# The Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina



Courage, Conscience, and Conformity —

South Carolina Jews and the Civil Rights Movement

> Register now for spring meeting in Charleston, SC April 16–17

> > Spring 2016

Volume XXI Number 1

# Тнв

JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

> Dale Rosengarten editor Alyssa Neely assistant editor and designer

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On the cover: Senator Isadore Lourie speaks at the 1986 dedication of the Columbia freeway (also known as Highway 277) named for his good friend Isaiah DeQuincey Newman (1911-1985), pictured in the banner. Elected to the South Carolina Senate in 1983, Newman was the first African American to serve in that legislative body since Reconstruction. Isadore E. Lourie Papers, South Carolina Political Collections, University of South Carolina.

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Isadore E. Lourie: Advocate for the Underprivileged ~ Jack Swerling ~ Attorney and legislator Isadore Lourie, a colleague recalls, was a strong advocate on behalf of minorities. Known for his compassion, he used his political skills and position in the South Carolina Senate to "do right" for all people, regardless of race, in the Midlands and 

The Keyserling Family Compass ~ Billy Keyserling ~ Beaufort's mayor traces his family's shared ethics to his grandfather, William, who, by example, encouraged service to others less fortunate. William's sons, Leon and Herbert, and Herbert's wife, Harriet, carried on 

Milestones: 40 Pillars, 500 Members ~ Martin Perlmutter ~ JHSSC and its affiliates at the College of Charleston have gone a long way towards putting South Carolina's Jewish 



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of the experience available to those who become active in the We plan to explore all sides of the issues confronting the Society. Several years ago I started writing articles for the magazine region and the nation in this explosive period. Jews in the South about various branches of my family in South Carolina, dating as felt conflicted in their identity: their forebears in Europe had far back as 1842. I had not had a history class since high school, so experienced centuries of antisemitism and outright violence, yet it was a little daunting, but the enthusiasm and resources offered as southerners they were very much accepted in white society. by Dale Rosengarten, Rachel Barnett, Marty Perlmutter, Alyssa This acceptance, however, came at a price, particularly for people Neely, Ann Meddin Hellman, and others gave me the courage to in isolated rural communities. White skin privilege came with reconnect with relatives and embark on family research projects. the expectation of political conformity on race issues. For Jewish As co-VP of Archives and Historical Sites this past year, families there was legitimate fear for their safety and economic well-I worked with Society officers and fellow board member being if they antagonized the mainstream community; the memory Rhetta Mendelsohn on the Orangeburg portion of the fall of Leo Frank's lynching resonated with some, and synagogue 2015 conference. While researching Jewish life in small towns bombings were not a hypothetical concern. Northern Jews who similar to Eutawville, where I grew up, I met some fascinating clamored for social justice for blacks brought unwanted attention to people, such as 90-year-old Bernie Rubenstein of Elloree, southern Jews, whose racial views were shaped by the mores of the

Orangeburg County historian Gene Atkinson, and Becky Ulmer from St. Matthews, a founder of the Elloree Heritage Museum and Cultural Center.

The fall meeting, "A Tale of Two Cities," featured terrific programs and speakers. Historic Columbia co-sponsored the Columbia presentations, which covered the capital's early Jewish history and 20<sup>th</sup>-century merchants. In the old commercial district of Orangeburg, we Left to right: Carol Aronson Kelly, Rhetta Aronson Mendelsohn,



Jewish merchants and notable *Photo: Dale Rosengarten.* 

USC history professor Bobby J. Donaldson as our keynote speaker on Saturday, and to have the College of Charleston's Our upcoming meeting on April 16–17 in Charleston tackles African American Studies Program as our co-sponsor. With the outpouring of grief and outrage over the horrific murders at Emanuel AME Church in Charleston in June 2015, I am gratified that the Society is tackling this thorny subject that just won't go away, and has designed a thought-provoking spring program.

residents, followed by a panel discussion at Temple Sinai, where a tiny congregation is holding on despite declining membership. the complex relationship between southern Jews and the Civil Rights Movement. Most of us are aware of the active involvement of Jews in the desegregation struggles of the 1960s, from Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel marching with Dr. Martin Luther King in Selma to the disproportionate number of Jewish Freedom Hope to see you in April. Riders. While the majority of activists came from the North, Jewish Ernest L. Marcus progressives in the South also took risks and became involved. That said, most southern Jews, a small minority throughout the

# Letter from the President

C ince moving from South Carolina to region, went along with the white, gentile majority and supported the status quo in race relations. It goes without saying now that no-change meant many of our neighbors would continue to suffer their inferior status with all its disadvantages. I wish I could say it went without saying then, but it did not.

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unveiled an historical marker Faye Becker Glancz, and Martin Becker at the dedication of the new commemorating the city's historical marker in downtown Orangeburg, November 8, 2015.

Jim Crow system.

Examining the thoughts and actions of South Carolina Jews during the civil rights era of the mid-twentieth century, we expect to find much to be proud of, but we also are determined to investigate aspects of the subject that make us uncomfortable.

In this issue of the Society's magazine and at our April meeting, we will take a look at the integration of Rivers High School in Charleston and the role particular Jewish political leaders played in pushing for change. JHSSC is excited to welcome

# **Entering Rivers**

 $B_{\rm Carolina,\ in\ 1963,\ I\ am\ sure\ I\ had\ almost\ no\ knowledge\ of}$  what it meant to be Jewish. In my narrowly constructed southern

world, people were either "white" or "black," and physical presentation alone accounted for the separation. But because of my parents' involvement in civil rights struggles that allowed intermittent, although brief, views of human interactions beyond the simplicity of my hometown, I had traveled to gatherings that brought people of good conscience and progressive social agendas together, in spite of pervasive laws and notions insisting on segregation.

Therefore, when I met Jewish students at Rivers, I knew the words to and could convincingly sing "Hava Nagila." I could enthusiastically dance the "hora," and was amused to find that my closest and most enduring ally, Barbara Solomon, claimed an inability to do either! I had learned these small insights into Judaism in safe places where being Jewish had meant solidarity with black struggle. These were not typical "whites," but a subset of social activists who dared be seen with black people, advocate for our constitutional rights, and confront dangerous

situations on our behalf. The Jewish students at Rivers were not nearly as noble as my lofty images. But the fact is, of the first eight

#### by Millicent E. Brown, Ph.D.

people to say hello to me that September 1963 day at school, sit next to me in class without pushing their chairs away in disgust, stand next to me in the lunchroom, seven were Jewish. That has always

> meant something to me. And the "coincidence" of the English teacher waiting until a High Holy Day when no Jewish students were present to have an impromptu classroom discussion about the existence of a "superior race" meant even more.

> > It would be years after my 1966 graduation before I fully appreciated the demographic circumstances that made Rivers so unique an educational institution in a typical, bigoted American city. Substantial numbers of Jewish residents relegated to "that" side

of town created a sizeable enough percentage of such students attending one specific public school. Whether understood, respected, liked or not, they could be marginalized, but not oppressed as were blacks because of the historic differences between the two groups. At 15 years of age, I was far from able to deconstruct the realities of ancient, global ethnic and religious legacies. It was enough to know that another group's experiences were buffering me in subtle ways from the antagonism I would surely have met had I

attended a more homogeneous, all-white school with Christian locals a few blocks away.

The author was a plaintiff in Millicent Brown, et al. vs. Charleston School District 20 (1963). Founding director of "Somebody Had to Do It" Oral History Project, she is principal consultant of Lightbright, LLC Consulting Services.

Top: Jacqueline Ford is escorted by her father into Rivers High School for 8<sup>th</sup> grade orientation, August 1963, as a consequence of the first successful desegregation case in the state. Bottom: A bomb threat was called in to Rivers on the first day of classes, September 3, 1963. Photos courtesy of The Post and Courier. Middle: Millicent Brown's class photo, Rivers High School yearbook, 1965, courtesy of Special Collections, College of Charleston.

# Across the Big Water of Lake Marion: The dismantling of the segregated school system by Ernest L. Marcus

Onsidering that we met only a few years ago, Rachel As you will read below, the decision by Rachel's family and mine to abandon the public school system and send each of us to an

to my cousin Henry; she's great friends with my sister-in-law Amy; and we were both born in 1956 and grew up in the sole Jewish family in our respective small towns, about 15 miles apart on opposite sides of Lake Marion, connected by the Santee bridge. As such, we experienced,

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at the same time, the *Groundbreaking for Holly Hill Academy, 1969. Photo from 1971 Holly Hill Academy* result in a precipitous disintegration of the *yearbook, courtesy of Ernest L. Marcus.* drop in the quality of

whites-only public schools. Summerton and Eutawville were their children's education. While uncomfortable to admit, I think majority black townships with separate public schools for white resistance to integration was motivated by other factors as whites and blacks. When the 1964 Civil Rights Act was passed, well. Racism certainly was one. Also, the independent schools must schools were forced to dismantle the dual system. "Segregation have been attractive to white parents because of the perception academies" sprang up rapidly in South Carolina, from 16 prior that other students (white or black) would be from families to integration to over 200 by 1975. In rural areas some 90 that were better off, financially. For Jewish families, mindful of percent of the white children in public schools ended up in the their people's own history of exclusion and persecution, the private school system. decision was especially complex.

# The Closing of Eutawville Elementary by Ernest L. Marcus

Eutawville is a small town in the South Carolina Lowcountry where my peddler grandfather met my grandmother and opened a dry goods store at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. going on around him in the '50s and '60s. Nearly all of his clientele in the store were black and he seemed immersed in their community, knowing generations of families as friends,

My father, Harry Marcus, was mayor of the town from 1948 to 1971. In the 1950s, with the federal government moving incrementally to address civil rights issues, in particular the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court decision, my older siblings recall that Dad joined the local Citizens' Council—for a few months anyway, as the Eutawville organization didn't last long. During the



early years these Citizens' Councils in the South (sometimes called "White Citizens' Councils") included community leaders but, over time, took on fringe elements. I know nothing further about how my father felt concerning the social changes Most of my classmates transferred to public school in



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"independent" school was complicated. For all white families there was concern over inattention to and lack of funding for the black schools. The general belief was that the black schools were not of the same quality as the white schools, so there was fear among families that merging the schools all at once would result in a precipitous drop in the quality of

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constituents (after the 1965 Voting Rights Act), and customers. To advertise his business, he purchased air time on the local gospel station.

From 1961 to 1965 I attended Eutawville Elementary School, serving grades one through seven (six to eight pupils per grade, in my memory), with more than one grade sometimes combined in a single room. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 gave

nearby Holly Hill. Several families, including ours, began sending their children more than 30 miles away to Wade Hampton Academy in Orangeburg. For me, it was the beginning of culture shock as I left my tiny school, a block from the rear of my dad's store. With nearly 600 students, WHA was one of the first and largest of the

fired.

The first celebration of Wade Hampton's birth-

The first celebration of wade nampton's unifi-tay evinces the honor and tradition so inherent a ourschool. Martha Robinson, leading a riderless

Honor and Tradition... The Pulse of Our School bert and Tom Porter. Ceremoniously the three flags were presented to the school from the Wade Hampton Legion and a twenty-one gun salute was fined

new "independent" schools, the white community's answer to what was perceived by some to be the federal government's forced mixing of the races in public schools.

Wade Hampton was a well-known Confederate general and governor of South Carolina. His Democratic nomination for governor was supported by the Red Shirts, a group that sought the removal of blacks from public office after Reconstruction. Certainly the choice of school name was intended to send a message. Known as the Rebels, the athletic teams wore gray and gold, not-so-subtle references to the Old

South. On Wade Hampton's birthday, just for fun, the "Yankees" in the school were captured and held for ransom in the study hall. Graduating seniors received Confederate flag pins with "Survivor" emblazened on them.

Church and state were not as separate as I might have hoped (my older sister and I were the only Jewish children in the school). Holy Roller preachers periodically came to the gym for an allout "saving" of young souls. Luckily, as a veteran of the Royal Ambassadors for Christ summer camp (another story!), I knew how to stay away from the baptismal water.

I can't say I was unhappy at WHA, but I felt an underlying current of racism and danger in Orangeburg (we were there when the Orangeburg Massacre took place in February 1968) that I did not feel at Holly Hill Academy, which opened in 1970, in time for me to transfer for my freshman year. While the school sports teams were called the HHA Raiders, with obvious Confederate connotations, the administration and students did not exude the same feeling of outright racism, and it was a place where I found success and acceptance. I recently had a conversation with my former principal, Dr. R. J. Steeley, who confirmed that the school's founders believed the creation of the academy was entirely about the quality of the education rather than avoidance of racial mixing.

As someone who considers himself a typical Jewish liberal, it is easy to criticize the decisions of my parents. Attending two "segregation" academies is not something I feel good about. Still, I can see that it was a period of uncertainty and the Jewish community felt

Clockwise from top left: Wade Hampton Academy (WHA) students in black face, posing as the Supremes (1969 yearbook); the "survivor" pin (1967 yearbook) bestowed on WHA graduates; masthead of May 1969 WHA school newspaper; WHA students commemorate Wade Hampton's birthday (1967 yearbook). Previous page: the author's 1967 WHA 5<sup>th</sup> grade class photo. All images courtesy of Ernest L. Marcus.

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stuck in the middle. The identification of Jews as white gave them a much higher social standing but, at the same time, their own history as victims of antisemitism made them more sensitive to the racism around them. Not surprisingly, particularly in small towns where African Americans made up the majority of the population, the path of least resistance was to go along with the rest of the white community and avoid being criticized and even ostracized.

Holly Hill Academy's senior officers, left to right: Vice President Ernie Marcus, President Billy Workman, Treasurer Rick Cummings, Reporter David Shingler, and Secretary Reg Munden, from the 1974 yearbook, courtesy of Ernest L. Marcus.

# When the Saints Go Marching In

**T**n the spring of 1970, I was in the eighth grade, looking my parents to encourage them to send us to CH. At that time, my L forward to cheerleader tryouts for our beloved Summerton father had no interest. This was a Baptist-supported institution High School. I had been a JV cheerleader in junior high and it and it was tough enough to be Jewish in a small town without the was time to move up to high school. I didn't know (nor care) added potential of being proselytized on a daily basis! about a fourth circuit ruling that demanded total desegregation As it turned out, he had little to worry about, since of our public schools. You see, I grew up in Summerton, South the opposite happened. His four children, the only Carolina, home of Briggs v. Elliott, which ultimately became Jewish kids in town, were accepted and no one tried to convert us. Even the religion teacher, a staunch part of the landmark Supreme Court case of Brown v. Board of Baptist, respected our religious differences. My Education of Topeka, Kansas. Being 14 years old is very time parents, too, were accepted in the school; my consuming, and I was truly unaware of the historic significance mother, a teacher, took a position at Clarendon of this issue. But on a spring evening, my father came home Hall teaching social studies, and from his drugstore and handed my mother a stack of forms. "Go ahead and register them," he said. "We have no other option." my father was invited

That meant my siblings and I were headed to Clarendon Hall, the private, all-white school, formed in 1965. Schools such as Clarendon Hall were established when desegregation began in the '60s. Baptist-supported, the all-white refuge was located on the outskirts of our small farming town.

I knew a few kids at Clarendon, but my friends had remained at the public school throughout the "choice" period. That is, every spring a form came home from the school district and you would select your school. Looking back, We had a few African-American I have fond memories of the private students in our school and, to me, school. But I am not proud of the fact that we went there. this was not a big issue. We all got A white-flight school really didn't reflect the values that my along-though, looking back as parents instilled in us. I suppose it was more about the place an adult, I wonder how those few and the times. Mom and Dad were fairly liberal, with a social black students felt. conscience-at least for South Carolina at the time. When it I had to trust my parents. I have came to their kids' education, however, they just wouldn't risk no doubt that Clarendon Hall was it. This was a new educational landscape, and as the white not their choice. Indeed, when the Above: The author, Clarendon Hall's head cheerleader in 1974, her school was first formed, I vaguely senior year, from the 1974 Clarendon Hall yearbook, courtesy of Mrs. Miriam B. Gordin History & Speech Rachel Gordin Barnett.



recall some of the founders visiting

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#### by Rachel Gordin Barnett

to join the school board. It was quite remarkable.

community pulled out of the public schools, there was great uncertainty as to what type of an education would remain. So they did what they felt was in their children's best interest and off we went to our new school, Clarendon Hall, home of the Saints.

#### Oh, when the Saints Go marching in!

Left: Sporting a halo and wings, senior Rachel Gordin demonstrates why she was voted female with the most school spirit. Right: The author's father, David Gordin (seated) with fellow Clarendon Hall board members Henry Rickenbaker and Leslie Tindal. Photos from 1974 Clarendon Hall yearbook, courtesy of Rachel Gordin Barnett.

# A Southern Jewish Girl's Very Personal Civil Rights Story

#### by Judy Kurtz Goldman

y father, like many southern Jews, owned a women's "Here's the situation. We have one bathroom. And everyone who works in the store is welcome to use it. Maybe you'd woman, to be The Smart Shop's maid. She was so bright better head on home now." and engaging, my father soon promoted her to saleswoman.

on customers. This made her, by many years, the first non-white salesperson on Rock Hill's Main Street.

Now here's where the story gets complicated. There was only one bathroom in the store.

Late one evening, our doorbell at home rang. It was the husband of one of the women who worked in the store, and he was fallingdown drunk. When my sister and I (maybe 10 and 13) heard the tumult at the front door, we rushed from our beds to the upstairs landing, so that we could peek through the banisters. Mr. Wingate was bellowing in my father's face, "The ladies don't want no nigger using the bathroom!" *father, circa* 1932. Courtesy

I saw my father stand up straighter, businesslike, a posture I was very familiar with. He took a maid, regardless of the job she was paid for? Was it the step toward Mr. Wingate, not away. Of course, everyone who knew my father knew he was fearless. And deeply principled. Wingate back down the front steps onto the grass, toward the driveway and his idling car. As the two men slowly moved together, my father was saying in his soft, southern voice: Avoiding putting himself in harm's way?

The next evening, I overheard my father telling Mother the She continued mopping and dusting, but she also waited talk on Main Street was that Mr. Wingate had brought a gun to

our front door. Why he didn't use it, no one knew. A decade later, in the early 1960s, Thelma (by then, strictly a saleswoman, no longer a maid) was recognized for her warm personality in a citywide vote. The Evening Herald ran a story under the headline: "Furniture Salesman, Maid in Ladies Wear Store Win Acclaim as Rock Hill's Friendliest Employees."

Whose decision was it to call her a maid? I'm sure it was probably still risky to broadcast her sales status. Were the editors protecting her? Protecting themselves? After all, what

small-town southern newspaper wanted to rile its customer base? Or did the editors automatically call a black female worker a

customers who assumed, because of the color of her skin, that she was a maid, even though, every day, all day, she was From my upstairs perch, I watched him gently ease Mr. right there in the front of the store, greeting them by name, ringing up their purchases? Was my father, growing more cautious with age, avoiding putting Thelma in harm's way?

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Meanwhile, in 1961, while I was away at college, eight men loafers, then looked up to see the black boy's bloody cheek, that I from Rock Hill's black Friendship Junior College (along with realized the white boy had a knife. one outside activist) sat down at McCrory's lunch counter On a warm afternoon in November-still my first year-the and ordered sandwiches. They were immediately arrested for principal made an announcement over the loudspeaker. It was trespassing and, because money in the Civil Rights Movement 2:30, last period of the day, journalism class. We were assigning

was scarce, they refused bail and were sentenced to 30 days' hard labor at the York County Prison Camp. ("Jail, no bail" soon became the strategy that reenergized the nonviolent Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s.) The presiding judge was Billy Hayes, a longtime friend of my parents. In an odd personal twist, Billy Hayes and his wife-two years later—bought our family home. He was a lovely man, but he was on the wrong side of history.

In 2015 the Friendship Nine were invited to a ceremony in Rock Hill in which their convictions were overturned. The presiding judge did not expunge their records; he wanted them preserved in the court docket so that future generations would know of the young men's courage. His statement: "We cannot rewrite history, but we can right history." The judge: John C. Hayes III, Billy Hayes's nephew.

After college, in the fall of 1963, I high school in Georgia ordered to admit blacks. Roosevelt High was the largest high school in Atlanta and located in one of its poorest neighborhoods. The situation was so volatile, police were stationed every day on all three floors of the building. My first morning, as part of the lesson, I asked my students to name a famous person they'd like to meet. A white boy's hand shot up. "I wish I could meet President Kennedy," he said, glancing around, making sure all eyes were fastened on him. "I'd tell him to get these niggers out of our school!"

Weeks later, during homeroom, I heard a scuffle in the coatroom and rushed in to find two boys fighting—one white, one black. They were small, so I wedged myself in and pulled them apart. It wasn't until I looked down and saw blood on my



Ben Kurtz, the author's of Judy Kurtz Goldman.







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THE NEW SMART SHOP OPENS Tomorrow Night, February 25th INFORMAL HOUSE WARMING Come, Be Our Guests! No Selling! MUSIC! 7:30 to 9:30 SOUVENIRS! A Revelation In Smart Styles Economy Prices • Wide Variety TOMORROW . Modern Appoir NIGHT-----• New Merchandise We Present The Ne Greater Convenience Smart Shop ! EVERYTHING The colorisation of our ideals ar-or heginning here a few years hop that best @in the mesh BRAND NEW --- Coats ! --- Suits ! --- Dresses ! Milline -- Undies -Bags

Above: Ad for The Smart Shop in The Evening Herald, Rock Hill, SC, February 1936. Below: Main Street, Rock

articles for the school newspaper. The principal's words: "Our president has been shot." You could hear white students cheering up and down the halls.

It was impossible to grow up in the South in the 1940s, '50s, and '60s, and not feel the rattling effects of segregation. From the side-by-side water fountains in Friedheim's Department Store to the separate waiting rooms in our family doctor's office to the whites-only swimming pool at the YMCA, prejudice was everywhere. But I learned strong lessons that night I leaned through the upstairs banisters. Those lessons were clear. Indelible. They remain as well defined for me as if

# **Courage, Conscience, and Conformity:** South Carolina Jews and the Civil Rights Movement April 16–17, 2016 ~ Charleston, South Carolina

Spring meeting of the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina, co-sponsored by the College of Charleston's African-American Studies Program

#### Saturday, April 16

| 11:30 а.м.        | Registration   |  |
|-------------------|--|--|
| Noon              | Lunch  |  |
| 12:45 – 1:45 р.м. | Let Us Break Bread Together: African Americans, Jews, and South Carolina's Civil Rights<br>Struggle – Bobby Donaldson, Associate Professor of History, University of South Carolina  |  |
| 1:45 - 3:15       | Panel Discussion – <b>Rising to the Challenge: Jewish Politicians in an Age of Change</b><br>Moderator: The Honorable Jean Toal, Chief Justice, Supreme Court of South Carolina (2000–2015)<br>Panelists: Billy Keyserling, Marvin Lare, Joel Lourie, Jack Swerling  |  |
| 3:15 - 3:30       | Break  |  |
| 3:30 - 5:00       | Panel Discussion – <b>Revisiting Rivers: Reflections on School Desegregation</b><br>Moderator: Jon Hale, Assistant Professor, Department of Teacher Education, College of Charleston<br>Panelists: Charlie Brown, Millicent Brown, Oveta Glover, Missy Cohen Gold, Robert Rosen,<br>Blanche Weintraub Wine |  |
| 5:30 - 6:45       | <b>Cocktail reception</b> , Albert and Robin Mercer's residence, 110 Ashley Avenue (corner of Bull Street and Ashley)  |  |
|                   | Dinner on your own   |  |

#### Sunday, April 17

| 8:30 а.м.   | Breakfast  |  |
|---|--|--|
| 9:00  | Open JHSSC Board Meeting   |  |
| <b>10:00 – 12:00</b> Panel discussion – <b>Against the Tide: Risks and Rewards of Rejecting the Sta</b> |  |  |
|   | Moderator: Cleveland Sellers, Jr., President, Voorhees College                       |  |
|   | Participants: Jack Bass, Dan T. Carter, Bill Saunders, Rabbi Robert Seigel           |  |
|   | Respondent: Patricia A. Sullivan, Professor of History, University of South Carolina |  |

#### **Hotel reservations**

| Francis Marion Hotel<br>387 King Street          | <b>Red Roof Inn</b><br>301 Johnnie Dodds Boulevard   | 96 Wentworth   |
|--|--|--|
| Charleston, SC 29403<br>(843) 722-0600 or        | Mount Pleasant, SC<br>(843) 884-1411 or<br>OR (800) 733-7663                               | <b>Mee</b> t<br>Online at:   |
| <i>Special rate:</i><br>\$309 per night plus tax | <i>Special rate:</i><br>\$114.74 per night plus tax<br>with group number B242JHSSC1        | jhssc.org/events/upcoming<br>with Visa, MasterCard,<br>Discover, or American Exp |
| 0 1 ,  | must make your reservations before<br>916, and mention you are with the<br>South Carolina. | Meeting fee: \$50 per<br>Questions: Enid Idels<br>Phone: (8                      |

# Unless otherwise noted, all events will take place in the

Sylvia Vlosky Yaschik Jewish Studies Center, Street, College of Charleston ting registration

| meeting registration |
|----------------------|
| By check, payab      |

| <i>coming</i><br>rd, OR<br>an Express | By check, payable to <b>JHSSC c/o</b><br>Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies<br>Program – 96 Wentworth Street,<br>Charleston, SC 29424 |
|---------------------------------------|--|
|                                       |  |

#### r person lsohn, idelsohne@cofc.edu

Phone: (843) 953-3918 ~ fax: (843) 953-7624

### "I don't run from nobody!" by Hyman Rubin III

Trecall my grandfather, Hyman Rubin, Sr., saying more than leadership, in changing the course of events. As a historian my Lonce, always with an uncharacteristic double negative for grandfather was ahead of his time. emphasis, "My father had to run from the Cossacks—I don't Understanding that race relations and racial justice were the have to run from nobody!" Even as a child I took from that key issues of his era, and believing that only strong, morally driven, statement two powerful ideas: on the one hand, it showed and fearless leadership would win the day, he did all he could to put his love and appreciation for the United States of America, a his beliefs into action. He often told the story of his father, Joseph place where the son of poor immigrants could become a state Rubin, knocking out the "town bully" who had attacked him. I'm senator, and a place where a prominent Jew had no need to quite sure that memory was a formative one for my grandfather, fear persecution. On the other hand, it showed why he felt and his work as a private citizen and later as a legislator showed a called to public service and to the fight for racial equality. lifelong commitment to confronting the powerful and defending Fear of pogroms might have forced his ancestors to keep the powerless. The causes to which he devoted the most energy

their heads down, but he was free to challenge injustice, and he felt compelled to do so.

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Even though he lived in a time when anti-Jewish prejudice was more widespread and acceptable than today, he would never acknowledge it as anything other than "a pinprick of an irritant." He never excused antisemitism, but he saw its American incarnation



was his co-founding, along with University of South Carolina President Tom Jones, of an interracial Luncheon Club-the first of its kind in Columbia, and possibly in South Carolina-to bring white and black leaders together. Recognizing that these leaders were usually brought together by crisis, and had not had the chance to get to know each other before they had to resolve But if the United States was a safe and tolerant place for problems, the two believed the Luncheon Club would remedy that. My grandfather also worked closely with downtown business owners, and especially lunch counter operators, to assure them that if they began serving black customers, white patrons would still come. Meanwhile, he encouraged white the lunch money himself!

other parts of the world. It might prevent him from playing golf with other legislators at their country club, but it couldn't stop him from becoming successful in business, winning offices of public trust, and openly challenging his community's laws and traditions when necessary. Jews, South Carolina in the 1950s and 1960s offered no such security for its black citizens. For my grandfather, the racial policies and attitudes of the country (and especially the South) were America's great moral failing. He never doubted what would cause those policies and attitudes to change: leadership. He was only an amateur historian, but he had an instinctive grasp of the Columbians to eat at the lunch counters, sometimes providing importance of leadership in history. When I was in graduate school the historiographical trend was to emphasize the role The same forces that threatened to boycott integrated that social structures, economic forces, and culture played in lunchrooms also tried to take control of Columbia's city council determining historical outcomes. Since then I have noticed the in 1963, advocating a "segregation ticket" to roll back the changes scholarly pendulum swinging back towards the importance of that had been made. (Lunch counters were desegregated in 1962, individual decisions, and particularly toward the importance of but the "white" and "colored" signs were not removed until later

from and less threatening Ceremony, Columbia City Hall, Friday, January 12, 1996, as part of a weekend occurred peacefully. One than the form it took in meeting of the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina. Photo by Dale Rosengarten. of his key contributions

all fill that bill: protecting the Congaree Swamp from logging, amending the state's strict noexceptions ban on abortion, urging state support for blind and elderly citizens. But of all these, he took the greatest pride in his fight for civil rights.

In the early 1960s he publicly advocated desegregation, as well as working behind the scenes to ensure that it

in 1963.) My grandfather was on the opposing "integration ticket," whose victory led to the end of legal segregation in the city. In these efforts and in his many public speeches opposing discrimination and advocating goodwill, Hyman Rubin, Sr., showed he was not afraid to take unpopular stands in defense of freedom and equality. He received plenty of hate mail (including death threats, as I later learned), but to him that only proved he was on the morally right side. If those who opposed him were motivated by hate, it only showed the weakness of their cause. He was completely dismissive of their threats.

I learned many lessons from my grandfather, some historical, some philosophical, some practical, and some moral. He often said he was too proud to lie or steal: lying and stealing are sneaky, and a proud man does not sneak. I found it humorous, but also insightful: a person who knows himself well can use one flaw (pride) to guard against others (dishonesty, pettiness, greed). More than anything else, though, I remember two things about him: the love and gratitude he felt for this country, and the obligation he felt to make it better. In fulfilling that obligation, he never ran from anybody.

### Isadore E. Lourie: Advocate for the Underprivileged by Jack Swerling

Isadore Lourie in the South Carolina Senate chamber

with Bishop Fred James (1) and Bishop A. C. Jackson

on the occasion of the swearing-in of Bishop Jackson's

son Darrell Jackson in December 1992. Senator

Jackson, who succeeded Senator Lourie, is standing

behind the desk with his campaign manager, Joel

Lourie. Isadore E. Lourie Papers, South Carolina

Come years ago the Alabama Bar Association dedicated a influence the path of legislation from 1962 to 1992. Susan was his Omemorial in Monroeville to the ideals personified by Atticus Finch in To Kill a Mockingbird. To mark the ceremony, author Harper Lee wrote a letter to the bar association, which in pertinent part said, "Your profession has always had some real life heroes lawyers of great courage and uncompromising integrity who did what was right when right was an unpopular and sometimes USC Young Democrats, president of the South Carolina Young

dangerous thing to do." Such a man was Isadore E. Lourie, my mentor and hero, whom I had the privilege of working with in his law practice from 1973 to 1983.

A large percentage of our practice involved representing African Americans and other minorities from the Midlands of South Carolina. Our clients trusted Senator Lourie to be a zealous advocate for their cause. They knew by his words, actions, and deeds that he had a sense of compassion for the less fortunate and less privileged members of society. He cherished the trust that people put in him and his goal was to give a voice to those who had no voice. Senator Lourie wanted to improve the quality of life of the people he served in his law practice and in the legislature. Our firm was an oasis for minorities facing legal problems.

Isadore Lourie was born in 1932 in St. George. He entered the University of South Carolina in 1951, and was admitted to the South Carolina Bar in 1956. He married Susan Reiner in 1959, and they had three sons-Lance, Joel, and Neil. Senator Lourie took his skills as a legal advocate and leader and combined them with his talents as a politician to *Political Collections, University of South Carolina.* 

partner in his political quests, as well as in life. That Isadore Lourie would enter politics and become a successful legislator would surprise no one who knew him. He was president of his senior class in high school, president of the student body at the University of South Carolina, chairman of the

> Democrats, co-chairman of Young Democrats for Kennedy, and president of the South Carolina Jaycees. He served as a page in the legislature, was administrative assistant to the House Ways and Means Committee, and later, majority leader of the South Carolina Senate for three years.

> In the legislature Senator Lourie was a member of the group known as the Young Turks, who broke from the "old guard" and committed themselves, in his words, to "the cause of social and economic justice for all our citizens . . . this was the anchor of our entire legislative program." The Young Turks fought for and succeeded in passing legislation that would assist education, teachers, public kindergarten, consumer affairs, minorities, the handicapped, senior citizens, transportation, housing, and workers' compensation. From their efforts came the Workers' Compensation Commission, the Consumer Protection Agency, the Public Kindergarten Program, the South Carolina Council on Aging, the South Carolina Commission on Race Relations, and a host of other state programs.

> One of Senator Lourie's most lasting contributions is in the area of race



relations. Early in his career he befriended two of the great African-American civil rights leaders in Richland County-Reverend C. J. Whitaker and Reverend I. DeQuincey Newman. They both recognized the commitment, force, and energy of Isadore Lourie and, together as a team, they began to change the racial landscape. With Senator Lourie's help, African Americans were appointed to boards and commissions from which they were formerly excluded. They obtained employment in state and county offices, and they began to have a more significant role in politics. In 1972 these men helped elect two of the first African Americans to the South Carolina

House of Representatives—I. S. Leevy Johnson and Jim Felder. And Fritz Hollings, governor and United States senator, Praise for the senator has come from friends in high places. succinctly summed up Senator Lourie's career: "He was the most Alex Sanders, Isadore Lourie's desk mate in the senate, and progressive lawmaker our state has ever known."

# The Keyserling Family Compass

When my mother Harriet Keyserling passed away in 2010, I took the liberty of calling her close friend Marty Perlmutter to ask how I should deal with her "Jewish" identity when making arrangements for her burial and what I knew was going to be a huge celebration of her life.

Mother rarely went to Friday night services, did as little as she could get away with for the Women's Auxiliary, and did not have a lot of patience with the rabbi in Beaufort. At the same time she was devoted to Israel, contributed liberally to Jewish causes, and whenever a smart new family moved to Beaufort from New York, she would ask, "Do you think they are Jewish?"

Fortunately, Marty gave me a way out when he said, "Don't worry about Harriet and Judaism; she is a prophetic Jew." While the characterization was new to me, it sounded and felt good, and my mother, but also my father, his brother, my grandfather, and everyone else in the close family.

When speaking about civil rights it would therefore be short-sighted to speak only about Harriet Keyserling, as my grandfather William, who arrived here in 1888 as a young man running from Tsarist Russia, had such a strong influence on the magnet in our moral compass.

William and his business partner were the first local board members of Penn School on St. Helena Island, a school for freed slaves founded in 1862—the first of its kind in South Carolina. After the Storm of 1893, which devastated Beaufort County and drowned thousands of people on St. Helena, William Keyserling is



College of Charleston.



former president of the College of Charleston and chief judge of the South Carolina Court of Appeals, reported: "During the tumultuous time of the '60s, Isadore was one of the most meaningful voices that connected black and white people."

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Governor Dick Riley, who served in the state senate and as secretary of education under President Bill Clinton, described his friend's impact on South Carolina: "Much of the major legislative accomplishments of the past quarter century are due to the leadership and caring of Isadore Lourie. He's been there with his colleagues when vision and strength were needed."

Above: the author and his grandfather William Keyserling, 1949. Below: Dr. Herbert Keyserling. Keyserling Family



said to have defied the town fathers and taken Clara Barton and the Red Cross, in the dark of the night, out to the islands to help the African-American families who held on. William helped found Beth Israel Congregation, though he rarely attended services. He died from a massive heart attack while presenting the keynote address at an international UJA conference in New York. His last words were, "It is time for the young people to take over."

by Billy Keyserling

William's eldest son, Leon, followed that same compass. After graduating from Columbia University and Harvard Law School, he became one of the young architects of the New Deal. As legislative assistant to U.S. Senator Robert Wagner, he helped draft the National Industry Recovery Act of 1934, the National Housing Act of 1935, the Wagner National Labor Relations I have used the phrase to characterize not only *Papers*, *Special Collections*, Act of 1935, portions of the Social Security Act of 1935, and the U.S. Housing Act of 1937. He wrote an essay upon which the Full Employment Act of 1946 was based and served as a member and then chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors under President Truman.

> After his years in government service, Leon founded and funded the non-profit Council on Economic Progress, and conducted extensive studies for civil rights and labor organizations. In collaboration with his wife, Mary Dublin, he worked on the rights of women and minorities. Leon was one of the principal organizers of the labor/Jewish/African-American coalition that, throughout the 1960s, championed civil rights for all.

#### PAGE 14 JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

My father, Herbert, and Leon were separated in age by the directors Elizabeth and Courtney Siceloff, who were ostracized in Great Depression. Their dad had lost most of his wealth when he had to sell land to pay farm debt during the crisis and could afford tuition only at the College of Charleston. As a student my father black children at Penn, most of whom had been brought into the sold his blood for spending money. Nevertheless, as early as his internship at the Medical University of South Carolina, Dad was in the field day and night helping those who otherwise would not Dr. Martin Luther King's leadership retreats on St. Helena Island. have had medical care.

notice with no combat training, was deployed to Guadalcanal with the first marine division. At a young age he learned that no

matter how much he knew about medicine, there were those who could not be saved. A brutal experience drove him home to Beaufort where he practiced medicine 24/7, tending, primarily, the underserved, most of whom were poor and black. Dad was the second Keyserling on the Penn School Boardanother exemplar of the family's moral compass.

Herbert chose as his life partner Harriet Hirschfeld, a well-educated "New York fit into our small southern town and struggled with her politics and her identity. She and my dad were forced by William to join the country club because they were invited years after William had been blackballed. As a community servant she worked to bring extraordinary performing artists to Beaufort but then faced the challenge of where they could perform. The schools were segregated and because she believed that

culture was color blind, she felt compelled to find an integrated venue. Fortunately, the commanding officers of the military

bases offered to host the events so that no one would be left out. Following the Keyserling family compass, Harriet replaced my dad on the Penn School Board and became a close friend of

the Beaufort community because of their association with Penn and the Civil Rights Movement. As youngsters we played with world by my dad at no charge other than gifts of food, cakes, and sometimes homemade crafts. At Penn, we sat in the front row at

In 1972, when I ran the McGovern campaign, Harriet said During World War II, Dad joined the navy and, on short she could not help me. But she and her housekeeper, my second mother, traversed the islands to register black voters and then organized some friends to help get the people to the polls on

There she championed the

cause of creating a statue to

honor Robert Smalls, former

slave turned Union navy

captain, then state senator

and U.S. congressman.

She won, but the county

would not allow the statue

to be erected on public

property, so it was placed

at Tabernacle Baptist

Church on Craven Street,

said to have been Smalls's

home church. It is, to my

knowledge, the only piece

of publicly commissioned

elected to the South Carolina

House of Representatives,

the first woman from

Beaufort to serve in the

legislature. For 16 years she

In 1976 Harriet was

art in Beaufort County.



Above: Leon Keyserling (r) meets with Coretta Scott King, August 1976. Handwritten on back of photo: "Conferences in Atlanta on H H Bill . . auspices Martin Luther King Center for Social Change."

Below: South Carolina Representative Harriet Keyserling talks with fellow politicians Richard Riley and Nick Theodore. Keyserling Family Papers, Jew," who for years failed to Special Collections, College of Charleston.



fought for the rights of women and minorities, the arts, the natural environment, and public education. Though not necessarily hers by blood, she followed that same compass William carried with him as he ran from oppression in the Old Country and put to use giving back to those in need.

# Milestones: 40 Pillars, 500 Members by Martin Perlmutter

SPRING 2016

The Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina has **L** had a tremendous impact in its relatively short history. Our accomplishments include the Jewish Heritage Collection at the Addlestone Library, which, in collaboration with McKissick Museum at the University of South Carolina, produced the landmark exhibit and book A Portion of the People; the recording of hundreds of oral histories; a statewide survey of Jewish burial sites; the erection of several historical markers; an informative and attractive website; the bi-annual publication of this remarkable magazine; and bi-annual meetings-all of which have created a vibrant JHSSC community.

The new Pearlstine/Lipov Center for Southern Jewish Culture at the College of Charleston, with its emphasis on research, teaching, and community outreach, assures the College's longterm commitment to southern Jewish history and, by extension, to the activities of the JHSSC. The Society has helped put South Carolina's Jewish history on the map, and in so doing, has created a "buzz" across the nation and made the Jewish South a destination for scholars, journalists, genealogists, and just plain tourists.

College of Charleston faculty and JHSSC stalwarts Adam Mendelsohn, Dale Rosengarten, and Shari Rabin have helped create a new exhibition and book titled By Dawn's Early Light: Jewish Contributions to American Culture from the Nation's Founding to the Civil War that includes substantial material from the American South and features the work of Charleston-born artists Theodore Sidney Moïse and Solomon Nunes Carvalho. The exhibit will be on display at the Princeton University Art Museum from February 13 through June 12, 2016, and is open to the public free of charge.

Closer to home, JHSSC recently received a \$5,000 grant from the Stanley Farbstein Endowment at the Coastal Community Foundation (CCF) to develop its Jewish cemetery records and to include the exemplary Beaufort burial records on its website. The late Mr. Farbstein cared deeply about South Carolina Jewish cemetery records, was instrumental in starting JHSSC's statewide survey of burials, and single-handedly compiled information on Beaufort's Jewish cemetery. It is fitting his generous bequest to CCF is funding work he himself initiated.

