the Jewish experience in South Carolina. I am also excited about the College of Charleston's new initiative in creating a Center for Southern Jewish Culture, which will complement and enhance our ongoing efforts to preserve our special history and educate the public.

The key to our future success will be the active participation of members in every community in the state. Please join us in this effort and help us build a vibrant program and organization. I welcome your ideas and suggestions and look forward to seeing you at the next regional meeting in Sumter and Columbia on March 3-4.

Sincerely,

*On the cover:
Charter Members of the
National Council of Jewish
Women, Charleston Section,
1906. From NCJW
scrapbook compiled by Irma
Furchgott Blank in 1958.
Jewish Heritage Collection,
College of Charleston
Library (JHC).*

NCJW Celebrates 100th Anniversary

The National Council of Jewish Women, Charleston Section, is one hundred years old! Come celebrate the achievements and contributions of this remarkable group of women at the Dock Street Theatre, Sunday, February 26, at 3:00 p.m. The NCJW is an all-volunteer organization that has been serving people in the Charleston community and around the world for 100 years. Inspired by Jewish values, the NCJW works through programs of education, advocacy, and community service to improve the lives of women, children, and families, and strives to ensure individual rights and freedoms for all.

Founded in 1906, the Charleston Section is one of the oldest NCJW groups in the country, with over 200 current members. From its first project of sending aid to victims of San Francisco's earthquake, the NCJW has been committed to community service and touched virtually every institution in Charleston. Council members threw themselves into home-front efforts during World War II; they made bandages for the Red Cross, provided recreational outings and hospitality for the soldiers, developed an information bureau for servicemen and women, and their families, sold war bonds, and taught English to new immigrants. NCJW volunteers provided screening for diabetes and Tay-Sachs, and hearing and vision tests for children in the schools. They worked at the dialysis clinic, volunteered for the Pap Mobile and Head Start programs, sponsored a workshop on "Youth in Trouble," sent

clothes, toys, and books to Israel, and co-sponsored the first community Health Fair in 1980.

The Council's philanthropic efforts continue. NCJW provides school supplies to low-income schools, lunches for seniors, food preparation at Crisis Ministries Soup Kitchen, toys and toiletries for abused women and their children, and programs and advocacy on issues related to women, children, and families. For ten years, it has sponsored and facilitated an interactive program for middle-school students, Hello Israel.

President of the Charleston Council Faye Seigel speaks with pride about the women who came before her: "The passionate women who have unselfishly served The Charleston Section of the National Council of Jewish Women for 100 years have left a rich heritage and a permanent imprint on thousands of lives in this community. It is a legacy we can all be proud of."

In honor of that heritage, NCJW's anniversary will feature proclamations from Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr., and the Council's national president, Phyllis Snyder, as well as a video retrospective, recognition of past presidents, and a musical program of Broadway songs performed by singer and actress, Gail Nelson. A champagne reception for major donors will be held at the East Battery home of Mr. and Mrs. Morton Needle prior to the event. The Jerry and Anita Zucker Foundation, Inc., and Arnold and Diane Goodstein have generously underwritten the gala evening. Tickets are available at the Dock Street Theatre for \$50.00 per person.



For further information about the donor reception or Dock Street event, or about sponsorships for the commemorative book, please call Faye Seigel at 843.795.5157.

The NCJW organized a Ship-A-Box program which sent toys, bicycles, and carpentry tools to children in Jewish communities overseas. From NCJW scrapbook, JHC.

Mystery of Temple Sinai

Adapted from an article by Eddie Litaker, staff writer, in The Item, June 12, 2005



Temple Sinai was placed on the National Registry of Historic Sites in 1999.

Home to Sumter's Reform Jewish congregation, Temple Sinai is architecturally stunning—a massive brick building with Moorish details, castellated towers featuring domed roofs, and eleven large stained glass windows. Its architectural significance landed it on the National Register of Historic Places in 1999. But who exactly was the architect? Despite the efforts of Katherine Harrison, director of the Sumter County Museum, and Robert Moses, Temple Sinai's historian, the identity of the Temple's designer remains a mystery.

Sumter's first Jewish citizens came from Charleston about 1815. These early settlers were of Sephardic background, whose ancestors had fled persecution in Spain. As oppression spread in Germany, Poland, and then Russia, immigrants from these countries also settled in South Carolina and the Sumter community.

The current Temple was built in 1913, a tangible symbol of the religious commitment of Sumter's Jewish population. German artisans were enlisted to build the ten large stained glass windows that adorn the temple. The eleventh, a circular window above the entrance depicting Solomon, was built in Atlanta. These tall, impressive windows flood the temple with afternoon light, as the sun shines through depictions such as Abraham and Isaac, Moses with the Ten Commandments, and David playing the harp. In 1982, the windows were covered with protective mesh on the

outside, but they still cast a luminous light over the interior of the Temple.

Despite the architectural significance of the Temple, its creator remains unknown. Harrison and Moses still hold out hope that the architect may be discovered. When records of the Temple were copied for historic preservation and granted to the Sumter County Museum, the copyist neglected to turn over a crucial postcard addressed to the architect, which would have revealed the architect's name. If the card is found, then the mystery of Temple Sinai's architect will be solved.

This historically significant building is a testament to the long-standing presence and strength of the Jewish community of Sumter. Visitors to the Temple will be impressed with its solidity, the effort and expense involved in shipping the large windows from Germany, its architectural grandeur, and not least the mystery of its provenance.



My America: Art from The Jewish Museum Collection, 1900-1955



Raphael Soyer (1899–1987), Dancing Lesson, 1926. Estate of Raphael Soyer. Courtesy of Forum Gallery, NYC.

Organized by The Jewish Museum (New York, NY), this exhibition is on view at the Columbia Museum of Art through May 7, 2006. The exhibit focuses on the first half of the 20th century, a period of great social turmoil during which Jewish artists played a major role in shaping American art. *My America* explores eclectic styles and subjects and includes over 70 works—paintings, sculpture, photographs, and works on paper.

A guided tour of the exhibit will conclude JHSSC's Sumter/Columbia weekend. Please join us for this extraordinary opportunity.

JHSSC Meets in Sumter & Columbia March 3-5, 2006

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Friday, March 3rd at Temple Sinai in Sumter

- ◆ 8:00 pm – Services: Rabbi Robert A. Seigel
Oneg (refreshments) follow. All are welcome.

Saturday, March 4th at the Sumter County Museum

- ◆ 10:00 am – “Why We Must Preserve South Carolina’s Jewish History,” Dr. Belinda F. Gergel, JHSSC President
- ◆ 10:15 am – Introductions, Bernard Warshaw, JHSSC Past President
- ◆ 10:20 am – “Small Town Jews: A Legacy of Leadership in South Carolina,” Richard Mark Gergel, Senior Partner, Gergel, Nickles, and Solomon Law Firm, Columbia
- ◆ 11:15 am – “Jewish Confederates/Sumter Confederates,” Robert N. Rosen, author of *A Short History of Charleston* and *The Jewish Confederates*, and Partner, Rosen Law Firm, Charleston
- ◆ 12:00 pm – Comments and Questions, Dr. Hyman S. Rubin, Associate Professor of History, Columbia College
- ◆ 12:30 pm – Luncheon with music by The Southern Klezmer Group

Saturday Afternoon at Temple Sinai

- ◆ 2:00 pm – “The Windows of Temple Sinai,” Robert A. Moses
- ◆ 2:30 pm – Performance by Koleinu (Our Voices), The Choir of Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim, Charleston
Refreshments follow the performance.

Sunday, March 5th at the Columbia Museum of Art

- ◆ 9:00 am – JHSSC Board Meeting
- ◆ 10:30 am – Guided tour of “My America: Art from the Jewish Museum Collection, 1900–1955”

JHSSC Meeting Sumter & Columbia, South Carolina March 3-5, 2006

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

E-MAIL _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

*The cost for this weekend is \$20 per person
not including hotel accommodations.*

Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Return form to:
*JHSSC / Jewish Studies Program
96 Wentworth Street
Charleston, SC 29424*

SUMTER HOTEL INFORMATION

Fairfield Inn

2390 Broad Street
Sumter, SC 29150
Phone: 803.469.2222
or 800.426.7866

RATE: \$60/night

Special rate available until February 20, 2006

You must make your own reservations

(request a room in the
“Jewish Heritage Weekend room block.”)

COLUMBIA HOTEL INFORMATION

The Whitney Hotel

700 Woodrow Street
Columbia, SC 29205
Phone: 803.252.0845
or 800.637.4008

RATE: \$104/night

Special rate available until February 20, 2006

You must make your own reservations

(request a room in the “Jewish Historical
Society of South Carolina room block.”)

Flight or Captivity: Four Teenagers

by Karen Tannenbaum, Field Researcher, Holocaust Archives Project

It was morning on November 9, 1938, the day preceding the night history knows as Kristallnacht, or “the Night of Broken Glass.”* Max Freilich, age 14, was hiding in the Leipzig train station to avoid attack by mobs roaming the streets

looking for Jewish men and boys. He had arrived on the early train from Altenburg to attend the Zionist ORT School, where his parents had enrolled him after public schools in Altenburg were closed to Jewish children. He

quickly saw it wasn’t safe to venture out of the station. So, for more than 12 hours, he hid alone, in the station’s numerous corridors, nooks, and crannies.

Months later, in August 1939, his parents put him aboard one of the last Kindertransport trains to leave

Germany. He never saw them again. In the years that followed, Max was interned by the British as a German citizen, served with the Canadian Army in Germany, and learned that his parents had perished in Auschwitz. In the summer of 1945, on leave in Germany, he talked his way into the spectators’ gallery at the Nuremberg trials, the only Canadian army private to do so, he reports. He still has his entry passes and program, which have been reproduced for the College of Charleston

library’s Jewish Heritage Collection. Max Freilich has lived in Greenville since 1983 with his wife, Anita, also a refugee from the Holocaust.

Germany. Austria. France. Poland. Four countries. Four teenagers. Each one caught up in the events of the Holocaust. Three were Jewish, one was not. Three survived; one did not. Each has a South Carolina connection. These are their stories.



Max Freilich (l), age 14, and Walter Kornfeld (r), age 17, managed to avoid arrest by the Nazis on November 9, 1938—the day of Kristallnacht. Both Freilich and Kornfeld’s son, Tom, are residents of Greenville, South Carolina.

Again on November 9, 1938, in Vienna, 17-year-old Walter Kornfeld had an afternoon dentist appointment. His parents waited in an anteroom. Warned by another patient of bedlam in the streets, the family left the dental office and

calmly settled in at a nearby café known to be frequented by the Gestapo. The café was not busy that day. The Kornfelds stayed until dark, drinking coffee and reading newspapers. Then they quickly made their way home. Walter’s father

Alexander, a decorated World War I veteran, intensified his efforts to get visas for the family to leave Austria. Walter, a happy teenager and recent high school graduate, did not want to leave. Nonetheless, in February 1939, he preceded his parents to America, starting his life here

working on a chicken farm in New Jersey. His son Tom Kornfeld, also a Greenville resident, has shared with our research team his family’s story, including a memoir written by Walter.



In August 1942, in Paris, the Gestapo was staging surprise round-ups of Jews, men and boys in particular. Henri Ejbuszyc, almost 20 years old, was tired of his mother’s warnings to stay indoors. His father had simply disappeared two years

earlier when he and a relative went to look for a safer place for the family to live. A friend called and urged Henri to come out for a while. Bored, he slipped out of the family’s

* All across Germany and Austria, a pogrom was underway—a massive state-sanctioned attack on Jewish shops, homes, and synagogues. Throughout the day, Nazi SS troops and their sympathizers broke windows of Jewish businesses and houses, burned and looted synagogues, rounded up and arrested Jews, and sent thousands to concentration camps. The rampage, which intensified throughout the night, is considered the start of the Holocaust.

under Nazi Rule



Max Freilich in an Aliyah group in Wales in 1939, following his evacuation from Germany on the Kindertransport.

modest apartment and was soon picked up. From Drancy, the transit concentration camp near Paris where he was held for a few days, he wrote to his family. “I have some news that will make you sad,” he reported. He was being shipped to “an unknown destination.” They all knew this meant Poland and that he was unlikely to return. H  l  ne Diamant, Henri’s sister, lived in Greenville for 22 years before moving to the Boston area to live near her daughter, the novelist Anita Diamant. H  l  ne has audio taped her family’s story and has loaned the archives Henri’s final postcard for photographic documentation.

Twelve months after Henri was rounded up, in August 1943, Jerzy Gruszczyński, age 17, was arrested by the Gestapo in Warsaw. For almost a year, he had been running errands for the Polish underground in the city. Although not Jewish, Jerzy and his family had left Warsaw to avoid Nazi rule. His father worked on an estate in the countryside where Jerzy studied English and German—reluctantly—with two elderly Jewish women who were being hidden in the estate mansion. In 1942, Jerzy was back in the city to take a radio technician course. He was soon working for the Underground. After his arrest and interrogation, he was deported to Auschwitz as a political prisoner. Ironically, knowing German helped him in several harrowing situations. “A bad dream, a nightmare” is his shorthand description of life in Auschwitz, including his assigned work of wheeling carts of dead bodies to the crematoria. Jerzy Gruszczyński and his wife, Dorothy, live in Mauldin, outside of Greenville.



Jerzy Gruszczyński (l), shown here at age 15, working in the fields in the Polish countryside. Jerzy was arrested by the Gestapo when he was 17 and held at Auschwitz as a political prisoner for more than two years. He lives in Mauldin, South Carolina.

Four teenage boys. Four perspectives on the Holocaust. Their histories are preserved in narratives, photographs, and documents in the Holocaust Archives, Jewish Heritage Collection, at the College of Charleston’s Addlestone Library. If you would like to learn more about these individuals, call 843.953.8028 and make an appointment to visit Special Collections.



Max Freilich (l), 81, and Jerzy Gruszczyński (r), 80, met for the first time recently in Greenville. Here, they discuss their experiences as teenagers in Nazi Europe. Photograph by Karen Tannenbaum. All photos courtesy of JHC.

Coming to Charleston in June: Spotlight on Jewish History & Culture

A World of Jewish Culture at Piccolo Spoleto



For the ninth consecutive year, the College of Charleston's Jewish Studies Program and the City of Charleston's Office of Cultural Affairs are sponsoring "A World of Jewish Culture" at Piccolo Spoleto. The 2006 program has been greatly expanded and scheduled a week later than usual, to coincide with the opening of the Biennial Scholars' Conference on American Jewish History (see below). Beginning after Shavuot and concluding on Monday night, special events tentatively include:

- a screening of the Israeli film *Ushpizin* in the classic American Theater on King Street
- a preview of *Terezin*, a soon-to-be-released production with music by Charleston native Joel Derfner
- a Klezmer band
- Sephardic music by Brio
- a concert by Charleston's own Jewish Choral Society
- a cabaret performance, and
- an evening of Gershwin in Charleston, featuring selections from *Porgy and Bess*.



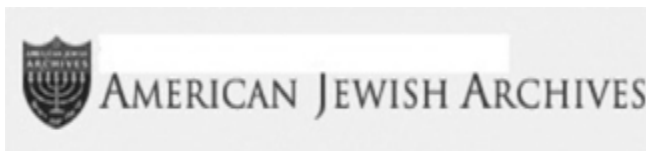
This year's bountiful offerings are made possible by a generous gift from the Herzman-Fishman Foundation. A complete schedule of events will be mailed to Society members in May. JHSSC has reserved a block of rooms at the La Quinta Inn Riverview located immediately across the Ashley River at Ripley Point Marina. To receive the special rate of \$69 per night (including breakfast), call the Inn at 843.556.5200 and mention the "Jewish Historical Society."

JHSSC Board Meeting and Panel

During *A World of Jewish Culture at Piccolo Spoleto* and in anticipation of the Scholars' Conference, JHSSC will organize a distinguished panel on southern Jewish history and hold a special meeting of the board on Sunday, June 4. Society members also are invited to participate in the Piccolo Spoleto performances of Jewish film, theater, and music, and to stay for the Scholars' Conference.

Scholars' Conference on American Jewish History

The College of Charleston's Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program and Jewish Heritage Collection will host the 2006 Biennial Scholars' Conference on American Jewish History. Co-sponsored by the American Jewish Historical Society and the American Jewish Archives, this premier professional meeting of American Jewish historians promises to be both edifying and fun. To paraphrase the Levy's rye bread advertisement, you don't have to be Jewish *or* a scholar to sign up for the Scholars' Conference, June 5-7. For more information, call 843.953.5682.



Scholars' Conference Schedule

June 5–7, 2006

MONDAY, JUNE 5

- 8:30 am Tours of historic Charleston led by Rhetta Mendelsohn and Ruth Miller
- 11:00 am Registration and lunch at Arnold Hall, Jewish Studies Center
- 12:30 pm **Roundtable on Regionalism: The Significance of Place in American Jewish Life**
Patricia Nelson Limerick, Deborah Dash Moore, John Shelton Reed, Theodore Rosengarten, and George Sanchez, moderated by William R. Ferris
- 3:00 pm **On Stage**
- Sally Sims Stokes, *The Art and Craft of Comic Imitation: The Parodies of Daniel Ottolengui . . .* Andrea Most, *Selling (and Buying) the American Dream: The Ethics of Ambition in American Jewish Culture . . .* Ted Merwin, *'Jewface': Non-Jews Playing Jews on the American Stage*
- Taking Care of One's Own**
- Aline Voltaire, *'In Need of the Elements of Civilization': American Reform Judaism, the Alliance Israélite Universelle, and the spreading of 'civilization' in the Levant in the 1860s . . .* Alan M. Kraut & Deborah A. Kraut, *'A Power for Healing': Newark Beth Israel Hospital and the Jewish Hospital in the United States . . .* Kim Van Alkemade, *Orphans Together: A History of New York's Hebrew Orphan Asylum . . .* Steven Lapidus, *Jewish Community Council: The Evolution of Sectarianism in a Montreal Organization*
- 4:45 pm Walk to Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim for evening activities
- 5:00 pm **The Eldridge Street Project**
Roundtable discussion by Jeffrey Gurock, Annie Polland, Jeffrey Shandler, and Tony Michels, moderated by Daniel Soyer
- 6:30 pm Cocktails and dinner
- 8:00 pm **Gershwin in Charleston:** Selections from *Porgy and Bess*. Co-sponsored by the City of Charleston's Piccolo Spoleto festival and the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina.

TUESDAY, JUNE 6

- 7:00 am Walk (or run) the new Cooper River Bridge, led by Jeffrey Gurock and Neda Nussbaum
- 9:00 am **Southern Strategies**
- Pamela Dorn Sezgin, *'Country Jews': Reconsidering 19th-century Alsatian Jewish Identity in the American South . . .* Mark K. Bauman, *The South to Center-Stage: The Origins of Reform Ideology at Baltimore's Har Sinai and in America . . .* Jessica Elfenbein, *Uptown and Traditional: A New Take on Baltimore's German Jewish Community . . .* Hollace Ava Weiner, *Whistling Dixie while Humming Ha-Tikvah: Acculturation and Activism among the Orthodox in Fort Worth*
- Languages and Landscapes**
- Adam Mendelsohn, *Tongue Ties: Emergence of the English-language Diaspora in the Mid-19th Century . . .* Daniel Kurt Ackermann, *Holy Congregation, House of God: KKBE's 1794 Synagogue Reconstructed*

10:45 am **The Jewish Woman in America after Thirty Years**

A discussion on the state of the field by Joyce Antler, Karla Goldman, Mary McCune, and Paula E. Hyman, moderated by Beth Wenger. Co-sponsored by the Jewish Women's Archive.

2:00 pm **Jewish Criminals**

- Ron Arons, *The Jews of Sing-Sing* . . . Rhonda Moskowitz, *American Prison: The Forgotten Jews*, a documentary film-in-progress . . . Isabel Vincent, *Bodies and Souls: The Trafficking of Jewish Prostitutes in the Americas*

City Jews, Country Jews

- Roundtable discussion by Richard M. Gergel, Leonard Rogoff, Jonathan D. Sarna, William Toll, and Lee Shai Weissbach, moderated by Dana Greene

4:00 pm Bus ride to Middleton Place for a plantation tour and a southern/Jewish feast

Pass the Rice 'n Gravy: It's Shabbos in Charleston

Custom-designed menu, served with commentary by Marcie C. Ferris, Jenna Weissman Joselit, Joan Nathan, and kosher caterer Marcie Rosenberg

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7

9:00 am **Regionalism Redux**

- Amy Hill Shevitz, *Constructing Community, Constructing Section: Regional Culture and Jewish Community* . . . Ellen Eisenberg, *Western Jewry during the Period of Mass Migration: A Case for Regional Distinctiveness* . . . Eric L. Goldstein, *How Southern is Southern Jewish History?*

Inside Story: Writing about Family

- Joseph Butwin, *Tevye on King Street: Charleston and the Translation of Sholom Aleichem* . . . Marcus D. Rosenbaum, *Heart of a Wife: The Diary of a Southern Jewish Woman* . . . Janice Rothschild Blumberg, *Rabbi Edward B. M. Browne in New York, 1881–1889*, and *One Voice: Rabbi Jacob M. Rothschild and the Troubled South*

11:00 am **Seeds of Statehood**

- Noam Pianko, *From Zionism to Ethical Nationhood: Mordecai Kaplan and Jewish Nationalism* . . . Daniel P. Kotzin, *The Radical American Zionist: Judah L. Magnes in the Yishuv* . . . Adam Howard, *Sewing the Seeds of Statehood: American Garment Unions and the Establishment of the State of Israel*

First Person Singular: Wonders from the Archives

- Field trip to the College of Charleston's Special Collections, Addlestone Library, with Marie Ferrara, Harlan Greene, and Dale Rosengarten, editors of a new and unabridged edition of Joseph Lyons's diary

12:30 pm Lunch at Addlestone Library

1:30 pm **Changing American Jewish Identities**

David E. Kaufman, *American Celebrity and Jewish Identity: Toward a Reconsideration of the Early 1960s* . . . Michael E. Staub, *Israel and the Making of American Jewish Identities* . . . Marjorie N. Feld, *'Sexism Is a Sin': Feminism and American Jewish Life in the 21st Century*

3:30 pm Optional afternoon tours: Boat ride to Fort Sumter . . . Walking tour of the Coming Street cemetery with Sol Breibart . . . Jewish Confederate tour with stops at the Phoebe Pember house, the M. C. Mordecai house, and the Daughters of Confederacy Museum, led by Rhetta Mendelsohn and Robert N. Rosen



Books of Interest

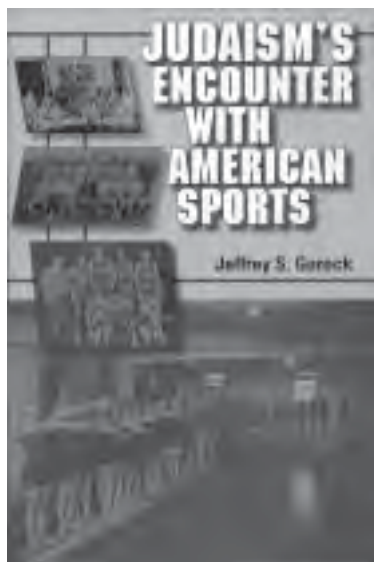
Judaism's Encounter with American Sports

Jeffrey S. Gurock

On the basketball court, the golf green, and the swimming pool, sports and religion meet—with what consequences? In this highly entertaining book, *Judaism's Encounter with American Sports*, Jeffrey Gurock examines the history of sports in the lives of American Jewish men and women. Do the secular values of sports threaten religious identification and observance? What do Jews do when a society—in this case, a team—"chooses them in," but demands commitments that clash with ancestral ties and practices?

Gurock's look at sports and Judaism follows his congregational history, *Orthodoxy in Charleston: Brith Sholom Beth Israel & American Jewish History*, which chronicled the story of BSBI in light of national Jewish history. In his new book, Gurock uses the experience of sports to illuminate an important mode of modern Jewish religious conflict and accommodation to America. He considers the responses of Jewish leaders to sports' challenges to identity, such as using temple and synagogue centers, complete with gymnasiums and swimming pools, to attract the athletically inclined to Jewish life. Within the suburban frontiers of post-World War II America, sports-minded rabbis competed against one another for the allegiances of Jewish athletes and all other Americanized Jews. Today, tensions among Jewish movements still are played out in the sports arena.

In a mostly accepting American society, it is easy for sports-minded Jews to assimilate and lose regard for Jewish ties. At the same time, a tolerant America has enabled Jews to succeed in the sports world, while keeping faith with Jewish traditions. Gurock contributes his own experiences as a basketball player, coach, and marathon runner to make the book both a national and a personal history. By using the metaphor of sports, *Judaism's Encounter with American Sports* underscores the basic religious dilemmas of our day.



Dean of Charleston's Jewish History Reflects on his New Book

by Sol Breibart

Explorations in Charleston's Jewish History was launched with a book signing at the annual meeting of the JHSSC in Columbia and followed by four signings in Charleston. I have been deeply gratified at the reception that the book has received.

The volume is a compilation of writings based on 30 years of research, unified by the common theme

of the Jewish experience in Charleston. *Explorations* was the result of the energies of many people. The initial impetus came from Robert N. Rosen, historian, lawyer, and past president of the JHSSC, who raised the necessary funds. Financial support also came from the Society, which will receive the royalties from the sale of the book.

Jack Bass, a professor at the College of Charleston and the author of several works on Southern politics, coordinated the project. My wife Sara, who for years had urged her reluctant husband to compile his writings for publication, saw to it that the materials were assembled.

The volume was faithfully edited and arranged by Harlan Greene, a talented archivist and writer. He was aided by Dale Rosengarten, the dynamic curator of the Jewish Heritage Collection, and her colleagues in Special Collections at the College of Charleston library, who selected and scanned more than 50 photographs for use in the publication.

I hope these articles will bring more attention to little known subjects. Each was pursued for my own enjoyment and in the interest of preserving our Jewish heritage. I also wanted to help members of the Jewish community better understand, and take pride in, the Jewish presence in Charleston for over 300 years.

Indiana University Press, 2005, \$29.95

The History Press, 2005, \$24.99

Matzoh Ball Gumbo

This bountiful book by Marcie Cohen Ferris, assistant professor of American Studies and associate director of the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies at UNC-Chapel Hill, marries food history and recipes on a tour of southern Jewish cooking. As she travels from the Mississippi Delta to the South Carolina Lowcountry and across the centuries, Ferris describes how Jews adjusted their eating habits to their new surroundings. “At the heart of the story,” writes historian Dale Rosengarten, “is a paradox: how can there be such a thing as southern Jewish cooking when the laws of kashrut . . . forbid such staples of southern kitchens as pork, shrimp, oysters, and crab?”

In the Lowcountry, Jewish women adopted patterns of their middle-class, non-Jewish neighbors, serving the same regional dishes, yet still observing Jewish holidays and in many cases Jewish dietary laws. Some families trained their African-American cooks in the intricate rules of keeping kosher, particularly during Passover. Ferris outlines the staggering labor involved in making Charleston’s Jewish kitchens kosher for the holiday. Families sterilized all kitchen equipment and “sold” all non-kosher food to their gentile

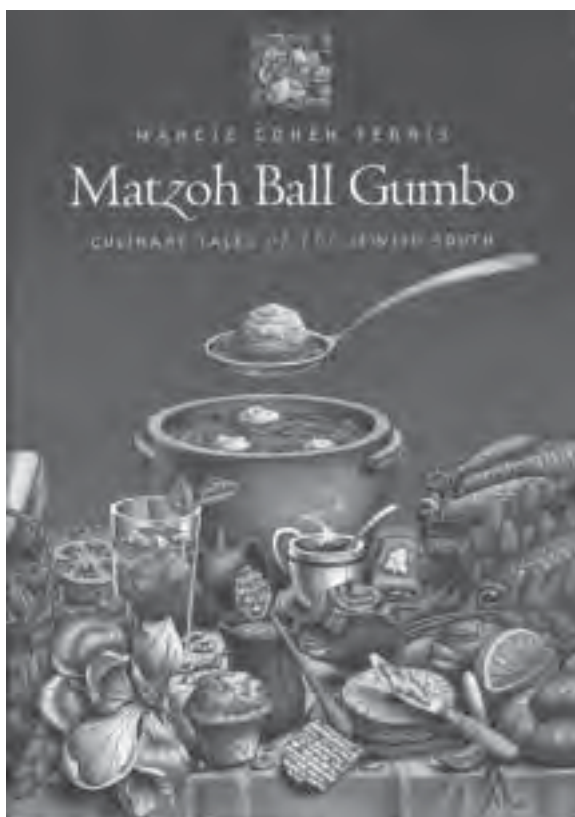
neighbors, then “bought” the food back after the holiday. Meat markets and delicatessens such as Zalkin’s and

Mazo’s supplied the Jewish community in the heyday of East European immigration. Catering businesses run by Jewish women flourished in the 1940s and 1950s.

One such business was operated by Minnie Weinberg and Mildred Bernstein, whose recipe for schnecken is reprinted in the book. South Carolinians will find lots of other familiar names and faces in these pages. Ferris made ample use of oral histories and images from the College of Charleston’s Jewish Heritage Collection, and in addition interviewed such notables as Jack Bass, Fred Bernstein, Sol Breibart, Ruth Bass Jacobs, Roslyn Furchgott Karesh, Alex, Lila, and Teri Bernstein Lash, Sandra Goldberg Lipton, Cynthia Kahn Nirenblatt, Peggy

Kronsberg Pearlstein, Sydney Solomon Richman, Morris and Robert Rosen, David and Marcelle Cohan Rosenberg, Raymond and Sandra Lee Kahn Rosenblum, Marian Birlant Slotin (o.b.m.), Dana Berlin Strange, Anita Rosen Levine, Kaylene Schoenberg Karesh, and Leona Geismar Stamler.

University of North Carolina Press, 2005, \$29.95



Nettie Levenson’s Spoonbread

This recipe is adapted from one found in the Ella Levenson Schlosburg papers in Special Collections at the College of Charleston library. The recipe was written in Yiddish by Ella’s mother, Nettie Levenson, of Bishopville, South Carolina, and translated for the Jewish Heritage Collection by Paul and Jean Birnbaum of Savannah, Georgia.

2 cups hot cooked grits
4 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut up
4 large eggs, well beaten
1 cup stone-ground white or yellow cornmeal
2 cups milk
2 teaspoons kosher salt
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Preheat the oven to 375°. Grease a 9 x 9 inch glass baking dish or ceramic casserole.

Put the grits in a large bowl. With a sturdy wooden spoon, stir in the butter until melted. Vigorously stir in the eggs, then the cornmeal until well blended.

Gradually stir in the milk. Stir in the salt and pepper. Scrape into the prepared baking dish. Bake until firm, puffed, and lightly browned on the surface, about 45 minutes.

Serve hot.
Makes 6–8 servings.

News Notes

Preserving Our Torahs

by Hy Brand, Second Vice-President, JHSSC

It is our duty to preserve and transmit our holy Torahs from one generation to another. We all cherish our Torahs and we know many Jews have sacrificed themselves to save their Torah. Torahs hold a cardinal place in Jewish history and we consider them priceless.

In South Carolina we have some large congregations that may have an abundance of Torahs and small congregations with a limited number of Torahs. American society is very mobile. Because of shifts in population, some congregations are closing or considering closing. Often the Torahs of the closing synagogues are given or sold to larger congregations.

We should consider doing a survey and inventory of Torahs in South Carolina. Ask all congregations: How many Torahs do you have? What size are they—small, medium, or large? What is their condition? Are they Torahs rescued from destruction during the Holocaust or donated to the congregation from a sister shul that closed its doors?

Once we have collected this information, if we find a congregation that is closing, we could be in a position to suggest a new home for its Torahs.



JHSSC Goes Global

by Ann Meddin Hellman

The Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina now has its own website. At www.jhssc.org you can find information about the Society, copies of publications, a listing of upcoming events, a photo gallery, and a connection to a secure page so that you can pay your membership dues online. You can even become a Pillar of the Society from this page.

Our photo gallery shows images of attendees at JHSSC meetings and functions. Some of the people in the pictures have remained nameless. Do you know who they are? Please click on the webmaster link at the bottom of the page and let me know their names. I would like to give them their moment of fame.

“A Portion of the People” Now Available Online

A digital version of the museum exhibition “A Portion of the People: Three Hundred Years of Southern Jewish Life” has been launched on the World Wide Web. This visually exciting project is the product of a partnership between the Addlestone Library at the College of Charleston and University Library at UNC-Chapel Hill.

The College library’s Special Collections supplied photographs and text to a great team of web designers who mounted the site. Three of four sections of the exhibit are now up and running @ www.lib.unc.edu/apop

- **First Families** begins with the coming of Jewish settlers to Carolina in the late 1600s and ends with the founding of the Reformed Society of Israelites in 1824.
- **This Happy Land** portrays southern Jewish religious life before the Civil War and culminates with the Confederate defeat.
- **Pledging Allegiance**, *still under construction*, traces Jewish migration to the South in the first half of the 20th century through World War II.
- **Palmetto Jews**, a portfolio of photographs by Bill Aron, moves the story into the 21st century.



The Jewish Historical Society of
South Carolina Newsletter
is published twice a year.

Dale Rosengarten.....Editor
Jecca Hutcheson.....Copy Editor
Enid Idelsohn.....Design and Layout

Special thanks to JHC photo archivist Joseph Rubin
and Elizabeth Stephenson for their help.

JHSSC
College of Charleston
Charleston, SC 29424

Looking Toward the Future: A Center for Southern Jewish Culture

Building on the successes of the Jewish Heritage Collection and the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina, the Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program and the Addlestone Library propose to establish a Center for Southern Jewish Culture. The Center will promote teaching, research, and community education on Southern Jewish life, a field in which the College has earned national attention and respect. The resources of a research center will enable the College to broaden its collecting efforts, develop coursework in Jewish Studies, and provide a public venue for Southern Jewish history.

JHSSC, together with the Jewish Studies Program and the College library, has laid the foundation for the proposed Center. The success of each institution is apparent in its accomplishments over the past decade. What is needed now is a headquarters for the study of Southern Jewish life.

The new Center will become a focal point for learning that ranges across academic disciplines. Like the Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture, a Center for the Study of Southern Jewish Culture will significantly increase the College's research capabilities and boost its reputation for excellence in higher education.

Charleston is *the* natural place for a research center on Southern Jewish culture. The city boasts many "firsts" in American Jewish history: the South's first Jewish settlement,

America's first Hebrew Benevolent Society, first Hebrew Orphan Society, first Jew elected to public office, first effort to reform Judaism; South Carolina's first Ashkenazi

Orthodox congregation and first Conservative congregation.

Charleston's great attractions—its mild winters, historic architecture, cosmopolitan society, and fine restaurants—will help make the new Center a magnet for research, scholarly conferences, and group visits.

Just as the curriculum of a college makes a strong symbolic statement for what matters and what does not, the existence of the Center recognizes Jewish history not as a minority religious interest, but as a field integral to the study of civilization.

The Center will establish two new faculty positions: a research archivist and a scholar specializing in Southern

Jewish studies. With these positions, the College can respond to the escalating demand for conferences, courses, oral history interviews, archival services, and community programming. The Center for Southern Jewish Culture will become an area of excellence in the College's heralded liberal arts curriculum.



Porters Lodge, College of Charleston, 2005.



Left: Wolff's Department Store, Allendale, SC, 1913. Courtesy of Sura Wolff Wengrow.



Right: Cemetery marker for second oldest Jewish burial ground in the state. Georgetown, SC.

Our Pillars, Our Strength

by Martin Perlmutter, JHSSC Executive Director

The Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina is now the largest statewide Jewish organization in South Carolina. The Society's strength lies in its members, who have been the driving force behind many of our best initiatives.

For two years, Stanley Farbstein has spearheaded a project to survey Jewish cemeteries across the state. He and his team of volunteers have discovered previously unknown gravesites and compiled biographical information on those buried there. Through the efforts of Hy Brand, we hope to complete an inventory of our state's Torahs.

In 2005, funds from the Society contributed to the publication of Sol Breibart's *Explorations in Charleston's Jewish History*. Last April, JHSSC members turned out in droves to help Beaufort's Beth Israel celebrate its 100th anniversary, and they showed up again in Columbia in September for a spectacular centennial celebration for Beth Shalom.

The Jewish Heritage Collection at the College of Charleston's Addlestone Library has embarked on two big new projects. One effort involves collecting photographs, documents, and memoirs in the possession of South Carolinians that relate to the Holocaust. The other is a long-overdue mission to create a photo archives—to scan and catalog the imagery JHC has been collecting for the past ten years and make it available online.

The work of JHSSC and its members has focused attention on the long and significant role that South Carolina Jews have played in building our nation. We will have an unparalleled opportunity to showcase our history this coming June, when the College of Charleston will host the Biennial Scholars' Conference on American Jewish History, co-sponsored by America's two premiere Jewish archives: AJHS in New York and AJA in Cincinnati.

The generosity of our Pillars makes all of this possible. Each Pillar pledges to give at least \$1,000 a year for five years, money that helps to cover our operating expenses and fund our activities. Please consider adding your name to our list of distinguished supporters. Become a Pillar and help preserve the history of South Carolina's Jews.

The Pillars of the Society (2006)

John and Marcie Baker	Columbia, SC
Doris Baumgarten	Aiken, SC
Norman and Eve Berlinsky	Charleston, SC
Bernice (Bunny) Bernstein	Mt. Pleasant, SC
Alan Coleman	Charleston, SC
Harriette Kraft Ehrlich	Jacksonville, FL
Carolee and Harold Fox	Charleston, SC
Meri Gergel	Columbia, SC
Richard and Belinda Gergel	Columbia, SC
Dr. Mark and Judith Green	Charleston, SC
Reuben Greenberg	Charleston, SC
Ruth B. Greenberg	Florence, SC
Ann and Max Hellman	Charleston, SC
Alan and Charlotte Kahn	Columbia, SC
Michael Kogan	Little Falls, NJ
Ronald Krancer	Villanova, PA
Cynthia J. Levy	Hilton Head, SC
Ina Rae Levy	Hilton Head, SC
Susan Lourie	Columbia, SC
Frieda and Jack Margolies	Charleston, SC
Rose Mark	Beaufort, SC
Dr. Albert and Robin Mercer	Owensboro, KY
Leon and Karen Ortner	Charleston, SC
Susan Pearlstine	Park City, UT
Edward and Sandra Poliakoff	Columbia, SC
Klyde and Claire Robinson	Charleston, SC
Benedict and Brenda Rosen	Myrtle Beach, SC
Robert and Susan Rosen	Charleston, SC
Jeffrey and Mickey Rosenblum	Charleston, SC
Paul and Jayne Siegel	Walterboro, SC
Steven and Harriett Steinert	Sullivan's Island, SC
Mark C. Tanenbaum	Sullivan's Island, SC
Bernard and Ann Warshaw	Walterboro, SC
Jerry and Anita Zucker	Charleston, SC
<hr/>	
Harvey and Mimi Gleberman, o.b.m.	Spring Island, SC
Anne Oxler Krancer, o.b.m.	Villanova, PA

**Yes, I/we want to become a pillar of the JHSSC.
In doing so, I/we commit to a gift of \$5,000
over a period of five years.**

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Phone: _____ **Fax:** _____

Email: _____

Check enclosed \$ _____ **(includes annual membership)**



Martin Perlmutter, Executive Director
Enid Idelsohn, Administrator

Officers

Belinda Gergel, *President*
Edward Poliakoff, *Vice-President*
H.J. Brand, *Second Vice-President*
David J. Cohen, *Treasurer*
Ann Hellman, *Secretary*

Past Presidents

Isadore Lourie, o.b.m.
Founding President
Richard Gergel
Klyde Robinson
Robert Rosen
Jeffrey Rosenblum
Bernard Warshaw

Board of Directors

Gerry Sue Arnold, *Columbia*
Doris Baumgarten, *Aiken*
Eve Berlinsky, *Charleston*
Moss Blachman, *Columbia*
Jack Bloom, *Greenville*
Sol Breibart, *Charleston*
Leah Chase, *Charleston*
Robert Dreyfus, *Greenville*
Stanley Farbstein, *Charleston*
Carolee Rosen Fox, *Charleston*
Ben Goldberg, *Charleston*
Leah Greenberg, *Sullivan's Island*
Lyssa Harvey, *Columbia*
Ruth Jacobs, *Charleston*
Alan Kahn, *Columbia*
Harriet Keyserling, *Beaufort*
Michael Kogan, *Charleston*
Harold Kornblut, *Latta*
Mike Krupsaw, *Anderson*
Cynthia Levy, *Hilton Head*
Joseph Lipton, *Columbia*
Mick Lourie, *Columbia*
Elizabeth Moses, *Georgetown*
I. Harby Moses, *Sumter*
Robert Moses, *Sumter*
Herbert Novit, *Hilton Head*
Karen Ortner, *Charleston*
Arlene Polinsky, *Columbia*
Mickey Rosenblum, *Charleston*
Barbara K. Stender, *Charleston*

Jewish Heritage Collection
Dale Rosengarten, *Curator*

Join the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: () _____ Fax: () _____

E-mail Address: _____

ANNUAL DUES FOR 2006 (JANUARY–DECEMBER)

_____ Individual/Family Membership	\$36
_____ Friend	\$200
_____ Sponsor	\$350
_____ Founding Patron	\$1000
_____ Pillar	\$5000 (\$1000 for 5 years)

Join or renew JHSSC online. Go to www.jhssc.org
Enroll your friends and relatives for an additional \$36 each.
Send us their information and we will inform them of your gift.

***Please make checks payable to JHSSC
and mail to the address noted below.***

Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program
College of Charleston
Charleston, SC 29424
phone: 843.953.3918
fax: 843.953.7624
website: www.jhssc.org
e-mail: jhssc@cofc.edu

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE

P-A-I-D

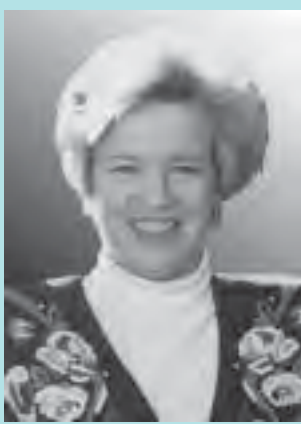
CHARLESTON, SC
PERMIT No. 437

THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY of SOUTH CAROLINA

FALL 2006 VOLUME XI - NUMBER 2



From the President: Belinda Gergel	2
Reflections on Greenville's Jewish History.....	3
Dean Street Synagogue: In Search of B'nai Israel's Founders.....	4
Looking for More Information about Descendants.....	5
Pillars: Support the Society.....	6
JHSSC Meets in Greenville and Spartanburg: October 20-22, 2006.....	7
Join the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina.....	8



From the President

I recently reread Eli Evans' outstanding book, *The Lonely Days Were Sundays: Reflections of a Jewish Southerner*, and once again was reminded of the increasing interest and growth of southern Jewish history and Jewish Studies as fields of academic inquiry and personal interest.

As Evans observed in this 1993 work, "Today we celebrate the validity of the southern Jewish experience—for academic research and literature—and take pride in its history and its struggle, in the unique Jewish perspective on southern history. We celebrate the southern Jewish experience as a body of knowledge that needs deeper probing, that can benefit from our perspective as southerners and Jews."

As Evans penned these words, preliminary meetings were taking place here in South Carolina among academics and community leaders about the critical need to collect and gather the personal accounts and documents that told the special story of Jews in our state. Before too long this interest led to the formation of the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina (JHSSC), housed at the College of Charleston. Since our inception over a decade ago, our organization has had a remarkable record of achievement in collecting and disseminating the dynamic and diverse stories of southern Jews.

This important effort remains ongoing. The Society has been especially active in fostering and nurturing interest in Jewish history over the last several months. In March we held a regional meeting in Sumter, a community with Jewish residents as early as 1815 and the home of America's first Jewish Chief Justice of a state supreme court. We worshipped at the beautiful Temple Sinai, built in 1913 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Our program was packed with overflow audiences as we explored issues and events of Sumter's unique Jewish past. In the process, we learned more about South Carolina's history, southern history, and the remarkable journey of immigrants to this great nation.

In June a number of our members participated in the 2006 Biennial Scholars' Conference in Charleston, coordinated by Dale Rosengarten, curator of the Jewish Heritage Collection at the College of Charleston, Marty Perlmutter, director of the College's Jewish Studies Program (JSP), and Enid Idelsohn, administrator of both JSP and JHSSC. Under Dale's outstanding guidance as chair of the program committee, the nation's leading American Jewish historians came to Charleston to explore issues of regionalism, with several programs focused on southern Jewish history. The JHSSC was a co-sponsor of the conference's "Gershwin in Charleston" program at the historic KKBE temple, and our former president Robert Rosen provided an insightful introduction to George Gershwin and his experiences in South Carolina.

This fall we move to South Carolina's upstate region. Our October meetings will be held in the Greenville/Spartanburg area on October 20-22. We will begin in Spartanburg with services at the historic Temple B'nai Israel and travel to Greenville on Saturday for services at Beth Israel. Following the Saturday services, our program will consider the historical experiences of Jews in these important cities, with special panel presentations on a range of topics exploring the settlement of these communities, the activities of Jewish community leaders, and the development of Jewish communal organizations. Our Sunday program and board meeting will be held at Temple of Israel. I hope you will make plans now to join us for this exciting weekend.

We welcome and need your involvement and active participation. Please help us spread the word about our important work and tell your friends to check out our website at www.jhssc.org. I look forward to seeing you in October in Greenville/Spartanburg.

Sincerely,

*On the cover:
Postcard of B'nai
Israel Tabernacle,
Spartanburg, SC,
circa 1918. Courtesy
of Joe Wachter.*

Reflections on Greenville's Jewish History *by Fred Leffert*

The history of Greenville Jewry is both an easy and a complex subject. It is easy because it is short. Although individual Jews are known to have lived here in the 19th century, and there was even an Eleazer Elizar who was postmaster of Greenville in 1794, Jewish life, which is traditionally communal life, did not begin until the 20th century. The founding of Congregation Beth Israel in 1911 and the Temple of Israel in 1916 are the first events recorded of Jews in Greenville organizing to live as Jews, with other institutions following—a B'nai B'rith lodge in the early 1930s, a cemetery in 1938, a chapter of the National Council of Jewish Women in 1939, and Greenville Federated Jewish Charities in 1945—altogether a history of less than a hundred years.



*Temple of Israel
today*

That history is also complex, however, in that Greenville's Jewish community may be seen as a microcosm of the larger trends in American Jewish life. The 20th century saw Greenville go from having an orthodox congregation and a kosher butcher to having neither today, from 22 Jewish retail stores on Main Street to none today, and from a city which at mid-century had two Jewish physicians and one lawyer to over a hundred Jewish professionals of all types. It has seen Greenville go from a tightly knit community, an island in a fundamentalist Protestant sea, a community where the synagogue was the center of religious and social life (I have it on good authority that congregational meetings at Beth Israel occasionally became so heated that chairs were thrown), to an assimilated community at ease in a more tolerant larger society, with the synagogue moving to the periphery of concern, and at least half the Jewish population having no affiliation with traditional Jewish communal institutions.



Old Temple of Israel

Although some of these transitions may be viewed with alarm or sadness, depending on one's point of view, one particularly heartening development has been the emergence of many individual Jews as leaders in the wider Greenville community. This is epitomized by the career of Max Heller, who, while remaining one of the pillars of our own Jewish community, went on to play a major role in the growth of Greenville. As a city council member, head of the chamber of commerce, and two-term mayor, he has been a central figure in the renaissance of downtown Greenville.

Short though its history may be as compared with that of its lowcountry brethren, the Greenville Jewish community has emerged as a diverse, strong, and growing component of the evolving history of Judaism in South Carolina.



Old Beth Israel



*Beth Israel
today*

DEAN STREET SYNAGOGUE ♦ 1917-1961

♦ IN SEARCH OF B'NAI ISRAEL'S FOUNDERS ♦

by Joe Wachter



Stained glass windows in the original Temple B'nai Israel (Dean Street synagogue)

In the summer of 1917, the Temple B'nai Israel Jewish Community opened and dedicated its first synagogue on South Dean Street (at its intersection with Union Street) in Spartanburg, South Carolina. A marble tablet was attached to the main wall of the temple foyer to commemorate the event. The tablet was removed from that original building (which still stands) when it was sold in 1961. Two years later, when the current sanctuary on Heywood Street was built and dedicated, the plaque was fastened to one of the outer walls. As you face the tablet, the left column contains the names of those members of the temple who served on the building committee for the original synagogue building. The right column lists the other members of the temple in 1917. As a sign of those times, only men's names are listed.

I was born in Spartanburg and raised in Temple B'nai Israel and I have always wanted to know more about the founders of my hometown Jewish community. During the last two years I have researched a great many public and family records and interviewed over 50 descendants of those members whose names appear on the tablet. Here are just a few of the stories that have been shared with me. **DAVID AND MOSES GREENEWALD** were born in Americus, Georgia, and lived there during the Civil War. Their uncle, Jacob Weil, volunteered and fought for the Confederacy as part of the 4th Georgia Infantry in Northern Virginia, most notably at the Battle of Malvern Hill—one of the bloodiest battles of the war. **MAX AND ISAAC HENRY GREENEWALD** managed the Spartanburg Opera House, often referred to as the “Greenewald Opera

House,” from approximately 1886 to 1907, when the theater was torn down. The Spartanburg Opera House was similar to the present-day Newberry Opera House. **LOUIS ALEXANDER MEYERSON** hired a young student named Olin D. Johnston to work in the department store he managed in the early 1920s, and in 1934 was appointed to Johnston's staff when Johnston was elected governor. In 1939 Meyerson moved to Charleston, South Carolina, where he became treasurer of Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim. **MAX COHEN'S** youngest son, **HAROLD COHEN**, volunteered for the Army during World War II as a buck private and at the war's end was a lieutenant colonel. According to one source, he was in line to become a general at the recommendation of his commander, General George S. Patton. Cohen's infantry soldiers rode on tanks commanded by his wartime and life-long friend, Creighton Abrams, who later became a general and chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. **ABE MEYERSON** sang as a young boy in vaudeville with Eddie Cantor, George Jessel, and others in shows on the Lower East Side of New York City. These shows featured young kids and were produced by songwriter, Gus Edwards, who is best known for writing hits such as “By the Light of the Silvery Moon” and “School Days.”

There are many other stories that I am investigating about B'nai Israel's members and their families who helped organize Spartanburg's Jewish community. Please contact me at the address or numbers below if you have information to share or can help me locate any of the descendants. I welcome your comments and would enjoy talking and visiting with you.



*B'nai Israel
Spartanburg,
South Carolina*

Contact: Joe Wachter
4505 Camellia Drive, Myrtle Beach, SC 29577
Home: 843.449.6259, Office: 843.449.2000, Fax: 843.449.7755
E-mail: jhw@48th.com

LOOKING FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT DESCENDANTS OF:



Interior of the original Temple B'nai Israel (Dean Street synagogue)

ABRAHAM LEVIN was born in Germany in 1877. He was a tailor and he and his wife, Gertrude, had four children: David, Rose, Bessie, and Sara. He was elected as Temple B'nai Israel's first president in 1912.

JULIUS S. SCHWARTZ was born in Russia in 1887. He was a dry goods merchant and he and his wife, Rebecca Bokritzsky, had one child, Harold, who was born in Georgia. In the early 1900s he lived in Jasper, Georgia.

JOSEPH JACOBS was born in Russia in 1876. He was a tailor and he and his wife, Fannie, had five children: Moses, Jacob, Abraham D., Oscar, and Sadie. Prior to coming to Spartanburg, he lived in Baltimore, Maryland. Shortly after the temple was built, he and his family first moved to Washington, D.C., and later moved to Long Beach, California. His eldest son, Moses, earned a degree in pharmacy from the Medical College of Virginia (now called Virginia Commonwealth University) and his youngest son, Oscar, became a dentist and practiced in southern California.

HARRY HARRIS BRILL, SR., was born in 1885 in South Carolina. He was the son of William and Rachel Brill, who at one time lived in the town of Kozer, Colleton County, South Carolina. His mother and some of his siblings later lived with him in Augusta, Georgia. He was an electrician and he and his wife, Rhea Hyman, had two children: Pauline E. and Harry Harris, Jr. In 1930 he lived in Miami, Florida, working as a life insurance agent. He later lived in Columbia, South Carolina, where he was a member of the Tree of Life Congregation.

JOSEPH GOLDSTEIN was born in Russia about 1865. He was a merchant working as a salesman in department stores, first in New York City and later in Spartanburg. He and his wife, Hannah, had seven children: Sarah, Rebecca, Louis, Betsie, Harris, Rosie, and Samuel Joseph.

MORRIS ABRAHAM BOBROW was born in Russia in 1880. He was a shoemaker by trade and lived on the Lower East Side of Manhattan in New York City and in Chicago, Illinois, before coming to Spartanburg. He and his wife, Tilly Annie, had five children: Mildrew M., Paul, Aaron, Louis, and Gertrude G. In 1930 he and his family lived in Newark, New Jersey.

JEROME I. PERO was born in New York City in 1896. He was the cousin of Louis A. Meyerson and Abe Meyerson. As far as can be determined, he never married. He was a salesman and buyer for a department store while living in Spartanburg. He later moved to Florida and passed away in 1945.

BENJAMIN H. BURNSTEIN was born in Chicago, Illinois, in 1892, the son of Louis and Lena Burnstein. He also later lived in Richmond, Virginia, as did his parents and siblings. He and his brother, Jacob Robert Burnstein, operated a junk dealership in Spartanburg. He and his wife, Wise (who was from Argentina), had one child, Juanita.

BERNARD ("BARNET") BERLIN was born in Russia between 1865 and 1870. He worked as a peddler in both Union and Spartanburg, South Carolina, and later managed a candy store in Brooklyn, New York. He and his wife, Jenny ("Zina" or "Zenna"), had nine children: Solomon, Edith, Jacob, Sarah, Annie, Selma, Ida, Rosa, and Abraham.



B'NAI ISRAEL BUILDING COMMITTEE PLAQUE:

Joseph ("Joel") Spigel, Chairman, Hyman Ougust ("August"), Greenwald brothers (David, Moses, Isaac Henry, and Max Greenwald), Harry Price, Joseph Miller, Abraham Levin, Julius S. Schwartz, Louis Alexander Meyerson, Max Cohen, Joseph Jacobs. MEMBERS: David M. Spigel, Samuel Hecklin, Abraham G. Blotcky, Harry Harris Brill, Sr., Joseph Goldstein, Meyer Levite, Samuel Loeff, Phillip Weintraub, Morris Abraham Bobrow, Jerome I. Pero, Abe Meyerson, Benjamin H. Burnstein, Bernard ("Barnet") Berlin, Barnett Hecklin

Pillars: Support the Society

by *Martin Perlmutter, Executive Director*

The Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina relies on its benefactors for much of its annual support. Pillars provide the Society with the wherewithal to accomplish all that it does.

The Society has taken major steps forward this year. In addition to our bi-annual newsletter, ongoing archival efforts at the Jewish Heritage Collection at the College of Charleston Library, the College's annual Elderhostel on South Carolina Jewish History, and our annual meetings, the Society co-sponsored the 2006 Biennial Scholars' Conference on American Jewish History, which met in Charleston this past June. Well over a hundred academics from across the country and beyond met at the College of Charleston, went to KKBE for a panel session, dinner, and a Gershwin concert, traveled to Middleton Place for talks about southern Jewish cuisine and tastes of the same.

This semester, the Society's President, Belinda Gergel, is giving a course on southern Jewish history at the College of Charleston. Moreover, the Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program has committed to developing a Center for Southern Jewish Culture at the College. Such a Center would assure the long-term excellence of the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina by adding an archivist to the staff of the Jewish Heritage Collection, expanding the library's holdings of southern Jewish material, and making the College a hub of public programs on southern Jewish history and culture.

The Society needs your continued support. Pillars make a five-year commitment of \$5000, that is, \$1000 a year for five years. Please become a Pillar and help make the Jewish history of South Carolina a living legacy for future generations.

The Pillars of the Society (2006)

John and Marcie Baker	Columbia, SC
Doris Baumgarten	Aiken, SC
Norman and Eve Berlinsky	Charleston, SC
Fred and Bunny Bernstein	Mt. Pleasant, SC
Alan Coleman	Charleston, SC
Harriette Kraft Ehrlich	Jacksonville, FL
Carolee and Harold Fox	Charleston, SC
Meri Gergel	Columbia, SC
Richard and Belinda Gergel	Columbia, SC
Dr. Mark and Judith Green	Charleston, SC
Reuben Greenberg	Charleston, SC
Ruth B. Greenberg	Florence, SC
Ann and Max Hellman	Charleston, SC
Alan and Charlotte Kahn	Columbia, SC
Michael Kogan	Little Falls, NJ
Ronald Krancer	Villanova, PA
Cynthia Levy	Hilton Head Island, SC
Ina Rae Levy	Hilton Head Island, SC
Susan Lourie	Columbia, SC
Frieda and Jack Margolies	Charleston, SC
Rose Mark	Beaufort, SC
Albert and Robin Mercer	Owensboro, KY
Leon and Karen Ortner	Charleston, SC
Susan Pearlstine	Park City, UT
Edward and Sandra Poliakoff	Columbia, SC
Klyde and Claire Robinson	Charleston, SC
Benedict and Brenda Rosen	Myrtle Beach, SC
Robert and Susan Rosen	Charleston, SC
Jeffrey and Mickey Rosenblum	Charleston, SC
Stuart M. Shamah	Myrtle Beach, SC
Paul and Jayne Siegel	Walterboro, SC
Steven and Harriett Steinert	Sullivan's Island, SC
Mark C. Tanenbaum	Sullivan's Island, SC
Bernard and Ann Warshaw	Walterboro, SC
Jerry and Anita Zucker	Charleston, SC
Harvey and Mimi Gleberman, o.b.m.	Spring Island, SC
Anne Oxler Krancer, o.b.m.	Villanova, PA

**Yes, I/we want to become a pillar of the JHSSC.
In doing so, I/we commit to a gift of \$5,000
over a period of five years.**

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Phone: _____ **Fax:** _____

Email: _____

Check enclosed \$ _____ (includes annual membership)



The Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina
Newsletter is published twice a year.

Dale Rosengarten.....Editor
Enid Idelsohn.....Design and Layout

JHSSC Meets in Greenville-Spartanburg, SC October 20-22, 2006

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

Friday, October 20th at B'nai Israel, Spartanburg

- 7:30 – 8:15 pm Shabbat Services
- 8:15 – 9:45 pm Oneg Shabbat: **Friday Night Live with Mappamundi**

Mappamundi is a gleeful North Carolina band that performs world music or ethnic music from all kinds of places including Eastern and Western Europe, the British Isles, colonial America, and recently, Latin America. They specialize in music from Jewish traditions—Yiddish, Sephardic, Hebrew, and Klezmer—and perform at bar/bat mitzvahs and Jewish weddings.

Saturday, October 21st at Beth Israel, Greenville

- 10:00 – 11:30 am Shabbat Morning Services
- 12:00 – 1:00 pm Kiddush Luncheon
- 1:00 – 2:30 pm Rediscovering Jewish Spartanburg:
Panel Discussion with
Marsha Poliakoff, Harry Price,
and Joe Wachter
- 2:45 – 4:15 pm Reflections on Jewish Greenville:
Panel Discussion with
Hy Brand, Fred Leffert,
and Jay Wachs
- 7:00 pm Light Dinner
- 8:00 pm Havdallah and Concert:
Mappamundi:
World Music Our Way

Sunday, October 22nd at Temple of Israel, Greenville

- 10:00 am Judy Goldman: **Growing Up
Jewish in Small Town
South Carolina**

Judy Goldman's second novel, *Early Leaving*, was published in hardcover by William Morrow in October 2004 and in paperback by Harper Perennial in September 2005. Her first novel, *The Slow Way Back*, was published by William Morrow and released in paperback by Harper Perennial. She is also the author of two books of poetry, *Holding Back Winter* and *Wanting To Know the End*, winner of the Gerald Cable Poetry Award, a national prize, and three top poetry prizes in North Carolina.

- 11:00 am – 12:00 noon
Jewish Historical Society Board Meeting

JHSSC Meeting Greenville-Spartanburg, SC

October 20 – 22, 2006

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

E-MAIL _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

*The cost for this weekend is \$36 per person
not including hotel accommodations.*

Total Amount Enclosed \$_____

Return form to:
*JHSSC / Jewish Studies Program
96 Wentworth Street
Charleston, SC 29424*

GREENVILLE HOTEL INFORMATION:

Hampton Inn

15 Park Woodruff Drive
(I-385 and Woodruff Road)
Greenville, SC 29607
Phone: 864.213.8200
or 800.426.7866

RATE: \$84/night

Special rate available until Sept. 30, 2006

You must make your own reservations

(Reservation Code: **JHS**)

Email: reservations@hamptoninnngreenville.com



Martin Perlmutter, Executive Director
Enid Idelsohn, Administrator

Officers

Belinda Gergel, *President*
Edward Poliakoff, *Vice-President*
H.J. Brand, *Second Vice-President*
David J. Cohen, *Treasurer*
Ann Hellman, *Secretary*

Past Presidents

Isadore Lourie, o.b.m.
Founding President
Richard Gergel
Klyde Robinson
Robert Rosen
Jeffrey Rosenblum
Bernard Warshaw

Board of Directors

Gerry Sue Arnold, *Columbia*
Doris Baumgarten, *Aiken*
Eve Berlinsky, *Charleston*
Moss Blachman, *Columbia*
Jack Bloom, *Greenville*
Sol Breibart, *Charleston*
Leah Chase, *Charleston*
Robert Dreyfus, *Greenville*
Stanley Farbstein, *Charleston*
Carolee Rosen Fox, *Charleston*
Ben Goldberg, *Charleston*
Leah Greenberg, *Sullivan's Island*
Lyssa Harvey, *Columbia*
Ruth Jacobs, *Charleston*
Alan Kahn, *Columbia*
Harriet Keyserling, *Beaufort*
Michael Kogan, *Charleston*
Harold Kornblut, *Latta*
Mike Krupsaw, *Anderson*
Cynthia Levy, *Hilton Head*
Joseph Lipton, *Columbia*
Mick Lourie, *Columbia*
Elizabeth Moses, *Georgetown*
I. Harby Moses, *Sumter*
Robert Moses, *Sumter*
Herbert Novit, *Hilton Head*
Karen Ortner, *Charleston*
Arline Polinsky, *Columbia*
Mickey Rosenblum, *Charleston*
Barbara K. Stender, *Charleston*

Jewish Heritage Collection
Dale Rosengarten, *Curator*

Join the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: () _____ Fax: () _____

E-mail Address: _____

ANNUAL DUES FOR 2007 (JANUARY–DECEMBER)

_____ Individual/Family Membership	\$36
_____ Friend	\$200
_____ Sponsor	\$350
_____ Founding Patron	\$1000
_____ Pillar	\$5000 (\$1000 for 5 years)

Join or renew JHSSC online. Go to www.jhssc.org
Enroll your friends and relatives for an additional \$36 each.
Send us their information and we will inform them of your gift.

***Please make checks payable to JHSSC
and mail to the address below.***

Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program
College of Charleston
Charleston, SC 29424
phone: 843.953.3918
fax: 843.953.7624
website: www.jhssc.org
e-mail: jhssc@cofc.edu

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE

P-A-I-D

CHARLESTON, SC
PERMIT No. 437

THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY of SOUTH CAROLINA

SPRING 2007

VOLUME XII - NUMBER 1



From the President: Belinda Gergel	2-3
Celebrating a Century of Women's Leadership at Tree of Life.....	4-5
Torah Scrolls Examined and Appraised.....	6
The Adventure of Jewish Genealogy.....	7
JHSSC Meets in Columbia: April 27-29, 2007.....	8-9
Order of the Jewish Palmetto.....	10
New and Noteworthy: Historic Treasures Given to the Jewish Heritage Collection.....	11-12
The Sam and Regina Greene Family Fund.....	12
Books of Interest: <i>Jewish Roots in Southern Soil</i> and <i>Dixie Diaspora</i>	13
Pillars: Become a Benefactor.....	14
Photos from the 2006 Biennial Scholars' Conference.....	15
Join the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina.....	16

From the President



Dear friends,

Gerda Lerner, who fled the Nazis and became one of our country's great historians of American women, once observed in her insightful work, *Why History Matters*, that "History . . . extends human life beyond its span, can give meaning to each life and serve as a necessary anchor for us. It gives a sense of perspective about our own lives and encourages us to transcend the finite span of our lifetime by identifying with the generations that came before us and measuring our own actions against the generations that will follow."

These powerful words about the ability of history to touch and enrich each of our lives resonate deeply with the mission of the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina. We know that it is our responsibility to collect the stories of South Carolina's Jewish past, to learn from them, and to preserve them for future generations. Our task is a big one for we have so many great stories to discover and share!

I want you to know that over the past several months the South Carolina Jewish Historical Society has been active in fulfilling this special mission. Our fall meeting in October in Spartanburg and Greenville explored the rich history and growth of Jewish communities in the South Carolina upstate. Besides listening to outstanding panel discussions, we visited three historic synagogues and enjoyed lively and moving musical presentations by Mappamundi, a gleeful North Carolina band that performs world music and specializes in Jewish traditions—Yiddish, Sephardic, Hebrew, and Klezmer.

We kicked the weekend off with services at B'nai Israel in the heart of downtown Spartanburg, then moved to Greenville on Saturday for morning services at Beth Israel and an afternoon of panel discussions. Our first speakers, Marsha Poliakoff and Joe Wachter, profiled a number of Spartanburg's Jewish community leaders. We then turned our attention to Greenville, with superb presentations by Hy Brand, Fred Leffert, and Jay Wachs. Former Greenville Mayor Max Heller also participated on the panel, providing special insights on Jews in public service in Greenville and South Carolina. Our Sunday program was held at Temple of Israel and featured noted author Judy Goldman, who took us back to the 1950s and 1960s and shared her perspectives on Jewish life in her hometown of Rock Hill. It was a great weekend and special thanks are due to our vice president, Hy Brand, and to the rabbis and our contacts at all three synagogues for their invaluable assistance.

At the JHSSC Board meeting in Greenville we decided to appoint a special committee to help chart future directions for our Society. The time is right to engage in such discussions, as we are in great shape with both membership and finances, and our relationship to the College of Charleston could not be better. Under Vice President Ed Poliakoff's capable leadership, an ad hoc committee comprised of Executive Director Marty Perlmutter, former President Jeffrey Rosenblum, Secretary Ann Hellman, Treasurer David Cohen, member Fred Glickman, and Jewish Heritage Collection

On the cover:
Confirmation at Tree
of Life, Columbia,
South Carolina, ca.
1938. Left to right:
Helen Kohn Hennig,
Floyd Newman, Ruth
Bass (Jacobs),
Carolyn Halford
(Green), Stanley
Donen, Ruth Katz,
Betty Jean Rosen,
Melvin Gergel, and ??
(Please help us identify
the gentleman on the
far right.)

*Photo: Gift of Ruth
Jacobs. Special
Collections, College
of Charleston Library*

of the JHSSC

Curator Dale Rosengarten met in Charleston for discussion. It was a great session, and the group will be sharing its recommendations at our next board meeting.

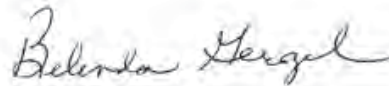
As I mentioned in an earlier letter, I taught a course in southern Jewish history at the College of Charleston that ended this past December. It was an incredible experience and provided me with a special window to view the work of the Jewish Studies Program and the Jewish Heritage Collection, two initiatives that our Society has helped to nurture and support. I cannot begin to tell you how impressed I am with the work that Marty Perlmutter and Dale Rosengarten have undertaken at the College. My students were simply terrific and the resources of the Jewish Heritage Collection clearly are the starting point for any serious research on southern Jewish history.

Our spring meeting will be held in Columbia the weekend of April 27–29 in conjunction with the centennial celebration of the Tree of Life Congregation's Sisterhood (Women of Reform Judaism). This celebration will provide our Society with the opportunity to explore the special contributions of Jewish women to South Carolina and promises to be exciting and informative. Featured speakers include Karla Goldman, author of *Beyond the Synagogue Gallery: Finding a Place for Women in American Judaism*, and Marcie Cohen Ferris, whose intriguing account of southern Jewish foodways, *Matzoh Ball Gumbo*, incorporates numerous sources from South Carolina. Make plans now to join us!

Finally, if you have not already done so, please renew your membership. You can use the membership form in this newsletter or go online at www.jhssc.org. Would you also consider becoming a Society "Pillar"? Our pillars each contribute \$1,000 a year for five years and make all the difference in the world in securing the financial stability of our organization.

Please know that we value your active involvement in our Society. I hope to see you in Columbia in April.

Fondly,



Belinda Gergel, President

Jewish Studies Elderhostel: May 20 - 25, 2007

For each of the last nine years, Jewish Studies has welcomed Elderhostelers from around the country who spend a week in historic Charleston in May learning about southern Jewish history. While participants enjoy the beauty of Charleston, they also learn that Charleston's history is not just about southern belles, antebellum homes, and plantation life. It is also about religious diversity. For more than 300 years the city has had an important Jewish presence.

The cost for the entire week's program is \$675 per person, which includes hotel, meals, and lectures. Accommodations are at the Francis Marion Hotel in historic downtown Charleston immediately across from Marion Square Park, site of Charleston's Holocaust memorial. JHSSC members who are over 50 are welcome to join. For more information, call Claire Robinson at the College of Charleston at 843.953.5488 or email robinsonc@cofc.edu.

Celebrating a Century of Women's Leadership at Tree of Life

by Belinda Gergel

The Tree of Life congregation was organized in Columbia's City Hall chambers in January 1896 by 18 "founding fathers," who launched

efforts to erect a "Liberal Orthodox" synagogue to meet the needs of the city's diverse Jewish community. By the time the new house of worship was dedicated in 1905, a majority of the members had voted to

affiliate with the Reform movement, and a minority left to establish an Orthodox synagogue that later became Beth Shalom. The split in the congregation resulted in a decline in Tree of Life's membership and severely strained its finances. At this critical and uncertain moment, in December 1905, the Ladies Aid Society, forerunner of Tree of Life's Sisterhood, was organized.

The young congregation confronted mounting debt and had no arrangements for regular worship, rabbinical services, religious programming for its youth, or holiday observances. Two exceptional women—Irene Goldsmith Kohn and Carrie Goldsmith Cohen—provided the key leadership that established the Ladies Aid Society on a firm foundation and in the process helped to secure the synagogue's future.



*Irene Goldsmith Kohn,
1868-1913*

Irene Goldsmith Kohn (1868–1913) sounded the call for the Society's organizational meeting and served as the group's first president. An exceptionally talented and articulate leader, Mrs. Kohn held offices in numerous women's organizations in Columbia and was married to Tree of Life founder, August Kohn. Carrie Goldsmith Cohen (1872–1944), who was also active in women's civic organizations, served as the Ladies Aid Society's first vice president and followed Mrs. Kohn's service as

This April Columbia's Tree of Life celebrates a century of women's leadership in the life of the congregation and synagogue.

president, ultimately holding the key leadership position for over eight terms. The two women, both of whom had

grown up in Charleston's historic K. K. Beth Elohim, understood the role of Reform Judaism in elevating the status of women in Judaism and had a clear view of the new opportunities open to women in the life of

a synagogue. They jointly assumed the directorship of Tree of Life's Religious School and placed it under the Society's governance. Within weeks they steered the Ladies Aid Society into responsibility for a wide range of activities.

By early 1906 the Society was actively engaged in efforts to provide rabbinical services for the congregation. Its leaders negotiated an agreement with Charleston's Rabbi Barnett Elzas of Beth Elohim to conduct services on alternate Sundays and to assist with the religious school. In

1912 the Society employed Elzas's successor Rabbi Isaac Marcusson, who later served as secretary of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, to provide once-a-month religious services in Columbia. The Ladies Aid Society made arrangements with Hebrew Union



*Carrie Goldsmith Cohen,
1872-1944*

College to send student rabbis to conduct High Holiday Day services and secured the services of rabbis from Sumter and Augusta to augment the religious school's programs. In addition the Society raised funds that furnished the synagogue with pews, carpets, and an organ.

In 1914 Ladies Aid Society member Tillie Berman Fleischman urged that the Society affiliate with the newly organized National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, and the group changed its name and became known as the Tree

of Life Sisterhood. Sisterhood members took active roles in establishing the Columbia Section of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) in 1919. Sisterhood members Hattie Clarke and Bessie Stahl Kohn were the NCJW's first two presidents. Members also assumed important roles in the South Carolina Federation of Temple Sisterhoods (SCFTS), which was organized in 1923. Former Sisterhood president Carrie Goldsmith Cohen served as SCFTS's president in 1925–26.



The first generation of exceptional female leaders at Tree of Life has been followed by succeeding generations of strong and visionary women. Perhaps the most notable of these



*Helen Kohn Hennig,
1896–1961*

was Helen Kohn Hennig, the longtime superintendent of the Tree of Life Religious School, which for decades served the entire Jewish community and linked her to the formal religious education of all of Columbia's Jewish children. In 1933 the school was recognized by the Union of American Hebrew

Congregations as the only accredited religious school in the country without a resident rabbi.

Widely regarded as Columbia's Jewish matriarch, Mrs. Hennig served as president of the SCFTS in 1951–1952 and was a vice president of the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods. She promoted ongoing interfaith projects in Columbia and pioneered special programs on Judaism for schoolteachers, Christian clergy, and other interested groups. An active women's club leader on the local and state level, she was the only woman appointed to the city's Sesqui-Centennial Commission in the mid 1930s and she edited the first comprehensive history of Columbia, *Columbia: Capital City of South Carolina, 1786–1936*. Her published work also includes a biography of noted portraitist William Harrison Scarborough; a biography of her



Planning committee for Tree of Life's Institute of Judaism, Record, October 18, 1954. Seated on the floor, left to right: Sylvia Savitz, Marian Fleischman, Evelyn Daniel, Evelyn Alion. Rear, left to right: Mrs. Sam Reyner, Midge Silverfield, Mrs. Ben Klein, Mrs. Bernard Lapidus, Florence Spiers, Mrs. Sol Kohn, Jr. Helen Kohn Hennig is seated at the front of the group.

father, August Kohn; histories of the Columbia Red Cross and the Tree of Life congregation; and numerous articles on South Carolina history.

In 1951 and again in 1986, Tree of Life's Sisterhood, now known as Women of Reform Judaism, assumed key roles in securing funds for the congregation's move to new synagogues. Since 1935, when Hannah Pearlstine became the first woman elected to serve on the congregation's board of trustees, women have become permanent fixtures in Tree of Life's formal governing structure. In 1977 Barbara Bruck became the first woman elected president of the congregation. Since her election three additional women—Jennifer Mykytyn, Sally Langer, and Terry Garber—have occupied that office. Amy Scully presently serves as the congregation's First Vice President.

A century after the founding of the Ladies Aid Society, its first avenue for women's service, Tree of Life proudly celebrates the dynamic role women have played in the life of the congregation. It does so with deep appreciation for the talents and commitment of her women in building a vibrant Jewish life in Columbia and South Carolina.

Torah Scrolls Examined & Appraised

by Doris Baumgarten



Showing damage: faded and missing letters



*Scribe Druin
reattaching scroll
to roller.*



90-year-old Aiken Torah

Our 85 year old congregation in Aiken, Adas Yeshurun, is most likely the smallest active congregation in South Carolina. Its 40 members carry on the vital job of maintaining the synagogue building, celebrating all the Holy Days, and conducting once-a-month Shabbat services.

For several years, our student rabbis have commented that our three Torah scrolls needed repair. Hebrew scribes we contacted would provide estimates only by coming to Aiken and doing repair work at the same time. Without even a ballpark figure, we could not hold fundraising events to cover the costs of repair or to get a much-needed estimate of the Torahs' insurance values.

Through the joint efforts of the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina and Board member Hy Brand, the monumental project was realized last summer. Greenville's Beth Israel and Augusta's Adas Yeshurun joined forces with Aiken's congregation and Hy arranged for Rabbi Gedaliah Druin of Miami, Florida, to come to Greenville to examine scrolls from all three synagogues. With three partners sharing the expenses of the rabbi's travel, hotel, and meals, it became affordable for our small congregation to obtain the help we needed.

Sofer Druin taught us much about the making and care of Torah scrolls, and filled in some history of each of our Torahs. We learned that the Aiken scrolls were about 80 or 90 years old and came from different parts of Poland. We learned that they had been repaired several times in the past by different scribes and that earlier techniques used to clean and repair them caused much of our present damage.

Your Torah Scrolls—What do you know about their condition? Are they marred by tears, mold, or missing letters? Are they still kosher? Are they properly insured?

With this information we were given a certificate of value and could now apply for proper insurance and begin raising funds to have the Torahs repaired. Most important of all, we found out what we need to do to care for them to avoid moisture

and mold damage in the future.

Without the JHSSC making an opportunity for exchange of information and the efforts of Hy Brand, our congregation might still be looking for answers.



*Three congregations participated in the project.
Left to right: Bob Sirull (Augusta), Linda Burros (Aiken), Rabbi David Sirull (Augusta), Gerald Erlich (Augusta), Rabbi/Sofer Gedaliah Druin, Nelson Danish (Aiken), Maurice Ghingold (Augusta), Hy Brand (Greenville).*

Photos by Doris Baumgarten, Aiken, SC

The Adventure of Jewish Genealogy

by Sandra Garfinkel Shapiro

It began ever so innocently with a phone query to my sister Matie in Mount Airy, North Carolina: "Where were Mama and Papa born?" It was 1978, long after our parents' death, and I had just finished reading the recently published book, *Finding Our Fathers* by Dan Rottenberg. Matie



Annie and Sam Garfinkel,
ca. 1913

wasn't sure but she had some Yiddish letters that Mama had given her and would send them on to me in Oregon. The only thing I could decipher from the yellowed pages of Yiddish script was the location and date, "Dywin 2/ F39," but it was enough to accelerate my pulse.

After World War II, I remember asking my mother if we had family in Europe. "Ganza g'harget veren" (all were killed). That was the extent of my knowledge, until these letters from the Litvinski family in Dyvin were finally translated by a Brooklyn cousin of my mother who identified the writers as the children and

grandchildren of my maternal grandmother's sister. Now I asked myself, who else remained in Dyvin and were lost in the Holocaust? How long had my ancestors lived there? What other families were related to the Garfinkels in Dyvin/Kobryn and surrounding shtetls? So the quest began.

And what an adventure it has been! Research in Jewish genealogy before the Internet and the dissolution of the Soviet Union required visiting the various archives, with no guarantee one would find helpful information. My personal search has taken me to Salt Lake City, New York City, Jerusalem, Toronto, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., and the countries of Poland and Belarus. Now the many research aids and books available, along with Internet resources such as www.jewishgen.org, make documenting family history much easier, but not as colorful or adventurous.



A typical house and yard in the shtetl of Dyvin, in Belarus, where Annie and Sam Garfinkel were born.
Photo: Sandra G. Shapiro, July 2000.



Holocaust memorial at the pit where the Jews of Minsk were shot by the Nazis. Leonid Levin, the foremost architect of Belarus and president of the Belarus Jewish community, renovated the site and added the figures as well as a Hebrew inscription acknowledging that the individuals descending into the pit were Jews.

Visiting the Jewish Heritage Collection at Addlestone Library at the College of Charleston, I was surprised to find very few resource materials for doing research on Jewish genealogy. History is such an important part of the Charleston environment, as Mr. Sol Breibart ably taught me in high school. So, in memory of my parents, Annie and Sam Garfinkel, I have initiated what I hope are the seeds of an evolving collection that will aid both the beginner and the experienced genealogist. The Internet is a wonderful addition to the family historian's toolbox, but it can never replace basic reference books. I hope all who do family research will take the time to explore the new Jewish genealogy resources in the reading room of Special Collections at the College library.

For more information, contact Sandra Shapiro at sgshapiro@comcast.net.

JHSSC Meets in Columbia, SC April 27-29, 2007

Celebrating the Lives and Contributions of Jewish Women to South Carolina and to its Jewish Community

Friday, April 27 Tree of Life Congregation, 6719 North Trenholm Road

- 6:15 p.m. Sisterhood centennial celebration Shabbat dinner
- 8:00 p.m. Centennial Shabbat service and Oneg
Speaker: Dr. Belinda Gergel, JHSSC President



Tree of Life Congregation today.

Saturday, April 28 Beth Shalom Synagogue, 5827 North Trenholm Road

- 10:00 a.m. Morning Services
- 11:00 a.m. Keynote speaker: Dr. Karla Goldman, historian,
Jewish Women's Archive, Brandeis University
Beyond the Synagogue Gallery, Southern-Style
- 12:30 p.m. Kiddush lunch
- 1:15 p.m. Welcome: Dr. Belinda Gergel



Karla Goldman

Making a Difference: Contributions of South Carolina's Jewish Women

- 1:30 p.m. **Jewish Women in Community Life**— Sandra Poliakoff, Beth Shalom board member, moderator
- Susan Brill, Columbia, member of the Richland School District #2 Board and former member of Richland County Council
 - Toni Elkins, Columbia, artist and arts advocate
 - Dr. Lilly Filler, Columbia, physician and former chair of the South Carolina Commission on Women
 - Judge Diane Goodstein, Summerville, Circuit Court
 - Harriet Keyserling, Beaufort, former member of the South Carolina House of Representatives
 - Anita Zucker, Charleston, philanthropist and community leader
- 2:45p.m. **Women in Jewish Community Life**—Belinda Gergel, moderator
- Gerry Sue Arnold, Columbia, Hadassah board leader and Jewish community activist
 - Belle Jewler, Columbia, Beth Shalom volunteer
 - Jane Kulbersh, Columbia, Jewish Federation activist
 - Irene Rudnick, Aiken, Jewish community leader and former member of the South Carolina House of Representatives
 - Amy Scully, Columbia, First Vice President, Tree of Life Congregation
 - Faye Seigel, Charleston, Past President, National Council of Jewish Women, Charleston section

Saturday, April 28 (continued)

Gerry Sue and Norman Arnold
Jewish Community Campus,
306 Flora Drive

6:15 p.m. Cocktail Buffet and Reception
Presentation of the **Order of the
Jewish Palmetto** to Max and
Trude Heller

7:30 p.m. Tel Aviv Café:
Concert with Ayala Kalus



Sunday, April 29 **Tree of Life Congregation,
6719 North Trenholm Road**

8:30 a.m. Board Meeting
(Tree of Life Library)

9:30 a.m. Coffee and bagels

Jewish Women of South Carolina: A Celebration

JHSSC Meeting
Columbia, SC

April 27 – 29, 2007

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

E-MAIL _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

*The cost for this weekend is \$35 per person
not including hotel accommodations.*

Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Return form to:

JHSSC / Jewish Studies Program
96 Wentworth Street
Charleston, SC 29424

Jewish Roots in South Carolina Soil: Religion and Domestic Culture in the American South

10:00 a.m. Dr. Dale Rosengarten, Curator,
Jewish Heritage Collection,
College of Charleston:
***Jewish Antiques Roadshow:
Exhibition Objects and Orphans***



Dale Rosengarten



Marcie Cohen Ferris

11:00 a.m. Dr. Marcie Cohen Ferris, Associate
Director, Carolina Center for Jewish
Studies, University of North
Carolina at Chapel Hill:
***Matzoh Ball Gumbo: Culinary
Tales of the Jewish South***

12:15 p.m. Matzoh Ball Soup and Deli Lunch/
Book Signing

COLUMBIA HOTEL INFORMATION:

Wingate Inn - Northeast

8300 Two Notch Road
(I-20 and I-77 @ US Highway 1)

Columbia, SC 29223

Phone: 803.699.9333

Fax: 803.699.6588

email: 7655@hotel.cendant.com

RATE: \$89/night

Special rate available until April 13, 2007

You must make your own reservations

(Reservation Code: JHSC or just say
"Jewish Historical Society of SC")

Trude and Max Heller to receive the Order of the Jewish Palmetto

by Martin Perlmutter



*Trude and Max Heller on Main Street, Greenville, SC.
Photo: Bill Aron, 2000.*

The Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina will honor Max and Trude Heller with the Order of the Jewish Palmetto, its highest tribute, the third such award to be bestowed and the first given to a couple. The Order will be presented at the Society's meeting in Columbia on April 28, 2007, at a cocktail party at the Gerry Sue and Norman Arnold Jewish Community Campus immediately before an evening cabaret performance. The two earlier recipients were Senator Isadore Lourie o.b.m., the Society's founding president, and Solomon Breibart, dean of Charleston's Jewish history.

Max Heller and Trude Schönthal were born in Vienna, Austria, and came of age as the Nazi Party was taking power in Germany. They had met in 1937—he was 18, she barely 15—and began dreaming of a life together. Max secured a visa to the United States in 1938, ending up in South Carolina, with the help of a young American girl named Mary Mills from Greenville. After five unsuccessful attempts to escape Europe, Trude finally made it to the United States in 1941. Max and

Trude will celebrate their 65th wedding anniversary this August, with their three children and many grandchildren and great-grands.

Trude has been an active Holocaust educator, speaking in schools and at public gatherings about the Shoah. In 1999 Furman University awarded her an honorary doctorate. Max made his mark in the textile business. Starting as a stock boy at Piedmont Textile Company, he rose through the ranks and went on to found the Maxon Shirt Company. He also succeeded in public service. In 1969 Max was elected to the Greenville City Council and from 1971 until 1979 served as mayor of the city. He led the effort to revitalize downtown Greenville. "The only thing I miss[ed] about Vienna was the music," Heller has said, and he proceeded to turn Main Street into a cosmopolitan esplanade, while working to bring new businesses into the city. He lost a close election for a seat in the U.S. Congress. Under Governor Richard W. Riley, he served as chairman of the South Carolina State Development Board.

The Hellers have been deeply involved in Jewish life in Greenville. Committed to their synagogue, Beth Israel, and active in community affairs, Max and Trude exemplify the best of Jewish values. The Society wants to acknowledge their extraordinary contributions by conferring the Order of the Jewish Palmetto jointly on Max and Trude. May they go from strength to strength!



The Jewish Historical Society of
South Carolina Newsletter
is published twice a year.

Dale Rosengarten.....Editor
Enid Idelsohn.....Design and Layout
Joseph RubinPhoto Archivist

JHSSC
College of Charleston
Charleston, SC 29424

New and Noteworthy: Historic Treasures Given to the Jewish Heritage Collection *by Dale Rosengarten*

For the past 12 years I have been in the enviable position, as curator of the Jewish Heritage Collection at the College of Charleston's Addlestone Library, of accepting hundreds of wonderful gifts. Works of art and artifacts, manuscripts and photographs—most pertaining to Jewish life in South Carolina, but more and more with regional importance—flow into our archives at a dizzying rate.

Two brand new donations are among the most rare and intrinsically interesting which, in the code of archivists, is the definition of precious. One is the DeLeon family's *Biblia Hebraica*, published in Amsterdam in 1667, a gift from I. Harby Moses of Sumter. In handwritten notations, this well worn Bible traces the path the family took from the old world to the new, from Holland to Spanish Town, Jamaica, to New York City, Philadelphia, Charleston, and then on to Camden and Columbia.

nine children, beginning with his eldest son Abraham, on September 21, 1734, and ending with the youngest child, David. Jacob DeLeon, son of this Abraham, duly recorded his father's death at the age of 52.

The next entry, October 4, 1789, finds Jacob in New York City, where he marries Hannah Hendricks, a member of a prominent Shearith Israel family. From New York the couple moves to Philadelphia and, by 1796, to Charleston, where they enter the ranks of the Jewish elite. Jacob DeLeon lived for a time in Camden before settling near Columbia in the early 1820s. At his

death in 1828, the *Columbia Telescope* reported that he occupied a 100-acre estate "with dwelling House, Out Houses, and every convenience for such an establishment." DeLeon was buried in the Columbia Hebrew Benevolent Society Cemetery.



*Biblia Hebraica of the DeLeon family, Amsterdam, 1667.
Gift of I. Harby Moses. Special Collections,
College of Charleston Library.*



*Miniature of Jacob DeLeon
(1764–1828) by John
Ramage (ca. 1748–1802),
United States, 1789, oil on
ivory. Collection of the
American Jewish Historical
Society.*

Jacob DeLeon, great-grandfather of the South Carolina settler of the same name, acquired the Bible in Amsterdam and passed it on to his son Abraham, who recorded the date of his own birth, May 8, 1702, and of his marriage in 1731, in Spanish Town. Abraham then notes the birth of his



The other new treasure in our collection is an autograph album presented in 1836 to Octavia Harby by Aaron Moïse, Jr., and inscribed with verses by Penina Moïse and other luminaries of her day. This slim, leather-bound volume was donated last fall by Phil Moïse in memory of his mother, Cecile Rosenberg Moïse.

Born in 1823, Octavia was a child of four when she lost her mother, Rachael Mordecai Harby. Her father, the renowned writer and Jewish reformer, Isaac Harby, died a year and a half later, in 1828.

Historic Treasures (continued)

The Harby orphans were raised by Isaac's sister, Caroline De Litchfield Harby, whom they referred to as "little mother." In 1838, on the occasion of Octavia's 15th birthday, family members and friends inscribed in the album their good wishes in verse. A year later, she married Andrew Jackson Moses, seven years her senior. Over the next 27 years, she gave birth to 17 children, 14 of whom lived to maturity. Five of her sons fought in the Civil War; her eldest, Joshua Lazarus Moses, was killed at Fort Blakely, Alabama, on April 9, 1865, the day Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox Courthouse, Virginia, a thousand miles away.

Octavia was to become a fair poet herself, but here in this book she is the recipient of flowery lyrics and sage advice, such as these three stanzas from Penina Moïse, who in her youth had been Isaac Harby's admiring student:

1

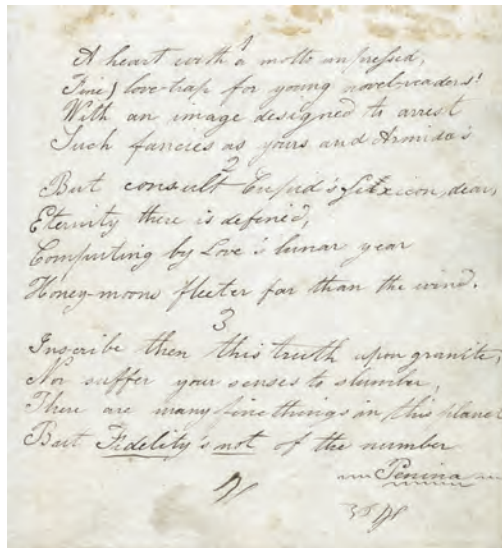
A heart with a motto impressed,
Fine love-trap for young novel readers!
With an image designed to arrest
Such fancies as yours and Armida's

2

But consult Cupid's Lexicon, dear,
Eternity there is defined,
Computing by Love's lunar year
Honey-moons fleeter far than the wind.

3

Inscribe then this truth upon granite,
Nor suffer your senses to slumber,
There are many fine things in this planet
But Fidelity's not of the number



Octavia Harby Moses
(1823–1904), artist
unknown, ca. 1840,
oil on canvas.
Private collection.



Penina Moïse
(1797–1880),
attributed to
Theodore Sidney
Moïse, ca. 1838,
oil on canvas.
Private collection.

The Sam and Regina Greene Family Fund

The Jewish Heritage Collection and the Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program extend heartfelt appreciation to Sam Greene for establishing the Sam and Regina Greene Family Fund at the College of Charleston. For many years Sam has generously supported the library's Holocaust Archives initiative, making possible the ongoing collection of material from survivors, liberators, and witnesses of the Shoah. Sam has also been a contributor to the construction of the Jewish Studies Center. The new endowment will allow the College to expand the library's holdings on southern Jewish culture, to design programming to promote Holocaust awareness, and to offer cultural events to the Charleston community..

In the words of George Benson, the new president of the College of Charleston:

"Sam's gift is a product of a poignant personal journey which included unspeakable evil. More importantly, the Sam and Regina Greene Family Fund represents what is best in mankind, the desire to do what is right and to give back. Sam's gift demonstrates a commitment to education, to history, and to human values that are the lifeblood of the College."



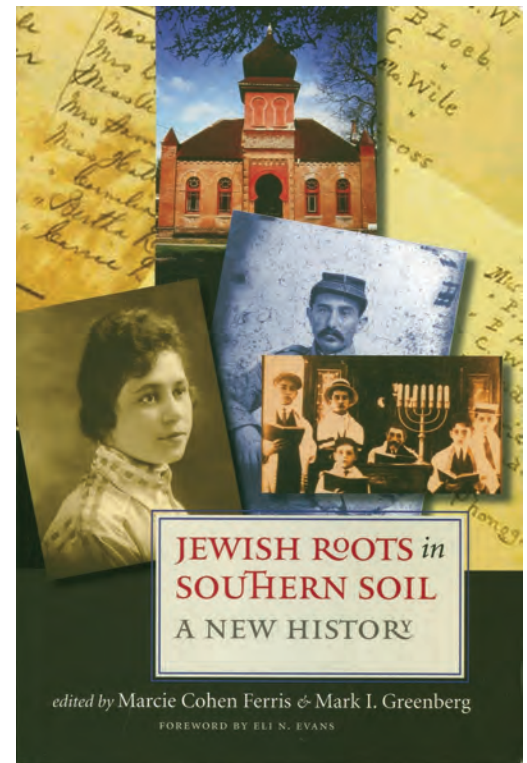
Regina and Sam Greene, ca. 1948.

Books of Interest

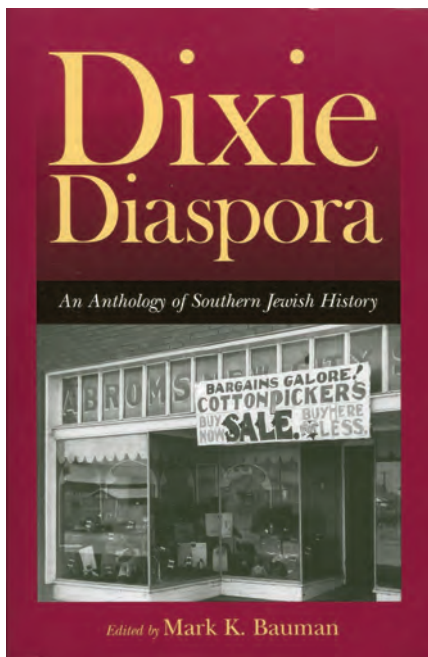
Jews have been a presence in the American South as long as there has been a South. They began settling in the region in the late 17th century as part of the first wave of European colonization. Two of the nation's earliest Jewish congregations were founded in Savannah in 1733 and Charleston in 1749. By 1800, more Jews lived in Charleston than in New York City. Today, Jews comprise less than one half of one percent of the southern population but provide critical sustenance and support for their communities.

Scholars continue to wrestle with the question of southern Jewish distinctiveness. Is Jewish culture in the South different from other regions of the country, and if so, how? What can we learn from studying southern Jewish history?

Jewish Roots in Southern Soil: A New History addresses these issues through the voices of a new generation of scholars. Essays span the region and cover historical periods from the colonial era to the present. Topics include assimilation and American Jewish identity; black/Jewish relations and the role of race in politics and economic life; southern Jewish women writers and the portrayal of southern Jews in literature and film; Jewish Confederates; Jewish peddlers; popular and material culture; the rise of American Reform Judaism; and changes wrought by industrialization, urbanization, and sunbelt migration in the 20th century. "With **Jewish Roots in Southern Soil**," writes historian Deborah Dash Moore, "the history of Jews south of the Mason-Dixon line comes into its own."



Jewish Roots in Southern Soil: A New History, edited by Marcie Cohen Ferris and Mark I. Greenberg
Foreword by Eli N. Evans, Brandeis University Press, \$29.95



Dixie Diaspora is a wide-ranging collection of articles on southern Jewish history selected from major journals published over the past 25 years. Now available in a single handsome volume, 16 significant works by prominent authors in the field address a variety of topics, including economics, politics, women's roles, ethnicity, and race. Editor Mark Bauman has grouped the chapters under five headings and provides cogent introductions to each: Jews and Judaism, Small-Town Life, Business and Governance, Interaction, and Identity.

"The essays make a valuable contribution when read against one another. Bringing them together in an anthology allows the reader to think about the issues raised in much deeper ways. In addition, the essays are diverse, well researched, and thoughtful."

—Phyllis K. Leffler, co-author of *Academic and Public History: A Paradigm and Philosophy*.

Mark K. Bauman is retired Professor of History at Atlanta Metropolitan College and co-editor of *The Quiet Voices: Southern Rabbis and Black Civil Rights*.

Dixie Diaspora: An Anthology of Southern Jewish History, edited by Mark K. Bauman
University of Alabama Press, \$35.00

Pillars: Become a Benefactor

by Martin Perlmutter, Executive Director

The secret is out! Jews have lived in South Carolina for over three hundred years, and for a generation following the American Revolution Charleston had the largest Jewish population in the United States. Today South Carolina Jews continue to make news. Son of the PeeDee Ben Bernanke, for example, began a four-year term as chairman of the Federal Reserve System in February 2006 and will remain a member of the Board for 14 years.

Jews often think of themselves as links in a chain that extends far back in time. Our common past unites us as a community. Jewish history in South Carolina is not only long but generally happy; acceptance and success are recurring themes. In its publications and panel discussions, cemetery surveys and archival collections, the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina has focused on stories of Jewish settlement. Our efforts now make it possible for future generations to learn from the experiences of their forebears.

Pillars provide JHSSC with the financial wherewithal to accomplish all that it does. The Society has succeeded in making South Carolina Jewish history well known across the state and beyond. Our message has even reached the hallowed halls of American Jewish historians, who tended in the past to focus their attention on more populous Jewish centers in the Northeast.

The Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program is committed to developing a Center for Southern Jewish Culture at the College. Such a Center would ensure the long-term well-being of the Society by adding an archivist to the staff of the Jewish Heritage Collection, expanding the Addlestone Library's Jewish archives, offering additional courses in southern Jewish history, and making the College a creative hub of public programs.

JHSSC needs your support. Pillars make a five-year commitment of \$5,000—that is, \$1,000 a year for five years—and earn our everlasting gratitude.

The Pillars of the Society (2007)

John and Marcie Baker	Columbia, SC
Doris Baumgarten	Aiken, SC
Norman and Eve Berlinsky	Charleston, SC
Fred and Bunny Bernstein	Mt. Pleasant, SC
Alan Coleman	Charleston, SC
Harriette Kraft Ehrlich	Jacksonville, FL
Carolee and Harold Fox	Charleston, SC
Meri Gergel	Columbia, SC
Richard and Belinda Gergel	Columbia, SC
Dr. Mark and Judith Green	Charleston, SC
Reuben Greenberg	Charleston, SC
Ruth B. Greenberg	Florence, SC
Ann and Max Hellman	Charleston, SC
Alan and Charlotte Kahn	Columbia, SC
Michael Kogan	Little Falls, NJ
Ronald Krancer	Villanova, PA
Cynthia Levy	Hilton Head Island, SC
Ina Rae Levy	Hilton Head Island, SC
Susan Lourie	Columbia, SC
Frieda and Jack Margolies	Charleston, SC
Rose Mark	Beaufort, SC
Albert and Robin Mercer	Owensboro, KY
Leon and Karen Ortner	Charleston, SC
Susan Pearlstone	Park City, UT
Edward and Sandra Poliakoff	Columbia, SC
Klyde and Claire Robinson	Charleston, SC
Benedict and Brenda Rosen	Myrtle Beach, SC
Robert and Susan Rosen	Charleston, SC
Jeffrey and Mickey Rosenblum	Charleston, SC
Jeff and Walton Selig	Columbia, SC
Stuart M. Shamah	Myrtle Beach, SC
Paul and Jayne Siegel	Walterboro, SC
Steven and Harriett Steinert	Sullivan's Island, SC
Mark C. Tanenbaum	Sullivan's Island, SC
Bernard and Ann Warshaw	Walterboro, SC
Jerry and Anita Zucker	Charleston, SC

Harvey and Mimi Gleberman, o.b.m.
Anne Oxler Krancer, o.b.m.

Yes, I/we want to become a pillar of the JHSSC.
In doing so, I/we commit to a gift of \$5,000
over a period of five years.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

Check enclosed \$ _____ (includes annual membership)

Biennial Scholars' Conference Charleston, SC June 5-7, 2006



Photos by Dana Sardet



THE
**JEWISH
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**
OF
SOUTH CAROLINA

Martin Perlmutter, Executive Director
Enid Idelsohn, Administrator

Officers

Belinda Gergel, *President*
Edward Poliakoff, *Vice-President*
H.J. Brand, *Second Vice-President*
David J. Cohen, *Treasurer*
Ann Hellman, *Secretary*

Past Presidents

Isadore Lourie, o.b.m.
Founding President
Richard Gergel
Klyde Robinson
Robert Rosen
Jeffrey Rosenblum
Bernard Warshaw

Board of Directors

Gerry Sue Arnold, *Columbia*
Doris Baumgarten, *Aiken*
Eve Berlinsky, *Charleston*
Moss Blachman, *Columbia*
Sol Breitbart, *Charleston*
Leah Chase, *Charleston*
Robert Dreyfus, *Greenville*
Stanley Farbstein, *Charleston*
Carolee Rosen Fox, *Charleston*
Ben Goldberg, *Charleston*
Lyssa Harvey, *Columbia*
Ruth Jacobs, *Charleston*
Alan Kahn, *Columbia*
Harriet Keyserling, *Beaufort*
Michael Kogan, *Charleston*
Harold Kornblut, *Latta*
Mike Krupsaw, *Anderson*
Cynthia Levy, *Hilton Head*
Mick Lourie, *Columbia*
Elizabeth Moses, *Georgetown*
I. Harby Moses, *Sumter*
Herbert Novit, *Hilton Head*
Karen Ortner, *Charleston*
Arline Polinsky, *Columbia*
Mickey Rosenblum, *Charleston*
Barbara K. Stender, *Charleston*

Jewish Heritage Collection

Dale Rosengarten, *Curator*

Join the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: () _____ Fax: () _____

E-mail Address: _____

ANNUAL DUES FOR 2007 (JANUARY–DECEMBER)

_____ Individual/Family Membership	\$36
_____ Friend	\$200
_____ Sponsor	\$350
_____ Founding Patron	\$1000
_____ Pillar	\$5000 (\$1000 for 5 years)

Join or renew JHSSC online. Go to **www.jhssc.org**
Enroll your friends and relatives for an additional \$36 each.
Send us their information and we will inform them of your gift.

***Please make checks payable to JHSSC
and mail to the address below.***

Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program

96 Wentworth Street
College of Charleston
Charleston, SC 29424

phone: 843.953.3918

fax: 843.953.7624

website: www.jhssc.org

e-mail: jhssc@cofc.edu

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE

P-A-I-D

CHARLESTON, SC
PERMIT No. 437

THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

FALL 2007 VOLUME XII - NUMBER 2



From the President: Belinda Gergel	2
Kaluzyners in Charleston	3-6
Ruth Bass Jacobs "A Gentle Soul".....	7-8
JHSSC Meets in Charleston: October 14, 2007	9
The Continuing Adventure of Jewish Genealogy	11-12
The "Dash" between Birth and Death	13-14
Become a Pillar: Make a Difference	15
Join the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina	16



*On the cover:
Ida Goldberg Appel
and two of her
children, Fannie and
Harry, in the
backyard of their
home at 178 St.
Philip Street, ca.
1940. The A. Z. A.
on Harry's jacket
refers to the popular
B'nai Brith Youth
Organization
fraternity, Aleph
Zadek Aleph,
established in
Charleston in 1932.*

*Photo: gift of Fannie
Appel Rones, Special
Collections, College
of Charleston
Library.*

From the President of the JHSSC

It was good to see so many of you at our spring meeting in Columbia in April. Held in conjunction with the Tree of Life Sisterhood Centennial, this gathering focused on the role of women in Jewish life in South Carolina. It was a terrific, jam-packed conference, and I deeply appreciate the assistance of Sandra Poliakoff, Lyssa Harvey, Dale Rosengarten, Enid Idelsohn, Tree of Life's Women of Reform Judaism, and everyone else who helped make the weekend informative and exciting.

Among the program highlights were insightful presentations on the roles Jewish women have played in southern culture by historian Karla Goldman from the Jewish Women's Archive in Boston, Dale Rosengarten from the Jewish Heritage Collection at the College of Charleston, and Marcie Cohen Ferris, Associate Director, Carolina Center for Jewish Studies at UNC-Chapel Hill. A group of outstanding women leaders from around the state participated in panel discussions and shared their perspectives on Jewish women's activism. On Saturday evening, JHSSC presented its highest award, the Order of the Jewish Palmetto, to Max and Trude Heller of Greenville, in recognition of their leadership and extraordinary contributions to our state.

The conference in Columbia resulted in a significant increase in Society membership. If you have not already done so, please take a minute to check on your membership status and, if necessary, renew. I ask that you also encourage your friends and relations to join us in the important work we do. JHSSC depends on its members to help spread the word of our mission to conserve and propagate the story of Jewish life in South Carolina.

As I pen this letter I have recently returned from a meeting with representatives of Temple Sinai in Sumter to discuss the future of their beautiful and historic synagogue and cemetery. With diminishing membership and a less than promising influx of new Jewish families, Temple Sinai is struggling with issues that confront congregations in small towns around our state and across the South.

JHSSC Executive Director Marty Perlmutter and Vice President Ed Poliakoff joined me in Sumter to explore with Temple leaders our common interests and to brainstorm about future possibilities. One matter jumped to the forefront of my thinking—the importance of making certain that synagogue and cemetery records are preserved. Temple Sinai has made great strides in organizing and protecting its archives. It is my hope that those of us in other congregations will check on the location and condition of our respective records now, to ensure their survival for generations to come. Please consider sending your original materials to the Jewish Heritage Collection at the College of Charleston Library where they will be permanently maintained under the highest archival standards.

Our upcoming annual meeting in Charleston on October 14 will focus on the subject of researching and preserving family history. This one-day session will begin planning for a larger conference on Jewish genealogy that the JHSSC board has identified as a high priority for future programs. You also will be receiving in mid-September the report of the Nominations Committee on a proposed slate of officers, to be voted on at the fall meeting.

I look forward to seeing you there!

Fondly,

Belinda Gergel, President

Kaluszyners in Charleston

by Alyssa Neely

Amid the influx of Eastern European Jewish immigrants into the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a large number of Jews from Kaluszyn, Poland, settled in Charleston, South Carolina. Most of our information about this group of *landsmen* (people from the same town in the Old Country) comes from the published memoirs of Henry Yaschik, who immigrated as a child, and the recollections of second-generation Kaluszyner-Americans



Kaluszyn's main thoroughfare. Sefer Kalushin (pub. Tel Aviv, 1961).

recorded and transcribed for the Jewish Heritage Collection's Oral History Archives at the College of Charleston. These Charlestonians—among them Samuel Appel, Ruth Kirshtein Kaplan, Sam Kirshtein, Fannie Appel Rones, and Louis Toporek—recall their parents' tales of hunger and hardship in the Old Country, the result of systematic repression and persecution by their Russian rulers. Hopelessness associated with extreme poverty was the primary motivation behind emigration from the Pale of Settlement. However, conscription by the Russian army also helped to push Jews out. Sam Kirshtein's father and uncle, for example, had already been drafted when they acquired false passports and slipped out of Poland.

The means of escape from a life in which one could aspire only to mere survival was through a pattern of chain migration whereby a Kaluszyner



Jewish residents of Kaluszyn line up to receive allotment designated for the poor. Sefer Kalushin.



Abe Appel outside first store on King Street between Reid and Wolfe, ca. 1935. Gift of Fannie Appel Rones, Special Collections, College of Charleston Library.

(anglicized to Kalushiner in America), newly established in Charleston, sponsored the immigration and settlement of another Kaluszyner, usually a relative or friend. Eleazer Bernstein, according to Kaluszyner lore, was the first to arrive.

It is agreed that he sponsored A. M. Solomon, but when Solomon arrived and what his relationship was to Bernstein is not reported. Solomon, according to a Sokol genealogical chart compiled by Helene Scharff, married an Altman, and was an uncle to Altmans and Goldbergs and a first cousin to Noah Sokol. Most of these relatives were born in Kaluszyn and immigrated to Charleston.

Kaluszyners, like other Jewish immigrants, tended to congregate in the vicinity of King and St. Philip



Ben Yaschik (l) in his store, corner Percy and Bogard with daughter Dena in arms, wife, Vera, and mother-in-law, Ida Blacher, 1930. Special Collections, College of Charleston.

Street, north of Calhoun, an area settled by newcomers of various backgrounds. Brith Sholom, located just south of Calhoun on St. Philip, served as the focal point of Jewish life for the Orthodox immigrants. Kaluszyner fathers initially supported their families by peddling, but many progressed to owning furniture or grocery stores. Their shops lined King Street, with some families living upstairs until they could afford to move to St. Philip or Radcliffe Street. The neighborhood was run down and residences often were divided into rental units or operated as boarding houses to bring in additional income.

The children of Kaluszyners who grew up in Charleston's "uptown" neighborhood during the period between the two world wars remember the community as warm and picturesque. Their memories are filled with the sights and sounds of chickens and goats milling about the yards, children playing baseball, vendors hawking vegetables and

fish, and the smell of baking bread on Fridays. "It was just a good neighborhood to grow up in," says Sam Kirshtein. It was "very colorful," and "everyone knew everyone." Parents spoke Yiddish at home and mothers kept kosher kitchens, relying on the Zalkins' or Bakers' markets for their meat.

In the tradition of Eastern European Jews, Kaluszyner parents stressed the importance of education to their children. These sons and daughters of immigrants took their studies seriously at the local public schools, and the sons attended heder or Hebrew School every afternoon from three to five o'clock in preparation for their bar mitzvahs. Summer vacations were spent at the beach, either Folly or Sullivan's Island, or in the Piedmont. The Kaluszyners' resort of choice was Glenn Springs, near Spartanburg, as attested by the many family photos taken there (see Sandra Lee Kahn Rosenblum's article about Glenn Springs in the JHSSC newsletter, Winter 2004).

The degree of piety of the Kaluszyner-Americans varied, with some choosing to open their stores on the Sabbath. Nevertheless, Sam Appel recalls a common sight on Friday evenings and Saturday mornings. "When it was time to go to synagogue, you see everybody walking toward shul, so you walked with the crowd and you went to shul." By this time, however, there were two shuls to choose from.

In 1911, Kaluszyners were among approximately 60 members of Brith Sholom who broke away and formed a second Orthodox congregation, Beth Israel. Locally the "Little Shul" became known as the "Kaluszyner Shul," or sometimes the "Greener Shul"—greener meaning "greenhorn" or immigrant. According to Abe Kirshtein, reporting through his grandson Jeffrey Kaplan in the *BSBI Messenger* (1983), when he arrived in Charleston in 1920, 90 percent of the 60 to 70 members of Beth Israel were Kaluszyners.

The aid provided to fellow immigrants was formalized in 1921 by four Kaluszyners who created the Independent Kalushiner Society—Charleston's only *landsmanshaft*, or society of *landsmen*. Walter H. Solomon, Noah Sokol, M. Toporek, and J. Zucker founded the organization, and I. M. Goldberg served as first president. The society's members benefited



Beth Israel, the "Little Shul," 145 St. Philip Street, ca. 1948. Courtesy Charleston Temple Association.



Kalushiner Society banquet, 1948, in the social hall of the new Beth Israel Synagogue. President Marty Chase (below clock, to the left) and Freda Chase were not Kaluszyners. Courtesy Joe Chase.

from no-interest loans, assistance when ill, and group insurance rates. Funds to help the needy were also sent home to Kaluszyn every year. The society, which held monthly meetings and yearly social activities, was at first restricted to Kaluszyners, but in 1923 it opened its membership to all Charleston Jews. A 1927 Jewish Community Center newsletter confirms that expansion did take place in the '20s, although in the absence of early organizational records it is difficult to say what proportion of the new members were of Kaluszyn descent.

Meeting minutes and letters dating from 1947 to 1970 reveal an organization in decline, primarily due to poor attendance. In 1967, the society disbanded with the

disbursement of its funds. Its final years were marked by controversy and questions regarding its mission. On the one hand, the society had served its purpose, having helped the immigrants achieve a standard of living and a level of respect undreamed of in Poland. Charleston Kaluszyners had become well established. Their businesses were thriving and many of their children were college educated. They had built a big new synagogue on Rutledge Avenue and, like many of their fellow Americans, were poised to move to the suburbs.

On the other hand, Jews who had remained in Kaluszyn, as in most of Eastern Europe, had been wiped out or dispersed by the Nazi onslaught. Paula



New Beth Israel Synagogue (now Brith Sholom Beth Israel), 182 Rutledge Ave. Photo: Dale Rosengarten, 2004. Special Collections, College of Charleston Library.



Processional bringing Torahs from the old shul to the new Beth Israel Synagogue, 1948. Special Collections, College of Charleston Library.



Kaluszyner Paula Kornblum (center), her sister Hannah, and a friend on their way to church in Czestochowa, Poland, 1943. Courtesy Paula Kornblum Popowski.

Kornblum Popowski and her husband Henry were the last immigrants from the town to come to Charleston, arriving with their firstborn in 1949. Paula and her sister Hannah were the

only members of their family to survive the Holocaust. Acquiring false identities as Christians, they managed, with the help of fellow Poles, to continue to live and work in Poland. After the war, Paula returned to Kaluszyn to reclaim her family's flour mill. The mill, however, had been taken over by the government. Moreover, the town she grew up in was unrecognizable. The Jewish residents, once the majority of the population, were gone, either rounded up and murdered in Kaluszyn or taken to the death camp of Treblinka. Thus, with no more immigrants to assist, Charleston's Kalushiner Society was rendered obsolete.

This article is based on a research project conducted by Alyssa Neely for "East Side/West Side: Charleston's Ethnic Neighborhoods," taught by Dale Rosengarten at the College of Charleston, Spring 2007. Neely's term paper was one of two winners of Jewish Studies' Ludwig Lewisohn prize for the past academic year.

If anyone has photographs, memoirs, documents, or correspondence pertaining to Kaluszyn and the Kaluszyners of Charleston, please contact JHC photo archivist Joseph Rubin at jrubin@knology.net.



False German ID showing Paula Kornblum as Apolonia Barkowska, 1943. Courtesy Paula Kornblum Popowski.

Ruth Bass Jacobs

"A Gentle Soul"

by Joseph Rubin

On August 9, 2007, the Charleston Jewish community and the Jewish Historical Society lost a dear friend and colleague. "Ruth was tolerant, non-judgmental, resilient, intelligent, humble, compassionate, not materialistic, empathetic, kind, caring, hospitable," wrote Rabbi David J.

Radinsky, who knew the Jacobs family as their rabbi and personal friend for over 37 years. "The best listener in Charleston," BSBI Rabbi Ari Sytner declared in his eulogy.

Born and raised in North, Ruth was the third of seven children of the only Jewish family in town.

Moreover, her parents were the only foreign-born people in North. Ruth's mother, Esther, came to America with her family from Poland when she was two and her father, Nathan, immigrated alone at age sixteen from a village in Lithuania.

Ruth's early Jewish life revolved around family and Tree of Life Reform Temple in Columbia. In 1951 she

married Isaac Jacobs of Charleston, where the couple raised a family of five daughters and two sons. "As her children became more observant," Rabbi Radinsky reports, "she and Isaac encouraged them and also became

more observant of the Torah laws and traditions. Ruth had a great feeling for Judaism and truly was a spiritual person. She loved Jewish history and loved to record it."

Dale Rosengarten, curator of the Jewish Heritage Collection at the College of Charleston, recalls Ruth as her first assistant. "She would arrange interviews and then come along with her video camera, determined to

document peoples' lives in images as well as words. She taught herself how to use a computer and helped transcribe our oral histories. She was a one-woman clipping service, keeping our vertical files up to date."

Jack Bass, journalist, professor, and the youngest Bass sibling, describes Ruth as "the family historian. She was the one who saved the letters, clipped articles, retained photographs, wrote her memories, and interviewed others."

Ruth's daughter Naomi Beck says of her mother: "Mama taught us to respect all people, no matter what race or religion, and especially to respect our parents. Mama's friends spanned all age groups. Mama taught us to have a lot of *Ahavat Yisrael*, helping others in need whom



Ruth with brothers Bernie (l) and Herbie, ca. 1924.



Ruth at 18 months, 1925.



Ruth with brother Jack and parents, Esther and Nathan Bass, ca. 1950.



Ruth, ca. 1930.



Ruth (center), with sisters Marcia, and Frances, ca. 1945.

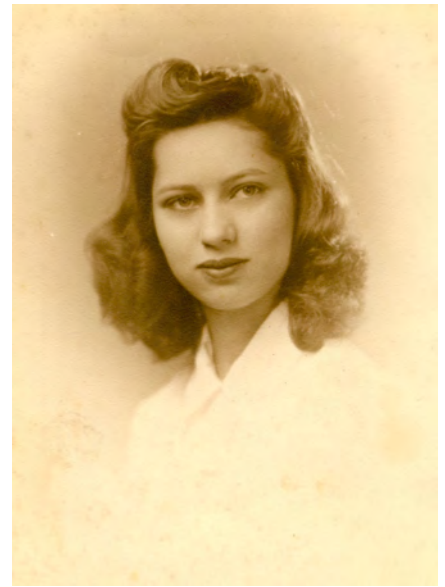
others may not have bothered with.” Ruth learned this trait in her parents’ home. In one of her many essays, “Growing up in North,” Ruth states: “Any shaliach [messenger] who passed through came by the house for something to drink and possibly to eat. We were taught to respect every person—black or white, Jew or Gentile.”

David Winner came to Charleston to study at the Citadel and found a Jewish home. Eulogizing Ruth, he said, “Ruth was my best friend. She was intuitive and clever. She had such a sense of humor—she laughed all the time. She was such a gentle soul with such wisdom.”

Daughter Sharon Steinherz praised her mother: “*Pirkei Avot* [Ethics of the Fathers] says that the best path a person should choose for oneself is a good heart. My mother had a good heart. She would have guests in her home, a listening ear for neighbors and friends and a dedication to family. I never knew what to give my mother because she was always satisfied with what she had.”