2016 is the year we hope to realize one of the goals our Past Presidents Council set in 2014. The council committed the Society to reaching 40 Pillar memberships-those who pledge \$1000 a year for five years—and 500 dues-paying memberships. We are close on both counts and need your help to make it happen this year. Renew your membership; give a gift membership; become a Pillar. Do it now!

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# Pillars

Susan and Charles Altman, Charleston, SC Ellen Arnovitz, Atlanta, GA Doris L. Baumgarten, Aiken, SC Eric and Candace Bergelson, Greer, SC Betty Brody, Coral Gables, FL Harold Brody, Atlanta, GA Alex and Dyan Cohen, Darlington, SC Manuel and Harriet Cohen, Moncks Corner, SC Barry and Ellen Draisen, Anderson, SC David and Andrea Draisen, Anderson, SC Lowell and Barbara Epstein, Charleton, SC Harold I. Fox, Charleston, SC Steven Gold, Greenville, SC Phillip and Patricia Greenberg, Florence, SC Stuart and Rebecca Greenberg, Florence, SC Ann Meddin and Max Hellman, Charleston, SC Alan and Charlotte Kahn, Columbia, SC Sue and Jerry Kline, Columbia, SC Michael S. Kogan, Charleston, SC Ronald Krancer, Bryn Mawr, PA Allan and Jeanne Lieberman, Charleston, SC Susan R. Lourie, Columbia, SC Susan Pearlstine, Charleston, SC Edward and Sandra Poliakoff, Columbia, SC Alan and Anne Reyner, Columbia, SC Debra C. Ritter, Columbia, SC Benedict and Brenda Rosen, Myrtle Beach, SC Robert and Susan Rosen, Charleston, SC Jeffrey and Mickey Rosenblum, Charleston, SC Sandra Lee Rosenblum, Charleston, SC Joseph and Edie Rubin, Charleston, SC Jeff and Walton Selig, Columbia, SC Sandra G. Shapiro, Wilsonville, OR Larry Simon, Isle of Palms, SC Richard Stern, Boston, MA Lois and Raphael Wolpert, Tampa, FL Anita Zucker, Charleston, SC

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

Make checks payable to JHSSC and mail to the address above.

Register now for the April 16-17 meeting in Charleston

See page 10 for more information.

Beth Israel's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

> Register now for fall meeting in Greenville, SC

> > October 21–23, 2016

# THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY of SOUTH CAROLINA

Volume XXI Number 2 Fall 2016



Тне

JEWISH

HISTORICAL

SOCIETY

Dale Rosengarten

editor

Alyssa Neely

assistant editor

and designer

The JHSSC newsletter is

published twice a year.

Current and back

issues can be found at

jhssc.org

On the cover, left to right: Max Heller, Carl Proser,

Rabbi Henry E. Barneis,

Cantor Julius Bloom, and

Meyer Lurey on the stage of

the social hall, Beth Israel

Synagogue, Summit Drive,

Greenville, South Carolina.

Photo was taken for a story

in the local newspaper at the

time of the High Holy Days,

likely the first High Holy

Days in the congregation's

new building. Courtesy of

Joan Bolonkin Meir and

SOUTH CAROLINA

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|--|--|
| Jean Davis Rovner  |  |

Proser Family Values: L'dor, V'dor ~ Nancy Proser Lebovitz ~ Founders of the first cancellation shoe store in South Carolina, Carl and Helen Proser became pillars of Beth Israel and passed on powerful 

Jewish Greenville: From Ethnic Enclave to Multicultural City ~ Fred Leffert ~ Changes in a once-insular Jewish community reflect the evolution since World War II of the vibrant modern 

The Rabhans Come Full Circle ~ Barbara Chardkoff Rabhan ~ Greenville of the 1960s and '70s was the perfect place to raise children. This family's life was centered around school activities, swim meets, 

Living in Liberty, SC ~ Shirley Sarlin ~ With operations in Liberty and nearby Easley, Sarlin's 

Hyman J. Brand: A Man of the Cloth ~ Alyssa Neely, with Hy Brand ~ Drawn to Greenville by the textile industry, this six-term president and lay leader of Beth Israel observes that, despite constant 

Building on a Broad Base ~ Martin Perlmutter ~ With its feet firmly planted in grassroots membership, the Society has soared to unexpected heights in partnership with the College of Charleston......23

**TA7**hy is it important to belong centennial celebration, and the contents of this magazine, **VV** and contribute to the Jewish promise to remind members of the congregation where the Historical Society of South Carolina? long-standing families came from and reinforce a sense of As southerners and as Jews, we belonging among old-timers and newcomers alike. venerate our ancestors and hold tightly Our keynote speaker, Professor Diane Vecchio, will to objects that have been passed down trace the socio-economic roots of Jewish immigrants to

through the generations: a shochet knife, a Victorian-era Upstate South Carolina in the late 1800s. Jewish peddlers and baby dress, candlesticks from the old country, photographs of merchants were drawn to the region by the rapid growth of the our families, even accounting ledgers from a small-town dry textile industry; their entrepreneurial spirit filled an important goods store. But without context, things lose meaning after niche in the economy. Saturday's first panel, "From the Old a generation. It is family stories that make history come alive Country to the Upcountry," will feature stories of in-migration and remain relevant for future generations. For the young adult told by contributors to this issue. The second discussion, who catches the family history bug, the academic researcher, "From Main Street to the Board Room," will explore the city's or a newcomer to our state, the Society is committed to being economic transition and changes in Jewish demographics over

the keeper of stories. Through its programs and its affiliation with the College of Charleston, JHSSC also connects the unique qualities of the southern Jewish experience with broader, national themes. No better example exists than our spring 2016 conference, "Courage, Conscience and Conformity - South Carolina Jews and the Civil Rights between speakers and audience, Photo: Jeri Perlmutter.

FALL 2016

Movement." There were Oveta Glover (left) and Millicent Brown speaking in Charleston, meaningful, charged exchanges South Carolina, at JHSSC's spring meeting, April 16, 2016.

on Max Moses Heller, a refugee of the Holocaust who served as mayor of Greenville from 1971 to 1979 and is widely credited with revitalizing the city. He brought a European sensibility to urban design with pedestrian-friendly sidewalks, outdoor seating surrounded by greenery and water features, public music and art. Heller was also a trailblazer on social issues such as affordable housing and diversity in the government workforce. The board of directors and officers of the Society invite you to His widow and children will share their memories, joined by former South Carolina Governor Richard W. Riley, who, in 1979, named Heller chairman of the State Development Board. The weekend will conclude with a walking tour downtown led by urban planners Abbie Rickoff and Barry Nocks.

heightened in the aftermath of the mass shooting at Emanuel in Charleston. Topics ranged from the integration of Rivers High to stories of what it was like – as a Jew or as an African-American - to live through a bitterly divisive period in American history. We heard about Jewish public servants who played critical roles during this turbulent time. We also learned not all South Carolina's Jewish citizens welcomed the winds of change. attend our fall 2016 conference, to be held in Greenville from October 21 to 23. The JHSSC bylaws make clear the importance of bringing our programs to all parts of the state. It has been Join us for a weekend of celebration, commemoration, and exploration in the beautiful city of Greenville! Founded as an Orthodox shul in 1916, the congregation

a decade since we met in the Upcountry; Congregation Beth Israel's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration this year provides a perfect opportunity to stage our autumn meeting. aligned with Conservative Judaism in 1954. Beth Israel has been a hub of social and religious life for generations of Jewish Greenvillians. Today many of the city's Jews are from elsewhere, drawn by the strong and growing economy. The

Greenville oral history resources: www.bethisraelsc.org/

Nancy Proser Lebovitz.

centennial-celebration.html and jhc.cofc.edu/oral-historyarchives/interviews-byplace/#greenville-county

# Letter from the President



the past hundred years.

PAGE 3

The day will be topped off by the dedication of a State of South Carolina historical marker (co-sponsored by Beth Israel and JHSSC) in front of the synagogue. In the evening, conference attendees will be t reated to "Musical Monuments" composed by Ernest Bloch and Leonard Bernstein and performed by the Greenville Chorale and the Symphony Orchestra at the Peace Center.

Sunday our focus will be

Ernest L. Marcus

a dian

#### Congregation Beth Israel – 100 Years and Counting ... by Victor Alfieri

▲ Il stories have a beginning, yet the date may be debatable. commenced on Friday evenings at 8:00 and religious school **T**For example, we are here to celebrate the centennial of Congregation Beth Israel (CBI), which received

its Certificate of Incorporation on June 17, 1916. Its roots, however, go back at least six years earlier, when 25 families, predominantly Russian Jews, came together to form a congregation and elect officers. Orthodox services took place in congregants' homes and in the old Bank of Commerce building at the corner of Main and Coffee streets. In 1912 the congregation hired Charles Zaglin to come to Greenville to be the first official rabbi, shochet, and mohel. A mikvah was immediately built at the insistence of Zaglin's wife, Evelyn Rose. Membership dues were \$2.00 per family.

The first permanent synagogue was constructed on the north side of town where many of the Jews in Greenville

lived—an area affectionately referred to as "Herring Alley." Charles Zaglin donated a lot on Townes Street in 1925, and the building was completed in 1930 at a cost of \$18,000. Services



met Sunday mornings at 10:00. Congregants were heavily

involved in retail trade. Jewish-owned businesses lined Main Street; all kept open on Saturday, the busiest day of the week.

One of the most prominent Jews in CBI history came to Greenville in 1938. Through the help of a local girl, Mary Mills, whom he had met in Europe, Max Heller and his family fled Nazi-occupied Austria. Shep Saltzman provided affidavits to bring them over, and Max went to work as a shipping clerk at Saltzman's Piedmont Shirt Company. Heller would go on to become a successful businessman and politician. In 1969 he won a seat on the Greenville City Council. Two years later he was elected mayor of his adopted

hometown and served for two terms. Max is widely credited with overseeing the revitalization of the city.

In December 1953 the congregation voted to join the Conservative movement and in 1954 was accepted into United Synagogue of America. This move appears to have been at least 18 years in the making. Recorded in the minutes of the congregation's regular monthly meeting, dated December 9, 1935: "The question of Friday night services came up for discussion with a unanimous decision to hold services at 8 P.M. and have conservative services."

In 1957 CBI purchased land and erected the current place of worship on Summit Drive. The community flourished; a year later the religious school boasted 130 students. A new sanctuary and classroom additions were completed in 1966 for \$134,000.

The struggle for the women of CBI to have full rights of membership came to the forefront in the late '60s. Not until 1967 could an "unattached woman" be a voting member of the congregation. Before then, a member of the Sisterhood

Harry Zaglin (1) and Solomon Zaglin, with shovels, do the honors at the October 27, 1957 groundbreaking for Beth Israel's second building, still in use, on Summit Drive, Greenville, SC. To Harry's right is Nathan Stotsky. To Solomon's left are Recording Secretary Sol Shimlock; board members Julius Bloom and Carl Proser. According to Jack Bloom's notes, based on meeting minutes, the board, under the leadership of President Max Heller, held its final meeting in the Townes Street building on July 18, 1958. Courtesy of Jeff Zaglin.

could attend board meetings but was not allowed to vote. Sondra Umsted was the first woman with voting privileges, and her first documented action was to recommend paying for janitorial services.

FALL 2016

The 1970s witnessed more changes in the community. The original Tree of Life in the CBI lobby was dedicated in July 1971. In November of the same year, the congregation held its first ecumenical Thanksgiving service with neighboring Northside Methodist Church. Fall 2016 will mark the 45<sup>th</sup> service that CBI has shared with Northside on the Sunday before Thanksgiving.

The religious school shrank to 70 children in 1972, and by 1977 had dwindled to 21. One reason for the decline is that average family size was decreasing. In 1973 Joyce Abrams successfully presented a recommendation to the board that women be allowed to wear pantsuits "in good taste" to services, as dictated by cold weather, health, or fashion.

(l to r) Helene Isaacs, Sisterhood Capping a long fight by women to have a say in the congregation, president; Dan Shager, immediate past president Sue Shager became the first female board president in 1985-eight and chairman, board of governors; Max Heller, years after women were finally allowed to serve as officers. In 1991 past president and chairman, building committee; CBI broke new ground yet again by hiring Rabbi Jodie Futornick as its Jack L. Bloom, president; and Rabbi David Korb first female rabbi. Shabbat morning services began the same year. The at the 1968 dedication of the new sanctuary, second Tree of Life, located in the Davis Social Hall, was dedicated Beth Israel, Greenville, SC. Bloom family papers. in October 1995. Over the next two decades, the demographics of Special Collections, College of Charleston. Beth Israel shifted, with newcomers from the Northeast and the Midwest outnumbering native South Carolinians.

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In 2016 CBI started its official second century with a new rabbi. Mathew Marko, a recent graduate of the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies in Los Angeles, led his first service on Friday, July 1. The congregation of approximately

100 families is excited about the future and committed to creating a fulfilling Jewish experience in Greenville, South Carolina.

In 2000 Rabbi Marc Wilson, Hy Brand, and Barry Nocks conducted an adult bat/bar mitzvah class at Beth Israel Synagogue, Greenville, SC. Left to right, 1<sup>st</sup> row: Bernard Geiger, Shirley Geiger, Linda Holtzman, Evelyn Kelman, Darla Kelman, Nan Tuckett, Terri Jermon, Freida Scharf. 2<sup>nd</sup> row: Denise Chumley, Zolli Kelman, Herbert Holtzman, unidentified male. 3<sup>rd</sup> row: Rabbi Marc Wilson, Hy Brand, Paul Rovin. 4<sup>th</sup> row: Dennis Reiche, Mitchell Litwer, Nat Litwer. Courtesy of Hy Brand.



Congregation Beth Israel's first building, still standing, on Townes Street, 2000. Photo: Bill Aron. Special Collections, College of Charleston.

#### The Zaglins of Greenville: A Jewish-American Saga by Jeff Zaglin

FALL 2016

This is an incomplete story of the Zaglin family of to live with family in Fayetteville, North Carolina. Sol and Freida ▲ Greenville, South Carolina—incomplete because, as with so many European Jewish family histories, many of the dates are inconsistent. The discrepancies often can be attributed to poor records, the passage of time, and embellished memories.

For the Zaglins, the death of Marion Zaglin on December 6, 2015, in Atlanta, Georgia, marked the end of an era. He was the would not be trained .... My aunt had a lot of little children and last of seven sons and one daughter of Charles (born Tzemakh) Zaglin, Lithuanian immigrant, rabbi, shochet, and mohel. The story of Rabbi Zaglin and his fledgling family is a Jewish-American saga with deep roots in the soil of South Carolina and the southern United States.

Around 1907, upon his arrival in New York City, Charles found employment in a kosher processing plant. Soon after, he began his travels south. With his wife, Evelyn Rose (Khava Reiza, or Eva Rachel), and son, Solomon Melton (born in 1906 in Vilnius, Lithuania), he moved to Wilmington, North Carolina, to fill a rabbinic position. The Zaglins' only daughter, Freida Selma, was born there in 1908. A son (my father), Harry Henry, was born in Bristol, Tennessee/Virginia, two years later. By 1912 Charles was hired to serve as rabbi by a handful of Orthodox families in Greenville, South Carolina. Congregation Beth Israel was formally recognized by the state on June 17, 1916.

Misfortune hit the Zaglin family a few months after their fourth child, Joseph, was born in 1912. According to Freida, Evelyn Rose died due to "bad blood." There was no Jewish burial ground in Greenville at the time, so she was buried in Columbia, South Carolina, at the House of Peace (Whaley Street) Cemetery. She is purportedly one of the first burials there.

After the death of his wife, Charles was forced to break up the Louis, Marion, and Jack, born between 1922 and 1930. family. Times were much different then. Joe, the baby, was sent

were taken in by relatives living in Haverhill, Massachusetts. Harry stayed with an aunt and uncle in Bristol for a few months before returning to Greenville. Freida explained why in her February 27, 1997 interview for the Jewish Heritage Collection: "He was strange to them and they were strange to him, and he she couldn't cope ...."



Charles, while acting as rabbi of Beth Israel, opened a business on Coffee Street. Zaglin's Market sold both kosher and non-kosher meat, as well as dry goods and other groceries. For well over a decade, the market was successful. Charles married divorcée Anna Glickman who, like Charles, had four children; they were older than his and did not live with them. Together Anna and Charles had four more children, all boys: Phillip,

Charles's business grew; he opened an abattoir and added

delivery trucks. Freida described other improvements: "He enlarged the store and he built a smokehouse in the back. He smoked his own hams and sausage and bacon . . . . He bought the first coolers, refrigerated coolers, and we had a water system up on top of the building that you ran with the coolers, and we had a freezer. It was in its infancy in those days. We froze and smoked,

Above: Charles, Freida, Solomon, and Eva Rachel Zaglin, circa 1909. Left: The Zaglin siblings at the wedding of Shirley Zaglin and Jules Cavalier, June 1950, at the Townes Street shul. From left to right: Harry H., Louis, Joseph G. (Joe), Phillip Hillal (Hicky), Freida (Kaplan), Marion (Butch), Jack, and Solomon Melton, father of the bride. Courtesy of Jeff Zaglin.



Above: Jeff Zaglin behind the counter of his Army & Navy Store, Greenville, SC, 2000. Photo: Bill Aron. Special Collections, College of Charleston. Below: Main Street, early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Greenville, SC. Courtesy of Congregation Beth Israel.



and he had trucks going out to all the little towns, distributing-with salesmen-distributing meats and things."

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When the Great Depression hit, the business suffered. Despite the financial crisis, the small congregation began constructing a permanent shul on a lot on Townes Street that Charles had donated in the mid-1920s. The first phase of the building-the basement-was completed well before Freida's wedding, held in the new hall in June 1931.

Zaglin's Market faced an additional challenge in the 1930s. Freida recalled that competition from supermarkets made it "hard for us to make a living." In May 1937 Freida had returned to Greenville with her husband, Nat Kaplan, and taken over the market from Charles, who was in declining health. The former rabbi died in July and Zaglin's Market closed a few years later.

During the 1930s and early '40s, the Zaglin boys developed quite a reputation in Greenville. They were known about town for enjoying a good time and stories abound about their shenanigans. Harry, Louis, Marion, and Jack were all in the military in some capacity during World War II, although not all served overseas. After the war Marion moved to Atlanta and was followed by Jack, Louis, Phil, and eventually Joe. They all married and started families. Sol, Freida, and Harry remained in Greenville. Harry Zaglin opened the Greenville Army & Navy store some 60 years ago and it is still located at 660 South Main Street today. As proprietor of one of the oldest businesses downtown, I take great pride in seeing, on occasion, three generations of Greenvillians walk through the door at the same time.

The Zaglins have been involved with the Greenville Jewish community for more than 100 years. Charles Zaglin's children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren continue to be deeply engaged in the city's Jewish and civic life and will be for years to come.



# Max and Trude Heller: Giving Back to Greenville

Tleft Greenville, South Carolina, more than 50 years ago, Libut every time the airplane touches down there, I feel like I'm home. I like to drive through the old neighborhood past our house, situated a few blocks from our synagogue, Congregation Beth Israel. Our house was a gathering place for people of all ages, interests, ideas, and cultures. Mom and Dad hosted dinners that were famous for Mom's kept in touch as circumstances allowed. In 1940 Max decided food and my parents' hospitality. Many agreements and friendships were forged at our dining table. Mom and Dad encouraged me, my sister, and my brother to invite friends over. We always had a houseful!

Max and Trude Heller began their married life on August

2, 1942, in downtown Greenville. The rabbi from Congregation Beth Israel conducted the ceremony on a sweltering summer day at Ensor's on Main Street, the only air-conditioned restaurant in the city. The air conditioning broke, but their marriage lasted 69 years.

The romance began five years earlier at a summer resort outside of Vienna, Austria. Max was 17 and Trude was 14. The day they met he declared his love and said he would marry her someday. According to Trude, "He always kept his word."

That same week, for a reason decided to take the train back to 1941. Courtesy of Susan Heller Moses.

Vienna for a night. He met up with a friend and they agreed to community. He was persuaded to run for city council and had go dancing. They spotted a table of young American women on a graduation trip to Europe. Max asked one of them, a girl from Greenville named Mary Mills, to dance, and the next day he took her for a walk around Vienna. They communicated using his newly-purchased English/German dictionary.

They exchanged addresses. Less than a year later, as Hitler was closing in on Austria, Max wrote to Mary requesting help. She brought his letter to Shepard Saltzman, owner of Piedmont Shirt Company, and asked him to sponsor Max's immigration to the United States. Saltzman replied, "How can I, a Jew, refuse, when you, a Christian, is asking?" Max Heller arrived in Greenville a few months later and began working at Saltzman's shirt factory the very same day. For the rest of his life Max would call Mary Mills his "angel."

While Max Heller was working at Shepard Saltzman's shirt factory, Trude was in the middle of a harrowing flight from

Vienna. First, her father was taken away, leaving young Trude in charge of escaping the chaos in Europe with her mother. Then, after many attempts and close calls, they crossed the border from Germany to Belgium. A year and a half later they arrived in New York.

From the time Max emigrated in 1938, he and Trude had to take the bus to New York to visit her. He arrived at her door at the same moment a Western Union man delivered a telegram from Trude's father that read, "I am alive." Since then, Trude proclaims my father to be her good luck charm.

Max convinced Trude and her mother to pay a visit

to Greenville. After picking them up at the train station, he drove around the town three times to convince them it was a big city. Little did they imagine that 29 years later, Max would begin his first day of eight years as Greenville's mayor. My parents embraced their adopted hometown and played an important role in helping transform it into a city considered one of the best places to live in America. They did it side by side, as true partners.

At age 42 my father sold his Max could never understand, he Max Heller and Trude Schönthal, Greenville, SC, circa successful shirt business and decided to devote his time to the

> served two years, when, on a vacation in Florida, Max and Trude read in the Greenville News that Daddy was going to run for mayor. That was news to them!

> My father credited Greenville with giving him a new life. In return, working with other forward-thinking people, he gave Greenville new life. Between 1971 and '79, during his tenure as mayor, his first hire was an African-American woman—the first in City Hall. He saw to it that affordable housing was built; diversity in municipal departments was achieved; community centers and senior housing were established; pensions for policemen and firemen were assured. He brought with him a European vision of downtown-pedestrian friendly and green-that could be enjoyed by citizens and visitors to the city. He was instrumental in bringing numerous businesses, such as Michelin, to the Greenville area. Max is often referred to as the "Father of Modern Greenville."

My parents remained active and dedicated to the Jewish to speak and can mesmerize an auditorium of young adults community. Dad created a prayer breakfast for all religions. or a group of prominent business leaders. When asked by a He twice served as president of Beth Israel young student, "What do I tell my father when

Synagogue and Mom was a longserving treasurer of the Sisterhood. They helped start a local BBYO chapter and housed many young Jewish people from across the South during conventions. My mom began publicly speaking about the Holocaust, going to business organizations, churches,

Trude Heller (seated), with daughters Francie Heller (on Trude's and schools, teaching her left) and Susan Heller Moses (behind Trude), and son Steven Heller audience "to love, not (2nd from Susan's right), surrounded by her grandchildren and great- grandchildren, and 18 greathate." At 94 she continues grandchildren, gathered for Passover, 2016. Photo: Isabel Chenoweth. grandchildren.



The Greenville Chorale and the Greenville Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Maestro Bingham Vick, will perform works by two great Jewish composers on the Saturday evening of the conference. Avodath HaKodesh (Sacred Service), by Ernest Bloch, is inspired by the Shabbat morning service. Chichester Psalms, by Leonard Bernstein, is based on three of the Hebrew psalms. Both works combine lush harmonies with texts of universal meaning and appeal. Join us for an evening of sublime music!

**Special ticket price** (\$32.00 plus \$1.00 for group fee) is available until October 7, 2016. To order tickets, call 800.888.7768 or 864.467.3000 if you live in the Greenville area. 





#### by Susan Heller Moses

he tells me the Holocaust never happened?" she looks him straight in the eye and softly says, "Tell him you met me."

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Despite my parents' active lives, family came first. My mother, an only child, likes to say she could never replace the 90 family members we lost in the Holocaust, but she is well on her way with 3 children, 10

Jewish Musical Monuments

Saturday, October 22, 2016 8:00 P.M.

Peace Center for the Performing Arts

#### Sponsored by Nathan and Sugie Einstein, Dan and Liz Einstein, and Howard and Angi Einstein



# Tracking the Switzers from Ariogola to America

The Switzers, formerly Reyzliovich, were from Ariogola in the eastern portion of Prussia, an area that is now Lithuania but at one time was Russia. How did Reyzliovich become Switzer? My oldest brother, Milton Lurey, related the story that upon entering the port, a large sign advertising Switzer candy was seen and a new American name was started. It has been verified through wife, Sarah Mervis Switzer, daughter, and youngest son, Harry, in the Internet that in 1888 a candy company by the name of S-W-I-T-Z-E-R did exist.

Tsale (Charles) and Surah (Sarah) Reyzliovich were the parents of five sons who immigrated to America. Joseph Switzer, the eldest of the brothers, resided in Lynchburg, Virginia. The other four-Morris (Maurice), Meyer, Marx (Marks), and Louis Switzer—came to Greenville, South Carolina, and were dry goods merchants. The only brother to remain in Greenville was Meyer.

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Greenville city directories indicate that the Switzer brothers operated stores on Main Street and in the West End. According to Judy Bainbridge, a local writer, between 1890 and 1910 the West End was almost a separate townthe bridge between them seemed to divide, rather than connect, the two sections of the growing city. The West End had its schools, shops, industries, and many substantial homes.

Through the records we can trace the Meyer Switzer, no date. Greenville and worked for Meyer Lurey. Courtesy of Ann Lurey. movements of my grandfather, Meyer, and his brothers, although we may never learn what motivated their choices. Each was married and had children, and among those children, four were named Charles after their grandfather. We now know for certain that Meyer was married in Europe to Lena Malka (Molly) Kohansky/Kahansky. The Kohansky family lived in Jonava, Lithuania. Meyer arrived in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1886. Lena, then 30 years old, and their three sons—Charles, Isaac, and Harry, ranging in age from seven to three—arrived April 17, 1889.

In New York in 1891, Lena Malka had one more child, a daughter-my mother-Ida Switzer Lurey. According to cemetery records, Lena died in Lynchburg, Virginia, of acute dysentery. Questions remain: was the family visiting Meyer's brother Joseph? Had the family decided to move south?

It is believed that Meyer came to Greenville in 1895, seven years after Morris's arrival. In the 1896 and '97 Greenville city directories, Morris and Meyer are listed as merchants, with businesses at 115, 202, and 108 North Main Street. The 1899 directory lists Louis as a peddler.

The 1900 census finds Meyer, a merchant, with his second Greenwood, South Carolina. Meyer reported that he had been in the United States for 13 years. Why Meyer went from Greenville to Greenwood is unknown.

The Greenville city directory shows that Marx was clerking for Morris in 1901. In 1903 the only Switzers listed in the directory were Marx and Meyer, yet four years later, it was Meyer and Morris who were recorded as merchants on Pendleton Street (West End). In 1909 Louis was also in the clothing business on Pendleton Street. In 1910 there was no listing for Morris.

Greenville property records show that in 1907 Meyer Switzer paid Alice Cely \$1500 for a lot and \$450 to add on to an existing structure. This later became 24 Pendleton Street. Meyer had his own building with a separate entrance for an apartment over the store. Our family owned this building until about 1990 when redevelopment of the West End began. Louis's son Irving stayed in

Meyer died in Greenville in 1932 at the age of 78. The Greenville Jewish cemetery was not established until 1938, so he is buried in Columbia in the House of Peace's Whaley Street Cemetery, which is now surrounded by the University of South Carolina. Meyer's wife, Sarah Mervis Switzer, is buried there as well, as is his only daughter, Ida Switzer Lurey, who died of pneumonia in 1935 at the age of 44.

I am grateful to those who assisted me in gathering this information. The Greenville County Library was very cooperative. Allen Ira Lurey, my nephew and Meyer's greatgrandson, did many hours of complicated research. Bits of information were gathered from cousins. In one case a scrap of paper was sent from one cousin to another and finally to me, with a note saying, "It makes me nervous reading this. You figure it out."

# The Lurey Family Story

The Lureys came to the United States from Bialystok, Zelic Lieb Luria (Lurey) were the parents of one daughter, Annie (Asnie) Lurey (Rosenthal), and four sons—Jake, Morris, Samuel (Schmuel), and Hymen (Chaim). The first family member to emigrate was Jake. At 18 years of age,

to boot, he decided to desert the army for a better life in America. A relative in Rhode Island was his destination.

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At some point Zelic followed, and Morris arrived in 1903. With eight dollars to her name, 44-year-old Mashe Lea immigrated in 1905 with her youngest sons, Samuel, 16, and Hymen, 14, and joined her husband in Valley Falls, Rhode Island, just north of Pawtucket.

Jake married Annie Hecklin. Annie had two brothers, Beryl and Schmuel. The Hecklins moved to Spartanburg, South Carolina, and, around 1909, all the Lureys followed. Jake, a shoemaker, and Annie lived in various places and in later years moved to Warrenton, Georgia, to be near their oldest daughter, Minnie Tannenbaum. Jake and Annie maintained a kosher home wherever they lived.



It was in late 1910 Mashe Lea Lurey, no date. Courtesy of Ann Lurey.

that the Morris Lureys moved to Greenville from studying the Pentateuch. At the insistence of Mashe Spartanburg. Morris and Mollie Dolk Lurey raised six Lea, all four Lurey sons chipped in to purchase the children in Greenville (see page 12 for Mollie's story). congregation's first Torah. Hymen and his heirs, as In 1912 Morris operated the New York Shoe Store at well as his nephew Meyer, were generous contributors 116 East Washington Street. In later years he and his to Beth Israel. On May 6, 1979, Esther Lurey Ginsberg son Meyer, who would take over the business, moved presented a Sefer Torah to the congregation in the store to Pendleton Street, one block from Morris's memory of her husband, Leo, and her parents, Hymen brother Samuel. and Dora Lurey.

Zelic, Mashe, and Samuel (my father) followed Jake L Russia/Poland, in the early 1900s. Mashe Lea and and Morris to Greenville, where Samuel met and married my mother, Greenvillian Ida Switzer. I was raised in Greenville with my three older brothers, Milton, Ralph, and Harold. Dad ran a small department store—Lurey's in the West End. Dad spoke mostly Yiddish, especially at after suffering persecution and being kicked by a horse, home. He spoke English when necessary, but he couldn't

read it or write it, so he kept informed about current events by listening to the radio and reading the Yiddish daily Der Tag (The Day).

PAGE II

Hymen moved to Laurens, South Carolina; his parents lived with him until Zelic's health declined, at which point Zelic and Mashe moved to Greenville. In 1912 Hymen married Dorothy (Dora) Fayonsky of Greenville in a ceremony performed by Greenville's first rabbi, Charles Zaglin. Hymen and Dora raised three children in Laurens: Esther Lurey (Ginsberg), Sadie Lurey (Kennedy), and Meyer. Hymen was a very successful businessman.

The Lurey families were instrumental in founding Beth Israel, Greenville's Orthodox Jewish congregation. The oldest grandchildren all told tales of visiting the homebound Zelic on Rowley Street in Greenville and finding him always

# Mollie Dolk Lurey: The Grandest Lady There Was

This is the story of Mollie Dolk Lurey—known to her grandchildren as "Mong"—and how and why she and her husband, in 1910, chose Greenville, South Carolina, to call home. Mong was the GRANDEST lady I have ever known. Fortunately for our family, in 1981, when she was 96, her oral history was recorded. The sound of her voice with her charming accent will forever conjure up loving and cherished memories of my childhood with her.

At age 17 Mong said goodbye to her mother, her brother, and the only life she knew, and made her way alone from Brody—then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire—to Trieste, Italy, where she boarded the S.S. Ultonia, bound for the U.S.A. According to the ship's manifest, she arrived at Ellis Island on October 13, 1904, listed under the name Malke Dolg; residence: Brody; nationality: (citizen or subject of) Austria; race or people: Hebrew. The trip was long and hard. Her ticket was for accommodations in steerage.

I remember Mong telling the story of her arrival at her sister's house in Providence, Rhode Island. After her 30-day journey by sea, she said she was indeed a sight to behold. In her oral interview she describes steerage as "the filthiest place you could ever imagine." When asked what she had to eat, she said, "Dark bread and sardines." After taking time to recover from this treacherous voyage, she found work, where she learned the trade of setting stones in jewelry. She worked full-time for four years and in the evenings went to class to learn English.

Mong always enjoyed telling this story: she overheard her sister say to her friends, "If I had known how homely my sister was, I would never have had her come to the U.S.A." (At this point in the story, Mong would really start to giggle.) Mong said to her sister, "You don't have to worry; in a few days I will be recuperated and looking good again." Her sister asked, "What are you talking about?" Mong replied, "I heard what you said to your friends. You

should have been speaking

in English and not Yiddish; then I would not have known what you said!"

> A few years later Mong met and married my grandfather,

*by Joan Bolonkin Meir* Morris Lurey, whom we affectionately called Gran. He

was one of five children and his family welcomed her with open arms. His mother and father bought her beautiful clothes and gave them a lovely wedding in Providence. Shortly thereafter, Sarah (Campell), the first of their six children, was born. In 1908 they moved to the South, arriving by train in Spartanburg, South Carolina. One of Gran's brothers was married to a southerner and she had two brothers living there.

The Lurey clan remained together, each brother settling his family in and around towns in South Carolina.

Not long after arriving in Spartanburg, the Lureys moved to Greenville. According to Mong, they were the third or fourth Jewish family to reside there. I recall her saying that when asked if they were religious and continued to keep kosher, she emphatically answered, "Oh yes, we order our kosher food from Atlanta." She said that early on, the Jewish community did not have a rabbi or a synagogue. They held services in a Woodman of the World hall. In time the community purchased land, built a building, and hired a rabbi. Listening to her interview, I can hear the pride in her voice when she describes contributing money to help build the synagogue and buy the congregation's first Sefer Torah. Originally Beth Israel was Orthodox, but decades later, it morphed into a Conservative congregation.

In Greenville, life continued for the Lurey family with the birth of five more children: Semmie Lurey Paul, Sam (Bubba) Lurey, Meyer Lurey, Hyman Lurey, and my mother, Ida Lurey Bolonkin. My grandfather Morris ran a store called the New York Shoe Store. Early on my grandmother had a little grocery and, in time, life became easier. All the siblings had a deep love and respect for Mong and Morris. As they graduated from high school, they either went to college or began working and helping their parents. My mother, Ida, the youngest of the siblings, remembers the older children helping the younger ones. She often tells the story of how her older sister, Semmie, bought her a bunny-fur stole to wear to a dance.

Interestingly, when Mong was asked about antisemitism in Greenville in the early years, she said she did not experience any. She said, "I never had a problem with anyone. I got along with everyone." And while that may be true, I think it was because of the person she was. Everyone, and I mean everyone—her husband, her neighbors, her sons and daughters, her grandchildren—loved her and adored her. It is with great love and affection that I write this tribute to her.

Left: the author's mother, Ida Lurey (Bolonkin) (r) with Lily Zaglin (Davis). Courtesy of Bobbie Jean Davis Rovner. Above: portrait of "Mong." Courtesy of Joan Bolonkin Meir.

# Looking Back and Moving Forward: Greenville's Congregation Beth Israel ~ Building Community Since 1916

#### October 21-23, 2016 ~ Greenville, South Carolina

| Friday, October 21 7:00 P.M. Shabbat service/ |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| Saturday, October 22                          |  |  |
| 10:00 А.М. – 12:00                            | Shabbat service  |  |
| Noon  | Lunch  |  |
| 1:00 – 2:00 р.м.                              | Jewish Entrepreneurs in the Caro   |  |
| 2:00 - 3:15                                   | Panel discussion – <b>From the Old C</b><br>Moderator: Diane Vecchio, professo<br>Panelists: Miriam Chernoff, Ann Lu<br>Shirley Honigman Sarlin, Jeff Zaglir |  |
| 3:15 - 3:30                                   | Break  |  |
| 3:30 - 4:45                                   | Panel discussion – <b>From Main Stre</b><br>Moderator: Victor Alfieri, vice presi<br>Panelists: Hy Brand, Michele Brinn                                      |  |
| 4:45  | Dedication of marker – Mindy Levy<br><b>Reception</b> following marker dedica  |  |
| 8:00  | Jewish Musical Monuments, Greenv   |  |

#### Sunday, October 23

FALL 2016

| 9:00 а.м.     | Open JHSSC board meeting—eve  |
|---------------|---|
| 10:00 - 11:00 | Panel discussion – <b>Max Heller: Th</b><br>Moderator: Ernie Marcus, presider<br>Panelists: Trude Heller, Susan Hell<br>Richard W. Riley, governor, South |
| 11:15         | Depart for downtown Greenville  |
| 11:30         | Max Heller Plaza: walking tour/lec  |
|               |   |

| <b>Hotel reservations</b>                                 |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| Special rate:   |  |  |
| \$129 + tax per night, includes                           |  |  |
| breakfast for 2   |  |  |
| Additional breakfast available for                        |  |  |
| \$11.25 in lobby  |  |  |
| Complimentary parking                                     |  |  |
| make your reservation by                                  |  |  |
| Sept. 20. To reserve online, click on this link where the |  |  |
| "JHS" group code is already selected:                     |  |  |
| Jewish Historical Society of SC Fall Conference           |  |  |
| or  |  |  |
| call (877) 834-3613 and mention "Jewish Historical        |  |  |
| Society of South Carolina" or "JHS" code.                 |  |  |
| -   |  |  |
|   |  |  |



e/Installation of Rabbi Mathew Marko

rolina Upcountry – Diane Vecchio, Ph.D., Furman University

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**Country to the Upcountry** sor of history, Furman University Lurey, Joan Bolonkin Meir, Barbara Chardkoff Rabhan, lin

**reet to the Board Room** esident, Congregation Beth Israel m, Fred Leffert, Herb Silver, Ken Zwerdling

vy, president, CBI: History of the Congregation ication, synagogue social hall (dinner on your own) nville Chorale and Symphony, Peace Center (see page 9)

eryone is invited!

he Father of Modern Greenville

ent, JHSSC ller Moses, Francie Heller, Steven Heller, and The Honorable a Carolina (1979–1987); U.S. Secretary of Education (1993–2001)

cture by Abbie Rickoff, AICP, and Barry Nocks, FAICP



# Memories of Lillian and Jack Bloom in Greenville – A Dynamic Duo

My aunt Lillian Chernoff met Jack Bloom in 1956 always toured Greenville, including the house where Jack grew on a trip to Greenville, South Carolina, where she up, the revitalized downtown area, and Liberty Bridge at Falls was attending a meeting of the National Council of Jewish Park. Jack was proud to take me to Furman University, his alma Women—as an NCJW field representative, her task was to mater. And he was equally excited to show off the Greenville support southeastern Jewish communities in the work of farmers' market and the local peach orchards. He relished

marrying, at which time each was about 42 years old. Lillian loved New York City and the move was daunting. She was an apartment dweller; unlike most Jewish families in Greenville, she and Jack lived in apartments until they bought their first house at age 80. She learned to drive in Greenville; at 72 years old she was elected to the South Carolina Commission on Consumer Affairs and routinely drove to Columbia for meetings.

Lillian and Jack were very private. Their social life revolved around their Jewish friends, but in their professional and volunteer activities, they were fully integrated into the non-Jewish community. Early on, for example, Lillian served on the advisory committees of Head Start and the YWCA, and later volunteered as an English tutor to Asian immigrants. During her years in Greenville, she was active in dozens of community organizations and civic associations.

How they kept these two spheres of their lives—their National Council of Jewish Women. Photo: Louis M. intellectual life, and community. Jewish social circle and their Burress of the News-Piedmont. Bloom family papers. public service—so separate is Special Collections, College of Charleston.

had been denied entry to law firms because of his religion, and this discrimination may well have led him to nurture his separateness. Yet he was proud of being a southerner and of serving in the U.S. Army in World War II (he retired from the until they became too frail. army reserves with the rank of colonel)—and he participated in both Jewish and non-Jewish organizations throughout his life.

Visiting Lillian and Jack as a child I recall watching Jack's niece, Stacy, ride a horse, and stopping at the children's clothing

the council. Lillian and Jack courted for seven years before peaches and Lillian tried hard, usually unsuccessfully, to control

the number he consumed. Jack loved pimento cheese and black-eyed peas; I remember the latter being served as a traditional southern dish on New Year's Day. Despite hearing problems, which began as a young adult, Jack could sing any American folk or popular tune you named. He was also an avid bird-watcher.

For several years, I joined Lillian and Jack at the B'nai B'rith Institute of Judaism, Wildacres Retreat (now in its 69<sup>th</sup> year), a spectacular setting in an eastern woodland forest in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina. There, within the context of a Jewish retreat, we learned about Middle Eastern politics, the archaeology of early Christianity, and other equally fascinating topics. Lay leaders led Shabbat services and dining was kosher. Then in my thirties, I was the youngster of the crowd; the Blooms and their friends were in their sixties and early seventies. The retreat epitomized Lillian and Jack's commitments to Judaism,

Jack and Lillian held leadership roles at the synagogue

a bit of a puzzle. As a young lawyer, Jack recounted that he and maintained a kosher kitchen until they required roundthe-clock caretakers. Jack's father had been Beth Israel's cantor. Although Jack never learned Hebrew, he knew all the prayers. He and Lillian attended Shabbat services regularly

They maintained their intellectual interests through the Furman University Learning in Retirement program, where they attended classes and coordinated curricula; Jack even taught a course on constitutional law, if I remember correctly. store owned by Jack's sister, Shirley Cohen. Once I was grown we One year Jack prevailed upon my mom and me to help him

research Jewish families in Greenville by consulting the R. G. Dun & Company records at the Baker Library of the Harvard Business School; later he presented and published his findings. Lillian was always curious about my work as a biostatistician; she avidly questioned me about the HIV/AIDS studies I was involved in-the findings and the meaning of the research.