Ruth’s granddaughter Faigy Steinherz said, “Bubbe has so many children and grandchildren [7 children, 39 grandchildren, 6 great-grandchildren, and counting!] but she still found a way for everyone. When Bubbe lit candles she said all her children, in-laws, and grandchildren’s names. She spoke to me as if I were on the same level as her. Sometimes I would be her sister, her daughter, her granddaughter, or her best friend.”

All who knew Ruth Bass Jacobs will miss her. May her memory be for a blessing.



Ruth as a young adult, ca. 1940.



Isaac and Ruth (front center) surrounded by children and grandchildren, December 1977.



Ruth and Isaac in later years.

JHSSC Meets in Charleston

October 14, 2007

**All activities take place at the
Sylvia Vlosky Yaschik
Jewish Studies Center
96 Wentworth St.
College of Charleston**

- 10:00 a.m. Continental Breakfast
- 10:30 a.m. JHSSC Board Meeting: Levin Library
- 11:30 a.m. **Welcome:** Belinda Gergel, President, JHSSC
- 11:45 a.m. **Keynote Address: Discovering Family Histories: The Sternbergers of Clio**, Karen Franklin, Leo Baeck Institute
- 1:15 p.m. **Luncheon:** Arnold Hall
- Membership Meeting
- Elections
- 2:45 p.m. **Uncovering One's Past: Real Life Stories**
- Larry Freudenberg, Charleston, SC
- Ann Meddin Hellman, Charleston, SC
- Harold Kornblut, Latta, SC
- 4:00 p.m. Planning for next year's Jewish Genealogical Summit in Charleston: Karen Franklin and Dale Rosengarten



Jonas Sternberger, Elias Mayer, and Bertha Sternberger, subjects of the keynote address.



Karen S. Franklin is director of the Family Research Program at the Leo Baeck Institute. For 21 years she was director of The Judaica Museum in Riverdale, NY. Karen is a past president of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies and past chair of the Council of American Jewish Museums. She serves on many boards, currently including the ICOM-US Board (International Council of Museums). Karen was the only Jewish museum director ever to serve on the board of the American Association of Museums. She lectures throughout the world on topics of museums and genealogy.

Among many other activities, Karen is now working on a National Endowment for the Humanities grant with the Jewish Historical Society of Greater Washington to document the European roots of the founders of Congregation Adas Israel.

Genealogy Preview JHSSC Meeting Charleston, SC

Sunday, October 14, 2007

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

E-MAIL _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

The cost for this meeting is \$30 per person.

Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Return form to:

*JHSSC / Jewish Studies Program
96 Wentworth Street
Charleston, SC 29424*

The Continuing Adventure of Jewish Genealogy

by Ann Meddin Hellman

As a fifth generation Charlestonian, I didn't have to go far to find my ancestors. Three sets of great-great-grandparents (PIATIGORSKY/JACOBS, FEINTUCH, RUBIN) are buried in the Brith Sholom cemetery off of Huguenin Avenue in Charleston, South Carolina. But my desire to search for my family's entry into the United



Hannah Piatigorsky Levkoff, June 1922, wife of Henry Levkoff, b. 1854, Kiev, Ukraine; d. 1937, Augusta, GA.

States was piqued when immigration records for Ellis Island came online. The problem was these great-great-grandparents arrived in America before Ellis Island was established. The story told about the PIATIGORSKY family was always that he hired a boat to bring him, his wife, their five daughters and husbands, and

their children directly to Charleston. Later I was informed that the family name, PIATIGORSKY, was changed at Ellis Island to JACOBS.

Cousins of mine had started a family tree, but arrival dates, locations, and other information were missing. With everyone searching the Internet, I decided to go online and find whatever new information I could. I signed up free on www.jewishgen.org and paid a membership fee to join www.ancestry.com. Jewishgen gave me the opportunity to correspond with discussion groups that would set me in the right direction to find my Jewish ancestors. I could enter my family names in Jewishgen Family Finder (JGFF) in hopes of connecting with others searching for the same names. In fact, looking for the LEVKOFF branch of my family through Jewishgen put me in touch with a cousin I hadn't seen in years. I added his information to the data I had already gathered and began researching the shtetls where my family lived in the Old Country.

Ancestry.com allows for searches of arrival manifests, censuses up to 1930, the Social Security Death Index, and birth and marriage records, among other data.

Keying in the names LEVKOFF and PIATIGORSKY in www.ancestry.com yielded only recent information on LEVKOFF. The families did not appear in early censuses and were nowhere to be found on arrival lists for Castle Garden or Ellis Island. Then Steven Morse set up a "One-Step"



The Levkoff boys. Front row (left to right): George, Joe, and Laz. Back row (left to right): Shier, Julian (husband of Fredrica Levkoff Wolfner), and David, June 1922.

search site at www.stevemorse.org. This enabled me to use a partial name or Soundex (a computer program that searches for variant spellings and sound-alike names) to find my family.

Persistence paid off and I finally found my LEWKOW (LEVKOFF), PITIGERSKI (PIATIGORSKY), and BELOURTOWSKY (BIRLANT) families arriving in Castle Garden on November 25, 1881, on a ship called the *Silesia*. The way the names were spelled on the manifest, LEWKOW and PITIGERSKI, I would never have located them without Morse's website, which searches www.ancestry.com, Ellis Island www.ellisland.org, and Castle Garden www.castlegarden.org all at once, or each website separately using Soundex. It was an exciting discovery, though I confess I was disappointed not to find the PATLA, BLUESTEIN, and WARSHAVSKY/ BERCOFF families arriving on the same ship.

Now I had another problem. Family history and all the censuses and World War I registrations

agreed that my twin great-uncles were born in Macon, Georgia, on November 15, 1881. This seemed impossible considering that they were not yet in America on that date. After searching many sites for birth records, I emailed the genealogy library in Macon and received a reply that there was no information for any LEVKOFFs in Macon in 1881. The library did have an article, however, describing a group of Russian Jews who arrived in the town on December 1, 1881. The item mentioned "a man, his five daughters, their husbands, and children" who spent their first night in Macon in the synagogue vestry. Imagine my delight! I had just documented my family's arrival in Macon. After landing in New York, the entire PIATIGORSKY family was put on a steam packet



Hannah's daughter, Frederica Levkoff Wolfner, on her wedding day.

around 1883. The PIATIGORSKY name was not changed to JACOBS at Ellis Island or Castle Garden; the manifest proved that. It was probably changed in Macon. The twins were not born in Macon; they were born on board ship.

The best way I knew to share my discoveries with all the LEVKOFFs was to organize a family reunion. With the convenience of the Internet and emails, I announced a gathering of the LEVKOFF clan in Charleston, May 11–13,

2007. Hannah and Henry LEVKOFF's descendants had dispersed across North America, as well as Israel and New Zealand, yet 90 family members managed to come to



Ninety members of the Levkoff family (from US, Israel, and New Zealand) attended the reunion on May 13, 2007.

ship to Savannah, Georgia. From there they were put on a train to Macon. Chances are, the twins were born onboard the *Silesia* on November 15th, but their birth was not recorded until they arrived in Macon.

Through my research I disputed many stories about my family's first days in the United States. It turns out that Jacob and Dvosy PIATIGORSKY did not hire a boat to bring all of them directly to Charleston; they came on the *Silesia* in steerage with a total of 1,392 people and arrived in Charleston

Charleston last spring to renew old relationships and make new ones.

It would have been wonderful to include all of Jacob and Dvosy PIATIGORSKY JACOBS' descendants in the reunion as well, but that was too big a task. I only hope the PATLA, BLUESTEIN, BIRLANT, and WARSHAVSKY/BRADY/BERCOFF families will read this article and realize that they need to have a family reunion too.

The “Dash” between Birth and Death

by Larry W. Freudenberg

Many of my family members are buried at the historic Coming Street cemetery in Charleston. Among the weather-worn gravestones is my second great-grandfather's stone, which reads: *“Morris Israel, Born February 14, 1835, Died October 20, 1911. At Rest.”*

Just a few yards from Morris Israel's grave is the tombstone of my other second great-grandfather, Maier Triest. This one has a brass marker that shows that he was a Confederate officer, wounded in the Battle of Atlanta.

My seventh great-grandfather is buried in New York in

dates of your birth and death inscribed on your gravestone. I would hope that my descendants know more about me than that! Without a family history, my life story and that of all my family members—past and present—would be lost. You may be fascinated by a particular ancestor, a special heirloom, or the jigsaw puzzle of genealogy. Deciding to actually document your family's history by writing a memoir or constructing a



Monuments of Morris and Rebecca Israel, KKBE Coming Street Cemetery, Charleston, SC.



Hannah Reichman Triest and Maier Triest, ca. 1869.

the cemetery of Shearith Israel, North America's first Jewish congregation. His epitaph reads: *“Here lies buried The Venerable and honored married man Rabbi Abraham son of Isaac (whose memory is a blessing). From the city of Emden in Friesland, he died on the first of the middle days of Tabernacles and was buried the same day in the year 5504 (1743) (24 September) May his soul be bound up in the bond of life.”*

I became interested in family history after my great-granduncle, Sammy Jacobs, died in 1989. He was the historian of his generation and while he was alive I didn't feel a need to pursue family research. After his death I inherited my uncle's files, notes, and photos. One thing was missing, however—he never wrote a family history or genealogy. Worst of all, I couldn't ask him questions since he was already gone. Let that be a warning: we often seem to want information once it is too late.

I read recently that your life is the “dash” between the

family tree takes the venture to another level. It may be something that you want to pursue, but not right now.

When is the right time?

My grandmother, Margot Strauss Freudenberg, who recently turned 100, has not written a family history but she has been happy to answer my questions and help me construct a genealogy for her side of the family. She has given me dozens of documents, including her Nazi passport and my grandfather's World War I scrapbook. My grandfather was 17 years her senior

and had fought in World War I as a German officer. Since he died seven years before I was born, I never had the opportunity to talk to him.

“But if I had ...” Those words are where you start writing your family history. If I had talked to my grandfather, what would he have told me about his life? Indeed, if I had been able to talk to all my ancestors,



Gravestone of Abraham Isaacs, Shearith Israel, New York City.



Nazi-issued passport of Margot Strauss Freudenberg.

what would they have said? Every little piece of information is important. Here is how to begin compiling the data. On index cards, write down the name of each family member, living and deceased, and below the name record facts about that person's life. Don't worry about writing beautifully constructed sentences. A simple form as shown below will do.

You may be surprised how many cards you can complete. The information you gather will be invaluable to future generations, even if you never get around to writing a narrative.

Let's take this one step further. When I decided to work on my family's history I wanted to include as much information as possible about each person so I acquired a

genealogy computer program to input the information and produce genealogy reports and trees. I began with one individual, my second great-grandfather, Morris Israel, then added his spouse and their children. Working backwards, I would insert his parents and his wife's parents. The program keeps track of the generations and their kinships and can even calculate the average lifespan of family members. Today I can ask my program to determine my relationship to any of my 570 relatives.

The index cards and/or computer files are pieces of a puzzle that keeps getting larger. Don't get discouraged—just keep compiling!

The last step I suggest is a little more complicated

Name: Morris Israel
Born: 02/14/1835
Place of birth: Europe
Died: 10/20/1911
Place of death: New York visiting son
Buried in KKBE Coming Street Cemetery
Married: Rebecca Elias
Notes:
 Past president of KKBE
 Obituary from News and Courier in my file
 Philanthropist

Name: Margot Freudenberg née Strauss
Born: 08/08/1907
Place of birth: Hanover, Germany
Married: Walter Freudenberg of Essen, Germany, 06/12/1928
Education: Graduate of University of Munich, degree in Physical Education and Therapy
Notes:
 Escaped from Germany to England, 06/30/1939
 Left England for the United States, 03/01/1940, aboard the SS Samarian (Cunard Lines), recipient of Businesswoman of the Year - 1954

but can add richness and longevity to your work. With an inexpensive scanner attached to your computer, you can scan photos and other documents into the genealogy program. When I open the file for Morris Israel I see a photo of his home on Wentworth Street and a picture of him as a young man. The file on my grandmother, Margot, reveals a whole archive of documents, awards, newspaper articles, and photographs.

Once you have accumulated a “critical mass” of information, you can start writing your family history. You can compose it yourself or hire a professional writer. Just think of how proud you will be, knowing that you’ve filled in some of those “dashes.” Even if you never write the history, you will reap the satisfaction of completing your research and leaving this priceless legacy to your siblings, children, or the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina.

Suggested Reading:

- **Explorations in Charleston’s Jewish History** by Solomon Breibart
- **The Jew Store: A Family Memoir** by Stella Suberman
- **The Peddler’s Grandson: Growing Up Jewish in Mississippi** by Edward Cohen
- **Time’s Tapestry: Four Generations of a New Orleans Family** by Leta Weiss Marks

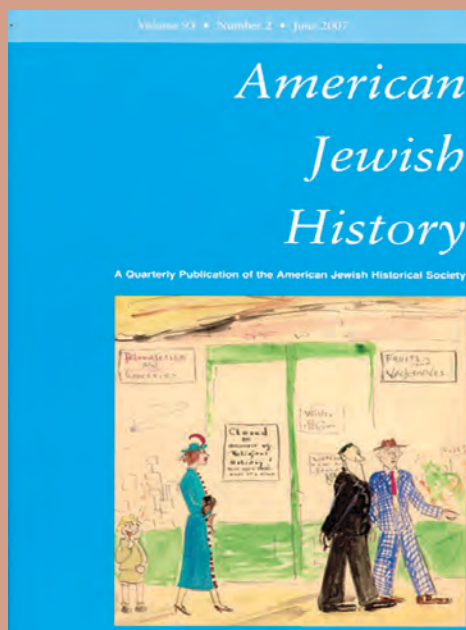
Two of my favorite non-traditional, national bestsellers show how far, with sufficient research and creative energy, you can push family history:

- **Slaves in the Family** by Edward Ball
- **Infidel** by Ayann Hirsi Ali

For more information, please contact:
larryfreudenberg@gmail.com.



Come and see the
new Jewish
Genealogy Collection
at the College of
Charleston Library
donated in memory
of Annie and Sam
Garfinkel.



Charleston Makes the Cover of *American Jewish History*

The current special edition of *American Jewish History*, edited by Deborah Dash Moore and Dale Rosengarten, is drawn from the Biennial Scholars’ Conference held in Charleston in June 2006. It includes illustrated essays on K.K. Beth Elohim’s first synagogue and Charleston’s amazing Mazos. The cover features a color drawing by Norma Mazo of her family’s deli at 171 King Street on the eve of Rosh Hashana, 1934. This issue marks the first time ever the journal has used artwork on its cover.

To order a copy, contact Natalie Garrity, Customer Service at Johns Hopkins University Press, email: ngarrity@press.jhu.edu or call toll free: 800-548-1784. Individual issues cost \$18.00, plus \$3.00 for shipping.



The Jewish Historical Society of
South Carolina Newsletter
is published twice a year.

Dale Rosengarten.....Editor
Eve Cassat.....Assistant Editor
Enid Idelsohn.....Design and Layout
Joseph Rubin.....Photo Archivist

JHSSC
College of Charleston
Charleston, SC 29424

Become a Pillar: Make a Difference

by Martin Perlmutter, Executive Director

The **Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina** relies on its benefactors for much of its annual support. Our Pillars enable the Society to accomplish its regular tasks and also undertake big projects. Annual and regional meetings, our bi-annual newsletter, the ongoing collecting efforts of the **Jewish Heritage Collection** at the College of Charleston, and the College's yearly **Elderhostel on South Carolina Jewish History** are accomplishments that taken together constitute a full program. In serving a large and growing membership across the state and beyond, the Society performs many of the community-building functions once performed by the statewide B'nai Brith. Its main mission remains heightening awareness of South Carolina's Jewish history and developing a more complete record of this important story.

For the coming year we have set our sights high. The Society's next major goal, in partnership with the **Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program**, is to establish a **Center for Southern Jewish Culture at the College of Charleston**. The Center will help ensure the long-term excellence of the Historical Society by providing on-campus leadership and staff, developing the library's archives on Southern Jewish history, and making these research materials available to a growing audience. The Center will guarantee that future generations of students are afforded the opportunity to study Jewish history, work with first-rate collections, and learn from top scholars in the field.

The Society needs your support to pursue its mission. Pillars make a \$5000 commitment over five years, or \$1000 a year. Please become a **Pillar**, and help make the Jewish history of South Carolina a living legacy.

The Pillars of the Society (2007)

John and Marcie Baker	Columbia, SC
Doris Baumgarten	Aiken, SC
Norman and Eve Berlinsky	Charleston, SC
Bunny Daitch Bernstein	Mt. Pleasant, SC
Alan Coleman	Charleston, SC
Harriette Kraft Ehrlich	Jacksonville, FL
Carolee and Harold Fox	Charleston, SC
Meri Gergel	Columbia, SC
Richard and Belinda Gergel	Columbia, SC
Dr. Mark and Judith Green	Charleston, SC
Reuben Greenberg	Charleston, SC
Ruth B. Greenberg	Florence, SC
Ann and Max Hellman	Charleston, SC
Alan and Charlotte Kahn	Columbia, SC
Michael Kogan	Little Falls, NJ
Ronald Krancer	Villanova, PA
Cynthia Levy	Hilton Head Is., SC
Ina Rae Levy	Sarasota, FL
Susan Lourie	Columbia, SC
Frieda and Jack Margolies	Charleston, SC
Rose Mark	Beaufort, SC
Albert and Robin Mercer	Owensboro, KY
Leon and Karen Ortner	Charleston, SC
Susan Pearlstine	Park City, UT
Edward and Sandra Poliakoff	Columbia, SC
Klyde and Claire Robinson	Charleston, SC
Benedict and Brenda Rosen	Myrtle Beach, SC
Robert and Susan Rosen	Charleston, SC
Jeffrey and Mickey Rosenblum	Charleston, SC
Jeff and Walton Selig	Columbia, SC
Stuart M. Shamah	Myrtle Beach, SC
Paul and Jayne Siegel	Walterboro, SC
Steven and Harriett Steinert	Sullivan's Island, SC
Mark C. Tanenbaum	Sullivan's Island, SC
Bernard and Ann Warshaw	Walterboro, SC
Jerry and Anita Zucker	Charleston, SC

Harvey and Mimi Gleberman, o.b.m.
Anne Oxler Krancer, o.b.m.

Yes, I/we want to become a pillar of the JHSSC.
In doing so, I/we commit to a gift of \$5,000
over a period of five years.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

Check enclosed \$ _____ (includes annual membership)



THE
**JEWISH
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**
OF
SOUTH CAROLINA

Martin Perlmutter, Executive Director
Enid Idelsohn, Administrator

Officers

Belinda Gergel, *President*
Edward Poliakoff, *Vice-President*
H.J. Brand, *Second Vice-President*
David J. Cohen, *Treasurer*
Ann Hellman, *Secretary*

Past Presidents

Isadore Lourie, o.b.m.
Founding President
Richard Gergel
Klyde Robinson
Robert Rosen
Jeffrey Rosenblum
Bernard Warshaw

Board of Directors

Gerry Sue Arnold, *Columbia*
Rachel Barnett, *Columbia*
Doris Baumgarten, *Aiken*
Eve Berlinsky, *Charleston*
Moss Blachman, *Columbia*
Sol Breitbart, *Charleston*
Leah Chase, *Charleston*
Robert Dreyfus, *Greenville*
Stanley Farbstein, *Charleston*
Carolee Rosen Fox, *Charleston*
Ben Goldberg, *Charleston*
Phillip Greenberg, *Charleston*
Lyssa Harvey, *Columbia*
Alan Kahn, *Columbia*
Harriet Keyserling, *Beaufort*
Michael Kogan, *Charleston*
Harold Kornblut, *Latta*
Mike Krupsaw, *Anderson*
Cynthia Levy, *Hilton Head*
Mick Lourie, *Columbia*
Elizabeth Moses, *Georgetown*
I. Harby Moses, *Sumter*
Herbert Novit, *Hilton Head*
Karen Ortner, *Charleston*
Eli Poliakoff, *Charleston*
Arlene Polinsky, *Columbia*
Mickey Rosenblum, *Charleston*
Barbara K. Stender, *Charleston*
Joseph Wachter, *Myrtle Beach*

Join the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: (____) _____ Fax: (____) _____

E-mail Address: _____

ANNUAL DUES FOR 2007 (JANUARY–DECEMBER)

_____ Individual/Family Membership	\$36
_____ Friend	\$200
_____ Sponsor	\$350
_____ Founding Patron	\$1000
_____ Pillar	\$5000 (\$1000 for 5 years)

Join or renew JHSSC online. Go to **www.jhssc.org**
Enroll your friends and relatives for an additional \$36 each.
Send us their information and we will inform them of your gift.

***Please make checks payable to JHSSC
and mail to the address below.***

Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program

96 Wentworth Street

College of Charleston

Charleston, SC 29424

phone: 843.953.3918

fax: 843.953.7624

website: www.jhssc.org

e-mail: jhssc@cofc.edu

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE

P-A-I-D

CHARLESTON, SC
PERMIT No. 437

THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY of SOUTH CAROLINA

SPRING 2008 VOLUME XIII - NUMBER 1



From the President: Ed Poliakoff	2
Strangers in Paradise: A Century of Jewish Settlement in Aiken	3 - 5
Emanu-El at 60	5 - 6
Upcoming Events	7
New and Noteworthy:	
Temple Sinai Archives	8 - 9
Camp Art	10
Pillars: Creating a Center for Southern Jewish Culture	11
Join the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina	12



From the President of the JHSSC

It is my honor to serve as president of the society in this, our Bar/Bat Mitzvah year. In partnership with my fellow officers and board members, I welcome the opportunity to build on successes achieved by our predecessors. Our level of paid memberships is high, making JHSSC the largest statewide Jewish organization in South Carolina. Our financial base is strong, thanks in large part to our Pillars, who commit to a contribution of \$1,000 annually for five years. JHSSC's close association with the Jewish Heritage Collection and the Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program at the College of Charleston produces win-win relationships for all and provides access to high quality academic and administrative resources for our programs and publications.

Speaking of programming, I urge each member to mark your calendar now and make plans to attend the JHSSC spring meeting in Sumter on May 4th and our annual meeting in Charleston, October 25–26, 2008. In Sumter we will commemorate historic Temple Sinai's farsighted decision to entrust their invaluable archives to the Jewish Heritage Collection at the College of Charleston, a process in which JHSSC participated and a resolution we applaud. Our October meeting in Charleston will focus on Jewish genealogy, and we will hear from speakers who are nationally recognized for their expertise in family history research. As the subjects of this year's two major meetings indicate, JHSSC focuses on what our bylaws state as our central purpose: "... to promote the study and preservation of the history and culture of the Jews of South Carolina."

As your president, I have identified several objectives that I hope to pursue, including nurturing our relationship with the College of Charleston, supporting the development of the Center for Southern Jewish Culture at the College, and inspiring increased activity on the part of our committees. Our standing committees—Fundraising and Membership, Education and Publications, Archives and Historical Sites, and Program and Conferences—are chaired, respectively, by Hy Brand, Ann Hellman, Joe Wachter, and Rachel Barnett. They all deserve our thanks for their energetic leadership. Ideally, most of the society's work will be conducted by our committees, and I encourage each and every member to volunteer to serve on the committee that interests you most.

Likewise, I encourage our members to step up and become Pillars, as this level of support enables the society to undertake ever more ambitious projects and activities. I ask each Pillar to recruit one or two friends and associates to join this esteemed group of benefactors.

In closing, I urge all readers to visit the new and improved JHSSC website at www.jhssc.org. Besides photographs of society events and back issues of the newsletter, webmaster Ann Hellman has posted links to South Carolina synagogues, Jewish community centers, day schools, and other useful sites.

With warmest regards,

Ed Poliakoff, president
ed.poliakoff@nelsonmullins.com

*On the cover:
Three panels of stained
glass in the sanctuary of
Temple Sinai, Sumter, SC.
left: Moses and the
burning bush.
center: Samuel and Eli.
right: David playing the
harp.*

*Photographs by Edie
Rubin*



The Jewish Historical
Society of South Carolina
Newsletter is published
twice a year.

Staff:
Eve Cassat
Enid Idelsohn
Dale Rosengarten
Joseph Rubin

Strangers in Paradise

A Century of Jewish Settlement in Aiken, SC

by Alyssa Neely

Aiken is “a place you could only dream of in Europe,” wrote Hiram Surasky to wife Friedel in Poland in June 1902. “No matter what street you travel on here there are parks and alleys full of delightful aromas.” The Suraskys were among several members of their extended family who settled in Aiken, on the South Carolina side of the Savannah River, lured by descriptions of the town relayed by *landsmen* who preceded them. It is “paradise itself . . . the Garden of Eden.” A letter writer tells of mild winters and parks “between every street.” Most important of all, “we’re making a living here.”

Long before the first Jews arrived in Aiken, the town had acquired a reputation as a healthful spot and a retreat for people with pulmonary problems. Thus, in addition to farming and the mining of clay, tourism developed as a significant industry. By the 1890s, Aiken had become a sports and recreation center for hundreds of wealthy winter residents who came to ride horses, hunt, and play polo, golf, and tennis. The town’s year-round population more than doubled between 1889 and 1935, with the greatest growth occurring in the 1920s. Eastern European Jews contributed to this population spurt in a chain migration initiated by H. L. Polier, who came in search of better health.

Diagnosed with tuberculosis, Harris L. Polier settled in Aiken in the early to mid-1890s on the recommendation of his doctor. Accompanied by his wife and his brother,



Laurens Street, Aiken, SC, ca. 1922.

Morris S., the Poliers opened two dry goods stores and encouraged their brother-in-law, Benedict M. Surasky, to join them. B. M. peddled, carrying an English-Russian dictionary with him, until the Poliers put him in charge of one of their stores. Just after the turn of the century, four more Surasky brothers and a sister left their hometown of Knyszyn, Poland, and followed B. M. to “paradise.” For one brother, however, the Garden of Eden became a nightmare. In 1903, while out in the country peddling, Abraham Surasky was brutally murdered by an anti-Semitic farmer whose acquittal compounded the tragedy with injustice.

According to her daughter Esther, when Sarah Anna Polier Surasky joined her husband B. M. in Aiken, the Polier families were not keeping kosher and had abandoned many other Jewish traditions. Sarah insisted on observing the laws of kashrut and immediately began taking routine train trips to Augusta, Georgia, to stock up on kosher products. In her zeal, Esther noted, she had “soon converted



Mrs. M. S. Polier's millinery shop, Laurens Street, ca. 1915. Courtesy of the Historic Aiken Foundation.



Surasky Bros. store, early 1920s. Gift of Mordecai Persky. Special Collections, College of Charleston.

her relatives.” She and B. M., who had been a rabbinical student in Poland, were primary figures in the push to form a congregation. B. M. served as lay leader, acting as cantor and rabbi at services held in homes of the congregants or in the Masonic Hall above one of their stores. Sarah rejected B. M.’s qualifications as shohet (kosher butcher), however. Because he kept his store open on Saturdays—the day farmers came to town—she found his slaughtering of chickens unacceptable.

In the decades that followed, Jewish-owned stores dotted the streets of the business district, particularly Laurens Street, the main corridor. The Polier brothers’ dry goods stores were joined by Mrs. M. S. (Augusta) Polier’s millinery shop, and three Surasky stores: B. M. Surasky, Surasky Bros., and H. C. Surasky, all purveyors of men’s and ladies’ clothing. M. S. Polier opened a barbershop next to his wife’s store. The Rudnicks got their start in dry goods and furniture with credit extended by Rubin of Columbia, Schneider of Augusta, and Karesh of Charleston. Other store owners included Nathan Poliakoff, Julia Wolf, George Payeff, Nathan Persky, Nettie Franzblau, and Nathan Franzblau, a hardware merchant who had moved to Aiken because of his asthma. Isadore Efron ran a garage and taxi service. One of his fares was a little boy he picked up at the train station with a request to drive him to his grandfather’s plantation near Barnwell. The boy was George H. W. Bush, visiting his mother’s family, the Walkers.

On January 7, 1913, as trustees of the “Sons of Israel,” the Polier and Surasky brothers and M. Poliakoff paid three hundred dollars to buy land for a burial ground. The first occupant of the Sons of Israel Cemetery was Ralph Panitz, husband to Sophie Halpern, the future Mrs. Morris Rudnick. Ralph’s tuberculosis precipitated their move to Aiken from New York, but his health continued to decline. It is interesting to note that he died the very day the cemetery was purchased.



Adath Yeshurun Synagogue, 2007. Courtesy of Doris Baumgarten.

The families with the most plots are the Wolfs, Suraskys, and Poliakoffs. The high number of Poliakoff plots reflects, in part, the desire of family members in Abbeville and Anderson to be buried in the cemetery with their Aiken relatives. A memorial plaque dedicated to the Poliakoff family posted at the cemetery’s entrance remains something of a mystery. How and why it was installed is yet unknown.

Adath Yeshurun congregation, founded by fewer than two dozen families, was incorporated in 1921. Because the congregation was small in size, members had to work especially hard to develop lasting institutions. The synagogue was built in 1925 with a three thousand dollar mortgage, and five years later a downstairs hall was added. After B. M. Surasky’s death in 1934, Nathan Persky, his son-in-law and a graduate of a Polish seminary, assumed the duties of lay leader. Services were held in Hebrew and the women were seated separately from the men. The Ladies Aid Society, which had provided care to needy Aiken families, was reorganized in 1938 as a local chapter of the Hadassah Sisterhood. Rabbi David Karesh of Columbia provided his services for ceremonies celebrating rites of passage such as marriage and circumcision.

Beginning in the 1950s, with the building of the Savannah River Plant which processed plutonium for H-bombs, the face of Old Aiken changed. An influx of workers, mostly from the Northeast, doubled the population. Jewish employees of DuPont and Allied Chemical boosted membership of the congregation. Still, gathering a minyan on Friday night proved difficult. Baby boomers fondly recall the warmth of holiday gatherings and the sense of family unity among the members, but they also report that Sunday school classes conducted in the basement of the synagogue were “dwindling.”

Adath Yeshurun moved away from the Orthodoxy of its founding members, assuming Conservative practices by the

Are You Coming to Aiken?

A telegram or a letter will have a Packard Limousine meet you at the Aiken Railway Station. The roads from Trenton, Columbia, Southern Pines, Augusta, Denmark and Savannah are in very good condition.

Both Fernata and Aiken Preparatory Schools use our Cars and Service.

Cars of different makes rented with or without drivers by the hour, day, week or month. Rates on application.

NEW STRAIGHT-EIGHT PACKARDS

I. EFRON

Packard Renting and Taxi Service

any Day—any Hour—any Where—any Weather

Storage for Private Cars.

PHONE 207 AIKEN, S. C.

Efron telephone directory ad, 1929. From History of Aiken Preparatory School by Donald Law, 1994.

late 1960s or early 1970s. The congregation began to invite rabbinical students from New York to conduct High Holy Day services, a practice continued to this day. Difficulty engaging students each year prompted Adath Yeshurun to affiliate with a congregational union. Unable to comply with the requirements of the Conservative union, some 12 years ago the synagogue joined the American Reform movement.

Membership has increased slightly in recent years to about 45 families, but the average age has risen as well with the loss of several young families due to cutbacks at the "Bomb Plant," as it is commonly called. Recent arrivals tend to be retirees or people associated with the equestrian enterprises for which Aiken has long been known. Congregants are pinning their hopes on a new company moving into the area to bring an infusion of younger members. Aiken's Jewish community was created by a determined and cohesive group of Polish immigrants and its customs were shaped by their children and the post-World War II arrivals. From whence will the next generation of torchbearers come to carry on the traditions of the Sons (and Daughters) of Israel?

This article is excerpted from a history of Aiken's Jewish community written by Alyssa Neely for the History Department at the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life in Jackson, Mississippi, as part of its digital archives project. Using documents and oral histories gathered in the course of fieldwork for the Jewish Heritage Collection, Neely has been commissioned to write histories of South Carolina Jewish communities for the Institute's website. Later this year, ISJL will post a more complete account of Aiken's Jewish history by Neely on its website, www.isjl.org.

For more information about Surasky's murder, see Patrick Q. Mason, "Anti-Jewish Violence in the New South," *Southern Jewish History* (2005). For a short account of the Montmorenci immigrant colony (popularly known as "Happyville"), see JHSSC newsletter, Summer 2004, at JHSSC.org.

If you have photographs, documents, or stories about Jewish life in South Carolina, contact JHC archivist Joseph Rubin at jrubin@knology.net.

Synagogue Emanu-El at 60

by Joan Halushka

Charleston's Synagogue Emanu-El celebrated its 60th anniversary on November 11, 2007, with a huge gala in the newly refurbished Zucker Social Hall. A sold-out crowd enjoyed an evening of magnificent décor, marvelous food, and exciting entertainment. The event commemorated six decades of congregational life, and also culminated several years of planning for and construction of Synagogue Emanu-El's new addition and renovation.

Emanu-El traces its history back to the summer of 1947 when a group of members from Orthodox Brith Sholom met to discuss the possibility of either converting the congregation from Orthodoxy to Conservative Judaism or breaking away to form a Conservative synagogue. The consensus of the group was to break away. The Kronsberg and Steinberg families, along with Nathan Goldberg, Milton Banov, and Hyman Rephan, formed the active nucleus within a group of 73 other charter members. Macey Kronsberg became the first president, and within a few months, land was purchased. Matthew "Mattie" Steinberg's family contributed a surplus Army chapel to be used as a sanctuary, and the congregation hired its first rabbi, Lewis Weintraub.

During this time, the ladies of the congregation blossomed. Sisterhood Emanu-El was formed, with Anita Steinberg as its



Synagogue Emanu-El's 60th Anniversary gala evening, November 11, 2007.

first president. The Sisterhood established a Sunday school and over the years has raised funds to help support the many activities and rituals in the synagogue. Alan Rubin was the first Bar Mitzvah, and Barbara Steinberg (Spitz) was the first to be confirmed. JoAnn Steinberg was the first bride to be married at Emanu-El.

In the early 1950s, Leon Steinberg purchased a site off Highway 61 for use as a cemetery. Recognizing that the synagogue was rapidly outgrowing the Army chapel,



Emanu-El's new sanctuary on Gordon Street, ca. 1955.

congregants formed a committee to raise money to buy land and erect a new building. Ed Kronsberg, Irving Steinberg, and Hyman Rephan took on the fundraising challenge. An architect was hired who designed a cathedral-like sanctuary big enough to hold 1000 members. The builders broke ground in 1954 and on December 18, 1955, the congregation moved into its new home on Gordon Street in Wagner Terrace. Rabbi Gerald Wolpe took the helm, serving as spiritual leader for four exciting years. Wolpe was succeeded by several other rabbis. In 1964, Rabbi Jordan Taxon joined Emanu-El's family and stayed in Charleston for ten years. Known as "Mister Fix-it," Rabbi Taxon was "as comfortable with a hammer in his hand as a siddur," remembers a current member. The synagogue thrived on Gordon Street.

In the '60s and '70s, the majority of younger members moved to neighborhoods west of the Ashley River. A young rabbi, Charles Sherman, was hired 1974 to replace Rabbi Taxon. Sherman was a dynamic community leader who fought against the development of Kiawah Island by Kuwaiti businessmen. As the congregation continued to grow, the younger contingent wanted Emanu-El to relocate west of the Ashley, but those still living around the synagogue opposed the move. Through quiet persuasion and a memorable Yom Kippur sermon, Rabbi Sherman convinced young and old alike that it was time for a change.

Charles Altman, Mickey Fischbein, Charlie Goldberg, and Samuel Steinberg formed a committee to study the potential relocation. While they worked on plans for the move, Harold "Buzzy" Sherman found a buyer for the Gordon Street facilities. The congregation selected a wooded site west of the Ashley River in Parkshore



Synagogue Emanu-El in West Ashley, November 2007.

and hired an Atlanta-based architect named Benjamin Hirsch. Howard Hoffman chaired the building committee. For the two years the synagogue was under construction, Shabbat and minyan services were held at the JCC, the High Holidays were celebrated at the Gaillard Auditorium, and synagogue offices were located in an apartment on Ashley Hall Road. Rabbi Alan Cohen replaced Rabbi Sherman in 1976, and on December 9, 1979, he officiated at the dedication ceremonies for the new synagogue.

Ten years later, on September 21, 1989, Hurricane Hugo swept through Charleston just before Rosh Hashanah and left considerable damage to the synagogue and its grounds in its wake. The membership banded together to restore the grounds and prepare for the upcoming High Holy Days. In spite of rainwater pouring through the destroyed roof, Emanu-El welcomed the New Year in the sanctuary. In the months to follow, the building was repaired and restored.

After almost 30 years at the present address, Synagogue Emanu-El continues to thrive and play a central role in the lives of its members through life cycle and social events. The congregation has grown to over 450 families. With the start of

the 21st century, the synagogue organized a Men's Club. Emanu-El boasts morning and afternoon minyanim, an active Sunday and Hebrew school, as well as youth groups for children of all ages. The B'nai Mitzvah calendar is crowded. Brit Milah, baby namings, and funerals all are performed by a dedicated staff, now under the leadership of Rabbi Robert Judd. Every year the Nathan and Lenore Goldberg Scholar-in-Residence Shabbat Weekend gives participants an opportunity for learning and reflection.

Looking Back . . . Looking Forward

by Theodore Levin, Emanu-El president

When my wife Rose and I joined Emanu-El in 1966, it was then as it is today, a warm and welcoming congregation. As current president of the synagogue, I can say with assurance that a lot has been accomplished in the past 60 years and more progress is being made every day. Looking back you can see all this came from an initial meeting that took place on Sullivans Island in 1947, when a group of young men and women gathered with an idea to create a place of worship where the entire family could learn and worship together. We anticipate a bright future ahead, with young leadership to take the helm and propel us forward in this 21st century. Our goal is to reach out to the entire community, young and old, and share our Jewish culture and values as I am sure our founders would have wanted us to do.

Upcoming Events

JHSSC Regional Meeting Temple Sinai, Sumter, SC Sunday, May 4, 2008

11:30 - 12:00	Registration, check-in
12:00 - 12:30	In the Sanctuary Welcome - Robert Moses Remarks - Ed Poliakoff
12:30 - 1:00	Buffet lunch in the Social Hall
1:30 - 2:30	Presentation by Dale Rosengarten: <i>Treasures of Temple Sinai's Archives</i>
2:30 - 3:30	Board meeting Adjourn

*The cemetery will be open for self-guided
tours after adjournment.*

Meeting Registration Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

City: _____ State: ____ Zip: _____

☐ I request a Kosher lunch

\$18.00 registration fee includes lunch

Reservations online at JHSSC.org

Return form to:

JHSSC/Jewish Studies Program

96 Wentworth Street

Charleston, SC 29424

JHSSC Annual Meeting Jewish Genealogy Workshop Charleston, SC October 25-26, 2008

Preserve the memory of your ancestors for your own generation and your descendants. Learn new ways to find and record family information. Mark your calendars now for the Jewish Historical Society's next annual meeting, October 25-26, 2008, at the College of Charleston. The two-day event will feature a genealogy workshop led by two experienced and innovative researchers who will offer insights and provide hands-on assistance.



Karen Franklin is director of the Family Research Program at the Leo Baeck Institute and former director of the Judaica Museum of the Hebrew Home for the Aged in Riverdale, New York. Past chair of the Council of American Jewish Museums and a past president of the International Association of Jewish Genealogists, she has been a board member of the

American Association of Museums and presently serves on AAM's International Council of Museums. Franklin is a German Special Interest Group coordinator, and a juror for the Obermayer Award. She has spoken about genealogical research at forums around the world, including JHSSC's Fall 2007 meeting in Charleston. Back by popular demand, she brings to Jewish genealogy passion, expertise, and a sparkling wit.

For information on family research, visit the following websites: jhssc.org/events.html, jewishgen.org, ancestry.com, google.com, americanjewisharchives.org, cjh.org, stevemorse.org, cofc.edu/~jhc.

Stephen Morse, an amateur genealogist, began by researching his Russian-Jewish origins and soon developed several web-based searching aids which attracted worldwide attention. He has received both the Outstanding Contribution Award and Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Association of



Jewish Genealogical Societies, the Award of Merit from the National Genealogical Society, and the first-ever Excellence Award from the Association of Professional Genealogists. Morse is a published computer professional with a doctorate in electrical engineering. He has held various positions in research, development, and teaching, and patented four inventions. He is best known as the architect of the Intel 8086 processor, which sparked the PC revolution 25 years ago.

New and Noteworthy:

Temple Sinai Archives Donated to the College of Charleston

by Harlan Greene and Dale Rosengarten

The study of Jewish history is continually enriched by the appearance of exciting source materials in unexpected places. In 1947, with the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls near the ancient West Bank settlement of Khirbet Qumran, a new chapter opened in early Jewish history. In 2007, with the donation of the aptly named Temple Sinai archives to the College of Charleston, another rich treasury was revealed. While not as momentous as the scrolls, the materials from Sumter's historic congregation nevertheless promise to open up new vistas in South Carolina and American Jewish history.

This remarkable gift from the trustees of Temple Sinai came to the Jewish Heritage Collection in the Addlestone Library after extensive deliberations by the congregation's Long Term Planning Committee and timely consultations with officers of JHSSC. Faced with declining membership and an uncertain future, Temple leaders charged the Committee with making the best disposition possible for Sinai's archives. The decision to give the collection to the College, explained committee member Robert Moses, "was based on what was best to protect and preserve them for the long haul, while assuring their ready accessibility."

After a flurry of e-mails and phone calls, a team from the College drove to Sumter—Harlan in a College van with photographers Joe and Edie Rubin and Dale with Robert's daughter Elizabeth—and began packing the precious records. We were overwhelmed by both



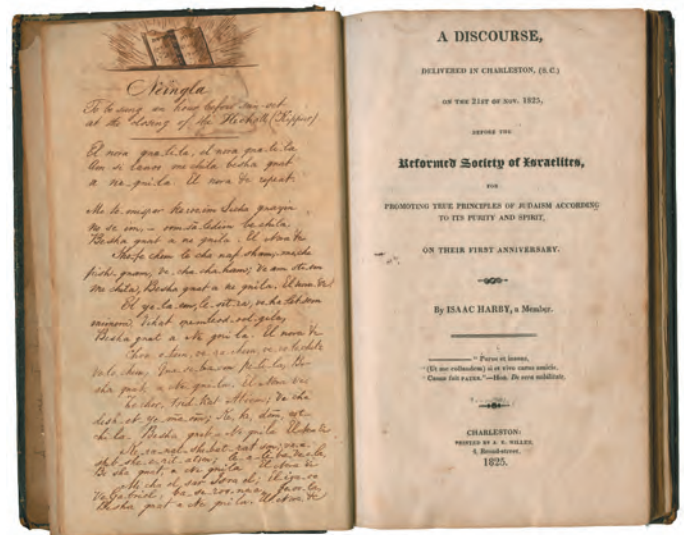
Temple Sinai, Sumter, SC, 2007.

the wealth of the collection and the heartbreakingly generous gift of its stewards, who had given so much of themselves to Temple Sinai over their lifetimes. While Sumter's and South Carolina's Jewish heritage was being saved for posterity by this selfless act, the passing of the torch reflected a sad reality. We knew, as we packed, that the collection was extraordinary and that the congregation deserved everlasting thanks.

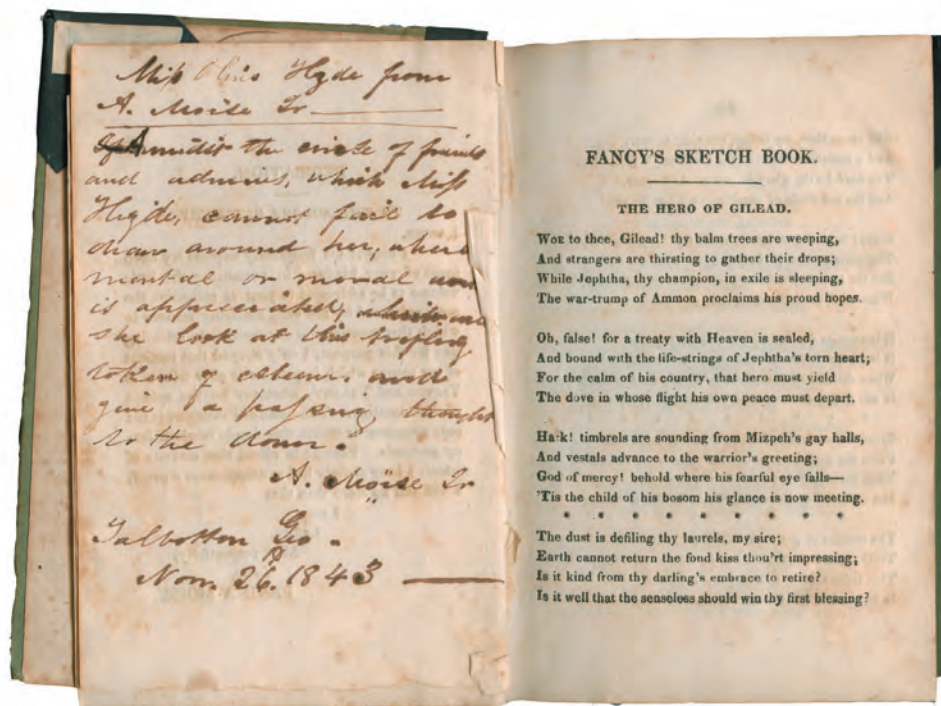
Sumter's illustrious Jewish past began in the 1820s. Early settlers included members of the Moïse and Moses families from Charleston, whose descendants gave Temple Sinai the papers of their forebears. Intellectual luminaries such as Isaac Harby, whose



Harlan Greene, Dale Rosengarten, Elizabeth Moses, and Robert Moses packing the archives, September 2007.



Isaac Harby's prayer book manuscript and Discourse, 1825.



Penina Moïse, *Fancy's Sketch Book*, 1833.

daughter Octavia settled in Sumter, and Penina Moïse, who refugeed there with her sister and niece during the Civil War, are well represented in the collection.

The Temple's gems include a manuscript prayer book penned by Harby and bound together with the discourse he delivered before the Reformed Society of Israelites in 1825 on the first anniversary of the organization. Here was a cornerstone of the American Reform movement: handwritten prayers, in Hebrew and English, of the first Reform services held in America, and an extremely rare first edition of Harby's *Discourse*. We also were thrilled to find a letter Harby had written to John C. Calhoun in 1816, a published copy of Harby's play *Gordian Knot*, written in 1810 before his 19th year and corrected by his own hand, and the original script of *Tutoona, or the Indian Girl*, a drama composed by Isaac's brother George Washington Harby and performed in New Orleans' American Theater in 1835.

We discovered files of clippings of poems and prose that Penina Moïse published in period newspapers, scrapbooks she compiled, and an 1856 printing of the hymnal she helped create for Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim, with her annotations and corrections in the margins. These will make wonderful companions to the original edition of Moïse's most important collection, *Fancy's Sketch Book* (1833), recently donated to the College library by Hamilton College in New York.

Included in Temple Sinai's archives is a commonplace book assembled by Penina's brother Abraham Moïse, Jr., a Harby's protégé who led the reformers to victory

over KKBE's traditionalists in 1841. Of special interest are Moïse's notes on political clippings he pasted in the book and multiple copies of *Selections from the Miscellaneous Writings of Isaac Harby and a Memoir of his Life*, published soon after Harby's death.

The collection also documents various institutions established by Sumter's Jews, such as the first Hebrew Cemetery Society, the Benevolent Society, the Sumter Society of Israelites, Temple Sinai, and the Sinai Sisterhood. We marveled over the minutes of the Sinai Culture Club (1910–1911), a copy of the

rare and short-lived periodical *The Saint Charles*, files of correspondence about refugee funds being raised in the 1930s and '40s, and the wooden spindles used to hold a Torah that were salvaged from a European synagogue destroyed in the Holocaust.

Now housed in the temperature and humidity-controlled vaults of Special Collections at the College of Charleston library, the materials have been sorted and placed in acid-free folders and archival boxes. Library staff have begun the process of creating an inventory, describing and cataloguing the holdings, and making them available to scholars and students. No matter what the future holds for Temple Sinai, the congregation can rest assured that its past is in good hands.

For Those Who Live in the Sun

In 1950, the Charleston Jewish community celebrated its bicentennial with an historical pageant entitled *For Those Who Live in the Sun*, written by author Sam Byrd. We have programs, photographs, and other information about the play in our archives, but we have not been able to turn up any piece, parcel, or printout of the script. Dozens of people participated in the play. If anyone has a copy or knows where one is, please contact Harlan Greene at greenh@cofc.edu.

Camp Art

by Joseph Rubin

Yizkor, which means “Remember,” is one of the more dramatic items contributed to the Holocaust Archives of the Jewish Heritage Collection. The poster was donated by Charlotte Shayne, formerly of Columbia and Walhalla, South Carolina. It came into her hands in 1946 while she was an assistant to Rabbi Philip S. Bernstein, advisor in Jewish affairs to the Theater Commander of the U.S. Army of Occupation in Frankfurt, Germany. One day an unknown young woman from the Zeilsheim UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration) near Frankfurt arrived unexpectedly in Shayne’s office and presented her with the print.

Pinchas Schuldenrein, the poster’s creator, grew up in Makow Mazowiecki, Poland, and attended the Warsaw Academy of Art. After World War II he met historian Koppel S. Pinson, then educational director of the American Joint Distribution Committee. Pinson helped Schuldenrein, who had lost all of his work during the war, establish a studio outside Zeilsheim. Art materials were extremely scarce, but in a bombed-out airport Schuldenrein found materials in sufficient quantity to tackle the challenge of conveying the terrors of the Holocaust through art.

In the months that followed he taught art to Jewish children in Displaced Persons (DP) camps and created paintings depicting what he had seen and endured. Reproduced in both poster and postcard form, *Yizkor* was distributed throughout UNRRA camps with the assistance of the Central Historical Commission of the Central Committee of Liberated Jews in American-occupied Germany. Schuldenrein’s poster *Remember Amalek* won first prize in a contest among DP artists sponsored by the Central Commission, and his *Vehigadita Levincha*, or “You will tell your children,” took top honors in a poster competition sponsored by the United Jewish Appeal. The prize was awarded by none other than UJA General Chairman Henry Morgenthau, Jr.

In 1947 Schuldenrein immigrated to the United States. When he became an American citizen several years later, he changed his name to Paul Sharon. He worked in New York as a commercial and graphic artist for himself and Shulsinger Brothers until his death in 1998. Today, the original *Yizkor* painting is owned by the artist’s son, Dr. Bruce Sharon, of Skokie, Illinois.

Yizkor represents in grisly symbolism the artist’s homage to the six million Jews murdered by the Nazis. The title



Pinchas Schuldenrein created the poster, Yizkor, from his original painting while he was interned in the DP camp at Zeilsheim, Germany. Approximately 14 3/4 by 20 1/4 inches, ink on paper, ca. 1946.

appears in calligraphic uppercase Hebrew across the top, flanked by the dates 5700 to 5705 (1940–1945), written in ornate Torah script. The figure “6000000” sits in a pool of blood with candles at either end dripping not wax but tears of grief. Within the outline of the block numerals the artist painted a mosaic of Nazi atrocities.

The whole—the number with candles on either side, the blackness above and red below—suggests a coffin of six million souls awaiting burial. Adding a phrase of consolation and warning to the outrage portrayed by the imagery, Schuldenrein quoted from *Tehillim* (Psalms) and the *Av HaRachamim* prayer in modern Hebrew script: *Ki doresh dammim otam zachar*, “For he who exacts retribution for spilled blood remembers them.”

Pillars:

Creating a Center for Southern Jewish Culture

by Martin Perlmutter

The Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina is embarking on an exciting new venture. In partnership with the Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program and the Jewish Heritage Collection at the Addlestone Library, we are committed to developing a Center for Southern Jewish Culture at the College of Charleston. Such an endeavor would make the College an ever more dynamic hub for teaching, research, and public programming, and would ensure the long term well-being of the society.

Our first steps towards realizing this goal are to support the College's efforts to add a professor of southern Jewish history to the Jewish Studies roster and an additional archivist to the staff of Special Collections. These positions require an endowment of \$1.5 million and offer enticing naming opportunities.

The good news is that we already have made great headway. Wearing my hat as director of the Jewish Studies Program at the College, I am thrilled to announce that Adam Mendelsohn, a young historian trained at the University of Cape Town in South Africa and at Brandeis in Waltham, Massachusetts, has agreed to join the faculty of Jewish Studies in 2009. Adam's academic specialties are the English-speaking Jewish diaspora in general, and in particular the Jewish South, making him a perfect match for the new center.

A second critical need is to endow an archival position in Special Collections. With the recent acquisitions of the William A. Rosenthal Judaica Collection (see the Jewish Studies Program's Winter 2008 newsletter) and Sumter's Temple Sinai archives (see pages 7 and 8 in this publication), the Addlestone Library is on its way to becoming the premier repository of Jewish materials in the American South. The library needs to increase the size of its professional staff to process these gifts.

We look to our Pillars not only to sustain our everyday operations, but to help us reach our big goals. We are asking current Pillars to renew their annual commitment of \$1,000 yearly for five years. We ask those of you who are not yet Pillars to join our list of esteemed long-term supporters. And we invite each of you to consider making a major contribution toward creating a Center for Southern Jewish Culture—the Society's next ambitious adventure in Jewish learning.

Yes, I/we want to become a pillar of the JHSSC. In doing so, I/we commit to a gift of \$5,000 over a period of five years.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Check enclosed \$ _____ (includes annual membership)

The Pillars of the Society (2008)

Ellen Arnovitz	Atlanta, GA
John and Marcie Baker	Columbia, SC
Doris Baumgarten	Aiken, SC
Norman and Eve Berlinsky	Charleston, SC
Bunny Daitch Bernstein	Mt Pleasant, SC
Alan Coleman	Charleston, SC
Harriette Kraft Ehrlich	Jacksonville, FL
Carolee and Harold Fox	Charleston, SC
Meri Gergel	Columbia, SC
Richard and Belinda Gergel	Columbia, SC
Dr. Mark and Judith Green	Charleston, SC
Phillip H. Greenberg	Florence, SC
Reuben Greenberg	Charleston, SC
Ruth B. Greenberg	Florence, SC
Ann and Max Hellman	Charleston, SC
Alan and Charlotte Kahn	Columbia, SC
Michael Kogan	Little Falls, NJ
Ronald Krancer	Villanova, PA
Cynthia Levy	Hilton Head, SC
Ina Rae Levy	Sarasota, FL
Susan Lourie	Columbia, SC
Frieda and Jack Margolies	Charleston, SC
Rose Mark	Beaufort, SC
Albert and Robin Mercer	Owensboro, KY
Leon and Karen Ortner	Charleston, SC
Susan Pearlstine	Park City, UT
Edward and Sandra Poliakoff	Columbia, SC
Klyde and Claire Robinson	Charleston, SC
Benedict and Brenda Rosen	Myrtle Beach, SC
Robert and Susan Rosen	Charleston, SC
Jeffrey and Mickey Rosenblum	Charleston, SC
Jeff and Walton Selig	Columbia, SC
Stuart M. Shamah	Myrtle Beach, SC
Paul and Jayne Siegel	Walterboro, SC
Steven and Harriett Steinert	Sullivan's Island, SC
Mark C. Tanenbaum	Sullivan's Island, SC
Ken and Laurie Walden	Columbia, SC
David Wallace	Columbia, SC
Bernard and Ann Warshaw	Walterboro, SC
Jerry and Anita Zucker	Charleston, SC

Harvey and Mimi Gleberman, o.b.m.
Anne Oxler Krancer, o.b.m.



THE
**JEWISH
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**
OF
SOUTH CAROLINA

Martin Perlmutter, Executive Director
Enid Idelsohn, Administrator

Officers

Edward Poliakoff, President
H.J. Brand, Vice-President
Ann M. Hellman, Vice-President
Joe Wachter, Vice President
David J. Cohen, Treasurer
Lyssa Harvey, Secretary
Moss Blachman, Archivist

Founding President

Isadore Lourie, o.b.m.

Past Presidents

Richard Gergel
Klyde Robinson
Robert Rosen
Jeffrey Rosenblum
Bernard Warshaw
Belinda Gergel

Board of Directors

Susan D. Altman, Charleston
Gerry Sue Arnold, Columbia
Rachel G. Barnett, Columbia
Doris Baumgarten, Aiken
Eve M. Berlinsky, Charleston
Sol Breibart, Charleston
Leah Chase, Charleston
Robert Dreyfus, Greenville
Stanley Farbstein, Charleston
Carolee Rosen Fox, Charleston
Ben Goldberg, Charleston
Phillip H. Greenberg, Florence
Alan Kahn, Columbia
Harriet Keyserling, Beaufort
Michael Kogan, Charleston
Harold Kornblut, Latta
Mike Krupsaw, Anderson
Cynthia Levy, Hilton Head
Mick Lourie, Columbia
Elizabeth Moses, Georgetown
I. Harby Moses, Sumter
Herbert Novit, Hilton Head
Karen Ortner, Charleston
Arline Polinsky, Columbia
Mickey Rosenblum, Charleston
Barbara K. Stender, Charleston

Join the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: ____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail Address: _____

ANNUAL DUES FOR 2008 (JANUARY–DECEMBER)

_____	Individual/Family Membership	\$36
_____	Friend	\$200
_____	Sponsor	\$350
_____	Founding Patron	\$1000
_____	Pillar (\$1000 yearly for 5 years)	\$1000
_____	Foundational Pillar	\$2000

Join or renew JHSSC online at **www.jhssc.org**.

Enroll your friends and relatives for an additional \$36 each.
Send us their information and we will inform them of your gift.

***Please make checks payable to JHSSC
and mail to the address below.***

Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program
96 Wentworth Street
College of Charleston
Charleston, SC 29424
phone: 843.953.3918
fax: 843.953.7624
website: www.jhssc.org
e-mail: jhssc@cofc.edu

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE

P - A - I - D

CHARLESTON, SC
PERMIT No. 437

Register for the
Jewish Genealogy Workshop
Pages 10 and 11

THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY of SOUTH CAROLINA

FALL 2008 VOLUME XIII - NUMBER 2





Ed Poliakoff, President

On the cover:

*The Sterenzys family,
Lodz, Poland, 1925.
Photo courtesy of
Joseph J. Lipton,
Columbia, SC.*



The Jewish Historical
Society of South Carolina
Newsletter is published
twice a year.

Staff:

Eve Cassat
Ann Hellman
Enid Idelsohn
Dale Rosengarten
Joseph Rubin

In this issue

From the President of the JHSSC

Ed Poliakoff

Page 3

The Gergels of Aleksandrovka Reunited after 100 Years

A photograph from the 1930s reunites generations of the Gergel family dispersed by emigration, revolution, and war.

Richard Gergel

Page 4

The Desk

A mother's desk holds a treasure of memories and identities of relatives lost in the Holocaust. The author also reminisces about the photograph reproduced on the cover of this issue.

Joseph J. Lipton

Page 6

Jewish Genealogy Workshop: Profiles of Speakers

Learn how the World Wide Web supplements travel and investigation into the dusty archives of the ages.

Page 9

JHSSC Annual Meeting Schedule

Jewish Genealogy: Explore Your Family Tree.

October 25 and 26, 2008 in Charleston

Page 10

The Historical Significance of Jewish Cemeteries

History matters! The reader is exhorted to pay attention to the tombstones of forbears wherever they can be found.

Joseph Wachter

Page 12

Rabbi Jacob S. Raisin and Zionism in Charleston, 1915–1945

Jacob Salmon Raisin, Rabbi of Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim from 1915 to 1945, became an ardent Zionist early in his rabbinate when Zionism was not in vogue among Reform Jews.

Solomon Breibart

Page 14

Midlands Merchants: The Jews of Orangeburg and Vicinity

Orangeburg's early German Jewish immigrants, more German than Jewish in outlook, blended seamlessly into their new environment, becoming successful merchants and businessmen involved in community affairs. Today, Orangeburg's Jewish presence has all but disappeared.

Alyssa Neely

Page 16

Pillars and More Pillars – Jerry Zucker in Memoriam

Martin Perlmutter

Page 19

From the President of the JHSSC

As your president I am pleased to report on several JHSSC projects that tangibly advance our central purpose: "... to promote the study and preservation of the history and culture of the Jews of South Carolina."

Jewish Genealogy: Explore Your Family Tree, JHSSC annual meeting, October 25–26, 2008, will offer entertaining, substantive, hands-on sessions. Read about it elsewhere in this newsletter, and register now at www.jhssc.org. Special thanks to Ann Hellman, Vice President and Chair of our Education and Publications Committee; Rachel Barnett, Chair of Program and Conferences Committee; Executive Director Marty Perlmutter; Administrator Enid Idelsohn; and all working with them to plan the meeting.

Treasures from Temple Sinai's Archives, JHSSC spring 2008 meeting in Sumter. Our meeting last May 4 at Sumter's Temple Sinai was a well-attended tribute to the historic congregation's farsighted donation of its unique archives to the Jewish Heritage Collection at the College of Charleston. One of the Society's primary missions is to insure the security of manuscripts and artifacts that document our state's Jewish experience, so we took the opportunity to express our gratitude to Temple Sinai for the gift. Thanks to Robert Moses, Rachel Barnett, and others on the Sumter arrangements committee for their attention to every detail, and to curator and historian Dale Rosengarten for her presentation on Sumter's rich Jewish heritage.

JHSSC website and publications. Vice President and Committee Chair Ann Hellman has enhanced our JHSSC website, www.jhssc.org. Take a moment to review the wealth of information, including links to South Carolina Jewish institutions. And thanks to Ann, Dale Rosengarten, Joe Rubin, Eve Cassat, Enid Idelsohn, and our authors whose contributions produce the outstanding newsletter you are reading.

Archives and Historical Sites Committee. Chaired by Vice President Joe Wachter, the committee is working on two projects fundamental to the Society's existence. Under Joe's leadership we are continuing efforts to document South Carolina's Jewish cemeteries. A mass of information awaits collection and organization, offering abundant opportunities for meaningful volunteer involvement by our members. Stanley Farbstein, JHSSC's first director of cemetery documentation, has completed an ambitious survey of the Beaufort Jewish cemetery, which can serve as a model for other communities interested in preserving their past. In collaboration with South Carolina's historical marker program, the committee has also launched a new

project. The JHSSC board has authorized sponsorship of two state markers per year at sites of Jewish historical interest, beginning with Sumter's Temple Sinai and the site of Columbia's first synagogue, the latter co-sponsored with Beth Shalom and Tree of Life congregations.

Renewing and recruiting JHSSC Pillars. Pillar members are the backbone of our Society; they provide the funding that makes our programs and projects possible. Pillars commit to dues of \$1,000 per year for five years—a total of \$5,000. I urge all Pillars to renew when their commitment is fulfilled and prospective Pillars to join the effort. Our board has approved a new ***Foundational Pillars*** category at \$2,000 per year for corporate and foundation donors, to help create a solid underpinning for the Society's work. The Henry and Sylvia Yaschik Foundation has become our first ***Foundational Pillar***.

Center for Southern Jewish Culture at the College of Charleston. Building on the successes of JHSSC, the Jewish Heritage Collection at the Addlestone Library, and the Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program, the College of Charleston proposes to establish the Center for Southern Jewish Culture. JHSSC supports this proposal. Members interested in philanthropic naming opportunities are encouraged to contact Executive Director Marty Perlmutter.

Member involvement. I ask each of our members to get involved to the fullest extent your time and interests permit. JHSSC is now the largest statewide Jewish organization in South Carolina. Our mission is to preserve, document, and increase awareness of South Carolina's important Jewish history. That history transcends denominational, cultural, social, economic, and political differences, and serves as a unifying principle to bring people together. Contact me or one of our officers or committee chairs to see how you can help. A special thanks to the members of the Society's Board, Executive Committee, and Advisory Committee (comprised of past presidents) for their thoughtful participation in meetings and conference calls.

I look forward to seeing you at our annual meeting in Charleston, October 25–26, 2008.

With warmest regards,



Ed Poliakoff, President

ed.poliakoff@nelsonmullins.com

The Gergels of Aleksandrovka Reunited after 100 Years

by Richard Gergel

A few days following my wife's election to Columbia City Council on April 1, 2008, she received an unexpected e-mail to her campaign website from a Los Angeles attorney, Mr. Bob Ackerman. He said that he was engaged to a woman by the name of Masha Gergel who had emigrated from Moscow 11 years ago. He recounted a legend in Masha's family that several Gergel brothers had left Russia in the early part of the 20th century and reportedly immigrated to South Carolina. He wondered whether Belinda was related to one of the Gergel brothers.

I responded to this e-mail by informing Mr. Ackerman that my grandfather, Joseph Gergel, one of four Gergel brothers, had emigrated from the small Ukranian town of Aleksandrovka and arrived in South Carolina before World

War I. I also mentioned that my family was Jewish and that all persons we had previously met with the last name of Gergel were of Lutheran or German origin. I indicated that unless his fiancée's family was Jewish, it was unlikely we were related.

Shortly thereafter, Masha Gergel forwarded to me a photograph sent by her father from Moscow. The picture was from the 1930s and reportedly was a group portrait of Gergel family members living in Russia and one Gergel relative visiting from South Carolina. She inquired whether I recognized anyone in the photograph. Masha also confirmed in this communication that her family was of Jewish origin.

I did not recognize anyone in the photograph but



The Gergel family of Alexandrovka, Russia, ca. 1930. Isadore Gergel, visiting from South Carolina, is seated front right next to his mother, Celia.

thought perhaps my nearly 80-year-old aunt, Shirley Gergel Ness, might be of some assistance. I immediately took the photograph to Aunt Shirley, who had a puzzled expression on her face when she took her first look. She then left the room momentarily and returned with an aged, but identical, photograph.

After recovering from our amazement over the matching photos, Aunt Shirley shared with me a story of how her uncle, Isadore Gergel, visited his widowed mother and siblings in Moscow in the 1930s. He returned from Russia with a photograph of the family and gave it to my grandfather. Uncle Isadore was the distinguished-looking gentleman sitting in the lower right hand corner of the picture, and his mother, my great-grandmother Celia, sat in the center of the portrait. Several brothers, a sister, and other family members were also in the group. This photograph had been in my grandparents' home until their deaths and is now in the safekeeping of Aunt Shirley.

I responded by e-mail to Masha telling her that we apparently had a match! I provided my phone number and suggested that she give me a call. Moments later my phone rang with a tearful Masha Gergel on the other end. She told me stories of how she had heard from her beloved grandmother, Sara, about the Gergels who had immigrated to South Carolina, and the curiosity the family had about what



Isadore Gergel, ca. 1930.

had happened to their kinsmen.

The lack of contact had been an unfortunate consequence of historic forces outside the control of the dispersed family. The Russian Revolution had



Masha with Richard Gergel.

brought an end to my great-grandfather's prosperous grain business and the rising tide of anti-Semitism in the Ukraine prompted the family to seek refuge elsewhere. The family initially moved to Orenberg, a railroad town between Moscow and Siberia, and then to Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan. Finally, the family moved to Moscow. As the Nazi army approached the city during World War II, the

family evacuated to Kazakhstan, but returned to Moscow as the war ended. After the war, tensions between the Soviet Union and the United States dissuaded family members from writing each other. As the years passed, deaths, fading memories, and differences in language further divided the Gergels settled on opposite sides of the globe.

Recent historic and technological developments have made it possible to reconnect. In the early 1990s, Masha's elder sister, Anya Gergel, presented herself to the American embassy in Moscow and applied for religious asylum on the basis of her Jewish faith. Her asylum application was approved and shortly thereafter she arrived in Los Angeles with no home and only \$1,000 in her pocket, but possessing a highly prized talent—a Ph.D. in computer science. Her first job in her new country was to set up the computer

system of the Los Angeles Jewish Federation. Six years later, Masha arrived, also on the basis of religious asylum, and soon passed the California CPA exam. Both sisters are thriving in their new country, just as their great-great-uncles had at the beginning of the 20th century.

After exchanging numerous e-mails and telephone calls, Masha and I arranged for a conference call that included nearly two dozen family members in Moscow and across the United States. With Masha translating, everyone on the call, from the eldest at age 87 to the youngest at age 15, spoke. Family members shared their individual histories and filled in the years since the departure of the Gergel boys almost 100 years ago.



Anya with Richard Gergel.

We followed this wonderful conference call with a visit to Los Angeles where Belinda and I had the chance to meet and spend time with Masha and Anya. Masha now plans to attend Aunt Shirley's 80th birthday in Columbia, South Carolina, and Belinda and I are planning a trip to Moscow in the near future. The Gergels of Aleksandrovka have been reunited.

Photos courtesy of Richard Gergel.

The Desk

by Joseph J. Lipton

This is the improbable story of a desk that has been and continues to be an extended part of my life. It resided in the hallway of my parents' home in Beaufort, South Carolina. When my mother died in 1987 that desk would find its place in my home in Columbia. It is not a valuable piece of furniture in and of itself. It does not claim any special lineage or provenance. So why would it tug at my heartstrings? Because it has been for over three-quarters of a century the keeper of memories. Everything that has now grown precious with time found its way into the sheltered safety of that desk. It was the oasis where my mother would settle to read, with me at her knee, amid a rivulet of tears and trembling sobs, the Yiddish letters from her mother, her brother and sisters, and her nephews and nieces who lived in Kielce and Lodz, Poland.

In the year 2007, as I sat at the desk, the memories that it symbolized were resurrected. I reached for the pulls and opened the drawers. There they were, 75 years later, letters from the *bubbe*, the uncles, the aunts, and the cousins addressed to my mother, Helen Lipton, Beaufort, SC, and to my uncle, Gabriel Stern, Columbia, SC, written in the *mamaloshen*.

As my hand fished in the drawer it lighted upon the ubiquitous group photograph of my mother's family. Seems that practically all of my American relatives have a copy of that picture, taken in 1925, which harbored 18 relatives within its four comers. At the center of the sepia photo sits the *zayde* and the *bubbe*. Time after time my mother, while pointing to each figure, would identify each one. This exercise became for me a ritual. Today I am the only member of the clan who can pin a name to the relatives in Poland. This knowledge

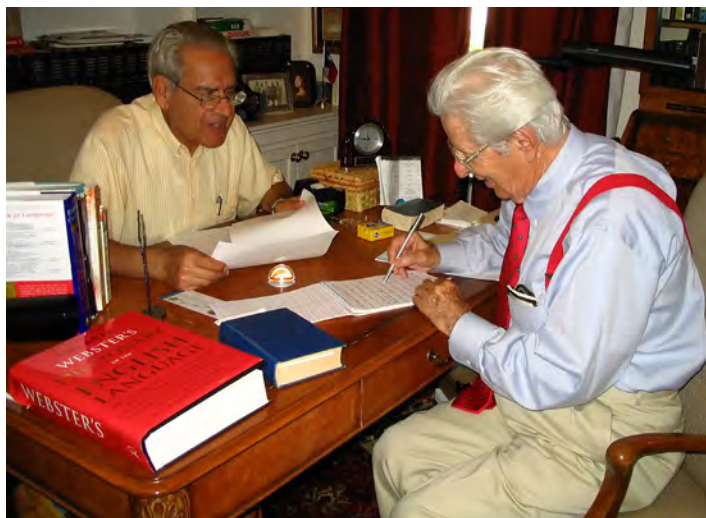


Joe Lipton and Helen Stern Lipton, ca. 1926.
Courtesy of Joe Lipton.

proved a facilitating tool in the translation process. More so, that picture fueled my incentive to translate the letters in that desk.

Across the span of time the *dybbuk* of these kin has mysteriously taken possession of me. My release from its grip is contingent upon the translation of these Yiddish letters.

Thus driven, I gently disentomb the fragile scraps of paper that awaken memories that always hovered at the rim of consciousness. As I carefully removed the faded, yellowed, tattered correspondence I thought, I, too, have grown old along with the *bintel brief* that I guarded and protected for so many decades. Oh, the ravages of time. As the Yiddish poet



Rabbi Philip Silverstein and Joe Lipton, translating a letter. Photo: Karen Tannenbaum.

GLOSSARY of Yiddish words

<i>bintel brief</i>	a bundle of letters
<i>bubbe</i>	grandmother
<i>dybbuk</i>	the evil spirit of a dead person that enters a living person
<i>mamaloshen</i>	mother tongue
<i>taam</i>	taste
<i>yente</i>	a gossip woman
<i>Yiddin</i>	plural of Yid (Jew)
<i>Yiddish shprach</i>	Jewish speech
<i>zayde</i>	grandfather

Khonon Eager wrote, "Der greste ganey is di tsayt"—the biggest thief is time.

With the *dybbuk* nipping at my heels, what to do with these letters? To whom shall I turn? Who can translate Yiddish into English? No small problem in South Carolina.

Obviously, the translator must be fluent and competent in the two languages. Obstacles are endless and varied. For example, while *Yiddish shprach* was the universal vernacular of European Jews prior to World War II, uniformity did not prevail. Diction and dialect varied from one locale to another. Then there are idioms that must be deciphered. Add to this the complications of handwriting and misspelled words.

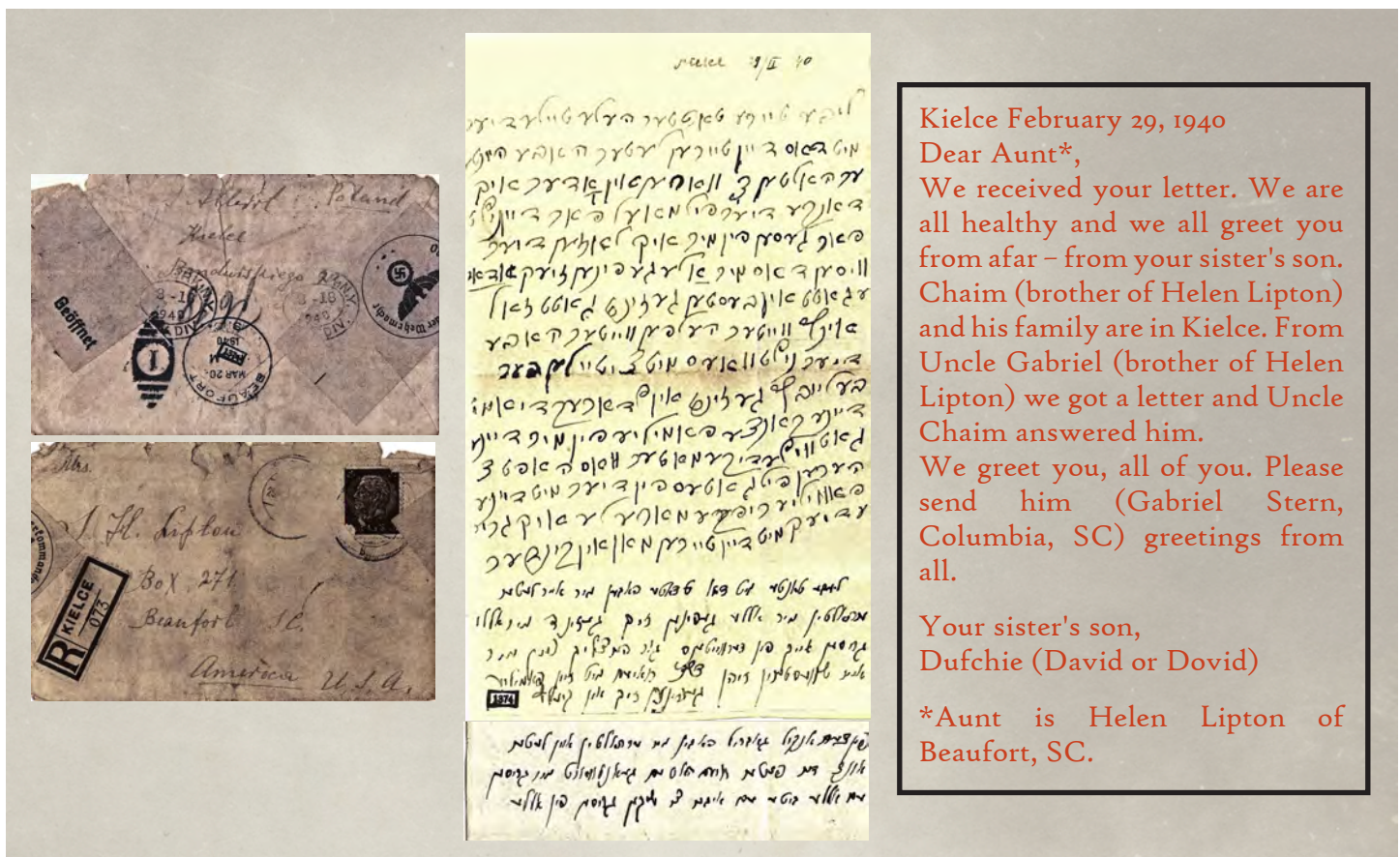
The letters in my possession were written by Polish Jews. This means that one encounters a Polish word written in Yiddish. The complexity does not end there. Because of the proximity of Poland to Germany a word from that country will find its way into the correspondence as well as an occasional word in Hebrew—all written in Yiddish. As a result dictionaries are an absolute necessity to the process. A calendar conversion table is useful to render Hebrew dates in the Gregorian calendar. Finally, the ultimate decision is whether the translation should be literary or literal. I opted to transcribe the letters literally. There is a word in Yiddish called *taam*. Loosely translated it means taste. I was fearful that a literary translation would not be true to their essence and that they would lose their style, quaintness, flavor, and *taam*.

I was indeed fortunate, perhaps lucky is the word, in

finding and forming not only a close, valued friendship but a compatible working relationship with Rabbi Philip Silverstein, who retired from Columbia's congregation Beth Shalom in 2005. With amazing skill he deftly translated the gnarled Yiddish of some 26 letters. He also has taken a lively interest in the Stern family, past and present.

There is in this cache of letters and postcards a record of the travails of one family in the decade of the 1930s. As Mark Anthony warned, "If you have tears, prepare to shed them now." Aside from family news there is the betrayal of emotions that alternate between longing and desperation, hope and disappointment, light and darkness. And then on September 1, 1939, darkness descended upon the Jews of Poland. The most devastating pogrom in Jewish history commenced.

It is now 1940 and the last letter from the blackness of Poland arrives in Beaufort from Sura Sterenzys Albirt of Kielce, Poland, to her sister Helen Lipton, dated February 29. The Germans are at this time fully entrenched and in control of the postal service. The envelope bears the Nazi seal of censorship with the invasive word *Geoffnet* (opened). A second censorship stamp reads, *Ober Commando Wehrmacht*, with eagle perched above a Nazi Swastika. Without any



Envelope front and back bearing Helen Lipton's address in Beaufort and censorship stamps, Geoffnet (opened) and the Ober Commando Wehrmacht eagle-over-swastika imprint (left). Letter in Yiddish dated February 29, 1940, from Kielce, Poland, to Helen Lipton in Beaufort, SC. Censor's stamp is at the lower left (center). Translation at the right, courtesy of Rabbi Philip Silverstein and Joe Lipton.

elaboration, the contents reveal an innocuous message that they are all doing well.

Prior to the last communication, the letters contain pleas for immigration papers to enable them to travel to America. In another, my grandmother Rivke Machele Sterenzys is chastising her son Gabriel Stern of Columbia for not writing, and then in the character of a *yente* she tells of an ancient aunt about to remarry. In sum, a reminder that Jewish life existed prior to the apotheosis of the Holocaust. A world where *Yiddin* created a tradition and a culture of study and learning, of literature, music, theatre, a world of day-to-day life.

To mitigate the handling and to facilitate reading, enlarged copies are made of each letter. Seated facing one another across a small desk in the rabbi's book-lined study we open a Yiddish letter for the morning translation. A solemn tranquility enshrouds the rabbi as he applies complete concentration to the task at hand. Suddenly there emanates from him a burst signifying conquest and then a smile of

satisfaction spreads across his face. "I've got it," he explodes, and I'm ready to record the first words. Suddenly the dead come alive when the rabbi intones, "Lieber tyerer tochter"—my dearest daughter. My grandmother Rivke, of Kielce, is speaking to her daughter, my mother, Helen, of Beaufort. Imagine!

I have lived with these family letters and photographs, my mother's passports, and other memorabilia for three quarters of a century. Daily I have confronted the past and the dead. Some questions have been answered but more remain and will forever remain unanswered because in youth we failed to ask questions. These letters and memories stir the heart and bring dampness to the eye. As one grows old one begins to understand the truth of Sophocles's insight, "It is the dead, not the living, who make the longest demand. We die forever."

My grandmother always closed her letters with these words, "I greet you and kiss you my dear children from the depths of my heart."

Journey to Kielce ...

These past few days I have journeyed, once again, to the city of Kielce, Poland, the seminal home of my mother, Hinda Sterenzys. Of course, I did not know her when she was dressed in that name. Some years later I would be introduced to her. After she married my father, Samuel N. Lipton, of Lithuania in 1922 and became Helen Lipton, we were formally introduced. Crude mathematics tells me that it would be some 80-plus and then some years, ago. When I entered the orbit of cognizance I remember that my mother, forever homesick for her parents and kin, would open the drawers of her writing desk and extract photos of her family. As though in a Masonic ritual, she would acquaint me with grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins. The ritual became regular and on occasion it was to the accompaniment of tears and sobs. As a result I became quite adept at "tearing," employing the device to advantage when an unaffordable trinket met my fancy.

There was one photograph that my mother treasured above all others, a picture of the Sterenzys – the Stern family. She had framed this picture and placed it in a prominent location in her den where all could see. There are 18 family members in the photo; two are absent – Gabriel Stern and Helen Stern Lipton. By 1925 when this photo was made, they had already emigrated and settled in Columbia and Beaufort, SC, respectively.

Frequently, my mother would take the picture from its lodging on the wall and, in keeping with what had become ritual, attach a name to each character. As time passed I became fearful that I would forget a name. I

decided to reduce her dictation to writing. On Post-It notes I wrote the names of the family members—at least 50 years ago. It had escaped me that a rather crude list of names existed.

It came to my knowledge that Zosia Stern Nowak had identified family members in the photo for Lilly Stern Filler. I requested a copy of that work from her, which was mailed to me, obligingly, along with copies of Yiddish letters from Chaim Stern of Poland (Ben Stern's father) to his sister Helen Stern Lipton of Beaufort, SC. Thus, between the two sources I was able to pin a name to family members in the photo.

Let me say that it is not without a good deal of agony, sorrow, and sadness that I confront this photograph and visit with my family of Kielce, once again. It is wrenching because decades ago I was in the company of the *bubbe* and the *zayde*, uncles, aunts, and cousins.

It was 1930 when my mother took her two sons, Morey and me, to Poland. There, we stayed with Chaim and Hadassah. They would be the parents of cousins Zosia, Yoel, Fella, and Ben Sternzys – Stern. It was a different world, a different time, and a different place. Preparations were already underway for the turmoil that was to come. Hitler was on the rise. But what does a child know from philosophy and geopolitics. Instead, I studied and observed family members, mimicked their ways, visited Mottel the tailor, ate *kartoffeln mit smetana* (potatoes with sour cream) and *kochte ayer* (hard-boiled eggs), and reveled in their attention, even picking up a few Polish words.

Jewish Genealogy Workshop: Profiles of Speakers

Charleston, October 25 - 26



Stephen P. Morse

In the “old days,” genealogical research was done by traveling great distances and then searching dusty archives or scrolling through microfilm. The advent of the World Wide Web has changed that. Today much of the data useful to genealogists has been put on websites and can be accessed from the comfort of home.

Unfortunately, many genealogical websites are not easy to navigate and even those that are don’t offer enough versatility. Steve Morse discovered these limitations back in April 2001, when he tried to use the new Ellis Island website to find the ship record of his wife’s maternal grandfather. He had found records of all the other grandparents the old-fashioned way, using physical

microfilm rolls at the National Archives, but this one piece of data eluded him. Unfortunately the new website didn’t help, and he was still lacking information for grandpa-in-law.

But Morse quickly discovered an alternate way of accessing that website and by doing so found the record he sought. He went on to analyze other websites and develop alternate routes into them as well. He also created his own databases and programs to facilitate genealogical research. Collected together under what is called the One-Step website, Morse’s method has continued to evolve over the years, and now contains more than 150 tools divided into 14 categories, from performing genealogical searches, to making astronomical calculations, to entering last-minute bids on eBay.

During the workshop, Morse will give both an overview of his One-Step site and also describe how to use some of its specific resources, such as Ellis Island records and U.S. census results. If you want to get started before the conference begins, you can find out “how to” at stevemorse.org.



Karen S. Franklin

CosmoGIRL! featured Karen Franklin’s son as a “hunk of the month” online, but the only way Karen could get noticed in the fashion rag was to give advice to teens on how to trace their family histories (you can find the article in the August 2008 issue). This is one of many times when Karen’s family research has taken her to unexpected places.

For more than 20 years Karen served as director of the Judaica Museum of the Hebrew Home for the Aged at Riverdale and was president of a variety of organizations, including the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies and the Council of American Jewish Museums.

Working with the U.S. Department of the Treasury, the Commission for Looted Art in Europe, and the Origins Unknown Agency in the Netherlands, Karen has used family research to solve cases of Nazi-era looted art, resulting in the

restitution of paintings, Judaica, and books. She is currently a guest curator of an exhibition on the Morgenthau family scheduled to open next year at New York Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust.

Karen’s interest in her own family began when she was in college. Home on vacation, perusing a trunk in the basement with her father, she found a letter from Albert Einstein to her grandmother. Einstein was helping a distant cousin of Karen’s in Germany to get an affidavit to the United States. The year was 1939. It took almost two decades of searching to learn the fate of the cousin, who indeed succeeded in finding refuge in America, but died in the 1950s.

As a professional researcher for families, Karen has helped countless people trace their origins, and, in the process, developed a toolkit of useful techniques for beginner and advanced genealogists. During the annual meeting, Karen will present “Tracking the Winter Family,” a dramatic tale of how she found the European roots of a Southern Jewish family—and the sole copy of a 300-page family history—in a remote village in Germany. Stories about four Civil War veterans, an “Embalmer on the Plain” (a Jewish homesteader in South Dakota), and cousins-in-common with the client will persuade even the most skeptical that pursuing family history can be fun.

Conference participants will have the opportunity to begin or continue their research with the Franklin-Morse team in a hands-on workshop session. Come prepared with your family tree, and don’t forget the stories!

Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina ~ Annual Meeting
Charleston, South Carolina

Jewish Genealogy: Explore Your Family Tree

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2008

11:00 am Registration

Sylvia Vlosky Yaschik Jewish Studies Center (96 Wentworth Street)

12:00 pm Luncheon

1:00 pm Stephen P. Morse *One-Step Webpages: Genealogical Search Tools*

The One-Step website started out as an aid for finding passengers in the Ellis Island database. Shortly afterwards it was expanded to help with searching in the 1930 census. Over the years it has continued to evolve and today includes over 100 web-based tools divided into 13 separate categories. This presentation will describe the range of genealogical search tools available and give the highlights of each.

3:00 pm Karen S. Franklin *Tracking the Winter Family*

Karen will discuss how she found the European roots of a Southern Jewish family in a remote village in Germany. Stories about four Civil War veterans, an "Embalmer on the Plain" (Jewish homesteader in South Dakota) and cousins-in-common will demonstrate search techniques.

4:15 pm Stephen P. Morse *What Color Ellis Island Search Form Should I Use?*

In April 2001 the Ellis Island ship manifests and passenger records went on-line. A few weeks later the One-Step Ellis Island website was created to make this resource easier to use. This talk will describe the evolution of the website from both a historical and a practical perspective, and provide a lens for navigating through it.

5:30 pm Reception

Marlene and Nathan Addlestone Library
Third Floor, Special Collections
205 Calhoun Street (at Coming Street)

Enjoy hors d'oeuvres and cocktails, view the treasures of the Jewish Heritage Collection, and see the new genealogical library donated by Sandra G. Shapiro in memory of her parents, Annie and Sam Garfinkel.

**Reception sponsored by Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough LLP and the
Pearlstone Family Fund of the Coastal Community Foundation.**