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Jack and Lillian bantered incessantly but loved each other dearly. After Lillian's to hide his grief. I last visited *Collections, College of Charleston.* 

the two when Lillian was nearing the end. She rallied the site, under trees, in proximity to their Jewish neighbors and Jack's weekend my sister, Ellen, and I came, and we conversed as if immediate family—his parents, his sister, and her three children she was not ill. I only wish I had visited Jack after that—he must (a third child had died as an infant). The Jewish cemetery was have felt quite alone. Melvin, his brother, and Vera, Melvin's gated and nestled within a much larger one, symbolic, perhaps, wife, were also aging, and the brothers had not seen eye-toof the way Lillian and Jack lived their southern Jewish lives.







This photo of Mrs. Lillian Chernoff Bloom (1)

and Mrs. Mary Abrams appeared in the Greenville

newspaper shortly after Lillian's marriage to Jack

Bloom in 1963. Mrs. Abrams was hosting a tea

welcoming the new bride to the local section of the

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#### by Miriam Chernoff

Above, left to right: Jack Bloom, his wife, Lillian Chernoff Bloom, and his father, Julius Bloom, 1964. Below: Lillian is seated in the death, Jack found it difficult second to top row, second from left. Bloom family papers. Special Lillian and Jack resting

eye for some time. Jack was surrounded by caring health professionals, but his closest friends were aged or gone.

Jack had grown up in the midst of a large extended family and relished the company. He and Lillian, in contrast, formed a small nuclear unit. Jack was greatly saddened by the premature deaths of his sister, Shirley, his niece, Stacy, and nephew, Mark. I wonder if, as he aged, he ever regretted not having a large, extended family of his own.

At the unveiling in 2011, I was comforted to see both peacefully in a family grave



# Proser Family Values: L'dor, V'dor by Nancy Proser Lebovitz

My father, Carl Proser, met my mother, Helen Poliakoff, at downtown Greenville, the congregation later moved to a new sanctuary on Summit Drive, where it grew and prospered. the South selling ladies' millinery. They married in 1941 and lived in Anderson, South Carolina, with my grandmother Rachel Poliakoff. The navy called in 1944 and Carl went to war, leaving their two-year-old daughter, Marsha, with family in Anderson. When he returned, Helen and Carl moved to Greenville and started a restaurant supply business. I was born in 1947. In 1951 my brother, Sylvan, arrived to complete our family.

The restaurant supply business failed, and Helen and Carl, with the help of three dear friends in the Jewish community, started the first cancellation (discount) shoe store in South Carolina. Carl would buy overstocked merchandise and previous seasons' shoes from wholesalers in New York City, as well as from retail stores around the South. At one time he carried men's shoes. When the Atlanta Falcons trained in Greenville, many players came to the Cancellation Shoe Mart because he sold large sizes. Because of the difference in stature, it was comical to see my father alongside some of the players. The original Cancellation Shoe Mart was

Passover Seder with the Draisen cousins, 1954. Clockwise from left: Sam Draisen, Marsha Proser (Cohen), Nancy Proser (Lebovitz), located on Washington Street Bernice Draisen (Goldman), Helen Poliakoff Proser, Eunice Poliakoff in downtown Greenville. Draisen (Helen's sister), Sylvan Proser on Eunice's lap, Judy Draisen As the business grew, they (Glassman), Carl Proser. Courtesy of Nancy Proser Lebovitz.

moved to a bigger building on Main Street, which was to become the community, to answer any and all religious questions. a fixture in downtown Greenville for years to come. After working side-by-side for more than 40 years, Helen and Carl retired in the celebrating happy events with friends and family. My parents mid-1990s. The "pink building" became Soby's restaurant.

It was not always easy to be a Jewish family in a mid-sized southern town. Beth Israel Synagogue was an important part of our family's existence and became the center of our Jewish lives. Because Greenville had such a small Jewish community, the shul served not only our spiritual lives, but also our social lives. There we attended services, Hebrew school, youth activities, carnivals, and many other gatherings. Located first on Townes Street in

Our family was observant, and my father, being well-educated religiously, served as Beth Israel's "shammes." Whenever the rabbi was out of town or the shul was "in between" rabbis, my father was called upon to lead services and perform ritual functions as needed. Carl also served for many years as president of the congregation, and subsequently was on the board.

My parents stressed the importance of family. You could

find the Prosers together for every holiday. As a child, we celebrated all the holidays with our Draisen cousins from Anderson, South Carolina. They usually came to Greenville for the High Holy Days, and we alternated the seders at Passover, my uncle Hy leading one and my father leading the other. Our grandmother Rachel Poliakoff (Bebe) was the matriarch always there to make sure everything was as it should be.

As the years passed, grandchildren became a part of family celebrations. I will never forget the look of pride and happiness on the faces of

his grandchildren as they sat on the bimah with all the children of Beth Israel and watched their Zadie blow the shofar on Rosh Hashanah. For many years to come we would call on my father, as did many others in

Both my father and my mother were active and enjoyed were the first ones on the dance floor and my father always led the conga line. When I pledged a sorority at the University of Georgia, my father became president of the Parents' Club. He was instrumental in building the new sorority house, which still stands on campus today.

The values, both religious and cultural, taught in my parents' home continue to be practiced today in different parts of the country by our children and grandchildren. L'dor v'dor.

# Jewish Greenville: From Ethnic Enclave to Multicultural City by Fred Leffert

y father, Morris Leffert, came to America from a small and congregational meetings were often marked by passionate arguments, including the throwing of chairs. York City. He relocated to Greenville for the same reason that The strong ethnic feeling was reinforced by the external many Jews came here in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century—the growing environment. There was significant antisemitism in those textile and apparel industry. In 1928 his cousin Shepard Saltzman years, both tacit and overt. The wider community offered few founded the Piedmont Shirt Company and offered him a job. He cultural or entertainment attractions; the vibrant Greenville married my mother, Fannie Mendelson, who had come to New restaurant scene, the Peace Center, the Warehouse and Center York from Minsk as a child, and brought her to the small but Stage theaters were all in the future. There was little to compete developing Upcountry city in 1940. So I grew up in the Greenville with the strong inner life of the congregation. of the 1940s and '50s. The Greenville of that era was markedly I left Greenville in 1958 reasonably certain I would not want to homogenous—solidly white Protestant—with an invisible black come back. After receiving my undergraduate and medical degrees at Emory, I spent four years in residency in New York

population segregated from mainstream society, two small Jewish congregations with fewer than 150 members between them, one Catholic Church, and no mosques or Hindu temples. The only Spanish speakers were language teachers in the high schools.

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In the public schools each day began with the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by the Lord's Prayer and a few verses of scripture, occasionally supplemented with a sermonette by the teacher. This had the effect of providing me with a good, free Christian education and also making me very conscious of being Jewish.

The Jewish community was tightly I returned to Greenville in the Above: Judy Leffert, the author's sister, became knit. Jews generally socialized with a bat mitzvah in 1957 at Beth Israel Synagogue 1980s to find a very different milieu each other and had few gentile friends; on Townes Street, Greenville, SC. Courtesy of and a changing Jewish community. intermarriage was unusual. Almost Fred Leffert and Congregation Beth Israel. The city had begun its transition everyone, religious or not, affiliated with one of the congregations. to a multicultural, multiethnic urban center. The Jewish For members of the old Beth Israel Congregation the high population was undergoing its own transformation from point of the week was the Friday night service. There was apparel manufacturers and retail merchants to professionals. no Saturday morning service, as those Jews not in the Antisemitism was no longer a significant factor; intermarriage apparel business were retail merchants who had to work was common. The majority of Jews had friends and interests on Saturdays; professionals were rare. Although there were outside the Jewish community. Perhaps most telling: few traditionally observant Jews in Greenville, the Friday despite rapid population growth, neither congregation was evening service was a sort of ethnic solidarity rally. While not significantly increasing its membership. particularly knowledgeable or observant, many of these first-The emergence of Greenville as a vibrant modern city and second-generation Americans still felt the strong pull of appears to have created a paradoxical situation in which individual Jews are living freer, more secure, and more interesting immigrant memory, giving the services, especially the High lives, while Jewish communal life is waning. It is this paradox Holy Days, a deep emotional aura. The synagogue was, for them, a second home, the focus of much of their energy and that likely will be the major challenge for Greenville's Jews as devotion. Members vied for offices and seats on the board, they move toward an uncertain future.

City (where at seders my cousins marveled that Hebrew could be read with a southern accent). After two years in the navy at Portsmouth, Virginia, I spent the '70s in academic medicine at the National Jewish Hospital in Denver and then the University of Chicago. On visits to my parents during those years I was surprised to see Greenville, under the leadership of its first Jewish mayor, Max Heller, evolving into an attractive place to live and work. When I decided to leave academic medicine, it was to return to Greenville to practice.

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# The Rabhans Come Full Circle

#### by Barbara Chardkoff Rabhan

This is the story of how we found a home in Greenville, South L Carolina. Harold Rabhan was from High Point, North Carolina, and I had spent my childhood in Jacksonville, Florida. We met at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1953 and were married a year later in Jacksonville-the start of 63 years of happiness. Our first home was in High Point, North Carolina, where Harold worked in the furniture manufacturing business. Mindy and Andy were born there. We later moved to was very active in student government. Jacksonville—my father had died suddenly of a heart attack and

we went there to help my mother organize her affairs. Abby was born while we were in Jacksonville, completing our beautiful family.

In 1960 Harold had an opportunity to sell industrial cleaning supplies for Zep Manufacturing Co. in Greenville, South Carolina. What a wonderful move! Thank you, Zep, for bringing us here. It has been a great place to live and raise our family. It certainly wasn't the city in the '60s it is today, but it was and

Abby Rabhan's bat mitzvah, Beth Israel Synagogue, Greenville, SC, November 9, 1973. Left to right: Harold, Andy, Abby, Mindy, and Barbara is a delightful place to Rabhan. Courtesy of Barbara and Harold Rabhan.

be. Our children were one, three, and five years old when we University Engineering School, Andy went to Lake Charles, arrived. Our life was centered around school activities, swim meets, dance, and of course, Beth Israel Synagogue. Harold and I both served on Beth Israel's board. I held many offices in Sisterhood and was honored with the Woman of Achievement award in 1998. Our children went through Sunday school and Hebrew school at Beth Israel and had their bar and bat mitzvahs here. Our two daughters were married in the sanctuary. So we naturally have always had a deep attachment to the synagogue.

We were active in many civic organizations (I served, for example, in the Lake Forest Elementary and Wade Hampton High School PTAs, as well as on the boards of the Greenville Forum of World Affairs, the Greenville Civic Ballet, and the Greenville County Commission for the Prevention of Child Abuse; Harold was a 32<sup>nd</sup> degree Scottish Rite Mason, a member of the Hejaz Shrine Temple, president of the Greenville

Salesmen's Club, and the Big Chief of the Indian Guides at the YMCA). We experienced no antisemitism. To underscore this point, our children attended Wade Hampton High School with an enrollment of over 2,000 students, of whom only five percent were Jewish, and yet they were recognized as leaders. Mindy was chosen Best All-Around Student in her senior class, Andy was president of the student body as a senior, and Abby

Mindy went to Duke University. Andy followed her

two years later. Abby graduated from the University of Alabama. Mindy and Abby went to Houston, Texas, after their graduations. While there Mindy met her husband, Louis Kandel, of Columbus, Ohio, and Abby met and married Daniel Vines of Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Thirty years ago the two couples moved to Atlanta and have raised four of my wonderful grandchildren there. Both families have been very involved in Etz Chaim Synagogue.

With a graduate degree from Duke

Louisiana, to work on oil rigs. After a few years, wanderlust ensued and he traveled cross country, then to Australia, and then to Israel. In Israel he met Nancy Page of Kinston, North Carolina. They were married and, after stops in Atlanta and Sweden, they settled in Dallas, Texas, with my other two fantastic grandchildren. They, too, have been active in their synagogue.

We were sad none of our children chose to stay in Greenville, but during the years they were growing up, Greenville did not have a lot to offer. Now, however, our oldest grandson, Matthew Kandel, is here, working for Michelin Tire Co., so we've come full circle. We love Greenville and Beth Israel Synagogue and have decided we would never live anywhere else.

For more on the history of the Rabhan family (aka, Rephan, Raphan, Rebhun), see Our Family Story, 1840-1979, by Morris Rabhan.

### Living in Liberty, SC by Shirley Honigman Sarlin

Tn the late 1800s my father-in-law, Reuben Sarlin, immigrated as chairman of the Pickens County Arts Commission, Lwith his family from a village in Russia to New York City. He secretary of the Pickens County Cancer Society, president left New York in his twenties to work for his cousin Sprintsia of the Liberty Friends of the Library, and was an active Drucker, who owned a dry goods store in McCormick, South member of the Pickens County Library Board and the

Carolina. Around 1920 or so Reuben had the opportunity to purchase his own store in Liberty, South Carolina, from a Jewish couple living in Pickens. After opening the Liberty store, Reuben opened another store in nearby Easley. Sarlin's Department Store remained a vital part of both towns for more than 50 years.

After establishing his business, Reuben married Ella Fedder from Baltimore, Maryland, and they had two sons, Stanley and Ralph, and a daughter, Lillian. Reuben became an active member of his community, serving on the Pickens County School Board and participating in numerous civic endeavors. Reuben worked closely with the many local clergy, offering them personal discounts as well as helping support their church members who were in need. He and his family attended Beth Israel Synagogue in Greenville, 20 miles away.

In late 1946 Ralph joined his father's

business and continued Reuben's philanthropic endeavors. Ralph and I met at the University of North Carolina and were married in 1947. (I was considered a "Yankee southerner" because I came from North Carolina.) We had a son, Milton, and three daughters, Becky Lou, Janet, and Linda. Both of us were very active in the Liberty and Pickens County communities. Ralph served as chairman of the Pickens County

Planning Commission, board member of the Pickens County the merchandise was sold in less than two weeks. The remaining Cancer Society, commander of the local American Legion Post, goods were given to a local youth minister to be used for his and president of the Liberty-Pickens Lions Club. For more than church's youth group. Ralph and I remained in Liberty until two decades, he provided storage space for medical equipment 2006 when we moved to Greenville. Ralph died in 2007, but I that was loaned out to cancer patients in the county. I served am still an active member of the Greenville Jewish community.







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Above: Reuben Sarlin, in front of his store in Liberty, SC, 1925. Below:

local American Legion Auxiliary. The Sarlin family donated money and land on which the town of Liberty built the Sarlin Community Library and a park.

Ralph and our family were active members of Beth Israel Congregation, with Ralph serving as its treasurer for 17 years. Our son had a bar mitzvah and each of our daughters had a bat mitzvah in the synagogue. Living in a small town and being the only Jewish family, we had the disadvantage of not having everyday contact with other Jews. Growing up, Ralph had an uncomfortable experience at school when, during an assembly, a minister asked everyone who believed in Jesus to stand up. Ralph was the only one who remained seated. Although the two older children experienced some antisemitism in school,

One terrifying incident, however,

occurred when Ku Klux Klan members and men in Nazi stormtrooper uniforms gathered directly across the street from the store and remained there for quite some time, determined to make their presence known.

In 1973 when Ralph announced the business was closing, the people of Liberty flocked to the store to buy their favorite items before they were gone. Ninety percent of

### Hyman J. Brand: A Man of the Cloth by Alyssa Neely, with Hy Brand

Tinneapolis, Minnesota, native Hyman "Hy" Brand had retailers and to manufacturers such as Max Heller, who owned **IVI** completed a degree in business administration at the Maxon Shirts. Hy first met Max while in Greenville selling for

University of Minnesota when he signed on to work for textile giant Riegel Textile Corporation in New York City in 1957. After a year of training, he was promoted in rapid succession from sales to management. He was transferred in 1966, and moved with his wife, Janet Franklin Brand, and their daughters, Diane and Cathy, to Greenville, South Carolina, where he became corporate manager of marketing. "Needless to say," Hy reports, "the move required many adjustments. For example, there were no restaurants open on Sunday. At that time women dressed up to go downtown. Everyone Above: Hy Brand at Conestee Mill, Greenville County, SC, 2000. Register of Historic would dress nicely to go to Photo: Bill Aron. Special Collections, College of Charleston. Below: Places, Hy's dream was

church or synagogue." The Brand children Synagogue, Greenville, SC, circa 2005. Courtesy of Hy Brand.

had been born a year apart in Quantico, Virginia, where Hy, then a marine, was stationed. In Greenville they attended J. L. Mann High School. Diane (Hundley) went to North Carolina State, and Cathy went to the University of South Carolina. Cathy worked for Dell computer and, in 1982, married Alex Harvin (Charles Alexander Harvin III, 1950-2005), who served in the South Carolina legislature for 30 years. Following Alex's death, Cathy was elected to his seat and served for five years, until her death in 2010.

After parting on good terms from Riegel, Hy founded his own business in the early 1970s, buying and selling cloth of all kinds

from his home. He opened several retail stores-Brand Fabric—in South Carolina, and sold wholesale to other constant change, but our future is a positive one."



moved to the Upcountry, the two became close friends. One of Hy's business strategies that paid off was his decision to buy damaged fabric sold in insurance losses and bankruptcies. He bought it at a heavily discounted price, paid a mill to clean it, then sold it for a profit. Hy stored his inventory in Conestee Mill, which he bought in 1972. The building is located on the Reedy River in the mill village of Conestee, less than ten miles south of Greenville. After decades of campaigning to see the mill listed on the National

Hy preparing to sound the shofar on Rosh Hashanah at Beth Israel realized in 2014.

A member of Congregation Beth Israel for 42 years, Hy served as president six times. During one of his terms, the sanctuary and the social hall were renovated, and the first sign was placed out front. Hy is one of a handful of men who have served as lay leader for Sabbath services in the years when the Conservative congregation was without a rabbi. He was well prepared for the role by male members of his Minneapolis synagogue, Mikro Kodesh, who took him under their wing after his father died when he was 12. Hy, in turn, has embraced the congregation in his adopted hometown. He notes, "Beth Israel is warm and welcoming, capable of fulfilling religious, educational, and

social needs. Needless to say, as with all congregations, there is

# JHSSC: Building on a Broad Base by Martin Perlmutter

FALL 2016

The Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program at the L College of Charleston has been the administrative hub of the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina since the late Isadore Lourie founded the Society in 1994, with the help of his friend and fellow-state senator Alex Sanders, then the president of the College. That connection between JHSSC and the College has been a win-win, providing the Jewish Studies Program and the Jewish Heritage Collection (JHC) with statewide reach and giving JHSSC a strong foundation on which to build. The Society hosts bi-annual meetings, produces an incredible newsletter (for which Dale Rosengarten and Alyssa Neely deserve accolades), sponsors cemetery surveys and historic markers across the state, and makes all of this publicly accessible through an impressive website, *jhssc.org*, maintained by Ann Meddin Hellman, our indefatigable web diva and former president. As administrator of the Jewish Studies Program and JHSSC since 2002, Enid Idelsohn has worked tirelessly and effectively for the well-being of both organizations, and with great success.

JHSSC's financial structure is as noteworthy as its activities and accomplishments. Except for occasional grant support and sponsorships of special events, JHSSC has relied on its broad membership to fund all of its programs; it raises its annual budget each year from modest membership dues and the generous support of its Pillar members. Pillars donate \$1000 a year for five years, and the Society needs a quorum of some 40 Pillars to meet our annual budget. I am deeply thankful to those of you who have stepped up to be Pillars, and I hope this appeal encourages more of you to join such distinguished company. Increasing Pillar support was a major objective of the Society's 2015 Strategic Plan and remains a priority for me. I envision a time in the not too distant future when

JHSSC will reach out to the community for endowment funds to supplement its Pillar program. As they mature, organizations need to become less reliant on annual giving for ongoing operations. This reality confronts synagogues, Jewish day schools, and Jewish Studies programs, as well as other non-profit institutions. Nevertheless, it says something genuine and reassuring when an organization can raise sufficient annual funds from its membership to support robust operations. Our broad financial base affirms the late President Bernard Warshaw's wish that JHSSC remain a grassroots organization. Please become a Pillar and help JHSSC continue to tell this happy story.



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# Pillars

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See page 13 for more information.

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# Тне JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SOUTH CAROLINA

Dale Rosengarten *editor* Alyssa Neely assistant editor and designer

The JHSSC newsletter is published twice a year.

Current and back issues can be found at jhssc.org

On the cover: 171 King Street by Norma Mazo Perlmutter, 1934. Sketches of George and Sonia Mazo's grocery and deli on King Street, drawn by their daughter Norma. Courtesy of Benjamin and Samuel Means.



Right: Aleck Ellison, circa 1930, in Ellison's Dry Goods, 560 King Street, Charleston, SC, forerunner to Ellison's Dress Shop. Special Collections, College of Charleston.

# In this issue

"Little Jerusalem" ~ Alyssa Neely and Dale Rosengarten ~ This photo essay features some of the many Eastern European Jewish immigrants who helped to shape Charleston's commercial district in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It heralds a new online exhibit titled Mapping Jewish Charleston, which showcases numerous images of Jewish life in the port city from the era of the American 

"The 'Kingdom of Israel' in this town": Jewish Merchants in Antebellum Charleston ~ Shari Rabin ~ Jewish merchants in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Charleston, like non-Jews, were subject to the vagaries of running a business. It was important to cultivate relationships and earn a good reputation. Early credit reports not only assessed the soundness of a merchant's finances, but revealed his standing in the community. Jewish identity also was noted in the evaluations. .... 8

"The 'Kingdom of Israel' in this town": Jewish Merchants of Charleston and Summerville ~ JHSSC meets in Charleston and Summerville, May 20 – 21, 2017......11

1907 Fall and Winter 1908

HORNIK'S BARGAIN HOUSE

Department Store Supplies.

From Pineland to Flowertown: Jewish Merchants of Summerville ~ Spencer Lynch ~ Summerville, South Carolina, was attractive to Jewish immigrants in the late 1800s and early 1900s for the economic opportunities it offered as a health resort. Over time it proved to be valuable for its proximity to Charleston with its Jewish institutions. This Summerville native describes growing up among the pines, while going to school at the Charleston Hebrew Institute and Porter Gaud.....12

A New Project and a New Endowment ~ Martin Perlmutter ~ The Society sets its sights on broader horizons with the announcement of an ambitious history project and a new means for raising funds......15





Fall 2016 meeting in Greenville provided a wonderful opportunity to meet members of Beth Israel Congregation and learn about the

region's rich history. On Saturday we listened as keynoter Diane Vecchio and participants in two panels traced the arc of change in Jewish life in the Upstate since the 19<sup>th</sup> century—a progression from peddling to retail and manufacturing to professional occupations, and from Old Country ways to Upcountry identities. Our Sunday panel and afternoon tour focused on the life and contributions of visionary mayor Max Heller, who

is widely credited with inspiring today's vibrant urban fabric of downtown Greenville.

JHSSC's board and officers warmly invite you to our Spring 2017 meeting, "The 'Kingdom of Israel' in this Town": Jewish Merchants of Charleston and **Summerville,** May 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. The weekend will begin with a walking tour of Charleston's King Street and continue, after lunch, with a lecture by Steve Litvin, a professor in the College of Charleston School of Business, Department of



Congregation Beth Israel of Greenville celebrated its 100 anniversary with the dedication of an historic marker, October 22, 2016. Photo by Jeri Perlmutter.

Hospitality and Tourism Management. Dr. Litvin will describe Why make this particular subject a centerpiece of our work? The history of Jews in the South, indeed, throughout the Diaspora, is dominated by the narrative of immigrant peddlers selling their wares in rural backwaters. After some level of success, peddlers would open stores in small towns or a neighboring city and become part of the civic fabric of that place. The Jews of South Carolina in the 19th and 20th centuries follow this characteristic pattern, including my family, which at one time or another operated at least 16 stores in the state, from the cities Between these two panels, College of Charleston faculty Shari of Columbia and Charleston (including three businesses on King Street) to Abbeville, Greenwood, Kingstree, Manning, and other small towns. My siblings and I spent years working in Marcus Department Store in Eutawville, established in 1901 by my peddler grandfather, Morris Marcus. The importance of family stores in the economic and social history of Jewish life in South Carolina is hard to overstate, and I am delighted to help On Sunday the conference moves 25 miles west to document this story.

the transformation of King Street over the past century, setting the stage for two panels of local experts: "Kings and Queens of King Street" will present eye-witness experiences of merchants who remember when King Street was something of a Jewish Mecca. "The New Royalty" will bring us into the present, as Upper King evolves into an upscale shopping and entertainment district, with bars and restaurants replacing dry-goods and furniture stores. Rabin, Harlan Greene, and Dale Rosengarten will introduce the audience to Mapping Jewish Charleston, an online exhibition created under the auspices of the Pearlstine/Lipov Center for Southern Jewish Culture. The afternoon will wrap up with a reception at Norman's Patio, behind the College's kosher dining hall, which surely represents one of the latest of Charleston's Jewish "firsts."

Summerville, popularly known as "Flowertown in the Pines." Famous for its azaleas and the invention of sweet tea, Summerville emerged in the 1890s as a world-class health resort, attractive

# Letter from the President

The Jewish Historical Society's especially to patients with respiratory problems. Jewish-owned shops once peppered picturesque Hutchinson Square in downtown Summerville. In partnership with the Summerville Dorchester Museum, we have arranged to meet for lunch just off the Square and hear from members of families who were among these early merchants. Together we will unveil a state historical marker, a permanent reminder of the significance of Summerville's Jewish community, and take a walking tour of nearby sites. The program will conclude-you guessed it-with sweet tea, served at the former home of storekeeper and philanthropist Saul Alexander.

The May meeting is designed to launch a research project now on the Society's drawing boards-an effort to document

> Jewish-owned stores, past and present, across South Carolina. We propose to collect written memoirs, oral histories, and photographs of businesses and the people who ran them, and artifacts such as account books, lay-away ledgers, advertisements, invoices, and correspondence. Once compiled, the information and images will be presented on JHSSC's website. Archival material, if donated, will be housed and catalogued by the College of Charleston's Jewish Heritage Collection.

PAGE 3

Hope to see you in May!

Ernest L. Marcus

Mandel, Allan Livingstain, and Betty Sc

Uncle Harry's Pawn Shop, 438 King

Harris & Mary Livingstair

Ben & Vera Yaschik's grocery

# "Little Jerusalem" by Alyssa Neely and Dale Rosengarten

In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, upper King Street became a Jewish enclave, affectionately dubbed "Little Jerusalem." Starting as an Indian trade route known as "Broad Path," the trail up the spine of the peninsula emerged in the colonial period as Charleston's major commercial artery. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, an influx of immigrants, notably East European Jews, Italians, Greeks, Chinese, and Lebanese, joined Germans, Irish, and English and changed the city's demography. For several decades a visible Yiddishkeit bloomed in the upper wards, and the neighborhood north of Calhoun and west of King became a small southern version of Manhattan's Lower East Side. Men who began as peddlers established businesses-dry-goods, furniture, shoerepair, and tailor shops; hardware, jewelry, and secondhand stores or pawn shops; mattress factories; groceries and delicatessens. At one time some 40 stores on upper King were closed on Saturdays for the Jewish Sabbath. Shopkeepers held daily prayer services above Zalkin's kosher meat market and in back of Sam Solomon's wholesale jobbers. Their wives often worked behind the counter; at home they kept kosher kitchens, with African-American cooks standing at the stove and Jewish bubbes giving instructions. The "greenhorns" attended Beth Israel,

3

MEAT

while the older families went a couple of blocks south on St. Philip Street to Brith Sholom.

'My father had a sense of humor that was really something else . . . if you asked him how business was, he would tell you in Yiddish . . . 'I haven't spoken the first word of English yet today.' He hadn't had a customer."

> —Irving "Itchy" Sonenshine, October 21, 1997

corner Percy & Bogard

Charles Nachman's dry goods, corner King & Queen

#### SPRING 2017

"We had a shtetl . . . bordered by Meeting, Cannon, Rutledge, and Warren ... a Jewish enclave.... We were called Little Jerusalem ... by people who were outside the Pale, so to speak . . . there was no meanness connected with it."

& Rosie Goldstein's clothing, 559 King

—Gus Pearlman, June 10, 1997

MAX GOLDS

Mazo's was an institution in the Jewish community. There was never a Sunday that we wouldn't go for a ride and stop by Mazo's to get some delicatessen." —Abel Banov, April 3, 1996

Meyer & Lena Collis's bakery, 165 King







Abe & Emily Novit's chinaware, 485 King

We didn't hang out on King Street. In fact I never went to upper King Street. . . . That was like a different county or city to me."

—Marcelle Kleinzahler Furchgott, May 14, 2014

PAGE 5

cAnn Livingstain Mandel, Allan Livingstain, and Ber

#### Harris Livingstain Co., pawnbrol

"The ones who wanted to close on Saturday wanted to observe Shabbos, see. I remember vividly Sonny [Goldberg] telling me, not long before he died, that he used to love Friday afternoon. Friday afternoon he would get ready to leave the store and go home . . . dress up, shower, get ready for Shabbos. It's like he was reborn again. He didn't care what happened to the business. He just was going to take it easy on Shabbos, and he did."

—Irving "Itchy" Sonenshine, October 21, 1997

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#### JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

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"When I came out of the air force in 1956, there were thirty-two furniture stores on King Street. We had no problems with each other. Most of us worshipped together. If you needed a particular piece of furniture from a bedroom suite, you called up somebody that you know that had them and they lent them to you. You either paid the money for it—the wholesale, by the way—or you returned the item."

THE UPTOWN SAMPLE SHOE STO Alex Karesh 545 King

THE UPTOWN SAMPLE SHOE STORE .

"My daddy was George Goldberg . . . owned a store . . . at 569 King Street, which is two doors south of Cannon Street. There were no less than six men's clothing stores on that block. First we had my daddy, of course. Then across the street was M. Dumas, a branch of the downtown [M. Dumas] at the corner of Woolfe and King Street, run by Nathan Goldberg, who was his son-in-law. A very famous clothing store and a very high competitor of ours was Brickman's . . . then you had . . . J. Needle & Company, and . . . the Bluesteins, of course, the most historic and famous store, and then you had Mike, Sam, and Jake. They were the Prystowsky brothers and they owned sort of a nicer store. They really shouldn't have been on that block."

—Charles Goldberg, January 24, 2013

Leon's Men's Wear,

Quotes are from the Jewish Heritage **Collection Oral History Archives:** http://jhc.cofc.edu/oral-history-archives/

on Co., wholesa

All photos courtesy of Special Collections, College of Charleston, unless otherwise noted.

Myer "Al" Spikler, Al's Delicatessen 478 King MATIZOS HATIZOS TAT FIAT MATIZOS MATIZOS

very opposite." —Sam Kirshtein, January 24, 2013

"Uptown, where we operated,

had the . . . merchandise that

was more inferior [than in

downtown stores]. The clientele

at that time was about eighty

percent black. The other end

of King Street was probably the

by Louis J. Schwartz, courtesy of Harold IL Fox





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—Joseph Chase, January 24, 2013

"Mama's social life was that all these salesmen would come in for their Coca-Cola and slice of bologna . . . she would become friends with them. So this Christian insurance man said, 'Jews are just so lucky, so lucky. You send your children to college; I can't send my children to college.' My mother said, 'You call this lucky? I wake up at five in the morning and I go to bed at twelve and one o'clock at night. You think I'm lucky?'"

King

PAGE 7

Abe & Ida Appel

520 King

Appel Furniture Co.

—Dorothy "Dutch" Idalin Gelson Cohen, March 5, 1995

formerly Mazo's

discount depa

ard Kron

Partment store, grand openin

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#### SPRING 2017

# "The 'Kingdom of Israel' in this town": Jewish Merchants in Antebellum Charleston

Tn 1845 pharmacist Philip M. Cohen (1808–1879) was described as "a Jew... doing a large fine bus [iness who] has made [considerable] money. In [dustrious] and indefatigable." This evaluation comes not from a letter or a newspaper

article, but rather, from America's earliest

HAYNE-ST. FIRE, CHARLESTON, S. C. CHARLESTON, S. C., MAY, 1851. CHARLESTON, S. C., MAY, 1854. To S. C. Herring, Eq., New York: D EAR SIR: The "Salamander Safe" which we pro-ented of you, was in our Store No. 29 Hayne still the time of its destruction by fire on the 18th April 18th the caure building together with seven others in me block was destroyed. This Safe was buried amil the time of ar several days when it was day out, and year in the to our surprise from the combastible nature of an usiness, (wholesale Brugs and Medicines,) and from this to find its contents to be in perfect order, and from the business, (whoresate Drugs and Atementers), on opening it to find its contents to be in perfect order, and from this we are satisfied that your Safes are entitled to public con-idence. You will alcone align as automation of the same we are satiefied that your Safes are entitled to public con-idence. You will please ship us another of the same size at once, and oblige, very respectfully yours, inporters of Drugs and Medicinles, 20 Haynes, In H. WILLIAMS is Agent in this city for HERRING'S SALAMANDER SAFES, relief on be procured of all sizes and prices. [30]

local opinions of businessmen from correspondents across the country, with an eye toward determining their creditworthiness. These records are a remarkable and largely untapped source for exploring the businesses and reputations of Charleston Jews. Further evidence of their activities can be found in newspapers, census data, city directories, and archival collections, which have been explored anew by historical researcher Sarah Fick as part of Mapping Jewish Charleston, an ambitious digital project from the Pearlstine/Lipov Center for Southern Jewish Culture. Philip M. Cohen's activities are particularly well documented

in these sources, which makes his story a useful one for understanding the broader world of Jewish business in antebellum Charleston.

Cohen, who sold wholesale "drugs, chemicals, perfumery, paints, oils, dye stuffs, brushes, surgical instruments, patent medicines, and fancy articles," was hardworking, but also relatively privileged.<sup>2</sup> He was a native son with a

Receipt dated November 13, 1856, for the purchase of two slaves, "Caroline and her son," by Mrs. Therese Levy from Benjamin Davis. Special Collections, College of Charleston.

#### by Shari Rabin

medical degree and was well connected in the city. His wife was Cordelia Moïse (1810–1869), a member of a prominent local family, and his uncle-also his wife's step-father-was Hyam Cohen (1788–1850), Charleston's city assessor.<sup>3</sup> Yet, despite his status, by 1855 his business had failed.

Jews were prominent in many aspects of Charleston's public life, and a number of them were fabulously wealthy. But Jewish merchants were a diverse lot, including men and women, immigrant and native born, well-to-do and of modest means. Their businesses ranged from pharmacies and groceries to hardware shops and dry goods stores. Through these various activities, Jews made their way in the city, although success was neither easy nor guaranteed. No matter their background or line of business, Jewish merchants discovered that what mattered most were relationships and reputations.

According to the credit reports, in the late 1840s Cohen was worth \$20,000, had a good reputation, and owned a home and "several negros."<sup>4</sup> Slave-owning marked Cohen as a typical, if relatively well-off, Charleston Jew. Members of Charleston's Jewish merchant community regularly owned slaves and several worked with much success as slave traders.<sup>5</sup> Whatever their "commodity" of choice, however, Jewish merchants' economic status was not certain to rise. Many Jewish merchants, especially immigrants, floated into town, failed to achieve economic stability, and left soon after.

Even for a native Charlestonian like Cohen, business was not easy. Mounting debts, robust competition, and disasters all could trouble economic life. By 1853 Cohen was working with a Jewish partner named Philip Wineman and was falling behind on payments to their creditors.<sup>6</sup> Next, a fire broke out at his place of business and though they had insurance, it did not cover their costs. Popular opinion held that "even if he [should] recover the insurance money (wh[ich] is somewhat

Charleston, 13 Mounder 1856 8 825 Received from Mer Therese Lery Eight hundred & brenty for no Dollars being in full for the purchase of this Negro Slaves named Caroling the dow The right and title of said slave & I warrant and defend against the claims of all persons whomsoever, and likewise warrant theme sound and healthy. As Witness my Hand and Seal. Mortnow Anna Burjamin Daris, LS Walker & Krane, Pilet

doubtful) he will be worth, when 'boiled down to cash' about cousin, Edwin, was an auctioneer and grocer who rented space one dollar." This turned out to be a self-fulfilling prophecy. at 28 Vendue Range, an address with a history of occupation

By February 1855 the store had failed.7 The following year, with backing from friends, Cohen opened a more modest drugstore and operated it under his wife's name to avoid association with his previous failure.8 While it is unclear how active Cordelia was in this new business, other women did enjoy an independent status as "feme sole" or "sole trader." These were single women, widows, and wives whose husbands gave permission for them to conduct business and own property.9

Jewish men and women alike entered into business with non-Jews, though they often worked with co-religionists, if not relatives. Philip M. Cohen's brother Lawrence L. Cohen, also a Medical College graduate, joined him in the business; by 1841 their uncle Hyamwith whom Philip and

State of South-Carolina. KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS. That 9 Benjamin D Lagand Heatand Dollart to mee in hand paid, at and before the sealing and delivery of these Presents, By Francie A. Mitcheel (the receipt whereof I do hereby acknowledge) have bargained and sold, and by these Presents do bargain. sell and deliver to the said Francis a Mitchell, a certain femace clase named Margand waronted sound and presumed to be in a state of pregnamay -TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the said Have Mongarty mille her fature issue and increase Francis a Mitchell hig Executors, Administrators and Assigns: to his and their only proper use and behoof forever. And I the said Bonjamin. D. Lagarus my Executors and Administrators, the said bargained premises, unto the said Frances a Mitcheel his Executors, Administrators and Assigns, from and against, all persons, shall and will wARRANT and PORTURE DEFINE by these Presents. In Witness Whereot, I have herounts set my Hand and Sent Dated at Cheer lectors on the 14th, day of December in the year of our bord any thousand eight hundred and Hill, Could and in the Ciffle Cheer Syear of the Independence of the United States of America Souled and delivered) Berg: I Ingaries in the prosence of Emma Lasaent

office to their building at 63 Broad.<sup>10</sup> They later moved to 29 temperate" although Moïse's "style of living"—considering Hayne Street, where among Cohen's customers was one of that he owned no property—seemed to the credit reporter his wife's Moïse cousins, Philip Augustus. He operated a drug "unsuit[able]." Potential creditors, he determined, should thus store at 221 King Street with two gentiles, John J. Ward, who be "very cautious."<sup>18</sup> Of Edwin Moïse, in 1853 one credit reeventually left the firm, and John J. Grierson.<sup>11</sup> Another Moïse porter could "see 0/0 [nothing] to prevent him from getting

Cordelia lived, first on Bill of sale for the slave "Margaret with her future issue and increase," dated Broad Street and later December 14, 1858, purchased for \$1,000 by Francis A. Mitchell from Benjamin D. and Grierson were on Tradd—moved his Lazarus. Courtesy Avery Research Center, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC.

by Jewish merchants.<sup>12</sup> He had entered into business as a clerk for a Jewish firm and in 1853 went into business on his own.<sup>13</sup>

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Whether between Jews and non-Jews or among Jews, business relationships were not always harmonious. When his business failed, Cohen's stock was purchased by Benjamin Mordecai, a fellow Jew who later became a prominent supporter of the Confederate cause.14 Mordecai was a wealthy slave trader, and the credit reporters estimated that he purchased the store's stock at half of its actual value.15 He turned the store over to J. H. Ashurst, the former bookkeeper, and kept Wineman on as clerk, pushing Cohen out.<sup>16</sup>

While these relationships determined access to capital, reputation shaped access to credit, which was becoming increasingly important in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>17</sup> Moïse deemed "steady and

his share of 'plunder' out of this wide world." By March 1856, however, he had quit business and was described as "character below par."<sup>19</sup>

Besides noting financial and personal attributes, credit reporters often mentioned the Jewish identity of the merchant and considered it in evaluating creditworthiness.<sup>20</sup> Descriptions of Philip Cohen regularly mentioned he was a "Jew," sometimes differentiating him as a (presumably more trustworthy) "Native Jew." After his failure, however, he was described as "an Israelite indeed but not without guile."<sup>21</sup> Within six weeks of Benjamin Mordecai's takeover of Cohen's business, it had "acquired a very smutty reputation." The new owner was described as "possess[ing] of a large share of the qualities so generally attributed to Israelites" and the new firm as a "Jew Concern" and "JEWS from A to Z." The report elaborated, "If paying is profitable + politic they will pay."22

Jewish identity could be a liability, then, but it could also be an asset. When Moïse and Grierson opened for business, the credit reporter noted that competition was fierce, but predicted they "will get the patronage of the 'Kingdom of Israel' in this town, a large Kingdom."<sup>23</sup> In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, even as religious reform and sectionalist politics were on the rise, Charleston Jews were working to put food on their tables. Many of them did so by buying and selling commodities, work in which their Jewishness shaped their business relationships, their financial identities, and their economic trajectories.