DINNER ON YOUR OWN

~~~~~

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2008**

**9:00 am Breakfast and Open Board Meeting**

Sylvia Vlosky Yaschik Jewish Studies Center

**10:00 am Stephen P. Morse *Playing Hide and Seek in the US Census***

Even before the 1930 Census was unlocked on April Fool's Day 2002, researchers began wondering how they were going to locate people's records. The lack of indexes presented a real challenge. Several solutions to this problem have since evolved. The One-Step Census website presents an aid for finding records. A similar aid exists on the NARA website. And commercial websites have developed extensive indexes which are available for a fee. The One-Step website has since been expanded to include 1910, 1920, and 1940 censuses as well. This presentation describes and contrasts these various solutions of searching in these census years.

**11:00 am Hands-On Research *Using Computers at the College of Charleston***

The Franklin-Morse team will utilize their expertise and College of Charleston computers to guide participants in their personal research, using Steve Morse's One-Step tools, Jewishgen.org, Ancestry.com, and developing strategies to solve a variety of research problems using all of Franklin's and Morse's secret weapons. Wireless is available for those using their own laptops.

**1:00 pm Luncheon**

**2:00 pm Do your own assisted research in the College of Charleston computer lab**



To start your search, check the following sites:

**stevemorse.org** A site that directs you to other genealogy web sites and provides an easy interface for searches. Free.

**ellisland.org** Ellis Island Port of New York Passenger Records, 1892–1954. Free.

**castlegarden.org** America's First Immigration Center, a database of information on 10 million immigrants, 1830–1892. Free.

**jewishgen.org** Site includes: Family Finder, Jewish Worldwide Burial Database, Family Tree of the Jewish People. Free, but you will need to register.

**ancestry.com** Essential to 19th Century American research for census and immigration records. Membership required, but you can get a short-term trial, or one-month membership to begin. May also be available at local libraries.

**google.com** You'd be surprised what you can find. Free.

**americanjewisharchives.org** American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati. A great deal of AJA's material is in the card catalog, which is not online. The archives' staff is wonderful, so don't hesitate to write with a specific inquiry. Even better—visit AJA's new facility in Cincinnati! Free.

**cjh.org** Center for Jewish History, New York. Online access to combined index of Partner Collections (American Jewish Historical Society, YIVO, Leo Baeck Institute). You can download valuable fact sheets from the Genealogical Institute. Free.

**library.cofc.edu** Our own College of Charleston resource, listing catalogued Jewish Heritage collections and an extensive oral history archives. Free.

## Jewish Genealogy: Explore Your Family Tree

### JHSSC Annual Meeting

Charleston, SC

October 25 - 26, 2008

**Deadline for registration is October 15.**

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse/Friend \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

I request meals that are: [ ] Vegetarian [ ] Kosher

Name(s) on name tags \_\_\_\_\_

Cost for the weekend is \$90.00 per person for JHSSC members

\$35.00 additional per family for non-members

**Total Amount Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

**Return form with check to:**

*JHSSC/Jewish Studies Center*

*96 Wentworth Street*

*Charleston, SC 29424*

*or*

Register online at **www.jhssc.org** using your credit card.

For further information call 843.953.3918 or e-mail **jhssc@cofc.edu**

## Hotel Information

*Best Western Charleston – Downtown*

*250 Spring Street, Charleston, SC 29403*

*(Corner of Lockwood Blvd. & US 17 South)*

843.722.4000 toll-free: 888.377.2121 fax: 843.805.8086

*www.CharlestonBestWestern.com*

**Special Rate: \$89.99 plus 12.5% tax for Saturday, October 25 and Sunday, October 26, available until Saturday, October 3, 2008. Mention code name: JHSSC.**

# The Historical Significance of Jewish Cemeteries

by Joseph Wachter

**History matters:** In many cultures, children are taught history to help them understand who they are, as individuals and members of a group, by learning where they came from. Certainly the value of knowing one's history is an accepted tenet of Judaism, whether defined as a religion, culture, or civilization.

Today's modern society has in many ways turned its back on the past. We live in a time of rapid change, a time of progress. People tend to define themselves in terms of where they are going, not where they came from. The past seems outdated and irrelevant and is only vaguely perceived and understood. This ignorance is not the result of a lack of information but rather the result of indifference. History just does not seem to matter much. Fortunately, there have always been individuals who understand that history is important and set themselves the task of documenting its remains.

**Barnett A. Elzas:** In 1903, Dr. Barnett A. Elzas, then serving as the rabbi at Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim, published a booklet entitled, *The Old Jewish Cemeteries at Charleston, S.C., A Transcript of the Inscriptions on Their Tombstones, 1762–1903*. In his introduction he noted that Charleston had three Jewish cemeteries whose origins pre-dated the 19th

century and whose grave markers and stones bore inscriptions of great historical interest. He pointed out that one of the three—the cemetery on Coming Street—was the oldest Jewish cemetery in South Carolina, purchased and owned by Isaac de Costa, the first *hazzan* of Beth Elohim. He further noted that De Costa

originally intended the cemetery as a burial place for family members only, but later decided it could serve as a burial ground for the Jewish community at large, and conveyed the property to Beth Elohim in 1764 for 70 pounds. Realizing the importance of preserving the information inscribed on the grave markers and stones, Rabbi Elzas wrote the following:

*The virtue of tombstone records for the purpose of the historian is not yet fully appreciated. Some day, when it is too late, we shall awake to a sense of our neglect. Apart from its own intrinsic value, the following record is printed in hope that others may be led to do likewise.*

**Jewish cemeteries in South Carolina:** I have had the good fortune to visit many, though not all, of South Carolina's Jewish cemeteries, and have come to realize they are more than just collections of carved stones or tablets. Jewish burial grounds are hallowed in several respects. Each cemetery is a unique and integral part of the history, culture, and religious background of the Jewish community it belongs to. Irreplaceable landscapes and tangible reflections of our heritage, cemeteries contain a wealth of information that needs to be preserved.

Customs and rituals associated with burying our dead have changed tremendously over time. In bygone days, friends and family members would routinely perform many

of the activities associated with death: preparing the body for burial, building a coffin, digging the grave, and burying the deceased. Death was dealt with on a very personal basis. In observant communities this is still true. However, for many today, the bereaved are more like visitors at the final rites. Jewish communities still assist with funerals in many ways, but



Rabbi Barnett A. Elzas, 1867–1936. Jewish Heritage Collection, College of Charleston.



Tombstone of David Lopez, builder of KKBE, Coming Street Cemetery, Charleston, SC. Jewish Heritage Collection.





*Hebrew Benevolent Association Cemetery, Camden, SC.  
Photo: Bill Aron.*

increasingly families and congregations have relinquished traditional functions to commercial funeral homes.

Cemetery maintenance also has been handed over to hired personnel whose weed trimmers, insecticides, and lawnmowers can inflict damage on markers and stones. Contrary to what many people think, cemeteries and their markers do not last forever. Gravestones deteriorate with

age. Some have weathered to the point that they are almost illegible. Air pollution and acid rain cause stones to decay and blacken, and in some cases, to erode so that the inscriptions are erased. Cemetery vandalism is no longer uncommon. Nature takes its toll in graveyards that are abandoned and go unattended, where trees and overgrown plants may undermine the sturdiest of monuments.

***Your invitation to get involved:*** In accord with the JHSSC's mission to document and conserve South Carolina's Jewish history, board member Stanley Farbstein initiated a statewide cemetery survey in 2004. The Society's Committee on Archives and Historical Sites is continuing the effort to identify Jewish cemeteries across the state, record the inscriptions on stones, and publish the information on the JHSSC website. Fruits of this labor can be viewed by going to [www.jhssc.org](http://www.jhssc.org) and clicking on "SC Synagogues, Cemeteries and Community Centers."

More work, however, remains to be done, and volunteers are needed. We owe it to past, present, and future generations to follow the lead of people like Rabbi Barnett A. Elzas and take note of the history that is literally writ in stone in our Jewish cemeteries. By so doing we affirm that history matters. We need people like you to answer Rabbi Elzas's call and do likewise.

### **The JHSSC Cemetery Project To volunteer, please contact:**

**Joe Wachter**  
JHSSC Vice-President  
Archives and Historical Sites  
4505 Camellia Drive  
Myrtle Beach, SC 29577

843.449.6259 (Home)  
843.449.2000 (Office)  
Email: [jhw@48th.com](mailto:jhw@48th.com)



*Sol Breibart giving a history lesson in the Coming Street Cemetery, Charleston, SC. Photo: Bill Aron.*

Putting the results of cemetery surveys on the Internet gives people all over the world the ability to search for family members. Become a part of preserving our past. Help with the cemetery project and sign up for JHSSC's genealogy conference in Charleston, October 25-26.

# Rabbi Jacob S. Raisin and Zionism in Charleston, 1915–1945

by Solomon Breibart



Jacob Salmon Raisin. Jewish Heritage Collection, ca. 1915.

This year the State of Israel is celebrating its 60th anniversary. In May 1948, a hope became a reality—the result of epic efforts by worldwide Jewry over 50 years. Zionists around the globe overcame immense political, economic, geographic, and social obstacles to establish a Jewish state in what was then called Palestine. Among this multitude, Jacob S. Raisin served the cause in his own way.

Jacob Salmon Raisin, the descendant of a long line of rabbis, was 18 years old when Theodor Herzl published his famous book *Das Judenstaat* (*The Jewish State*) in 1896 and launched the modern Zionist movement. Jacob had been brought to the United States in 1892 by his father; the rest of the family was brought over by 1894. Their home town was Nieswizh (now Nyasvizh, Belarus), a Polish/Russian community known as a center of Jewish secularism, or *haskalah*. The elder Raisin, a learned man and teacher, was considered an “enlightened man,” dedicated to promoting nationalism among Jews, secular education, and Hebrew as the official Jewish language. In his autobiography, Max Raisin, Jacob’s younger brother, wrote that he and Jacob were greatly influenced by their father’s ideas.

Zionism was not met with the overwhelming support its founders had anticipated. In both Europe and America, Jews of diverse factions advanced a variety of reasons, some religious, some political, against the establishment of a Jewish state. With the outbreak of violent anti-Semitism in Russia in the 1880s, East European Jews had become increasingly desperate and anxious to leave. The only viable haven at the time was the United States. In America, despite their intense preoccupation with making a living and adjusting to the new environment, and despite opposition from all sides, the immigrants founded Zionist clubs and small organizations based on European models.

The Raisin family was a part of this great migration.

Adapting to their new home, Jacob in 1900 and his brother Max in 1903 earned degrees from the University of Cincinnati and Hebrew Union College (HUC). Both were ordained as rabbis in Reform Judaism. In those days, the Raisins found that “Hebrew, Zionism, and love of peoplehood were simply not components of American Reform Jewish thought.” Jacob later recalled that his support of Zionism endangered his standing at HUC. In fact, the college was described as “the citadel of anti-Zionism.” Some of its faculty had been active in drafting the Pittsburgh Platform in 1885 that outlined the principles of classical Reform Judaism, one of which was the rejection of the concept of a Jewish state.

Jacob Raisin’s diaries and scrapbooks, which were donated in 2007 to the Jewish Heritage Collection at the College of Charleston by his daughters, Mordenai Hirsch and Rachel Raisin, contain ample evidence of the rabbi’s activities on behalf of Zionism. An item from his early days in Port Gibson, Mississippi, his first pulpit, mentions that he spoke on Zionism to the local chapter of the Federation of American Zionists (FAZ), the forerunner of the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA). When attending conferences of the strongly anti-Zionist Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), he stoutly defended the idea of Jewish statehood, along with such pro-Zionist Reform rabbis as Richard Gottheil, Stephen Wise, and Max Heller. He wrote frequently to Anglo-Jewish publications supporting the cause.

When Raisin became the rabbi at Charleston’s Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim (KKBE) in 1915, he found a congregation faithful to the classical Reform pattern promulgated in the Pittsburgh Platform. Rabbi Malcolm Stern, in his insightful examination of the role of the rabbi in the South, concluded that “to be outspokenly Zionist before World War II in a Southern Reform congregation took courage on the part of the rabbi.” Raisin’s pro-Zionist stand may have been a contributing factor, in his early years at KKBE, to the opposition which arose annually when his contract came up for renewal. Members of the congregation were uncomfortable with his advocacy for a Jewish state, fearing that their loyalty to the United States might be challenged.

Shortly after his arrival in Charleston, Raisin became a member of a local Zionist group, B’nei Zion (Sons of Zion). Its earliest surviving records date from 1917, but it is likely that the movement in Charleston began even earlier. When Zionists across America debated whether to affiliate with



the ZOA or the World Zionist Congress (WZC), the question raised such heated discussion in B'nei Zion that Raisin felt compelled to write a letter to the opposing factions urging them "to leave personalities out and join in unity." In 1924 the conflict was resolved and it was decided to become a district of the ZOA. That same year the chapter began using the newly organized Jewish Community Center on George Street and met there until 1930, when the JCC disbanded. Thereafter, meetings were held at Brith Sholom.

No congregants from Reform KKBE joined Raisin in the ZOA; its ranks were filled with members from Charleston's Orthodox synagogues, Brith Sholom and Beth Israel. Nevertheless, Raisin served as district chairman and vice-chairman, and was active on various committees. In 1932, he attended a meeting of the World Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland, and then traveled to Palestine for a week—with special dispensation from KKBE's board to take two additional weeks of vacation time to make the journey. Also with the trustees' permission, Raisin visited several communities in the Carolinas to speak on behalf of Zionism. It appears that KKBE's attitude toward Zionism had somewhat softened, and so had that of the Reform Central Conference of American Rabbis.

For most of the 1920s and '30s, the Charleston District struggled to be relevant, putting energy into raising money for Palestine and building local support. Membership peaked at about 110 in the early 1920s, but by 1936 the chapter had become "a one-man Zionist district," kept alive by the energy of Joseph Goldman. No information has been found thus far to explain the decline of Charleston District ZOA. The author's conjecture is that the local, long-established lodges of B'nai B'rith and the Masonic Order, and the newly organized Kalushiner Society (1922), filled more adequately the perceived social needs of the immigrant generation for

officers follow.  
A report on Jewish Relief was submitted of this city was given by Rabbi J. Loeb. A total of \$9000.00 was collected during year 1917 one half of that sum was raised by the so called uptown section. It gives pleasure the Committee to note the equality of the amount collected from our side so called "uptown Jews" we are not rich in wealth or in money, but we are rich in nobleness in ideals in self sacrifice, hope was expressed to double the sum for year 1918. It was past to give a rising vote of thanks for the

*From the minutes of B'nei Zion Society, Charleston, SC, December 29, 1917. Rabbi Loeb reports \$9,000 collected for Jewish relief from the Jewish community, half from "uptown Jews." and half from "our side." Jewish Heritage Collection.*

help in adjusting to the Charleston community. Meetings, which rarely attracted more than 10 members, were held at the Daughters of Israel Hall on St. Philip Street, next door to synagogue Brith Sholom. The district raised money for the United Palestine Appeal until the United Jewish Appeal took over fund-raising for overseas philanthropies in 1937.

In its infamous 1939 White Paper, the British government revoked the Balfour Declaration of 1917, which had favored the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Just as the Nazis' war against Jews in Europe was intensifying, the British aimed to limit, then stop, immigration of Jews to Palestine. KKBE joined with other community organizations in protesting that perfidious policy. Its board "ordered that a cablegram be sent to Prime Minister Chamberlain requesting that the Balfour Declaration be upheld." In the end, Nazi atrocities transformed practically all Jews into ardent Zionists. Although the Charleston District of ZOA did not at first feel the impact of this turn of events, the organization did experience a strong revival in the post-World War II era.

While the local ZOA faltered in the 1930s, the Charleston Chapter of Hadassah flourished. Organized in 1921 by Mrs. Jacob S. Raisin—and we can reasonably assume that Rabbi Raisin had some influence on this development—by 1938, the chapter had 142 members and boasted that it was "the largest women's group in the city." Besides the usual activities on behalf of Palestine, the local chapter in the course of time sponsored a Junior Hadassah group and two Young Judea clubs, and remains an energetic presence in Charleston to this day.

With Jews the world over rejoicing over Israel's 60th anniversary, it is sad to note that Rabbi Jacob S. Raisin, who died in 1946, did not live to enjoy the thrill of seeing, hearing, and reading about the founding of Israel as a nation.

| Memberships of 1921 |              |             | 275 |
|---------------------|--------------|-------------|-----|
| Goldman             | 567 King St  | Paid \$6.00 |     |
| Mrs. "              | "            | Paid \$6.00 |     |
| S. "                | "            | Paid \$6.00 |     |
| Sam Rittenberg      | 55 Broad St. | Paid \$6.00 |     |
| Mrs. "              | 94 Huger     | Paid \$6.00 |     |
| S. Spivak           | 405 King     | Paid \$6.00 |     |
| Louis M. Schimmel   | 55 Broad     | Paid \$6.00 |     |
| Dr. Jacob S. Raisin | 14 Huger Sq. | Paid \$6.00 |     |

*Page from the Charleston ZOA minute book confirming Dr. Jacob S. Raisin as a 1921 member having paid \$6.00 dues. Jewish Heritage Collection.*

# Midlands Merchants: The Jews of Orangeburg and Vicinity

by Alyssa Neely

German Jews began settling in Orangeburgh (as it was originally spelled) in the early 1840s, once railroads connected the village of fewer than 400 to Charleston and Columbia. By 1853, the town's population had more than doubled. Originally established as an Indian trading post called Edisto, the settlement was renamed in honor of King George II's son-in-law, William IV, Prince of Orange, by German-Swiss immigrants in the early 18th century. Situated on hilly ground near the Edisto River, Orangeburg was surrounded by a well-populated farming region. Cotton production, together with the railroads, helped to make many 19th-century farmers in the district wealthy.



*Theodore Kohn, from A Sketch of the War Record of the Edisto Rifles, 1861 – 1865, W. V. Izlar.*

Ten-year-old Theodore Kohn, one of the town's first Jewish residents, emigrated from Germany in 1850 with his parents and a brother and settled in Orangeburg the same year. Kohn served in the Edisto Rifles during the Civil War. In the post-war period he became a respected businessman and an important contributor to civic affairs, serving as a town alderman, a founding member of Edisto Bank, and a major force behind the creation of Orangeburg's public schools. Dubbed the "Father of Orangeburg graded schools," he was also a member of the Masonic Shibolet Lodge, serving as its treasurer

for more than two decades.

When he first arrived in Orangeburg, Kohn worked for his uncle, Deopold Louis, an established merchant and possibly the earliest Jewish settler in town. In 1868, Theodore and a friend opened a general merchandise store, Ezekial and Kohn. Their association appears to have been brief, however, since a year later Theodore's brother Henry joined him in a mercantile business, Theodore Kohn and Brother. Later, Henry broke away from Theodore to open his own store.

Born in Orangeburg in 1850, Henry made his mark on the community as a founder of the Young America Fire Company and a Mason. In partnership with his wife, Matilda Baum Kohn, he organized and led the Orangeburg Philharmonic Orchestra.

Henry and Matilda directed the group of amateur musicians for almost 50 years. Henry, himself a violinist and a violin instructor, was admired for his dedication to bringing music to the city.

**Shopkeepers, Tradesmen, and Land Owners:** After the Civil War, Orangeburg dropped the "h" at the end of its name and incorporated as a city. Cotton farming continued to be the county's economic mainstay, supplemented by a diversity of food crops, including corn, oats, wheat, rye, rice, potatoes, pecans, and peanuts. The nearby towns of Bowman, Branchville, St. Matthews, Elloree, Eutawville, and Blackville all attracted Jewish settlers. Many of the newcomers were landmen, hailing from the same part of the Old Country, or were linked by marriage.

Simon Brown (Braun), a shoemaker, immigrated to the United States from what is now Poland around 1849 with his wife, Philapena Asher (Aschen) Brown, a Jew of Sephardic descent. Initially, they joined Pena's brothers in New Jersey, but left the state after Simon became involved with anarchists. For reasons unknown, the Browns chose to settle in Blackville, which by 1878 was home to approximately 40 Jews. The Browns sent their children by train to Sabbath school at the Reform Temple in Augusta, Georgia, which Simon may have helped to found. He and Pena were buried in the family plot in Augusta.

How long Simon continued in the shoemaking trade in Blackville we do not know, but at some point he opened a store in Blackville called Simon Brown's Sons, touting "Globo de Oro—the New Golden Centered Cantaloupe" among the goods for sale. He also became a substantial landowner and, according to one descendant, owned slaves in the years before the Civil War. By the time of his death in 1906, he had acquired 5,000 acres.

St. Matthews, originally Lewisville, attracted a handful of Jewish families in the post-bellum period. In 1878, six years after



*Kohn's store, established by Theodore Kohn in 1867. Photo ca. 1917, from Orangeburg Revisited, G. Atkinson.*





*Lipman Rich's clothing store on the right, Russell Street, 1928. Photo from Orangeburg, G. Atkinson.*

its incorporation, the town was home to some 19 Jewish residents. Jewish businessmen in 1889 included M. Jarecky, J. H. Loryea, and P. Rich. Brothers Moritz and Lipman Rich of Germany had settled in Charleston before moving to St. Matthews. Moritz's grandson Lipman P. Rich, born in 1894 in St. Matthews, moved to Orangeburg with his wife and daughter and opened a clothing store. When the business failed during the Great Depression of the 1930s, Lipman went to work for the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company.

Rich's clothing store was one of several Jewish-owned stores in Orangeburg in the early 1900s, as East European immigrants joined their predecessors from Germany. Downtown store owners included the Abrams, Beckers, Bernsteins, Finkelsteins, Furchgotts, Hurwitzs, Levines, Manheims, Marcuses, Mirmows, Rubensteins, Silvers, and Wilinskys.

Small towns across the region also attracted Jewish shopkeepers. Nathan Blatt (Minnenblatt), while peddling out of Charleston, learned that Blackville was ripe for a new merchant and decided to set up shop there. Alexander Goldiner ran a store in St. Matthews; the Nussbaums in Branchville; the Nesses in Denmark; and the Pearlstines in St. Matthews, Branchville, and Olar. Louis Link, who was born in St. Matthews and raised in Orangeburg, became a peddler. His father Solomon, a Russian immigrant, had been an Orangeburg merchant in the late 1800s. Joseph J. Miller of Elloree and Mordie Rubenstein of Orangeburg, competitors and good friends who often ate lunch together, each ran a store in Elloree.

Like small-town Jewish storeowners in other parts of the state, midlands merchants tried hard to integrate into society and often attained elected office. Harry N. Marcus, for example, was mayor of his hometown, Eutawville, from the late 1940s to the early 1970s. The World War II veteran was a Mason, a Shriner, and owner of Marcus Department Store, a business started by his father in the first half of the twentieth century. Irving Benjamin, who owned a department store in Bowman, served for 30 years as a councilman, and was a member of the Masons and the American Legion.

The Jareckys and Sol Wetherhorn were cotton factors in St. Matthews. H. M. Kline was a junk and used car parts dealer.



*West Russell Street, Orangeburg looking toward the square and courthouse, ca. 1927. Courtesy of Marcelle Furchgott.*

Evelyn Marcus, whose mother was a Rich, in 1920 became the first woman in Orangeburg County to be admitted to the Bar. Evelyn's choice of a professional career was a harbinger of the path future generations of Jews from Orangeburg and neighboring communities would take. Jewish-owned stores on the main streets of midlands towns would gradually close their doors as the owners retired with no one in the next generation willing to stand behind the till. One resident, born in Orangeburg in 1922, reported that the Jewish population in town had peaked in the early 1900s and was in decline when her generation was coming of age. In 1996, Barshay and Marcus Clothing Store, the sole remaining Jewish-owned store in Orangeburg, closed its doors.

***Societies, Cemeteries, and Synagogues:*** The first Jewish organization in Orangeburg, the Hebrew Benevolent Society, was established in 1885, with Theodore Kohn acting as president. The following year, the group purchased land for a cemetery, where, over the next quarter century, members of the Bamberg, Blatt, Fenchel, Jarecky, Kohn, Link, Marcus, Rich, Sorentrue, Wald, Wetherhorn, and Wolfe families were laid to rest. Of the 21 burials during this period, nine were small children.

A copy of a printed program for a "Confirmation Service at B'rith Sholom" on May 19, 1918 at 4:30 p.m. provides evidence of Orangeburg's first Jewish congregation. The name the group chose may have come from Charleston's Orthodox synagogue Brith Sholom, where King Street merchants Lipman Rich and his son Philip were members and officers before they moved to St. Matthews, but the leadership was classical Reform. Jacob S. Raisin, rabbi of Charleston's Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim, officiated at the confirmation (a distinctly Reform practice) and is listed in the program as superintendent of the Sunday school. The confirmation teacher was Mrs. Sol Kohn, the second grade teacher was Mrs. J. P. (Blumah Sorentrue) Moseley, and Henry Kohn served as president.

Nobel Prize-winning biochemist Robert Furchgott, who moved from Charleston to his mother's hometown of Orangeburg in 1929 at age 13, was a member of Orangeburg's last confirmation class. Robert's mother, Philapena Sorentrue, was a descendant of Simon and Philapena Brown. His father, Arthur Furchgott,



*Robert Furchgott receiving Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine from Carl XVI Gustaf, King of Sweden, Stockholm, Sweden, 1998. Courtesy of Marcelle Furchgott.*

instructing. Rabbi Samuel R. Shillman of Sumter officiated at the confirmation of Robert and his cousin Edward Moseley, reportedly the last confirmation ceremony conducted in Orangeburg. Observant Jews typically traveled to Charleston or Columbia for the High Holy Days. Some families simply conducted services at home. Edward V. Mirmow, Jr., born in 1930 in Orangeburg, attended Sunday school sporadically and for a short time only; for some reason, he reported, "it didn't last." Mirmow estimated that as much as half the Jewish population did not attend worship services. Others, often through intermarriage, became practicing Christians.

The ease and frequency with which intermarriage occurred reflects the harmonious nature of Jewish-Christian relations in the area and the paltry number of potential Jewish spouses. Jewish residents participated fully in the social life and civic affairs of Orangeburg. They belonged to the Elks Club, the Orangeburg Country Club, the Young Men's Business League, the Junior Service League, the Camellia Garden Club, and the Rotary Club.

Merchant Joseph J. Miller had no living relatives when he died in 1980, but he was surrounded by a family of friends. Born in Philadelphia, he had come to Elloree in 1946 by way of Augusta and Sumter and bought a department store. Upon retiring in 1973, he established the Joseph J. Miller Foundation to support "religious, scientific, literary or educational charities." In his will, he left his savings to four Elloree churches, Orangeburg's Temple Sinai, Charleston's Brith Sholom Beth Israel, Savannah Hebrew Day School, and various charities.

Edward V. Mirmow (Mirmowitz), Sr., born in New York City to Russian immigrants, moved with his family to Orangeburg in 1901 when he was a year old. He lettered in football and baseball at the University of South Carolina and remained a big Gamecocks

came from a family of successful German Jewish merchants; in the 1920s he found himself struggling to make a living in Charleston. He tried his luck in Orangeburg but the drop in cotton prices during the Depression years made it difficult to get ahead, and in the mid-1930s the family moved again.

The religious practices of Orangeburg Jews tended to be fairly relaxed. Congregants followed the Reform tradition and offered Sunday school classes, with Kate Marcus



*Eddie Mirmow at the lower right, a sports enthusiast, organized the Orangeburg High Indians Booster Club, 1947. Photo from Orangeburg Revisited, G. Atkinson.*

fan throughout his life. After World War II, Mirmow founded the Orangeburg Indian Boosters Club to support high school sports and organized the city's American Legion Post 4 baseball program, serving as athletic director for ten years. In 1948, Mirmow Field was named in recognition of his contributions to amateur baseball.

In the 1950s, with an influx of Jews into the midlands and a surge in births as GIs came home, Orangeburg Jews organized again, this time to build Temple Sinai. It is possible that this new congregation, which had been served by Rabbi Shillman in the past, named their temple after Sumter's Temple Sinai. A *News and Courier* article reports that their Christian friends and neighbors helped to make it possible. The building, which was completed and dedicated in early 1956, seats a hundred and houses a hall, a kitchen, and space for a Sunday school on the lower level. J. J. Teskey, previously of Savannah, served as president of the board of directors and as lay leader. Member families, many of whom had young children, came from Orangeburg and surrounding towns as well. Temple Sinai's membership may have reached a peak of 15 to 20 families during this period.

The small congregation never had its own rabbi. To conduct services on the High Holy Days, Temple Sinai engaged visiting rabbis or student rabbis. Rabbi David Gruber of Columbia's Tree of Life conducted worship services once a month into the sixties. Disagreements over whether to use Conservative or Reform prayer books and personal animosities prevented the formation of a unified congregation. Sunday school classes were held during the Temple's early years, serving the small number of young families who were part of the post-World War II baby boom, but the congregation's viability became more tenuous as the children left for college and settled elsewhere.

Today, Temple Sinai's remaining three or four members meet one Saturday morning a month for worship, led by a lay reader originally from New York. Somehow, the tiny congregation has managed to retain the Temple building. High Holy Day services are a "hit or miss proposition," according to one member. The endangered congregation likely faces the same future as the Jewish-owned stores that once lined the streets of Orangeburg.



# Pillars and More Pillars

*by Martin Perlmutter*

## Of Blessed Memory ...

**T**he Jewish community of South Carolina lost one of its foremost pillars when Jerry Zucker passed away on April 11, 2008, at the age of 58. Jerry Zucker was a self-made man of incredible talent and drive. Born in Israel to Holocaust survivors from Poland, Jerry arrived at Ellis Island as a toddler in 1952. He spent most of his adult life in Charleston, where he founded Intertech Group, his holding company, and with his wife Anita raised a loving family. Jerry knew his Jewish roots and celebrated them. Giving back was a cornerstone of his being; his life exemplified the centrality of Tzedakah and the responsibility of wealth. Mourning the loss of such a giant, it is helpful to remember that the Jewish way to honor the dead is to pick up the work he or she left unfinished. May Anita and all of Jerry's extended family find comfort among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

**T**he Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina relies on its Pillar membership level to provide financial support for its operations, which includes assistance to both the Jewish Studies Program and the Jewish Heritage Collection at the College of Charleston. The Society has been fortunate in having so many people step forward to assure that its projects are funded, its endowment stays intact, and its regular membership dues remain affordable. Support from Pillars has been crucial for the Society's continuing documentation of cemetery records and our new campaign to encourage members to research their own family histories.

This year, JHSSC is reaching out to Jewish charitable foundations across South Carolina. These organizations were established by individuals who were part of the fabric of Jewish communal life in South Carolina, and who would be pleased by the Society's efforts to keep their history alive. Modeled after our Pillars' initiative, Foundational Pillars commit to pay \$2,000 per year for five years. We are happy to announce that the Henry and Sylvia Yaschik Foundation has signed on as our first foundational pillar. Please let us know of other prospects to whom we might apply.

## PILLARS of the SOCIETY (2008)

|                              |                  |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| John and Marcie Baker        | Columbia, SC     |
| Doris Baumgarten             | Aiken, SC        |
| Norman and Eve Berlinsky     | Charleston, SC   |
| Bunny Daitch Bernstein       | Mt. Pleasant, SC |
| Harriette Kraft Ehrlich      | Jacksonville, FL |
| Carolee and Harold Fox       | Charleston, SC   |
| Meri Gergel                  | Columbia, SC     |
| Richard and Belinda Gergel   | Columbia, SC     |
| Dr. Mark and Judith Green    | Charleston, SC   |
| Phillip H. Greenberg         | Florence, SC     |
| Reuben Greenberg             | Charleston, SC   |
| Ann and Max Hellman          | Charleston, SC   |
| Alan and Charlotte Kahn      | Columbia, SC     |
| Michael Kogan                | Little Falls, NJ |
| Susan Lourie                 | Columbia, SC     |
| Frieda and Jack Margolies    | Charleston, SC   |
| Rose Mark                    | Beaufort, SC     |
| Albert and Robin Mercer      | Owensboro, KY    |
| Leon and Karen Ortner        | Charleston, SC   |
| Susan Pearlstine             | Park City, UT    |
| Edward and Sandra Poliakoff  | Columbia, SC     |
| Klyde and Claire Robinson    | Charleston, SC   |
| Benedict and Brenda Rosen    | Myrtle Beach, SC |
| Raymond and Sandra Rosenblum | Charleston, SC   |
| Jeff and Walton Selig        | Columbia, SC     |
| Stuart M. Shamah             | Myrtle Beach, SC |
| Paul and Jayne Siegel        | Walterboro, SC   |
| Ken and Laurie Walden        | Columbia, SC     |
| David Wallace                | Columbia, SC     |
| Anita Zucker                 | Charleston, SC   |

Harvey and Mimi Gleberman, o.b.m.

Anne Oxler Krancer, o.b.m.

Jerry Zucker, o.b.m.

## FOUNDATIONAL PILLAR (2008)

The Henry and Sylvia Yaschik Foundation, Charleston, SC

Yes, I/we want to become a Pillar member of the JHSSC. In doing so, I/we commit to dues of \$5,000 over a period of 5 years.

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Check enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (includes annual membership)

JHSSC Pillars commitment is \$1,000 per year for 5 years.

The Foundational Pillars category is designed for institutions/foundations at a commitment of \$2,000 per year for 5 years.

Go to [www.jhssc.org](http://www.jhssc.org) to become a Pillar.



THE  
**JEWISH  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY**  
OF  
SOUTH CAROLINA

Martin Perlmutter, Executive Director  
Enid Idelsohn, Administrator

**Officers**

Edward Poliakoff, President  
H.J. Brand, Vice-President  
Ann M. Hellman, Vice-President  
Joe Wachter, Vice President  
David J. Cohen, Treasurer  
Lyssa Harvey, Secretary  
Moss Blachman, Archivist

**Founding President**

Isadore Lourie, o.b.m.

**Past Presidents**

Richard Gergel  
Klyde Robinson  
Robert Rosen  
Jeffrey Rosenblum  
Bernard Warshaw  
Belinda Gergel

**Board of Directors**

Susan D. Altman, Charleston  
Gerry Sue Arnold, Columbia  
Rachel G. Barnett, Columbia  
Doris Baumgarten, Aiken  
Eve M. Berlinsky, Charleston  
Sol Breitbart, Charleston  
Leah Chase, Charleston  
Robert Dreyfus, Greenville  
Stanley Farbstein, Charleston  
Carolee Rosen Fox, Charleston  
Ben Goldberg, Charleston  
Phillip H. Greenberg, Florence  
Alan Kahn, Columbia  
Harriet Keyserling, Beaufort  
Michael Kogan, Charleston  
Harold Kornblut, Latta  
Mike Krupsaw, Anderson  
Cynthia Levy, Hilton Head  
Mick Lourie, Columbia  
Elizabeth Moses, Georgetown  
I. Harby Moses, Sumter  
Herbert Novit, Hilton Head  
Karen Ortner, Charleston  
Eli Poliakoff, Charleston  
Arline Polinsky, Columbia  
Mickey Rosenblum, Charleston  
Barbara K. Stender, Charleston

## Join the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

### ANNUAL DUES FOR 2008 (JANUARY–DECEMBER)

|                                                        |         |
|--------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| _____ Individual/Family Membership                     | \$36    |
| _____ Friend                                           | \$200   |
| _____ Sponsor                                          | \$350   |
| _____ Founding Patron                                  | \$1,000 |
| _____ Pillar (\$1,000 yearly for 5 years)              | \$1,000 |
| _____ Foundational Pillar (\$2,000 yearly for 5 years) | \$2,000 |

Join or renew JHSSC online at **www.jhssc.org**.

Enroll your friends and relatives for an additional \$36 each.  
Send us their information and we will inform them of your gift.

**Register now for Jewish Genealogy Workshop**  
**October 25 – 26, 2008, Charleston, SC**  
**See pages 10 – 11 in this issue.**

*Please make checks payable to JHSSC  
and mail to the address below.*

Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program  
96 Wentworth Street  
College of Charleston  
Charleston, SC 29424

NON-PROFIT  
U.S. POSTAGE

P - A - I - D

CHARLESTON, SC  
PERMIT No. 437



Register for the  
Spring Meeting at Hobcaw Barony  
Pages 10 and 11

# THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY of SOUTH CAROLINA

SPRING 2009    VOLUME XIV    -    NUMBER 1





Ed Poliakoff, President

**On the cover:**

Baruch family, ca. 1897.  
Left to right: Isabelle Wolfe,  
Simon, Sailing, Hartwig,  
Annie Griffen, Herman,  
and Bernard Baruch.  
Photo courtesy of Belle W.  
Baruch Foundation



The Jewish Historical  
Society of South Carolina  
Newsletter is published  
twice a year.

Dale Rosengarten, editor  
Joseph Rubin, designer

Staff:  
Alyssa Neely  
Enid Idelsohn  
Ann Hellman

[www.jhssc.org](http://www.jhssc.org)

# In this issue

From the President of the JHSSC . . . . . 3  
*Ed Poliakoff*

Pee Dee Pioneers . . . . . 4  
*In the late 1800s, Jewish immigrants opened businesses in the railroad towns of Dillon and Latta. Their success built a foundation for the next generation's accomplishments and produced individuals of national renown, including Ben Bernanke, current chairman of the Federal Reserve.*  
*Alyssa Neely*

Ties that Bind: The Baruchs of South Carolina . . . . . 6  
*In his 1957 autobiography, Bernard Baruch credits his parents with shaping his character and philosophy. Although the family left Camden for New York in 1881, Bernard's South Carolina ties drew him back to Waccamaw Neck. There he established a winter residence and hunting retreat and entertained dignitaries and celebrities.*  
*Lee Gordon Brockington*

History of Hobcaw . . . . . 9  
*Through the foresight and philanthropy of Bernard's daughter, Belle Baruch, Hobcaw Barony serves today as a center for education and research. Visitors to the 17,500-acre coastal estate just east of Georgetown can take a guided tour by van through this natural and historic treasure.*

JHSSC Meets at Hobcaw, May 3, 2009: Profiles of Speakers and Meeting Schedule . . . . 10

*Yiddishkeit* in Bishopville . . . . . 12  
*A small but vibrant Jewish community, captured in this photo essay, became an integral part of southern society in a town where religious differences posed no boundaries.*  
*Rachael Bowman Bradbury*

Rabbi Burton Padoll and Civil Rights in Charleston . . . . . 16  
*Rabbi Burton Padoll arrived at KKBE in 1961, as the civil rights movement in Charleston was agitating for change. What effect did Padoll have on the community and his congregation?*  
*Solomon Breibart*

Books of Interest . . . . . 18  
*Opening the Covenant:*  
*A Jewish Theology of Christianity – Michael S. Kogan. Review by Adam Parker*  
*The Office Upstairs:*  
*A Doctor's Journey – Charles Banov, MD. Review by Dr. Alan Nussbaum*

Tough Times, More Pillars Needed . . . . . 19  
*Martin Perlmutter, JHSSC Executive Director*



# From the President of the JHSSC

I would like to report on several JHSSC activities that demonstrate the vibrancy of our Society. As South Carolina's largest statewide Jewish organization, we offer members any level of involvement they choose. *Old and new members alike are cordially invited to renew or join now at [www.jhssc.org](http://www.jhssc.org).* I extend thanks to Executive Director Martin Perlmutter, Administrator Enid Idelsohn, and to our executive committee members and committee chairs whose work contributes so much to our success.

**The Society's 2009 spring meeting** will be held on Sunday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> at Hobcaw Barony, a 17,500-acre estate near Georgetown acquired in the early 1900s by Camden native Bernard Mannes Baruch (1870–1965), renowned financier, statesman, and presidential advisor. Read about the Barony and check the weekend meeting schedule elsewhere in these pages, and register now. Thanks to Rachel Barnett, chair of our Program and Conferences Committee, to Dr. Albert Baruch Mercer, who made Hobcaw available to us, and to everyone working with them on this upcoming event.

**Jewish Genealogy: Explore Your Family Tree**, our October 2008 annual meeting, featured two nationally recognized experts on Jewish genealogy, used College of Charleston computer lab facilities for Internet research, and included a lavish reception at the College's Jewish Heritage Collection. Ann Hellman, vice president and chair of our Education and Publications Committee, with assistance from an excellent team, organized an exceptionally productive and entertaining meeting. Ann's committee also manages the JHSSC website, offering at the click of a mouse valuable information about Society events and other South Carolina Jewish institutions, as well as back issues of our superb newsletter.

**Society Vice President Joe Wachter**, chair of our Archives and Historical Sites Committee, solicits member involvement in two projects. The first is an ongoing effort to document Jewish cemeteries across the state; the second seeks to sponsor or co-sponsor state historical markers at sites of Jewish historical interest. So far we have designed a marker for Sumter's Temple Sinai and dedicated a marker at the site of Columbia's first synagogue, the latter co-sponsored by Beth Shalom and Tree of Life congregations.

**JHSSC Pillar Members**, who commit to dues of \$1,000 per year for five years, supply the funding that makes our programs and projects possible. We encourage each of you to consider Pillar membership, and to renew when the five-year commitment is fulfilled. We are grateful for the support provided by these bulwarks of the Society. Please contact me or Vice President Hy Brand about Pillar membership.

The Society's close association with the College of Charleston's **Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program** and the Addlestone Library's **Jewish Heritage Collection** provides access to professional and academic resources at the highest level. Anyone interested in philanthropic naming opportunities at the proposed College of Charleston Center for Southern Jewish Culture should contact Executive Director Martin Perlmutter.

In closing, I invite our members to become involved in JHSSC activities, visit our informative website, and attend our spring meeting at Hobcaw Barony, May 3, 2009.

With warmest regards,



Ed Poliakoff  
[ed.poliakoff@nelsonmullins.com](mailto:ed.poliakoff@nelsonmullins.com)

# Pee Dee Pioneers

by Alyssa Neely

In 1888 the town of Dillon began sprouting up around a railroad depot built amid pine trees on swampy land of little value, not far from the North Carolina border. A number of Jewish immigrants and their families settled in Dillon and neighboring towns such as Little Rock and Latta. Many played important roles in the local community and one achieved success at the national level as an economist. Although Ben Bernanke, current chairman of the Federal Reserve, was born in Augusta, Georgia, he was raised in Dillon. His grandparents Jonas and Pauline Bernanke immigrated to the United States from Austria in the 1920s, moved to Dillon in the early 1940s, and opened a pharmacy, the Jay Bee Drug Company. In 2006, Dillon County and the South Carolina legislature honored Ben by declaring September 1<sup>st</sup> Ben Bernanke Day and presenting him with the Order of the Palmetto, the state's highest civilian award, in recognition of his accomplishments. Ben has come a long way from waiting tables at South of the Border as a college student during his summer vacations.

South of the Border was founded by Little Rock native Alan Schafer in the mid-to-late 1940s, when a North Carolina county bordering South Carolina changed its alcohol licensing laws, limiting sales. Alan seized the opportunity by setting up a beer stand not far from the state line. The acreage he bought



*Lizzie Schafer and Leon Kornblut took over the Latta Dry Goods Company, "leaders in ladies' and gents'" furnishings, soon after their marriage in 1906. Kornblut family papers, Special Collections, College of Charleston.*

was near the north-south highway connecting New York and Miami, later supplanted by Interstate 95. In this ideal location, Alan's beer business expanded exponentially over the years to become South of the Border, employing hundreds of South Carolinians to run the Mexican-themed amusement park rides, hotels, restaurants, and gift shops. Like many Jews who grew up in small southern towns, Alan was a descendant of a merchant of modest means.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Jewish immigrants began to arrive in the Pee Dee region, opening stores in Dillon and nearby towns. Abraham Schafer, Alan's grandfather, may have been the earliest Jew to settle in the area. Born in Oberheim, Germany, Schafer came to Darlington in the 1870s by way of New York and Charleston and worked for the Iseman family, who had sponsored his immigration. He married Isaac Iseman's daughter Rebecca, and they settled in Little Rock where they opened a general store. The family of six lived above the shop. Successful in the dry goods business, Abraham and Rebecca expanded their operation, opening stores in Dillon and Latta. When two of their daughters married, they turned the newest stores over to the newlyweds. Belle Schafer and Isadore Blum ran the Dillon location while Lizzie Schafer and her husband Leon Kornblut took over the Latta Dry Goods Company soon after their marriage in 1906.

A decade earlier, 17-year-old Leon Kornblut had emigrated from Austria and followed his brother to Latta. He partnered with his brother-in-law Isadore Blum during the 1920s. At one time, Blum and Kornblut owned as many as eight stores



*South of the Border in Dillon, founded by Alan Schafer of Little Rock, SC, in the 1940s. Photo by Bill Aron, 2000.*





*Moses Kornblut in front of the department store in Latta established by his father Leon in the 1920s. Photo by Dale Rosengarten, 1995.*

scattered throughout the area, staffed by Jews they hired out of Baltimore. Bankruptcy forced them to close their doors in 1928, however, and the two went their separate ways. Blum opened a store just across the state line in Rowland, North Carolina. Kornblut became a well-established businessman who was actively involved in Dillon County's civic affairs, serving as a director of the Dillon Merchants Association and the Dillon Industrial Corporation. He opened Kornblut's Department Store with "fashions for the entire family" in two locations, Dillon and Latta. His sons, Moses and Sigmond, followed him into the family business and ran both stores when he retired.

Austrian immigrant Morris Fass and his wife, Rosa Nachman of Charleston, moved to Dillon around 1910 and began a small business that over the years grew into the large Fass Department Store. The couple also acquired a significant amount of real estate, including farmland which they rented to tenants. Morris played key roles in the Dillon Chamber of Commerce and Board of Trade. He was an alderman, a Mason, and a charter member of the Dillon Rotary Club. Morris's brother Max also settled in Dillon and opened a store. A Mason and a Shriner, Max made his living in the insurance and real estate business.

Isadore Cohen left Lithuania in 1910 to avoid conscription into the Russian army. His brother Harry, who had ventured south peddling, urged Isadore to make his way to South Carolina, insisting he could make a decent living. The five dollars he sent took Isadore as far as Dillon, where he peddled before taking a job with one of the Blums in Latta. At some

point, he opened his own small store with credit extended by the Baltimore Bargain House. Cohen's clothing store, which catered to local tenant farmers, thrived and the business grew. Discharged from the military at the end of World War II, his son Leonard joined him and kept the store running until 1987, when I. Cohen's closed its doors for the last time. Leonard's children, who had professional careers that took them away from home, were not poised to take over the family business, and competition from the large chain stores had become fierce.



*Interior of the I. Cohen store in Latta, ca. 1930. Isadore's son Leonard is sitting on the counter. Courtesy of Leonard and Mildred Cohen.*

By the 1990s, Dillon and Latta's Jewish population had dwindled to a fraction of what it once was, yet Jews have made a lasting mark on the region. Moses Kornblut served as a Latta City Council member for nearly 50 years. In 1993, the Latta Rotary Club honored him by naming him Citizen of the Year. Kornblut was also active as president, treasurer, and secretary of Ohav Shalom in Dillon. A devoted member of the congregation, he filled other roles as well, including lay reader and organizer of High Holy Day services. He was also a founding member and president of the Dillon B'nai B'rith Lodge. Moses Kornblut passed away on January 10, 2009. Up to the end, he continued to sit on City Council, serve as Latta's Mayor Pro Tem, and operate Kornblut's Department Store, the last Jewish-owned shop in the area.

### ISJL Digital Archive

*Drawn from material in the College of Charleston's Jewish Heritage Collection, illustrated histories of several South Carolina Jewish communities have recently been added to the Digital Archive of the Institute of Southern Jewish Life, based in Jackson, Mississippi. Go to [www.isjl.org/history/archive](http://www.isjl.org/history/archive) and click on SC. Please send comments and corrections to [neelya@cofc.edu](mailto:neelya@cofc.edu). We are especially interested in finding photographs of Jewish-owned stores, family events, congregational activities, and streetscapes in these South Carolina communities.*

# Ties that Bind: The Baruchs of South Carolina

by Lee Gordon Brockington

In writing his autobiography in 1957, Bernard Mannes Baruch created a narrative that began with the Reconstruction era and extended past the splitting of the atom. Baruch detailed his life of public service as a presidential advisor on economics, war policy, and mobilization of industry. His memoir emphasizes his formative years and the influences of his father, Dr. Simon Baruch, and his mother, Isabelle Wolfe Baruch. In the preface to *Baruch: My Own Story*, Bernard wrote, “None of us ever really outgrows his or her childhood. How we meet the problems of adult life usually does not differ greatly from how we met the problems of growing up.” Reaching beyond his own boyhood, he cited the early years of both his father and mother, who shaped the character of their son, the “Park Bench Statesman.”



*In a classic public relations pose, Bernard Baruch was often seen on a bench in Lafayette Park across the White House in Washington, DC and in Central Park, NY. His nickname was “Park Bench Statesman” and his cocker spaniel was “Pat.”*



*Dr. Simon Baruch holds his first grandchild, Isabel “Belle” Wilcox Baruch, Bernard and Annie Baruch’s daughter born on August 16, 1899. She was named for her paternal grandmother, Isabelle, and her mother’s grandfather, W. J. Wilcox.*

Simon Baruch was born in 1840 in Prussia, “whose standing army was larger than that of France or Britain. Many Jewish men became cannon fodder in a Hohenzollern army,” according to an article by historian Tom Horton. Simon slipped away from the village of Schwersenz, near Posen, and left Hamburg on a sailing bark bound for America in 1855. Upon his arrival in Charleston, Simon made his way to Camden where his sponsor, Mannes Baum, operated a store, and Simon started work as a bookkeeper. His interest in medicine led him to enter the



South Carolina Medical College and continue his studies at the Medical College of Virginia, graduating in 1862. Although he had immigrated to the United States to avoid conscription, Simon enlisted in the Confederate Army, citing allegiance to his adopted state. He became assistant surgeon in the Third Battalion, SC Infantry, Kershaw's Brigade, and a part of Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. On the battlefield, Simon Baruch treated both Confederate and Union soldiers. Twice he was a prisoner of war, after Antietam and at Gettysburg. During surgeries at field hospitals, he surprised fellow doctors by taking time to sterilize his instruments between amputations, and while imprisoned, he wrote a paper on how best to treat bayonet wounds, research that remained current through World War I.

Establishing a country practice in Camden after the Civil War, Simon Baruch married Isabelle Wolfe of Winnsboro, the daughter of a ruined cotton planter in Fairfield County. Together, they had four boys who enjoyed rural boyhoods while their parents witnessed Reconstruction era violence, political and social upheaval, and racial bitterness. In 1881, Simon and Belle moved the family to New York City and enrolled their sons in public school. Simon campaigned for better health, sanitation, and sewage treatment practices, established the first public baths for the poor, and pioneered surgery for appendicitis. In an address before the New York Academy of Medicine in 1889, Dr. A. J. Wyeth declared, "the profession [of medicine] and humanity owe more to Dr. Baruch than to any other individual for the development of surgery."

Isabelle Baruch, after the family's move to New York, became deeply involved in the city's civic and social affairs. Still a southern belle, she kept her membership in the United Daughters of the Confederacy and joined the New York Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.



*Left to right: Front row – Hartwig, Isabelle Wolfe, Sailing. Back row – Simon's brother Herman, son Herman, Bernard, and Simon Baruch. Tintype, ca. 1895.*



*Hobcaw House on a bluff facing west above Winyah Bay. The house was rebuilt by Bernard Baruch after a fire destroyed the original residence in 1929. Photo by Lewis Riley, 1975.*



*Belle, Bernard, and Annie Griffen Baruch on a porch of the old plantation house, ca. 1916.*





*The Baruchs vacation in the redwood forests of northern California, 1915. Left to Right: Rear – Annie, Junior, John Jr., Gould, Belle. Front – the driver, Annie's brother, and Bernard Baruch.*

A popular speaker at clubs and organizations, she was interested in Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic charities and helped found what became the Knickerbocker Hospital. “Belle” was brought up in a strictly kosher home and observed Jewish holidays. She worshipped at New York’s West 82<sup>nd</sup> Street Synagogue with Rabbi Frederick Mendes. Her husband was a highly moral person and encouraged the teaching of Judaism and the Bible, but told his son, “I don’t believe there is an avenging God standing over people with a sword.”

At his parents’ urging, Bernard maintained close ties with South Carolina, the land of his forebears. Beginning in 1905, he acquired a 17,500-acre estate on Waccamaw Neck and named it Hobcaw Barony. His mother had asked him particularly to “do something for the Negro,” and he hired 100 slave descendants and provided for their medical, educational, and housing needs. He established scholarships at South Carolina colleges and universities and built hospitals, schools, and auditoriums around the state. Bernard Baruch, who had begun his career as an errand boy in a stock brokerage firm and rose to become a Wall Street financier, gave away millions in his lifetime, a legacy to his parents’ instructions and their life experiences.

Bernard wrote, “The priceless heritage which America has given us—the heritage which is America—is this opportunity of being able to better oneself through one’s own striving. No form of government can give a person more than that. And as long as that heritage remains ours, we will continue our progress toward better religious and racial understanding as more and more, each of us comes to be recognized for his or her own worth.”



*Belle Baruch holds three champions of world-class hunter-jumper competitions. Souriant III is in the center with full blaze. Belle moved her horses from France to America just before Sudetenland succumbed to Nazi intimidation.*



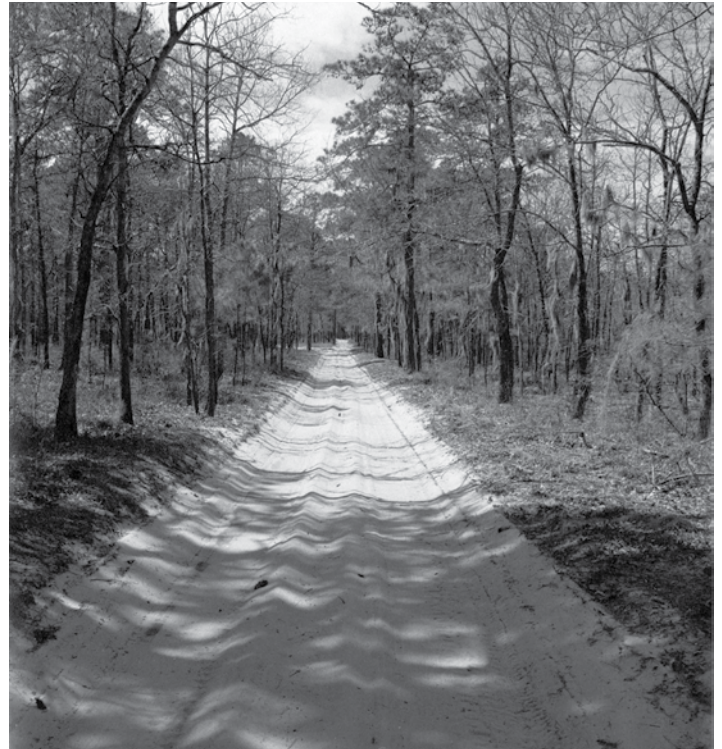
## A History of Hobcaw Barony

**H**obcaw Barony, a 17,500 acre research reserve, occupies a sparsely developed tract of land on Waccamaw Neck. Native Americans called the Neck “hobcaw,” meaning “between the waters,” because it is bordered by the Waccamaw River, Winyah Bay, and Atlantic Ocean. In 1718, Lord Carteret, one of the eight Lords Proprietors of the Carolina colony, claimed 12,000 acres—later resurveyed and discovered to be 13,970 acres—that became known as Hobcaw Barony. Sold and subdivided into plantations extending from the river to the sea, Hobcaw Barony remained part of the rice-growing empire of the South Carolina Lowcountry until the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In 1905, Wall Street financier and native of Camden, South Carolina, Bernard Mannes Baruch began acquiring land that once was part of the original barony. He pieced together the current property from 11 old plantations, and renamed his winter residence and hunting retreat Hobcaw Barony. There, during the 1930s and '40s, he and his daughter Belle Wilcox Baruch entertained such dignitaries as Franklin D. Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, Irving Berlin, Jack London, and Claire Booth Luce.

By 1956, Baruch had conveyed all of Hobcaw to Belle and established his own seat at “Little Hobcaw” near Kingstree, South Carolina. At Belle’s death in 1964, her will created a foundation and trust to own and operate the barony as a teaching venue for colleges and universities. Today the Belle W. Baruch Foundations manages Hobcaw as a center for education and research in forestry, wildlife, and marine science.

Hobcaw’s swamps, abandoned rice fields, pine and



*Plantation Road at Hobcaw Barony. Photo by Lewis Riley, ca. 1975.*

hardwood forests, salt marsh and barrier island environments provide habitat for many animals native to the coastal plain, including hogs and game species such as duck, turkey, deer, quail, and foxes. Historic sites include Hobcaw House, rebuilt in 1930 on a bluff overlooking Winyah Bay; Bellefield House and stables, built in 1936 for Belle Baruch; and Friendfield, a 19<sup>th</sup>-century slave village inhabited until 1952.

### Directions

*Hobcaw is a right turn off of US Highway 17 North, one mile east of Georgetown after the bridges.*



### Van Tour

Take a magical trip by van through the diverse eco-systems and historical sites that make up Hobcaw Barony. Historians Lee Brockington and Richard Camlin will narrate the excursion as you traverse forests, fields, swamps, and marshland, and make stops at Bellefield stables, Friendfield village, and Hobcaw House.

To take the 2 1/2 -hour tour, meet the van at 2:30 p.m. on May 2 or 8:30 a.m. on May 3, at the **Hobcaw Barony Discovery Center** (22 Hobcaw Road) at the entrance to Hobcaw on Highway 17 North.



*Belle Baruch bags a turkey at Bellefield, ca. 1936.*

*All Hobcaw Barony and Baruch family photos courtesy of Belle W. Baruch Foundation.*

# JHSSC Meets at Hobcaw Barony

## Profiles of Speakers

**Ed Poliakoff**, master of ceremonies of the spring meeting at Hobcaw, is president of the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina. A partner in Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough, LLP, he chairs the firm's government relations group. Originally from Abbeville, South Carolina, where for 100 years his family ran Poliakoff's Department Store, Ed is a graduate of Harvard College and Georgetown Law School. He and his wife, Sandra Altman Poliakoff, live in Columbia.

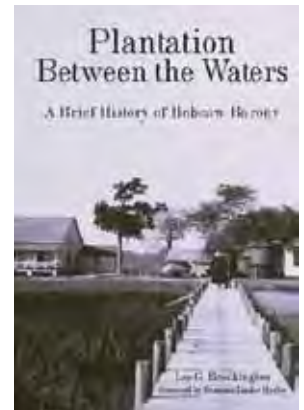


**Dr. Albert Baruch Mercer** is a cardiologist in Owensboro, Kentucky, and a great-grandson of Dr. Simon and Belle Wolfe Baruch. His father and grandfather (Bernard's older brother) were both named after Hartwig Cohen, *hazzan* of Charleston's Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim from 1818 to 1823. On Belle Baruch's side, Dr. Mercer descends from Isaac Rodrigues Marques, a sea captain who was the first Jewish person deeded property on Manhattan Island. Marques's home on Spring Street, near today's Hanover Square in New York City, dates from the late 1600s.

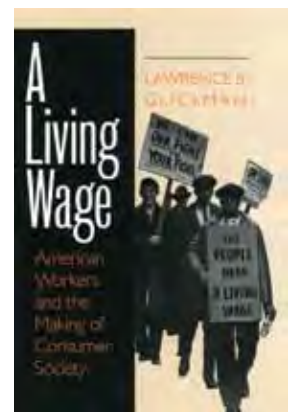
Bert, a trustee of Hobcaw Barony, attended Creighton University and received his medical training at the University of Louisville School of Medicine, Duke University Medical Center, and the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. He and his wife Robin have two children, Nathaniel and Megan.



**Lee G. Brockington** is the senior interpreter for the Belle W. Baruch Foundation at Hobcaw Barony. A graduate of Columbia College and participant in the Seminar of Historical Administration at Colonial Williamsburg, she is a former curator of education at Historic Columbia Foundation. Her research has appeared in newspapers and magazines and she is author or editor of three books, *Pawleys Island: Stories from the Porch* (2003), *Plantation Between the Waters: A Brief History of Hobcaw Barony* (2006), and *Pawleys Island: A Century of History and Photographs* (2008).



**Lawrence B. Glickman** is a professor of history at the University of South Carolina, Columbia, where he has taught since 1992. He earned his undergraduate degree from Princeton University and his doctorate from the University of California, Berkeley. A specialist in labor history, cultural history, and the history of consumer society, he is the author of *A Living Wage: American Workers and the Making of Consumer Society* (1997) and *Buying Power: A History of Consumer Activism in America* (forthcoming in June 2009). His hobbies include distance running and coaching his children in soccer.





# Barony on Sunday, May 3, 2009

## Meeting Schedule

*A 2 ½-hour van tour of the Hobcaw property is available to conference attendees on Saturday afternoon or Sunday morning. Registration required. Space is limited.*

SATURDAY, MAY 2, 2009

2:30 p.m. Pre-conference tour of Hobcaw Barony

SUNDAY, MAY 3, 2009

8:30 a.m. Van tour of Hobcaw Barony

The following activities take place  
in Hobcaw House  
(located four miles from the main entrance)

11:30 a.m. Registration and check-in

12:00 p.m. Greetings and welcome:  
Ed Poliakoff, Albert Baruch Mercer

12:30 p.m. Buffet lunch in the dining room

1:30 p.m. *Baroness of Hobcaw: The Life of Belle Baruch* – Lee G. Brockington, author of *Plantation Between the Waters*

2:30 p.m. *Bernard Baruch and the Transformation of American Liberalism* – Lawrence Glickman, professor of history at the University of South Carolina, Columbia

3:30 p.m. Open JHSSC Board Meeting

### GEORGETOWN HOTEL INFORMATION:

**Hampton Inn – Georgetown**

420 Marina Drive

Georgetown, SC 29440

Phone: 843.545.5000 / Fax: 843.545.5009

Block of rooms reserved for Saturday night, May 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**SPECIAL RATE: \$119/night** available until April 10

**You must make your own reservations.**

(Reservation Code: JHSSC)



*Hobcaw House.*

### JHSSC Spring Meeting at Hobcaw Barony May 3, 2009

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Registration fee: \$30 per person.**

**I am enclosing an additional \$5.00 for each person  
taking the Hobcaw Barony van tour.**

**Please make tour reservation(s) for the  
following name(s):**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# \_\_\_\_\_ people for tour on Saturday, May 2, at 2:30 p.m.

# \_\_\_\_\_ people for tour on Sunday, May 3, at 8:30 a.m.

**Total Amount Enclosed \$** \_\_\_\_\_

**Return form to:**

**JHSSC / Jewish Studies Program**

**96 Wentworth Street**

**Charleston, SC 29424**

**You may also register online at: [www.jhssc.org](http://www.jhssc.org)**

# Yiddishkeyt in

*"The secret to being accepted is this:*



*Jennie Levinson Krasnoff's father was a watch repairman and ran a general store. When Jennie married Meyer Krasnoff, the following announcement ran in the Lee County Vindicator (July 23, 1902): Last Sunday evening at 7:30 o'clock the invited friends and relatives of Mr. Myer [sic] Krasnoff and Miss Jennie Levinson assembled to witness the pretty but solemn Jewish marriage ceremony of the above named young people by the Rabbi from Manning. After the ceremony, an elegant collation was served. The presents were numerous and handsome. Mr. and Mrs. Krasnoff and son from Manning came over to the marriage. The next morning, the bride and groom left for Manning and Charleston for a pleasure trip.*

Bishopville, with a relatively constant population of 3,000, sits at the center of cotton-farming country halfway between Columbia and Florence. In 1927, this dot on the South Carolina map was home to 93 Jewish individuals, earning the town a place on the American Jewish Committee's list of 871 independent Jewish communities in the United States. Bishopville boasted an incorporated congregation and other services to meet the communal needs of resident Jews. The Levensons, Krasnoffs, Levys, Cahns, Slesingers, Steinbergs, Levinsons, Sindlers, Katzes, Traubs, and Ginsbergs, among others, were a strong presence on Main Street. Some Jewish families came and went, especially in the Depression years, while others persevered. In 2008, the Ginsbergs closed the last remaining Jewish-owned retail shop in Bishopville, and by 2009 the Jewish population had dwindled to two.

The patriarchs of many of the town's Jewish families had peddled their way south from Baltimore, a center of Jewish population in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and site of the Baltimore Bargain House, a large wholesaler famous for providing collateral-free credit to greenhorns who wanted to try their luck. It is no surprise that many Jewish merchants who established themselves in Bishopville had arrived at the encouragement of a Baltimore uncle or cousin.

Bishopville offered newcomers a rural landscape reminiscent of the Russian and Lithuanian hamlets of their youth. In the Old Country they had engaged in raising and trading livestock, butchering, and baking, occupations that served them well in Lee County. The new arrivals brought skills that were needed and appreciated and they depended



Frank and Jacob Levenson at Frank's store in Bishopville, ca. 1938. Photo courtesy of Ella Levenson Schlosburg.



The Levensons traded in mules and wagons from the stables at the rear of their general merchandise store, ca. 1930.



# Bishopville

*a photo-essay by Rachael Bowman Bradbury*

*you be what you are and I'll be what I am."*

*—Ella Levenson Schlosburg, 2008*

in turn on the business that farmers and fellow townspeople provided.

The inaugural edition of the *Lee County Vindicator*, published March 14, 1902, contains a comprehensive list of downtown merchants, many described with humorous, stereotypical quips. Of note are four Jewish businesses:

- Hirsch Bros & Co. has a large brick store they occupy built especially for them. However, this is only a branch of the immense store in charge of this branch.
- Mr. A. F. [sic] Krasnoff, an Israelite in whom there is no guile, is a native of Russia, but has been in America eight years and doing business here three years. He is a hustler as will be seen from his card elsewhere.
- Mr. J. Levinson, the jeweler and watch repairer does good work or no pay. He keeps a general merchandise store also and does a thriving business. Read his ad and then call on him.
- Mr. L. Slesinger, a native of Russia and heretofore one of the come and go business men of Bishopville, says he is here to stay the year round. He is a good business man and knows how to turn a dollar to advantage. He deals in Dry Goods, Notions, Clothing, etc.

Mutual respect between Jew and Christian, as well as the immigrants' remarkable adaptability, were key to forging friendships and good business relationships. Though raised in a kosher home, when Frank Levenson paid a visit to a farmer's house and was served ham, he ate the ham and didn't comment. "[My father] liked people," his daughter Ella Schlosburg reports, "and people liked him. I don't know



*Slesinger stables, ca. 1950. One of several Jewish-operated livery stables in Bishopville was owned by Morris Slesinger. A cousin of Frank Levenson, he and Frank were in the livery business together before Frank opened his own store and stables.*



*A moment of camaraderie between brothers Aaron and Leo Krasnoff, ca. 1917. While best known as owner of a liquor store, Leo's early enterprises included the L&S Department Store and a general store on Main Street. Aaron graduated from Bishopville High School in 1922 and died the next year, at age 18, from a ruptured appendix and the ensuing infection.*



*"Uncle" Harrison and Nettie Levenson with one of the Levenson's many dairy cows. The barn for the livestock business was in their backyard and Nettie made cheese, buttermilk, sour cream, and clabber from the abundance of cow and goat milk on hand. "Uncle" Harrison worked for the Levensons at home and in the store and delighted the Levenson children with treats like sugar cane.*



Harry Levinson was among the soldiers taking part in a Passover Seder while stationed with the U.S. Army in Paris, France, during World War I. Harry, born in Manning in 1894 to Russian immigrants, grew up in Bishopville where he worked as a salesman in a family clothing store. After the war, he returned to Bishopville. His bride, Anna Katz of New York, joined him in 1921. Harry and Anna and their two children moved to Fairmont, North Carolina, in 1929, where Harry became a prominent and successful merchant. Photo gift of Irene Levinson Schwartz, Special Collections, College of Charleston.



Frank Levenson (left) and son Sam chat with customers outside Levenson's Main Street store. Frank peddled with his father from Baltimore to Bethune. The elder Levenson died of injuries sustained when he was crushed by his own wagon. Frank chose to stay in Bishopville and, in 1915, married Nettie Cahn of Baltimore, whose brothers Julius and Ellis had been shopkeepers in Bishopville for some years.



Oscar Levy was listed as president of the Bishopville Hebrew Congregation when it was incorporated in 1925. Records of O. Levy keeping shop in Bishopville date as far back as 1902.

what it was, but he just got along with everybody. I mean when you're invited to—when a Jew is invited to join the Ku Klux Klan, you know you get along with everybody.” (Frank, of course, politely declined the invitation.) In Bishopville, amidst an unexpected mix of cultures and traditions, a Jew might provide an extra voice in the Presbyterian choir or a Christian might dance at a bar mitzvah.

Born in Bishopville in 1916, the late Joe F. Stuckey, Jr., vividly remembered friendships cultivated between the town's Jewish and non-Jewish youth. “Since Jewish people did not eat meat that was sold in stores,” he recalled, “one social event of kids my age was to follow the rabbi from yard to yard and watch him with the chicken butcherings. The cow butchering was done on the edge of town at a regular meat establishment.” What might appear on the surface an afternoon of boyish amusement was in reality a first-hand education in Jewish custom.

While not all the Jewish families in town leaned towards Orthodoxy, families who wished to keep kosher were able to do so thanks to the services of Rabbi David



Krasnoff Store ad, Lee County Vindicator, 1:2 (March 28, 1902). It was customary in Krasnoff's general store for the farmers to have charge accounts and pay their bills when the crops came in. Meyer had an old black coal stove to heat the store and the farmers would sit and chat around the fire on winter days. On one occasion during the Great Depression, Meyer reportedly threw his ledgers into the fire and announced, “Let's all start over together.”



Meyer Krasnoff (foreground) and family gather for a picture in front of his Lee Street home, ca. 1917. The seated ladies are Meyer's sister, Fanny, and his wife, Jennie. Also pictured are his brothers, Augustus and Perry Krasnoff, and Morris Yoffee, who became Fanny's husband. The three young men are Meyer and Jennie's sons Leo, Aaron, and Solmie.



Karesh of Columbia and others who were trained as *shoheitim*. In a letter to his friends Frank and Nettie Levenson, postmarked November 24, 1957, Rabbi Karesh wrote: "I have Thursday slaughtered for you a large, good cow. And that reminded me of the times when the Bishopville Jews, in general, were for old, traditional Jewishness. And I was with them an invited guest."

Jews had long been an integral part of life in South Carolina. The Eastern European-ness of the newcomers to Bishopville was likely more alien to the natives than their religious preference. Ruthie Stevenson Bowman, who grew up in Bishopville in the 1940s and '50s, recalls, "I realized there were Jewish people in Bishopville but never gave the difference in religion much thought. I simply regarded them as another denomination."

Unquestionably, small-town Jews made concessions to local custom, such as keeping shops open on Saturdays. Yet in Bishopville, Jewish families were able to maintain a unique sense of community while the friendship provided by their neighbors made southerners out of more than one "Israelite."



Fanny Krasnoff and her sister-in-law, Jennie Levinson (Mrs. A. M.) Krasnoff, ca. 1920.



Opened by Sam Ginsberg in 1929, this Bishopville landmark—the last Jewish-owned business in town—closed its doors in February 2008.



Frances Bass and Arthur Ginsberg fishing for large-mouth bass in Florida, ca. 1950. Photo courtesy of Frances B. Ginsberg.

### About the author

Rachael Bowman Bradbury's maternal ancestors settled near present-day Bishopville in the 1790s. Following the lead of her great-grandfather, Lee County historian Joe Stuckey, she is collecting materials and information for her forthcoming book, *Images of America: Bishopville and Lee County*. She became fascinated by the town's Jewish history when she learned that, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, upwards of 30 Jewish families lived there. To share your Lee County photographs and information, please contact Rachael at: [rachaelbradbury@gmail.com](mailto:rachaelbradbury@gmail.com) or visit <http://bishopvillephotos.wordpress.com>. Unless otherwise noted, all photos courtesy of the author.

# Rabbi Burton Padoll and Civil Rights in Charleston

by Solomon Breibart

An essay by Rabbi Allen Krause, “Charleston Jewry, Black Civil Rights, and Rabbi Burton Padoll,”\* which appeared in the latest issue of *Southern Jewish History*, is attracting intense interest in South Carolina. Part of a larger study of the role southern rabbis played in the civil rights controversy, the article relies heavily upon the holdings of the Jewish Heritage Collection at the College of Charleston, especially its impressive oral history archives, as well as interviews Krause conducted himself.

The essay begins with a brief social history of the Charleston Jewish community that sets the stage on which the drama of the civil rights movement unfolded in South Carolina. “As well integrated and as proud as the Jewish community was,” Krause concludes, “Charleston was not Camelot.” Although Charleston Jews denied that they experienced anti-Semitism, “many spoke of feeling not completely accepted.”

On the issue of civil rights for African-Americans, Jews tended to be moderates, rather than “dyed-in-the-wool segregationists.” Yet, Krause acknowledges that the Jewish community was “nervous about ... what became known as the Charleston Movement” and he proceeds to analyze the movement in some detail.

By the time Rabbi Burton Padoll came to the city in 1961, the lines of struggle between African-Americans and whites were sharply drawn, with the NAACP on one side and the segregationist White Citizens Council on the other. The Supreme Court decision in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* in 1954, in which South Carolina’s Clarendon County played a seminal role, found segregated schools inherently unequal, hence unconstitutional. The decision stirred strong reactions from the whites and resulted in delaying tactics by the State of South Carolina. Not until nine years later did the integration of public schools begin.

When Padoll settled in Charleston as

Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim’s rabbi, he became involved almost immediately in the struggle for civil rights. In fact, he had accepted the pulpit in a southern community because he wanted to make a difference. Before he was hired, he had made clear to the leaders of the congregation his views on civil rights. He was particularly interested in “establishing lines of communication with the black community.” In 1962, with the support of the Jewish Community Relations Council, he attempted to create a biracial committee. City administrators rebuffed the effort, though eventually, after African-American activists raised the stakes by more aggressive tactics—boycotts, marches, sit-ins, and volatile mass meetings—the city did form such a committee.

As integration proceeded gradually in South Carolina and economic and social demands were slowly addressed, Krause reports, Padoll constantly criticized the failure of

the Jewish community and especially his congregation to become active participants in advancing the cause of civil rights for African-Americans. Padoll could not understand how Jews, with their long history of discrimination and persecution, were not motivated to promote civil rights for all.

It is true that a number of KKBE’s members were “not pleased with the causes that their rabbi advocated.” Krause cites one confrontation that occurred between Rabbi Padoll and the leaders of the KKBE Brotherhood who were planning a dinner dance at the segregated Fort Sumter Hotel. The rabbi protested vigorously. When the Brotherhood ignored his pleas, Padoll informed them that he “considered it a personal affront” and refused to attend the affair.

Edwin Pearlstine, Jr., was president of the KKBE Brotherhood at the time; Krause terms him a formidable opponent. To show what Padoll was up against, Krause discusses the Pearlstine family and its place of influence and importance in the community and especially at KKBE, which they supported with generous financial contributions. The article fails to mention,

## Black List

Condon's Department Store  
Belk-Robinson Company  
J. C. Penney Co., Inc.  
Berlin's  
Kerrisons Department Store  
Western Auto Store  
Legerton & Co., Inc.  
Hanover Shoe Store  
Walgreen Drug Store  
Federal Bake Shop  
Haverty Furniture Co.  
Levy's Boys' Store  
The Bandbox  
Southern Furniture Co.  
Rosalee Meyers  
Jack Krawcheck  
Thom McAnn Shoe Store  
Lesser-Tanenbaum  
Richards Men's Wear  
Red & White Food Stores  
Gloria and Riviera Theatres

**DON'T BUY WHERE YOU CAN'T WORK!**

**Stay Out of These Places!!!**

**THE CHARLESTON MOVEMENT**  
N.A.A.C.P.

\* Allen Krause, “Charleston Jewry, Black Civil Rights, and Rabbi Burton Padoll,” in *Southern Jewish History*, Journal of the Southern Jewish Historical Society, vol. 11 (2008), 65–122.

*Charleston NAACP's Black List, ca. 1963, included several Jewish-owned stores. Courtesy of Avery Research Center, College of Charleston.*



however, some leading congregants who allied with Padoll, including Doris Levkoff Meddin. Meddin opened her home on Murray Boulevard to a Padoll study group, whose invited speaker was Father Henry Grant, an African-American minister of the A.M.E. Church.

It became evident that despite the backing of a large majority of the congregation, an influential minority demanded an end to Padoll's tenure at KKBE. The rabbi, disappointed by his failure to move his flock ahead on civil rights and discouraged about the tense atmosphere in the congregation, resigned.

In a letter to the KKBE Board of Trustees, he wrote:

*I am painfully aware of the negative attitudes toward me that exist in the congregation. Although they have not influenced my ultimate decision, with all my heart I wish they were not so.*

*At the same time, I am gratefully aware of the strong positive feelings regarding my ministry which are shared by so many in Beth Elohim ... They, more than anything, have made my decision a difficult one ...*

Krause then seeks to answer the question that spurred his research: what caused Padoll to leave Charleston? With the aid of oral histories, numerous interviews, and an examination of congregational correspondence, he assessed the rabbi's strength and weaknesses. He found general accord, even among Padoll's opponents, about his effectiveness in the pulpit, his stimulating leadership of the religious school, and especially his rapport and influence with the youth of the congregation. On the negative side was his inability to play the game of congregational politics, his refusal to socialize with some congregants, his wife's coldness to members of the congregation, and her evident dislike of living in Charleston. Krause concludes that the reasons Padoll left Charleston were more social than political.

"In every good way," Krause writes, "Padoll was a true reincarnation of his Biblical heroes, men like Amos and Jeremiah. They too would have been forced out of town if they had come to Charleston."

Rabbi Padoll did not realize his goal of rousing his congregation and community to champion the cause of civil rights, which he equated with social justice. However, he did shake many of his congregants from their complacent acceptance of the status quo for African-Americans. He also provoked many to question the role of religion in society and conventional attitudes toward social conditions. This was especially true among the youth, whose reflections Krause quotes in the essay.

Padoll was especially proud of his ability to reach across the color line. In an interview in Charleston in 1999, he recalled his warm relationship with leaders in the black community, his participation with his African-American friends in several sit-ins, and the impact he had in practically forcing a Charleston association of clergy to accept Jews and blacks as members. He remembered, with pride, the visits to South Carolina State and Voorhees College, all-black at that time, to discuss Judaism and social justice with students and professors.

It is sad that Padoll did not live to see the inauguration of the first African-American president of the United States. He would have been elated at the outpouring of enthusiasm and support from people of every race and religion, old and young, rich and poor. In downtown Charleston, at Marion Square, over 500 people gathered on a very cold day to view the inauguration ceremony on a wide screen erected by the city. Rabbi Padoll might well have joined with whites and blacks to say reverently, "Thank God, free at last."



*Natalie and Burton Padoll celebrate the first birthday of son Bill, March 20, 1963. Photo gift of Sheila Padoll, Special Collections, College of Charleston.*



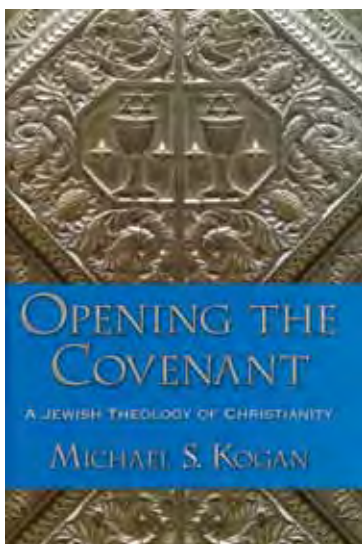
*Solomon Breibart and Rabbi Burton Padoll, Charleston. Photo by Dale Rosengarten, Special Collections, College of Charleston, 1999.*

## Books of Interest

### *Opening the Covenant: A Jewish Theology of Christianity*

by Michael S. Kogan

Review by Adam Parker



Oxford University Press, 2008.  
304 pages, [www.oup.com](http://www.oup.com)

When it comes to Judaism, Christians are caught between a theological rock and a hard place. Is Christ the only way to heaven? Or is God's covenant with the Jews enough to ensure members of this ancient tribe a place in God's kingdom?

It is this dilemma, among others, that Michael S. Kogan boldly confronts in his fascinating hybrid of a book, *Opening the Covenant: A Jewish Theology of Christianity*. Kogan, professor of religious studies and chairman of the department of philosophy and religion at Montclair State University, is a long-time proponent of Jewish-Christian dialogue. His roots in South Carolina run deep and include the Winstocks, who immigrated to Charleston in the 1830s. Twenty years later, they brought over their brother-in-law, Rabbi Hirsch Zvi Levine, who led the minyan that became Brith Sholom. Kogan spends his summers in Charleston lecturing and writing.

In *Opening the Covenant*, Kogan blends rigorous scholarship, advocacy, and personal opinion, with the goal of promoting interfaith understanding. He makes an effort to convince his fellow Jews that it is time to accept Christianity as a sister faith despite all the suffering it caused over the course of two millennia. Christians, he argues, have taken historic steps toward reconciliation, acknowledging, at least to some degree, that Christ's appearance did not invalidate God's distinct and living covenant with the Jews.

The Protestant World Council of Churches meeting in 1948, for example, denounced anti-Semitism as "sin against God and man," and, in 1968, published a statement calling for "rethinking the place of Jews in the history of salvation." The Second Vatican Council (1962–65) issued its Conciliar Declaration *Nostra Aetate* in 1965, effectively rejecting the charge that Jews

were guilty of deicide and affirming the validity of Judaism.

These changes provide a solid basis upon which interfaith dialogue can ensue, Kogan argues. The ball now is in the Jewish court.

"Great progress has been made in the last 40 years—so great, in fact, that we are now prepared to take the next step in mutual understanding. That step must be one in which we truly attempt to see the other as closely as possible to how she sees herself," Kogan writes. Jews can "come to see Christianity as a means of extending their core conceptions into the wider world."

Through Christ, in other words, God has opened his covenant to the Gentiles.

Kogan's thoughtful and controversial interpretations of the sacred texts, bolstered by his scholarly understanding, make for a captivating read, and it would serve all who claim to be interested in interfaith reconciliation to consider the eloquently expressed ideas he offers in *Opening the Covenant*.

© *The Post and Courier*. Revised review reprinted with permission from Faith & Values section, November 9, 2008. For original article, go to: [http://www.charleston.net/news/2008/nov/09/professor\\_calls\\_interfaith\\_dialogue60877/](http://www.charleston.net/news/2008/nov/09/professor_calls_interfaith_dialogue60877/)

### *Office Upstairs: A Doctor's Journey*

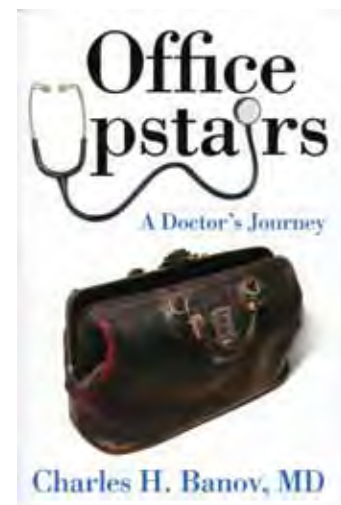
by Charles H. Banov, MD

Review by Dr. Alan Nussbaum

Charles Banov has lived an extraordinary life. His memoir, *Office Upstairs*, provides insight into the experience of being Jewish in Charleston in the 1940s and '50s, the adventures of medical education and practice, and how raising a daughter with special needs led both Dr. Banov and his wife Nancy into years of political and medical advocacy.

Dr. Banov has been a friend and mentor to generations of our family and a model of commitment and leadership in medicine and the Jewish community. Yet reading *Office Upstairs* convinced me that I have known only the "Clark Kent" side of his life. Little did I realize that he frequently slipped into "Superman" mode, having unusual and sometimes crazy adventures like working on a merchant tanker sailing to Venezuela and being captured by pirates, traveling to Soviet-era Russia and drug trade-infested South America in medical liaison groups laced with intelligence agents, delivering volunteer medical care under Third World conditions in Hurricane Hugo-ravaged South Carolina and post-Hurricane Katrina Texas, and training to provide emergency medical back-up to the Israel Defense Forces.

Never in this intimate account does Charles Banov lose the sense of amazement and gratitude for having been able to live his life with joy and humor, and to make such outstanding contributions. Surely, the world is better for his gifts.



History Press, 2007. 192  
pages, 19 images, [www.officeupstairs.thebook.com](http://www.officeupstairs.thebook.com)



# Tough times, more pillars needed

by Martin Perlmutter, JHSSC Executive Director

In difficult economic times, philanthropic giving is one of the first casualties. I know, because just as the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina is hitting its stride, our financial resources are challenged. I am taking this opportunity to appeal for your support, which is more vital today than ever.

Last fall, our Jewish genealogy workshop introduced dozens of participants to exciting resources for researching their family histories. Our cemetery project continues to gather information, document tombstones, and digitize records of South Carolina's Jewish burials. Following Belinda Gergel's initiative, the Society sponsors or co-sponsors the placement of historic markers at sites of Jewish significance across the state.

The Jewish Heritage Collection, which the Society helps to support with Pillar dollars, has undertaken several new projects: cataloguing the extraordinary Rabbi William A. Rosenthal Judaica collection; building a website based on the Holocaust Memorial Quilt; developing curriculum kits for high school teachers with materials collected for the College library's Holocaust Archive; and composing illustrated histories of Jewish communities of South Carolina for the digital archive of the Mississippi-based Institute of Southern Jewish Life.

While our research and publishing engine at the Addlestone Library is humming, the Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program has hired a second full-time faculty member, Adam Mendelsohn, a gifted young scholar who studied with Jonathan Sarna and earned his Ph.D. from Brandeis University. Jewish Studies also has made the Center for Southern Jewish Culture a high priority for future funding, to ensure a permanent academic home for the work of the Society.

With more than 350 family memberships to date for 2009, JHSSC can claim the distinction of being the largest statewide Jewish organization in South Carolina. Our operating budget depends entirely upon your contributions. The Society's Pillars program, since its inception in 2002 during Robert Rosen's presidency, accounts for the bulk of our annual giving. Pillars commit to dues of \$1,000 per year for five years. Until now, enough people have stepped forward each year to underwrite our projects and to keep our membership fees low and our modest endowment intact. We need your help to continue to build an effective grassroots organization driven by an active membership.

Your support has enabled the Society to make incredible progress in its brief 15-year history. Our founding president, Isadore Lourie, o.b.m., would be proud of what his hands have wrought. May we go from strength to strength!

For a list that includes past Pillars, please go to [www.jhssc.org](http://www.jhssc.org).

## PILLARS of the SOCIETY (2009)

|                                |               |    |
|--------------------------------|---------------|----|
| Ellen Arnovitz                 | Atlanta       | GA |
| Doris Baumgarten               | Aiken         | SC |
| Shep Cutler                    | Columbia      | SC |
| Carolee and Harold Fox         | Charleston    | SC |
| Meri Gergel                    | Columbia      | SC |
| Phillip and Patricia Greenberg | Florence      | SC |
| William M. Guggenheim          | Hilton Head   | SC |
| Ann and Max Hellman            | Charleston    | SC |
| Alan and Charlotte Kahn        | Columbia      | SC |
| Susan R. Lourie                | Columbia      | SC |
| Susan Pearlstine               | River Heights | UT |
| Edward and Sandra Poliakoff    | Columbia      | SC |
| Benedict and Brenda Rosen      | Myrtle Beach  | SC |
| Robert and Susan Rosen         | Charleston    | SC |
| Joseph W. and Edith L. Rubin   | Charleston    | SC |
| Jeff and Walton Selig          | Columbia      | SC |
| Anita Zucker                   | Charleston    | SC |

Harvey and Mimi Gleberman, o.b.m.

Anne Oxler Krancer, o.b.m.

Jerry Zucker, o.b.m.

## FOUNDATIONAL PILLAR (2009)

The Henry and Sylvia Yaschik Foundation, Charleston, SC

**Our list is current as of publication. We encourage JHSSC members to join or renew as Pillars. We apologize if there are inadvertent omissions.**

.....

Yes, I/we want to become a Pillar member of the JHSSC. In doing so, I/we commit to dues of \$1,000 per year for five years.

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Check enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (includes annual membership)

JHSSC Pillars' commitment is \$1,000 per year for five years. The Foundational Pillars category is designed for institutions/foundations at a commitment of \$2,000 per year for five years. Go to [www.jhssc.org](http://www.jhssc.org) to become a Pillar.

.....



THE  
JEWISH  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY  
OF  
SOUTH CAROLINA

Martin Perlmutter, Executive Director  
Enid Idelsohn, Administrator

**Officers**

Edward Poliakoff, President  
H.J. Brand, Vice-President  
Ann M. Hellman, Vice-President  
Joe Wachter, Vice President  
David J. Cohen, Treasurer  
Lyssa Harvey, Secretary  
Moss Blachman, Archivist

**Founding President**

Isadore Lourie, o.b.m.

**Past Presidents**

Richard Gergel  
Klyde Robinson  
Robert Rosen  
Jeffrey Rosenblum  
Bernard Warshaw  
Belinda Gergel

**Board of Directors**

Susan D. Altman, Charleston  
Gerry Sue Arnold, Columbia  
Rachel G. Barnett, Columbia  
Doris Baumgarten, Aiken  
Eve M. Berlinsky, Charleston  
Sol Breitbart, Charleston  
Leah Chase, Charleston  
Robert Dreyfus, Greenville  
Stanley Farbstein, Charleston  
Carolee Rosen Fox, Charleston  
Ben Goldberg, Charleston  
Phillip H. Greenberg, Florence  
Alan Kahn, Columbia  
Harriet Keyserling, Beaufort  
Michael Kogan, Charleston  
Harold Kornblut, Latta  
Mike Krupsaw, Anderson  
Cynthia Levy, Hilton Head  
Mick Lourie, Columbia  
Elizabeth Moses, Georgetown  
I. Harby Moses, Sumter  
Herbert Novit, Hilton Head  
Karen Ortner, Charleston  
Eli Poliakoff, Charleston  
Arline Polinsky, Columbia  
Mickey Rosenblum, Charleston  
Barbara K. Stender, Charleston

## Join the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

### ANNUAL DUES FOR 2009 (JANUARY–DECEMBER)

|                                                        |         |
|--------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| _____ Individual/Family Membership                     | \$36    |
| _____ Friend                                           | \$200   |
| _____ Sponsor                                          | \$350   |
| _____ Founding Patron                                  | \$1,000 |
| _____ Pillar (\$1,000 yearly for 5 years)              | \$1,000 |
| _____ Foundational Pillar (\$2,000 yearly for 5 years) | \$2,000 |

Join or renew JHSSC online at [www.jhssc.org](http://www.jhssc.org).

Enroll your friends and relatives for an additional \$36 each.  
Send us their information and we will inform them of your gift.

**Register now for the May 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting at Hobcaw Barony.  
PLEASE REGISTER EARLY.**

**See pages 10 - 11 for more information.**

***Please make checks payable to JHSSC  
and mail to the address below.***

Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina  
96 Wentworth Street  
College of Charleston  
Charleston, SC 29424  
Phone: 843.953.3918  
Email: [jhssc@cofc.edu](mailto:jhssc@cofc.edu)

NON-PROFIT  
U.S. POSTAGE

P - A - I - D

CHARLESTON, SC  
PERMIT No. 485



# THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY of SOUTH CAROLINA

Fall 2009 VOLUME XIV - NUMBER 2

October 23 - 25, 2009

מדור  
לדור

M'dor L'dor

Celebrating 25 years of the  
Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program  
at the College of Charleston





Ed Poliakoff, President

*Jewish Studies' students at the Cistern, Randolph Hall, College of Charleston, Fall 2005.*

*Photo by Loren Bridges.*



The Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina Newsletter is published twice a year.

Dale Rosengarten, editor  
Joseph Rubin, designer

Staff:  
Alyssa Neely  
Enid Idelsohn  
Ann Hellman

[www.jhssc.org](http://www.jhssc.org)

## In this issue

### Charleston Jewry: 320 Years and Counting ..... 4

*Stuart Rockoff, Dale Rosengarten, and Alyssa Neely*

This fast-paced essay surveys the experiences and exploits of Charleston's Jews since the city's founding in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, including the advent of Reform Judaism in the 1820s, a resurgence of Orthodoxy in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and a bright future ahead.

### Jewish Studies at the College of Charleston: A Quarter Century ..... 7

*Martin Perlmutter*

Its successful first quarter century, the product of untiring effort, vision, and generosity, sets the stage for Jewish Studies' next 25 years.

### Featured Speakers at the JHSSC Annual Meeting, October 23 - 25 ..... 9

### Who Is This Bride-To-Be? ..... 9

*Howard Steinmetz*

A reader from Boulder, Colorado, seeks information about a Jewish bride with Charleston connections.

### JHSSC Celebrates the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Jewish Studies Program ..... 10

### Kits Will Put "South Carolina Face" on Holocaust Lessons ..... 13

*Karen Tannenbaum*

Designed as a traveling archives for distribution to middle and high schools across the state, classroom kits will put facsimiles of photographs, letters, documents, and memoirs collected from Holocaust survivors and witnesses in the hands of students.

### The Rise and Fall of Dillon's Ohav Shalom ..... 15

*Alyssa Neely*

Established in Dillon, South Carolina, by Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the congregation that became known as Ohav Shalom succumbed in 1993 to a fate shared by other small-town Jewish communities across America.

### All in the Family ..... 16

*Judith Alexander Weil Shanks*

In this review of *An American Experience* by John L. Loeb, Jr., *Ordinary Jews in an Extraordinary Land*, by Larry Freudenberg, and her own family history website, the author explores the roots and branches of some of America's first Jewish families.

### May Their Memory Be a Blessing ..... 17

Saying good-bye to two pillars of Charleston Jewish life: Harold Jacobs and Carolee Rosen Fox.

### Center Talk ..... 18

*Adam Mendelsohn*

A new Center for Southern Jewish Culture at the College of Charleston attracts a star-studded academic council.

### Become a Pillar: Help Our Past Inform Our Future ..... 19

*Martin Perlmutter*



# From the President of the JHSSC

As my two-year term as president comes to an end, I am proud to report on what the Society has achieved in the recent past and what we can look forward to in the future. Thanks to the dedication of Executive Director Martin Perlmutter, Administrator Enid Idelsohn, the JHSSC Executive Committee, and our members, we are successfully fulfilling our mission—to promote "the study and preservation of the history and culture of the Jews of South Carolina."

Last year's annual meeting, entitled "Jewish Genealogy: Explore Your Family Tree," featured talks by two experts on Jewish genealogy and hands-on practice in Internet research using College of Charleston computer facilities. In May 2009, at the Society's spring meeting at Hobcaw Barony near Georgetown, an overflow crowd listened to superb presentations on the legacy of Bernard M. Baruch and enjoyed a delicious buffet lunch and majestic views of Winyah Bay. Our thanks to Dr. Albert Baruch Mercer who arranged access to this unique historical site.

The upcoming 2009 annual meeting promises to be a landmark event as we join the College's Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program in celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary and mark the Society's 15<sup>th</sup> birthday as well. The schedule for the meeting is detailed elsewhere in these pages. Please register now and encourage all friends of JHSSC to attend. The nominating committee will present an outstanding slate of officers for election. Please see the adjacent inset.

Vice-President Ann Hellman, who chairs our Education and Publications Committee, and Vice-President Joe Wachter, head of our Archives and Historical Sites Committee, are spearheading the Society's ongoing efforts to document South Carolina's Jewish cemeteries. The Society has undertaken a program to sponsor or co-sponsor historical markers at sites of Jewish interest across the state. I recently had the honor of representing JHSSC at the unveiling of a marker at Sumter's Temple Sinai. Last



*Sumter's Temple Sinai dedicated its new JHSSC-sponsored marker in a ceremony held at the temple on May 22, 2009. Photo by Max B. Hellman.*

year JHSSC co-sponsored a marker at the site of Columbia's first Jewish religious school. Society members are urged to suggest additional candidates for recognition, using the nomination form that can be found at [www.jhssc.org](http://www.jhssc.org).

On behalf of my fellow officers, I extend thanks to everyone who has served on our board in the past and a warm welcome to our new class of board members. All members are invited to participate at the level of activity that suits them best. We are especially grateful to our Pillars—stalwart supporters who commit to dues of \$1,000 per year for five years—as their contributions provide much of the funding that makes our programs and projects possible. We encourage everyone who can to become a Pillar and ask current Pillars to renew when their five-year commitment is fulfilled.

We endeavor to be careful stewards of JHSSC funds. Last year our income exceeded expenses and we hope at least to break even for 2009.

I hope to see you in Charleston for a gala celebration, October 23–25.

With warmest regards,

Ed Poliakoff

[ed.poliakoff@nelsonmullins.com](mailto:ed.poliakoff@nelsonmullins.com)

## Proposed Slate of Officers for 2009–2011

President: Ann Meddin Hellman  
 V. P., Fundraising and Membership: Phillip H. Greenberg  
 V. P., Education and Publications: Susan D. Altman  
 V. P., Archives and Historical Sites: Joe Wachter  
 Treasurer: David J. Cohen  
 Secretary: Rachel G. Barnett  
 Archivist: Moss Blachman





### Civil Wars in Charleston: 1821–1865

In 1824, Charleston produced the first home-grown movement to reform Judaism in America. It was led by young, native-born Jews who believed that if Judaism did not change, it would not survive under the conditions of unprecedented freedom they enjoyed. To combat the “apathy and neglect” they saw afflicting Jewish youth, Isaac Harby and 46 others submitted a petition to Beth Elohim’s leadership calling for a style of worship more like that of their gentile neighbors, with shorter services, a more decorous system of offerings, and a sermon on the Sabbath preached in English.

When the adjuncta, or board of trustees, dismissed their plea, 12 petitioners, led by Harby, Abraham Moïse, and David Nunes Carvalho, broke from Beth Elohim and formed The Reformed Society of Israelites. They compiled their own “reformed” prayer book, the first of its kind in America, and made plans to build a sanctuary. By 1833, however, five years after Harby’s untimely death, the movement had lost some its steam; most of the reformers rejoined Beth Elohim, where they would work for change from within.

In 1836, Abraham Moïse, Jr., helped draft Beth Elohim’s new constitution, and two years later, following the model of Rebecca Gratz in Philadelphia, the congregation established a religious school. That same year, in April 1838, the synagogue was destroyed by fire. During rebuilding, a fierce debate over the installation of an organ led to a second split. In 1840, 40 traditionalists formed a new congregation, Shearit Israel, and seven years later built their own synagogue.

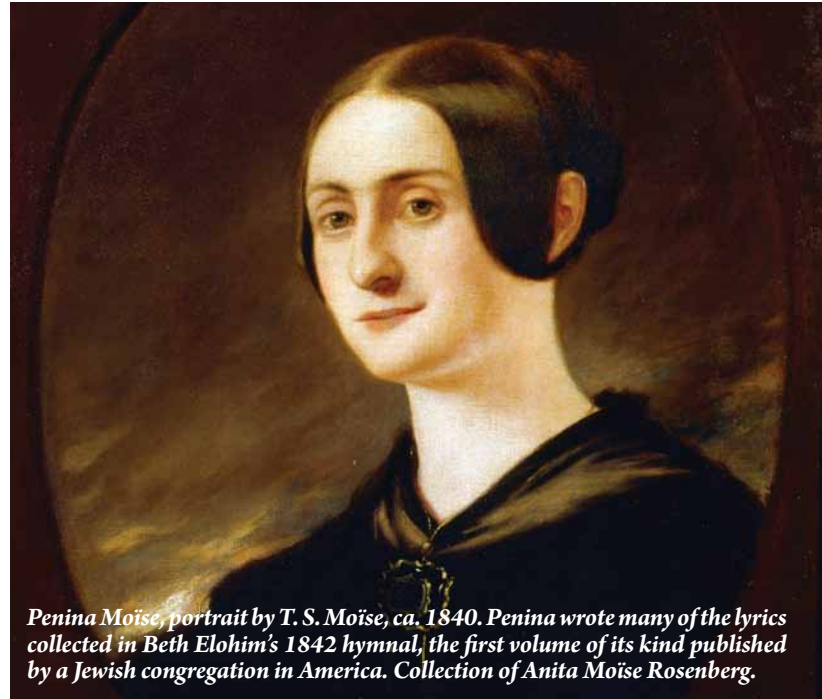
By 1852, a group of German and Polish immigrants, led by the Lithuanian-born Hirsch Zvi Margolis Levine, had



**Rabbi Hirsch Levine (1807–1887), wearing tallit and tefillin. Courtesy of Carol Kaminsky.**

begun meeting for prayer. Two years later they formed their own congregation, Berith Shalome (now Brith Sholom), which held services using the traditional Polish rite in a small building on St. Philip Street rented from John L. Francis, a free person of color.

Charleston’s Jews owned slaves in the same proportions as their Christian counterparts—according to historian James Hagy, in 1830, 83 percent of Jewish households in Charleston owned at least one slave—



**Penina Moïse, portrait by T. S. Moïse, ca. 1840. Penina wrote many of the lyrics collected in Beth Elohim’s 1842 hymnal, the first volume of its kind published by a Jewish congregation in America. Collection of Anita Moïse Rosenberg.**

and when the time came to fight, they joined the Confederacy in numbers greater than their share of the population.

### Charleston’s Jewish Community: 1865–1900

The Civil War’s toll on Beth Elohim and Shearit Israel led the two groups to merge. In 1866 they negotiated a compromise on issues regarding leadership, rites, and rituals. A handful of members left the congregation, but most bowed to necessity and turned their attention to getting back on their feet.

By 1867, almost one-third of the city’s 50 dry goods stores and half of the 20 clothing businesses were owned by Jews. Among the most successful, Hornik’s Bargain House opened in 1886 as a small wholesale business. By 1901, it had grown to fill a four-story building and sent out 40,000 catalogs to its mail-order customers.

Meanwhile, Charleston’s “downtown Jews”—typically members of old families of German ancestry—embraced Reform Judaism fully. In 1872, Beth Elohim bought an organ to replace the one lost in the Civil War and, a year later, joined Isaac Mayer Wise’s new Union of American Hebrew Congregations. By 1879, the congregation had gotten rid of its shohet and instituted “family pews,” where men and women sat together.

Dissatisfied with the laxity of other congregants, members of Brith Sholom who practiced strict Orthodoxy formed their own congregation, Shari Emouna, in 1886. Eleven years later, for reasons lost to history, the two groups decided to reunite. Conflicts over the degree of observance remained a thorny issue and after two decades Brith Sholom split again.



*Elihu Mazo's grocery, 478 King Street, Charleston, S.C., ca 1925.  
Photo courtesy of Harriet Spanier.*

### **New Waves of Immigrants: 1900–1945**

Between 1900 and 1920, the number of Jews in South Carolina doubled from 2,500 to 5,000. Like those who had come in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, these new arrivals from Eastern Europe started as peddlers and often ended up owning small retail stores along King Street, north of Calhoun. Followers of Orthodox Judaism, most “uptown Jews” kept their stores closed on Saturday. Catering to the city’s African-American population, they were more likely to offer black customers credit and to allow them to try on merchandise than were other white merchants. In 1911, a group of strict Sabbath observers, including many recent immigrants, split from Brith Sholom to form Beth Israel.

Zionism attracted a small but dedicated following in Charleston. The city’s first Zionist organization, the B’nei Zion Society, was founded some time before 1917. Joseph Goldman was the longtime leader of the group. Zionism in Charleston was not exclusively an Orthodox immigrant cause. Breaking with other Reform rabbis, Jacob Raisin of Beth Elohim was an ardent supporter and, with official permission from the trustees, attended the World Zionist Congress in 1932. His wife Jane had helped to found a Charleston chapter of Hadassah in 1914.

### **Charleston Jews since World War II: 1945–present**

By 1948, three quarters of Charleston Jews were American-born. Among the newcomers were GIs from the Northeast who had been stationed at one of South Carolina’s many military bases and refugees from Hitler’s war. Jews were still heavily concentrated in small enterprise, with 53 percent of household heads either owning or managing a business. Only 12 percent were professionals, while 7 percent were skilled laborers. The most common Jewish-owned businesses were clothing, grocery, furniture, and liquor stores. A few Jewish families were engaged in manufacturing such items as undergarments, ties, and mattresses. Two kosher butcher shops and several kosher delis operated in the city.

A majority of Charleston Jewish families—58 percent—identified as Orthodox. Beth Israel had 240 members in 1948, when they built a new synagogue on Rutledge Avenue. Brith Sholom had 280 members. The city’s Reform congregation, Beth Elohim, also remained strong, with 270 member families.

Even before World War II, some members of Brith Sholom were pushing for change. As elsewhere in the United States, the Conservative movement took hold in Charleston as urban residents abandoned their old neighborhoods and moved to the suburbs. They wanted to drive to shul on the Sabbath—prohibited by Jewish law—and to sit next to their wives in synagogue.

In 1947 the drive for change failed narrowly in a congregational vote. Almost half of Brith Sholom’s membership and much of the leadership walked out and formed a new Conservative congregation, Emanu-El. This split left the 100-year-old “Big Shul” greatly weakened. By contrast, Beth Israel—the “Little Shul,” or “Kaluzsyner Shul”—was thriving. It had hired its first full-time rabbi in 1945 and, soon after, moved into its new synagogue, with room to grow.

After years of negotiations made difficult by past disagreements, the two Orthodox congregations agreed in 1954 to merge as Brith Sholom Beth Israel. They decided to use Beth Israel’s sanctuary, and in a public ceremony, members of Brith Sholom carried their Torahs to the new BSBI. In 1955, the congregation hired Rabbi Nachum Rabinovitch. A tireless builder, Rabinovitch established the Charleston Hebrew Institute in 1956, which, in 1976, became Addlestone Hebrew Academy.

William Ackerman, a prominent Pennsylvania-born lawyer, helped lead Charleston into the suburban era, developing the first shopping mall and housing subdivision west of the Ashley River. As Jews moved to South Windermere, their institutions crossed the river with them. In 1959, the Jewish Community Center bought land west of the Ashley and seven years later completed a new facility. Following its membership, Emanu-El moved west to the suburbs in 1979.

Charleston’s changing Jewish geography has raised serious challenges for BSBI, with one faction, including many of the congregation’s old-timers, committed to keeping the synagogue downtown, while two Orthodox minyanim meet across the river. In the meantime, Beth Elohim’s membership has grown significantly, from 285 families in 1992 to 461 in 2008, and Emanu-El has experienced a modest increase.

*For an in-depth study of Charleston’s Jewish history, go to Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities at The Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life, [www.isjl.org](http://www.isjl.org).*



# Jewish Studies at the College of Charleston: The First Quarter Century

*by Martin Perlmutter*

Jewish Studies has come a long way in its 25 years. The program has developed a full-fledged Jewish Studies curriculum, with ten courses offered each semester, hired three full-time Jewish Studies faculty, and sponsors the **Arnold Visiting Chair in Jewish Studies** and a line-up of community outreach activities unmatched by any Jewish Studies program its size in the country. A vibrant **Jewish Student Union/Hillel**, **AEPi**, and **SDT** serve more than 700 Jewish students, while the **Sylvia Vlosky Yaschik Jewish Studies Center** has become a favorite destination for dinners, study sessions, and camaraderie.

Not everything was the result of careful planning. Happily some things just turn out right. Three major turning points come to mind.

- In 1984, **Henry Yaschik** wanted to make a gift to the **College of Charleston** to honor his father, Nathan, who had left Henry a small bequest many years earlier. **Nathan Yaschik** was an immigrant from Kaluszyn, Poland, and a Yiddishist with secular Jewish values, to the left politically, and connected primarily to Yiddish culture, as was common among many Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe. Henry was determined to establish a Yiddish-language program but was persuaded to go in a different direction. The foundation of a full-fledged Jewish Studies Program was the result.
- In the late 1990s, Jewish Studies needed additional



## Jewish Studies Timeline at a Glance

**1984:** Henry and Sylvia Yaschik make initial pledge to the College of Charleston to develop the Jewish Studies Program.

**1986:** Stuart Knee (r) becomes Director of Jewish Studies, following Martin Perlmutter (l), and David Cohen, each of whom served one-year interim appointments. An academic minor in Jewish Studies is developed.



**1992:** Martin Perlmutter succeeds Stuart Knee as the Program Director.

**1992:** African American – Jewish Connection begins at the College and culminates with Operation Understanding.

**1994:** Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina is founded under the leadership of Senator Isadore Lourie and with the help of CofC President (and former state senator) Alexander Sanders.



**1995:** Jewish Heritage Collection is launched at the College of Charleston Library, with Dale Rosengarten as Curator. Jewish Studies Advisory Board is established.



**1996:** Three-Rabbi Panel initiated as a regular event each semester with Rabbis Edward Friedman (Emanu-El), Anthony Holz (KKBE), and David Radinsky (BSBI) discussing topical Jewish issues.

space, since the entire operation was housed in one faculty office in the Philosophy Department. We learned that Dry Clean USA at 96 Wentworth, formerly **Peroclene Cleaners** owned by **Jerold and Lilah Hirschman**, was becoming available. Grace Episcopal Church had an option to purchase the property, but passed on it because of other priorities. **Alex Sanders**, then College president, made it available to Jewish Studies with the stipulation that we raise the funds privately to buy the property and build the building. **Terry Fisher, Rosenblum-Coe Architects**, and **M. B. Kahn Construction** all worked hard to make it happen. Jerold and Lilah's children, the **Rivkins** and the **Hirschmans**, were delighted to have the family property put to such good use. The **Sylvia Vlosky Yaschik Jewish Studies Center** was ready for occupancy for the 2002–2003 academic year.

- Jewish Studies created a **Strategic Planning Committee** in 2003 to chart its future. With input from **Jerry Zucker, Mark Tanenbaum**, and **Tom Ervin**, CofC President **Leo Higdon** decided to assign two permanent lines to Jewish Studies. These two positions are now occupied by **Joshua Shanes** and **Adam Mendelsohn**, who have immeasurably broadened and deepened our Jewish Studies curriculum offerings.

The Jewish blessing for milestones is appropriate. We are thankful to have reached this point and we intend to plan carefully and work hard for the next 25 years, in the hope that the constellation—our mazal—continues to shine its bright light upon us all.



**1997:** JSP's first Elderhostel in South Carolina Jewish history becomes an annual tradition—a week's worth of activities organized each May.

**1997:** Sunday Morning Brunches begin in the Stern Center Ballroom, dishing up bagels, lox, and talks by eminent speakers on a wide range of subjects.



**1998:** JSP renamed the Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program, acknowledging a generous gift from Norman and Gerry Sue Arnold. Jerry Zucker's pledge of a matching gift completes the Program's first \$1 million campaign.

**1998:** The first annual World of Jewish Culture at Piccolo Spoleto, organized with help from the City's Office of Cultural Affairs, celebrates Israel's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday.



**2002:** Sylvia Vlosky Yaschik Jewish Studies Center opens at 96 Wentworth Street. Enid Idelsohn is hired as Program Administrator.



**2003:** Two academic positions are awarded to Jewish Studies. The Program is designated a "Center of Excellence" at the College of Charleston.

**2004:** Graduating seniors are hired as interns to help with JSU/Hillel. Kimberly Richey, Mary Karesh, Jeffrey Silverberg, and Maxine Bier occupy the post in successive years. Marsha Alterman becomes JSU/Hillel Advisor. Weekly Shabbat dinners introduced at Arnold Hall.



**2006:** Joshua Shanes hired as first full-time professor of Jewish Studies. The program officially becomes an academic department. First "Chanukah in the Square" at Marion Square.

**2008:** Adam Mendelsohn hired as second full-time professor of Jewish Studies. Hebrew instruction becomes part of the Jewish Studies Department and third-year Hebrew becomes a regular curriculum offering.





## Featured Speakers: JHSSC Annual Meeting, October 23 - 25, 2009

**Jeremy Dauber**, Atran Associate Professor of Yiddish Language, Literature, and Culture at Columbia University and Director of Columbia's Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies, is the author of *Antonio's Devils: Writers of the Jewish Enlightenment* and *The Birth of Modern Hebrew and Yiddish Literature* and co-editor of *Landmark Yiddish Plays: A Critical Anthology* (with Joel Berkowitz). He is an editor of *Prooftexts: A Journal of Jewish Literary History* and lectures widely on Jewish and popular culture. Dauber studied with Ruth Wisse at Harvard University. He is the grandson of Judith and the late Melvin Solomon.

**Adam Mendelsohn** received his Ph.D. in American Jewish history from Brandeis University in May 2008 and spent the past academic year as a fellow at the Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. Born and raised in South Africa, Adam originally became interested in American Jewish history at the University of Cape Town. Mendelsohn's research focuses on English-speaking Jewish communities in the United States and the British Empire over the past 200 years. He is a board member of the Southern Jewish Historical Society and edits its newsletter, *The Rambler*.

**Martin Perlmutter** (B.A. City College of New York, Ph.D. University of Illinois), Professor of Philosophy, came to the College of Charleston in 1979 after appointments at the University of Texas at Austin and the University of Tennessee in Nashville. He chaired the College's Philosophy Department for eight years and, in 1991, became director of the Yaschik/Arnold Program in Jewish Studies. His teaching interests include the philosophy of religion, medical ethics, and Jewish thought.

**Theodore Rosengarten** received his B.A. from Amherst College and Ph.D. in the History of American Civilization from Harvard University. While his primary field of research and writing is African-American history, he has been a student of the Holocaust for more than 50 years and teaches courses on the subject at the College of Charleston and the Honors College at the University of South Carolina. He also directs workshops for middle and high school teachers and leads semi-annual study-abroad trips to Poland and Germany.

**Joshua Shanes** received his B.A. from the University of Illinois in 1993, his Ph.D. in History from the University of Wisconsin in 2002, and spent time in between studying in Israel. Professor Shanes's research interests focus on Central and East European Jewry in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, specifically turn-of-the-century Galicia and the rise of Zionism as a counter-movement to the traditional Jewish establishment.

### Howard Steinmetz of Boulder, Colorado, asks...

#### Who Is This Bride-To-Be?

Can you identify the woman, second from the left, who is wearing the traditional engagement belt? She is believed to have emigrated in the World War I era from Poland to Charleston to marry a furniture merchant. The photo was taken in Poughkeepsie, NY, ca. 1920, on the occasion of a visit with relatives from the Old Country, before catching the train to Charleston. Howard is able to identify his mother, Eva Labensky (right), her siblings Mary (left) and Benjamin (center), and his grandmother, Rivka née Zutz (Sachs) Labensky (behind Benjamin). The future bride may have been related to Rivka's maternal family, the Belitzkys. When Eva married in 1931, two Charleston names appeared on her invitation list: W. Feldman and a member of the Gelson family.



# JHSSC Celebrates the Jewish Studies

## FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23

- 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM **Registration**  
**Sylvia Vlosky Yaschik Jewish Studies Center**  
96 Wentworth Street
- 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM **Hospitality in Arnold Hall, Jewish Studies Center**
- 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM **Walking Tour of Charleston Jewish Sites**  
(space limited, pre-registration required)  
Leaves from Jewish Studies Center
- 1:00 PM – 1:45 PM **Class Sampler—Zionism: Ancient Dream or Modern Revolution**  
**Joshua Shanes**, College of Charleston  
Arnold Hall
- 2:00 PM – 2:45 PM **Class Sampler—Teaching the Holocaust**  
**Theodore Rosengarten**, College of Charleston  
Arnold Hall
- 3:00 PM – 3:45 PM **Class Sampler—Ecclesiastes: A Biblical Skeptic**  
**Martin Perlmutter**, College of Charleston  
Arnold Hall
- 5:30 PM – 6:00 PM **Shabbat Services**  
**Host: JSU/Hillel**  
Stern Center, Room 409
- 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM **Shabbat Dinner**  
**Host: JSU/Hillel**  
Stern Center Ballroom
- 8:00 PM – 9:30 PM ***The Have Nots* (Improvisation Group)**  
Stern Center Ballroom
- 10:00 PM – Last Call **Jewish Studies Alumni Reunion Bar Crawl**  
An Informal Gathering for JSU/Hillel Alumni

## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24

- 8:00 AM – 10:00 AM **"Walk the Bridge"**  
**Hosted by: JSU/Hillel Parent Network**  
Cooper River Bridge
- 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM **Hospitality in Arnold Hall**
- 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM **AEPi Cookout (Members and Alumni)**  
**Host: Alpha Epsilon Pi, Chi Omicron chapter**  
103 Wentworth Street
- 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM **SDT Cookout (Members and Alumnae)**  
**Host: Sigma Delta Tau, Delta Eta chapter**  
15 St. Philip Street



# Jewish Studies Program's 25th Anniversary



## SPECIAL SATURDAY EVENTS HOSTED BY THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

- |                    |                                                                                                                                                                              |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 9:00 AM – 11:45 PM | <b>Special Collections Open House</b><br>Addlestone Library, Third Floor                                                                                                     |
| 12:00 PM – 1:15 PM | <b>Lunch</b><br>Stern Center Ballroom                                                                                                                                        |
| 1:30 PM – 2:30 PM  | <i>Shmatas in the South: Jews and the International<br/>Old Clothes Trade Before the Civil War</i><br><b>Adam Mendelsohn, College of Charleston</b><br>Stern Center Ballroom |
| 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM  | <b>Parent Network Meeting</b><br><b>Host: JSU/Hillel Parent Network</b><br>Conference Room 323, Jewish Studies Center                                                        |
| 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM  | <b>Alumni Career Services Panel for CofC Seniors</b><br>Levin Library, Room 209, Jewish Studies Center                                                                       |
| 3:00 PM – 4:45 PM  | <b>Film: <i>Walk on Water</i></b><br>Israel, 2004, 103 minutes<br>Arnold Hall                                                                                                |
| 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM  | <b>Reception with President and Mrs. George Benson</b><br>President's House, 6 Glebe Street                                                                                  |

## SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25

- |                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8:30 AM – 9:30 AM   | <b>JHSSC Annual Meeting and Open Board Meeting</b><br>Levin Library                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM | <b>The Milton and Freddie Kronsberg Memorial Lecture:</b><br><i>Woody Allen and American Jewish Comedy</i><br>by <b>Jeremy Dauber</b> , Columbia University<br>Introductions by <b>Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr.</b> and<br><b>The Honorable Alexander M. Sanders, Jr.</b><br>Stern Center Ballroom (Brunch will be served) |
| 1:00 PM – 2:15 PM   | <b>Jewish Studies Program Advisory Board Meeting</b><br>Levin Library                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

# REGISTRATION FORM

REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS October 1, 2009.

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse/Friend \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (     ) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) on name tags \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to make reservations for the following additional people: \_\_\_\_\_

***Fees are per person; advance reservations are required.***

Registration fee @ \$75 per person \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Optional Walking Tour of Charleston Jewish Sites, Friday afternoon,  
October 23<sup>rd</sup> from 1:00-4:00pm @ \$10 per person \$ \_\_\_\_\_

LATE REGISTRATION FEE. Add \$10 after 10/1/09. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Go to [www.cofc.edu/jsp25](http://www.cofc.edu/jsp25) for more information and to register online.

## MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO:

Jewish Studies Program  
College of Charleston  
96 Wentworth Street  
Charleston, SC 29424

## QUESTIONS:

Enid Idelsohn  
843-953-3918  
[IdelsohnE@cofc.edu](mailto:IdelsohnE@cofc.edu)  
[www.cofc.edu/~jwst](http://www.cofc.edu/~jwst)

**PLEASE MAKE YOUR OWN HOTEL RESERVATIONS BY OCTOBER 1, 2009.**

**MENTION "JEWISH STUDIES" TO RECEIVE THESE SPECIAL RATES.**

| <u>HOTEL</u>                     | <u>ADDRESS</u>        | <u>PHONE</u>                 | <u>WEBSITE</u>                                                               | <u>PRICE/NIGHT</u> |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Best Western                     | 250 Spring Street     | 843.722.4000<br>888.377.2121 | <a href="http://charlestonbestwestern.com">charlestonbestwestern.com</a>     | \$79.99            |
| Springhill Suites<br>by Marriott | 98 Ripley Point Drive | 843.571.1711<br>888.236.2427 | <a href="http://marriott.com">marriott.com</a>                               | \$125.00           |
| Residence Inn<br>by Marriott     | 90 Ripley Point Drive | 843.571.7979<br>888.236.2427 | <a href="http://marriott.com">marriott.com</a>                               | \$135.00           |
| Days Inn                         | 155 Meeting Street    | 843.722.8411<br>800.329.7466 | <a href="http://daysinn.com">daysinn.com</a>                                 | \$199.00           |
| Francis Marion Hotel             | 387 King Street       | 843.722.0600                 | <a href="http://francismarioncharleston.com">francismarioncharleston.com</a> | \$199.00           |
| King Charles Inn                 | 237 Meeting Street    | 843.723.7451<br>866.546.4700 | <a href="http://kingcharlesinn.com">kingcharlesinn.com</a>                   | \$219.00           |
| Mills House Hotel                | 115 Meeting Street    | 843.577.2400<br>800.874.9600 | <a href="http://millshouse.com">millshouse.com</a>                           | \$249.00           |



# Kits Will Put “South Carolina Face” on Holocaust Lessons

by Karen Tannenbaum

Even for an experienced teacher like Kris Cox, it was an exciting day this past February when she received a CD containing interview transcripts, memoirs, notes, and photos—lots of photos—related to South Carolina residents who had firsthand experience with the terrors of the Holocaust. These primary source materials were something new to the veteran classroom instructor.

“I have tons of materials [about the Holocaust],” the Blue Ridge High School teacher says, “but this gave me an opportunity to teach this period of history in a new way.” Cox has been teaching about the Holocaust for ten years and has attended workshops at South Carolina universities and training centers at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC, and the Jewish Foundation for the Righteous in New York.

Along with 11 other Greenville County middle and high school social studies teachers, Cox volunteered to create pilot lessons for a Holocaust Classroom Kit using primary materials drawn from the Holocaust Archives at the College of Charleston.



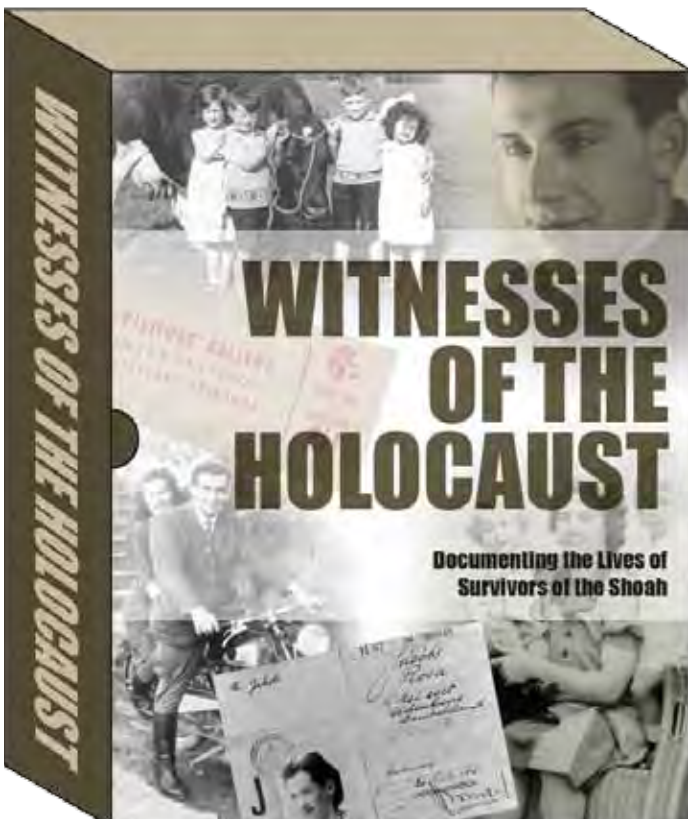
*Paula Popowski's extended family outside the Roza family's flour mill in Kaluszyn, Poland, on the occasion of a visit from her aunt, Miriam Roza, and her husband, Chaim Lazar Kaluszyner in 1939. The couple, living in Palestine since 1936, survived the Holocaust. Paula is third from the left in the front row of seated adults. Miriam is to her right and sister Hannah, to her left. Paula and Hannah survived the war. The rest of the Roza family perished.*

The kit, to be produced this coming year, will contain a teacher's guide, histories of seven survivors, refugees, or liberators, and facsimile photos, letters, and documents. All items selected and organized for the kit were collected from South Carolinians over the past eight years in a project jointly sponsored by the College and the South Carolina Council on the Holocaust.

## Histories that Capture the Imagination

On the pilot CD, the teachers found an interview with Paula Kornblum Popowski, a longtime Charleston resident who, along with her teenage sister, “passed” as Catholic while being sheltered in a Polish village for two years. They also saw tattered, yellowed pages documenting the saga of Max Freilich, a Greenville resident who left Germany on one of the last Kindertransport trains in 1939 only to end up nine months later incarcerated by the British as a 16-year-old German enemy alien. While Popowski and Freilich survived, their parents and other family members did not.

The diary of Edith Jakobs, written while she was in hiding with her family in an attic in Holland, invites comparisons with Anne Frank's famous journal. The Jakobs diary was brought to the archives by a Pickens County veteran who had befriended the family at the end of the war and kept in touch with them over the years. Students involved in the pilot







שרה סמואל, כ"ב בשבט תשד"ט - 22 FEBRUAR 1984

*Title page from the Jakobs family diary, 1984. Survivors of this Dutch family fled to Palestine. The saying is from Psalm 137: If I forget thee O' Jerusalem let my right hand forget [its cunning].*

project also were encouraged to read aloud spine-tingling transcripts of interviews with Charleston resident Francine Taylor who fled Paris in 1942—alone, and only 14 years old—by train and bicycle, to find her family in the South of France. She evaded capture by the Nazis through courage, quick wits, and plucky intelligence. No teenager could read her story without wondering, “Could I have done that?”

### A Teaching Tool to Fulfill a Mission

Primary sources like these make the learning process more immediate and personal. They “allow the students to draw some of their own conclusions about historical people and events, to be the historian, so to speak,” says Martha Bohnenberger, who teaches seventh- and eighth-graders at the Charles Townes Gifted Center

in Greenville and serves on the Teacher Advisory Committee of the SC Council on the Holocaust.

Following classroom trials this spring, teachers reconvened to share experiences and refine their ideas. A distribution system will be worked out so that every South Carolina school district, and eventually every middle and high school, will receive a copy of the kit.

“Since the start of the Holocaust Archives Project, it has been our goal not only to preserve these materials but also to make them available to students, teachers, and scholars,” Dale Rosengarten, curator of the Jewish Heritage Collection, asserts. “Ultimately, we will provide digital access, via the Internet, to all the collections we have gathered. For the moment, outreach to classrooms is a practical way to put the materials in the hands of a vital audience—school kids.”

Bonny Duncan, an instructor at Berea High School who has been teaching a nine-week elective course on the Holocaust for two years, says the South Carolina survivor materials she tested with students this spring helped them understand the variety of ways people responded to German terror in Nazi-occupied Europe. “They were all familiar with the image of Jews and other targeted groups as victims. But they had not heard the stories of people who were not in the camps, who survived other kinds of hardship,” she reports. “These wonderful primary sources really increased their interest.”

Kris Cox adds, “Authentic South Carolina materials put a face on the Holocaust. They helped the students think of the people affected as individuals and not just in terms of the large numbers of those who suffered. They will make this subject more realistic, presenting it on a human level that students can appreciate.”

*Photos for this article courtesy of Special Collections, College of Charleston.*



*Francine Taylor's false identification card. Blond and blue-eyed, she passed as a Christian girl.*



*Max Freilich used these passes to gain entrance to the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials in 1945.*



# The Rise and Fall of Dillon's Ohav Shalom

by Alyssa Neely

Austrian immigrants Max and Morris Fass appear to have been the catalysts for establishing Dillon's first Jewish religious organization. By 1915, the Dillon Hebrew Congregation had formed and was meeting at one Fass home or the other. Charter members included Adolph and Hyman Witcover, William Brick, and Sam Levin, with Morris Fass as lay leader. Beginning in 1922, Rabbi Jacob S. Raisin of Charleston's Reform temple Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim traveled to Dillon one Sunday a month to conduct services. About the same time, Fannie Brick organized a Sunday school under Rabbi Raisin's supervision.

In 1928, the congregation and its Sunday school changed its name to the Teresa Witcover Fass Congregation in honor of Max Fass's wife who died in 1927 at the age of 48. Teresa's hallmark, noted by many Dillon area residents, was her generous and good-hearted nature. Two months after her death, 21 female members of the congregation, inspired perhaps by the Jewish tradition of carrying on the work of the deceased, founded the Teresa Witcover Fass Sisterhood. Sisterhood members became the backbone of the religious school, hosting holiday celebrations, participating in charitable work, and raising money to build a synagogue.



*Sam Schafer of Little Rock, S.C., became the first president of the rejuvenated Ohav Shalom, ca. 1940. Photo courtesy of Harold Kornblut.*

In 1937, 84 Jews lived in Dillon while another 75 lived in the nearby town of Latta. Dillon's small congregation struggled during the Great Depression, especially after the deaths of both Fass brothers in 1935. In 1939, the congregation hired Rabbi Samuel R. Shillman of Sumter's Temple Sinai to lead services. Under Shillman's leadership, the congregation was reorganized and officially incorporated under the name Ohav Shalom, or Lover of Peace. With a membership of about 20 families, the rejuvenated Reform organization built a house of worship in 1942 and added a community center in 1956.

In the 1950s, the Dillon Temple Sisterhood joined the Conservative National Women's League—the only South Carolina sisterhood to do so. This association reflected a shift toward Conservative Judaism, a trend noted as early as 1939



*Ohav Shalom, Dillon, S.C., 1995. Photo by Dale Rosengarten.*

by member Moses Kornblut. The congregation's willingness to hire rabbis of varying backgrounds suggests that the lines between Reform and Conservative remained blurred, a common survival strategy among small-town synagogues.

In 1964, Ohav Shalom celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Served on a part-time basis by Rabbi Charles B. Lesser, who led Florence's Beth Israel between 1961 and 1970, the congregation of 25 families had added a third building, used for educational purposes. Slightly fewer than half the membership lived in Dillon, while the rest made their homes in Latta, Marion, Clio, Hamer, McColl, Mullins, Florence, and across the state line in Fairmount, North Carolina.

The Dillon synagogue maintained its numbers through the 1970s and into the 1980s. By the early 1990s, however, only a handful of Jewish families remained in Dillon. The fate of Ohav Shalom was typical of small-town Jewish life across America, as out-migration, intermarriage, and the deaths of the elderly all took their toll. In 1993, the seven remaining members agreed to close and sell the synagogue. Proceeds from the sale, plus funds remaining in the sisterhood and congregation accounts, were split seven ways, with the stipulation that the recipients would donate the money to the Jewish charity of their choice. The majority gave their portion to Florence's Temple Beth Israel and most became members of the congregation as well.

*This article is a sequel to Pee Dee Pioneers, which appeared in our Spring 2009 issue. Both stories are based on community histories written by Alyssa Neely for the Institute of Southern Jewish Life's Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities, accessible at [www.isjl.org](http://www.isjl.org).*

# All in the Family

by Judith Alexander Weil Shanks

“Cuz” is a handy word for distant kin. I recall my father, Roman Weil, of Montgomery, Alabama, addressing his long-time friend and neighbor Jo Baum this way, even though they were not related. I hadn’t thought about that for years, but now that I am immersed in family history and have newly discovered cousins, I use the term a lot.

Some years ago, while working with the College of Charleston’s Jewish Heritage Collection on research for the exhibition, “A Portion of the People,” I encountered several people who are descended from some of my early American ancestors, including Hannah Mears Isaacks and her husband Abraham Isaacks of Emden. Three of us—John L. Loeb, Jr., Larry Freudenberg, and I—have been pursuing family history with what seems a lifelong passion. Coincidentally, the efforts of each of us have borne fruit this year.



*Adeline Moses Loeb. Portrait by G. L. Brockhurst, ca. 1925.*

John L. Loeb, Jr., once a partner at the New York investment firm Loeb Rhoades and former U.S. ambassador to Denmark, has sponsored a beautifully produced, book-length biography of his grandmother—*An American Experience: Adeline Moses Loeb (1876–1953) and Her Early American Jewish Ancestors*. Featuring an introduction by Eli N. Evans, a narrative account of Adeline and Carl Loeb’s “Cinderella story,” and two first-person memoirs, the volume concludes with an extensive investigation by genealogist

Judith Endelman into Adeline’s lineage. Ambassador Loeb has also created a tangible monument to our forebears by underwriting construction of a Visitors Center at Touro Synagogue, where Jacob Phillips, Loeb’s ancestor, was a founding member. (See [www.loeb-tourovisitorscenter.org](http://www.loeb-tourovisitorscenter.org) for more information.)