Shari Rabin is assistant professor of Jewish Studies and acting director of the Pearlstine/Lipov Center for Southern Jewish Culture, http://jewishsouth.cofc.edu/

NEW DRUG STORES THE subsectors having formed a conjust mership under the name and siyle of MOISE. WARD & GRIERSON, for the purpose of conducting a ceneral DRUG purpose of enducting a ceneral DRUG purpose of using name and one of the best selected at the Northern with and increases. CHEMICALS, PERFUNCER, AND STRUCT WENTS, BRUSHES, TOILEFT GOODS, FANCY ARE DECLES, &c., over brought to this city, and are disposed ICLES, &c., ever brought to this city, and are disposed ICLES, &c., ever brought to this eity, and are disposed soil on such terms as cannot fail to give sulisfaction. C2+ The Drugs, Medicines and Chemicals have been arefully selected, and most of them are of recent impor-ation, and are warranted, in overs instance, to be of the tion, and are watranted in every instance to be of the mrest quality. GJ-In the Performery Department will be found rare ad elegant English, French, German and American Exraces, Odeurs, Cologues, Soaps, Cosmeties, Tollet Yow, races, Odeurs, Cologues, Soaps, Cosmeties, Tollet Yow, lers, Pomades, Hair Oils, and all articles of this description worthy the attention of the multic ters, Pomades, Hair Olls, and an articles of fuis description worthy the attention of the public, G2- English, French and American Hair, Treth and call prushes manufactured expressiv for the also sport GP English, French and American Hair, Treth and sait Brushes manufactured expressive for its ; also, every oriety of Shell, Ivory, Bullato and Horn Combs, orgenter eith a large assorment of Fangy Goods. GP The very best Swedish, Leeches will be kept con-tantly on hand, and applied if desired. GP Family, Plantation and Ship Medicine Chests, for Ge- Family, Plantation and Ship Medicute Chests fut ished or fitted on the most reasonable terms, fragment, mondar of the firm having full monte time. Go- Each member of the firm having bal many years' enouse in the business, Physicians may rely upon his Aperiance in the business, Physicians and rely upon five ress. A share of the paironage of the public is respect will solicited. Det 25 6 JOHN J. WARD. JOHN W. GRIERSON.

#### NOTES

1. South Carolina, Vol. 6, p. 28, R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Report 14. South Carolina, Vol. 6, p. 187; Robert N. Rosen, The Jewish Volumes, Baker Library, Harvard Business School.

2. Charleston Courier, January 13, 1845, 3.

3. Sarah Fick, 1833 Research for Mapping Jewish Charleston, Special Collections, College of Charleston, 2016.

4. South Carolina, Vol. 6, p. 28, R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Report Volumes.

5. James William Hagy, This Happy Land: The Jews of Colonial and Antebellum Charleston (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press), 91–106.

6. Ibid., appendix p. 411.

7. South Carolina, Vol. 6, p. 187, R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Report Volumes.

8. South Carolina, Vol. 6, p. 238. Ads described him as "P. Melvin Cohen of 'Cohen's Medical Depot," Charleston Mercury, February 12, 1857, 2.

9. Fick, 1833 Research for Mapping Jewish Charleston. 10. Ibid.

11. South Carolina, Vol. 6, p. 218, R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Report Volumes; Ads, Charleston Courier, October 28, 1854, 3.

12. Fick, 1833 Research for Mapping Jewish Charleston.

13. South Carolina, Vol. 6, p. 189, R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Report Volumes.

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16. South Carolina, Vol. 6, p. 259.

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20. Rowena Olegario, "'The Mysterious People': Jewish Merchants, Transparency, and Community in Mid-Nineteenth Century America," The Business History Review (Summer 1999), 161–189; Gerald Tulchinsky, "Said to be a very honest Jew:' The R. G. Dun Credit Reports and Jewish Business Activity in Mid-19th Century Montreal," Urban History Review (February 1990), 200-209.

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22. South Carolina, Vol. 6, p. 187, 259.

23. South Carolina, Vol. 6, p. 218.

#### SPRING 2017

### "The 'Kingdom of Israel' in this town": Jewish Merchants of Charleston and Summerville

### May 20–21, 2017 ~ Charleston and Summerville, South Carolina

#### Saturday, May 20 ~ Charleston Sat. events take place in the Sylvia Vlosky Yaschik Jewish Studies Center, 96 Wentworth St.

| • •                |   |
|--------------------|---|
| 10:00 а.м.         | King Street Walking Tour – meet at  |
| 11:30              | Registration  |
| 11:45 – 12:30 р.м. | Lunch   |
| 12:30 - 1:30       | <b>The Transformation of King Stre</b><br>Department of Hospitality and Tou   |
| 1:30 - 1:45        | Break   |
| 1:45 – 2:45        | Panel discussion – <b>Kings and Que</b><br>Moderator: Dale Rosengarten<br>Panelists: Steve Berlin, Nicky Blues<br>Leonard Goldberg, Barry Kalinsky, |
| 2:45 - 3:45        | Mapping Jewish Charleston – pre   |
| 3:45 - 4:00        | Break   |
| 4:00 – 5:15        | Panel discussion – <b>The New Royal</b><br>Moderator: Randi Weinstein<br>Panelists: Ben D'Alessandro, Joe Fi  |
| 5:15 - 6:30        | <b>Reception</b> – Norman's Patio, behin  |
|                    |   |

#### Sunday, May 21 ~ Charleston and Summerville

| 9:00 - 10:30 а.м. | Open JHSSC board meeting, 96 V   |
|-------------------|--|
| 11:30             | Lunch at <b>Eclectic Chef,</b> 125 Cent<br>W. Richardson Avenue or in the to   |
| 12:30 – 1:00 р.м. | Dedication of marker – Central Av  |
| 1:15 - 2:30       | Panel discussion – <b>Jewish Life in Fl</b><br>Moderator: Spencer Lynch<br>Panelists: Sallie Wolper Boyles, Jan<br>Rosalyn Kramer Monat-Haller, Vi |
| 2:30              | Walking tour of downtown Summ  |
|                   | Immediately following the tour, a 409 Central Avenue, Summervil  |

#### Hotel reservations

**Francis Marion Hotel** 387 King Street, Charleston, SC 29403 (843) 722-0600 or (877) 756-2121

*Special rate:* \$269 per night + tax

To get the special rate, make your reservation by midnight on April 19 and mention "Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina." 



PAGE II

at 96 Wentworth Street

eet: The Price of Success – Steve Litvin, Professor, ourism Management, College of Charleston

#### eens of King Street

estein, Benjamin Chase, Rosemary "Binky" Read Cohen, , Sam Kirshtein, Allan Livingstain resentation by Harlan Greene, Shari Rabin, and Dale Rosengarten

#### lty

Fischbein, Eli Hyman, Joseph Jacobson, Jerry Scheer ind Marty's Place, 96 Wentworth Street

Wentworth Street, Charleston—everyone is invited!

tral Avenue (Short Central), Summerville – parking available on own parking deck (free) on Short Central, off of W. Richardson

Avenue, across from Eclectic Chef

Flowertown – Summerville Downtown YMCA, 208 W. Doty Avenue

ane Barshay Burns, Marjorie Levy Lynch, Paul Lynch, vivian Rose

nerville Jewish heritage sites or driving tour of historic Jewish homes

attendees are cordially invited to tea at the Saul Alexander home, lle, now the residence of Vivian and Mike Rose.



#### VOLUME XXII ~ NUMBER I SPRING 2017

# From Pineland to Flowertown: Jewish Merchants of Summerville



The first settlement of Summerville, known as L Pineland Village, began after the American Revolution, its development fueled by Lowcountry planters eager to escape the heat, biting insects, and disease environment of the coast. Officially, Summerville became a town in 1847. By 1899 it was considered one of the world's two best places for the treatment of lung and throat disorders because of its dry, sandy soil and the prevalence of pine trees. Even today, the town's official seal reads "Sacra

Pinus Esto (The Pine is Sacred)."

My grandfather Samuel Lynch came from Poland through New

Top, left to right: Cecile Wolper (Lazarus), Pauline Wolper (Lynch), the author's grandmother, Cecile Barr Wolper, Louis Edwin Wolper, Jacob Wolper, and Max Wolper, Charleston, SC, 1915. Special Collections, College of Charleston.

Middle, left to right: Izzy Wolper, Seymour Lynch, and Mosey Wolper. Seymour and Mosey, born four days apart, were best friends.

Bottom: Wolper's Shoe Co., 217 Meeting Street, Charleston, SC, a wholesale business owned by Louis E. Wolper and his wife, Sylvia Geldbart Wolper, was adjacent to Hyman's Southern Wholesale Co. Special Collections, College of Charleston.

#### by Spencer Lynch

Orleans to Charleston, where he met and married Pauline Wolper, who had emigrated, also from Poland, to South Carolina as a child. In the 1930s Samuel purchased several buildings on a stretch of Central Avenue (now a pedestrian-only segment popularly referred to as Short Central) in downtown Summerville and commuted from Charleston. He started a dry-goods business called Summerville Bargain Store, selling work boots and pants to the men building the Santee Cooper hydroelectric plant during the New Deal. After Prohibition ended in 1933, he also opened a liquor store.

> When Samuel died, my father, Seymour Lynch, inherited both businesses.

My grandfather was one of the first individuals in Summerville to lease buildings to African Americans, specifically to two barbers, Mr. Bryant and Mr. Pinckney. As a child during segregation, I remember that Mr. Bryant's barber shop catered to whites and Mr. Pinkney served a black clientele. Ironically, one of the buildings my family owned was next door to where the Ku Klux Klan met in the 1930s.



My mother, Marjorie Levy Lynch, a native New Yorker, married my father in 1959 and they decided to live in Summerville. By 1964 my parents expanded their businesses and opened a department store called Seymour's, while continuing to operate the liquor store. The businesses were located across the street from each other. My father would be working in the clothing shop, and when a customer walked into the liquor store, an employee would yell, "Seymour, you have a customer in the liquor store," and he would run across the street.

Since our residence was only one block from the stores, our lives revolved around the businesses. On Saturdays, while my parents worked, my brother, Paul, and I would ride our bicycles to the stores and hang out with our friends. Periodically, our neighbors invited us to attend Baptist

singing Christian hymns, my parents decided it was time to send us to Charleston Hebrew Institute, later called Addlestone Hebrew Academy, under the auspices of the Orthodox synagogue Brith Sholom Beth

Israel. During our teenage

years we continued to commute to Charleston to attend high school at Porter Gaud. However, it was important that 📄 we always stop by the stores on Friday afternoons to help our parents. My fondest memories were those Fridays. My father would cash hundreds of paychecks for the blue-



Bible study. When we started Above: Marjorie Levy and her mother, Goldie Shapiro Levy, building previously occupied visit Summerville, SC, late 1950s, before Marjorie's marriage to Seymour Lynch in April 1959. A New Yorker, Marjorie found the "country town" likable because "everyone was friendly and nice." Below: Seymour Lynch, 1950s, enjoyed sitting in the sun outside his liquor store at 120 Central Avenue, Summerville, SC, while waiting for customers. He was in the habit of stacking boxes on the sidewalk to show he was open for business.



collar workers, many of whom could not write or did not have a bank account.

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The Alcohol Blue Laws created a mini-industry of bootlegging; retail liquor stores were closed after sunset and on Sundays. My father capitalized on this market and became one of the largest distributors of liquor to the bootleggers in Dorchester County. My brother and I would load hundreds of cases of half pints into the cars and trucks of the bootleggers for their weekend sales.

Summerville was a very tolerant community and welcomed many Jewish families. Marcus Barshay, an immigrant from Riga, Latvia, got his start in America running a dry-goods business in Orangeburg in 1897. In 1905 he relocated to Summerville and opened a men's clothing store on the town square. Five years later he moved his business a couple of doors down into a

by another Jewish merchant, Solomon Mirmow, who owned a considerable amount of property in town. Marcus and his wife, Lena Banov Barshay, had three sons and

> two daughters. Aaron and Sammy took over the business, called Barshay's, when their father died in 1950.

> Around 1900 an immigrant named Saul Alexander from Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine, Russia, moved to Summerville and worked at Mirmow Dry Goods Store. In 1914 he opened his own business, also selling dry goods. During the hard times

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#### JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

of the late 1920s and '30s, Saul Alexander and Marcus Barshay were private bankers, providing loans for people to buy from Prussia and opened a produce market in Summerville homes. When Alexander died in 1952, most

of his estate went into the Saul Alexander Foundation, which continues to provide annual grants to charitable organizations in Summerville and the greater Charleston community.

My father's uncle Isadore Wolper moved to Summerville with his wife, Janette Jacobs Wolper, in 1946. Newly married, they had the idea of opening Dorchester Jewelers as the first jewelry retailers in town. Their shop was on Short Central in a space they rented from my father and grandfather until 1961, when they moved into their own building at 138 South Main Street.

was fondly called, and Janette were highly regarded and active longtime members of the Lions

of Commerce. Serving as president of both organizations, Izzy was recognized posthumously for his dedication to the Lions. Janette volunteered as a board member of the Dorchester County Library and accepted numerous invitations over the years from church groups to share her insights about Jewish holidays and rituals. Before we were old enough for our parents to put us to work in their stores, my brother and I spent many Saturdays playing with our cousins. Our families would also celebrate many of the Jewish holidays together.

Around 1900 Etta and Moses Kramer came to America on the site where their son Isadore Kramer later built his drug store. Kramer's Pharmacy was a town landmark noted for its ice cream counter. Many Jewish families from Charleston would take a day trip to Summerville on Sundays and enjoy a sundae from Kramer's.

Other Jewish families in Summerville included the Lazaruses, Bernsteins, Bornsteins, Epsteins, Meyers, and Friedbergs.

Like the rest of the Lowcountry, the Jewish population of Summerville is expanding at a significant pace, attracted by industries such as Volvo and Mercedes, as well as the Del Webb retirement community

Retiring in 1989, Izzy, as he Above: the author (1) and his brother, Paul Lynch, on a visit to Cane Bay Plantation. As of Santa at the Summerville Town Hall, late 1960s.

Below: Marjorie Levy Lynch in Seymour's, 117 Central Jewish families reside at Del in the community. They became Avenue, Summerville, SC, late 1980s. In 1997 the family closed the store and began renting the space to other retailers.

Club and Summerville Chamber All photos, unless otherwise stated, courtesy of the Lynch family. Summerville are receiving



December 2016, more than 50 Webb. More than 30 young Jewish families in metro

> free Jewish children's books from PJ Library, a Harold Grinspoon Foundation program that partners with local philanthropists and the Charleston Jewish Federation to encourage reading in the home. My family and I, though we all now live in Charleston, are still active in our hometown through our association with Summerville DREAM, a non-profit organization dedicated to the revitalization of the downtown area. As property owners, we also consult with several economic development committees.

#### SPRING 2017 VOLUME XXII ~ NUMBER I

# A New Project and a New Endowment

by Martin Perlmutter • connection to the past is an integral part of Jewish **A**values, practice, and education. JHSSC is living proof that Jewish history encompasses not just biblical history, Talmudic studies, mass immigration, the Holocaust, or the founding of the modern state of Israel. The formative past is also local. Our history takes place in Summerton, Aiken, Greenville, Charleston; BBYO, Camp Blue Star, Temple Sinai in Sumter; Edwards' "five and dime" on King Street, Ben Arnold Distributors in Columbia, and Poliakoff's Department Store in Abbeville. It also includes civil rights marches and one's own genealogy. JHSSC's mission charges us to study, preserve, and promote awareness of the history and culture of the Jews of South Carolina. The Society has recently proposed a new initiative to do just that. At our Spring 2017 meeting, we will launch a project to document the life and times of Jewish merchants-peddlers, shopkeepers, and owners of chains of stores-who made South Carolina their home. I am confident this undertaking, like other efforts spearheaded by the Society, will produce a valuable historical resource, available to future generations. Central to JHSSC's success is the generosity of our Pillars, donors who contribute to the Society at the rate of \$1,000 per year for five years. Pillars are our lifeblood; they have helped us put South Carolina's Jewish history on the map and create a cohesive and welcoming community. As our organization and our ambitions grow, we need to find additional sources of income beyond membership dues. The time has come to seek endowment gifts to supplement our Pillar program. JHSSC's endowment fund will be housed in the College of Charleston Foundation and will provide support in perpetuity. If you are interested in becoming a Pillar, or in helping to build our endowment, including legacy giving, please let me know. I am very good at protecting confidences. On a personal note, I was fortunate to know Mimi and Harvey Gleberman (obm), co-founders of J. H. Harvey, a retail furniture chain in the Northeast, who retired to Spring Island, South Carolina, from their home outside New York

City. Mimi and Harvey were wonderful people—gracious, benevolent, gentle, and warm. Wanting to engage with their adopted community, they were among JHSSC's first Pillars. Harvey and Mimi both passed away in 2003. Their son Joseph recently surprised us with a substantial gift in their memory to begin JHSSC's endowment. Generosity runs in the family. Many thanks!

# Pillars

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Susan and Charles Altman, Charleston, SC Ellen Arnovitz, Atlanta, GA Doris L. Baumgarten, Aiken, SC Betty Brody, Coral Gables, FL Harold Brody, Atlanta, GA Alex and Dyan Cohen, Darlington, SC Barry and Ellen Draisen, Anderson, SC David and Andrea Draisen, Anderson, SC Bruce and Lilly Filler, Columbia, SC Harold I. Fox, Charleston, SC Steven J. Gold, Greenville, SC Judith Green, Charleston, SC Stuart and Rebecca Greenberg, Florence, SC Max and Ann Meddin Hellman, Charleston, SC Alan and Charlotte Kahn, Columbia, SC Sue and Jerry Kline, Columbia, SC Michael S. Kogan, Charleston, SC Ronald Krancer, Bryn Mawr, PA Allan and Jeanne Lieberman, Charleston, SC Susan R. Lourie, Columbia, SC Susan Pearlstine, Charleston, SC Andrew Poliakoff, Spartanburg, SC Edward and Sandra Poliakoff, Columbia, SC Alan and Anne Revner, Columbia, SC Benedict and Brenda Rosen, Myrtle Beach, SC Jeffrey and Mickey Rosenblum, Charleston, SC Sandra Lee Rosenblum, Charleston, SC Joseph and Edie Rubin, Charleston, SC Larry Simon, Isle of Palms, SC Mark and Gayle Sloan, Myrtle Beach, SC Richard Stern, Boston, MA Raphael Wolpert, Tampa, FL Anita Zucker, Charleston, SC

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THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

> College of Charleston Charleston, SC 29424

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| Address: |               |
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#### ANNUAL DUES FOR 2017 (JANUARY-DECEMBER)

| <br>Individual/Family Membership | \$36    |
|----------------------------------|---------|
| <br>Friend                       | \$200   |
| <br>Institutional                | \$250   |
| <br>Sponsor                      | \$350   |
| <br>Patron                       | \$750   |
| <br>Founding patron              | \$1,000 |
|                                  |         |

Pillar (\$1,000 per year for 5 years) \$5,000 Foundational Pillar (\$2,000 per year for 5 years) \$10,000

Join or renew online at jhssc.org.

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

Make checks payable to JHSSC and mail to the address above.

Register now for the May 20-21 meeting in Charleston and Summerville. See page 11 for more information.

# Register now for THE fall meeting at JEWISH Hobcaw Barony HISTORICAL Georgetown Society of SOUTH CAROLINA

**KANNE** 

Volume XXII Number 2 Fall 2017

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14-15,

2017



SOUTH CAROLINA

Dale Rosengarten editor Alyssa Neely assistant editor and designer

The IHSSC newsletter is published twice a year.

Current and back issues can be found at *ihssc.org* 

On the cover: Getting ready for the hunt at Hobcaw Barony, ca. 1907. Bernard Baruch is seen mounted with daughter Renee on the saddle in front of him; Bernard's father, Dr. Simon Baruch, is crouched in the center; Edwin W. Kaminski, is standing, far right; in the right foreground, kneeling, is Hobcaw superintendant Harry Donaldson. Courtesy of the Belle W. Baruch Foundation, Hobcaw Barony.

# In this issue

The Baruchs of Hobcaw Barony ~ Alyssa Neely and Dale Rosengarten ~ In 1905 Camdenborn Bernard Mannes Baruch began piecing together a 16,000-acre coastal estate just north of Georgetown to use as a winter residence and hunting retreat. His daughter Belle Wilcox Baruch acquired Hobcaw Barony from her father; at her death in 1964, her will created a foundation to 

The Kaminskis of Georgetown ~ Alyssa Neely and Dale Rosengarten ~ Heiman Kaminski immigrated to South Carolina, from Posen, Prussia, in 1854. After serving in the Confederate Army he settled in Georgetown and went into business. His enterprises soon included a hardware store, medical dispensary, boat and oar company, steamship line, the Bank of Georgetown, and the 

"Between the Waters" ~ JHSSC meets at Hobcaw Barony & Georgetown, Oct. 14–15, 2017......8

The Rosen Family: Good Citizenship 101 ~ Benedict Rosen ~ From modest mercantile beginnings, members of the Rosen family have risen to high positions in law, politics, and business, 

Albert & Sons: The Schneiders of Georgetown ~ Deborah Schneider Smith ~ Albert Schneider founded a business that became one of the Southeast's biggest department stores, specializing in appliances. Two of his sons joined him in The New Store, and a third went into law and politics. The author recounts the ease with which the family—and all of Georgetown's Jews bridged social and spiritual boundaries.....11

The Fogels of Front Street ~ George Sidney Fogel ~ Young dry goods merchant Harry Fogel built a small empire on Front Street, including a clothing store, a 50-room hotel, and the original River Room restaurant. The second generation outstripped their parents in schooling, and the 

Ebb and Flow: Georgetown's Jewish History ~ Martin Perlmutter ~ Georgetown boasts an old and important Jewish community whose population began to dwindle in the second half of the 

#### Jewish History Exhibit to Open at Temple Sinai in Sumter

Big plans are underway in Sumter. Temple Sinai, the Reform Jewish congregation, has entered into a new partnership with the Sumter County Museum. Over the years, dwindling membership has prompted temple leaders to consider plans for new uses of the historic sanctuary, should the day come when the congregation is no longer viable. The project is spearheaded by Roger Ackerman and Jay Schwartz, with the members' support.

In this new partnership, the congregation will continue to use the sanctuary for Friday night and holiday services, and the museum will take over the adjoining social hall to create a permanent exhibition, expected to open in early 2018. The exhibit will feature displays about Jewish history in South Carolina and Sumter, with a prominent section on the Holocaust and Sumter's ties to this unprecedented tragedy.

We are seeking objects about Sumter Jewish families and community life for the exhibition. Financial donations to the project are always welcome! Please visit our FAQ page, linked from the museum's homepage, www.sumtercountymuseum.org. Feel free to contact us by email or phone: Executive Director Annie Rivers, arivers@ sumtercountymuseum.org; Education & Outreach Coordinator Elizabeth Moses, emoses@ sumtercountymuseum.org; Tel. 803-775-0908.



FALL 2017

president of the Jewish Historical Society for the past two years. As you might

roots while living for 41 years in Washington, D.C., has been challenging. Leading the Society has helped me to stay connected and renew ties to "home." I have enjoyed working with many interesting, accomplished people among the membership, board, and staff to produce conferences on topics that are important to me, including southern Jews and civil rights, Greenville's urban planning guru Mayor Max Heller, and most recently, the merchants of King Street and Summerville, who mirror my own families' experiences in retail.

Over the past few months we have been working towards a smooth transition as Marty Perlmutter, JHSSC's founding executive director and maven of all things Jewish at the College of Charleston, retires at the end of the Spring 2018 semester. A recent "reset" of our nominating committee assures that we will have rich human resources to draw upon and greater geographic diversity. While our ongoing initiatives continue apaceincluding oral history interviews, historical markers, website, and cemetery survey-in May we inaugurated a new project to document Jewish "store stories" across South Carolina. All of it is made possible by a steady increase in membership, which just topped 500, and the generosity of our 38 pillars.

Our Spring 2017 meeting, "The 'Kingdom of Israel' in this Town": Jewish Merchants of Charleston and Summerville," began with informationpacked walking tours along King Street led by historian and archivist Harlan



**IHSSC unveiled a new historic marker** on Central Avenue in Summerville on May 21, 2017. Photo by Laura Moses.

#### **SLATE OF OFFICERS FOR** 2018-2019

**President** Jeffrey Rosenblum, Charleston, SC **VP Fundraising and Membership** Steve Savitz, Columbia, SC **VP Archives and Historical Sites** Alan Reyner, Columbia, SC

David J. Cohen, Charleston, SC **Secretary** Garry Baum, Columbia, SC Archivist Sandra Lee Rosenblum, Charleston, SC

Greene and board member Rhetta Mendelsohn. Next, College invited to visit the Kaminski House, Rice Museum, and Kaminski of Charleston business professor Steve Litvin described how Hardware, for a total immersion in local history. King Street has evolved into an upscale retail and restaurant While I am stepping down as president, I look forward to continuing to work with JHSSC and nurturing my friendships district. Harlan, Shari Rabin, and Dale Rosengarten presented a preview of *Mapping Jewish Charleston*, which traces the Jewish with you all. Ernest L. Marcus geography of the city over three centuries. Panels featuring long-



# Letter from the President

As I close out my term, I want to thank time King Street merchants and representatives of Charleston's burgeoning food scene rounded out the day.

Visiting Summerville's vital, historic downtown on Sunday was an eye-opener for most of us. Hats off to the Summerville/ imagine, holding on to my South Carolina Dorchester Museum, and to Robyn Wittenberg Dudley

**VP Education and Publications** Lilly Stern Filler, Columbia, SC

Treasurer

and Spencer Lynch, who organized a full afternoon of activities, including the dedication of a historic marker on Central Avenue, a remarkable panel of merchants and customers, tours of Jewish heritage sites and homes, and High Tea at the former residence of philanthropist Saul Alexander.

Our Fall 2017 conference takes us to Hobcaw Barony and Georgetown on October 14 and 15. Hobcaw-an Indian word meaning "between the waters"-was the winter retreat of Bernard Baruch. Born in Camden, South Carolina, Baruch made millions on Wall Street and gained renown as advisor to presidents from Woodrow Wilson through Harry Truman. On Hobcaw's sprawling 16,000 acres, he and his daughter Belle hosted such luminaries as Winston

Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt. We will spend Saturday touring the property, now a world-class center of marine biology and forestry research, and listening to Lee Brockington, senior interpreter at Hobcaw, and the SCETV team that created the award-winning Between the Waters website.

On Sunday the meeting will convene at Temple Beth Elohim in Georgetown, third oldest town in South Carolina and the second (after Charleston) where Jews settled. Dale will present a virtual tour "From First Families to Front Street," followed by a panel discussion including the children of former Front Street merchants, as well as several of the newcomers who have revitalized the congregation, which now numbers more than 40 families. After lunch attendees are

# The Baruchs of Hobcaw Barony

"In this hectic age of distraction, all of us need to pause every now and then in what we are doing to examine where the rush of the world and of our own activities is taking us. Even an hour or two spent in such detached contemplation on a park bench will prove rewarding. . . . I naturally grasped the opportunity that came to me in 1905 to acquire a veritable Shangri-La in my native South Carolina—famed Hobcaw Barony, whose sandy beaches and salt marshes once offered the finest duck hunting in the United States, with four rivers and a bay abounding in fish; vast stretches of almost primeval forest, and—no telephone."

> BERNARO M. BARUCH III BROADWAY NEW YORK

I have your latter of the 5th inst. and shall keep you in mind.

Very truly yours,

It is my intention to patronize as much as possible local interests. I only hope that the local interests will be as friendly disposed towards me as I

-Bernard M. Baruch

#### by Alyssa Neely and Dale Rosengarten

"I always observed the Jewish holy days—as I still do. My wife attended her own church. . . . We agreed that our two daughters, Belle, who was born in 1899, and Renee, who was born in 1905, should be baptized and brought up in the faith of their mother. With my son, we decided to let him make his own choice of religion when he grew up." —Bernard M. Baruch

Isabelle Wolfe

Bernard Baruch, presented with a portrait of his father, Dr. Simon Baruch, by the artist, Irwin Sussman, 1953



Bernard Baruch, ca 1946

"One reason I established a second home in the South was that my mother had asked me not to lose touch with the land of my forebears. She also had urged me to try to contribute to its regeneration and, in particular, to 'do something for the Negro.'"

—Bernard M. Baruch

Bernard M. Baruch was very much a self-made man, intent on controlling his image in both pictures and words. His three quotes above come from the

first volume of his autobiography, Baruch: My Own Story, 1957.

Georgetown,

Sir:-

C. L. Ford & Sons, 713 Front Street, Georgetown, SC, sold groceries first, with many of its suppliers and customers arriving at the building's back door by boat on the Sampit River. In the early 1930s, the business expanded into the space next door at 711 Front Street, adding hardware and marine to the inventory. "A large part of the business was with plantation owners. Mr. Ford was given credit for enticing many northern capitalists to this area. It was not unusual to see the Huntingtons, Vanderbilts, Emersons, Baruchs, or DuPonts come through the store."

> -A Walk Down Front Street, published by Georgetown County Historical Society, November 2011.

Charleston, unless otherwise noted.

"Belle identified strongly with the Baruch side of the family and felt great inner peace and a sense of rightness when she prayed with her Jewish relatives. Although raised an Episcopalian, Belle occasionally attended synagogue with her devout Jewish grandmother. She especially loved to spend Sabbath eve at her grandparents' home. Her eyes would fill with tears at the lighting of the Sabbath candles, and she loved to hear Grandfather Baruch speak the ritual blessings in Hebrew."

—Baroness of Hobcaw: The Life of Belle W. Baruch, by Mary E. Miller, 2006.



Love letters written by Hartwig Baruch, Sr., Bernard's Baruch's brother, to his future wife, Arline Lennox, 1915



Courtesy of the Belle W. Baruch Foundation, Hobcaw Barony,

PAGE 6 JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

"Heiman Kaminski arrived in Georgetown at the age of twenty-six with two silver

dollars in his pocket, destined to become not merely the most important man in Georgetown Jewry in the late nineteenth century, but perhaps the most important man in all of Georgetown."

# The Kaminskis of Georgetown

#### by Alyssa Neely and Dale Rosengarten

"Heiman and his first wife Charlotte Emanuel had four children: Edwin, Nathan, Joseph, and Linah. Charlotte contracted tuberculosis, and during her illness the family summered on an estate along the Hudson River. After Charlotte's death in 1880, the family continued their tradition of summering in New years after Charlotte's death,

York. Five years after Charlotte's death, Heiman married Rose Baum (1861–1937). Their only child, a son, Harold, was born February 24, 1886."

-from Kaminski House Museum brochure, published by The Creative Company, 1996. "The rise of Heiman Kaminski is nicely summarized in the terse credit reports of the R. G. Dun Company.... In 1867, the Dun reporter described Kaminski as 'prompt'. By 1870 he pronounced Kaminski's credit 'excellent'. In 1871 he described him as being of 'excellent character and credit'. The following year he wrote that Kaminski was 'believed to be getting rich'. By 1875 his report only said 'rich."

Stear & and Fair and and and and and and

"The marriage of Heiman and Rose Kaminski's son Harold to Julia Pyatt marked the first intermarriage between Georgetown's Jewish community and Georgetown's old plantation aristocracy. There is no way to ascertain whether the two families supported or opposed the young people's choice. But there is a way to tell what Georgetonians in general thought of it. Shortly thereafter, they elected Harold Kaminski to be their mayor."

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-Quotes, except where otherwise noted, are from "A Community of Memory: Assimilation and Identity among the Jews of Georgetown" in Shared Traditions: Southern History and Folk Culture, by

Charles Joyner, 1999.

Bible, 1805, of Isaac Gomez, Jr., great-grandfather of Charlotte Emanuel Kaminski Images courtesy of Special Collections, College of Charleston, unless otherwise noted.

ardware CE



PAGE 8 **JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH CAROLINA** 

# "Between the Waters"

#### October 14–15, 2017 | Hobcaw Barony and Georgetown, South Carolina

#### Saturday, October 14 ~ Hobcaw Barony

| 9:00 а.м.          | Discovery Center at Hobcaw Barony opens, 22 Hobcaw Road, Georgetown  |
|--------------------|--|
| 10:30              | Shuttle service begins to Hobcaw House from Clemson's Belle W. Baruch Institute of Coastal Ecology and Forest Science, 177 Hobcaw Road (parking location)                              |
| 11:00              | Registration at Hobcaw House   |
| 11:30 – 12:15 р.м. | Box lunch  |
| 12:15 - 1:00       | <b>Native Americans to Native New Yorker, Hobcaw Barony From 6000 BCE–1964</b><br>presentation by Lee G. Brockington, Senior Interpreter, Hobcaw Barony                                |
| 1:00 - 3:00        | Bus tour of Hobcaw property  |
| 3:15 - 4:30        | <b>Between the Waters</b> – presentation by Betsy Newman, SCETV producer, and Patrick Hayes,<br>Hayes Media, Clemson's Belle W. Baruch Institute of Coastal Ecology and Forest Science |
| 4:30 - 6:00        | Reception at Clemson facility  |
|                    | Dinner on your own   |

#### Sunday, October 15 ~ Georgetown

|                    | Saturday morning events and lunch will take place at Temple Beth Elohim, 230 Screven Street.   |
|--------------------|--|
| 9:00 - 10:30 а.м.  | Open JHSSC board meeting – everyone is invited!  |
| 10:30 - 11:15      | <b>From First Families to Front Street</b> – presentation by Dale Rosengarten, curator and historian, Special Collections, College of Charleston   |
| 11:30 – 12:30 р.м. | Making Their Mark on Georgetown – panel discussion<br>Moderator: Elizabeth Moses<br>Panelists: Marilyn Abrams Friedman, Richard Dimentstein, George S. Fogel, Roz Goldstein Greenspon,<br>Nathan (Kim) Kaminski, Jr., Benedict (Dick) Rosen, Deborah Schneider Smith, Gene Vinik |
| 12:30              | Box lunch  |
| 1:15               | Tour of Marcia and Nathan Kaminski's house, 622 Highmarket Street  |
| 2:00 - 4:30        | Tours (each tour is approx. one hour; locations have requested no more than 25 people per hour):<br>Kaminski House Museum, 1003 Front Street   |
|                    | Rice Museum and Kaminski Hardware Store, 633 Front Street  |

**Hotel reservations** 

Hampton Inn Georgetown Marina 420 Marina Drive, Georgetown, SC 29440 (843) 545-5000

*Special rate:* \$109 per night + tax

To get the special rate, make your reservation by September 20 and mention the group name, "JHSSC."

#### **Meeting registration**

Online at: jhssc.org/events/upcoming OR with Visa, MasterCard, Discover, or American Express

By check, payable to **JHSSC** c/o Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program – 96 Wentworth Street, Charleston, SC 29424

Meeting fee: \$50 per person

Questions: Enid Idelsohn, idelsohne@cofc.edu Phone: (843) 953-3918 ~ fax: (843) 953-7624



# The Rosen Family: Good Citizenship 101 by Benedict (Dick) Rosen

VOLUME XXII ~ NUMBER 2

1887 when my great-grandmother Sallie Weinberg Lewenthal, and her husband, Philip Lewenthal, relocated from Darlington, South Carolina. Sallie opened a store on Front Street selling baked goods, china, fine linens, and other merchandise. Within a few years she had built a brick building adjacent to the bakery for Dr. Myre S. Iseman's drugstore.

FALL 2017

Born in Prussia, Philip and Sallie Lewenthal had four children: three in quick succession-Fannie, my grandmother Dora, and their brother Isaac-followed by another boy, Benedict, 11 years Sallie Weinberg later. Fannie and Dora both attended Salem College, a Lewenthal, the liberal arts women's college in Winston-Salem, North author's great-Carolina, founded as a primary school in 1772. The grandmother. sisters married two gentlemen from New York: Dora married Harry Nathan Rosen and Fannie married Albert Schneider. The brothers-in-law started The New Store in Georgetown in the 1920s, initially selling men's and ladies' clothing, and later furniture and appliances.

Fannie and Albert Schneider had three sons; two went into the business and one became an attorney. My grandparents Dora and Harry Rosen had two sons, Sylvan, born in 1913, and Meyer,



born in 1919. Both became attorneys, both served in political My family's history in Georgetown begins around office, and each was awarded the Order of the Palmetto, South Carolina's top civilian honor.

> My dad, Sylvan, married Erma Levkoff in Columbia, South Carolina, in 1935, when he was in law school. Her brother Irving Levkoff was a classmate. The couple moved to Georgetown in 1936, soon after I was born. Sylvan started his law practice that same year, and my younger brother, Larry, was born a year and a half later.

Growing up, Larry and I attended religious services in the Winyah Indigo Society Hall. We had no synagogue until Temple Beth Elohim's sanctuary was dedicated in 1950. We had religious school in people's homes and later in the synagogue. I was the first bar mitzvah in Georgetown that anyone remembered. My brother and I had many friends but no Jewish friends.

We were not aware of any anti-Semitism in Georgetown-that was true for our parents as well as for us. I remember spending Jewish holidays with my grandparents and parents.

Our father was considered to be an excellent lawyer and well respected in Georgetown. First elected mayor in 1948, he served 13 years. Georgetown was struggling financially when he took office-the seventh Jewish mayor in Georgetown's history—and he led the city through difficult times. As mayor he was responsible for annexing the neighboring community of Maryville; as a member of the development board he was instrumental in bringing the steel mill to Georgetown.

Sylvan later served as head of the highway commission and was county attorney for more than 40 years. He was the go-to person for many people, sought after for his advice and leadership. He raised funds for the state's United Jewish Appeal (UJA)

> Abe Fogel (1) and Svlvan Rosen. **Courtesy** of George S. Fogel.
### Page 10 Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina

and served as president of the South Carolina Association of B'nai B'rith and of Georgetown's Temple Beth Elohim. The year of his death, the bridges over the Sampit River as you enter Georgetown from the south were named for him.

My mother, Erma, was also very active in the community. She started the Red Cross blood drive, headed the program for many years, and was honored as the organization's "woman of the year." She worked hard for the temple and served as president of its Sisterhood.

Meyer joined Sylvan's A law practice soon after World War II and they remained partners until Dad died in 1996. The law firm Rosen & Rosen was considered to be first-rate.

Meyer married Lillian Rubin and they had three children—Mark, Phyllis, and Beverly. From 1963 to '66 Meyer served in the South Carolina House of Representatives and was always well thought of. He is still around at age 97 and his daughter Beverly makes sure he is well cared for in an assisted living home in Charleston.

Beverly works for MUSC in Charleston and

Mark with Blue Cross Blue Shield. Phyllis is retired from the<br/>IRS and lives in Chicago with her husband and son, Nathan.Jewish causes, and we in turn have been supporters of Temple<br/>Emanu-El in Myrtle Beach, as well as Temple Beth Elohim in

My brother, Larry, lives in Austin, Texas, with his wife, Roberta, an educator. After moving to Austin more than 30



Hanukkah, 1950, at Beth Elohim, Georgetown, SC. Left to right, back row: Roslyn Goldstein, Brenda Bodian, Dickie Rosen, Leffy Schneider, Sandra Abrams, Larry Rosen; middle: Susan Baker, Steven Goldstein, Tad Fogel, Alicia Gardner, Sammy Abrams; front: Robert Schneider, Susan Schneider, Marilyn Abrams, Sarah Ellen Baker, and Michael Schwartz.

#### Images courtesy of Special Collections, College of Charleston, unless otherwise noted.

Three generations of the Rosen family gathered in November 1995 for the dedication of the new bridge crossing the Sampit River, named in honor of former Georgetown mayor Sylvan Rosen, seen here standing beneath the sign, flanked by sons Larry and Benedict.



Emanu-El in Myrtle Beach, as well as Temple Beth Elohim in Georgetown. We feel this is important and what our parents would have wanted.

school for children who needed help. When he retired as an accountant, Larry went to work with his wife in their school. They have two daughters, one in the Peace Corps and one in education in Charlotte, North Carolina. Each has one daughter.

years ago they opened a

My wife, Brenda, and I live in Myrtle Beach. In 2000 I retired as CEO of AVX Corporation and officer of Kyocera, a Japanese company that produces electronic components and other products. I continue to serve on the boards of Brookgreen Gardens and the Belle W. Baruch Foundation Trust, as well as the mortgage company of Carolina Financial Corp.

With three children and six grandchildren, we recently attended our 12<sup>th</sup> college graduation, including three graduate degrees.

Brenda has been very active in Myrtle Beach, working for years with Belk, serving on many committees at the Dunes Club and other volunteer boards, and taking superb care of my parents in their last years.

Brenda was born in Haverhill, Massachusetts, to Rose and Joe Wekstein from Russia and Poland. She and I both grew up in families who were advocates of

### Albert & Sons: The Schneiders of Georgetown by Deborah Schneider Smith

My grandfather Albert Max Schneider arrived in Georgetown around 1906 at the invitation of J. M. Ringel, who asked him to clerk at one of Ringel's several department stores on Front Street. Albert had come to the United States

from Russia at the age of seven, arriving in New York in 1892. The family settled first in Brooklyn, and even after moving to South Carolina the younger generation continued to spend summers in New York. Albert went south as early as 1902; family lore claims he worked his way to Charleston on a ship. Whether arriving as passenger or crew, he first worked as a cotton mill clerk in Summerton and then for a Charleston merchant, before being recruited by Ringel.



The Joseph H. Rainey House, 909 Prince Street, Georgetown, SC, now a National Historic Landmark, was home to the Schneider family from 1906 to 1969.

*Everybody worked for Mr. Ringel when they first came to Georgetown*....[I]*f they needed a job and they were Jewish, he would give them a job*....*Jewish merchants would get the young men to come to work for them*...[*because*] *anybody that had anybody that had* 

daughters wanted to make sure that they'd marry a Jewish man. —Philip Schneider, 1995 \*

On New Year's Eve, 1910, Albert married Fannie Lewenthal of Darlington, South Carolina. In 1911 they opened Hyman-Schneider Co., a dry goods store on Front Street, with help from Fannie's uncle Abe Hyman, who provided a letter of credit. The story goes that the first month or two, when they totaled up the receipts, there were healthy profits. Albert



goes that the first month or two, when they totaled up the receipts, there were healthy profits. Albert Dorothy Schneider, and Cecil, Harold, and Philip Schneider. The Schneider family celebrated Albert and Fannie's 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in 1960 at Temple Beth Elohim, Georgetown, SC. Left to High Holidays the virtually "shut down." For a time in



with their father, and the youngest—my father, Cecil would become an attorney. The Schneiders purchased a house on Prince Street that had been the home of Joseph Rainey, the first black man elected to the U.S. Congress, now a National Historic Landmark owned by the Camlin family.

The business grew into adjacent buildings and was renamed The New Store. Expanding into appliances and furniture, adding more locations, it became one of the

> they sold Zenith farm radios: they made the sale, cut poles, dug holes, and ran wires, all for \$39.50.

In the 1930s all the Front Street merchants stayed open late on Saturday nights for shoppers from as far away as Awendaw, 40 miles down the coast. Bar mitzvah-age boys studied Hebrew in the back of Alwyn Goldstein's shop on Sundays. So many stores were Jewish-owned, on the High Holidays the town virtually "shut down."

rold, and Philip Schneider. For a time in the 1950s, the Schneiders endeavored to sell the first home e microwave ovens, which were the size of a modern dishwasher.
New Store employees would demonstrate them in the main

<sup>\*</sup> Philip Schneider and Alwyn Goldstein, audio interview by Dale Rosengarten, 30 January 1995, Mss. 1035-004, Special Collections, College of Charleston. Audio and transcript available online at: http:// lcdl.library.cofc.edu/lcdl/catalog/lcdl:11802

window. A former employee recalls the staff sitting in the big display windows to watch the annual Christmas parade. Many Georgetonians saw their first TV shows through those windows as they gathered there on summer evenings. I recall my fascination with the colorful straw hats for sale and the

Cecil Schneider's wartime portrait; Schneider with his JAG Corps colleagues in Switzerland at the end of World War II.

huge back doors open to the wharf. My brother, Michael, and Harold Schneider's son, Robert, have vivid memories of Albert drawing advertisements on the sidewalk in the summer, a white handkerchief tied around his neck. On the front window he painted, "If you take my money, you take trash. If you take my good name, you take all."

In the 1960s the store consolidated at 730–733 Front Street. Albert remained active until his death in 1967. Harold and Philip finally closed the store in 1988, at the time, the oldest continually operating business in town.

Albert is remembered as a leader at Temple Beth Elohim, exerting his influence over the visiting rabbi from Charleston, Allan Tarshish (1907-1982). If a High Holiday service ran long, Albert would rise, walk in front of the bimah to a window, and gaze out-his sign that it was time to wrap up.

Grampa Albert certainly fancied himself master of his universe. He decided to bulldoze the dunes in front of the family's two-story house on Pawley's Island so they would have a better ocean view. New walkways were then built to the beach. My cousin Robert recalls: "The same year the dunes were bulldozed, Hurricane Hazel struck. We came to see the house after the storm. The house had become one story, and the downstairs was covered in sand and water. The lower level was never used again except to accommodate a ringer washing machine."

In our parents' and our generation, social and spiritual life was thoroughly interdenominational. Catholic children came to Purim parties and I sang in the Episcopal Junior Choir. Michael is notorious among his Episcopal childhood friends for his performance during a children's program at Prince George's. Reverend Irwin Hulbert asked the assembled youngsters, "Who can tell me about Jesus?" Six-year-old Michael's hand shot up. He stood and proudly stated, "My daddy says, Jesus was a Jew!" Amidst giggles from his friends, Rev. Hulbert said, "That's right, Michael. You may be seated."

A final word about the son who didn't go into the family business. When my father, Cecil, returned from World War II, he opened a law office on Front Street. A typical smalltown lawyer, he handled a variety of cases for all sorts of people, many of whom brought payment to our house in the form of vegetables or freshly caught fish.

For 30 years, until his death at the age of 61, Cecil was a bulwark of Georgetown's civic life, serving 24 years on city council and two terms as mayor pro-tem. If not for

failing health in early 1977, he might have been the eighth Jewish mayor of Georgetown. He was the youngest circuit judge in the state's history, chaired the Winyah Indigo Society, and became the president of Temple Beth Elohim in 1948, as the congregation prepared to build its first synagogue.

Two of Albert's seven grandchildren now live in Georgetown County. I am happy to be one of them, to visit the revived temple, and to share memories with old friends and new.

Cecil Schneider presiding over a Hanukkah service at Temple Beth Elohim, Georgetown, SC, 1961.



### The Fogels of Front Street by George Sidney Fogel

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The history of the Fogel family in Georgetown, South L Carolina, begins with Harry Fogel, who emigrated in 1900 from the Austro-Hungarian province Galicia in what is today's Poland. By 1904 Harry was in Georgetown operating a dry goods business. The woman who would become his wife, Clara Hepler, emigrated from Odessa, Russia, in 1905, arriving first in Charleston, South Carolina, where her family was in the jewelry business. On November 19, 1908, a



Abe had joined the U.S. Navy in the late 1930s and was on active duty with Fleet small blurb in Georgetown's Daily Item Air Wing 8 when the United noted: "Mr. Harry Fogel, a young States declared war in 1941. dry goods merchant of this city, is in He told of being shipped Charleston, and will be married this to Pearl Harbor in the first evening at 8 o'clock to Miss Clara convoy, arriving a few days after the Hepler of that city. Accept the *Daily* attack, only to have his group ordered Item's congratulations, Harry." back to California. He served the rest By 1920 Harry and Clara had of the war in the Pacific Theater, three children: Beatrice, age ten; primarily in New Guinea and Abraham, age six; and Ruby, age the Philippines. Harry Fogel's four. Interestingly, the census also relatives in Europe all were killed reports living in the home one by the Nazis, except for one Isadora Hufflin, age 22, who had cousin who survived and later emigrated from Austria in 1910. moved to Palestine. Harry The Fogel family store himself did not outlive the war. He occupied three different died on April 28, 1943, soon after learning locations during its years on Front of his sister's death. Ruby and Abe both said that he died of a broken heart.

Street, and by the 1930s had moved to the 800 block in the front of the Standard Opera House. The Opera House had Beatrice and Fred managed the store been built in 1894 after a fire destroyed part of the downtown during the war years. Afterwards the area. In 1932 the building burned to the ground and Harry lost family reaped the benefit of Georgetown's everything; however, he was able to buy the land and erect a new bountiful postwar economy, fueled in building that housed the clothing store and the Lafayette Hotel. part by the opening of International From 22 rooms, the hotel, renamed Prince George Hotel, was Paper's Kraft Paper Mill—the largest in expanded in 1950 to 50 rooms in a renovation that added a third the world—in 1936. floor and the original River Room Restaurant. On March 29, 1941, Abe married The 1940 census recorded Harry, Clara, their children— Elizabeth (Bette) Rose Greenwald now young adults—and Bea's husband, Fred, all living in a from Baltimore. Their eldest son, house on Broad Street. All family members were employed by Harry Robert Fogel (Tad), was born the store and hotel. Fred was from the Bronx, New York, and on May 4, 1944-Abe met him for the first time when Tad was 18 According to the census, Harry had a fifth-grade months old. Mustering out of active

had arrived in Georgetown about 1935.

education and Clara had completed seventh grade, but their duty in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1945, Abe offspring outstripped them in schooling. Abraham and Ruby returned to Georgetown but remained in the navy reserves and both graduated from college, while sister Bea had two years of sometime in the 1950s attained the rank of full commander. college to her credit. Abe attended The Citadel in Charleston, This page, clockwise from left: Fred and Bea Fogel Kaufman, but transferred to University of South Carolina when he broke Abe Fogel and his father Harry; Clara Hepler Fogel; Ruby Fogel Levkoff. his leg in his junior year and was not able to drill with his

class. He graduated from USC in 1935; Ruby graduated from Duke University, where she was voted class poet; and Bea attended Brenau College in Gainesville, Georgia, graduating in 1929.

#### PAGE 14 **JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH CAROLINA**

and was a copy writer in New York when she met Jack Levkoff, who worked as a controller at Macy's. Their two Jewish mothers in Georgetown had set them up: Ruby's mother, from an early age. He worked at the local station WGTN and, Clara, planned it with Jack's mother, Sophie, who had moved after attending the University of South Carolina, moved to

to Georgetown after the death of her husband, Lazarus Levkoff, to be near her daughter Dorothy (Dot) Levkoff Schneider (Mrs. Phillip Schneider). With their children both in New York City, the mothers conspired with some cousins to arrange a blind date! Ruby and Jack were married in 1947.

Ruby continued her writing career with some acclaim. A collection of her poetry titled Of Apes and Angels was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in 1966, and two years later one of her poems received the James Joyce Award from the Poetry Society of America.

Jack and Ruby's two daughters, Lizabeth and Mary, were born in Miami Beach: Jack's career in retailing and later in financial analysis had taken the couple first to Birmingham, Alabama, and then to Florida. The family returned to visit Georgetown over the years, their trips immortalized in Ruby's poem "Perhaps Some History." Ruby inherited Harry's

store building at the corner of Front and Broad, which was rebuilt in a low, modern style after a devastating fire. Her daughters eventually sold the property, along with the house on Broad Street where Ruby was born. Bea had inherited the Fogels' larger house on Prince Street.

Ruby's daughters would enjoy success: Liz with remarkable innovations in real estate that enabled her to retire at the age of 40 and fulfill her dream of living in Jerusalem, and Mary in the world of museums. A specialist in French Renaissance art, Mary Levkoff also wrote books on Auguste Rodin and William Randolph Hearst. In 2014 she left her job as sculpture and decorative arts department head

Ruby enrolled in graduate school at Columbia University at the National Gallery of Art to become museum director of the Hearst Castle in San Simeon, California.

Bette and Abe's son Tad was interested in radio broadcasting



1944, stationed with the U.S. Navy amphibious forces in New Guinea.

Below: Abe Fogel (1) with Bernard Baruch in the lobby of the Prince George Hotel. Photo by W. H. Burney of Georgetown.



Miami and worked in radio there until later returning to Georgetown. He and Abe purchased local station WGOO and went on the air on May 1, 1967, having changed the call sign to WINH. In September 1971, keeping up with the times, they added an FM station. Tad was elected president of the South Carolina Broadcaster's Association (1973-74) and in 2001 was inducted into the Broadcaster's Hall of Fame. The stations were sold in 1984. Tad now lives in Brevard, North Carolina; he has four daughters, one in Virginia, one in Texas, and two in Columbia, South Carolina.

Born in 1955, I was Bette and Abe's second son. Growing up I worked in the store and assumed management in the late 1970s. In the mid '80s the family decided it was time to close the business. Competition from outlet stores in Myrtle Beach, a general economic downturn, and changes in regional and national market conditions

eroded the viability of small retailers, even before the advent of online shopping. Today there are few family-owned department stores in the South.

I switched careers: at 42 years old, I became a freshman at Coastal Carolina, then earned a master's degree in counseling at Webster University and started work as a mental health therapist—the only Fogel remaining in Georgetown to this day. My wife and I have four children, a daughter who is a veterinarian, a daughter in the master's program of social work at USC, a son in retail management in Summerville, and a son in the hospitality industry in Washington State.

All photos courtesy of George Fogel.



### Ebb and Flow: Georgetown's Jewish History by Martin Perlmutter

The Jewish community of Georgetown is a fascinating study of **L** the old and the new—an historically important population that dwindled in the past half-century and is now in the early stages of renaissance. Temple Beth Elohim mirrors the trajectory of Jewish life along the South Carolina coast and the upstate, as tourism, industry, and an influx of "snowbirds" have revitalized the economy and bolstered social and religious institutions. Traditional Jewish dry goods stores and groceries have disappeared from main streets across the state, but the Sunny South has become a destination for manufacturers of automobiles and jet planes, IT companies, and retirees. The Grand Strand has been a prime beneficiary of this latter contingent, attracted by the temperate climate, white sand beaches, golf courses, and modest property taxes.

Georgetown claims the second oldest Jewish population in South Carolina and a Jewish cemetery dating to 1772. By 1800 the town's 80 Jews made up roughly ten percent of the white population; over the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Georgetown elected seven Jewish mayors. In 1904, relatively late in the span of the town's Jewish history, Congregation Beth Elohim was established as a sister to Charleston's Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim. Having worshipped in homes and communal spaces such as the Winyah Indigo Society for nearly two centuries, Georgetown's Jews dedicated a synagogue in 1950 on the corner of Screven and Highmarket streets. Front Street was dotted with Jewish merchants.

In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, Beth Elohim's membership began an inexorable decline. In Georgetown, as in small towns across the nation, Jewish children came of age and pursued education and economic opportunities elsewhere. By the mid-1990s the dozen or fewer congregants who remained considered selling the temple and using the funds for cemetery maintenance. Still, a small group of "Elders" continued to hold services, and their loyalty was rewarded when, in 2001, Elizabeth Moses moved to Georgetown and led an effort to revive the congregation. She reached out to new residents of the Grand Strand and built the temple's membership, which today boasts 43 families, who hold regular Friday night services, have renovated the social hall, and take pride in the long history of Georgetown's Jewish life.

JHSSC has played a role in this transformation. Elizabeth was one of the Society's first employees (she also worked for the College's Jewish Heritage Collection and Jewish Studies Program); we began recording oral history interviews in Georgetown as early as 1995; and JHSSC met there in 2001, 2004, and 2009.

While our 500 dues-paying members provide essential support, we need Pillars—benefactors who contribute \$1,000 per year for five years-to sustain our ambitious projects. Become a Pillar and help keep the Society's engines humming!

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Make checks payable to JHSSC and mail to the address above.

Register now for the October 14-15 meeting at Hobcaw Barony and Georgetown. See page 8 for more information.

# THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY of SOUTH CAROLINA

Memory, Monuments, and Memorials

Register now for spring meeting in Charleston April 28-29, 2018

Volume XXIII Number 1 Spring 2018



Тне **J**EWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

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#### On the cover

Top: Slave cabin at Mansfield Plantation, Georgetown, SC. Photo by Nancy Santos, 2008.

Bottom: Crematorium at Buchenwald concentration camp, Germany. Photo by Raja-Léon Hamann, 2017.

### In this issue

Not Fully Human: Why Racists Are the Living Dead ~ Simon Lewis ~ During the Civil Rights Movement in the United States and the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa, Jewish activists made common cause with black people to battle racism and injustice. The author urges us to apply lessons from this history of solidarity to combat the current resurgence of white supremacists, who have grown bold enough to espouse their ideology in public and wear their inhumanity on their 

In the Shadow of John C. Calhoun ~ Herb Frazier ~ As an African-American boy growing up in Charleston, South Carolina, in the 1950s and '60s, the author learned not to trust "Mister Charlie." He recalls feeling the "creepy sneer" of John C. Calhoun bearing down on him while walking past the statue that still stands, a shrine for some, a relic for others, and for many, an archetype of 

Beholding the Past at Magnolia and Buchenwald ~ Raja-Léon Hamann ~ A young scholar steps outside his comfort zone with visits to both a southern plantation where Africans and African Americans were enslaved and a Nazi concentration camp. Gazing into the "abysses of human nature," Raja Hamann discovers invaluable lessons about himself and about history......7

Memory, Monuments, and Memorials ~ JHSSC meets in Charleston, April 28–29, 2018......9

To Honor the Survivors and Remember the Dead: Building a Memorial in Marion Square ~ David Popowski ~ A son of Holocaust survivors describes his parents' harrowing experiences during World War II and their immigration to Charleston in 1949. He recalls the spark, 45 years later, that ignited a five-year drive to honor survivors and memorialize those who had perished in the Shoah......10

To Teach the Children: Columbia's Holocaust Memorial ~ Lilly Stern Filler ~ The ambition of two Holocaust survivors to build a monument in their adopted city was realized through the efforts of their daughter and the greater Columbia community. The surplus of funds raised for the project led to the creation of the Columbia Holocaust Education Commission......12

Confronting Our Complex Past at Historic Sites ~ Robin Waites ~ Incorporating information about enslaved people in historic narratives and exhibits makes possible a more comprehensive view of the past that challenges conventional wisdom and invites meaningful dialogue......14

History Is Local ~ Martin Perlmutter ~ The Society's extraordinary success since its founding 24 years ago has been propelled by its members, its Pillars, and its ongoing relationship with the College of Charleston. Dr. Perlmutter may modestly downplay his effective leadership but all who know the story of the Society and Marty's role in marrying town and gown know that a visionary has been hard at work......15

#### Keynote Speaker: Michael Arad



Michael Arad's design for the National September 11 Memorial at the World Trade Center site, titled "Reflecting Absence," was chosen from among more than 5,000 entries submitted in an international competition held in 2003. He joined the New York firm Handel Architects as a partner in April 2004. A native of Israel, Mr. Arad was raised there, the U.K., the United States, and Mexico. He earned a B.A. from Dartmouth College (1994) and a Master of Architecture from the Georgia Institute of Technology (1999). In 2017, Mr. Arad was selected to design a memorial to the victims of the 2015 mass shooting at Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina. •



SPRING 2018

### Letter from the President

It is with great excitement that I Mother Emanuel AME in Charleston, will offer his reflections have assumed the presidency of the on "Facing Memory: The Past, the Present, and the Public." Jewish Historical Society of South Sunday's discussion will address issues surrounding the Carolina for the second time. My first presentation of "difficult history" at former slave labor presidency (2000–2001) occurred while plantations in the American South and Nazi concentration I was a practicing architect, 18 years and death camps in Europe.

ago. Now in my third year of retirement, I will have much Four times in the Society's history we have awarded more time to devote to activities that I enjoy, such as working individuals the Order of the Jewish Palmetto for outstanding with all of you to continue the Society's growth and maintain service to JHSSC and contributions to the field of southern Jewish its high standards of excellence. history. Senator Isadore Lourie, obm, was so honored in 2002 for his role in founding the Society and his service in the State Senate. JHSSC was conceived in 1993 when Isadore E. Lourie, obm, assembled a small group in Marty Perlmutter's office at Solomon (Solly) Breibart, obm, received the award in 2004 for the College of Charleston. Isadore has been duly credited as a lifetime devoted to studying and teaching American history,

the founder of the Society, but it was Marty's efforts, drive, and vision that built it into the powerhouse it is today. One cannot talk about the successes of the Society without acknowledging his hand on the tiller.

Over the past two-and-a-half decades, the organization has grown in many ways, most obviously in its professional staff. With Marty serving as executive director, Enid Idelsohn as administrator, Mark Swick as community liaison, Rachel Barnett as our new program director, and Dale Rosengarten and Alyssa Neely as editors of this magazine, we have a talented and dedicated team handling day-to-day activities.



The Jewish Merchants Project, under at the May 2, 2015 meeting in Charleston the direction of Rachel Barnett and where Ann was awarded the Order of the Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program Katharine Allen of Historic Columbia, Jewish Palmetto. Photo by Jeri Perlmutter. wholesale businesses.

At our meeting on April 28–29, 2018, JHSSC will partner with the College of Charleston's Carolina Lowcountry and Atlantic World and African American Studies programs, and the Charleston branch of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History to explore a topic that has caught the attention of the nation—public memory and memorialization. Saturday's panels will focus on how communities pay homage to loss, or raise high their heroes, in heavily politicized environments. Keynote speaker Michael Arad, the celebrated Israeli-American architect of the 9/11 memorial in Lower Manhattan, now designing a memorial at

Marty Perlmutter and Ann Meddin Hellman

Max Heller, obm, and Trude Schönthal Heller won in 2007—he for his innovative work as mayor of Greenville; she as an active Holocaust educator; and both for exemplifying the best of Jewish values through their civic involvement in their adopted home. Ann Meddin Hellman was awarded the Order in 2015 for her tireless efforts developing the Society's website and documenting and cataloguing Jewish burials across the state.

with an emphasis on the Jewish South.

PAGE

On Saturday evening, April 28, I look forward to presenting JHSSC's fifth "Order of the Jewish Palmetto" to Dr. Martin Perlmutter for his leadership of the Society and his accomplishments at the College of Charleston directing the and establishing the Pearlstine/Lipov

is moving forward as planned. We continue to look to our Center for Southern Jewish Culture. Marty also was the catalyst membership for information about their families' retail and for building the Sylvia Vlosky Yaschik Jewish Studies Center and its recent addition, which houses a kosher/vegan/vegetarian dining hall dubbed Marty's Place, in his honor.

With Marty's retirement at the end of this school year, JHSSC also moves to new ground with a new executive director-a changing of the guard for both Jewish Studies and the Jewish Historical Society. Please join us for a lively and provocative spring meeting in Charleston on April 28 and 29, and a bittersweet celebration as our fearless leader steps down from his post.



### Not Fully Human: Why Racists Are the Living Dead

by Simon Lewis, Professor of English, College of Charleston

L the roles South Carolina Jews played (or did not play) in the Civil Rights era. Joining forces with the local chapter of the for us in our current situation. Currently, locally, a network of Association for the Study of African American Life and History faith-based congregations has come together in the Charleston

exploration while actively exemplifying the alliance between blacks and Jews in the fight for social justice.

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Connections between anti-black racism and anti-Semitism are well documented. The white nationalists in Charlottesville who chanted, "You will not replace us. Jews will not replace us," are only the most recent manifestation. In the United States, of course, the Ku Klux Klan notoriously targeted Jews and Catholics as well as people of color. South African apartheid, the set of segregationist Below: Unite the Right rally participants show their true colors with the policies that 20<sup>th</sup>-century statue of General Lee in Emancipation Park in the background. Photos by he wrote. "One gets a vivid French philosopher Jacques Evelyn Hockstein (see evelynhockstein.com). Derrida called "the last word in racism," was created by a political party many of whose leaders had been interned by the British during World War II because of their pro-Nazi beliefs. Thus, although the kinds of persecution Jews and black people worldwide have suffered vary in nature and degree, there is a shared consciousness of racist violence that, despite differences between the

communities, fosters a fundamental anti-racist affinity.

That affinity and shared consciousness have historically motivated cross-community collaboration in pursuit of equal rights for all, notably in the courageous commitment of Jewish Freedom Riders during the Civil Rights Movement, and in similarly significant contributions by prominent Jewish activists

wo years ago, JHSSC's annual conference examined in the anti-apartheid struggle—sometimes at the cost of their very lives. The history of this solidarity offers important lessons (ASALH), this year's conference continues and expands that Area Justice Ministry. While the stakes may not appear to be

as high as they were in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the principle that freedom is (or should be) universal demands that we actively combat the lifedenying processes both of anti-Semitism and of antiblack racism.

When Alan Paton, the acclaimed South African author of Cry, the Beloved Country, re-visited the United States in 1954 after almost a decade, he wrote optimistically of the South's "Big Change": "The South is beyond question a different place from what it was when I last visited it," impression that the Deep South, the Deep South of the grossest inequality, the worst discrimination, of murder and violence, is slowly retreating. Its theories of white supremacy and segregation are slowly being forced into the Gulf of Mexico, where they will be drowned, thus holding water for the first time."

As we have seen all too clearly over the last couple of years-notably in the

mass murder in Mother Emanuel Church and in the alt-right demonstrations in Charlottesville, the Gulf of Mexico, rather than drowning theories of white supremacy, may instead have spread their deadly toxins. Like the living dead in the classic horror movies that the tiki-torch-bearing mob in Charlottesville evoked, racist ideology is hard to kill. Neither the presidency of

Nelson Mandela in South Africa nor of Barack Obama here in America has provided the silver bullet or stake through the heart to kill it once and for all.

supremacy and zombies seems appropriate to me for reasons other than the difficulty of laying them finally to rest. As a result of racism's failure to acknowledge the full humanity of people deemed "other" by the

"The only dream worth having is to dream that you will live while you are alive, and die only when you are dead. To love. To be loved. To never forget your own insignificance. To never get used to the unspeakable violence and the vulgar Comparing theories of white disparity of life around you. To seek joy in the saddest places. To pursue beauty to its lair. To zombie-apocalypse TV series, never simplify what is complicated or complicate what is simple. To respect strength, never power. Above all, to watch. To try and understand. To never look away. And never, never to forget."

Arundhati Roy, The Cost of Living, 1999

## In the Shadow of John C. Calhoun

by Herb Frazier, public relations and marketing manager for Magnolia Plantation and Gardens and co-author of We Are Charleston: Tragedy and Triumph at Mother Emanuel (2016).

My daddy, Benjamin Frazier, sailed to Cuba with the U.S. Navy where he was welcomed as an like me. Daddy didn't say much about the implications American sailor more warmly than he was in his segregated of being black. His only lesson on race was a simple yet hometown of Charleston, South Carolina. Daddy returned profound statement: "You can't trust Mister Charlie." with souvenirs from Havana, including a special tablecloth Daddy had reason not to trust "Mister Charlie." When he decorated with a large map of the island. joined the military he was assured he'd become an electrician.

That tablecloth stirred my childhood imagination. I Instead, his duty was in the kitchen as a cook in a segregated admired the colorful drawings of palm trees, bongos, and navy. He resented it, but he became good at what he did and he advanced. The navy opened the world to him and, as a result, scantily clothed women with fruit hats. My gaze, however, always returned to Cuba's plow-shaped gave me a home filled with objects and

outline.

I traced the map with my finger tip. "I want to go there," I said. That thick plastic tablecloth was my Aladdin's Lamp. When I touched it and spoke those words the ancestors cleared a path that would lead the tiny teddy-bear-hugging me not just to Cuba but around the world.

As a child in Charleston in the 1950s and 1960s, I was more aware of other nations than the dangers of Jim Crow in this racially divided city replete with symbols glorifying the Confederacy.

There really was never much to fear from whites, I thought, because I saw them mostly from a distance. In the Ansonborough Homes, a federally

funded housing project at the east end of Calhoun Street, Confederacy. Maybe he didn't know this history or maybe he my neighbors looked like me. The people in my church, just wanted to protect me from it.

*circa* 1945.



Above: White nationalists bearing tiki-torches march on the University

of Virginia campus in Charlottesville, August 11, 2017, to protest the

removal of a statue of Confederate General Robert E. Lee from a city park.



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dominant group, those in the grip of racist ideology are themselves not fully human, not fully alive to everyone around them. They have aligned themselves with the living dead.

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Rather than binge-watching therefore, please come out to the JHSSC/ASALH conference and learn how we can actively combat zombieracism whenever and wherever it raises its ugly and ignorant head.

Benjamin Frazier, the author's father,

conversations that reflected his travel.

A craftsman in Port-au-Prince carved the mahogany coffee table. Daddy crowned my head with a fez from the Kasbah. Cuban postcards depicted the Malecón, Havana's five-mile esplanade and seawall stretching along the coast. On the living room wall hung a framed painting with muted colors of Venice and its canals.

Daddy talked more about foreign lands than he did about the history of this country. He didn't explain how Charleston came to be a segregated town. He didn't say it was the cradle of slavery. He didn't say Laurens Street, which bordered the projects, was named for a slave trader. He didn't say the city's statues celebrated the

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Calhoun, whose statue stands on the street that bears his name. Black Charlestonians know two truths about the city. Streets flood on cloudless days and Calhoun was no friend better, and he was beginning to partially trust "Mister Charlie." to the black man. My eyes avoided his creepy sneer. Instead

Daddy didn't have to tell me, however, about John C. at that paper, the one that supported segregation and the one he wanted to burn down in the mid-'50s. His views softened by the 1970s. America and Charleston were changing for the Decades later after working at other papers around the

country, I returned to

Charleston. I joined

Initially, I didn't

want the assignment in

South Africa because

My views on South

Africa changed with Mr.

chess when I was 12.

It was more than just

Daddy taught me

Mandela's presidency.

I focused on the date of his death—1850. He died a century before my birth. As a child I was thankful he was gone before I was born.

Daddy also didn't complain that black people were barred from the nearby Jewishowned Sam Solomon department store. Because Daddy was in the navy we had options on where to shop. We didn't have to face the possible humiliation of a white-owned business on King Street. We shopped mostly on the naval base in the North Area. After I was born the navy began to lift racial barriers.

That policy was most evident when Daddy was transferred in 1965 to the U.S. Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. In two days I went from an allblack high school on Charleston's east side to a predominantly white high school at Gitmo. No one protested that I was in a classroom with white children.

After college I got a

chance to do what my father did—travel. I became a newspaper reporter. When I took a reporting job in 1972 at the then-News and Courier in Charleston, my father was stunned. He Ansonborough. Gentrification had something to do with wasn't elated that his son was one of the first black reporters to integrate the white newsroom. He asked why I wanted to work intolerance have remained.



Ansonborough projects and Marsh Street (neither the street nor the projects exist free press and accurate today). Below: Herb Frazier (second from left) with his grandmother, Mable reporting. Frazier, and his parents, Albertha and Benjamin Frazier, at U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, mid- to late 1960s. Photos courtesy of Herb Frazier. Not pictured are Herb's brothers, Benjamin Frazier III and Terry Frazier.

of Daddy's stories of how the apartheid government kept him and other black sailors on the ship when it docked in Cape Town. a game. For him it was metaphor on life. In all matters, think of your next move. Years later, as we played, I had

travel stories to share, too.

I can revisit the places I've seen, but I can't return to that. Even though Charleston has changed, the monuments to

### Beholding the Past at Magnolia and Buchenwald by Raja-Léon Hamann, master's candidate in social and cultural anthropology at

This summer I spent two-and-a-half months in Americans as much more than mere historic events, appalling Charleston working on a research project about but distant. I feel deeply affected by that history. It forms an the interplay of gentrification, cultural heritage tourism, and important part of my identity as an Afro-person. Besides the the politics of race and identity. It was my first time in the projections of other people upon me, there was thus much that I Lowcountry, and it was the first time in my life to visit former expected from myself as well. plantations. I had read about them, primarily in academic I spent the whole day at Magnolia, and while it was very articles that criticize them for not paying sufficient attention to moving, emotionally and intellectually, it did not bring me the history of slavery and the lives of enslaved people. Still, I was what I felt it should have. There was no moment of revelation, irritated when I saw for myself how former slave labor camps are no life-changing incident. Before we went to sleep in the

being advertised as tourist destinations and wedding venues, lovely gardens to marvel at. One of my initial impulses was to think of Nazi concentration camps, and how inconceivable it would be to turn them into amusement parks. I do not want to imply that the slave labor camps of

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Slave Dwelling Project living historians, 1 to r, Germaine Jenkins, Gilbert Walker, the American South, Christine King Mitchell, George Hunter, Sara Daise, Joseph McGill, Rhiana Green, euphemistically Jerome Bias, and Dontavius Williams pose in front of a slave cabin at Magnolia I walked around for called plantations, Plantation and Gardens, Charleston, SC, February 16, 2018. Courtesy of Joseph McGill. an hour or more, and

conversation. Magnolia felt magical. From the white of the moon to the black of the shadows everything was imbued with a soft and delicate blue. The trees and plants seemed to glow, and all the hardness and sharpness of things were gone. It was During my time in Charleston, one experience left a dreamy and very comforting atmosphere, something I would never have expected to feel on a former plantation, a place that, not so long ago, I regarded as a reminder only of a horrible and dark past. We would stop and be quiet sometimes, listening in awe to the sounds of nature, the owls, the insects, and the purling and gurgling of the water.

and the concentration, labor, and death camps set up by the though we barely knew each other, we had a long and intimate Third Reich are the same. But there are similarities among them. All were places of unimaginable torment, horror, and pain, of the systematic subjugation of humans deemed less human than others. an indelible impression. Joe McGill, founder of the Slave Dwelling Project, invited me to an overnight stay at Magnolia Plantation on October 7<sup>th</sup>, and I readily agreed. When the day came, however, I got nervous. What was I supposed to feel? How would people behave towards me? And what kind of behavior and emotions would they expect of me as a "Black" I felt calm when we went to bed. The next morning, I realized that something unexpected had happened overnight.

person visiting the site of a former plantation? I am not African American. My mother is German and my I felt different about the place where I had slept, the cabin and father Nigerian. I grew up and have always lived in Germany. Magnolia in general. It meant something on a much more But even though the experience of slavery has not been passed personal level now. But how so? Of course, the experiences down to me as part of my family history, I regard slavery and Dontavius and I shared when we took that walk had a the subsequent discrimination and violence against African profound meaning to me, but there was something else as



Martin-Luther University, Halle, Germany

cabins, I noticed how beautiful it was outside in the moonlight. The moon had been full just a few days earlier and was still shining brightly. I remarked to Dontavius, with whom I was sharing a space in the cabin, how I would love to take a walk now, not really expecting him to say yes. But he did.

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Dontavius and

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well. Eventually it occurred to me that it must have been the site. I was moved to tears several times. sleeping itself.

are vulnerable when we sleep and only relax and let go in an environment that feels safe to us. I believe that by spending the night in the former slave cabins, by physically facing such miniscule discomforts as cockroaches and other insects possibly crawling

over my body, and by mentally confronting my anxieties about the site and my imagination of the horrors that happened there in the past, I was able to process deeper emotional conflicts I had about former slave labor camps.

This experience allows me to look at these sites differently. I see them as places of both peace and that ambivalence to me. December 2017.

Elegantly adorning the alleys, the Spanish moss drooping from their branches, they bestow upon these landscapes a dreamy and surreal beauty. At the same time, crooked under the weight of the history they have witnessed, they are mournful reminders of the wrongs that built and sustained these places. It is this melancholic beauty I witnessed that sets the sites of former plantations apart from the sites of former Nazi concentration camps.

This winter, I visited Buchenwald. I participated in one of the tours offered by Förderverein Buchenwald e.V., Association for the Promotion of the Memory of the Buchenwald Concentration Camp. We were a group of around 20 people. Most of the others appeared to be Germans, a few I could identify as Polish, and I also heard some speak English. I felt different than I did at Magnolia, somehow out of place. I was the only "Black" person in the group, and I wondered what people might think about who I was, where I belonged. I feel different in Germany in general, differently aware of my skin color, most of the time being the only "Black" person in class, on the bus, or like that day at Buchenwald. I am so used to this that the awareness of it has been pushed to the periphery of my attention. As such, it remains a constant companion of mine, the latent background of my every perception. At Buchenwald this caused me to feel a distance from the other Germans in the group. But it did not affect my emotional connection to the

It was very cold that day. My hands hurt and even started Sleeping, of course, is a deeply intimate practice. We to feel numb in the brief moments when I removed my gloves to take a few photos. As I walked the fields of debris in the former detainee section, the utter emptiness of the place, the only sound the wind whirling snow, created an almost haunted scene. I cannot imagine how it must have been for the people

> who were forced to walk through the snow half naked or march up from nearby Weimar clothed in rags and often barefoot.

Our guide told us of the zoo built directly in front of the detainee section. The guards would go there on weekends with their families to "get some well-earned rest from the strains of their duty," quoting the first commandant nothing left today that

oak trees epitomize area in Buchenwald concentration camp, Germany. Photo by Raja-Léon Hamann, of the camp. There is

reminds visitors of a zoo, unimaginable as it is anyway. Most of the structures of Buchenwald have been destroyed; only a few remain. The crematorium where the imprisoned had to burn their fellow inmates is one of them. Upon entering that building, we first walked into the "pathology department." Its purpose was not to find out why the detainees died, but to determine whether even in death their bodies might be exploitable. What was greatly valued was human skin. For one of his birthdays the commandant received a lamp as a gift from his officers whose shade was made from the skin of dead prisoners.

I feel devastated by the insanity that ruled such places. But I believe that we need to gaze into these abysses of human nature. A fundamental part of being German to me is the responsibility to remember the history of the Holocaust, to search for and keep alive knowledge of the unspeakable crimes committed under the Nazi regime, and above all, of its victims. And as my emotional connection to African-American history shows, this urge to commemorate is not just a question of nationality. These visits to former slave labor camps and former concentration camps have been formative experiences for me. They have provided me with invaluable lessons about myself and my relation towards their respective histories. And as dark, irritating, and unpleasant as these sites are, I feel that my involvement with them has given me a certain peace.

## Memory, Monuments, and Memorials April 28–29, 2018 | Charleston, South Carolina

#### Saturday, April 28

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11:30 – 12:30 р.м. 12:30 - 2:00

2:00 - 3:00 3:15 - 4:30 6:00

#### Sunday, April 29

9:00 – 10:00 а.м. 10:15 - 12:00 р.м.

Remainder of Saturday's events take place in Simons Center Recital Hall, Albert Simons Center for the Arts Shared Memories, Equal Justice? Moderator: The Honorable Richard M. Gergel, U.S. District Judge Panelists: Claire Curtis, Professor of Political Science, College of Charleston; Rev. Joseph A. Darby, Presiding Elder of the Beaufort District of the AME Church; Armand Derfner, civil rights attorney; Rev. Charles Heyward, Co-president, Charleston Area Justice Ministry; Bernard Powers, Professor of History, College of Charleston **Monuments of Marion Square** 

Moderator: Theodore Rosengarten, Professor of Holocaust Studies, College of Charleston Michael Kogan, Professor Emeritus of Religion, Montclair State University Christine King Mitchell, History Interpreter, Old Slave Mart Museum

Reception to honor Dr. Martin Perlmutter, Executive Director, JHSSC, and Director, Jewish Studies, College of Charleston, Randolph Hall, 66 George Street (behind the Cistern)

JHSSC board meeting and breakfast - everyone is invited! Difficult History: Plantations, Concentration Camps, and Cultural Tourism Moderator: Robin Waites, Executive Director, Historic Columbia Panelists: Sara Daise, Cultural History Interpreter; Shawn Halifax, Cultural History Interpretation Coordinator for Charleston County Parks; Lilly Filler, Chair, SC Holocaust Council and JHSSC Vice President; George McDaniel, Executive Director Emeritus, Drayton Hall; Joseph McGill, Founder, Slave Dwelling Project; David Popowski, attorney and Charleston Holocaust Council member; Robert Rosen, attorney, author of Jewish Confederates, and JHSSC Past President

1:30 - 3:00

International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies – South Carolina Chapter Following the JHSSC conference, all are invited to attend a meeting of the Jewish Genealogy Society of South Carolina. For more information contact Jeff Alexander: atjalexan142@gmail.com

#### Hotel reservations **Francis Marion Hotel**

387 King Street, Charleston, SC 29403 (843) 722-0600 or (877) 756-2121

*Special rate:* \$289 per night + tax

To get the special rate, make your reservation by 5:00 р.м. on March 28 and mention "Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina." •



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Registration and lunch, Hill Gallery, Albert Simons Center for the Arts, 54 St. Philip Street

Facing Memory: The Past, the Present, and the Public - Michael Arad, architect, Handel Architects

#### All Sunday events take place in the Sylvia Vlosky Yaschik Jewish Studies Center, 96 Wentworth Street



# To Honor the Survivors and Remember the Dead: Building a Memorial in Marion Square

#### by David Popowski, Chair, Charleston Holocaust Memorial Committee

Tam the child of Holocaust survivors. Henry Popowski Land Paula Kornblum Popowski were both from Kaluszyn, a Polish town 50 miles east of Warsaw. Before World War II its population numbered approximately 10,000–80 percent of whom were Jews. My father was 11 years older than

my mother, so while they knew each other's families, they did not know each other until after they were liberated.

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Their stories of survival differed dramatically. My father lived as a young man in Warsaw in the late 1930s. When Germany invaded Poland he was conscripted into the Polish army. After Poland surrendered, he found his way back to Kaluszyn to warn his family of the impending danger his six siblings hid in the woods and the remainder of the Popowski family perished. My

father sought refuge in the Warsaw ghetto and subsequently was incarcerated in the following concentration camps: Kraśnik, Plaszow, and Ebensee, a sub-camp of Mauthausen. He survived because of his skills as a carpenter, his family's trade. When he was liberated by the U.S. Army in May 1945, he and several friends attached themselves to a MASH unit and ultimately reached Landshut, Germany, where a displaced persons community evolved.

My mother escaped from Kaluszyn to a labor camp four miles away. Her father, Moshe Kornblum, had buried a number of gold coins in the yard. My mother's family owned the largest enterprise in Kaluszyn, a flour mill, so she began her journey

with the remaining assets of that business. My mother and her sister, Hannah, sewed the coins into their coats and dresses and used them for food, rent, and bribery. (A family friend, the late and beloved South Carolina author Pat Conroy, memorialized the story in the character "the Lady with the Coins" in his novel *Beach Music*.)