Drawing on 20 years of research, Larry Freudenberg has painstakingly documented his family history in three volumes, collectively entitled *Ordinary Jews in an Extraordinary Land*. Volume I contains genealogies, Volume II is an annotated scrapbook and photo album, and Volume III, *The Memoir*, is



*Boating on “the pond” (Colonial Lake). Maier Triest is in the second row, second from the left, ca. 1918. Photo courtesy of Larry Freudenberg.*

a first-person account of Larry’s exploration of 11 generations of family history. While the work suffers from a disregard of some publishing conventions—for example, listing bibliographic entries alphabetically by the author’s first name—and also quotes extensively from inadequately credited sources, the compendium of information and Larry’s unabashed “native” point of view provide a mother lode of material for future research.

My interest in family history revolves around heirlooms handed down, evidence of the material culture of past generations. I have focused primarily on three southern Jewish women—Rebecca Moses (1792–1872), Charlotte Joseph (1803–1883), and Eleanor Solomons (1794–1856)—and the things they left behind. *Old Family Things: An Affectionate Look Back*, my recently launched website, devotes a chapter to each of these women, and one to the album quilt that linked them with 60 other members of their circle—friends and family whose bonds were stitched in fabric and thread. For a closer look, go to [www.serve.com:80/~rim/Judith\\_Old\\_Family\\_Things](http://www.serve.com:80/~rim/Judith_Old_Family_Things).



*Album quilt made, ca. 1851–1854, for Eleanor Israel Solomons, née Joseph. Collection of Judith W. Shanks*



# May their Memories Be a Blessing

**Carolee Rosen Fox (January 19, 1930–July 11, 2009)**

**Harold Jacobs (December 7, 1913–July 14, 2009)**



*Carolee performing Phoebe Pember during a JHSSC dinner program, April 13, 2000. Photo by D. Rosengarten. Special Collections, College of Charleston.*

energy and flair. A member of both Beth Elohim and Brith Sholom Beth Israel, she was a long-term docent at KKBE and led tours for Historic Charleston Foundation as well. Known for her quick wit and infectious sense of humor, she went out of her way to make her presentations memorable.

A popular teacher at the temple's religious school, Carolee served on the KKBE board and as president of the sisterhood, and was active with (and honored by) the Charleston Chapters of Hadassah, ORT, and the National Council of Jewish Women. She was a pillar of the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina and was among the first volunteers who helped to build the College of Charleston Library's Jewish Heritage Collection.

Married in 1965 to Harold I. Fox, Carolee worked for 17 years at Keys to Music, Harold's piano and organ dealership. She had a passion for theater and opera and enjoyed acting with the Footlight Players, the Dock Street Theater, and the Jewish Community Center.

Carolee's enthusiasm for story-telling and appreciation of history is evident in a 1997 oral history interview. In her silken-toned voice, she jumped with both feet into tales of her family and the Charleston of her grandmother's and mother's day. She spoke rapidly, but clearly, providing stories vivid with details. There was an urgency to her pace, as if she felt compelled to convey all that was most important. "Now, I've got more to tell you!" she declared early in the interview. We never got enough.

Carolee will be sorely missed by all those who knew and loved her, and also by scores of people who met her only once.

The first baby boy born in the new Baker Sanatorium on Ashley Avenue, Harold Jacobs's Charleston roots ran deep. Son of Sam Jacobs and Mignonette Cohen and grandson of Isaac and Jeanette Jacobs on his father's side, Harold's Jacobs/Karesh/Pearlstine ancestors first arrived in Charleston in the 1850s and helped found Berith Shalom. After the Civil War, the Pearlstines became major wholesalers in South Carolina, while the Karesh/Jacobs clan went into dry goods, especially hosiery and shoes.

After military service in North Africa and Italy during World War II, Harold married Lillian Breen of Anderson, South Carolina, and they worked together in the family's grocery store, Harold's Cabin, located at Congress and President Streets. Under Harold and Lillian's stewardship, the business grew into a premiere purveyor of gourmet foods and delicatessen items. In new quarters on Wentworth Street between King and St. Philip, the store featured a luncheon balcony on the mezzanine floor, mail order and catering departments, and a large delicatessen offering specialty foods, including more than 200 cheeses and Charleston's first frozen kosher chickens.

The innumerable roles Harold played in Charleston's Jewish community are legendary. He was the youngest president of B'nai Brith's Dan Lodge, the first vice-president of the South Carolina Association of B'nai Brith Lodges, second vice-commander of the Samuel Turteltaub Post of the Jewish War Veterans, and recipient of the first Lifetime Achievement Honor awarded by the Greater Charleston Christian Jewish Council, on whose board he served for 12 years.

Harold became a Bar Mitzvah at Brith Sholom in 1926. Later, he joined Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim, serving as co-editor of the first Temple Bulletin and chairing several committees. In 1979 he was elected president of KKBE, and in 1996 was named its first, and so far, only president emeritus. Always positive, always engaged, Harold was a one-man welcome bureau for the temple, greeting every visitor with grace, gentility, and genuine interest, making friends wherever he went.



*Harold standing in front of his new store at 84 Wentworth Street, 1954. Gift of Harold Jacobs, Special Collections, College of Charleston.*

## Center Talk *by Adam Mendelsohn*

Until a few months ago, the Center for Southern Jewish Culture was little more than a distant dream. But when the energetic duo of Marty Perlmutter and Dale Rosengarten are involved, dreams have a way of becoming reality.

Based in the Yaschik/Arnold Program in Jewish Studies at the College of Charleston, the new Center will focus on teaching, researching, documenting, and popularizing the historical experience of Jewish people in the American South. It will be the first of its kind at any American college or university.

This ambitious vision has attracted the attention of the scholarly community. The Center has already appointed a star-studded academic council to advise us as the program develops, review our activities, and visit us in Charleston as often as possible. This minyan of movers and shakers in the fields of southern and American Jewish history includes:

**Marcie Cohen Ferris**, Assistant Professor of American Studies at the University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill, author of the award-winning *Matzoh Ball Gumbo: Culinary Tales of the Jewish South* (2005) and co-editor of *Jewish Roots in Southern Soil: A New History* (2006). She is currently at work on a social history of food in the American South.

**Eric L. Goldstein**, Associate Professor of History and Jewish Studies at Emory University and author of *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race and American Identity* (2006). He is the current editor of the journal *American Jewish History*.

**Jeffrey S. Gurock**, Libby M. Klaperman Professor of Jewish History at Yeshiva University, and author or editor of 14 books, including *Orthodox Jews in America* (2009), *Judaism's Encounter with American Sports* (2005), and *Orthodoxy in Charleston: Brith Sholom Beth Israel and American Jewish History* (2004). Gurock chairs the Academic Council of the American Jewish Historical Society.

**Jenna Weissman Joselit**, Charles E. Smith Professor of Judaic Studies at The George Washington University. She has published eight books, including *The Wonders of America: Reinventing Jewish Culture, 1880–1950*, winner of the National Jewish Book Award in History in 1995. A frequent contributor to *The New Republic*, *TNR Online*, and *Gastronomica*, Joselit also writes a monthly column on material culture and American Jewish life for *The Forward*.

**Phyllis Leffler**, Professor of Public History at the University of Virginia and co-curator of two exhibitions on southern Jewish life: "To Seek the Peace of the City: Jewish Life in Charlottesville" (1994) and "Jewish Life at Mr. Jefferson's University" (1993). She serves on the board of the Southern Jewish Historical Society, where she currently holds the position of secretary. Her publications focus on public history, museum studies, and institutional history.

**Deborah Dash Moore**, Frederick G. L. Huetwell Professor of History and Director of the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan. Her publications include *American Jewish Identity Politics* (2008), *GI Jews: How World War II Changed a Generation* (2004), *Cityscapes: A History of New York in Images* (2001), and *To the Golden Cities: Pursuing the American Jewish Dream in Miami and L.A.* (1994).

**Stuart Rockoff**, Director of the History Department at the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life in Jackson, Mississippi. President-elect of the Southern Jewish Historical Society, he is currently working on a general history of Jewish life in the South.

**Leonard Rogoff**, Historian of the Jewish Heritage Foundation of North Carolina and author of *Homelands: Southern Jewish Identity in Durham and Chapel Hill, North Carolina* and the forthcoming *Down Home: Jewish Life in North Carolina*. A frequent contributor to journals and anthologies, he edited *The Rambler*, the newsletter of the Southern Jewish Historical Society, and currently serves as the Society's president.

**Jonathan D. Sarna**, the Joseph H. & Belle R. Braun Professor of American Jewish History at Brandeis University and Chief Historian of the National Museum of American Jewish History. He has written or edited more than 25 books, including *American Judaism: A History* (2004), winner of the Jewish Book of the Year award from the Jewish Book Council.

**Gary P. Zola**, Executive Director of The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives and Associate Professor of the American Jewish Experience at Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati. His publications include *American Jewish History: A Primary Source Reader* (forthcoming), *A Place of Our Own: The Beginnings of Reform Jewish Camping in America* (2006), and *Isaac Harby of Charleston: Jewish Reformer and Intellectual* (1994).

The Center's founders have set serious academic goals, such as expanding the College's course offerings on southern Jewish history, organizing lectures and conferences, adding an archivist to work on the already impressive collections housed in Addlestone Library, and creating an internship program to recruit out-of-town talent. Yet we see our mission more broadly. We plan to make the Center and its resources welcoming to everyone interested in southern—and particularly South Carolina—Jewish history, and to engage the general public through workshops, lectures, historical tours, and cultural events. Our dream will be realized only with the support and partnership of the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina. As the Center grows, we look forward to working with the JHSSC to bring our shared passion for Jewish history to a wide audience.



# Become a Pillar: Help Our Past Inform Our Future

by Martin Perlmutter

The Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina is now in its 15<sup>th</sup> year and, I'm happy to say, we are thriving. With a membership topping 400, the Society hosts annual and regional meetings, publishes a bi-annual newsletter which is mailed to 9,000 households, sponsors **Elderhostels** on South Carolina Jewish history every spring, and supports a world-class archive—the **Jewish Heritage Collection** at the College of Charleston's Addlestone Library. The Society also has launched several special projects. We are producing a survey, in print and online, of all Jewish burials in South Carolina. We have sponsored official markers of historic Jewish sites in Columbia and Sumter, with more to come. We have developed a dynamic website, designed and maintained by Ann Hellman, our incoming president. At [www.jhssc.org](http://www.jhssc.org) you can find announcements of upcoming activities, photographs of past events, copies of all our newsletters, records and images from our cemetery surveys, selected archival documents, and links to other Jewish institutions around the state and region.

The Society is not slowing down. To the contrary, we are now undertaking our most ambitious project ever. The Society's next major goal, in partnership with the **Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program** and the **Jewish Heritage Collection**, is to establish a **Center for Southern Jewish Culture** at the College of Charleston. The Center will help ensure the JHSSC's long-term excellence by expanding on-campus leadership and broadening our academic offerings.

Specifically, we aim to further develop the library's Jewish collections and make these research materials available to a growing audience; to hire a new faculty member specializing in southern Jewish history; and to create an internship program that will bring graduate students and young scholars to Charleston to pursue their research. The Center will guarantee that future generations have the opportunity to study southern Jewish history, work with first-rate collections, and learn from top scholars in the field. The Center will crown the extraordinarily productive partnership JHSSC has forged, from its inception, with the College of Charleston. There are naming opportunities associated with this initiative and we solicit community involvement and support.

Major gifts will help us reach our goals, but it is membership dues and the generosity of our **Pillars** that keep our operations running. Become a Pillar by pledging to contribute \$1,000 a year for five years. Help make South Carolina's Jewish history a living legacy.

## PILLARS of the SOCIETY (2009)

|                                |                   |    |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|----|
| Ellen Arnovitz                 | Atlanta           | GA |
| Doris Baumgarten               | Aiken             | SC |
| Shep Cutler                    | Columbia          | SC |
| Harold Fox                     | Charleston        | SC |
| Meri Gergel                    | Columbia          | SC |
| Phillip and Patricia Greenberg | Florence          | SC |
| William M. Guggenheim          | Hilton Head       | SC |
| Ann and Max Hellman            | Charleston        | SC |
| Alan and Charlotte Kahn        | Columbia          | SC |
| Michael Kogan                  | Little Falls      | NJ |
| Susan R. Lourie                | Columbia          | SC |
| Susan Pearlstine               | River Heights     | UT |
| Edward and Sandra Poliakoff    | Columbia          | SC |
| Benedict and Brenda Rosen      | Myrtle Beach      | SC |
| Robert and Susan Rosen         | Charleston        | SC |
| Raymond and Sandra Rosenblum   | Charleston        | SC |
| Joseph W. and Edith L. Rubin   | Charleston        | SC |
| Jeff and Walton Selig          | Columbia          | SC |
| Mark Tanenbaum                 | Sullivan's Island | SC |
| Anita Zucker                   | Charleston        | SC |

Carolee Rosen Fox, o.b.m.

Harvey and Mimi Gleberman, o.b.m.

Anne Oxler Krancer, o.b.m.

Jerry Zucker, o.b.m.

## FOUNDATIONAL PILLAR (2009)

The Henry and Sylvia Yaschik Foundation, Charleston, SC

**Our list is current as of publication. We apologize if there are inadvertent omissions.**

.....  
 Yes, I/we want to become a Pillar member of the JHSSC. In doing so, I/we commit to dues of \$1,000 per year for five years.

Name(s): .....

Address: .....

City: ..... State: ..... Zip: .....

Phone: ..... Email: .....

Check enclosed \$ ..... (includes annual membership)

JHSSC Pillars' commitment is \$1,000 per year for five years. The Foundational Pillars category is designed for institutions/foundations at a commitment of \$2,000 per year for five years. Go to [www.jhssc.org](http://www.jhssc.org) to become a Pillar.  
 .....



THE  
JEWISH  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY  
OF  
SOUTH CAROLINA

Martin Perlmutter, Executive Director  
Enid Idelsohn, Administrator

**Officers**

Edward Poliakoff, President  
H.J. Brand, Vice President  
Ann M. Hellman, Vice President  
Joe Wachter, Vice President  
David J. Cohen, Treasurer  
Lyssa Harvey, Secretary  
Moss Blachman, Archivist

**Founding President**

Isadore Lourie, o.b.m.

**Past Presidents**

Richard Gergel  
Klyde Robinson  
Robert Rosen  
Jeffrey Rosenblum  
Bernard Warshaw  
Belinda Gergel

**Board of Directors**

Susan D. Altman, Charleston  
Gerry Sue Arnold, Columbia  
Rachel G. Barnett, Columbia  
Doris Baumgarten, Aiken  
Eve M. Berlinsky, Charleston  
Bunny Daitch Bernstein, Charleston  
Sol Breitbart, Charleston  
Leah Chase, Charleston  
David Draisén, Anderson  
Robert Dreyfus, Greenville  
Stanley Farbstein, Charleston  
Ben Goldberg, Charleston  
Phillip H. Greenberg, Florence  
Alan Kahn, Columbia  
Harriet Keyserling, Beaufort  
Michael Kogan, Charleston  
Harold Kornblut, Latta  
Mike Krupsaw, Anderson  
Mick Lourie, Columbia  
Rose Mark, Beaufort  
Burnet Mendelsohn, Charleston  
Elizabeth Moses, Georgetown  
I. Harby Moses, Sumter  
Herbert Novit, Hilton Head  
Eli Poliakoff, Charleston  
Alan Reynér, Columbia  
Mickey Rosenblum, Charleston  
Steve Savitz, Columbia

Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina  
96 Wentworth Street  
College of Charleston  
Charleston, SC 29424  
Phone: 843.953.3918  
Email: [jhssc@cofc.edu](mailto:jhssc@cofc.edu)

NON-PROFIT  
U.S. POSTAGE

P - A - I - D

CHARLESTON, SC  
PERMIT No. 485

**Join the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**ANNUAL DUES FOR 2009 (JANUARY–DECEMBER)**

|                                                        |         |
|--------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| _____ Individual/Family Membership                     | \$36    |
| _____ Friend                                           | \$200   |
| _____ Sponsor                                          | \$350   |
| _____ Founding Patron                                  | \$1,000 |
| _____ Pillar (\$1,000 yearly for 5 years)              | \$1,000 |
| _____ Foundational Pillar (\$2,000 yearly for 5 years) | \$2,000 |

Join or renew JHSSC online at [www.jhssc.org](http://www.jhssc.org).  
Enroll your friends and relatives for an additional \$36 each.  
Send us their information and we will inform them of your gift.

**Register now for the October meeting.  
See pages 9 - 12 for more information.**

***Please make checks payable to JHSSC  
and mail to the address above.***

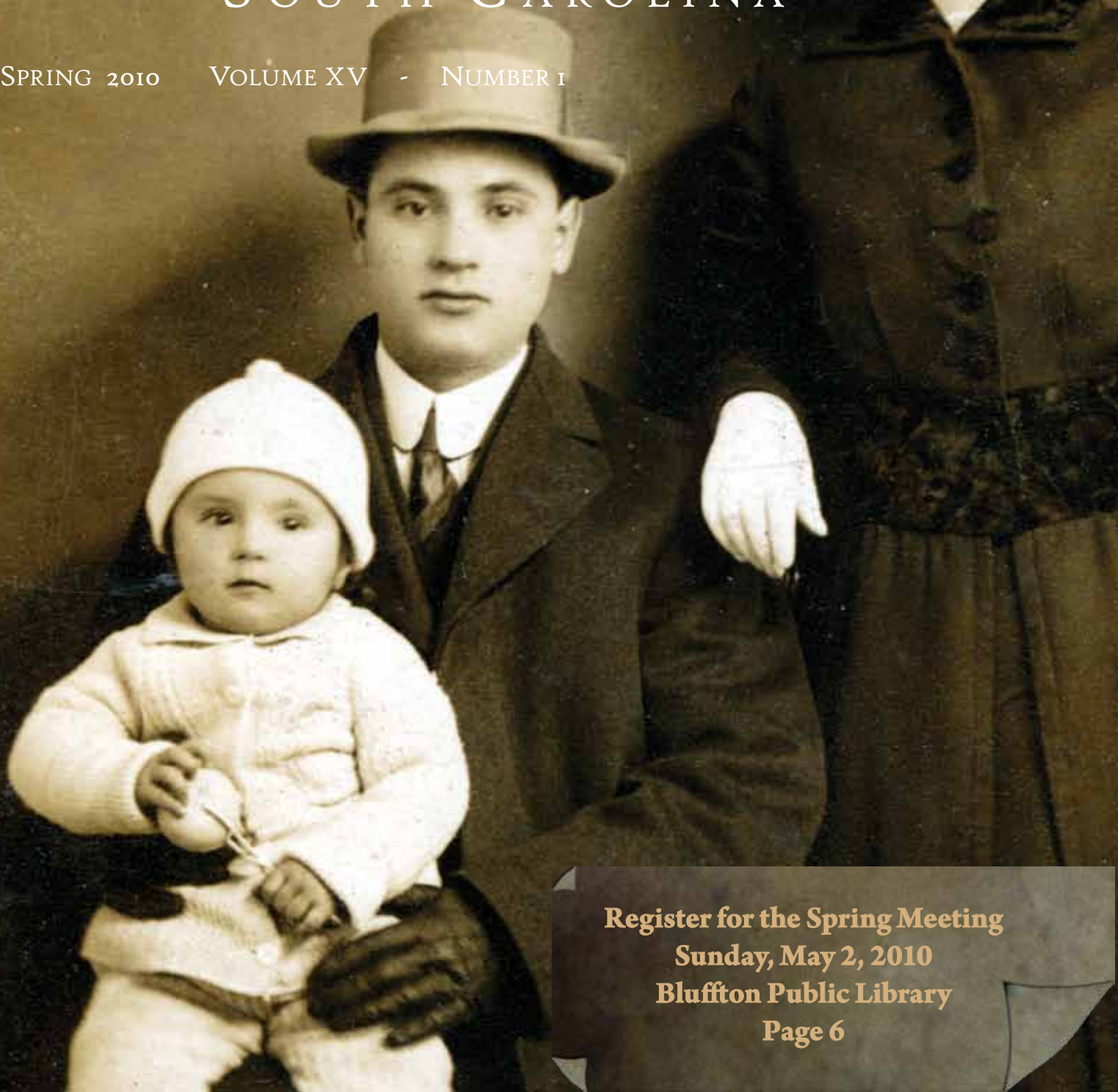


Leader page to JHSSC Spring 2010  
Set your Acrobat Reader to View > Page Display > Two-Up



# THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY of SOUTH CAROLINA

SPRING 2010    VOLUME XV    -    NUMBER I



**Register for the Spring Meeting  
Sunday, May 2, 2010  
Bluffton Public Library  
Page 6**





Ann Meddin Hellman  
President

### On the cover:

*Sol Breibart at one year old, with his parents, Sam and Ida Goldberg Breibart, Charleston, SC, 1915. Photo courtesy of Sara Bolgla Breibart.*



The Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina Newsletter is published twice a year.

Dale Rosengarten, editor  
Joseph Rubin, designer

Staff:  
Alyssa Neely  
Enid Idelsohn  
Susan Altman

[www.jhssc.org](http://www.jhssc.org)

## In this issue

**From the President of the JHSSC** ..... 3  
Ann Meddin Hellman

**Bluffton's Oseh Shalom: From 17 to 500 Members in Four Years** ..... 4  
Alvin B. Reuben

Fueled by snowbirds flocking to Sun City and Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, a new congregation based in Bluffton has grown by leaps and bounds.

**JHSSC Meets in Bluffton, May 2, 2010** ..... 6  
At its spring meeting, the Society will have a chance to welcome members of the newest Jewish community in the Palmetto State. Register now and witness history in the making.

**The Jews of Anderson, South Carolina: Merchants and Manufacturers** ..... 7  
Alyssa Neely

From a single German family in the mid-1800s, Anderson's Jewish population increased in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century with an influx of Eastern Europeans. A surge in textile manufacturing attracted hardy entrepreneurs and brought prospects for real prosperity to the upcountry town.

**Rural Rabbis for the Carolinas** ..... 11  
Jonathan Cohen

A new outreach effort called the Rural Jewish Initiative aims to recruit student rabbis to serve small congregations across the Carolinas. Modeled on I. D. Blumenthal's circuit-riding rabbis of the 1950s to '70s, RJIC's goal is to sustain Jewish life in out-of-the-way places.

**My Brother, My Teacher: Solomon Breibart** ..... 12  
Jack Breibart

Sol Breibart's youngest brother writes a loving tribute to the man who was also his teacher. When Sol passed away on October 31, just a week shy of his 95<sup>th</sup> birthday, Charleston lost a gifted chronicler and JHSSC a great friend.

**Under a Magnolia Tree: Discovering Lopez Family Roots in South Carolina** ..... 14  
John Franklin Davis with Linda Montedonico Davis

Lopez descendants locate the graves of their prominent forebears in Charleston's Jewish burial ground on Coming Street and—surprise!—Magnolia Cemetery.

**Center Talk** ..... 15  
Adam Mendelsohn

With funding from two new grants, the College of Charleston's Center for Southern Jewish Culture plans to pick up the pace of activities this year and establish itself as a leading center for researching, documenting, and teaching Jewish history and culture of the American South.

**New Gifts to the Jewish Heritage Collection** ..... 16  
Dale Rosengarten

New treasures recently donated to the Jewish Heritage Collection are on display through May 2010 in Special Collections at the College of Charleston Library.

# From the President of the JHSSC

There are many ways of acquiring historical data. We are accustomed to learning about the past from books, and we once were limited to sources we could find in our local library or purchase from bookstores. Today, the Internet allows us access to a wide range of media and information. The Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina is doing its part. Our website shares the history and culture of the state's Jews with people all over the world. Featuring synagogue histories, cemetery surveys, book listings, back and current issues of the Society's newsletter, photographs of past meetings, and much more, the site is an invaluable asset to the Society and an excellent teaching tool.

Joe Wachter, Vice-President of Archives and Historical Sites, leads our efforts to index and photograph Jewish burial grounds across the state. Cemetery listings ensure that the names of those interred will live on in perpetuity and will not disappear because of erosion from weather or vandalism. The records we have compiled are available at [www.jhssc.org](http://www.jhssc.org), and have been added to [www.jewishgen.org](http://www.jewishgen.org) at its JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry (JOWBR). There's a great deal more work to be done, however, and as a grassroots organization, the Society needs your help. Please contact Joe at [jhw@48th.com](mailto:jhw@48th.com) or me at [hellmana@bellsouth.net](mailto:hellmana@bellsouth.net) if you would like to become involved.

We also have undertaken an initiative to erect historical markers at important Jewish sites in South Carolina. So far the Society has co-sponsored markers at Sumter's Temple Sinai and Columbia's first synagogue and Sunday school. You can suggest additional candidates for historical recognition by going

to the volunteer page at [www.jhssc.org](http://www.jhssc.org) and entering your nomination.

Yet another way you can play a vital part is to become a Pillar of the Society. Pillars provide JHSSC with the means to accomplish all that it does. By committing \$1,000 a year over a five year period (or \$2,000 a year for institutional members), Pillars underwrite our operations and help us tell the world about Jewish history and culture in South Carolina. To make a pledge or to learn more about how you can contribute, please contact Vice-President of Fundraising and Membership Philip Greenberg at [scgreenbrg@aol.com](mailto:scgreenbrg@aol.com).

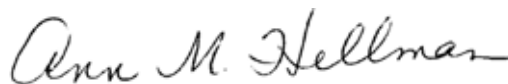
Mark your calendars for the Society's spring meeting in Bluffton on Sunday, May 2, 2010. Unlike many small towns, Bluffton has witnessed dramatic

growth of its Jewish population, thanks to its proximity to Del Webb's Sun City, a 5,600-acre community begun in the 1990s that has attracted a significant influx of Jewish "snowbirds." Four years ago these newcomers started a congregation, Temple Oseh Shalom, and Rabbi Robert Seigel of Charleston has recently been engaged to

lead services. At the meeting in Bluffton, JHSSC will participate in history in the making.

I look forward to seeing you on May 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Fondly,



Ann Meddin Hellman  
[hellmana@bellsouth.net](mailto:hellmana@bellsouth.net)

## Be a Photojournalist in Your Own Town

*Many cities and towns in South Carolina have buildings that testify to the state's Jewish heritage: Jewish storefronts, homes of Jewish civic leaders, buildings formerly housing synagogues or community centers. These structures will not be here forever, but their historic value can be preserved. An image and a story go a long way.*

*To help preserve our history, we ask you simply to take a picture of a place with a Jewish past, write a short paragraph about its history, and email the photo and text to [jhsscwebmaster@bellsouth.net](mailto:jhsscwebmaster@bellsouth.net). We will add the materials to our digital archive and publish some submissions on our website. If you would like suggestions of sites that need documentation, contact Joe Wachter at [jhw@48th.com](mailto:jhw@48th.com).*



# Bluffton's Oseh Shalom: From 17 to 500 Members in Four Years

by Alvin B. Reuben

**B**luffton, South Carolina, is located in southern Beaufort County, almost equidistant from Hilton Head Island and Savannah, Georgia. The town dates from the early 1800s when Lowcountry rice and cotton planters seeking high ground and cool river breezes built residences in what was then called Devil's Elbow Barony. Until the late 1970s and early 1980s, few Jews lived in the Bluffton area, but with the construction of new gated communities, the area's population swelled, and so did the number of Jewish inhabitants.

The trend escalated when the Del Webb Corporation began building Sun City–Hilton Head in the early 1990s. A 5,600-acre community for active seniors, Sun City eventually will contain 8,500 homes and over 15,000 residents spread over parts of Beaufort and adjacent Jasper County. From the beginning, the Jewish population of Sun City has been significantly higher than the demographics of most rural areas. Today the Sun City portion of greater Bluffton is five percent Jewish, and this contingent has become an engine for spirited growth of the Jewish population in the area.

Until 2006 most of the Jews living in Bluffton traveled to one of the synagogues on nearby Hilton Head Island or in Savannah for religious services, while a few made the 30-mile drive to Beaufort. Then, four years ago, 17 people from Hilton Head and Bluffton met to discuss the possibility of forming a new congregation closer to home. Six couples put up some seed money, rented a church, and printed a small number of custom-designed siddurim, calculating that about 50 people would attend the first service of this newly formed, non-affiliated eclectic congregation, Temple Oseh Shalom.

The inaugural service was conducted in June 2006 and,

to the surprise of all, 165 Jews—mostly from Bluffton, with some from Hilton Head—showed up. In just four years, the congregation has ballooned to upwards of 500 members, 83 percent of whom live in Sun City, 8 percent in greater Bluffton, 7 percent on Hilton Head Island, 1.5 percent in Beaufort and Ridgeland, and .5 percent in other nearby communities. The new residents come from across the country, from the eastern seaboard to the west coast.

Among the temple's original organizers was Rav Bob Wiener, who volunteered to serve temporarily as the group's spiritual leader and who remained in that position until recently, when Rabbi Robert Seigel from Charleston was hired on a part-time basis to lead the congregation.

Oseh Shalom serves its members in ways most congregations do not. The minimal dues structure (currently \$25.00 per year) is subsidized by voluntary contributions from members at times of Yahrzeit, illness, mitzvot, and through an annual Yom Kippur appeal. There is no building fund. Rather, the congregation rents space at a local Presbyterian church that not only permits the use of its sanctuary and social hall, but also has accommodated storage of the ark, Torahs, and other ritual items. Complementing the strong ties between Lowcountry Presbyterian Church and Temple Oseh Shalom



President Al Reuben bensching lulav on Sukkot, October 16, 2009. Photo: Judy Glazer.



Temple Oseh Shalom presently rents space in a Presbyterian church in Bluffton for Shabbat services on the third Friday evening of each month. A portable ark is to the right of the bimah.



Rav Bob Wiener and Cantor Ken Rosenberg (in cap) dedicate Oseh Shalom Gardens, a section of Bluffton Cemetery. Photo: Judy Glazer and Sue Wiener.



*Judy Glazer and Cantor Ken Rosenberg with Jewish Marine recruits at Parris Island, November 2009. Photo: Jeff Glazer.*

is an ecumenical outreach program that houses and feeds the homeless for short periods in various religious institutions in the area.

The temple's adult education program supports a variety of opportunities, including two Torah study groups. After a year of study, nine congregants honored the congregation last October by celebrating the temple's second b'nai mitzvah service. There has been no need for a Hebrew or Sunday school for children because the overwhelming majority of the membership's children are grown, although one teenager has celebrated her bat mitzvah after intense tutoring and preparation.

A lay cantor and 17-member choir, led by a music director, supplement the congregation's singing and provide music to enhance services. Land in an existing cemetery was recently consecrated for Temple Oseh Shalom Gardens, a Jewish burial ground with room for up to 500 grave sites.

Oseh Shalom is a congregation of active adults with the time, skills, and desire to take part in diverse projects. The



*Table set with traditional foods for Tu b'Shevat seder, January 2010. Photo: Judy Glazer.*

temple's board of directors is supported by volunteers serving on 15 committees. The Sisterhood and Men's Club donate innumerable hours to regional organizations, including local schools. At nearby Parris Island Marine Corps Depot congregants provide weekly and High Holiday services for recruits at the facility's Jewish chapel.

Temple Oseh Shalom's phenomenal rise is attributable not only to dramatic population growth, but to its members' dedication to the educational and spiritual enrichment of their fellow Jews and their involvement in programs that benefit the greater community. The congregation is likely to be a strong presence in the region for decades to come.



*Bat mitzvah class of 2009. Left to right (top row): Moreh Rav Bob Wiener, Carol Rosenberg, Ellie Crystal, Ellen Altman, Judy Glazer; (front row) Phyllis Wilner, Susan Safranek, Jan Mintz, Ruth Kashine, and Minnie Levine. Photo: Sue Wiener.*



*Larry Katz plants a tree in the temple's Bluffton burial ground, Oseh Shalom Gardens, January 16, 2010. Photo: Jackie Katz.*



# JHSSC Meeting Schedule

## Bluffton, SC – Sunday, May 2, 2010

All activities take place at the Beaufort County Library

Bluffton Branch, 120 Palmetto Way

Bluffton, SC 29910

Phone: (843) 757-1519 Fax: (843) 757-1505

**10:30 a.m. Registration**

**10:45 a.m. Welcome**

Ann Meddin Hellman, President, JHSSC

**11:00 a.m. Hilton Head/Bluffton:**

**Decades of Phenomenal Growth**

Alvin B. Reuben, President, Oseh Shalom

**11:30 a.m. Sewing a Thin Gray Line:**

**Jews who Made Uniforms for the Union and Confederacy**

Adam Mendelsohn, College of Charleston

**12:45 p.m. Luncheon**

**Comments and Hamotzi**

Rabbi Robert Seigel

**2:00 p.m. Port Jews and Plantation Jews:**

**Carolina/Caribbean Connections**

Dale Rosengarten, College of Charleston

**3:15 p.m. Open JHSSC Board Meeting**

### BLUFFTON HOTEL INFORMATION

**Holiday Inn Express**

**35 Bluffton Road**

**Bluffton, SC 29910**

Phone: (843) 757-2002 Fax: (843) 757-2425

**\$79.95/night (includes breakfast)**

**Special rate available until April 23<sup>rd</sup>. You must make your own reservations. Use code JHS or ask for a room in the Jewish Historical Society room block.**

### Bluffton Meeting Registration

You may also register online at: [www.jhssc.org](http://www.jhssc.org)

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

*The cost for this meeting is \$18 per person.*

Total Amount Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Return form to:**

**JHSSC / Jewish Studies Program**

**96 Wentworth Street**

**Charleston, SC 29424**

## Directions

*From Holiday Inn Express to library, head south on Bluffton Road (SC 46), left on Johnston, and right on Palmetto Way to the Bluffton Library (1.3 miles). If you are driving in on Sunday morning, follow US 278 (William Hilton Parkway) and turn right into Bluffton Road (SC 46). Proceed as above to the library.*



# The Jews of Anderson, South Carolina: Merchants and Manufacturers

by Alyssa Neely

The first Jews to settle in Anderson, the Lessers, came from Prussia by way of New York and Georgia and were established in the town well before the Civil War. During the post-war occupation of South Carolina, Michael and Martha Lesser took an injured Union soldier, Oscar Geisberg, an observant Jew who hailed from Vienna, into their home, and in 1871, their daughter, Carrie, married him. It appears that, for Geisberg and the Lessers, a common religious background trumped regional alliances.

Reflecting the national pattern, Anderson's Jews tended to be merchants of one sort or another. The Lessers ran a mercantile store on the main square and a number of their children and grandchildren followed them into the dry goods business. Dora Geisberg, Oscar and Carrie's daughter, owned D. Geisberg's Millinery, a ladies' ready-to-wear shop. Her brother, Harry, operated a shoe store, while his wife, Sadie, offered ladies clothing at The Vogue Shop. Another Geisberg brother, Leo, sold general merchandise. Oscar reputedly tried his hand at storekeeping but was not successful. He was active in civic affairs in his adopted hometown, however, as an organizer of the YMCA and the Board of Trade. In 1878, there were some 17 Jewish residents in Anderson, most or all of whom were members of the Lesser and Geisberg families.



*Reuben Siegel played football and boxed for Clemson University, ca. 1930. Photos courtesy of Paul Siegel.*

As the area's economic base shifted from agriculture to a combination of farming and manufacturing, the face of the Jewish community changed. Among the influx of Eastern European immigrants in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were the Fleishman and Siegel families. Sam Fleishman was one of nine brothers who fanned out across southern North Carolina and northern South Carolina and established as many as 15 general merchandise stores. He opened his Anderson store in 1906 and soon was joined by his 12-year-old nephew, Nathan, who, two decades later, would succeed him in the business, Fleishman's "Outfitter from Head to Foot for Men, Women, and Children."

Max Siegel left Russia just after 1900 and settled in New York's Lower East Side. Unhappy with the cold winters and the big city atmosphere, he boarded a train headed south in 1908. His money took him as far as Anderson where he peddled first and later established a livestock business, supplying meat to local markets and Clemson College.

Max's company thrived, enabling him not only to survive the Great Depression, but to provide assistance to the municipality. When the mayor and the city council approached him for help meeting the city's payroll, he loaned them \$50,000. He also was affluent enough to acquire the Anderson country club which, ironically, did not admit Jews. One year later he sold it to the city for the same price he paid, but when the city fathers offered him membership, he declined. Max's son, Sam,



*Left to right: Sadie, Minnie, and Julia Cohen, Elberton, GA, 1904. Sadie moved to Anderson in 1914 when she married Harry Geisberg. Her daughter, Caroline, married Louis Funkenstein. Photo courtesy of Louis and Caroline Funkenstein.*



recalled in a 1996 interview, “My father told them, ‘Nope, if the Jewish people can’t be a member, I don’t want to be a member.’”

Born in 1915, Sam recollected a childhood blighted by a lack of Jewish playmates and the taunts of other children. He was acutely aware of the power of the Ku Klux Klan, whose members, he said, controlled every facet of city life. He observed that while white Christians “tolerated” Jews, anti-Semitic attitudes prevented outright acceptance. During his high school years, the taunting subsided, which Sam attributed to the popularity of his older brother, Reuben, a star athlete who lettered in three sports at Clemson. Reuben’s football and boxing prowess won him the respect of admirers and he became known as “The Jewish Juggernaut” or “Jew Boy Siegel.”

Nathan Fleishman’s son, Alvin, born six years after Sam Siegel, estimated that 15 to 20 Jewish families lived in Anderson during his childhood. Though many stayed only briefly before moving on, he remembered having Jewish friends. Apparently his cohort was not numerous enough, however, to warrant a Sunday school. Nathan hired a rabbi to instruct him and, in 1934, Alvin’s bar mitzvah was the first to take place in the city of Anderson. “I made the day of my fountain pen speech at the Elks Club. It was the hit of the community for a while. They tried to figure out what those Jews were and they saw me and they decided, well, maybe they’re not too bad after all.”

Alvin also claimed in a 1998 interview that the Anderson congregation had existed as long as he could remember. The date of its founding and when it adopted the name B’nai Israel, however, remain unclear. Younger members of the second generation recall Sabbath services taking place with some



*Rosenblum family Passover seder, 1941. Photo courtesy of Raymond and Sandra Lee Rosenblum.*

regularity by the late 1930s, when the city’s Jewish population numbered roughly 72, mostly Eastern European immigrants and their offspring. Congregants met in the Woodmen of the World hall and, later, in a room over a grocery store, where High Holy Days services, Sunday school classes, and Purim plays also were held.

While some English made its way into the Hebrew liturgy, services were Orthodox, led by lay readers. Men and women sat separately. Members of the congregation taught Sunday school and hired rabbinical students from New York for the High Holy Days. Rabbi David Karesh, of Columbia’s House of Peace synagogue, presided over circumcisions, which were always held on Sundays, the day the merchants closed their stores. The Yiddish-speaking community with its strong sense of connectedness left an indelible impression on Raymond Rosenblum, who grew up on Peachtree Street in the 1930s. “The Jews of Anderson at that time were one extended family. Everybody knew everybody else’s business.”

In the years before World War II, virtually all of Anderson’s Jewish families operated businesses. Reuben Siegel returned from college and continued to trade livestock, opening his own barn. Nathan and Freida Rosenblum, Polish immigrants who had moved to Anderson in 1933 after trying their luck in Miami, Florida, and three other South Carolina towns, went into the dry goods business, selling new and used clothing. Nathan served as the cantor at Sabbath services.

Jules Kaplan moved to Anderson from Pennsylvania in the late ’30s and opened a shirt factory. He volunteered as a lay leader of the congregation’s weekly services. Ted Fleishman first worked for his brother Nathan, then opened his own store, The Hub. Younger brother Joe moved to Anderson in 1937 with his wife, Libby, and joined his brothers in the family businesses, which had grown to include a liquor store.

Sam Siegel, in the late 1930s, ran the Bern & Siegel Mule Company with his brother-in-law, Sam Bern, and achieved some renown by offering a helping hand to immigrant Kurt



*Lt. Allen Rosenblum, pilot for the U.S. Army’s “Mighty Eighth” Air Force, flew 56 missions before being shot down over Germany in April 1945. The decorated pilot returned home safely after three weeks in a POW camp in Austria. The swastika on “Rosey’s” plane was a trophy from a German aircraft he shot down. Photo courtesy of Raymond and Sandra Lee Rosenblum.*



*Newsstand acquired by Kurt Sax, an Austrian Jewish immigrant, 1942. A neighbor remarked, "It would be only a matter of time until he owns the whole block." Photo courtesy of Kurt Sax.*

toward a successful career as an executive in a large, well-respected company on the west coast.

In the 1940s, a rabbi reportedly came to conduct services on Sunday mornings and the congregation hired George Ackerman of nearby Walhalla, a Hebrew teacher and cantor, to lead High Holy Days services. Adult members continued to teach Sunday school classes and bar mitzvah candidates, and a chapter of B'nai Brith was chartered in 1945.

Max Siegel, Nathan Fleishman, Hyman Draisen, Sam Bern, and Nathan Rosenblum, among others, led the drive to build a synagogue—a 150-seat sanctuary with adjacent



*Left to right: Michael Fleishman, Steven Siegel, and Edward Poliakoff ushering at Harriet Fleishman's confirmation in the 1950s. Photo courtesy of Libby Fleishman.*

Sax, who had fled German-occupied Austria in 1939 and landed in Anderson at age 19. Sam gave the needy and ambitious young man a dollar and a note to hand other local Jewish business owners, urging them to do the same. The assistance Kurt received enabled him to open a kiosk, where he sold a "complete line of magazines, newspapers, soft drinks, cigarettes, cigars, tobaccos," and gave him a kick-start

classrooms, social hall, and kitchen. Supported by a Jewish population that had nearly doubled since 1937, Temple B'nai Israel was completed in 1948, in time for its first bar mitzvah, Ronald Bern. According to Ron, who wrote about growing up Jewish in Anderson in his 1975 novel, *The Legacy*, the impetus behind the building project was his grandfather Max Siegel's desire to see the ceremony take place in a proper synagogue. With a congregational membership of 20 to 25

families, the women organized a Sisterhood and affiliated with the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods.

Anderson's manufacturing industry continued to grow in the 1950s as Duke Power Company came on line and construction began on the Hartwell Dam. The promise of a substantial power supply was just one of a number of attractions for would-be manufacturers, such as Bill and Elaine Epstein, who moved to Anderson in 1953 and opened a ladies' apparel factory, Iva Manufacturing Company. The business became quite successful, expanding to include six plants. Bill developed a patent on a sewing device and was recognized by Clemson University for his management style.

Louis Funkenstein, who married Caroline Geisberg, a granddaughter of Oscar and Carrie Geisberg, moved to Anderson at the end of World War II and, with the encouragement of Jules Kaplan, opened a plant that manufactured paper boxes. Jules used Louis's boxes to pack his shirts.

By the 1950s, B'nai Israel's Orthodoxy appears to have been a source of contention among members. Funkenstein, among others, wanted the congregation to align its practices with the Conservative movement. Nathan Fleishman reportedly encouraged his fellow elders to defer to the younger generation regarding ritual preferences in order to keep them involved. The senior members followed his advice and the two groups compromised. Weekly services followed Conservative customs, while High Holy Days were observed according to Orthodox tradition. Men and women sat together and the Sunday school was well attended.

The congregation's flexibility helped keep it viable as the first generation of immigrants gave way to second and third generation Americans. In the 1950s, B'nai Israel hired Rabbi Goldberg, a retired Reform rabbi living in Augusta, Georgia, to provide services once a month and on High Holy Days. He served the congregation for many years, including presiding over marriages and funerals.

Sons and daughters of immigrant families who stayed in Anderson tended to operate their own businesses and take seriously their civic duties. Reuben Siegel, who had left the live-



*Caroline Geisberg and Louis Funkenstein, wedding photo, 1943. Photo courtesy of Louis and Caroline Funkenstein.*





*Alvin Fleishman emcees at Temple B'nai Israel's 50th anniversary celebration in 1998. Photo: Dale Rosengarten. Special Collections, College of Charleston.*

stock business and gone into finance, was a charter member of the Anderson Sertoma Club, served as its president, and was influential in creating its Scholarship Awards Program. In appreciation of his years of service to the community, the Club established the Reuben Siegel Scholarship Award in 1983.

Inspired by the struggles of one of his brothers, Reuben devoted much of his time to improving the quality of life for people suffering with mental illness. He served as president and vice president of the Anderson County Mental Health Association, and helped to establish the Anderson-Oconee-Pickens Mental Health Center and the Patrick B. Harris Psychiatric Hospital. In 1986, Reuben was recognized by the Anderson mental health community for his leadership in fundraising and advocacy. A gymnasium at the Harris Hospital was named in his honor, marked by a dedication ceremony at which Rabbi Israel Gerber, one of B'nai Israel's visiting rabbis, offered the invocation.



*Executive Officer Louis Funkenstein (left) on the seaplane tender USS Curtiss in the South Pacific, ca. 1943. Photo courtesy of Louis and Caroline Funkenstein.*

A number of Jewish-owned businesses continue to operate in Anderson and neighboring towns today. They include manufacturers, retailers and wholesalers, and a music company. Most Jews living in the area, however, work in professions such as education, medicine, and the law.

Participation in Sabbath services dwindled in the 1970s and '80s. Perhaps to attract more members, B'nai Israel joined the Reform movement, a move that appears to have led to a return to regular Sabbath services. Temple B'nai Israel's official affiliation with the Reform movement, however, was brief. The congregation did not maintain its relationship with the national



*Members and friends celebrate Temple B'nai Israel's 50th anniversary, June 1998. Photo: Dale Rosengarten. Special Collections, College of Charleston.*

organization and today its practices are not explicitly aligned with either the Conservative or Reform traditions.

While the B'nai Brith chapter has not been active in decades, the Sisterhood continues to function. Currently, 36 families—few with young children, however—belong to the congregation. They meet Friday evenings for Sabbath observance led by members. On the High Holy Days, the temple fills up for services conducted by Robert Kimmel and his son, Brian. While the congregation is small, membership losses are offset by newcomers, mostly retirees, and B'nai Israel is optimistic about its future.

### ISJL Online Encyclopedia

*Drawn from material in the College of Charleston's Jewish Heritage Collection, illustrated histories of several South Carolina Jewish communities, including Anderson, have been added to the Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities, produced by the Institute of Southern Jewish Life, based in Jackson, Mississippi. Go to [www.isjl.org/history/archive](http://www.isjl.org/history/archive) and click on SC. Please send comments and corrections to [neelya@cofc.edu](mailto:neelya@cofc.edu). We are especially interested in finding photographs of Jewish-owned stores, family events, congregational activities, and streetscapes in these South Carolina locales.*

# Rural Rabbis for the Carolinas

by Jonathan Cohen



*I. D. Blumenthal flanked by “traveling rabbis” Howard Friedman and George Ackerman, ca. 1950. Photo: Gift of Sarah Burgen Ackerman. Special Collections, College of Charleston.*

ism’s influence are visible. Yet, with the passage of time, things change. Jews in small towns such as Orangeburg and Sumter now face the consequences of an exodus of younger generations to metropolitan centers like Charleston, Atlanta, Charlotte, and Raleigh. While these cities have seen their Jewish populations double over the past 20 years, small-town congregations across South Carolina have dwindled.



*Congregants of Beth Israel Synagogue, Beaufort, SC, 2000. Photo: Bill Aron.*

A journey across South Carolina from the upcountry to the lowlands affords travelers glimpses of the historical imprint Jews have left on the Palmetto State. From Aiken to Anderson, from Beaufort to Bishopville, from Chester to Conway, signs of Judaism’s influence are visible. Yet, with the passage of time, things change. Jews in small towns such as Orangeburg and Sumter now face the consequences of an exodus of younger generations to metropolitan centers like Charleston, Atlanta, Charlotte, and Raleigh. While these cities have seen their Jewish populations double over the past 20 years, small-town congregations across South Carolina have dwindled.

A native of Kinston, North Carolina, and a rabbinical student at the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies in Los Angeles, California, I recently conceived the idea for a program to help offset these demographic trends. In partnership with Rabbi Robert Seigel—the first South Carolinian ordained as a rabbi—I have launched a new non-profit, pluralistic outreach effort called the Rural Jewish Initiative for the Carolinas, or RJIC, which aims to supply student rabbis to congregations on a part-time basis.

At the present time, three South Carolina congregations are participating in the RJIC—Temple B’nai Israel in Anderson, Temple Beth Elohim in Georgetown, and Beth Israel in Beaufort. After Pesach this year, services will be led once a month by rabbinical students from the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies, the Jewish Theological Seminary, and Hebrew Union College.



*Temple Beth Elohim, Georgetown, SC, 2000. Photo: Bill Aron.*

RJIC is modeled on a “circuit-riding rabbi” program established by I. D. Blumenthal that provided itinerant rabbis to rural North Carolina and border towns in South Carolina from the 1950s through the 1970s. This program received such notoriety that in 1955, Harold Friedman, “The Traveling Rabbi,” was featured in *Life* magazine detailing his trek of more than 1,200 miles every two weeks to serve some 300 Jewish families in ten communities.

Today more than 14 congregations in North and South Carolina do not have full-time clergy, which means some 1,000 affiliated Jews are without rabbinic resources. In many cases these communities are geographically isolated with the nearest rabbi several hours away. Our goal is to ensure that no more synagogues in North or South Carolina close their doors. By providing rabbinic support and empowering congregational lay leaders, we hope to shape a future for Judaism in the Carolinas that will carry forth through the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

If you or your congregation would like more information on the Rural Jewish Initiative for the Carolinas, please call me at (786) 487-5004 or write to: [jonathan.yahel.cohen@gmail.com](mailto:jonathan.yahel.cohen@gmail.com).



# My Brother, My Teacher: Solomon Breibart

by Jack Breibart



Photo: Bill Aron, 2000.

The scene is my father's grocery store at 743 Meeting Street, in Charleston, corner of Maple, probably in 1937. I am six years old and sitting on the broad wooden counter that separates the customers from the family. My brother, Solly, then 23, is showing me the *News and Courier* sports

pages and he is asking me to sound out the names—mainly Italian—in the New York Yankees lineup. I'm sure he knew it was a difficult assignment but that was Solly. There were standards to be met and, no matter how high, one should at least try to meet them. He never, never wavered from this belief.

This is one of my earliest memories of Solly, who died the last day of October 2009, a week shy of his 95<sup>th</sup> birthday, after a lifetime of touching people with his teaching, writings, and the strength of his personality. Sol became a legendary figure in the southern Jewish historical community and we were always proud of his accomplishments, but to the family he was first a son or a brother.

The story at the counter is significant because it is a metaphor for a relationship between brothers who were almost 17 years apart. Sol was not my companion but my teacher, my mentor, my hero.

Solly and I were the bookends of five children born to Sam Breibart and Ida Goldberg, who immigrated to the United States from Russia in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, met and got married in New York, and then moved to Charleston to join Ida's brother, Harry Goldberg, in the grocery business.

Our family was spaced. Two years after Solly came George. Six years later, to the day, there was Mickey. Five years later Sidney, and then, almost three years later, me.

Like many Jewish families in Charleston at the time, we lived above the store. In many ways, the store dictated our routine. Open from early in the morning until late at night seven days a week, the business was entirely staffed by family—sometimes not without complaint. It was closed a full day only on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

Except on Jewish holidays, meals were seldom eaten together. My mother's kitchen would be open for dinner—

southern noontime dinner—from around noon to 3 o'clock, depending on demands of the store and school schedules.

We lived together as a family only ten years—from 1931 when I was born until 1941 when George married Bertha Lazarus from Summerville. The next year Sol married Sara Bolgla from Augusta and left the household, although he had been away a couple of years before that at graduate school at the University of North Carolina.

This was the period of the Great Depression. My father was 39 and my mother 37 in 1931. They were busy keeping the store going, raising five children, and helping our black and white low-income customers through hard times with extended credit.



Sol, ever studious, with his brother George, and Buddy Shukoff of Atlanta, in the Breibart family grocery store, ca. 1935.



Sam Breibart Groceries, 743 Meeting Street, Charleston, SC, ca. 1930. Left to right: Ida Breibart holding baby Sidney, Sol, Mildred (Mickey), and Sam.



*Sol becoming a bar mitzvah, 1927.*

Solly was already a super academic achiever but, like George, he had to clerk in the store, deliver groceries, and keep an eye on the younger siblings. He had been the top graduate at James Simons grammar school and the High School of Charleston, and later again at the College of Charleston. I can't remember how many times my mother asked, "Why aren't you more like Solly?"

Much of my upbringing fell to Sol. He labored with me through my public school assignments and Hebrew school lessons. He took me to baseball games and let me be batboy for the Jewish Community Center softball teams on which he played shortstop and outfield. He criticized my batting stance. He introduced me to encyclopedias and the wonders to be found in books, newspapers, and magazines. Later, when I started writing for the *News and Courier*, he would praise me and then point out errors of grammar. "That is a transitive verb and needs an object," he would say.

Solly led us all into the world of the Jewish youth fraternity, Aleph Zadik Aleph (AZA). He was the first in the family to become Aleph Godol (president), followed in that position by George and later Sidney and me. Mickey got in the act, too. She was the chapter "Sweetheart."

Family stories of Sol's early years always focused on independence—or "stubbornness," as my mother would say—honesty and modesty.

I also remember his playful side. He liked to take me and Sidney for rides in the car and on the way home turn off



*Left: Sol as a graduate of James Simons grammar school, 1928. Right: Sol on the sax and his cousin Joe Cohen on the fiddle, ca. 1929.*



the motor and coast into a parking place outside the store. And then there was his ear wiggling which pleased a couple of generations of the family. He also pleased generations of Charlestonians with his beloved saxophone, which he got in childhood and played in dance bands and the symphony in the 1930s and '40s and the county band in the next century.

There is one image of Sol which still shocks me because he always seemed to be in complete control of himself. I think it was at the wedding reception for George and Bertha at the Meeting Street house. Solly is sitting at the top of the stairs on the back porch, utterly drunk and talking nonsense.

It probably was the only time in his life.

I figure that Solly lived about 34,700 days—give or take leap years. It was a good, productive life.

We in the family miss our tribal chief.



*Sol and his students on the steps of the High School of Charleston, 1940s.*

**JHSSC lost a great friend when Solomon Breibart (b. November 8, 1914) passed away on October 31, 2009. Sol helped found the Society in 1994, sat on its board of directors for 15 years, and was one of only three recipients of the Order of the Jewish Palmetto, JHSSC's highest award. He was instrumental in reviving the Southern Jewish Historical Society in 1976 and he planted the seeds that led to the establishment of the Jewish Heritage Collection at the College of Charleston in 1995. His *Explorations in Charleston's Jewish History* (History Press, 2005), a compilation of essays carefully wrought over a long and productive career, remains a lasting legacy and a gift to the city of his birth.**

*All photos are gifts of Solomon Breibart. Special Collections, College of Charleston.*



# Under a Magnolia Tree: Discovering Lopez Family Roots in South Carolina

by John Franklin Davis with Linda Montedonico Davis



*John Davis at the grave of his ancestor David Lopez, Jr., in the Coming Street Cemetery, Charleston, SC. The ornate tomb of Lopez's first wife, Catherine Dobyn Hinton, is in the background. All photos courtesy of John Davis.*

As I grew into adulthood, I became interested in learning about the Lopez side of our family. My grandfather, Moses E. Lopez, Jr., died when I was one year old. My mother, Jane Hinton Lopez Morris, had no records of her Lopez background nor did she know where her father was buried, except to say he was buried “under a magnolia tree” in Charleston, South Carolina.

Linda, and I discovered Magnolia Cemetery. This seemed like a logical place to start looking. We went to Magnolia’s administrative office and asked if a Moses E. Lopez was buried there. Superintendent Beverly Donald was thrilled to meet us, as she had been looking many years for a Lopez heir.

Ms. Donald took us to the family plot. There were headstones in place for Moses E. Lopez, Sr., and his wife, Cecilia Cohen, who died in 1907 and 1909 respectively. The records showed that Moses E. Lopez, Jr., was buried there in 1934, but no tombstone marked his grave.

Linda, our daughter Mary Jane, and I made another trip to Charleston in 2009. We had a headstone erected for my grandfather and we buried my mother and father’s ashes beside him.

While in Charleston we also visited the Coming Street Cemetery where my great-great-grandfather, David Lopez, Jr., is buried. Lopez pur-



*A live oak stands over the graves of Moses E. Lopez, Sr., and his wife, Cecilia Cohen, in Magnolia Cemetery.*

chased the family plot in 1843, when his first wife, Catherine Dobyn Hinton, died in childbirth. Because she was not Jewish she was denied burial in the cemetery of Shearit Israel, the congregation that David belonged to at the time. He purchased land adjacent to the Orthodox burial ground, which itself was separated by a wall from the newly reformed Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim.

Today, the wall has come down and Lopez himself is warmly remembered for his work rebuilding Charleston after the fire of 1838. He built KKBE’s second sanctuary, still standing at 86 Hasell Street, as well as many other buildings, including the Glebe Street Presbyterian Church (now Mt. Zion AME Church), and the Farmers’ and Exchange Bank at 141 E. Bay Street, notable for its Moorish architectural style and designated a National Historic Landmark in 1980.

Our excitement at discovering some of the Lopez family history has inspired us to plan another trip for further explorations.



*In 2009, the Davis family erected a marker for the author’s grandparents and buried his parents’ ashes in the Lopez plot at Magnolia Cemetery.*

# Center Talk *by Adam Mendelsohn*

**T**he new Center for Southern Jewish Culture at the College of Charleston has made impressive strides over the past few months. Both the Jewish Heritage Collection and the Jewish Studies Program have received prestigious grants that will help us bring our passion for southern Jewish history to a broader audience. We aim, quite simply, to become the region's leading center for researching, documenting, teaching, and popularizing Jewish history and culture of the American South.

In November the Jewish Heritage Collection was awarded \$184,000 by the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) to process and catalog recently acquired

our year of events and programs will focus on the theme, "Jews, Slavery, and the Civil War."

Beginning next fall we plan to sponsor guided walking tours that provide a window onto the world of Charleston's antebellum Jews, and a series of public lectures by speakers from the Lowcountry and beyond. We are working with the National Park Service to develop special cruises to Fort Sumter highlighting Jewish participation in the Confederate war effort.

Plans are underway to host a two-day conference at the end of May 2011, featuring leading scholars, including Jonathan Sarna, Gary Zola, Pamela Nadell, and Eric Goldstein.



*The Last Council of War of Confederate President Jefferson Davis with his military chiefs and advisors, a mural by Wilbur G. Kurtz, 1922. At Davis's left sits Judah P. Benjamin. Collection of the City of Abbeville, SC.*

archival materials. These include the magnificent William A. Rosenthal Judaica Collection; 75 collections donated by survivors, liberators, and eyewitnesses of the Shoah who have settled in South Carolina; and more than a hundred new collections documenting southern Jewish life.

CLIR's support is a ringing endorsement of the importance of the archives and a cause for celebration. As one of only 14 successful candidates among 91 applicants, JHC now faces the task of raising additional funds to match the grant.

The Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program also has good news to report. In December, the Program was awarded \$22,000 by the Legacy Heritage Jewish Studies Project to organize a year-long series of public events in Charleston. The College of Charleston was one of five applicants selected from a national pool to pioneer this new initiative. To commemorate the upcoming 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Civil War,

Sessions will cover a broad range of topics, such as Jewish attitudes toward slavery and abolition, Jewish soldiering and wartime service, the Jewish experience on the home front, and the roles Jews played during the eras of Reconstruction and the return to "white rule." The conference will be open to the public and we very much hope you'll join us for the discussion and debate.

The College also has added to the Jewish Studies curriculum. In January, I began teaching a class on the history of Jews in the South, the first of a regular rotation of new courses we will offer on southern Jewish life. Twenty-seven students are enrolled in the class. You are welcome to sign up for these new offerings in future semesters.

Only a few months since its inception, the Center for Southern Jewish Culture is beginning to blossom. Your help and enthusiasm will enable us to thrive.



## New Gifts to the Jewish H

## בסימן טוב

רביעי בשבת אחד עשר יום לחודש ניסן שנת חמשת אלפים ושלש מאות  
 ושתים עשרה לבריאת עולם ושבעים ושלש לחרות אמריקא למנוח שאנו בונים  
 כאן סאואנה במדינת דשורדשיא איך הבהור אברהם בר שלום המוכנה  
 אונספוס אורילוס סולומון אמר לה להרא בתולתא קאמאריין איליאבית  
 בת ברוך הכהן המוכנה קאמאריין איליאבית בהן הוי לי לאנתו כדת משה וישראל  
 ואנא אפלה ואקיר ואקיר ואפרנס ימיני בהלכות ליברין יהודאין דפלאחין ומוקדסין וזלן  
 ומפרנסין לזליהון בקיטטא ויהיבנא ליכי מהר בתוליכי כסף זוזי מאתן דרדלי ליידי  
 מדאורייתא ומחזיקי וכסותי וסיפיקי ומיעל לותיבי באורח כל ארעא ועבארת  
 מרת קאמאריין איליאבית בתולתא הא וחות ליה לאנתו ודין נדוניא דהנעלות ליה  
 מבי לשי בין כסף בין כדהב בין בתכשיטין במאלי דלבושא ובשמושא דערסא דמושין  
 לטריין ועבי אברהם המוכנה אונספוס אורילוס סולומון חתן דלן והוספה מן די ליה  
 חמשיין לטריין סך הכל מאה לטריין דכסף וכן אמר אברהם המוכנה אונספוס  
 אורילוס סולומון חתן דלן אחריות שלר כתובתא דא ותוספתא דין קבליר  
 עלי ועל ירתי כתרא להתפרע מכל שפר ארג נכסין וקלניין דאית לי תרומה  
 כל שמיא דקנא ודעתיד אנא למקנא נכסין דאית להון אחריות ודלית להון  
 אחריות כלהון יהון אהראין וערבאין לפרוע מנהון שלר כתובתא דא ותוספתא  
 דין ואפילו מן גלימא דעל כתפאי בתים וכמות מן יומא דלן ולעלם ואחריות  
 שלר כתובתא דא ותוספתא דין קבל עליו אברהם המוכנה אונספוס אורילוס  
 סולומון חתן דלן כחומר כל שלרי כתובות ותוספתות דלנהון בבגרת ישראל  
 העשוין בתיקון הול דלא כאסמכתא ודלא כטופסי דשטרי וקנינא סך  
 אברהם בר שלום המוכנה אונספוס אורילוס סולומון חתן דלן למכת קאמאריין  
 איליאבית בת ברוך הכהן המוכנה קאמאריין איליאבית בהן בתולתא דא  
 בנה מה דכרת ומפורש לעיל במנא דכשר למקנא עליו

הכר שרידי וקדים

חתן

עד

עד





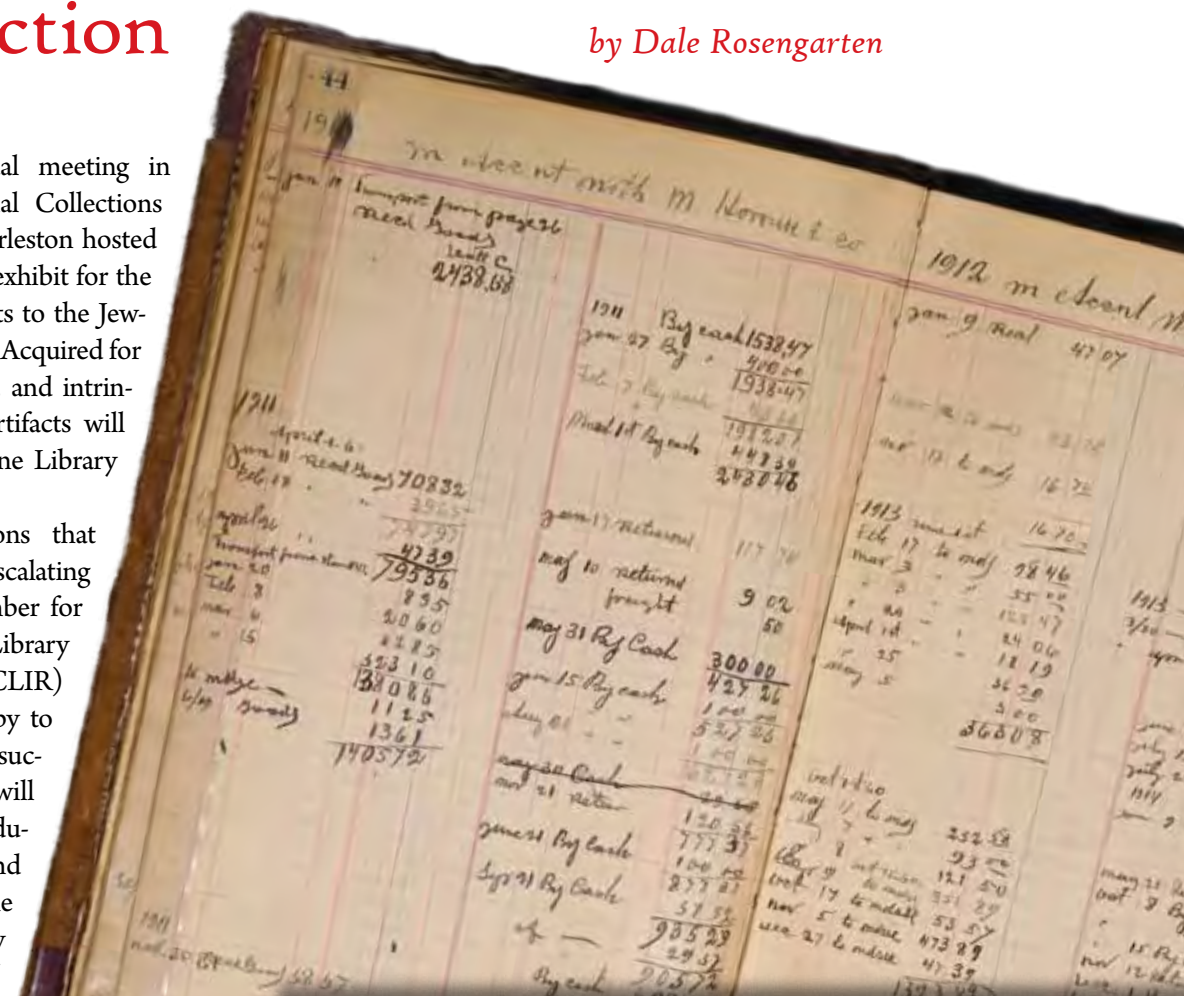
# Heritage Collection

by Dale Rosengarten

During JHSSC's annual meeting in October 2009, Special Collections at the College of Charleston hosted an open house and created an exhibit for the occasion showcasing recent gifts to the Jewish Heritage Collection (JHC). Acquired for their rarity, age, research value, and intrinsic worth, these remarkable artifacts will remain on display in Addlestone Library through May 2010.

To process the collections that flow into our archives at an escalating pace, JHC applied last September for a grant from the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) in Washington D.C. I am happy to report that our application was successful and, in July 2010, we will add a project archivist and graduate intern to our archival team and tackle our backlog in earnest. The wonderful materials currently on view represent just a few of the collections soon to be arranged, described, catalogued, and made available to students and researchers around the globe. Among the treasures are:

- The ketubah of Augustus Aurelius Solomons (1829–1891) and Catherine (Kate) E. Cohen (1833–1876); photos of the couple and several of their children; and tintypes of two servants who worked for the family, including Susie Grantham, a “cook for the Solomons for years & a fine one.” The collection includes a wide range of 19<sup>th</sup>-century imaging techniques—daguerreotypes, tintypes, cabinet cards, and a miniature portrait. Donated by Barbara Schwartz Burchstead.
- A ledger from the Yelman dry goods store in St. Matthews, recording accounts with suppliers and customers between 1909 and 1919; a 1930s photo of Judah and Hannah Gordin Yelman, Russian immigrants who moved to South Carolina from New York in 1908 and within a year had opened their “Jewish hardware”; and a group portrait of the Yelman and Gordin families on the front porch of the Yelmans’ home, ca. 1923. Gifts of Shep Yelman and his daughter Brenda Y. Lederman.







- A photo album packed with pictures of Sumter's Jewish gentry, including a photograph of a Purim party for Temple Sinai Sunday school children, ca. 1913, at the home of Perry and Rosalie Virginia Levy Moses—the son and daughter-in-law of Andrew Jackson Moses and his wife Octavia Harby. The album, compiled by Samuel Harby, is a gift from Emily Cribb Moise.

- On display is a sampling of prints and postcards from the vast William A. Rosenthall Judaica Collection—166 cubic feet (in archival lingo) comprised of dozens of portfolios of fine art prints of historic synagogues, hundreds of rare books, some dating to the 1600s, tens of thousands of vintage postcards, broadsides, newspapers, manuscripts, cartoons, medals, and games. Gift of Mrs. Irene Rosenthall.

- A photo of the Brith Sholom men and boys' choir led by Reverend Jacob Joseph Simonhoff (center, second row), Charleston, South Carolina, ca. 1916. Harry Simonhoff stands to his father's left, and his younger brother, Sam, is in the front row wearing glasses. Isadore Givner, whose daughters donated the photograph, is seated far right. Gift of Joan G. Bovarnick, Eileen G. Goldfless, and Barbara G. Goodman.

- Four choir books written by Rev. J. J. Simonhoff for soprano, alto, tenor, and bass voices. The rabbi, who emigrated from Lithuania in 1892, served as spiritual leader of Brith Sholom in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Gift of his granddaughter Sherna Simonhoff Brody.





Art and artifacts donated by descendants of some of the state's first families reflect the intellectual vitality of Sumter's Jewish population, but also the sad reality of its decline. The stewards of Temple Sinai have sought safe haven for their heritage in our archives, and several private donors also have made JHC their repository of choice. Visitors to Special Collections can contemplate such original works as:

- A leather-bound copybook of essays by Isaac Harby, scholar, journalist, academy master, political philosopher, and Jewish reformer, as well as several books from his library, donated by his great-great-granddaughter Alice Moore Harrelson.
- Harby's manuscript prayerbook, described by historian and archivist Harlan Greene as "ground zero of Reform Judaism in America," a gift from Temple Sinai.
- A first edition of Penina Moïse's *Fancy's Sketch Book*, donated by Hamilton College library in New York state, and two manuscript lyrics the poet and hymnalist inscribed in an autograph book on the occasion of Octavia Harby's 15<sup>th</sup> birthday, donated by Philip Moïse in memory of his mother, Cecile Rosenberg Moïse.

Just as the waning of small-town congregations creates a windfall for archives, so the closing of Jewish-owned businesses produces a bittersweet yield. Also on exhibit are:

- Promotional materials for Red Goose Shoes from the Lipsitz Department Store, established in 1902 in Beaufort, South Carolina, and operated by the family until February 2009, when they closed their doors for the final time. Also donated by the Lipsitz family are copies of the 1926 program for the first confirmation at Beth Israel and Yiddish New Year's cards exchanged by Beaufort's Jewish families in the early 1900s.

Come and feast your eyes.







THE  
JEWISH  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY  
OF  
SOUTH CAROLINA