Hannah, with the help of Stanislaw Wozniak, a Catholic work associate of my grandfather, came to the labor camp and facilitated my mother's escape. My mother and aunt, with Mr. Wozniak's assistance, made their way to Warsaw where they acquired false identification papers, posing as Catholics.



and urge them to leave. Two of Above: To avoid capture by the Nazis, Paula Kornblum assumed a group of family friends who a false identity as Apolonia Borkowska. Below: Henry and Paula Kornblum Popowski with their son Mark in Landshut, Germany, 1949. Special Collections, College of Charleston.



They migrated to Częstochowa, nearly 200 miles from Kaluszyn. There they lived in a convent and worked in a glass factory, using their Catholic identities. After they were liberated in January 1945 by the Russian army, they made their way back to Kaluszyn. My grandparents, my mother's brother, and numerous family members were gone. The flour mill had been seized.

My mother and aunt found had survived and together they traveled to Landshut, Germany, where my parents met. They

remained there until 1949, waiting for approval to immigrate to America. During that time, they married and the first of their four children, my brother Mark, was born.

My parents' immigration to Charleston was sponsored by cousins Joseph and Rachel Zucker. Charleston had a uniquely large number of ex-patriot Kalushiners dating back to the late 19th century. Thus, the city was a welcoming place for my parents to begin their new lives-indeed, they were the last Kalushiners to make Charleston their home. I was born in Charleston, followed by my two sisters, Sarah and Martha.

During our childhood, my parents did not discuss the specifics of their

war experiences. I would tell my friends that my parents had accents because they were from Europe, my grandparents were killed in the war, and the few family members I had lived in Brooklyn and Israel. As we began our college years, my parents opened up—my mother more than my father. As a survivor of the Warsaw ghetto and the camps my father had seen the Holocaust in all of its horror.

Fast forward, I graduated from college and law school and Riley assigned City Parks Director Steven Livingston and head returned to Charleston to practice law, start a family, and be of Cultural Affairs Ellen Dressler Moryl to the committee, and near my parents. One day in 1994, I was working in my office they worked diligently with us. when Pincus Kolender called. Like my parents, Pincus was a From a group of 15 applicants, architect Jonathan Levi of Holocaust survivor and he had known me, literally, from the Boston and landscape design firm Design Works of Charleston day I was born. He and fellow Auschwitz survivor Joe Engel were selected. At the recommendation of Jeffrey Rosenblum wanted Charleston to have a Holocaust memorial. He said Jerry and respected contractor and Jewish community leader and Anita Goldberg Zucker (Jerry was the grand-nephew of Raymond Frisch, the committee chose contractors Stier, Kent my parents' sponsors, Joseph and Rachel Zucker) had pledged & Canady to build the memorial. After receiving their cost \$60,000 in seed money and local architect Jeffrey Rosenblum estimate of approximately \$500,000, we began the fundraising

had offered to help. Anita is the daughter of survivors Rose Mibab and Carl Goldberg of Jacksonville, Florida, and Jerry's father Leon Zucker lost the vast majority of his family in the Holocaust. Also, Pincus and Joe had met with Mayor Joe Riley and he pledged his full support. Pincus asked me to chair the project and added that they

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felt it was so important, Dedication of Charleston's Holocaust Memorial in Marion Square, June 6, they were willing to 1999. The spire of Emanuel AME Church can be seen in the background. Special on Rutledge Avenue, pay me my hourly rate Collections, College of Charleston. but the consensus was that Marion Square, fronting Calhoun Street, was best because of its visibility. There also was some disagreement about the design proposed by the professionals: some critics wanted a more striking structure and others a greater emphasis on Jewish

to do so. They anticipated the cost of the memorial would be \$200,000. I told Pincus to give me a night to think about it. Guessing the project would take a year and an hour or so a week of my time, I agreed and told Pincus that paying me was symbols. The committee finally approved the memorial as you

out of the question. Initially, I questioned the necessity of building a Holocaust see it now. There was no discussion about the irony of it being memorial in Charleston. Would enough people in a small next to a towering statue of former vice president and slavery metropolitan area with a relatively modest Jewish population advocate John C. Calhoun. Marion Square, by the way, is owned care? As the project evolved and I saw the gratifying response by the Washington Light Infantry and Sumter Guard and is of both the Jewish and non-Jewish communities, my concern leased to the City of Charleston. Their member and former abated and my devotion to the mission intensified. South Carolina State Senator Robert Scarborough represented those organizations and skillfully handled the collaboration. The five-year period of design, fundraising, and

construction was time-consuming, at times contentious, and We broke ground on July 23, 1997, and on June 6, 1999, meaningful. A committee of approximately 20 members of the five years after the call from Pincus Kolender, we dedicated the Jewish community, with survivors Joe Engel, Pincus Kolender, memorial at Marion Square before a crowd of 1,500 people. Charles Markowitz, and Sam Greene playing key roles, oversaw It was a remarkable day that included a performance by the the project. An executive committee consisting of Jennifer Charleston Symphony Orchestra conducted by David Stahl, Phillips, Anita Zucker, Jeffrey Rosenblum, and myself handled generously sponsored by Walter Seinsheimer and Dr. David the daily tasks and issues. Jennifer Phillips was at the center of Russin. When it ended, I told my mother: "Now our mishpacha our work, devoting her energies full-time to the project. Mayor who perished have had a proper burial."

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effort, led by Anita. Our timing was fortuitous because the economy was robust and we had broad support from the community at large. Contributions came from countless individuals and-owing largely to Anita's work-from numerous corporations.

The selection of the site was mildly controversial. A few people preferred the old museum property

### To Teach the Children: Columbia's Holocaust Memorial

by Lilly Stern Filler, Chair, South Carolina Council on the Holocaust and **Co-chair, Columbia Holocaust Education Commission** 

South Carolina, on June 8, 1949—their day of independence! Along with them came an 18-month-old daughter, Lilly (me), born in Munich, Germany. We were sponsored by a paternal uncle, Gabriel Stern, who had immigrated to the States in the early 20th century and ultimately made Columbia his home.

We arrived at Ellis Island via the U.S. Army transport ship General J. H. McRae and, once in the United States, my parents chose never to look back. Our family grew to four children and my father built his own construction business. My parents' experience of the Shoah was so dreadful it was rarely discussed in our household, so when my father died unexpectedly while my mother was battling Alzheimer's, I knew I had to find a way to honor them and to memorialize the family members they had lost.

and Jadzia Szklarz Stern

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form a committee to create a standing Holocaust Memorial in Columbia. Both of my parents lamented that their chosen American city did not have such a memorial, although they visited many in other cities. My mother's efforts were thwarted by fears of anti-Semitism, and the committee struggled to make decisions on design, location, publicity, and so forth. As a result, the project was tabled.

In the 1990s, my father began to raise money for a Memorial Park in downtown Columbia. monument through our synagogue, Beth Shalom. He was

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| For more information online, see:                               |
| • Ben Stern's Jewish Heritage Collection oral history interview |
| Columbia Holocaust Education Commission panel on Ben            |
| Stern   |
| • South Carolina Council on the Holocaust's digitized survivo   |
| and liberator testimonies, including interviews with Ben Sterr  |

Ben and Jadzia Szklarz Stern with their children, from left, Herbert Joel, Helena, Lilly, and William Harry, 1960s. Courtesy about the Holocaust. of Lilly Stern Filler.

My parents, Jadzia Szklarz and Ben Stern, *obm*, were memory dimmed. On December 6, 1999, my father died. In the following months I grappled with how I, the oldest of their children, could best honor my parents. By June 2000, I knew I had to take on the cause that had been so important to both of them-the erection of a Holocaust Memorial in the capital city of South Carolina.

I started with \$10,000 in seed money that my father had

raised. Seeking committee members, I reached out to Columbia's Jewish congregations. I expanded the search for volunteers to the secular community, in particular, Columbia City Council, the University of South Carolina, and Fort Jackson. The monument was intended to memorialize the six million Jews and five million others murdered by the Nazis and their collaborators: honor the survivors and liberators living in South Carolina; and educate all South Carolinians

The committee grew to

I remembered that my mother, in the 1980s, had tried to about 50 people. For the next year we met all together once or twice a month and more often in subcommittees. On the Internet we found an existing memorial in Boca Raton, Florida, that satisfied our criteria. Creator Irwin Hyman gave us permission to use his design, which we modified to incorporate a timeline and a list of liberators and survivors. I contacted Mayor Bob Coble, who advised me to request from city council a site for the stone edifice in the newly developed

On June 6, 2001, the 57th anniversary of D-Day, we forced to abandon the endeavor to care for my mother as her unveiled our beautiful granite monument in Memorial Park. A gentle rain was falling, but it was one of the most moving and memorable days of my life. More than 500 people attended the ceremony, which was filmed by SCETV; platform guests included South Carolina Governor Jim Hodges, Mayor Bob Coble, and other distinguished individuals. The grandchildren of survivors and liberators unveiled the monument. Each year in April, SCETV replays the hour-long dedication on television.

The project raised more money than was needed, so with the remaining funds the Columbia Holocaust Education Commission (CHEC) was launched. Co-chaired by Lyssa Harvey and me, this commission was to adopt the original goals of the memorial and continue to pursue innovative ways to educate the people of the city and nearby towns. Since its inception in 2001, the commission has awarded mini-grants for teachers K-12, developed a speaker's bureau, and created a 24-panel exhibit, Holocaust Remembered, which tells the stories of liberators and local survivors.

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The exhibit has been shown in public spaces around the city and will travel this spring to four churches, two universities, and one Presbyterian retirement community in Summerville, South Carolina. CHEC publishes an annual newsprint magazine distributed by the McClatchy papers to more than 1.5 million South Carolinians every spring.

Holocaust education was not new to South Carolina. In 1989, Senator Isadore Lourie, obm, had introduced a bill creating the South Carolina Council on the Holocaust (SCCH). The legislature allocated funds, and the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker of the house appointed council members, charged with providing support to any community in the state that wished to have a Holocaust program. Later, prospects for funding were expanded to any educator teaching the history of the Holocaust, as well as training workshops for teachers who want to add the subject to their curricula. The council sponsors a Summer Workshop that brings to Columbia distinguished faculty from the non-profit organization Facing History and Ourselves, based in Washington, DC, for a three-day program following four weeks of online sessions. Every other year the council sponsors a trip to Eastern Europe for teachers interested in experiencing first-hand the locations and lasting legacy

of the Holocaust. Both the workshop and the European tour are heavily subsidized by the council and graduate credits are offered.

With their common purpose of outreach, CHEC and SCCH collaborate seamlessly. Their work has become even more critical in the past two years as we have seen a rise in anti-Semitic acts and vile rhetoric, a willingness to be openly intolerant and racially bigoted. We need to teach our children, and all young people, the importance of respect, the value of diversity, the power of acceptance, and the love of mankind. Public reminders such as the Holocaust Memorial and programs offered by CHEC and SCCH become more vital as eyewitnesses of the Shoah pass away. Our small state has a large commitment to Holocaust education and remembrance. Time will not slow, and the need to educate, to recognize the facts, the causes, and the consequences of the Holocaust grows increasingly urgent.

We will not forget!











Top: Participants in the 2016 Summer Workshop for educators visit the Holocaust Memorial in Columbia's Memorial Park. Bottom: Lilly Filler (center) presented "Holocaust Remembered' to Dutch Fork Middle School 7th-grade students at their "Hate Won't Win" assembly, Irmo, SC, September 2015. Courtesy of the Columbia Holocaust Education Commission.

### Confronting Our Complex Past at Historic Sites by Robin Waites, Executive Director, Historic Columbia

In 2003, Historic Columbia opened a new exhibit at the Hampton-Preston Mansion, one of six historic sites for which we serve as steward. A Home to Many People was the organization's first attempt to document urban slavery at this antebellum property and more broadly in South Carolina's capital city. With panels addressing topics ranging from descriptions of the differences between enslaved labor in an urban versus a rural setting to the treatment of enslaved men and women by their owners, the exhibit broke new ground for Historic Columbia. Before this, the daily lives of 68 men, women, and children, without whom the property could not have functioned, were scarcely mentioned. Introducing

content about enslaved people and free blacks who worked for the Hamptons and Prestons provided visitors with a more authentic and complete view of life at the site. As difficult as this history is to share and to hear, it would be irresponsible to ignore it.

Ten years later, in 2014, our organization re-opened the Woodrow Wilson Family Home as the only museum in the country focused on the

on one of the most misunderstood

and understudied aspects of

our nation's past. Addressing the

progress made by black leaders in

public education, municipal

political terrorism employed

by white supremacists

intent on regaining power,

themes at this site are

meant to challenge visitors'

perceptions of a key period

in American history.

Reconstruction Era. Shifting the interpretive frame from Above: Mary Cantey Hampton's a shrine to the 28<sup>th</sup> president to an will. Richland County, South in-depth and honest exploration Carolina, probate case files, of the years immediately following estate no. 1156 (box 47), Mary the Civil War, when the teenage Hampton (1863); Probate Court Wilson lived in Columbia, allowed Clerk's Office, Richland.

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Below: Keith, owned by Frank Historic Columbia to shed light and Sally Baxter Hampton, served as a body servant to Frank. This undated photograph was taken after the Civil War and depicts Keith as a freedman. Historic Columbia collection.



Exit surveys completed by visitors to the Hampton-Preston Mansion provide evidence of their reconsideration of a past they thought they understood, an acquisition of new information, and a desire to learn more. Transformations like these, resulting from personal experience, critical thinking, and dialogue, are goals towards which we strive. By introducing challenging stories and acknowledging our complex and interwoven past, we can engender change. As Dr. David Skorton, Secretary of the Smithsonian, explains: "In the end, many of the issues that all cultural institutions explore, from climate change to economic inequality, to race relations, may ultimately have political or partisan implications. Our role is to not advocate or judge. Instead, cultural institutions aim to provide context and information-and often the forum-to address the big issues knowledgeably and constructively." ["Trusted Sources: Why Museums and Libraries Are More Relevant Than Ever," American Alliance for Museums, February 27, 2017.]

Continuing the momentum established at the Wilson site, in May 2018, Historic Columbia will premiere a new tour at Hampton-Preston, which extracts the content from the Home to Many People panel exhibit and integrates it into the central visitor experience. Utilizing new research, primary documents, images and technologies, this tour offers a much deeper exploration of life at the estate. For example, visitors will learn about enslaved domestic workers William and Maria Walker, a brother and sister owned by the Prestons. William worked as John's body servant and steward while Maria served as Caroline's maid. In addition, guides will present Mary Cantey Hampton's valuation of her "property" found in her will, which includes people alongside objects. Visitors will be encouraged to consider ways the experiences of those both living and working at the estate intertwined, and to think about how these stories of the past remain present and relevant today.

Historic Columbia is committed to telling the stories of ALL people associated with the historic sites under our stewardship. Over the last 15 years, we have focused on those who were previously excluded from the chronicle, which has resulted in an increase in visitation from people who now see themselves reflected in the narrative. The journey to this point has not been easy, nor is it by any means complete. Our visitors have noticed the shift from a traditional house museum with period rooms to what amounts to a museum housed in a historic home, and they have been willing to engage in deeper conversations about content. By approaching each site and each visitor with the intention of revealing the full story, we have developed a better understanding of our shared past and are learning how to encourage meaningful dialogue.

### History Is Local by Martin Perlmutter

SPRING 2018

The Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina has L been an important part of the Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program for most of the Program's history. The Society is an expression of one of JSP's central missions-community outreach—and by virtue of its remarkable impact, it has helped to define Jewish Studies. JHSSC was founded to study, preserve, and promote awareness of the history and culture of the Jews of South Carolina. It fosters public history at its best, supporting publications, exhibitions, oral histories, cemetery records, archives, and most important, a vibrant community galvanized by its mission and committed to its projects. Jewish Studies has no better example of town/gown cooperation than its relationship with JHSSC. This College/community synergy is also at the heart of the Jewish Heritage Collection at Addlestone Library and the Pearlstine/Lipov Center for Southern Jewish Culture.

The Society teaches us that much of history is local. The broader Jewish narrative encompasses slavery in Egypt, an exodus, great kings, destruction of the temples in Jerusalem, and long-term aspirations of a return to Zion. But for many South Carolinians, Jewish history revolves around the family store, the immigrant grandparents, quiet Sundays when most neighbors were in church, summers spent at Camp Blue Star, Camp Judea, or Barney Medintz, and efforts to sustain small congregations in towns with a



Isadore Lourie (r), at the Society's January 2002 meeting where he was presented with the first Order of the Jewish Palmetto, in the state house, College seen here with Past President Richard Gergel.

Most of all, we are indebted to the Society's Pillars and Foundational Pillars-stalwarts who donate \$1,000 or \$2,000, respectively, each year for five years. With your continued generosity, I am confident the JHSSC membership and lay leadership will carry the Society far into the future, creating community and preserving memory even after the small town merchants of St. George, Summerton, and Walterboro are gone.

declining Jewish presence.

expectations of those who witnessed its birth nearly 25 years ago. Isadore Lourie would be proud to see how far the Society has come. We owe much of our success to the loyalty of our dues-paying membership, now numbering over 500, and to our ongoing relationship with the College of Charleston-a bond that dates back to the friendship between Senator Lourie and his former desk mate President Alex Sanders.

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Pillars

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Susan and Charles Altman, Charleston, SC Ellen Arnovitz, Atlanta, GA Doris L. Baumgarten, Aiken, SC Harold Brody, Atlanta, GA Alex and Dyan Cohen, Darlington, SC Barry and Ellen Draisen, Anderson, SC Lowell and Barbara Epstein, Charleston, SC Bruce and Lilly Filler, Columbia, SC Steven J. Gold, Greenville, SC Judith Green, Charleston, SC Stuart and Rebecca Greenberg, Florence, SC Max and Ann Meddin Hellman, Charleston, SC Alan and Charlotte Kahn, Columbia, SC Jerry and Sue Kline, Columbia, SC Michael S. Kogan, Charleston, SC Ronald Krancer, Bryn Mawr, PA Allan and Jeanne Lieberman, Charleston, SC Susan R. Lourie, Columbia, SC Susan Pearlstine, Charleston, SC Andrew and Mary Poliakoff, Spartanburg, SC Edward and Sandra Poliakoff, Columbia, SC Alan and Anne Reyner, Columbia, SC Deborah Ritter, Columbia, SC Benedict and Brenda Rosen, Myrtle Beach, SC Jeffrey and Mickey Rosenblum, Charleston, SC Sandra Lee Rosenblum, Charleston, SC Joseph and Edie Rubin, Charleston, SC Larry Simon, Isle of Palms, SC Mark and Gayle Sloan, Myrtle Beach, SC Gail (Altman) and Ronald Spahn, Baltimore, MD Richard Stern, Boston, MA Anita Zucker, Charleston, SC

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Send us their information and we will inform them of your gift.

Make checks payable to JHSSC and mail to the address above.

Register now for the April 28-29 meeting in Charleston. See page 9 for more information.



## The Jewish Historical Society South Carolina of

Volume XXIII Number 2

Fall 2018

Endangered Congregations Strategies for Survival

Register now for fall meeting in Sumter and Camden October 20–21, 2018





**J**EWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

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#### On the cover:

Temple Sinai sanctuary in Sumter, SC, and (top) detail from a stained glass window featuring Moses bringing the Ten Commandments down from the mountaintop. Photos: Perry Weinberg, 2018.

### In this issue

Sumter's Temple Sinai Breathes New Life ~ Annie Rivers ~ It took a village to save this synagogue and its cemetery. The Charleston Jewish Federation, Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim of Charleston, Coastal Community Foundation, Sumter County Museum, and Sumter locals responded to the congregation's call for help to prepare for an uncertain future. Temple Sinai's Jewish History Center opened on June 2, 2018, ushering in a new era for a two-centuries-old community and assuring responsible stewardship of a historic landmark......4

Eulogy for Elizabeth ~ Dale Rosengarten ~ Beloved friend and colleague Elizabeth Moses leaves a lasting legacy at the College of Charleston, Georgetown's Beth Elohim, and in the new 

Turning Out the Lights ~ Dr. Louis A. Drucker ~ Imagine growing up in a town so small, there aren't enough Jews for a minyan. And then imagine families from a few rural communities coming together in 1945 to form a congregation and build a synagogue to serve the Pee Dee region of South Carolina. The author describes how Temple Beth Or in Kingstree taught him the value of education, hard work, and compassion, but it was the sense of shared history and the feeling of 

Love and Loyalty: Temple Mt. Sinai in Walterboro ~ Paul Siegel, Gale Siegel Messerman, Penny Siegel Blachman, and Joseph Siegel ~ The post-World War II Baby Boomer generation was making its appearance when Walterboro's Jews began raising the necessary funds to build a synagogue and acquire land for burials. The congregation did indeed "boom" for the next three decades, followed by a period of steady decline. Though too few for a weekly minyan, the membership swells each year for the High Holidays, as the sons and daughters who moved away 

Endangered Congregations | Strategies for Survival ~ [HSSC meets in Sumter and Camden, 

Growing Up Jewish in Camden ~ Garry Baum, Becky Baum Lourie, Cheryl Baum, and Harry Baum ~ Four siblings share their memories of Temple Beth El in Camden. Growing up in this small Midlands city, their connection to the congregation of their childhood is renewed each year when they meet for the High Holidays in the same sanctuary where, at one time, three generations of Baums filled half the pews.....12

Holding On: Temple B'Nai Israel of Anderson ~ Barry Draisen, with contributions from David Draisen ~ Lingering over the word "Hamelech" on Rosh Hashanah in 1947 was tough on a little boy in the hot second-floor room over a store. Anderson's congregation is rooted in Old World traditionalism but its practices have kept pace with the modern world, adapting as needed and thriving in the decades following World War II. The future of B'Nai Israel, however, is threatened by changing demographics—a dwindling Jewish population and the loss of families with young children to more vibrant congregations nearby......16

Small-town Conundrum: Temple Sinai of Orangeburg ~ Barry Frishberg ~ In a small congregation the loss of one lay leader can cause a seismic shift and require exceptional dedication from other congregants to keep the eternal light burning. Despite decades of striving to sustain Temple Sinai, recruiting new members remains an ongoing challenge. Today, it seems Jewish families in this small city want either more than the congregation has to offer or no affiliation at all......17

Telling the Story ~ Mark Swick ~ The Society's Jewish Merchant Project is up and running, documenting the generations of storekeepers who became the backbone of congregations in towns and small cities across the state. Waning Jewish populations have left synagogues struggling for survival. JHSSC's fall meeting in Sumter and Camden will consider the plight of endangered congregations and the special circumstances—partnership with a county museum, energetic lay 



FALL 2018

# Letter from the President

VOLUME XXIII ~ NUMBER 2

#### 2019 Will Mark the Society's 25th Anniversary

∧ s we approach our upcoming education, career opportunities, and Jewish life. Small-town  $oldsymbol{\Lambda}$ fall meeting, I think back on  $\,$  southern Jews remain present in the remnants of their homes, our conference last spring in Charleston businesses, and religious buildings, even if they are too few to titled "Memory, Monuments, and raise a minyan.

Memorials" and realize how many times I have recalled the Just 25 years ago, South Carolina was one of only two words of panelists, speakers, and participants. One debate that states in America where more citizens lived in rural areas than stands out had to do with the contested use of the terminology in urban centers. Rural roads and railroads linked the towns "slave" vs. "enslaved person." Especially memorable was the to each other and to major population centers. Religion tied presentation by the Israeli-American architect Michael Arad, South Carolina's Jews together. In October we will explore FAIA, describing how he arrived at his design for the 9/11what remains of families and buildings in these far-flung Memorial at Ground Zero in Lower Manhattan, and his work communities. South Carolina's population has almost doubled

on a new memorial for Mother Emanuel Church in Charleston, a project recently unveiled and featured in the Post and Courier.

Other Charleston museums recently in the news include the Medal of Honor Museum and Memorial by Israeli-American architect Moshe Safdie, FAIA, and the proposed International African American Museum, by Pei Cobb & Freed Architects. All three projects involve world renowned design firms, making Charleston a natural site to talk about memorials and museums.



JHSSC Founding Executive Director, Martin Perlmutter, poses with family members in the College of Charleston's Alumni Hall after being awarded the Order of the Jewish Palmetto on April 28, 2018. L to r: Daniel Perlmutter, Anahita Modaresi, Teddy McRackan, Estee Perlmutter, Marty Perlmutter, Jeri Perlmutter, Jake Perlmutter, Samantha Brock Perlmutter, Karen Kaplan Perlmutter, Aaron Perlmutter. Photo: Jessica Spence.

Saturday's sessions last April culminated with a reception with Robert Moses when we founded JHSSC, and with for the Society's outgoing executive director, Dr. Martin his youngest daughter, Elizabeth, on our first and second our deepest condolences to the Moses family. Our fall meeting on October 20 and 21 in Sumter and fall. Please send me your suggestions, concerns, and ideas for future meetings.

Perlmutter, to whom JHSSC awarded its fifth Order of the Georgetown meetings. We all will miss her, and we extend Jewish Palmetto. I look forward to seeing you in Sumter and Camden this Camden, SC, "Endangered Congregations Strategies for Survival," will highlight the exodus of Jewish families from small towns to larger cities in the state and across the country. Wishing everyone a healthy and happy New Year, "How can you keep them down on the farm after they have And seen Paris?" In this case, Paris becomes Charleston, Greenville, Columbia, Charlotte, Atlanta, Houston, New York, and San Francisco-metropolitan areas with a lot to offer in terms of Jeffrey Rosenblum, FAIA, JHSSC President

over the past five decades; with that in mind, we will discuss strategies for the preservation or the reestablishment of Jewish life in small towns.

Looking forward to JHSSC's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, I think back on our founding members, on those who have been involved since the early years, and on those who are no longer with us. We sadly add to the list of those we have lost our fellow board member and beloved friend Elizabeth Moses of Sumter. I met the Moses family through the Society, working

### Sumter's Temple Sinai Breathes New Life

by Annie Abrams Rivers, Executive Director, Sumter County Museum

Cumter has a rich Jewish history. The first Jewish Jewish Community Legacy Project. Ackerman remembers From the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s, there was a steady Jewish presence in town thanks to active retail, textile, and manufacturing opportunities aided by vital nearby rail lines. As in many small-town southern communities, however, the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the congregation dwindle. Younger generations of Temple Sinai families left for bigger cities. The ease of assimilation in Sumter contributed to the decline in congregation membership; as interfaith marriage became more common, children were raised in other faiths.

Anticipating the possibility of the congregation's demise, Roger Ackerman wrote a long letter to his fellow members in 2005, encouraging them to prepare for the future and create something like a living will.

Two years later, Sinai's board of directors appointed a long-range planning committee composed of Roger Ackerman, Harby Moses, Robert Moses, Ray Reich, and Jay Schwartz. The committee had to face the hard questions of what to do with the historic 1913 building if Temple Sinai no longer be turned into something else? Sold? They also had to secure the future care of their cemetery. In 2007, the temple's archives were donated to Special Collections at the College of Charleston.

On a friend's recommendation, Ackerman reached out to consultant David Sarnat, former president of the Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta and current president of the

Jimmigrants arrived here from Charleston around 1815. being at an "impasse" until Sarnat visited. They decided to tackle the cemetery concern first. Sarnat connected them with the Charleston Jewish Federation. After several meetings, an agreement was drawn up for the Federation to manage perpetual care of the cemetery.

> They then turned their focus to the temple building complex. Robert Moses suggested contacting Charleston's Reform synagogue, Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim (KKBE). Since most of the original Jewish settlers in Sumter came from Charleston, KKBE already had a strong tie to Temple Sinai. A large congregation with a robust historical consciousness, Beth

> > Elohim was willing and eager to help Temple Sinai. Another agreement was drawn up, this time giving KKBE control over the temple board and the ultimate decision of when to turn the lights off. Temple Sinai set up two endowments with the Coastal Community Foundation: one for the Charleston Jewish Federation to use for the cemetery's care, the other for the "care, maintenance, and operation" of the synagogue as well as support for Jewish heritage programs.

With the agreements successfully concluded, the committee did not have any additional plans. However, word got around through various news articles about the temple's anticipated eventual closing. Local residents of Sumter without a Jewish background expressed concern

and interest in helping. This led Roger Ackerman to consider turning part of the building into a museum about the Holocaust. With no permanent exhibit on the Holocaust between Atlanta and Richmond, he saw an opportunity for the temple to serve as an educational resource for the students of Sumter County and beyond.

Not knowing anything about running a museum, Ackerman had sufficient members to keep the synagogue going. Would it and Jay Schwartz approached the Sumter County Museum Board of Trustees with the idea in 2015. Considering the temple's proximity to the museum and its significant historical value, the board quickly supported the idea but wanted to make sure it was feasible for a small museum staff to manage such an enterprise. The museum and temple boards and I decided that the social hall would make a great display area after a few

renovations. Temple Sinai agreed to raise funds for the project and as a result we acquired many artifacts and photos to tell and I promised to assist by finding grants. the story of Sumter's Jewish life.

The Sumter County Museum, Temple Sinai, and Coastal Community Foundation signed an agreement in December 2016 with the mutual goal to preserve the Temple Sinai building "as a historic entity with the purpose of operating it as an educational and cultural facility." The document detailed a plan for the Foundation to manage and disburse the temple's cash assets to ensure the maintenance of the building. The Sumter County Museum agreed to develop a historical exhibit and oversee the building's care. Through all discussions, it was made clear that the temple would continue to be available as needed for Sabbath and holiday services as well as celebratory occasions and funerals. While it took several drafts to reach a final agreement, the signed document provides clear instructions for each party in the immediate and distant future. Ackerman and Schwartz got busy fundraising. I secured a Connected Communities grant from Central Carolina Community Foundation. By early 2017, the project was a reality.

I suggested hiring the Charlestonbased company HW Exhibits, then known as the History Workshop, to help curate and design the exhibition. I had worked with its staff members on the museum's outdoor signage and was impressed with their skills in exhibit design and fabrication. We had a great team from HW Exhibits, led by Rachel Bragg as project manager and Kelly Bozarth as designer. First, we determined the exhibit's mission: to remember, celebrate, and share Jewish history with the people of Sumter and their visitors. While we knew we wanted a significant portion of the display to focus on the Holocaust, featuring the story of Sumter's own Holocaust survivor, Abe Stern, we felt it was also important to tell the history of Jewish life in our town. Jews played a major role in the development of both city and county. With the Jewish population declining in numbers, it seemed more important than ever to ensure the historic memory of this portion of the people would be preserved.

In spring 2017, we hired Elizabeth Moses as Sumter County Museum's Education and Outreach Coordinator. Moses, originally from Sumter, has deep Jewish roots in the Sinai. After going community and had been a critical player in developing the through the galleries, visitors can pick landmark exhibit A Portion of the People: Three Hundred Years up a guide to peruse as they walk through the sanctuary and of Southern Jewish Life, a collaboration between the College marvel at the remarkable stained glass windows. Guests also of Charleston and McKissick Museum at the University of can view Sumter's Holocaust memorial, recently relocated from South Carolina. She helped connect the museum to longthe former site of the city and county government offices to the standing members of the congregation and their children, grounds of the temple, where it will enjoy greater visibility.

Temple Sinai Jewish History Center exhibits. Top right: section on the Holocaust, May 10, 2018, during installation. Photo: Annie Abrams Rivers. Opposite page and above: Opening preview, June 1, 2018. Photos: Perry Weinberg.

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The exhibition is divided into seven sections: Discover Judaism, Finding a Place: Jewish Immigrants Arrive in South Carolina, Jewish Life in Sumter, the Holocaust, Sumter Connections to the Holocaust, a Holocaust reflection area, and Congregation

#### PAGE 6 **JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH CAROLINA**

The Temple Sinai Jewish History Center, as we named the new museum, opened to great fanfare on June 2, 2018. We chose the word Center to call attention to the fact that it is more than a static exhibit. We plan to sponsor educational programming throughout the year with lectures, musical performances, and other events. While the exhibit installation is mostly permanent, portions will change, and artifacts will rotate over time.



Ribbon Cutting, Temple Sinai Jewish History Center, 11 Church Street, Sumter, SC, June 2, 2018. Photo: Perry Weinberg.

It was a long journey to reach this point, but we are all very proud of the temple's new life. Ackerman recalls, "We worked awfully hard. I can't tell you how many times we met over agreements. To see the end result is so gratifying." We can't wait to share the Center with members of the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina at their October meeting in Sumter. For more information, please visit our website at www. sumtercountymuseum.org.

# Eulogy for Elizabeth, Temple Sinai, Sumter, SC delivered by Dale Rosengarten on July 25, 2018

L Elizabeth, youngest daughter of Harriett and Robert Moses. We ache with her death because, whether we knew her as daughter, sister, colleague, co-worker, friend, mentor, or prayer leader, she was a loved one. In all the roles she played, under all the hats she wore, she never let anyone down. Elizabeth would do for you and go as far for you as she could, and then go some more.

When I first met her dad and mom in 1995, soon after we launched the Jewish Heritage Project at the College of Charleston, Elizabeth was living in Massachusetts, working as

her as the younger sister of Natalie, Carol, Katherine, and Laura, as the one who loved animals and who decided to pursue her father's religion—studying diligently with rabbis Michael Mellen and Jonathan Magidovitch and, in 1997, converting to Judaism.

Armed with a bachelor's degree from Wofford and a master's degree from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Elizabeth spent the first dozen years of her professional career working with marine life—at

roday we are tasked with saying goodbye to Sea World and the New England Aquarium, and on research cruises in the North Atlantic, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Eastern Tropical Pacific.

In 1999 she ended her seafaring days and returned to South Carolina. She began working for the College of Charleston as an archival associate for the Jewish Heritage Collection and as an administrative assistant for the Jewish Studies Program. That's when I came to know and love her. Among other tasks, she helped edit and lay out the newsletter of the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina. She was an essential ally in the development of A Portion of the People—the chronicle of 300 a biologist with a specialty in marine mammals. I heard about years of southern Jewish life. She connected us with members

> of her extended family and helped persuade reluctant lenders to let us borrow objects for the exhibition.

As many of us know, the roots of the Moses family tree run deep in South Carolina, going back to before the American Revolution. I used to like to rattle off the litany: Myer Moses I was a Patriot in the War of Independence, Myer Moses II in the War of 1812, and Myer Moses III, a rebel in the War between the States. Myer III for the show.



On her father's mother's side, the Emanuel ancestors She was eager to return to Sumter, to be near her beloved father, and she was ready to undertake a challenge even greater than the one she encountered at Georgetown's Beth Elohim: to bolster attendance at Temple Sinai, whose congregation was dwindling and greying. The Sumter County Museum had entered a partnership with Temple Sinai with the goal of creating a Jewish Elizabeth was proud of her heritage and devoted to her History Center in the synagogue's social hall. Museum director Annie Rivers needed help with the project. Elizabeth applied for the position of Education and Outreach Coordinator and was quickly hired. Over the course of a year she poured her

came to America on the boat popularly known as the "Jewish Mayflower"-the St. Catherine-which, in 1654, carried 23 Jewish refugees from Recife, Brazil, to the port of New Amsterdam, later called New York. family, but her most outstanding characteristic, in my opinion, was her commitment to truth-telling. She was one of those people who cannot tell a lie, or even a half truth. She told it like she saw it and would not hesitate to point out when the

emperor had no clothes. She also had a keen sense of humor, a deep interest in history, and a way with words.

Just as A Portion of the People began its two-year tour, Elizabeth made plans to move to Georgetown, SC. She never was a big city girl, she said, and always preferred small town life. She had heard that congregation Beth Elohim in Georgetown was in trouble, its members so few and so aged, they were talking about selling the synagogue and "turning off the lights."

Landing a job as instructor and research technician in the Department of Marine Science

at Coastal Carolina University, Elizabeth Moses with her father, Robert Altamont Moses, Temple surrender to self-pity and and finding a small house Sinai, Sumter, SC, 2000. Photo: Bill Aron. Courtesy of Special regret. But you did not hear that and you did not see that that would accommodate Collections, College of Charleston. her and her menagerie of dogs and cats, she made the move. from Elizabeth. The fact is her struggles with illness made her more acutely aware of the plight of others. She would answer With persistence, intelligence, and gentle persuasion, she sought the phone at work and it was not unusual to hear her comfort out Jewish retirees who had migrated to the Grand Strand and the person on the other end: "I'm sorry for your loss." "I hope brought them into the fold of Georgetown's longstanding Jewish community. Many of the newcomers had more Jewish education you're feeling better." "How can I help you?" than the natives, but almost none knew how illustrious the The poet Wordsworth must have had her in mind when town's history really was. From a struggling minyan of old-timers, he wrote: Elizabeth built the membership to more than 40 families. As tempted more, more able to endure

As more exposed to suffering and distress, In 2006, she took a job as feature and copy editor for the Thence more alive to tenderness. Georgetown Times and the Sun News, and late the next year became an interpreter for the SC Department of Parks, Recreation, Alas, Elizabeth was not given the gift of time. She had and Tourism, first at Huntington Beach State Park and then at more work to do, more dogs and cats to rescue, more pen Rose Hill Plantation, outside the town of Union. Leading tours pals to befriend, more ports to visit. But in her 54 short years at the home of William Henry Gist, known as South Carolina's she created a lasting legacy—at the College of Charleston, in Georgetown, in the sanctuary where we now sit, and in the "Secession Governor," may not have been Elizabeth's cup of tea, but as in everything she did, she gave it her all. hearts of each of us.

Then in the spring of 2017, her dream job became available. May Elizabeth's memory be a blessing forever.



Elizabeth Moses greets a diamondback terrapin during one of her marine animal surveys in North Inlet, east of Elizabeth loaned an ambrotype of Georgetown, SC, ca. 2003. Photo: Rob Young.





energy into developing the exhibition galleries you now can see, just beyond the doors of this sanctuary. Temple Sinai's Jewish History Center is a wonder to behold: an inspired re-purposing of synagogue space as an educational facility, designed with extraordinary speed, efficiency, and a sense of beauty.

My dear friend Elizabeth died far too young. Few of us can know how long we have here on earth. We don't know the trials and misfortunes that will test us along the way. Elizabeth knew! It would have been easy for her to become bitter and hardened, or to

### Turning Out the Lights by Dr. Louis A. Drucker, Past President, Temple Beth Or, Kingstree, SC

Turn out the lights when you leave. It's a simple April 1945 as a Conservative congregation by Jewish families L statement that we've all heard. Seems reasonable, that lived in small towns in the Pee Dee region of South

seems easy, but how do you do it? How do you do it when it's your synagogue and you're not only leaving, you're closing? Such is the fate of many of South Carolina's smalltown congregations, including mine, Temple Beth Or in Kingstree, South Carolina. In February 2005, the day after my father's funeral, I had to turn out the lights.

The congregation at Temple Beth Or taught me many things. I learned to read Hebrew. I learned the history of the Jewish people and their historic struggles with many kinds of strife. I learned how hard work and compassion for others could reward you with far more than wages at a job. I learned that not all the people in my temple were perfect, but each had a purpose and a place. I learned to be a leader of the congregation and of weekly Shabbat services. I learned how to make as much noise as possible when I heard the name HAMAN! But what I never learned was how to end it all. How could it be that I, the president of the congregation, was going to be the one to make the decision that it was time to close the doors? How, after only 60 years, did this happen? How can I go over to our cemetery and look at the headstones of all these great people who had built so much out of so little? What did I do, or not do, that could have averted this awful end?

What do you do with the memorabilia that documents the history of your congregation? How about the Torahs, the religious school books, the Haggadot, the memorial boards, the eternal light, the building itself? These were all questions without answers.

Temple Beth Or was founded in



Above: David Marcus blowing the shofar at Temple Beth Or, Kingstree, SC, no date. Courtesy of Louis Drucker. Below: Sid Dubin in the door of student from the Jewish Theological Temple Beth Or, no date. Courtesy of Neil Dubin.



Carolina. They met in members' homes until they finally decided upon a location for a synagogue in Kingstree. On April 10, 1949, the cornerstone for Temple Beth Or was placed. Like all congregations, there were Shabbat services, onegs, seders, Purim festivals, men's club and Sisterhood, religious school, Hanukkah parties, field trips, youth group, monthly bulletins, and fundraisers. We did it all. Except we didn't have a rabbi. How could we? We were only a small group of families in a small town.

Fortunately, Synagogue Emanu-El in Charleston was willing to take us under its wing for many years; with its help every child in our congregation for decades was either a bar or bat mitzvah. Every year, for the High Holidays, we hosted a rabbinical Seminary in New York to lead us in prayer. Our congregation prospered. Little did we know that our level of education, drive, and success would contribute to our demise. It wasn't long before our children, who had achieved excellence in the classroom and society, were now leaving our sleepy rural setting for life in bustling cities around the country. The job market was changing and our community wasn't. The proprietors of the many Jewish businesses in Kingstree and nearby towns were retiring and closing their businesses.

As our numbers diminished, so did our potential to attract new members. How do you convince that new Jewish couple with the four-yearold daughter to come to your temple when holding Shabbat services depends on finding a minyan; when you have no religious school because



religious school is taught by 70-year-olds to 70-year-olds and the only kids who are "members" are grandchildren who are visiting. The congregations dominated by older members are I suspect similar scenarios have taken place in other small viable and dynamic, but to survive they must be located in an area with institutions and organizations that are vital to a thriving city or town. Many of our small communities in South Carolina don't have the societal infrastructure needed to retain their residents, let alone draw newcomers.

there are only two children in the congregation; when all of that and more is offered at another temple 40 miles away? Jewish communities in South Carolina, such as Camden, Dillon, and Orangeburg-isolated towns negatively affected by changes in the local economy and population. Some small congregations, like Temple Beth Elohim in Georgetown, have been able to avoid extinction because of their geographical advantage. Retirees moving south help to sustain these I only hope you don't have to be the person who turns out congregations, though it's a different environment, where the light.

### Love and Loyalty: Temple Mt. Sinai in Walterboro by Paul Siegel, Gale Siegel Messerman, Penny Siegel Blachman, and Joseph Siegel

🗋 uring the early years of Jewish religious life in hired architect John Truluck, a Clemson graduate and World Walterboro, South Carolina, dating to the early War II fighter pilot. Blueprints were drawn and approved, an 1900s, Sabbath services were held in private homes, the official groundbreaking ceremony took place in 1950, and Masonic hall adjoining Zalin's Department Store, and, for construction finally began. The building was completed by the fall of 1951, in time for the High Holidays. a time, at the Walterboro Army Airfield chapel. The Torah was kept at the home of Jacob Frank. Lewis Harris, the son On May 25, 1952, Temple Mt. Sinai was dedicated in the of Ruth Horowitz and Abram Harris, proprietors of Hayes presence of the entire Jewish community of Walterboro and

Jewelers on Washington Street in Walterboro, recalls seeing Mr. Frank walking from his house on Lucas Street to the Masonic hall, carrying the Torah wrapped in a sheet. Various members of the Jewish community led the prayers and delivered sermons. Among the earliest members were our maternal great-grandparents (Joseph's great-great-grandparents) Anna Barth and Hyman Zalin. Their daughter Bessie married Albert Novit, and their daughter Leona our mother, married Anderson native Sam Siegel.

small Jewish community of Collection of Paul Siegel.

Temple Mt. Sinai groundbreaking, Walterboro, SC, 1950.

approximately 40 members to build a temple in which to temple and cultural center: "The completion of the Synagogue worship, celebrate, educate their children, and hold cultural is not, in itself, the end. It is the beginning . . . the spirit of a and communal events. Minutes of the meetings from 1947 congregation is more important than its beautiful temple. Gold and marble are never as bright as love and loyalty." The to 1976 demonstrate the dedication, concerted effort, and sacrifice of every member of Walterboro's Jewish community Rev. John Younginer extended formal greetings on behalf of to attain these goals. After a few years of searching for an the Walterboro Ministerial Union. A reception in the temple's appropriate location for their sanctuary and social hall, the new assembly hall followed the ceremony. congregation bought a parcel of land on Neyle Street and In the early 1950s, the congregation also arranged to



L to r: Abe Harris, Karl Sutker, Benny Frank, Sol Cohen, The cataclysmic events Leon Gelson, Jay Frank, Sam Novit, unknown, Isadore of World War II inspired this Bogoslow, Mortie Cohen, and John Truluck, the architect. Beth Israel, congratulated the

the population at large. Temple President Leon Gelson led the program with welcoming remarks in which he thanked the Town of Walterboro for its spirit of friendship and cooperation. The program reveals that our grandfather Albert Novit and Murray Warshaw placed the scrolls in the ark. Cantor J. J. Renzer of Charleston's Conservative Synagogue Emanu-El sang, and the eternal light was lit. Rabbi Lewis Weintraub, also from Emanu-El, gave the dedication address. In his prayer of dedication, Rabbi Julius Fisher, of Beaufort's congregation on its beautiful

#### **JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH CAROLINA** PAGE 10

have a parcel of land in Walterboro's Live Oak Cemetery set aside for a Jewish burial ground, freeing the city's Jews from having to purchase plots 50 miles away in Charleston, an accomplishment that was a high priority for our father, Sam Siegel. Congregants purchase their respective plots directly from the Live Oak Cemetery Association.

Our congregation has never formally affiliated with either the Conservative or Reform tradition. At the January 1952 annual meeting, Sam Novit, our great-uncle, moved that they affiliate with the Conservative Movement. A discussion followed with members expressing concern over the cost and

a desire to determine personal preferences first. A straw poll was taken and the result was thirteen for Conservative and nine for Reform, but there was no motion, second, or formal vote.

Affiliation with United Synagogue of America (later renamed United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism) was proposed again in 1956, this time by Henry Kessler. The

Paul Siegel, president of the congregation for four decades, fondly remembers community leader Bernard Warshaw informing the congregation of attempts by Charleston synagogues to "swallow up" Temple Mt. Sinai. Paul remembers Bernard striding up to the bimah and announcing to the world "we are a proud community and will not give up our identity."

In the three decades after building the synagogue, the Jews of Walterboro maintained a vibrant religious community with as many as 50 adult members in the congregation and 15 children attending Sunday school. Although the future looked bright, the changing business dynamics of small towns in the

> a challenge. Once a thriving area for small businesses, many owned by Jewish families, downtown Walterboro no longer provided a fertile environment for this type of enterprise. Young people, looking for social, cultural, and economic opportunities, were drawn to urban areas. By the 1950s, U.S. Highway 301 offered travelers the fastest route between the Northeast and Florida. The South Carolina portion, completed in the late

same concerns were Bernard Warshaw (center, in black), former president of the JHSSC, and his wife, raised but, in the end, Ann, surrounded by family and fellow congregants, Temple Mt. Sinai, Walterboro, the board decided to SC, ca. 2006. Photo: Alan Gardner, MD. Courtesy of Paul Siegel.

request materials to help plan services from both the United '40s, is well inland from U.S. Hwy 15 and diverted tourists a Synagogue and Hebrew Union College (Reform).

Although the Conservative label stuck, many members have felt a close kinship with Reform; a number have also held membership at either Synagogue Emanu-El or the Reform Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim (KKBE) in Charleston.

In their quest for knowledge, the young congregation engaged, besides lay teachers, scholars such as Rabbis Alan Tarshish and Burton Padoll of KKBE to present lectures and lead discussions about the challenges facing modern Jewry. Student rabbis commissioned through the Jewish Theological Seminary, a Conservative organization, conducted High Holiday services, and traveling rabbis supplemented Sunday school classes with Hebrew instruction. We celebrated the holidays-Passover Seders, Purim parties-in communal fashion. The Sunday school children put on plays and we had a sukkah at the synagogue. We were a close-knit group and, having grown up in the midst of what felt like an extended family, we have many warm memories.

good 40 miles west of Walterboro. Roads were better and gas was cheap. In the 1970s, with the advent of Charles Town Square and Northwoods Mall, more and more Walterboro residents did their shopping on the outskirts of Charleston. Further damage occurred when, first, Kmart came to Walterboro, then Walmart and Super Walmart.

Sixty-six years after the founding of Temple Mt. Sinai, Jewish life in Walterboro has drastically diminished. With fewer than ten members residing in town, holding weekly Shabbat services is not realistic. However, there is still something remarkable about the Jews of Walterboro. While most of the Baby Boomers and their children have moved to larger cities, the extended families, understanding that their roots lie in this small, southern town, come together every year to worship at Temple Mt. Sinai for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Although our numbers have dwindled, our connection to the community formed by our parents and grandparents remains strong.



### Endangered Congregations | Strategies for Survival October 20-21, 2018 | Sumter and Camden, South Carolina

#### Saturday, October 20 ~ Sumter

| Registration   Tour   Lunch – Sumt<br>After lunch tour of Temple Sinai Jev<br>Unless otherwise stated, Saturday afternoon e  |
|--|
| <b>What a Big City Boy Learned Abo</b><br>David Sarnat, President, Jewish Cor  |
| <b>Endangered Congregations</b><br>Moderator: Noah Levine, Vice Presid<br>Panelists: Garry Baum (Camden); B<br>Barry Frishberg (Orangeburg); Jack<br>Paul Siegel (Walterboro)  |
| <b>Strategies and Resources for Surv</b><br>Moderator: Mark Swick, Executive<br>Panelists: Roger Ackerman, Temple<br>Noah Levine, Jewish Community L<br>Anita M. Rosenberg, Kahal Kadosh<br>Jay Schwartz, Temple Sinai |
| Reception – Sumter County Museu  |
| Dinner at Hamptons, 33 N. Main St  |
|  |

#### JHSSC board meeting – everyone is invited! 9:30 - 10:30 а.м. 10:30 - 11:30**Stories from Jewish Camden** Barbara Freed James, Secretary and Treasurer, Temple Beth El

11:30 - 1

12:45

| 2:30 р.м. | Community of Memory: Camd         |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|
|           | Moderator: Dale Rosengarten, Cura |
|           | Panelists: Cheryl Baum, Garry Ba  |
|           | Box lunch provided                |
|           | Beth El Cemetery tour, Campbell   |

#### Hotel reservations Hyatt Place Sumter/Downtown 18 N. Main Street, Sumter, SC 29150 803.774.8100 A block of rooms has been reserved at the Hyatt Place Sumter/ Downtown for \$124/night on Friday October 19th and Saturday October 20th. To reserve a room please visit the hotel website, or call 803.774.8100 by September 20<sup>th</sup> and use the group code *G-JHSC*.



ter County Museum, 122 N. Washington Street wish History Center, 11 Church Street events take place in Temple Sinai sanctuary, 11 Church Street

out Small Town Jewish Life: The JCLP Experience mmunity Legacy Project

ident, Jewish Community Legacy Project Barry Draisen (Anderson); Louis Drucker (Kingstree); Lieb (Orangeburg); Rhetta Mendelsohn (Orangeburg);

#### vival

Director, JHSSC e Sinai; Rebecca Engel, Charleston Jewish Federation; Legacy Project; Annie Rivers, Sumter County Museum; n Beth Elohim; Dale Rosengarten, College of Charleston;

um

Street – Dutch treat. Reservations are required.

Unless otherwise stated, Sunday events take place in Temple Beth El sanctuary, 1500 block, Lyttleton Street

#### den's Jews Then and Now

rator and Historian, Special Collections, College of Charleston aum, Barbara Freed James, Albert Baruch Mercer, Rita Tanzer

Street near Meeting Street



### Growing Up Jewish in Camden

by Garry Baum, Becky Baum Lourie, Cheryl Baum, and Harry Baum

### Garry

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When I was growing up in Camden, South Carolina, headmaster, Chuck Owens, was a good friend of my Camden in the 1960s and '70s, the city had a population grandmother. Minnia Tayall Baym, and he always around the second of around 8,000. Now it is about 7,000. But while the city us so we could attend services.

itself has lost some residents, Kershaw County has really ballooned. The Jewish population of Camden was thriving when my siblings, Harry, Cheryl, Becky, and I were children, but it was starting its descent. Many kids, like me, left Camden after high school and did not return.

There were a few Jewish families in Camden with children: the Kareshes, Schreibers, James, and others. We would see each other at Jewish functions. My brother, sisters, and I were socially friendly with all of them. One of my earliest memories associated with Judaism was my brother Harry's bar mitzvah. It was a big event and many of our out-of-town relatives attended. Above: Garry, Harry, and Cheryl The celebration took place at the Holiday Baum (front to back) at Burger Chef families that would stop by. Inn in Lugoff, which may have been one in Sumter, SC, where the Baum siblings of the few hotels in the Camden area and often stopped for lunch after Sunday probably the only one that could hold the large crowd that attended.

was different from being raised in a city of the Baum family. that had enough Jewish families to fill a synagogue and maintain a youth group. Most of my friends were not Jewish. They really didn't understand my religion, but it was never an issue. The only difference was I got out of school for two days during the High Holidays, and we didn't celebrate Christmas with a tree, though one time we had a "Hanukkah bush" made of tree branches and gum drops. We usually had gifts during the eight days of Hanukkah and on Christmas morning.

My sister Becky and I were the only Jews at our small, private Christian school, Thomas Sumter Academy in Dalzell. The school gave us a quality education. My

each year for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, but the Rita) led services. I remember Jay would also give a thoughtful

in the 1960s and '70s, the city had a population grandmother, Minnie Tewell Baum, and he always excused

Besides opening every fall for the High

Holidays, our active Jewish congregation

held some Friday night services at Temple

Beth El on Lyttleton Street. Behind the

small sanctuary is an annex that housed a

Sunday school. While we were growing up,

however, there were not enough children

to warrant weekly classes, so my brother,

sisters, and I were driven to Temple Sinai

in Sumter every Sunday morning. After

Sunday school, we were treated to lunch at

served as the place for oneg after Shabbat

services. My mom, Ann Briskin Baum,

would have coffee and such for the Jewish

spot of sorts for a number of relatives. They

would either come for a visit on their way

somewhere, or they would plan a vacation

and stay with us for a few days. We had a

large dining room table that accommodated

several guests at various meals; of

course, there was a kids' table as well. My

grandmother, Minnie, whom we called

Nannie, would make the best chopped liver

and that is when I learned to like it. To this

lay rabbi when I was little. Sometimes we

would meet at one of Camden's restaurants

after services, and on a couple of occasions

congregation members gathered to celebrate

Hanukkah together; I remember spinning

the dreidel with the other children. After

Leon died, my dad, Bernie Baum, became

the temple's lay leader and conducted

Leon Schlosburg (wife Trixie) was our

day, all others are judged by hers.

Our home was next to the temple and

Our house also served as a landing

one of the restaurants in town.



school at Temple Sinai. Below: Bernie Baum (1) and Jay Tanzer, former lay leaders of Temple Beth El, Camden, Growing up Jewish in a small town SC, Rosh Hashanah 1995. Courtesy



services for many years. When he and my classmates may not have known why we got out of school mom moved to Myrtle Beach in the late 1980s, Jay Tanzer (wife

and informational "sermon." I always made it a point to return my husband's parents, Susan and Isadore Lourie. I remember to Temple Beth El for High Holiday services. I still do. thinking how special that felt and tried to do it often with my children when they were young.

### Becky

TAThen I was growing up in Camden there were maybe 20 Jewish families who belonged to Temple Beth El—down from around 100 families in 1927. Our house was right next door to the temple, which, by the way, used to be St. Mary's Catholic Church, built in 1903. I remember going to temple as a young girl for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. There would always be a visiting, retired rabbi to conduct the services. Eventually, my father, Bernie Baum, took over leading the prayers for the holidays. My dad was not a rabbi;

he owned Fox Pawn Shop, which was on Broad Street in the heart of downtown Camden. After he and my mother moved out of Camden, Jay Tanzer served as lay leader and he continued in that role for a number of years. Then my younger brother, Garry, took over, and he leads services twice a year for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. I still go home with my family for Rosh Hashanah.

My siblings and I went to Sunday school classes in

Sumter at Temple Sinai. I remember my sister, Cheryl,



The Baum family (1 to r): Garry Baum, Bernie Baum, Becky Baum Lourie, Cheryl Baum, Harry Baum, and Ann Briskin Baum, Temple Beth El, Camden, SC, Rosh Hashanah 1995. Courtesy of the Baum family.

driving us there every Sunday and how I never wanted to my family sent us to Temple Sinai in Sumter for Sunday school. In the 1960s and early '70s, our temple had a nice crowd go. My older brother, Harry, had a bar mitzvah at Temple of about 40 people. Now we have only about ten families. We Sinai, and Cheryl and my younger brother, Garry, and I were open up only four times a year for evening and day services on confirmed there. Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. At home my family celebrated Rosh Hashanah, Yom

Kippur, Passover, and Hanukkah, but I don't remember having a My father, Bernie Baum, became our rabbi after Leon Shabbat meal on Fridays or lighting Shabbat candles as a child. Schlosburg died. Now my brother Garry Baum leads our The first time I lit Shabbat candles, we were having a meal with services and we have different people read from the Torah. A

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I loved growing up in a small southern town and being Jewish was just that. I was Jewish and my friends were not, but that was okay. Life in Camden was good.

### Cheryl

Tn school, I gave my friends cards and presents at LChristmastime. There was no one to give Hanukkah cards to and my schools did not recognize Hanukkah as a holiday. We never had a tree to put our presents under like my friends whose families celebrated Christmas.

The sanctuary at Temple Beth El has not changed much. We do have air conditioning and heat now. Before that, we had large fans to cool us off. We have an annex in the back of the temple where the children-when there were enough for a class-went to Sunday school. My classmates learned more than I did about our Jewish heritage. I never learned much. Our class, which consisted of me, my brother Harry, and the Schreiber and Karesh kids, was very small-about eight altogether—so

JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH CAROLINA PAGE 14

member takes the Torah home after services to keep it safe.

It was not hard living in Camden with such a small Jewish community. That's all I know. I still live in Camden and I love it. Opening the temple for our holidays is very exciting. Now we have families coming from large cities to celebrate with us. They say it's because we are small and they would rather come to a small temple instead of one of the larger ones.

### Harry

This is to Certify that Norman Everett Baum During the 1960s I remember having Temple Beth El next door to the house where I grew up in Camden. That was good about 14 days a year, because those were days when the congregation gathered for services. Temple was very formal, but also—little did I know at the time—very English. Hebrew was never spoken, except for the Sh'ma and the Bar'chu, which were recited from memory, not read. We had a rabbi from Sumter come during the school year once a month, on Sunday afternoons, to lead Shabbat services. During the High Holidays, the president of the congregation led the services—that is, the part in English. We would take out the Torah but never open it. As a child all I remember was being told to be quiet.

Sunday school meant going to Sumter every week—a 70-mile round trip. At the beginning, a high school student,

Jan Barre Courses Jours

Steve Zagoria, was Dear mr. 9 mrs. Wingrow Thank you very mid to de beautibut lewish for de beautibut lewish magnesus and other de magnesus and other de magnesus and other de magnesis and other de magnesis and other de magnesis and the beautibut lewish magnesis and other de magnesis and other de magnesis and the beautibut lewish magnesis and other de magnesis and the beautibut lewish magnesis hired to drive us. When he graduated it required an unhappy parent. Then three of

Bertificate of

us—David Karesh, Harry Kline, and me—had our bar mitzvah. We became the Hebrew experts. Even if we said something wrong, who knew?

Confirmation

CORRESPONDING TO DAY OF Sivan 5096

Beth El S.

2a. Witthouly

HAS BEEN DULY ACCEPTED AS A

RESPONSIBLE MEMBER OF THE

CONGREGATION OF ISRAEL

Today the reality is the size of the congregation at Temple Beth El continues to shrink. I remember three generations of the Baum family-our grandparents Minnie T. Baum and Morris and Cille Briskin; Minnie's sisters, Rose Israel and Augusta Simons; Uncle Norman Baum; and my parents and siblingstaking up the entire right side of the temple, while the rest of

Top: Norman Everett Baum's confirmation certificate, Temple Beth El, Camden, SC, May 24, 1936. Special Collections, College of Charleston.

> Left: Harry Maurice Baum's bar mitzvah cake, created by Sura Wolff Wengrow of Columbia, SC, and Harry's thank you note. Mrs. Wengrow made elaborately decorated cakes for many bar and bat mitzvah celebrations, and other occasions. She compiled an album filled with photographs documenting her creativity. Courtesy of Sura's son Arnold Wengrow and daughter Reberta Wengrow Karesh.



FALL 2018

Baum Brothers stocked buggies, groceries, dry goods, and hardware. Special Collections, College of Charleston.



the congregation was on the left. Many of us have moved away. Today, we have fewer than ten dues-paying families. Once we invited some friends of mine from a local Baptist church, who were interested

> in attending a service, and they outnumbered the Jewish people.

> > My brother, Garry, is in charge of services. Without him and Barbara Freed James, who is temple secretary and treasurer, we would not exist. I hope more

> > > Ser.

TORE

Sage

Jewish people come to Camden so we can keep the temple alive for many years to come. It would be a shame for it to close.

Left: Norman "Nicky" Everett Baum Phyllis Karesh, Frances Deborah "Debby" Baruch, Rose Louise Rich, and David Wolfe Wallnau, Temple Beth El confirmation, Camden, SC, May 24, 1936. Special Collections, College of Charleston.

Baum Brothers Store, ca. 1890, Camden, SC. Three Baum brothers emigrated from Schwersenz, Prussia, settled in Camden and, in 1850, opened a mercantile store. All were soldiers in the service of the Confederacy. Marcus Baum lost his life to friendly fire in 1864. After the Civil War, Herman and Mannes operated what their sign described as "The Mammoth Store" at 1000 Broad Street. In 1902,

### Holding On: Temple B'Nai Israel of Anderson

#### by Barry Draisen, with contributions from David Draisen

The service was held in a room over a grocery store on East Whitner Street. I remember looking down out of the window at the children walking to town when school at McCants Junior

High was over for the day. I don't remember anything about the service but I do remember that my new wool suit itched terribly and I was very uncomfortable. The next year we had our own synagogue. There was no air conditioning back then, the wooden pews were hard, the sanctuary was crowded with a lot of big loud people I didn't know, and my wool suit still itched. The cantor was Nahum Rosenblum and he made each Hebrew word he chanted last forever and ever. I remember he would spend an eternity on just the one word "Hamelech." I wanted to go outside and play, where at least there would be a breeze.

I was six years old when Temple B'Nai Israel opened in 1948. I found out later that a committee led by Max Siegel, with Herman Poliakoff (my uncle), Hyman Draisen (my father), Nathan Fleishman, Nahum Rosenblum, and others led the drive to build the synagogue that presently stands on Oakland Avenue in Anderson. It was built at that time because Mr. Siegel wanted his grandson Ronnie Bern to have his bar mitzvah in a "proper" synagogue. At the time bar and bat mitzvah candidates were trained by Joe Fleishman and Hyman Draisen.

I remember going to Sunday school with many other kids up until the time of my own bar mitzvah. Flo Fleishman was the religious school leader and classes were taught by volunteer members. In the 1970s, my

sister Bernice Draisen Shuman (now Goldman), my wife, Ellen Cherkas Draisen, and Lynn Vinson Friedman taught our young children there. As president of the congregation in the early '80s,

My earliest recollection of going to shul in Anderson I remember recruiting (begging) Lynn, who was a teacher, to add Hebrew to the curriculum. She agreed, even though she didn't know how to read Hebrew. I bought the books and told her she just had to stay one lesson ahead of the kids. She did great with it!

The congregation was initially Orthodox, with services led by George Ackerman of Walhalla, South Carolina, and a series of part-time rabbis, including Rabbis Norman Goldberg, William (Bill) Feyer, and Israel Gerber. In the 1950s, there was a shift toward Conservative practices. For a few years the Shabbat services were Conservative but High Holidays were Orthodox. In the late '70s, the congregation shifted to Reform services. We briefly joined the Reform Movement and still use the Reform Gates of Prayer as our prayer book on Shabbat.

> Many improvements have been made to the sanctuary, which can seat 150 people. We installed air conditioning in the mid- to late '50s, replaced the carpeting, and added old 1940s roll-out windows with 12 beautiful stained glass windows, and we recently added stained glass doors to our ark in memory of Alvin Fleishman, reportedly Anderson's first bar mitzvah. The ark now houses three Torahs. The original was brought over from Kiev by my grandfather Zalman Poliakoff. We also have a Holocaust Torah from a community in Czechoslovakia that we traditionally use for the afternoon service on Yom Kippur.

In recent times, Dr. Robert Kimmel, Dr. Peter Cohen, and Mike Krupsaw have provided bar and bat mitzvah training. Lay leaders conduct services every Friday night, and Dr. Kimmel leads services for the major

holidays, as well as several Shabbat services.

The membership of our congregation has stayed fairly steady over the past ten years. At its peak Temple B'Nai Israel served 36 member-families, a number that now stands at 25. The demographics are a cause of concern. When we had 36 families most members were in their 30s and 40s and there were about 50 kids. Now there are almost no children—in the 1990s our Sunday school classrooms were converted to one large area for break-the-fast meals and Passover Seders. Our membership ranges in age from 60 to 80.

FALL 2018

I'm not sure what the future holds for Temple B'Nai Israel of Anderson. While the general population of the David Draisen (1) and Dr. Robert Kimmel, Purim Anderson area is growing, the number 2017, Temple B'Nai Israel, Anderson, SC. Photo: of Jews is declining. We do lose some Barry Draisen.



services, which was tradition. We broke the Yom Kippur fast by Barry Frishberg in the basement of the synagogue with food brought in by the When we moved to Orangeburg in 1981, Lillian Goldberg, our next door neighbor, invited us to members. It was always our best attended event of the year. That year, at the Yom Kippur break-the-fast, Mordie's widow, Yetta, Friday night services at Temple Sinai, which were conducted got up and remarked that since her husband passed away we had by her brother Mordie Rubenstein. It wasn't until a few years not had one service; she felt we were no longer a functioning later that we finally accepted the offer. During our first visit synagogue and, as treasurer, proposed that we hold a business we were warmly greeted by the dozen or so congregants. meeting in two weeks to discuss closing the synagogue and

They welcomed our threeyear-old daughter and newborn son, expressing joy about seeing children in the synagogue again.

In 1956, after years of fund raising and holding services in family homes, Temple Sinai was built at its current site on Ellis Avenue, in a residential neighborhood. By the 1980s, Temple Sinai's membership-like that of many synagogues in small southern towns-was shrinking. As children grew up they moved Phillip Scott Reynolds, Temple Sinai, Orangeburg, SC,



elsewhere; parents were aging and The Times and Democrat (Orangeburg, SC).

some passed away. There weren't enough younger people to and distribute all assets to other places of worship in Orangeburg. replace them in the congregation. At that time, a minyan was The rationale was that these churches helped us when we were unusual for Friday night services, and most of the congregation raising money to build Temple Sinai since they thought bringing a attended only holiday services. synagogue to Orangeburg would complete the major institutions

of religious worship in the area. The second strategy, endorsed by Then, on January 24, 1987, Mordie Rubenstein died. Without our lay rabbi, services were discontinued until Rosh most of the congregation, was to continue as we had in the past; Hashanah, when the son of a rabbi was hired to conduct no one, however, was willing to assume the leadership position.



Above: Irvin (1), Caroline, and Raymond Rosenblum, children of founding member Nahum Rosenblum, in front of Temple B'Nai Israel, in Anderson, SC, 1954, six years after it was built across the street padding to the pews. We replaced the from their home. Collection of Sandra Lee Kahn Rosenblum. Below: Bonnie Mitchell lights the candles, Temple B'Nai Israel, Anderson, SC, Hanukkah 2017. Photo: Barry Draisen.





potential members, especially those with young children, to Temple of Israel, Beth Israel, and Chabad in Greenville. New industry is coming to Anderson all the time and there is a major push to build hotels, parks, and a convention facility in the Lake Hartwell recreational area. We have some new members, recent retirees who have moved to our area from other parts of the country. Maybe if we hold on long enough, a retirement community like the one Del Webb built near Bluffton will come here and bring with it sufficient numbers of Jewish residents to spark a revival in our congregation.

### Small-town Conundrum: Temple Sinai of Orangeburg

distributing its assets.

Approximately 30 people attended the business meeting, including-to my surpriseseveral non-members. One gentleman was an accountant who was Jewish but converted to Unitarianism and attended a church in Columbia, South Carolina. While claiming no affiliation with Temple Sinai, he said he felt a tie to Judaism and he had the expertise to help us liquidate the assets.

There were two primary out of town seeking employment September 10, 2010. Photo: Larry Hardy. Courtesy of opinions on how to proceed. The first was we should sell the building

#### PAGE 18 **JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH CAROLINA**

would alternately conduct services, so as not to put a big burden on one person. In addition, instead of Friday nights, services would be conducted on Saturday mornings to accommodate elderly members who preferred to drive in daylight. The last and most significant change was the decision to hold services only on the first Saturday of the month. Our thinking was that members would be more likely to attend regularly if the obligation was less demanding.

That year was a resounding success. Attendance was high

and most members expressed satisfaction with the renewed fellowship. Unfortunately, at the end of the year, two of the lay readers moved out of state, leaving me with the responsibility of running services. Over the last two decades, new members, David Farr in particular, have shared the leadership of the synagogue.

From about 1988 to 2000, things went smoothly. our new format, enrollment Times and Democrat (Orangeburg, SC).

who joined were a few well know citizens, whose participation major event in our lives—took place in Temple Sinai. The improved our visibility. We invited non-Jewish residents to special events such as our Passover Seder, which helped to increase awareness of Judaism in the area. But recurring notice that the bond we share is unique to members of Temple problems—an aging population, children leaving the area, and the synagogue's low profile-have once again caused membership to dwindle to historically low numbers. Since Temple Sinai finds itself in a similar place as it was three Passover 2017 only a few have attended services.

membership and a low dues structure, the future is once again more become a viable synagogue.

Finally, a compromise was proposed: three members in doubt. Part of the challenge is this: what I call the "low effort" model (once-a-month services of less than one hour duration, minimal dues, etc.) that attracts our members is at the same time a deterrent to recruiting newcomers who are looking for a more traditional congregation led by an ordained rabbi and who find their needs met in synagogues located in Columbia or Charleston, South Carolina. It appears that most new Jewish citizens in the Orangeburg area are either traditionalists, or they are secular Jews who are not likely to join any synagogue.

Over the last few decades I have contributed much to

Temple Sinai, but I have received far more in return. My wife, Debra Mergel Frishberg-may her memory be a blessing—did as much or more for Temple Sinai as I did. She served as secretary and treasurer for about as long as I conducted services. She typically wrote the letters to the J. J. Miller Foundation documenting our need for funds. She organized our Passover Seders and the

parties for the children, attended

Since former members were Barry Frishberg, lay leader of Temple Sinai, Orangeburg, SC, break-the-fast dinners on Yom persuaded to rejoin under Rosh Hashanah 2010. Photo: Larry Hardy. Courtesy of The Kippur. She hosted Hanukkah

expanded to roughly 50 members at our peak. Among those mostly by their non-Jewish friends. My son's bar mitzvah—a congregation has become an extended family to me and my children. Whenever I run into a member in the community, I Sinai. The relationships I have developed over the years have enriched my life and will always be greatly appreciated. Today, decades ago. A solution needs to be found to re-energize the While Temple Sinai is financially stable, despite its small congregation, preserve the history of Temple Sinai, and once

Solomon Lipman

Living by the Rails: A History of Lowcountry Railroads The Morris Center for Lowcountry Heritage, Ridgeland, SC April 28, 2018 – March 19, 2019

While researching her family history, attorney and Charleston native Deborah Lipman Cochelin discovered that her great-grandfather Solomon Lipman, who lived in Ridgeland, South Carolina, filed a lawsuit against the Atlantic Coastline Railroad in 1913. The outcome resulted in a ruling that stands today. Solomon's story is featured in the exhibit Living by the Rails currently on display at the Morris Center for Lowcountry Heritage in Ridgeland. The center is open, free of charge, Tuesday through Saturday, 10 to 5. Its third annual Dine, Dance, and Discover Fundraising Gala will be held on October 26.

# Telling the Story

FALL 2018

#### by Mark Swick, Executive Director, JHSSC

▲ s of press time, it has been nearly four months since  $A_{JHSSC's}$  spring meeting when I stepped into Marty Perlmutter's gigantic shoes as the Society's executive director. I have spent that time working with JHSSC staff and lay leadership on our major initiatives, including our upcoming fall meeting in Sumter and Camden and next spring's 25th anniversary gala, to be held in Charleston. We continue to make great progress with our newest venture, the Jewish Merchant Project (JMP), which aims to collect the story of every Jewish merchant who has operated in

South Carolina and document the impact Jewish businessmen and women have had on their communities, large and small. The JMP website is up and running—awaiting input from all of you who have information to share. Check it out at www.merchants. *jhssc.org*. Take the survey, explore the map, volunteer to help.

The merchant information we've gathered so far confirms what we have long known: that Jewish storekeepers who set up shop on main streets across the state became, with their families, the backbone of small congregations, reaching their peak as the post-World War II Baby Boomers came of age. When that generation moved away to pursue higher education and occupations elsewhere, the Jewish populations of small towns began to wane, and congregations faltered. Sensing the shifting tide, the Society's founders, led by Isadore Lourie, felt compelled to record and remember what they saw as an endangered contingent of South Carolina Jewry. Telling the story of the small-town Jewish merchant was very much at the heart of JHSSC's mission.

Small and mid-sized Jewish communities, not only in South Carolina but across the nation, continue to suffer from demographic decline, with some disappearing entirely. A few have found creative strategies for survival, while others are searching for a way forward. As you've read in this issue, our fall meeting in Sumter and Camden will focus on the plight of endangered congregations and consider approaches that may reverse the downward spiral. While looking backwards is a quality inherent to all historical societies, I am proud that JHSSC also looks to the future.

Our most ambitious initiatives, not to mention day-today operations, are made possible by the generosity of our Pillars—JHSSC members who commit \$5,000 over five years. Pillars allow us to think big and take our work seriously. For that you have my deepest gratitude, as well as an invitation to join us in October. Please come to the open board meeting Sunday morning and help us plan events to commemorate our 25<sup>th</sup> year. We have much to do, and much to celebrate.



### Pillars

Susan and Charles Altman, Charleston, SC Ellen Arnovitz, Atlanta, GA Doris L. Baumgarten, Aiken, SC Harold Brody, Atlanta, GA Alex and Dyan Cohen, Darlington, SC Joan Cutler, Columbia, SC Barry and Ellen Draisen, Anderson, SC Lowell and Barbara Epstein, Charleston, SC Bruce and Lilly Filler, Columbia, SC Steven J. Gold, Greenville, SC Judith Green, Charleston, SC Stuart and Rebecca Greenberg, Florence, SC Max and Ann Meddin Hellman, Charleston, SC Alan and Charlotte Kahn, Columbia, SC Jerry and Sue Kline, Columbia, SC Michael S. Kogan, Charleston, SC Allan and Jeanne Lieberman, Charleston, SC Susan R. Lourie, Columbia, SC Bert and Robin Mercer, Charleston, SC Susan Pearlstine, Charleston, SC Andrew and Mary Poliakoff, Spartanburg, SC Edward and Sandra Poliakoff, Columbia, SC Alan and Anne Reyner, Columbia, SC Deborah Ritter, Columbia, SC Benedict and Brenda Rosen, Myrtle Beach, SC Jeffrey and Mickey Rosenblum, Charleston, SC Sandra Lee Rosenblum, Charleston, SC Joseph and Edie Rubin, Charleston, SC Larry Simon, Isle of Palms, SC Mark and Gayle Sloan, Myrtle Beach, SC Gail (Altman) and Ronald Spahn, Baltimore, MD Richard Stern, Boston, MA Anita Zucker, Charleston, SC 

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Send us their information and we will inform them of your gift.

Make checks payable to JHSSC and mail to the address above.

Register now for the October 20-21 meeting in Sumter and Camden. See page 11 for more information.

jhssc.org

# THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY of South Carolina

Revisiting the Past Envisioning the Future May 18-19, 2019

Volume XXIV Number 1 Spring 2019

Тне

JEWISH

HISTORICAL

SOCIETY

Dale Rosengarten

editor

Alyssa Neely

assistant editor

and designer

The JHSSC newsletter is

published twice a year.

Current and back

issues can be found at

jhssc.org

On the cover: I. D. Rubin

(Uncle Dave) and his family

pose in the windows of the

New York Pawn Office at

128–130 Market Street, in

Charleston, SC, ca. 1912. Born in Russia in 1869

and educated at the Jewish

Theological Seminary in

Kovno, Rubin immigrated to

Charleston, South Carolina,

in 1894. A staunch member of

Brith Sholom synagogue, he

Archival image from Special

Collections, College of

Charleston, superimposed on

contemporary photograph of

the location, now occupied by

the Belmond Charleston Place

Hotel and Shops. Photo by Lisa Rosamond Thompson.

served as president in 1909.

SOUTH CAROLINA

OF

#### SPRING 2019

# Letter from the President

s JHSSC enters its 25<sup>th</sup> the history of American, and especially southern, Jews. Three **A**anniversary year, it's a good renowned speakers will help us forge these ideas. Historian time to reflect on what has been the Stephen J. Whitfield, author of nine books on American secret to our success and longevity. Jewish culture, will be our keynote speaker on Saturday. On Sunday morning we will host a conversation between Rabbi Judith Schindler, former senior rabbi at Charlotte's of hard work by all those involved. Temple Beth El, and Steven R. Weisman, author of the recent bestseller Chosen Wars: How Judaism Became an American Religion. Together we will consider trends in Jewish life and culture that will affect our future and our children's future over the decades to come.

I believe the key has been stability of membership and staff, and a lot Marty Perlmutter and Dale Rosengarten were the catalysts who had enormous vision and put forth tremendous effort. Enid Idelsohn, Alyssa Neely, Rachel Barnett, and Mark Swick are part of the team comprising the current backbone

of the organization. We cannot thank them enough. It is an honor for me to be a part of a state-wide group, based at the College of Charleston, that, among its significant historical accomplishments, has brought together so many people from across South Carolina.

At the Society's meeting in May we will get a preview of the Jewish Merchant Project. The first fruits of the effort is A Store at Every Crossroads, an exhibition opening on May 18 in Addlestone Library. Creating the exhibit and filling out online surveys has prompted many family members to assemble their histories, compiling archival materials and writing about the experiences of their forebears. Some of their essays appear here in print, with longer versions posted online.

The stories coming to light are from the era of our grandparents and parents, the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, when new immigrants Carolina's economy and growth.

We were lucky to recruit Lynn Robertson, individual who put South Carolina's former director of McKissick Museum at the Unversity of South Jewish history on the map. The award will be presented at Carolina, to curate and design the exhibition, which has already the Society's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration on May 18, 2019. attracted interest from Historic Columbia and the State Museum I am proud of what this organization has accomplished in Columbia. In the lead story in this issue, Lynn outlines the and look forward to continuing my participation as JHSSC long history of Jewish merchants, from peddlers and small-town develops into one of the country's foremost Jewish historical storekeepers to retail tycoons and builders of shopping malls. societies. I hope you all will join me on May 18 and 19 as we For the past 25 years, JHSSC has looked back in time begin the next 25 years!

to understand our present. Much of what we know about South Carolina Jewish history has been documented by our own research. At our May meeting, we will use our acquired knowledge to try to imagine what the next 25 years holds for

### In this issue

A Good Living Can Be Made in Trade ~ Lynn Robertson ~ The dream of many Jewish immigrants arriving in South Carolina around the turn of the 20th century was to develop a successful selling route, acquire a store of their own, find a spouse, and raise a family. In this essay, the curator of A Store at Every Crossroads traces the roles Jewish merchant families played not only in southern cities, but in every town and hamlet along a railroad line or highway.....4

D. Poliakoff: 100 Years on the Square ~ Ed Poliakoff ~ David Poliakoff emigrated in 1893 from the shtetl of Kamen, northeast of Minsk in today's Belarus. After short stints in several upcountry towns, he settled in Abbeville, South Carolina, where he opened a clothing store in 

Edward's 5¢ · 10¢ · \$1.00 Stores and the Kronsberg Brothers ~ Mickey Kronsberg **Rosenblum** ~ With help from his uncle Joseph Bluestein, Edward Kronsberg opened the first Edward's five and ten cent store on King Street in Charleston in 1926. Joined in the 1930s by his brothers and mother, the Kronsbergs launched a 50-year expansion that led to the creation of more than 35 stores......10

Lowcountry: Past and Present ~ Lisa Rosamond Thompson ~ Look, and look again, at the images in this photo essay, and at I. D. Rubin's "New York Pawn Office" on the cover. These "doubletakes" are reproduced from the artist's senior thesis project at the College of **Revisiting the Past and Envisioning the Future** ~ JHSSC Celebrates its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary,

Charleston, SC, May 18–19, 2019......14–15

The Brody Brothers: Jewish Retail Giants in South Carolina ~ Harold J. Brody, M.D. ~ Russian immigrant Hyman Brody turned his shoe shop (est. 1918) in Sumter, South Carolina, into a department store, then tripled its floor space. When his sons joined the business, the Brodys expanded into North Carolina and opened a second store in Sumter called The Capitol......16

The Furchgott Stores, since 1866 ~ David Furchgott, with contributions from Alison Walsh and Maurice Furchgott ~ Slovakian Max Furchgott arrived in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1865, and partnered for a time in dry goods with his brothers Herman and Leopold and businessmen Charles Benedict and Morris Kohn. The family spread out to the south, north, and west, establishing successful department stores in Jacksonville, Florida, as well as Charleston...18

Rails to Retail: Mercantile Pioneers in St. Stephens ~ Deborah Lipman Cochelin ~ St. Stephens, in the upper reaches of Berkeley County in an area described as the "wild, wild, West," was a business frontier in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century for merchants Gus Rittenberg, Arthur 

The Sam Solomon Company ~ Kate Stillman, Martha Stillman Silverman, Ellen Jacobson Terry, and Marilyn Solomon Brilliant ~ Through much of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Sam Solomon Wholesale Jobbers helped to stock the shelves of storeowners and fill the packs of newly arrived immigrants who got their start by peddling. In the 1950s, Solomon's sons and son-in-law shifted from wholesale to a retail discount operation and catalog showroom. In the 

What Makes a Merchant? ~ Mark Swick ~ JHSSC's new executive director remembers the merchant patriarch of his family, Meyer Rosenblum, a Swedish immigrant who operated The Hub Clothing Co. in Iron Mountain, Michigan, exhibiting the same driving work ethic and sense of civic duty as his compatriots in South Carolina......27

Jeri Perlmutter.



Dale Rosengarten and Jeffrey Rosenblum at the opening of the

The Society has awarded the Order of the Jewish Palmetto five times in its 25year history-to Senator Isadore Lourie, Greenville Mayor Max and Mrs. Trude Heller, Solomon Breibart, Ann Meddin Hellman, and Dr. Martin Perlmutter. It will be my great pleasure to award the Jewish Palmetto for the sixth time to Dr. Dale Rosengarten.