Martin Perlmutter, Executive Director  
Enid Idelsohn, Administrator

**Officers**

Ann Meddin Hellman, President  
Phillip Greenberg, Vice President  
Susan D. Altman, Vice President  
Joe Wachter, Vice President  
David J. Cohen, Treasurer  
Rachel G. Barnett, Secretary  
Moss Blachman, Archivist

**Founding President**

Isadore Lourie, o.b.m.

**Past Presidents**

Belinda Gergel  
Richard Gergel  
Edward Poliakoff  
Klyde Robinson  
Robert Rosen  
Jeffrey Rosenblum  
Bernard Warshaw

**Board of Directors**

Gerry Sue Arnold, Columbia  
Doris Baumgarten, Aiken  
Eve M. Berlinsky, Charleston  
Hy Brand, Greenville  
Leah Chase, Charleston  
David Draisen, Anderson  
Robert Dreyfus, Greenville  
Stanley Farbstein, Charleston  
Ben Goldberg, Charleston  
Lyssa Harvey, Columbia  
Alan Kahn, Columbia  
Harriet Keyserling, Beaufort  
Michael Kogan, Charleston  
Harold Kornblut, Latta  
Mike Krupsaw, Anderson  
Mick Lourie, Columbia  
Rose Mark, Beaufort  
Burnet Mendelsohn, Charleston  
I. Harby Moses, Sumter  
Herbert Novit, Hilton Head  
Eli Poliakoff, Charleston  
Alan Reyner, Columbia  
Mickey Rosenblum, Charleston  
Steve Savitz, Columbia

Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina  
96 Wentworth Street  
College of Charleston  
Charleston, SC 29424  
Phone: 843.953.3918  
Email: [jhssc@cofc.edu](mailto:jhssc@cofc.edu)

NON-PROFIT  
U.S. POSTAGE

P - A - I - D

CHARLESTON, SC  
PERMIT No. 485

**Join the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State:** \_\_\_\_ **Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Fax:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ANNUAL DUES FOR 2010 (JANUARY-DECEMBER)**

|       |                                                         |                |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| _____ | <b>Individual/Family Membership</b>                     | <b>\$36</b>    |
| _____ | <b>Friend</b>                                           | <b>\$200</b>   |
| _____ | <b>Sponsor</b>                                          | <b>\$350</b>   |
| _____ | <b>Founding Patron</b>                                  | <b>\$1,000</b> |
| _____ | <b>Pillar (\$1,000 yearly for 5 years)</b>              | <b>\$1,000</b> |
| _____ | <b>Foundational Pillar (\$2,000 yearly for 5 years)</b> | <b>\$2,000</b> |

**Join or renew JHSSC online at [www.jhssc.org](http://www.jhssc.org).  
Enroll your friends and relatives for an additional \$36 each.  
Send us their information and we will inform them of your gift.**

**Register now for the May 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting in Bluffton.  
PLEASE REGISTER EARLY.  
See page 6 for more information.**

*Make checks payable to JHSSC  
and mail to the address above.*

Leader page to JHSSC Fall 2010  
Set your Acrobat Reader to View > Page Display > Two-Up





THE JEWISH  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY  
of SOUTH CAROLINA

FALL 2010 VOLUME XV - NUMBER 2



Fall Meeting  
Sunday  
November 14, 2010  
Anderson, SC  
Pages 10 – 11



Ann Meddin Hellman  
President

#### On the cover:

*Greenville natives, Jack LeRoy Bloom (left) and his brother Melvin Sigmund, ca. 1927. Gift of Miriam Chernoff. Special Collections, College of Charleston.*



The Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina Newsletter is published twice a year.

Dale Rosengarten, editor  
Joseph Rubin, designer

#### Staff:

Alyssa Neely  
Ann Hellman  
Enid Idelsohn  
Susan Altman

[www.jhssc.org](http://www.jhssc.org)

## In this issue

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| <b>From the President of the JHSSC</b> .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 3  |
| Ann Meddin Hellman                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |    |
| <b>Raising Draisens in Anderson</b> .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 4  |
| Alyssa Neely with Judith Draisen Glassman, Bernice Draisen Goldman, and Barry, Samuel, and David Draisen                                                                                                                                                             |    |
| The children of Eunice Poliakoff and Hyman Draisen share their experiences growing up in post-World War II Anderson, where the family ran a business selling jewelry and musical instruments.                                                                        |    |
| <b>A Tribute to Jack and Lillian Bloom, Greenville</b> .....                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 7  |
| Earlier this year, South Carolina lost two civic-minded citizens. Born and raised in New York, Lillian Chernoff met her future husband, Greenville's Jack L. Bloom, when she traveled to South Carolina as a representative of the National Council of Jewish Women. |    |
| <b>Growing Up Jewish in Greenville</b> .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 8  |
| Philip Rovner                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |    |
| A Greenville native found meaning and camaraderie in BBYO, the junior Masonic group DeMolay, and Clemson's Hillel in the 1950s and '60s, when Jews in the upcountry still were typically excluded from social clubs.                                                 |    |
| <b>JHSSC Meets in Anderson, November 14, 2010</b> .....                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 10 |
| A keynote talk by McKissick Museum Director Lynn Robertson, a matinee performance by Yiddish diva Dina Claire, and a wide-ranging conversation about Jewish life in the upstate make JHSSC's fall meeting a must-not-miss event.                                     |    |
| <b>Textiles and Torahs in Spartanburg</b> .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 12 |
| Alyssa Neely                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |    |
| Jewish merchants were attracted to this textile center as early as the 1880s. Steady population growth through the 20 <sup>th</sup> century produced a vital Jewish congregation that thrives today.                                                                 |    |
| <b>My Daddy, My Hero</b> .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 14 |
| Roslyn Goldstein Greenspon                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |    |
| Georgetown's Alwyn Goldstein—storekeeper, community historian, and lay leader at Beth Elohim—passed away on March 16, 2010. His daughter pays homage to 95 years of a life well lived.                                                                               |    |
| <b>A New Beginning: Fort Mill's Kol Ami</b> .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 16 |
| Jonathan Cohen                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |    |
| Prospects for a new congregation in York County, South Carolina, are strong, as more than 150 people attended Kol Ami's first Shabbat service in June.                                                                                                               |    |
| <b>Jews, Slavery, and the Civil War</b> .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 17 |
| Adam Mendelsohn                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |    |
| The Center for Southern Jewish Culture at the College of Charleston will mark the 150 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Civil War with a series of events, starting this fall with walking tours.                                                                     |    |
| <b>Books of Interest</b> .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 18 |
| Harlan Greene reviews Louis Rubin's latest book, <i>Uptown/Downtown in Old Charleston: Sketches and Stories</i> . Robert Rosen reports on <i>Jews and the Civil War: A Reader</i> in time for the sesquicentennial commemoration of the War Between the States.      |    |
| <b>Pillars and Partnerships</b> .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 19 |
| Phillip Greenberg                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |    |
| JHSSC has forged productive partnerships with the College of Charleston over the past 16 years. Its continued well-being rests on the generosity of its Pillars.                                                                                                     |    |



# From the President of the JHSSC

**H**olding JHSSC meetings in towns and cities across South Carolina, I am happy to report, has benefited the Society in many ways. Our May meeting in Bluffton drew a crowd of more than a hundred, including lots of newcomers to the state who were excited to learn about Carolina's early Jewish settlers. Adam Mendelsohn's slide lecture on Jews in the clothing trade during the Civil War, Dale Rosengarten's presentation on Carolina/Caribbean connections, and Beaufort Mayor Billy Keyserling's personal reminiscences were highlights of the program.

The meeting also netted us a new board member, Donald Kantor, who described the rapid rise of Bluffton's Ohav Shalom and gave us a chance to see history in the making. For many years Jewish communities in small towns have been in decline. Bluffton and Fort Mill—as reported in this issue—represent a counter-trend. Fed by a wave of Sunbelt migration, Jewish populations in these areas have grown to such an extent that they have inaugurated new congregations. We welcome these recent arrivals and warmly invite them to become members of JHSSC.

Our cemetery project has helped people from far and wide find their roots in South Carolina. Some genealogists have discovered information and images of family members' gravestones on JHSSC's website; some have joined the Society in appreciation of the work we do. We recently added the index and photos of two cemeteries in Anderson—Old Silver Brook and Forest Lawn. Columbia Hebrew Benevolent Society Cemetery is also online, though the burial ground still needs to be photographed. All cemetery listings and pictures have been sent to [www.jewishgen.org](http://www.jewishgen.org) for their Jewish Online Worldwide Burial Registry (JOWBR), which incorporates data from around

the world and links our indices back to [www.jhssc.org](http://www.jhssc.org).

I call on Society members to follow the lead of Bluffton, whose residents have volunteered to survey Jewish cemeteries in their vicinity. Not only does this mitzvah assure that the names of our ancestors will live on in perpetuity, it also provides deep pleasure to know we have helped fill in a blank spot on someone's family tree.

JHSSC's fall meeting will take place in Anderson on

November 14 and will include a panel discussion on "Jewish Life in the South Carolina Upcountry," featuring residents of Greenville, Anderson, and Spartanburg. The staff of the Jewish Heritage Collection will be on hand to conduct interviews with people who want to add their oral histories to the archives. To schedule a recording session, email Dale Rosengarten at

[rosengartend@cofc.edu](mailto:rosengartend@cofc.edu), or call 843.953.8028.

To underwrite the Society's ongoing oral history initiative, we must recruit at least five additional Pillars. As the new year unfolds, consider making a gift to the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina. You might think of it this way: An investment in preserving the past guarantees our future.

And speaking of the future, please save the dates May 25 and 26, 2011, when the Society will co-sponsor a conference on "Jews, Slavery, and the Civil War" at the College of Charleston.

Fondly,



Ann Meddin Hellman  
[hellmana@bellsouth.net](mailto:hellmana@bellsouth.net)



*Harriet Keyserling and son Billy, mayor of Beaufort, at the May 2, 2010 JHSSC meeting in Bluffton, SC. Photo: Jeri Perlmutter.*

## Raising Draisens in Anderson

by Alyssa Neely

*with Judith Draisen Glassman, Bernice Draisen Goldman, and Barry, Samuel, and David Draisen*

The Draisens family's southern roots go back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, when Rachel Leah Poliakov left her home in Amchea, Russia, for Aiken, South Carolina, where she married her second cousin, Zalman (Sam) Poliakov. Sam, who ran a store in the small upstate town, may have followed his brothers or cousins to the area. The couple raised eight children and moved a number of times, opening dry goods stores in Laurens, Greenville, and Anderson.

Daughter Eunice, born in Greenville in 1914 and raised in Anderson, studied piano at the Peabody Conservatory of Music in Baltimore. While teaching music to underprivileged children at Camp Woodlands near Baltimore, she met Hyman Draisens, who was making marionettes for the campers. Hy was the son of David and

Dora Margolin Draisens, who had emigrated from Russia, with David leading the way in October 1906, and Dora and their eldest child, Sadie, following seven months later. They lived first in New York, where David worked as a tailor. By 1913, when Hy was born, the family was living in Burlington, Vermont. Raised in Dorchester, a suburb of Boston, Massachusetts, Hy was trained as a printer at the Boston Trade School.

Hy and Eunice married in Anderson in 1939 and honeymooned at the New York World's Fair. They lived in Lynn, Massachusetts, before moving to Anderson in the spring of 1942, when their first child, Sammy, was just a few weeks old. Hy had been drafted and Eunice wanted to be near her family. The call to service, however, never came. After receiving two deferrals for illness in the family, Hy was



*Wedding of Eunice Poliakov and Hyman Draisens, Anderson, SC, June 11, 1939. Seated from left: Dora Brown, Moses Poliakov, Fannie Poliakov, Helen Poliakov, David Draisens, Rose Poliakov. Back row from left: Evalynn Poliakov, Schlaime (Sam) Poliakov, Raphael Poliakov, Augusta Poliakov, Dora Draisens, Rachel (Beebe) Poliakov, Eunice and Hyman Draisens, Herman Poliakov, Estelle Levkoff Poliakov, Max Poliakov, Gussie (Getel or Gete) Schwartz Poliakov, Ben Poliakov, Christine Scott.*





*Herman Poliakoff's going-out-of-business sale, Anderson, SC, 1951.*

told to stand by for further orders. When the war ended, Hy was still waiting in Anderson for his deployment.

The young family, including a second son, Barry, born in 1943, lived with Eunice's mother, Rachel, who had been widowed nearly two decades before. The Draisen children called Rachel "Beebe"—Sammy's rendition of "Bubbe," for grandmother, which stuck.

Shortly after the birth of their third child, Bernice, in December 1945, Hy and Eunice moved to Spartanburg, where Eunice's brother Max set them up in a jewelry store called Bari's. The venture failed and, in 1948, the Draisons, with four children in tow, including newborn Judy, returned to Anderson. They joined Eunice's brother, Herman, in his pawn shop until he transferred ownership of another business, Henry's Jewelers, to them. Henry's became Draisen's Jewelry Store in August 1948. At the grand opening, Hy and Eunice stationed Sammy, age six, and Barry, five, on the sidewalk in



*A raffle on opening day at Draisen's Jewelry Store in Anderson, 1948.*

front of the shop passing out small boxes of Sunkist raisins to potential customers. They had put the letter "D" in front of the word "raisin" on each box.

Draisen's sold radios and record players, as well as jewelry, in a 28- by 100-foot space, before branching out in the 1950s to include musical instruments. The new line of merchandise started when Marty Travis, a traveling salesman from Charlotte, North Carolina, convinced the Draisons to carry guitars. Later, band directors from the local schools asked the jewelers to stock instruments after Herman Poliakoff, one of their suppliers, had closed his store. Draisen's served both black and white customers and extended credit to all.

All the Draisen children, including the youngest, David, born in 1950, worked at Draisen's Jewelry and Music Store after school and on the weekends. Each played one or more musical instruments and joined his or her school band or



*Rachel Leah Poliakoff was "Beebe" to her Draisen grandchildren, who adopted young Sammy's pronunciation of "Bubbe."*



*Sammy Draisen, Hy and Eunice's oldest child, Anderson, SC, 1945.*



*David Draisen, the baby of the family, 1950.*



*Draisen family, ca. 1955. From left, Hy, David (front), Sammy, Eunice, Judy, Barry, and Bernice.*

orchestra. With Hy on sax and Eunice on piano, the family would gather for informal jam sessions.

Intensely civic-minded, Hy donated time to the Elks, Masons, and Shriners. He also ran for a seat on the Anderson Board of Education in the 1950s. Anticipating the inevitable desegregation of schools, Hy proposed that Anderson's school administrators integrate first grade classes right away, adding a class a year so that integration would be complete in 12 years. His platform was greeted with a resoundingly low number of votes.

Eunice and Hy were raised as Orthodox Jews but practiced Conservative Judaism in Anderson. Despite the difficulties of keeping kosher in small-town South Carolina, Eunice and Hy adhered to the dietary laws at home and packed special school lunches for the kids during Passover. They had kosher meat bussed in from Charlotte, North Carolina, or purchased a supply when visiting relatives in Atlanta, Georgia. If kosher visitors came to Anderson, they were directed to the Draisons.



*Temple B'nai Israel, Anderson, SC, 1997. Photo: Dale Rosengarten. Special Collections, College of Charleston.*



*Hy Draisen (far right) in Anderson, SC, with youngsters from Greenville's Shriners Hospital for Crippled Children, ca. 1958.*

Hy was deeply involved in Anderson's Conservative congregation. He and Paul Radin led services on Friday evenings and on Saturday mornings when there was a bar or bat mitzvah. Hy and Joe Fleishman led services on the High Holy Days when rabbinical students were not available. Nathan Rosenblum served as cantor. Before the present temple was built, services and Sunday school, led by George Ackerman, were held over a grocery store in downtown Anderson.

Hy also taught the children Hebrew, preparing them for bat and bar mitzvahs. He was one of several men behind the push to build a house of worship. Max Siegel initiated the project because he wanted to see his grandson, Ron Bern, become bar mitzvah in a proper synagogue. Among those joining Max and Hy on the building committee were Joe Fleishman, Herman Poliakoff, Nathan Rosenblum, Sam Bern, and Nathan Fleishman. Temple B'nai Israel, which included a 150-seat sanctuary, kitchen, social hall, and classrooms, was completed in 1948, graced by the congregation's first Torah, which had belonged to Sam Poliakoff's maternal grandparents.

The Draisen children recall playing ball and badminton in the backyard. On Sundays their parents would take them on trips in their red Plymouth station wagon to Oconee State Park and Charleston. Growing up in Anderson, the children had mostly gentile friends since there were few, if any, Jewish youngsters their age. To expand their social circle, Eunice and Hy sent them, as teenagers, to Greenville's Beth Israel, a Conservative synagogue, where they attended religious school and joined United Synagogue Youth and B'nai Brith Youth Organization. Barry notes that "a big part of our Jewishness came from Camp Blue Star." He and Sammy made Jewish friends at Camp Blue Star and Camp Osceola, both in Hendersonville, North Carolina, where they were counselors. Bernice, Judy, and David also attended Camp



Blue Star. Because of their parents' devotion to Judaism and passing on this dedication to their children, it is noteworthy to mention that all five children married Jewish partners.

The Draisens siblings recollect the presence of the Ku Klux Klan in Anderson, but did not feel threatened by its activities. Some members of their congregation apparently felt less secure. Preferring to maintain a low profile in the community, the temple leadership chose not to place a sign on the synagogue until the 1970s.

While the KKK may not have frightened them, the Draisens did experience anti-Semitism in daily life. As kids, they were called "dirty Jews" by neighborhood children, even their playmates. While Bernice didn't encounter name-calling, she felt people would "shy away" from her because she was Jewish. She believes a "wall" of prejudice was the reason she was never asked out on dates. It also kept her gentile friends from coming to parties at the Draisens home. Judy's date for a Sadie Hawkins dance backed out when he learned she was Jewish.

The Draisens' store has been a family-run business ever since Hy and Eunice took over Henry's Jewelers. In 1967, Bernice and her first husband, Ed Shuman, moved to Anderson to help out, because Hy and Eunice were getting older and felt they needed assistance or would have to sell the business. Beginning in the mid-1970s, David and Barry took over the operation and the two brothers remained at the helm until 1990, when David decided to change his career. That year the store stopped carrying jewelry and began selling band instruments only.

David now works as a medical technologist in several hospital and physicians' laboratories, and serves on the Anderson County Board of Education. He is married to Andrea, an Anderson pediatrician. Barry continues to run the company, with a partner from outside the family. Bernice, a retired teacher, lives near Cleveland, Ohio, with her husband, Lloyd, a retired rabbi. Judy, also a retired teacher, lives in Atlanta, Georgia, with her husband Bruce. Their son, Michael made aliyah to Israel with his wife, Julie. Sammy and his wife, Carol, live in Atlanta where he is a retired air force lieutenant colonel and pharmacist.

The five Draisens siblings have prospered and multiplied, producing collectively a total of 12 children plus Bernice's two stepsons and (to date) ten grandchildren. While many of their offspring have gravitated toward bigger cities, the Draisens who have remained in Anderson continue to be fully involved in Temple B'nai Israel. David has been president of the congregation four times and now serves as treasurer. Barry's wife, Ellen, is the current president, leading a flock of 33 active member families.

*Photos courtesy of Judy Draisens Glassman and David Draisens, unless otherwise noted.*

### **Lillian Chernoff Bloom**

**(November 11, 1920 – February 21, 2010)**

### **Jack L. Bloom**

**(June 25, 1920 – May 8, 2010)**



Who could predict that an independent career woman from New York and a self-proclaimed southern gentleman from Greenville, South Carolina, would find true love, become devoted partners, and die within three months of each other? The Greenville Jewish community lost just such a couple this past spring. Lillian Chernoff was born in 1920 to Max Chernoff and Pauline Markowitz, immigrants from a shtetl in the region of Minsk, Russia, who met in the sweat shops of New York's Lower East Side. Despite the hardships of the Great Depression, Lillian attended Hunter College and her brother, Herman, went to City College of New York. Lillian worked as a medical records librarian at Beth Israel Hospital, an administrative assistant for the New York University Medical Center, and a field representative for the National Council of Jewish Women. On a trip to Greenville for NCJW in 1956, she was introduced to Jack L. Bloom. After a courtship of seven years, Jack and Lillian eloped and were married in Charleston's Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim.

Once settled in South Carolina, Lillian served on the boards of dozens of social service, health, and educational organizations, and was elected to the statewide Commission on Consumer Protection from 1992 to 1999. Her husband, Jack, was the son of Julius H. and Jennie Shatenstein Bloom, whose dry goods store was a feature of Greenville's Main Street for more than 55 years. Jack received his undergraduate degree from Furman University and his law degree from Duke. He served in the army in World War II and later retired from the army reserves with the rank of colonel. An active member and former president of Congregation Beth Israel, he dedicated himself to research and writing and, in 2005, published "A History of the Jewish Community of Greenville, South Carolina"—an engaging mix of archival data, family information, and philosophical reflection. Jack served on the JHSSC board from 2001 to 2006, always attending meetings with the lovely Lillian on his arm.

# Growing Up Jewish in Greenville

by Philip Rovner

**G**rowing up Jewish in Greenville, South Carolina, was both exciting and frustrating. Between my bar mitzvah in 1959 and my entry to college in 1963, I lived a life not unlike any other teenager. However, there was a lack of social acceptance, not so much bigotry, but exclusion by some peers, with occasional hurtful anti-Semitic comments.

With my parents, Bob and Anita, fully engaged in Bob's Men's Shop, their retail clothing store downtown, my early Jewish interaction was guided by my grandparents, Harry and Mary Abrams, who were early and continuing leaders of Temple of Israel. I was one of only three students in my confirmation class. I learned Hebrew and the prayers from a transliterated lesson plan taught by a superb instructor, Ann Nachman. Unfortunately, this shortcut to learning Hebrew almost derailed my bar mitzvah: a rabbi interviewing for the Temple's pulpit unwittingly told my grandfather (not knowing he was my grandfather) that I was not prepared. First lesson in politics, find another rabbi!

Since our Reform Temple did not have a youth group, I couldn't wait to become a member of B'nai Brith Youth Organization. Some of the friendships I forged in BBYO last even to this day. I served as chapter president and was elected Beau of B'nai Brith Girls. I recall today with great clarity a battle that was waged when my congregation proposed to initiate a Temple Youth Group (TYG). I strongly objected because the prospective membership numbers were too few and I feared that the competition would undermine



*Rabbi Jay Goldberg officiating at the bar mitzvah of Philip Rovner, Temple of Israel, Greenville, SC, 1959.*

BBYO's strength. Greenville's Conservative synagogue, Beth Israel, sponsored a fairly inactive United Synagogue Youth chapter, yet the debate continued at the Temple with my grandfather at the helm.

This was my second lesson in synagogue politics: you don't always win. The Temple did form a TYG chapter and became active in the newly established Camp Coleman in Georgia.

At age 14, I entered the newly built Wade Hampton High School. Separating from my junior high friends was at first unnerving and, as one of only four or five Jews, I sometimes felt like the odd man out. With the notable



*Front of Bob's Men's Shop, 32 South Main Street, Greenville, SC, late 1950s.*



*Bob Rovner, Philip's father, in his store, ca. 1960. Photos courtesy of Philip Rovner.*



exception of one Jewish football player who seemed to be invited to participate in everything, Jews were not permitted to join the school's social clubs. I concentrated on earning excellent grades and gravitated toward organizations that promoted scholarship over social life.

I was friends with the few Jewish girls in our community and must have dated each one at least once, but there were too few to restrict my dating just to them. I recall my mother's consternation when I had dated a non-Jewish girl more than a few times; however, the issue never reached a high level of discussion.

My dad was well respected and could have aspired to political office. He resisted the calling based on his very busy schedule and general lack of my mother's support. I was overjoyed when our friend, Max Heller, was elected mayor. Whatever discrimination may have existed seemed to melt away as Max and a few other Jews gained membership at social clubs that previously excluded Jews.



*Trude Schönthal and Max Heller, Main Street, Greenville, SC, 2000. Max served as Greenville's mayor from 1971 to 1979. Photo: Bill Aron.*

Having started out in Scouting as a preteen and teen, I was enticed away to join the junior Masonic organization, DeMolay. Being Jewish appeared to have no bearing whatsoever as I progressed through leadership roles and enjoyed close friendships and the accompanying social network.

Skipping my senior year in high school, I entered Clemson University at age 16. The rationale seemed clear at the time but less so as I ponder what I gave up, having to grow up so quickly. Still, my social life flourished in college. Clemson's Hillel had about a dozen members. I helped bring the group to Greenville for the High Holy Days and Passover, a tradition that continues to this day.

Changing my major to accounting, I transferred to the University of South Carolina. My first roommate turned out to be a passionate anti-Semite. After he locked me out of the room, I made haste to join Phi Epsilon Pi, the Jewish fraternity on campus, and moved into its dorm. Here I was reacquainted with some of my BBYO friends and, for the first time, lived in a fraternal setting with about 40 Jews. Honing my leadership skills, I joined Hillel and became chairman of Religious Emphasis Week for the university. I was most proud that Phi Ep had a higher composite GPR than any other fraternity.

Graduation in 1967 coincided with what was to become the first lottery draft for the Vietnam War. I was married and drafted within five weeks of commencement. To better position myself, I asked for an entry delay so that I could sit for the CPA exam in November when I would be just short of my 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. Prohibited by the Board of Accountancy from taking the exam, I signed up to go to Artillery Officer Candidate School.

After completing OCS as the Brigade First Candidate of my class, I served as an assistant adjutant for the OCS Brigade at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. I was unaware of other Jews in my training or service unit. No effort was made to provide religious services to Jewish soldiers. My wife and I befriended a Jewish merchant in nearby Lawton. He and his wife graciously embraced us and invited us to share holidays with them. Approaching my third year in



*1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division, 1-30<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery firing from FSB Noble, Vietnam, 1971. Photo of Philip's unit, called Hard Charger. Taken after his tour of duty, it shows the "same type of guys and gear." Photo: 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division Association archives.*

the service, I received orders for Vietnam. I shipped out in August 1969, and served a full 12-month tour as executive officer for three successive 50-man artillery batteries which each had three 155 mm howitzers. With replacement troops rotating one at a time, I commanded more than 200 men over the course of the year and achieved my proudest accomplishment, perhaps ever: not having lost a single life.

My career has taken a number of exciting and challenging directions, leading to my service as president of the Tidewater Jewish Foundation in Virginia Beach, Virginia, for the past 14 years. Lessons learned early from my family have steered me along a path of achievement and purpose. While the world has changed demonstrably, there remains an imperative for Jews everywhere to acknowledge, practice, and understand our faith, for it is a way of life, one that is generally productive and good, not without fault, but with a sense of purpose that I embrace each and every day.

# JHSSC Meeting Schedule

## Anderson, SC – Sunday, November 14, 2010

All activities take place at Temple B'nai Israel  
1302 Oakland Avenue, Anderson, SC 29622  
(864) 226-0310

- 10:30 a.m. Registration**
- 10:45 a.m. Brief Open JHSSC Board Meeting**
- 11:15 a.m. Welcome**  
Ann Meddin Hellman, President, JHSSC
- 11:20 a.m. Introduction of Keynote Speaker**  
Dale Rosengarten, College of Charleston
- 11:30 a.m. Keynote: "A Portion of the People: Local History Is History"**  
Lynn Robertson, Executive Director  
McKissick Museum, University of South Carolina
- 12:30 p.m. Luncheon**
- 1:30 p.m. Performance: "Songs of Her Heritage"**  
Dina Claire, singer
- 2:00 p.m. Panel Discussion: "Jewish Life in the South Carolina Upcountry"**  
Moderator: Dale Rosengarten  
Panelists:  
Sam Draisen, Anderson  
Fred Leffert, Greenville  
Gary Poliakoff, Spartanburg  
Marsha Levin Poliakoff, Spartanburg
- 3:15 p.m. Closing**

### Keynote Speaker: Lynn Robertson



Executive Director of McKissick Museum at the University of South Carolina, **Ms. Robertson** is a winner of this year's Governor's Award in the Humanities. As project director of *A Portion of the People: Three Hundred Years of Southern Jewish Life*, she helped bring South

Carolina's early and illustrious Jewish history to national attention. Lynn received her M.A. in Art History from American University in Washington D.C., and her training in museum practices from the Smithsonian Institution and Columbia University. In 1978, when she became McKissick's curator of art, she teamed up with George Terry to steer the new institution toward its focus on folk art and material culture for which it has become renowned. Under her leadership McKissick has supported an active research program with global implications, documenting traditional culture and crafts through ethnographic fieldwork, surveys, and archival collection. She has overseen the development of groundbreaking exhibitions that have traveled across the country and the publication of catalogs of extraordinary scholarship and reach. Since 1989, Lynn has run the University of South Carolina's Museum Management Program, one of the country's premier training grounds for the next generation of museum curators, administrators, and public historians.

#### HOTEL INFORMATION

- Country Inn and Suites**  
116 Interstate Boulevard  
Anderson, SC 29621  
(864) 622-2200 – Mention JHSSC for special rate  
Room rate: \$72, includes hot breakfast  
Rate reserved until November 6, 2010
- Hilton Garden Inn**  
115 Destination Boulevard  
Anderson, SC 29625  
(864) 964-0100 – Mention JHSSC for special rate  
Room rate: \$99 for singles and doubles  
Rate reserved until October 29, 2010

#### MEETING REGISTRATION

You may also register online at: [www.jhssc.org](http://www.jhssc.org)

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

*The cost for this meeting is \$18 per person.*

Total amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Return form to:  
JHSSC / Jewish Studies Program  
96 Wentworth Street  
Charleston, SC 29424



# Upcountry Jews: Who's Who on the Panel

**Fred Leffert** grew up in Greenville, South Carolina. After receiving his undergraduate and medical degrees from Emory University, he spent several years in academic medicine at the National Jewish Hospital in Denver, the University of Colorado School of Medicine, and the University of Chicago. In 1980, he returned to Greenville to establish a private practice in asthma and allergy. Today he practices medicine part-time and teaches classes in Jewish history and philosophy at Furman University's life-long learning program.



**Marsha Levin Poliakoff** is the author of *Portraits of a People: A History of Jewish Life in Spartanburg, South Carolina* (2010). She is an award-winning playwright, best known for her play, *Jacksey's Lawyer*, based on a precedent-setting murder trial in

Spartanburg in the early 1940s, in which the late Matthew Poliakoff was defense attorney. Marsha has five theatrical productions and numerous short stories, essays, poems, and a novel to her credit. Born in Baltimore, Maryland, she was educated in the city's public schools and in a gifted students' program at Johns Hopkins University. She attended the University of Miami and Converse College and holds a B.A. from the University of South Carolina at Spartanburg and an M.A. in English with an Emphasis on Creative Writing from the University of South Carolina. In 1949, she married Matthew Poliakoff, who served Spartanburg County in the SC House of Representatives from 1944 to 1960. Their sons, Andrew and Gary, both practice law in Spartanburg; one daughter, Berne Poliakoff, is a singer-songwriter in Atlanta, and the other, Phaye Poliakoff-Chen, teaches creative writing at Goucher College in Baltimore.

## Dina Claire Sings of Her Heritage



**Dina Claire** has performed on Broadway, at Radio City Music Hall, and Carnegie Hall, and at resort hotels in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. She entertained President Jimmy Carter's cabinet and 600 guests in Washington D.C., and appeared in concert in London, sponsored by the royal family. She can be seen on TV in the movie "Gypsy." Her program in Anderson will include selections in Yiddish, Hebrew, and English from her CD, *Dina Claire LIVE! In Concert! Songs of Her Heritage*.



Born in Lynn, Massachusetts, in 1942, **Samuel M. Draisen** moved to South Carolina when he was two months old and spent most of his youth in Anderson, with a three year hiatus in Spartanburg. He graduated from Boys' High School in 1960, and earned a B.S. in Pharmacy from the University of South Carolina in 1966. The next year he entered the U.S. Air Force as a pharmacy officer. He and his wife, Carol Gilmer from Atlanta, have two children, Rebecca and Howie, both of whom graduated from Georgia Tech with master's degrees. Rebecca lives with her husband Dan Abramovich in Alpharetta, Georgia, where she works for an ad specialty company. Howie, a mechanical engineer for the U.S. Navy, resides in Gaithersburg, Maryland, with his wife, Stefanie, and two children. Sam retired from the air force in June 1987 as a lieutenant colonel and became a hospital pharmacist, first at Dunwoody Medical Center and then at Northside Hospital. Retired in July 2009, he enjoys traveling, reading, and volunteering.



Raised in Spartanburg, South Carolina, **Gary W. Poliakoff** graduated in 1973 from Washington and Lee University. In 1977, he received his J.D. from the University of South Carolina's School of Law. Gary was awarded an American Jurisprudence Award for Excellence in Constitutional Law in 1977, SC Bar Pro Bono Lawyer of the Year Award in 1988, the Victims Voice Award by the SC Jury Trial Foundation in 1995, and the Public Citizen Award by the SC Trial Lawyers Association in 1996. He is listed in *The Bar Register of Pre-Eminent Lawyers* (Martindale-Hubbell), *South Carolina Super Lawyers*, and *The Best Lawyers in America*. He edited and co-authored a federally funded volume, *Environmental Law in South Carolina*, in 1977. Since then, Gary has written numerous articles and seminar presentations on environmental law, most recently "Practicing Environmental Law," "Discovery in Toxic Tort/Contamination cases," and "Toxic Exposure – Proof and Causation." Between 2001 and 2006, he served on the SC Forestry Commission as an appointee of the governor.

# Textiles and Torahs in Spartanburg

by Alyssa Neely

An estimated nine Jews lived in Spartanburg in 1878, nearly 100 years after the town was named the county seat. Their identities have not been determined and they may not have been the first to settle there. It seems likely that Jews would have been among the antebellum residents of Spartanburg, as they were in nearby Greenville.

Reportedly, Greenewald's was the first Jewish-owned store in Spartanburg, founded by Moses Greenewald as "M. Greenewald, Outfitters to Men and Boys." Moses set up shop in 1886. He was living in Spartanburg, however, at least by 1882, when he served as captain of the volunteer Spartan Fire Engine Company. He was one of four brothers to move to Spartanburg from Wilmington, North Carolina. David, the first brother to follow Moses, arrived in the late 1880s. An Elks Club member, he was a director of the Chamber of Commerce and the Spartanburg Music Festival. Isaac and Max joined their older brothers a decade or so later. Both were musicians and co-managed the Spartanburg Opera House, informally referred to as Greenewald's Opera House.

With the expansion of the textile industry, Spartanburg's general population increased dramatically between 1890 and 1920. The city was a leading producer of cotton in South Carolina. The Jewish population began to grow appreciably after the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Harry Price, grandson of a Lithuanian immigrant, moved to Spartanburg from New York City on the advice of his brother-in-law who lived in Hartwell, Georgia. In 1903, he opened The New York Bazaar, later renamed Price's Clothing Store, next to Greenewald's. Harry, like the Greenewalds, was actively engaged in civic affairs. He was a member of the Knights of Pythias, the Woodmen of the World, the Loyal Order of the Moose, and the Chamber of Commerce.

David and Joseph (Joel) Spigel of Prussia peddled in Columbia and Newberry before settling in Spartanburg in 1903. The brothers opened a small store that sold jewelry and eyeglasses. Other turn-of-the-century arrivals included the Brill, Hecklin, Morris, Cohen, and Ougust (August) families—all dry goods merchants.

Members of today's congregation believe that there were enough observant Jews in town by 1905 to form a minyan. Although this date is cited as the beginning of Spartanburg's "active Jewish community," the *Carolina Spartan* made note of the city's "Hebrew friends" meeting for Yom Kippur in its September 1888 issue. In 1912, the small congregation of perhaps a dozen families drafted a constitution and by-laws and, two years later, the city directory recorded the meeting

place of Shir Israel Congregation at the same address as Abe Goldberg's clothing store on West Main Street. Reverend Craft, an itinerant rabbi, conducted holiday services until members hired Hyman Samuel Cohen, an Orthodox rabbi born in Russia, who served from 1914 to 1916, when he died unexpectedly.

In 1916, the group of roughly 27 members, represented by Joel Spigel, Hyman August, and Joseph Miller, filed for incorporation, adopting the name B'nai Israel. Sunday school classes, organized by founding member Joseph Jacobs, were hosted by Mrs. I. Fuchter in her living room until a synagogue was built in 1917 at the corner of Dean and Union Streets.

The *Spartanburg Herald* noted that the new synagogue was open in time for High Holy Days services that year, and that both Reform and Orthodox traditions were practiced, at least during the holidays. Reform members planned to observe one day under the leadership of Dr. Finklestein, with services in English, while Orthodox members were to celebrate both days with Dr. Isaiah Sobell, who would conduct services in Hebrew.

The size of the Jewish community fluctuated during the 1920s and '30s. Some merchants left, while a few of those who remained went bankrupt before or during the Great Depression. The population, estimated at 80 in 1927, was substantial enough to warrant a cemetery. In 1924, a Jewish burial ground was established in a section of Spartanburg's Oakwood Cemetery. The vitality of the congregation helped it survive the economic hardships of the 1930s. Its 36 members maintained their rabbinical leadership through the Depression and, in 1937, Joseph Spigel paid off the mortgage.



*Spartanburg's Temple B'nai Israel Sisterhood Thanksgiving play, ca. 1960.*





*Spartanburg Sunday school class, 1948-49, led by teacher Mae Wrubel (far right). Photo: Seymour Gray.*

In 1940, shortly after being admitted to the bar, Matthew Poliakoff, a native of Blackville, South Carolina, opened a law practice in Spartanburg. His brothers Bernard and Manning joined him a few years later. In 1944, Matthew was elected to the South Carolina House of Representatives, where he served seven terms as a Democrat.

The end of World War II marked the beginning of Spartanburg's transition from an economy based primarily on agriculture and textile manufacturing to one heavily reliant on high-tech industries. By 1947, the city's Jewish population had reached an estimated 170, more than double the 1927 figure.

In 1953, B'nai Israel responded to the growth of the congregation, particularly the increasing number of children, by purchasing a house on Heywood Street. The B'nai Israel Center, equipped by the B'nai Israel Sisterhood, was the site for Sunday school classes, social events, and bar mitzvahs. One year later, B'nai Israel Memorial Gardens, a

new Jewish cemetery, was founded. In 1955, members hired Rabbi Max Stauber, who would serve the congregation for nearly 30 years. By this time, B'nai Israel leaned toward the Conservative tradition, although Stauber, it is reported, "pleased all factions."

In 1963, a new temple was completed on the Heywood Street lot. Eight years later, the Sunday school and Hebrew classes, which had outgrown their facilities, moved into a new education building that included a parsonage and a chapel. The education building was paid for by the congregation, with matching funds from Andrew Teszler, son of Sandor Teszler, who had arrived in the United States in 1948. Before World War II, Sandor owned and operated textile factories in Yugoslavia and Hungary. Because his skills as a textile engineer were essential to keep the mills running, he not only survived the war, he used his position to save other Jews. Emigrating after the war, Sandor established plants in the United States and ran the first racially integrated textile factory in the South, in King's Mountain, North Carolina.

After a long run under the proprietorship of David Greenewald's grandsons, James and Jack Cobb, Greenewald's finally closed its doors in 1991. Prices' Store for Men celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2003, and still sells men's clothing with Harry Price, grandson of the founder, at the helm.

In 1994, B'nai Israel, home to just over 100 member-families, joined the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, formally adopting the Reform tradition. The region's ongoing economic strength in the high-tech sector continues to attract newcomers to the area. Spartanburg's Jewish community has grown tremendously just since the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the temple has expanded to accommodate the influx of professionals and businessmen and women.

*All photos courtesy of Marsha Poliakoff. This article is adapted from the Institute of Southern Jewish Life's online encyclopedia. Go to [www.isjl.org/history/archive](http://www.isjl.org/history/archive) and click on SC.*



*Rabbi Max Stauber leads the procession of Torahs from Dean to Heywood Street, October 15, 1961.*

## Congregation Adath Yeshurun, Aiken

Congregation Adath Yeshurun, Aiken, will celebrate its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary the weekend of March 11, 2011. A banquet Friday evening at Woodside Country Club will feature Dale Rosengarten as the keynote speaker. Plans for Saturday's events are still pending but will include Shabbat services, brunch, historical displays, tours, and much reminiscing. Because of the small size of the synagogue, reservations are required. For more information, please contact Doris Baumgarten at (803) 648-4324.

# My Daddy, My Hero

Alwyn O. Goldstein, June 4, 1915 – March 16, 2010

by Roslyn Goldstein Greenspon

## *A Living Breathing Archive*

Two words: PACKRAT AND HISTORIAN. Would you say they are synonyms? Well, YES and here's why.

For 75 of my daddy's 95 years, I thought of him as a packrat, a collector of sorts, because on long tables in the back of The Store, he always had piles and piles of newspaper articles, photographs, letters, books of poetry—all posted with notes like "send to Roz," "send to Dale," "keep for Georgetown."

In the mid-1990s, I realized my father was not a packrat. He was a historian. Daddy was a man who believed the value of the future lay in keeping hold of the past.

Daddy said to me over and over, "Write names, dates, and places on the back of everything you save. You'll see. It's important." Until the moment of his death, Daddy had a remarkable memory for names, events, dates, and poems, and a drive to share the information he stockpiled. He sent hundreds of carefully annotated clippings to the College of Charleston library for the Jewish Heritage Collection's vertical files. He gave articles on merchandizing to his fellow storekeepers, articles about stocks and investing to friends and family, reports of medical breakthroughs to doctors or would-be doctors.

He never stopped telling stories to anyone who would listen. He helped edit a book on the history of Front Street

in Georgetown, South Carolina, a project completed just two weeks before his death. Sadly, he never had the pleasure of holding the lovely volume in his hands.

## *Storekeeper*

In May 1938, Alwyn Goldstein married the sweetheart he had loved since seventh grade, Thelma Engel. They left Charleston, where they both had grown up, and moved to Georgetown to open Alwyn's Department Store: Men's and Ladies' Ready-To-Wear—"Where Styles Are Newer." From that moment on, The Store was the focal point of our family's existence. Our house was just five blocks away, but The Store was where everything happened, where everything was kept, where we spent most of our time—914 Front Street.

The Store, long and narrow as a bowling alley, had only a front and back door, no windows and, until 1955, no air conditioning. Ladies' things were on the right: white go-to-meetin' dresses, overcoats, "fancy-dancy" hats with veils and flowers. Men's things on the left: suits, mostly black, on hangers, and felt hats in big round boxes.

Down the middle were heavy, handmade tables with men's trousers and sweaters by the hundreds, and usually a boy of about 15 busily brushing, straightening, folding and refolding. Shiny glass showcases with lights made rhinestone pins twinkle, and turntables kept men's watches revolving slowly. The tall, old-fashioned floor-model cash register—it was not electric!—stood next to a wrapping table and two wooden chairs.

Customers were always asking for "Mr. Alwyns." "I gotta see Mr. Alwyns. I wanna pay off my credit." Most of our clientele were working-class people with little cash to spare. During the era of Jim Crow segregation, black and white customers were equally welcomed. Daddy explained, "Back in those days, times were



*Thelma Engel Goldstein with 7-year-old Roslyn, and Alwyn holding Steven, age 1½. Georgetown, SC, 1947. Photo courtesy of Roslyn Goldstein Greenspon.*



*Max Goldstein's store at 559 King Street, Charleston, SC, 1927. Max is standing in front with his sons Ralph (left) and Alwyn in the doorway. Gift of Alwyn Goldstein. Special Collections, College of Charleston.*





*Alwyn's at 914 Front Street, Georgetown, SC, 1949. A customer poses in front of the store about 11 years after it opened its doors. Photo courtesy of Roslyn Goldstein Greenspon.*

tough. If you excluded people, you wouldn't be in business long."

Saturdays The Store was always busy. People from the country came to town to shop. "Pay down \$1, and take 'em home today," Alwyn would say. "You can come in every Saturday to pay on your bill." On Sundays Daddy and I sometimes rode around when church was letting out to see who was wearing a suit of clothes or a fancy-dancy hat from The Store.

#### **Teacher and Humorist**

Friends, customers, and family all describe Daddy as a tender and gentle man who treated everyone the same loving way. Listening to the eulogies at his funeral, JHC curator Dale Rosengarten remarked to me, "Everybody knew the same man."

Daddy had a title for the high school boys he employed. He'd say with a grin, "You know, you're Vice President in Charge." The boy would ask, "In charge of what, Mr. Alwyn?" Daddy's answer was, "Vice President in charge of anything nobody else wants to do!" He taught that every part of running a business is important if you want to be successful, and the young guys took the credo to heart. When showing how to make decisions of consequence, Daddy would quip with that special smile, "Always remember: after me, you come first!"

#### **A Married Man**

When my mother, Thelma, died suddenly at age 52, my brother Steven and I watched in awe as my father courageously reorganized his life, gathered his strength, and kept his positive attitude. He later married a family friend, Frances Ward, whom he called "My Angel."

Frances is a member of First Baptist Church. With a twinkle in his eye, Daddy often said to the minister there,

"You're my Baptist rabbi."

The new marriage lasted 41 years, until his death. Altogether, Daddy was married for 73 years—"one for the books," as he would say.

In his last six years, Daddy and Frances settled in an assisted living center in Charlotte, North Carolina. There he earned a reputation as the darling man who let the ladies know how "sharp" they were dressed. Oh how I miss that voice saying to me, "Roz, you look sharp today, Shugah."

#### **Temple Leader**

After my generation left Georgetown for college and careers, Beth Elohim's membership dropped to 20 families, at best. Laymen led Shabbat services on Friday nights from eight to nine o'clock. Because he could read the Hebrew prayers, Daddy often served as rabbi, as well as Hebrew teacher for bar mitzvah boys. He was "taxicab" for people who needed a ride to Temple, and he always stressed the importance of keeping the old Hebrew cemetery in good repair.

#### **His Legacy**

During the closing of Alwyn's Department Store, Daddy asked me to give some items of historical value to the Georgetown County Museum. Today the museum has a corner exhibit of showcases, furniture, mannequins, and merchandise from The Store over its 75 years.

Daddy often said he wanted to be remembered as "a good citizen of Georgetown." His wish came true. On the day of his funeral, *The Georgetown Times* carried a front-page story with his picture: "Pillar in Georgetown Community Dies at 94." At last, Daddy got his "moment of glory."



*Temple Beth Elohim, Georgetown, SC, 2000. Clockwise from upper left: Philip Schneider (z'l), Meyer Rosen, Alwyn Goldstein (z'l), Rita Fogel, and Deborah Abrams. Photo: Bill Aron.*

# A New Beginning: Fort Mill's Temple Kol Ami

by Jonathan Cohen

For more than 50 years, Jews in York County, South Carolina, have had no place to worship. Since the closing of Rock Hill's synagogue in the late 1950s, Jewish families were forced to drive more than 45 minutes to nearby Charlotte or Gastonia, North Carolina, to attend Shabbat and High Holy Day services—but no more.

In January 2010, Jonathan Shaw, a local resident, and I set out to determine what religious facilities existed for Jews in the greater York County area and discovered them sorely lacking. Initially we considered forming a havurah or minyan that would meet once a month.

We anticipated 30 or 40 people, at most, would attend services, but never imagined the response we received. More than 90 families, many of whom have moved to York County in the last ten years for retirement or work, contacted us, proof that people wanted a place to worship close to home, a home that has been steadily growing as a suburb of Charlotte for the last two decades.

We called an organizational meeting on April 25<sup>th</sup> to consider establishing a congregation and watched with excitement as a dream became a reality. Some 50 attendees selected a steering committee to help guide the effort and elected Jonathan Shaw as the congregation's first president.

Choosing the name Kol Ami, which means "All My People," was an important step—both symbolic and strategic. We envisioned a congregation that would welcome all Jews and

Temple Kol Ami holds Shabbat services every first and third Friday of the month at 7:00 pm, with Saturday morning services offered every third Saturday at 10:00 a.m. We meet at St. Philip Neri Catholic Church, 292 Munn Road East, in Fort Mill, SC. If you would like additional information or want to make a contribution, please e-mail [yorksynagogue@gmail.com](mailto:yorksynagogue@gmail.com), or call (803)701-0149. You also can find us online at [www.kolamitemple.com](http://www.kolamitemple.com), or on Facebook under "York County Synagogue."

their families, a true "community shul," so we selected a name that suggested inclusiveness.

It worked! On Friday evening, June 4, 2010, 170 people representing all branches of Judaism and a range of socio-economic backgrounds flocked to St. John's United Methodist Church social hall in Fort Mill to celebrate Temple Kol Ami's first Shabbat. I led the service, which included a baby naming, President Shaw gave a keynote address, congregant David Daniel played guitar, and Vice-President James Fox organized an oneg.

While it is too soon to tell, we are optimistic that the new congregation

can provide Jewish residents of York County a solid sense of community. "There is a tremendous need for a nexus to pull the Jewish community together," said Shaw. "Our mission is to become such a nexus and offer a haven for Jewish families to worship, learn, and socialize."

Temple Kol Ami has accomplished a great deal in a short period of time, but there is much work to be done. Plans are underway to begin a religious school and adult education classes. We need to acquire curricular materials, a Sefer Torah, and tallitot. We have been blessed with the gift of free machzorim from the Greenburgh Hebrew Center in Dobbs Ferry, New York. Like many fledgling congregations, Kol Ami is hoping for assistance from other synagogues in the state to help us provide a house for "all our people" in a burgeoning Jewish community in the upstate.



Rabbinical student Jonathan Cohen surrounded by children on the bimah at Friday evening service.



Cohen recites kiddush for the congregation at Oneg Shabbat, 2010. Photos: Michaela Fox.



# Jews, Slavery, and the Civil War

by Adam Mendelsohn

As Federal warships bobbed offshore on a late Sunday morning in the middle of April 1861, the officers on deck strained their eyes to make out the scene through spyglasses. The *Isabel*, a paddle steamer owned by Mordecai & Co., prepared to dock at Fort Sumter. Accustomed to running the lucrative mail route to Havana, the ship had been pressed into service for the occasion. After a ceremonial surrender, the *Isabel* carried Major Robert Anderson and his exhausted garrison out to the Federal fleet. (The vessel, named perhaps for Moses Cohen Mordecai's wife, Isabel Rebecca Lyons, would later do duty as a blockade runner). For those watching from Charleston, the moment must have been one of excitement and foreboding. Even if all present understood that the bombardment and surrender of the fort foretold war, few expected the devastating and crippling struggle that was to follow.

One hundred and fifty years after the *Isabel's* cameo appearance at the start of a great American tragedy, the United States will begin a five-year commemoration of the causes, course, and consequences of the Civil War. Charleston, a hub of the slave trade and the secession movement, and the very site where the conflict began, will take center stage in April 2011. Thanks to a generous grant to the College of Charleston's Jewish Studies Program from the Legacy Heritage Jewish Studies Project, the new Center for Southern Jewish Culture will organize a range of public events designed to analyze the impact of the war on Jews and Jewish life in both North and South, and reevaluate its legacy.

This fall we are sponsoring monthly walking tours led by historian and archivist Harlan Greene. Beginning in January 2011, we will host a series of public lectures that cover such stimulating topics as Jewish abolitionists, anti-Semitism during the war, Jewish soldiering, and the Jewish role during Reconstruction. Along with Eli Evans, our stellar list of speakers will include Hasia Diner, Stuart Rockoff, Leonard Rogoff, Marni Davis, Eric Goldstein, Saskia Coenen Snyder, Dale Rosengarten, and others.



*Steamship Isabel, Charleston, SC. Attributed to Joseph B. Smith & Son, New York, ca 1855. Collection of John O. Sands.*

On May 25 – 26, 2011, in partnership with JHSSC, we will host a conference at the College on the theme of “Jews, Slavery, and the Civil War.” Jonathan D. Sarna, the pre-eminent historian of American Jewish life, who is publishing a new book on General Grant and the Jews, will be our keynote speaker.

We urge you to join us for any and all of these events. The walking tours scheduled for mornings have sold out, and the afternoon tours will fill up quickly, so let us know as soon as possible if you would like to take part. Sign up for one or more of the tours by calling 843.953.3894 to reserve your place.

## Walking Tours of Charleston Led by Harlan Greene

All tours depart from the Jewish Studies Center, corner of Wentworth and Glebe Streets, at 3:00 pm.

Fee: \$10 per person per tour.

October 10: Jews, African Americans, and slaves

November 7: Jewish life in Charleston during the Civil War

December 12: Tour of the Coming Street Cemetery

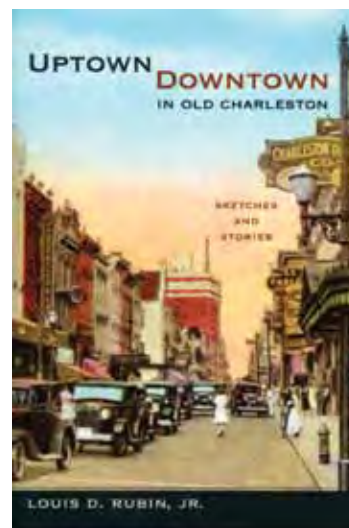
## Books of Interest

### *Uptown/Downtown in Old Charleston: Sketches and Stories*

By Louis D. Rubin, Jr.

Review by Harlan Greene

People often say that Charleston author, professor, literary critic, and publisher Louis D. Rubin, Jr., needs no introduction. Though true for many of us, those who do need an introduction and others eager to renew a happy acquaintance can do so in Rubin's latest book, *Uptown/Downtown in Old Charleston*. Part memoir, part work of the imagination, the slender volume is composed of individual essays, many previously published, that stand beautifully alone and also dovetail into a complex whole. As Rubin traverses the landscape of his upbringing in a Jewish family in Charleston, he evokes many worlds of the peninsula city. We see narrow houses on narrow downtown streets, wharfs on the water, and front porches, yards, and ballparks of neighborhoods north of Calhoun Street. Rubin penetrates less visible worlds even more strongly demarcated by unseen force fields—those of uptown and downtown families, uptown and downtown Jews. The young man's journey between these worlds is articulated in deceptively simple prose that brings clarity and specificity to everything the author contemplates or sees. Running through it all, like musical leitmotifs, are two of Rubin's fascinations: trains, which take one away, literally and metaphorically, and baseball, the American pastime that also often serves as a vehicle of dreams. Louis Rubin was not a very good ballplayer growing up, he ruefully admits, but he has hit a homerun this time at bat, as his train of memory brings back—and brings him back to—his home city.

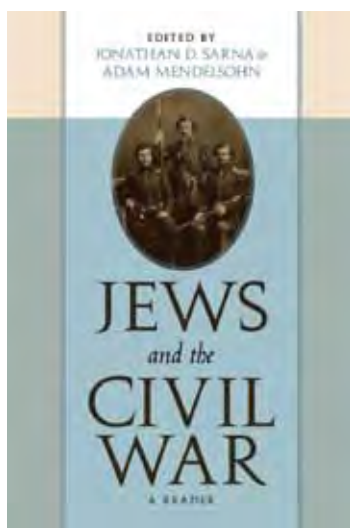


University of South Carolina Press, 2010. 128 pages, [www.sc.edu/uscpress/books](http://www.sc.edu/uscpress/books).

### *Jews and the Civil War: A Reader*

Edited by Adam Mendelsohn and Jonathan D. Sarna

Review by Robert N. Rosen



New York University Press, 2010. 448 pages, 26 illustrations, [www.nyupress.org](http://www.nyupress.org).

The 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Civil War, the sesquicentennial, begins in April 2011. The first shots of the war were fired at Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861, and Jewish Confederates were there. As the war unfolded, Jewish Americans, North and South, played a role on every battlefield, diplomatic arena, and across the home front.

In commemoration of the anniversary, Adam Mendelsohn of the College of Charleston and Jonathan D. Sarna of Brandeis University have collaborated as editors to provide us with a timely anthology of 18 essays, plus an introduction and editorial notes.

This book is a "reader," which means it is a collection of previously published essays, book chapters, and articles. Eli N. Evans, who provides an overview, is well known as the biographer of Judah P. Benjamin and a chronicler of the Jewish South. *Jews and the Civil War* also includes classic works by the great historian, Bertram W. Korn, on Jews and slavery; Louis Ruchames on abolitionists; and the legendary Jacob Rader Marcus on Major Louis Gratz. Fine essays by David T. Morgan and Dianne Ashton illuminate the experiences of Jewish women during the war.

The edited volume is full of insights into slavery, Jews and the abolitionists, and anti-Semitism during the war. Missing, because no one has written about it, is the experience of Jewish soldiers in the Union army and navy. It is hard to understand why this is so. Perhaps, the sesquicentennial and the publication of this superb reader will inspire students of American Jewish history to go to work on the Jewish Yankees. More research also needs to be done on the American Jewish community's participation in the war effort, both on and off the battlefield, and how Jews felt about a host of issues, including Lincoln and emancipation.



# Pillars and Partnerships

by Phillip Greenberg

The 16<sup>th</sup> year of the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina is a momentous one in many ways. In a time of economic uncertainty, we continue to expand our membership. At the Society's regional meeting in Bluffton last May, we were introduced to a whole new Jewish community in Beaufort County, a foundation for Jewish life in the lowcountry that did not exist 20 years ago. On November 14, we will travel to the northwest corner of the state and convene in Anderson, where we will explore Jewish roots in the upcountry.

JHSSC President Ann Meddin Hellman has updated our website, launching us into cyberspace and making it easy to find information about events, publications, synagogues, cemetery surveys, and other worthwhile projects and partnerships. The breadth and depth of these initiatives is impressive. To name just a few:

- The Society is collaborating with the College of Charleston's Jewish Studies Program and the Center for Southern Jewish Culture to organize a scholars' conference on May 25 – 26, 2011, in commemoration of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of the Civil War.
- A volunteer corps, led by Vice President Joe Wachter, continues to document Jewish burial grounds across the state.
- The Jewish Heritage Collection at the Addlestone Library has launched a major "Hidden Collections" project designed to catch up with its acquisition backlog over the next two years and make its archival treasures fully accessible.
- A major gift from the Zucker/Goldberg family, recently announced by the Jewish Studies Program, will underwrite Holocaust education initiatives at the College in perpetuity. Anita Zucker and family serve as a shining example of philanthropy, an inspiration to us all.

As JHSSC's membership chair, I am actively soliciting contributions to our organization at the Pillar level. I encourage former Pillars to "re-up" their support, and I sincerely thank those who have made the commitment to become a Pillar for the first time this year. While large donations are essential if we want to reach our long-term goals, the Society's day-to-day operations depend on membership dues and the generosity of our Pillars. Become a Pillar today by pledging to contribute \$1,000 a year for five years. Help make South Carolina's Jewish history a living legacy.

## PILLARS of the SOCIETY (2010)

|                                  |                   |    |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|----|
| Ellen Arnovitz                   | Atlanta           | GA |
| Doris Baumgarten                 | Aiken             | SC |
| Harold I. Fox                    | Charleston        | SC |
| Phillip and Patricia Greenberg   | Florence          | SC |
| Reuben Greenberg                 | Charleston        | SC |
| William M. Guggenheim            | Hilton Head       | SC |
| Ann and Max Hellman              | Charleston        | SC |
| Michael Kogan                    | Little Falls      | NJ |
| Susan R. Lourie                  | Columbia          | SC |
| Susan Pearlstine                 | Charleston        | SC |
| Andrew N. Poliakoff              | Spartanburg       | SC |
| Edward and Sandra Poliakoff      | Columbia          | SC |
| Alan Reyner                      | Columbia          | SC |
| Benedict and Brenda Rosen        | Myrtle Beach      | SC |
| Robert and Susan Rosen           | Charleston        | SC |
| Raymond and Sandra Lee Rosenblum | Charleston        | SC |
| Joseph and Edie Rubin            | Charleston        | SC |
| Jeff and Walton Selig            | Columbia          | SC |
| Mark C. Tanenbaum                | Sullivan's Island | SC |
| David Wallace                    | Columbia          | SC |
| Anita Zucker                     | Charleston        | SC |

Carolee Rosen Fox, o.b.m.

Harvey and Mimi Gleberman, o.b.m.

Anne Oxler Krancer, o.b.m.

Jerry Zucker, o.b.m.

## FOUNDATIONAL PILLARS (2010)

|                                     |            |    |
|-------------------------------------|------------|----|
| George and Sara Stern Foundation    | Boca Raton | FL |
| Henry and Sylvia Yaschik Foundation | Charleston | SC |

**Our list is current as of publication. We apologize if there are inadvertent omissions.**

Yes, I/we want to become a Pillar member of the JHSSC.

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Check enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (includes annual membership)

JHSSC Pillars contribute \$1,000 per year for five years. Foundational Pillars are institutions or foundations that commit \$2,000 per year for five years. Go to [www.jhssc.org](http://www.jhssc.org) to become a Pillar.



THE  
**JEWISH  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY**  
OF  
SOUTH CAROLINA

Martin Perlmutter, Executive Director  
Enid Idelsohn, Administrator

**Officers**

Ann Meddin Hellman, President  
Phillip Greenberg, Vice President  
Susan D. Altman, Vice President  
Joe Wachter, Vice President  
David J. Cohen, Treasurer  
Rachel G. Barnett, Secretary  
Moss Blachman, Archivist

**Founding President**

Isadore Lourie, o.b.m.

**Past Presidents**

Belinda Gergel  
Richard Gergel  
Edward Poliakoff  
Klyde Robinson  
Robert Rosen  
Jeffrey Rosenblum  
Bernard Warshaw

**Board of Directors**

Gerry Sue Arnold, Columbia  
Doris Baumgarten, Aiken  
Eve M. Berlinsky, Charleston  
Hy Brand, Greenville  
Leah Chase, Charleston  
David Draisén, Anderson  
Robert Dreyfus, Greenville  
Stanley Farbstein, Charleston  
Ben Goldberg, Charleston  
Lyssa Harvey, Columbia  
Alan Kahn, Columbia  
Harriet Keyserling, Beaufort  
Michael Kogan, Charleston  
Harold Kornblut, Latta  
Mike Krupsaw, Anderson  
Mick Lourie, Columbia  
Rose Mark, Beaufort  
Burnet Mendelsohn, Charleston  
I. Harby Moses, Sumter  
Herbert Novit, Hilton Head  
Eli Poliakoff, Charleston  
Alan Reyner, Columbia  
Mickey Rosenblum, Charleston  
Steve Savitz, Columbia

Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina  
96 Wentworth Street  
College of Charleston  
Charleston, SC 29424  
Phone: 843.953.3918  
Email: [jhssc@cofc.edu](mailto:jhssc@cofc.edu)

NON-PROFIT  
U.S. POSTAGE

P - A - I - D

CHARLESTON, SC  
PERMIT No. 485

**Join the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State:** \_\_\_\_ **Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Fax:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ANNUAL DUES FOR 2010 (JANUARY–DECEMBER)**

|       |                                                         |                |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| _____ | <b>Individual/Family Membership</b>                     | <b>\$36</b>    |
| _____ | <b>Friend</b>                                           | <b>\$200</b>   |
| _____ | <b>Sponsor</b>                                          | <b>\$350</b>   |
| _____ | <b>Founding Patron</b>                                  | <b>\$1,000</b> |
| _____ | <b>Pillar (\$1,000 yearly for 5 years)</b>              | <b>\$1,000</b> |
| _____ | <b>Foundational Pillar (\$2,000 yearly for 5 years)</b> | <b>\$2,000</b> |

**Join or renew JHSSC online at [www.jhssc.org](http://www.jhssc.org).**

**Enroll your friends and relatives for an additional \$36 each.**

**Send us their information and we will inform them of your gift.**

**Register now for the November 14<sup>th</sup> meeting in Anderson.**

**PLEASE REGISTER EARLY.**

**See pages 10 – 11 for more information.**

*Make checks payable to JHSSC  
and mail to the address above.*