PAGE 3

Dale has been central to JHSSC from the very beginning, playing a major part in its organization in 1994. She is founding director of the Jewish Heritage Collection at the Addlestone Library and has built an extensive manuscript and oral history archives that attracts researchers from far and wide. In partnership with McKissick Museum, she curated the exhibition A Portion of the People: Three Hundred Years of Southern Jewish Life and co-edited the exhibit A Portion of the People: book by the same name. She is editor of built successful businesses—often dry goods Three Hundred Years of Southern the JHSSC magazine and a consultant for stores—and contributed mightily to South Jewish Life at McKissick Museum, the Society's Jewish Merchant Project. Columbia, SC, 2002. Photo by We recognize Dale Rosengarten as the



Jeffrey Rosenblum, FAIA, JHSSC President

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# A Good Living Can Be Made in Trade

by Lynn Robertson, curator, A Store at Every Crossroads

uring the period of mass immigration between 1881 and 1924, the vast majority of East European Jews coming to the United States settled in urban areas, mainly outside the South. Northern and midwestern cities often immigrants who had some background in retail trade; life as are presented as sites of the typical American immigrant experience. But lives lived away from big cities are equally important to our understanding of history. South Carolina, undeniably rural and agricultural, offered Jewish "greenhorns" opportunities to experience, and integrate into, a different America.

PRICES

It was here, throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, that small

towns sprang up across the state along railroad lines and roadways, serving as trading hubs for local farmers and businesses. They attracted a significant influx of Jewish a rural peddler was an understood path to achieving financial security and being your own boss. For many newcomers, some of whom spoke only Yiddish, the dream was to develop a successful selling route, acquire a store of one's own, find a spouse, and start a family.

> Life in business often began with a dry goods store. These establishments sold most of what farm families needed, from plows to pillowcases. General merchandise stores commonly evolved into more specialized businesses as the town grew. Jewish merchants frequently encouraged other immigrant entrepreneurs or family members to join thempart of a matchmaking strategy that recruited single men as salesmen and potential suitors. Many towns boasted numerous Jewish-owned stores by the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1927, the small town of Bishopville was home to 93 Jewish residents, many of whom, such as the Levensons, had stores on Main Street.

> > These general merchandise stores served as community centers in small towns-destinations where both town residents and rural visitors could socialize as well as shop. The local store was

a hub for news and gossip, friendships and rivalries. Customers, especially women, looked forward to acquiring not only daily necessities but also the modest luxuries displayed on the shelves.

Some early Jewish merchants established themselves as purveyors of inexpensive merchandise. Regional suppliers provided a wide variety of wholesale goods to peddlers and storeowners. The Baltimore Bargain House specialized in serving southern merchants, many of them Jewish, offering credit and prepaid freight on first orders. Arrangements like these made it affordable for would-be merchants to stock their wagons or shops and develop a clientele. In 1911, Wolfe Rubenstein and his wife, Fannie Berger, opened the appropriately named Underselling Store in Elloree. But, by World

Top: Price's of Spartanburg, SC, 1903. Bottom: Wolff's of Allendale, SC, ca. 1915. Special Collections, College of Charleston.



War II, they were successful enough to install a new awning carrying the more dignified Rubenstein's above the store.

SPRING 2019

Jewish-owned establishments had a reputation for being more courteous to African-American clients, allowing them to try on articles of clothing, not a common practice in other shops. Jewish storekeepers also were more likely to extend credit to people of color. Their open-for-business policy required merchants to carefully navigate the racial norms in towns where the Ku Klux Klan operated openly. During the revival of KKK activity in the 1950s, Nathan Bass, the only Jewish merchant in North, South Carolina, both offered shelter to his customers during Klan displays and confronted his Masonic brothers on their racist views.

Small-town storeowners provided financial loans to regular customers, or became creditors in the crop lien system, where merchants furnished supplies to farmers against the sale of future crop yields. Holding the land as collateral, if years were bad, store men became landowners, and many diversified their investments by going into timber, cotton, or other crops. In this way, they started to look like so many of their fellow townsmen, managing land and worrying about the vicissitudes of weather and markets.

By the end of World War II-after the wholesale destruction of European Jewry that came to be called the Holocaust-American Jews emerged as the most affluent and inluential Jewish population in the world.

Right: Mann's of Newberry, SC, ca. 1908. Special Collections, College of Charleston. Novit's of Walterboro, SC. Courtesy of the Novit-Siegel family.



Their assimilation into mainstream America was driven by the immigrant generation's dreams of financial stability and public acceptance. Local storeowners were recognized as important contributors to day-today life and were increasingly invited to take part in public affairs. As their businesses prospered, Jewish merchants displayed their commitment to their adopted communities through civic and benevolent activities. Jewish women and men often served on boards and founded cultural organizations.

Perhaps the ultimate manifestation of Jewish involvement in community affairs was widespread engagement in politics. By 1900, many towns in the state could claim Jewish residents who had been elected

JOSEPF

mayor, city council member, or state legislator.

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#### JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH CAROLINA PAGE 6

Novit family of Walterboro, SC.

REMEMBER

SHORTES

U.S. HIGHWAY

LEADING FROM

THE NORTH

FLORIDA

Some of South Carolina's most powerful politicians in the 20<sup>th</sup> century came from Jewish merchant families. Sol Blatt reminisced about working in his father's store in Barnwell. Irene Rudnick, whose family's business was in Columbia, became the first Jewish woman elected to the state legislature. Members of other families, such as the Louries from St. George and the Kornbluts in Latta, maintained their mercantile ties while becoming politically prominent.

By the 1970s and '80s, many once-thriving small-town Jewish stores were out of business or soon to be. Typically, the younger generations in storekeeper families went to college, became professionals, and moved Lady Lafayette Hotel, owned by the to cities. Acknowledging the reality of smalltown depopulation, some prudent merchants relocated their businesses to thriving cities such as Greenville, Columbia, and Charleston.

> The spirit of entrepreneurship that characterized the ambitions of early Jewish peddlers and merchants did not disappear. Retailers looked for niche markets where they could avoid competition from big box stores. Some specialized in quality goods and personalized service. Spartanburg's Price's Menswear, established by Harry Price in 1903, offered custom-made suits to its Upstate clientele.

Others pursued new strategies for offering merchandise at bargain prices. Harry Zaglin opened the Greenville Army and Navy Store, selling military surplus, in the 1950s. The wholesale warehouse established in Charleston by Sam Solomon in 1909 passed to his sons, Melvin and Aaron, and son-in-law, Joseph Stillman, at his death in 1954. They pioneered retail discounting through customer memberships and catalogue showroom merchandizing. The company that once supplied Jewish peddlers grew to include stores throughout South Carolina as well as three other states.

In the post-World War II suburban boom, main street stores migrated to shopping centers. Development of South Windermere across the Ashley River from downtown Charleston—the brainchild of attorney William

Ackerman-began in 1951 and included one of the first suburban malls in South Carolina. When it opened in 1959, the Kronsberg brothers' North Charleston Pinehaven Shopping Center, featuring their Edward's store, was the largest retail complex in the state. Merchants in other growing cities followed the same pattern. In the 1960s, established stores in Columbia such as Berry's On Main maintained their Main Street presence while opening branch stores in suburban locations.

LAFAYETTE GRILL "Finest Food South of New York"

Special Collections, College of Charleston.

have professionally designed web sites for international buyers of their iconic southern men's wear styles.

ON ON DU DU

Perhaps Edward Kronsberg, in a 1949 article in the Charleston Evening Post, best summarized the history of Jewish merchants and their contribution to South Carolina: "Our business is founded on personal interest. We make friends in the community in which we establish ourselves and share our time between community activities and business." For two centuries Jews have set up businesses, engaged in civic life, and established families. From Clio to Charleston, and Greer to Greenville, Jewish merchants have been an integral part our state's history.

SPRING 2019

Clockwise from top left: flyer from wholesaler Baltimore Bargain House, 1916, Special Collections, College of Charleston; Poll Parrot children's shoes display from the D. Poliakoff store in Abbeville, SC, courtesy of Ed Poliakoff; September 16, 1959, advertisement in the Charleston Evening Post for the opening the following day of Pinehaven Shopping Center, Charleston Special Collections, College of Charleston.

SOUTH CAROLINA

TOURIST COTTAGES

Tourists traveling to and from Florida should make an overnight stay at this charming oasis of hospi-tality—the enterprise that has made a small town famous.

WALTERBORO

SENSIBLE RATES South Carolina

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Tourism brought in a new mobile customer base. In the 1920s, with the establishment of the federal highway system, Routes 17 and 15 carried travelers down the coast. Tapping into the growing flow of New York to Florida traffic, Albert Novit, in 1927, expanded his mercantile shops in Walterboro,

PAGE 7

opening an adjacent hotel and then a restaurant. Fifty years later, Alan Schafer's popular South of the Border, located on Route 301, with its iconic sombrero sign, only grew in popularity when I-95, with an adjacent Dillon exit, was completed through South Carolina in 1978.

> The 21<sup>st</sup> century introduced online shopping and created the e-commerce customer. Stores such as M. Dumas, originally established in 1917 in Charleston by Mendel Dumas as a uniform shop for local service jobs, and Britton's in Columbia now

PINEHAVI

SHOES FOR BOYS AN

### D. Poliakoff: 100 Years on the Square by Ed Poliakoff

D. Poliakoff, the dry goods store opened in 1900 by my grandfather David Poliakoff, was in business on historic Court Square in Abbeville, South Carolina, for more than 100 years, from February 19, 1900, to August 26, 2000. David emigrated from Kamen, a shtetl about 112 miles northeast of Minsk in today's Belarus, in 1893, when he was 20 years old. His passport application (found last year in the State Historical Archives of Belarus) states that the purpose of his trip was to "earn money." A few brittle wholesaler invoices addressed to "Poliakoff Brothers, Clifton, SC," some in Yiddish, remain from the years David Poliakoff was in business with his brother Mendel, 1894 to 1898, first in Clifton (near Spartanburg), then in Gaffney, South Carolina. In 1898-1899, he was in Aiken County.

Family lore has it that David was a peddler who initially picked McCormick, South Carolina, to open his own store and paid the first month's rent, but quickly decided to settle in Abbeville. Years later, in a November 1937 interview for the Abbeville Press and Banner, he said he came to Abbeville after leaving his brother Samuel in Graniteville, South Carolina. Abbeville's population had more than doubled between 1890 and 1900, perhaps a reason he decided to settle there.

The 1900 U.S. Census for Abbeville Township listed David Polliaskoff [sic], "clothing merchant," born in Russia in 1872, as a boarder who could read, write, and speak English. The store's original location on Abbeville's Court Square was "next door to [the State] dispensary," as noted in its March 1900 ad in the Abbeville Medium. A 1900 ledger shows cash sales the first month in business were \$433.98. The store, along with the dispensary and several other businesses, got electric lights in March of that year. By June 1901, David Poliakoff had become a U.S. citizen. Affidavits supporting his petition were submitted by his brother Mendel and J. S. Poliakoff Press and Banner proclaimed "He is One of Us Now."

A July 1904 article in the Abbeville Medium reported on the wedding of David Poliakoff and Elka Rachel Axelrod. The ceremony in Augusta was performed by Rabbi Abraham Poliakoff, a cousin and the first spiritual leader of Augusta Above: David and Rachel Poliakoff, ca. 1904. Left: Poliakoff family's pushke. Courtesy of Ed Poliakoff.

congregation Adas Yeshurun. Rabbi Poliakoff was married to David's sister, Rebecca. A 1937 Press and Banner article looked back and recounted: "Mr. Poliakoff had not been in Abbeville but four years when he sent back to Russia for his sweetheart. His marriage to Miss Rachel Axelrod . . . showed him to be [a] man of outstanding wisdom and good judgment. Mrs. Poliakoff has truly been a helpmeet. She has not only kept a fine hospitable home, reared a large family, but has been his true partner in the operation of his store."

David Poliakoff died on June 9, 1940. According to the Press and Banner, "Mr. Poliakoff had been at his store throughout the day and was sitting in his chair at home when the end came. . [He] prospered in Abbeville but in prospering he won the goodwill, the respect and esteem of a great circle of friends." The paper noted he was the oldest living member of the local Masonic Lodge and a regular attendee.

Elka Rachel Poliakoff died at home on June 8, 1956, after a brief illness. She was described in the hometown paper as a "prominent Abbeville businesswoman and a resident of this city since 1904."

David and Rachel raised five sons and a daughter, maintaining an observant Jewish home a block from Court Square. Throughout its 100 years, the store was closed on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. In a 1920 article entitled "The Knowledge of Hebrew Not Now Confined to Preachers," the Abbeville paper extolled their first-born. "Young Ellis Poliakoff returned this week from Anderson

where for the past month he has been under the tutelage of a professor of Hebrew and . . . has mastered the intricate characters of the Hebrew language." David Poliakoff "is the proudest man you ever saw when he is listening to his son read so fluently the language of his fathers."

Sons Ellis, Marion, Myer (my father), Arthur, and Samuel all graduated from the University of South Carolina, where over of Langley, South Carolina, a cousin. A 1901 headline in the a period of more than 15 years at least one Poliakoff brother occupied the same dorm room (#48) at Burney College, according to an October 29, 1935, article in the USC Gamecock. All the brothers served their country during the World War II era, three overseas. Ellis was a respected physician who served the people of Abbeville County his entire professional career, excepting wartime service. Marion was a gentleman merchant who established a top-line men's apparel store in Walhalla, South Carolina. Arthur (Bud) was a beloved pharmacist in Atlanta and became the senior practicing pharmacist in the state of Georgia.

#### SPRING 2019

RUBIN & SON COMPANY, INC. Daughter Eva Poliakoff, who later was a school teacher and lived with PIEDMONT SHIRT COMPANY GRIENVILLE, S.G. 7/18/28 As his business grew, David Poliakoff had moved the store twice, settling in his

Eva's brother Myer, who had met Rosa at Jewish dances in Columbia. Rosa was the daughter of Israel and Bertha From, immigrants from Lithuania. Israel was a successful merchant—"I. From, Dry Goods and Notions" was a household word in Union-and Bertha a religiously observant homemaker. After graduating from Agnes Scott College, Rosa became a teacher in Atlanta, while Myer completed his degree at USC and returned to Abbeville to work with his parents in the store, eventually taking over its management. On February 20, 1940,

Samuel was a prominent physician in Atlanta and a discerning collector of Western American Indian art. He bequeathed to the Abbeville County Public Library, "in honor of the Poliakoff Family," his unique collection of pottery, textiles, and paintings, along with a monetary bequest, establishing in Abbeville one of the most significant public collections of this genre. Readers are invited to visit the collection in person or online at http://poliakoffcollectionofwesternart.org/ her husband and family in Marblehead, Massachusetts, graduated from Agnes Scott College, where her roommate was Rosa From of Union, South Carolina. Eva and Rosa became roommates at the suggestion of Myer Poliakoff and Rosa From were married at the From residence in Union. third and final location in 1935 on the northeast corner of Court Square at Washington Street, located on the site where John C. Calhoun's law office once stood. It was constructed in 1873, only eight years after the horse-drawn entourage of Jefferson Davis, Judah P. Benjamin, and others in the fleeing Confederate war cabinet came up Washington Street from the train station to the Square, en route to the Abbeville residence Receipts dated 1938 from wholesalers J. where the last meeting of the cabinet was held.

Myer ran D. Poliakoff's for almost half a century, in later years with Rosa's help. Like his father, he was a life member of the Abbeville Masonic Lodge. He was an officer of sold to D. Poliakoff in Abbeville, SC. Special the local development board, a 17-year member of the school board, and a longtime board Collections, College of Charleston. member, treasurer, and ardent supporter of the Abbeville County Library system. His portrait, a gift of former store employees, hangs in the Library's Poliakoff Art Gallery and Meeting Room.

D. Poliakoff was an Abbeville institution, where a visit to the store and a welcome from the Poliakoff in charge was a custom for generations of Abbevillians. It was not unusual for a resident to be outfitted at Poliakoff's as a child and employed there as a teen, then return as a parent for proper fitting of his or her children. Myer and Rosa were regular attendees at apparel shows at the merchandise marts in Atlanta and Charlotte. My sisters, Doris and Elaine, and I grew up in Abbeville, about a mile from the store, where we helped out after school and on weekends. Store specialties included the expert fitting of children's shoes—with Myer routinely declining the sale if he was not satisfied with the fit—and women's and children's apparel. At merchandise shows, Rosa frequently selected women's apparel with specific customers in mind. Myer Poliakoff died on August 10, 1985. Rosa took up the reins and ran the business with paperwork assistance from her children.



Myer and Rosa Poliakoff were strong advocates for maintaining the 19th-century charm of Abbeville's Court Square, a frequent subject for artists. A 1987 painting by Oscar Velasquez, AWS, later reproduced as a postcard, makes artistic reference to Myer (with bow tie and red vest) and Rosa in front of the store. A 1990 Location Agreement with Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, for which the filmmaker paid D. Poliakoff \$200, permitted interior and exterior shots of the store during production of Sleeping with the Enemy, starring Julia Roberts. In 1995, NationsBank TV ads featured Rosa Poliakoff and the store interior.

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Rubin & Son, Columbia, SC, and Piedmont Shirt Company, Greenville, SC, for items

PAGE

D. Poliakoff building after renovation, Washington Street view, Abbeville, SC. Photo by Ed Poliakoff.

#### JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH CAROLINA PAGE 10

Still family-owned, the D. Poliakoff building was renovated a few years after the business closed, renewing its heart-pine flooring, high entitled "90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary's Not a Swan Song for Rosa Poliakoff,"

pressed-tin ceilings, and clerestory windows, and retaining on its corner sidewalks its pre-electricera translucent panel vault lights and gratecovered basement light wells. The building's front parapet and side wall still display "D. Poliakoff" in the large letters once common on storefronts. Tenants operate an apparel boutique.

The store's 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary was celebrated in April 1990 at a public event near the Square. Speakers included former Governor Dick Riley, former Congressman W. J. Bryan Dorn, and state senator Billy O'Dell, who presented the congratulatory resolution adopted by the General Assembly. State Senator Isadore Lourie was the keynote speaker, praising the generation of Jewish immigrants who established Today, 105 West occupies the Poliakoff and was buried alongside her beloved Myer

generation," he declared, adding that he hoped the descendants of until after the anniversary was reached, and D. Poliakoff closed those Jewish immigrants would remember their forefathers' twofold heritage and be proud of it: "Proud to be the sons of the covenant between God and Abraham ... and proud to be Americans."



the century. "I shall always stand in awe of that **Photo by Eli Poliakoff**.

On April 29, 1990, Greenwood's Index-Journal, in an article quoted Rosa's observation that what separated

D. Poliakoff from other stores for most of the century was personal service and attention: "We always said you can't come into the store without being greeted by a Poliakoff... people like to be remembered by their names." The 95<sup>th</sup> anniversary was celebrated in

April 1995 in conjunction with a meeting of the newly organized Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina. A congratulatory letter from President Bill Clinton was presented to Rosa Poliakoff.

Rosa Poliakoff was determined D. Poliakoff would reach its 100th anniversary in February 2000. She died October 26, 1999

businesses in the South around the turn of building on Abbeville's Court Square. in Aiken's Sons of Israel Cemetery. Family and devoted staff kept the store in business

its doors for good on August 26, 2000.

The full version of the Poliakoff and Kronsberg articles, with images of historic documents and photographs, can be found at http://merchants.jhssc.org/merchant-stories/ •

### Edward's $5 \notin \cdot 10 \notin \cdot \$1.00$ Stores and the **Kronsberg Brothers** by Mickey Kronsberg Rosenblum

Miriam Stoller Kronsberg, widow of Edward Kronsberg—grandfather and namesake of the man who founded Edward'semigrated from Ukraine to Baltimore, Maryland, in 1888, with her nine-year-old son, Abraham, his three sisters, and a half-brother. Abraham grew up in Baltimore and as a young man became a cigar maker. In 1902, he married Lena Jacobson, a Lithuanian immigrant and daughter of Meyer Lena Kronsberg, ca. Jacobson and Rose Rochell Mervis Jacobson. Their first son, Edward, was born the following year in his grandparents' home in Portsmouth, Virginia.

Edward contracted polio as an infant and, for his whole life, he walked with a limp.

About the time Edward was born, Abraham moved the family to Tilghman Island, Maryland, where he opened a clothing and dry goods store. They were the only Jews on the island and, despite the logistical difficulties, Lena kept a kosher home, getting meat by boat from Baltimore, but mainly



1900, and Abraham Kronsberg, ca. 1905. Courtesy of Mickey Kronsberg Rosenblum.



cooking fish, which was plentiful on the island. Lena and Abraham had three more sons after Edward: Meyer was born in 1905, Milton in 1909, and Macey in 1911.

Raymond Sinclair described Abraham and Lena in his book, The Tilghman's Island Story 1659-1954: "...they were of the Jewish denomination and classed as Tilghman's most loved citizens."

The Kronsbergs were active in the town's life. Their neighbors respected their closing the store when the family would go to Baltimore for the Jewish High Holidays.

At the age of 39, Abraham got an infection and died, leaving Lena with four boys to raise—15, 13, 9, and 7 years old. She moved to Baltimore to be near her family. Edward attended the Polytechnic Institute and worked at night. He was still in his teens when Lena sent him to Charleston, South Carolina, to work for Uncle Joseph Bluestein, the husband of Lena's sister Bessie, at Joseph's King

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Street store. Edward lived with the Bluestein family and attended the College of Charleston. In 1926, with Joseph's help, Edward opened the first Edward's five and ten cents store on King Street, next door to Bluestein's.

Expansion within South Carolina began in 1930 with the opening of the Bamberg store. Milton and Macey, both of whom had graduated from Johns Hopkins University, moved to Charleston, in the '30s to work for Edward's, and Lena followed. Stores were added in Walterboro (1936) and Conway (1938). World War II put a stop to further expansion, but in 1947, the Reynolds Avenue store at the entrance to the Charleston Naval Base was completed.

In 1949, one of the most significant stores in the Edward's chain was opened in Charleston at King and Morris Street. The large modern building was launched with lots of fanfare and newspaper coverage. The 15,000 square feet of store space accommodated 34 departments, including a frozen custard bar, fresh baked goods, shoe repair, fresh flowers and plants, and goldfish and pets. More than 15,000 people attended the grand opening. Two thousand five hundred orchids were flown in from Hawaii for souvenirs and were gone in two hours. There had been nothing like this store or its unveiling on the Charleston peninsula before. Lena, now secretary of the organization, opened the doors for the crowd. In attendance were all the Kronsberg brothers: Edward, founder and president; Macey, first vice-president; Meyer, second vice-president; and Milton, treasurer.

All four brothers married and had children: Edward and Hattie Barshay of Charleston had two sons, Avram and Jonathan (Buddy); Meyer and Fay Karp of New York had two sons, Alan Michael and Lawrence; Milton and Frederica (Freddie) Weinberg of Staunton, Virginia, had two daughters and a son, Regina (Gina), Miriam (Mickey), and Abram; and Macey and Adele Jules of Baltimore had three daughters, Rose, Peggy, and Sandra.

The 1950s brought many changes. Macey retired from Edward's and went to Florida to open his own store and work on his MBA. Meyer moved to New York and became Edward's resident New York buyer. Milton, who had started in the business as an assistant store manager and later became a store manager,



assumed the position as General Manager of the Distribution Warehouse, the first of which was a small building at 237 East Bay Street in Charleston, across from what is now the Harris Teeter. In 1951, the Kronsbergs opened a store in Byrnes Down, West Ashley, Charleston, and in 1952, launched the first of two stores in Myrtle Beach. In the late '50s, they moved the warehouse from the small building on East Bay Street to a bigger one on Huger Street further up the Charleston peninsula.

Expansion in South Carolina continued apace in the '50s. In 1955, a store was opened in downtown Beaufort. Three years later, the Kronsbergs closed the Byrnes Downs store and opened a much larger store down the street in the new St. Andrews Shopping Center. In 1958, they acquired a store in Georgetown, the first of two, and two years later, they opened a store in Sumter.

In 1959, the Kronsbergs built Pinehaven Shopping Center, the state's largest, in Charleston Heights. It contained 23 stores, including an Edward's, and had a mammoth

Top: Kronsberg brothers, ca. 1937, l to r, Macey, Milton (standing); Edward, Meyer (sitting), courtesy of Mickey Kronsberg Rosenblum. Middle: Edward's opening, 1949, corner of King and Morris streets, Charleston, SC, Special Collections, College of Charleston. Bottom: Pinehaven groundbreaking, 1950, l to r, Edward Kronsberg, Milton Kronsberg, and Max Lehrer, Special Collections, College of Charleston.

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#### JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH CAROLINA PAGE 12

parking lot. Maxwell Lehrer of Charleston, who had been an important leader of the Edward's organization for many years, was chosen to manage the shopping center. Although Edward pioneered the new development and was responsible for it, the privately owned corporation did not have sufficient money to invest; rather, the partners raised capital for Pinehaven through a public stock offering.

In the '60s, when Edward's sons Avram and Buddy joined the business, most of the stores measured between 5,000 and

10,000 square feet and were modeled after Woolworth's. Between 1963 and 1969, a huge expansion took place, including an increase in the square footage of the stores. Stores were opened in Aiken, Orangeburg, Greenwood, Laurens, North Augusta, Myrtle Beach (the second store), Lake City, and another in Charleston in the new James Island Shopping Center. With the addition of so many stores, it became necessary to build more warehouse space, Edward's store opening, Georgetown, SC, 1958. L to r: Buddy Kronsberg, so plans were made for a Rabbi Gerald Wolpe (Emanu-El, Charleston), Abe Fogel, Sylvan Rosen, new 80,000-square-foot Hattie Barshay Kronsberg, Erma Levkoff Rosen, and Freddie Weinberg a major recession to the warehouse and 18,000 Kronsberg. Special Collections, College of Charleston.

be seen from I-26 in North Charleston. In 1970, the Kronsbergs inaugurated a store in Greenville,

South Carolina, and the following year, stores were opened in Newberry and Georgetown (a second store), as well as in the new Ashley Plaza Mall, West Ashley, Charleston. In 1971, they also opened a small store in the Harbor View Shopping Center on James Island, which was intended to serve as a prototype for future neighborhood stores. Not long after the Harbor View opening, Avram was named president and Edward became chairman of the board.

Under Avram and Buddy's management, the new South Carolina stores were built even bigger. In 1972, they opened the biggest store to date-60,000 square feet-in Dillon, followed the next year by stores in Florence and Summerville. Edward's stores were described as "junior department stores." During the 1970s, major changes in retail were taking place with the advent of stores such as K-Mart and Wal-Martnational chains offering similar goods at competitive prices. As public corporations, these big box stores had a lot of money for

expansion. In 1960, Sam Walton had gone public, a concept Edward refused to embrace. Avram recalled his father's attitude in a 2001 interview: "He didn't want to share his business with anybody, and he didn't want anybody telling him what to do, and we never had the capital. We had to expand out of profits, not out of raised money, and so we didn't grow as rapidly."

In spite of national competition, the new executives continued to open additional stores in the Palmetto State. Between 1973 and 1974, they built new stores in Union, Hilton

> Head, Camden, Easley, and Mt. Pleasant. Finally, they decided to venture out-ofstate—Georgia—opening first in Savannah in 1975 and Brunswick in 1977. Around the same time, there had been a storm in Laurens, South Carolina, and the Edward's store there was inundated. with no flood insurance on the building. All the stock was lost and the store needed a major renovation. The corporation was not able to insure the building because the flood, and after the renovation, it flooded again. To top it off, 1974 brought country, and interest rates on

square feet of office space to be located in a building that could borrowing capital for goods and maintenance went to 20 percent. This put extreme pressure on the liquidity of the privately owned stores. It could be said that this was the beginning of the end for Edward's. In spite of everything, expansion continued with the opening of two more stores, in Charles Towne Square, Charleston, and a second store in Beaufort.

> In 1977, Big K-Kuhn Brothers of Nashville, Tennessee, purchased Edward's. At the time of the purchase, the chain was doing \$43 million annually, despite the depressed economy and floods.

> The telling of this great American success story would not be complete without noting that Edward Kronsberg built the business from a single location to a conglomerate of more than 35 stores while giving his all to both the Jewish and gentile communities. His brothers and business partners Macey and Milton also were active in organizations that might not exist today without their hard work. They all loved Charleston and felt the city had been good to them. In return they gave, not only financially, but in countless hours invested in a legion of civic, cultural, and religious organizations.

Lisa Rosamond Thompson, known professionally as Lisa Rosamond, is a senior at the College of Charleston majoring in History and Studio Arts and minoring in Jewish Studies. After taking a course at the Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program, she found herself drawn to further study of Jewish religion and culture.

isa Rosamond Thompson's senior thesis, *Lowcountry*: of Jewish storefronts and shopkeepers in Charleston. Once Past and Present, reflects her love of photography and she located an old image, she photographed the same site as history. Inspired by the works of visual artist Shimon Attie it appears today, aiming to capture the same angle as in the old photograph. In the Simons Center photography lab, Lisa and photographer Sergey Larenkov and her fascination with Jewish culture and community, she searched books, databases, used Adobe Photoshop's Layers to superimpose a portion of the internet, and JHSSC magazines for vintage photographs the historic image on the new photo. Lining up the angles was challenging and required technical skill, while the decision about how to blend past and present offered her the opportunity to select which aspects of each era to feature. Through this method of layering the past on the present, Lisa expresses her appreciation for those who have come before HAROLD'S CABIN and hopes to spark an interest in history in people who may be otherwise indifferent to it.







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### Lowcountry: Past and Present

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#### Dale Rosengarten Recipient of the Order of the Jewish Palmetto

Join us Saturday evening when we present Dale Rosengarten with the Order of the Jewish Palmetto, an acknowledgement of her tireless work on behalf of the Society. For more than two decades, Dale has been JHSSC's historian par excellence, traveling the state, gathering oral histories, photographs, and artifacts that document Jewish life in South Carolina. Dale's generosity and expertise has been instrumental to our success in researching, recording, and interpreting our family stories through exhibits, panel discussions, and this magazine, assuring that South Carolina Jewry is part of the public discourse on American Jewish history. We are grateful!



Founding curator of the Jewish Heritage Collection at the College of Charleston Library, Dale Rosengarten developed the landmark exhibition A Portion of the People: Three Hundred Years of Southern Jewish Life, which opened at the University of South Carolina's McKissick Museum in 2002 and traveled nationally for two years. More recently, for the Princeton University Art Museum, she co-curated By Dawn's Early Light: Jewish Contributions to American Culture from the Nation's Founding to the Civil War, which had an unexpected second life at the New-York Historical Society under the name The First Jewish Americans. For the catalog Dale contributed an essay on Charleston-born artists Theodore Sidney



Stephen J. Whitfield, Max Richter Professor of American Civilization, Emeritus, Brandeis University, holds a bachelor's degree from Tulane University, a master's from Yale University, and a doctorate in the history of American civilization from Brandeis. Trained as an historian, he first encountered the field of American studies when he had to teach it, beginning in the fall of 1972 at Brandeis.

His curricular and research interests are primarily in the intersection of politics and ideas in the 20th century. Whitfield has twice been awarded Fulbright visiting professorships: first at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (1983-84) and then at the Catholic University of Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve in Belgium (fall semester 1993). For a semester in 2004, he became the first Allianz Visiting Professor at the Ludwig-Maximilians University of Munich to offer courses in American Jewish studies.



Rabbi Judith Schindler is the Sklut Professor of Jewish Studies and Director of the Stan Greenspon Center for Peace and Social Justice at Queens University of Charlotte. She was named Rabbi Emerita of Temple Beth El in Charlotte, North Carolina, after serving as Senior Rabbi from 2003–2016 and as Associate Rabbi from 1998-2003. She has contributed chapters and articles to more than ten

books. She co-authored Recharging Judaism: How Civic Engagement is Good for Synagogues, Jews, and America (2018), which was a finalist for the National Jewish Book Award in Contemporary Jewish Life and Practice. Among the many awards she has received, Rabbi Schindler was named Charlotte Woman of the Year in 2011.

Moïse and Solomon Nunes Carvalho. She currently serves as associate director of the College's Pearlstine/ Lipov Center for Southern Jewish Culture.

Dale continues to pursue her other field of scholarship-the African-American tradition of coiled basketry. Her doctoral dissertation (Harvard University, 1997) placed the Lowcountry basket in a global setting and led to a partnership with the Museum for African Art in New York. With co-curator Enid Schildkrout, she produced the exhibit and book Grass Roots: African Origins of an American Art (2008), which ended its national tour in 2010 with a six-month run at the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of African Art in Washington D.C.



Steven R. Weisman, vice president for publications and communications at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, previously served as a correspondent, editor, and editorial board member at The New York Times. He was awarded the Edward Weintal Prize in 2004 from Georgetown University for his reporting on the run-up to the Iraq War and has served as a New York Times bureau

chief in Japan and India, as well as senior diplomatic and senior White House correspondent. His book The Great Tax Wars: Lincoln to Wilson — How the Income Tax Transformed America (2002) received the Hillman Prize in 2003. He was editor of Daniel Patrick Moynihan: A Portrait in Letters of an American Visionary (2010). The Great Tradeoff: Confronting Moral Conflicts in the Era of Globalization was published in 2016, and The Chosen Wars: How Judaism Became an American Religion in August 2018.

### **Revisiting the Past and Envisioning the Future** JHSSC Celebrates its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

### May 18–19, 2019 ~ Charleston, South Carolina

All events take place in the Sylvia Vlosky Yaschik Jewish Studies Center, 96 Wentworth St., unless otherwise noted.

| Saturday, May 18 |   |  |
|------------------|---|--|
| 11:30 а.м.       | Registration and lunch  |  |
| 12:00 р.м.       | Welcome – Jeffrey Rosenblum   |  |
| 12:15            | Layers of History – Lisa Rosamond The   |  |
| 12:30 - 1:45     | <b>Merchants: The Marrow of the Southe</b><br>Stephen J. Whitfield, Max Richter Profes  |  |
| 2:00 – 3:45      | Merchants on the Move<br>Moderator: Katharine Allen, Research &<br>Jewish Merchant Project, JHSSC<br>Panelists: Harold Brody, Deborah Lipma<br>Zachary M. Solomon, Alison Walsh                     |  |
| 4:00 - 4:30      | <b>A Store at Every Crossroads: Curator</b><br>Lynn Robertson, former Executive Dire  |  |
| 6:30             | <b>25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reception</b> – Addlestor<br>A celebratory evening featuring a cockta<br><i>Documenting the Stories of South Carolina</i><br>Order of the Jewish Palmetto to Dale Ro |  |

#### Sunday, May 19

SPRING 2019

| 9:00 а.м.   | Open JHSSC board meeting—everyone         |
|-------------|---|
| 10:30-12:30 | American Judaism and Civil Engagem        |
|             | Rabbi Judith Schindler, Sklut Professor o |
|             | Peace and Social Justice Queens Universit |

How Judaism Became an American Religion and What the Future Has in Store Steven R. Weisman, Vice President for Publications and Communications, Peterson Institute for International Economics, Washington, DC

Be sure to visit A Store at Every Crossroads at Addlestone Library, as well as two exhibits on display at the Jewish Studies Center: Picturing Southern Jews, Room 305, and Lowcountry: Past and Present in the Levin Library, Room 210.

877.756.2121

Hotel reservations **Meeting registration Francis Marion Hotel** By check, payable to **JHSSC** c/o Online at: Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies 387 King Street, Charleston, SC 29403 *jhssc.org/events/upcoming* OR Program – 96 Wentworth Street, with Visa, MasterCard, Charleston, SC 29424 Discover, or American Express *Special rate:* \$319 per night + tax Meeting fee: \$60 per person To get the special rate, make your reservation by 5:00 P.M. on Questions: Enid Idelsohn, idelsohne@cofc.edu April 17 and mention Group JHSSC2019. Phone: 843.953.3918 ~ fax: 843.953.7624 



nompson, College of Charleston

#### ern Jewish Experience

essor of American Civilization, Emeritus, Brandeis University

Archives Manager, Historic Columbia, and Lead Researcher,

nan Cochelin, Mickey Kronsberg Rosenblum,

#### r's Talk

ector, McKissick Museum, University of South Carolina

tone Library, College of Charleston, 205 Calhoun St., third floor ail buffet, the opening of *A* Store at Every Crossroads: a's Jewish Merchants, and a special awards presentation of the losengarten

**NELSON MULLINS** Reception sponsored by Nelson Mullins

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ne is invited! Bagels will be served

#### ment: Our Future Depends Upon It

of Jewish Studies and Director of the Stan Greenspon Center for Peace and Social Justice, Queens University, Charlotte, NC, and Rabbi Emerita, Temple Beth El, Charlotte, NC

# The Brody Brothers: Jewish Retail Giants in South Carolina

#### by Harold J. Brody, M.D.

any business careers are stories of father-son Many business careers are stories or lattice our relationships with the father originating the business and the sons carrying the torch after the father's death. This is the history of the Brody Brothers Dry Goods Company, founded in 1917 by my grandfather Hyman Joseph Brody (1876–1946)

as a simple shoe store in Sumter, South Carolina. Hyman and his brothers and sisters, children of Mordechai Schuster and Ruth Palevitz Schuster, settled in New York briefly after emigrating from Russia, but within a few years Hyman moved to the South on advice from friends.

Hyman Joseph Brody (née Schuster; family lore has it that "Brody" was on a sign at the New York docks and was adopted because it was easier to pronounce than Schuster), a native of Kletzk, Russia, immigrated to the United States in 1906. His wife, Bessie Lampert Krashnishelsky Brody (1882–1967), immigrated in 1913 with their children Sam, Raymond, William, Leo, Abram, and Jake. After Hyman and Bessie reunited, they moved to Anderson, South Carolina. Over time, the family grew, adding four boys-Reuben, Julius Samuel ("Sammy"), Morris, and Alex—and one girl, Ruth.

Hyman set up shop as a cobbler and shoemaker when the Brodys arrived in Anderson in 1913. Five years later they moved to the Midlands town of Sumter, South Carolina, and settled in what the family called the "Big House" at 10 South Washington Street. The Brody home was walking distance from Liberty Street, where Hyman established a shoe store, and near Temple Sinai, which had been built in 1913—the congregation's second sanctuary, still standing today.

Convinced that Sumter was destined to grow and that its future was bright, Hyman did his utmost to expand the business. The shoe store became Brody's Department Store, located at 8 West Liberty Street; in 1929, its floor space was tripled to include 10 and 12 West Liberty Street. All the Brody

brothers worked in the store and contributed to its success. The two oldest siblings, Sam (1901-1986) and Raymond (1902–1992), helped their father and stayed in retailing for their lifetimes. With financial support from his brothers, William (1904-1974) moved to Philadelphia and became a physician. Throughout his life, he remained in close touch with the family, providing medical advice when needed. In 1928, Leo (1906-2003)

moved to Kinston, North Carolina, and established a second Brody's Department Store. The Kinston store collaborated with the Sumter store in buying, selling, and public relations as the Brody brothers built their enterprises.

The original Brody's was so successful that, in 1934, the brothers opened a higher-end store at 37-39 North Main Street called The Capitol Department Store. Three years later The Capitol moved to a more central location at 12 South Main Street. Remodeling to keep abreast of the times, the Brodys expanded the store into two adjoining properties. They also joined Independent Retail Buying Syndicate, enabling them to offer, at affordable prices, nationally known brands usually sold at much larger department stores. The Capitol became known as the largest Jewish-operated dry goods store in South Carolina at the time.





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In 1938, Hyman Brody retired from the business because She was a constant of his and his wife's poor health. The same year, the Sumter presence in the business was reorganized and incorporated as Brody Brothers Sumter stores Dry Goods Company, with Leo, Abram, Jake, and Reuben as and, during officers. Brody policy, according to the "Employee Handbook of World War II, she ran the the Capitol Dept. Store," was to "sell merchandise as reasonably as possible," "to give honest value," and "to satisfy its customers." The rapid expansion and phenomenal growth of the company proved the soundness of this policy.

Also in 1938, Brody's, Inc., opened its doors in Greenville, North Carolina, about 30 miles northeast of Kinston. Leo got the store up and running and, at age 21, Ruth took over until Morris (1918-2011) returned from World War II. His son Hyman ("HJ") worked with him in the late 1970s, after his graduation from the University of Pennsylvania.

Julius Samuel (Sammy) (1916–1994) joined Leo in Kinston after serving in the world war. Sammy was not cut out for retailing but became very successful in radio/TV and the soft drink industry; his philanthropy is recognized to this day. Leo, Sammy, and Morris were instrumental in establishing the medical school at East Carolina University in Greenville, renamed the Brody School of Medicine in their honor.

Abram (1909–1983), my father, married Sara Pearlstine from Olar, South Carolina, in 1946, shortly after the death of his father, and he settled down to manage the shoe and men's departments of The Capitol in Sumter. Of the other Brody brothers in the retail business, Reuben (1914–1964) managed the women's department, Jake (1911–1999) handled physical renovations, maintenance, and housewares, and Leo managed the Kinston store, which carried similar

merchandise as The Capitol. The Brodys raised their families and contributed materially An outstanding attribute of the company was good to the growing Jewish community of Sumter by constructing a employee relations and good working conditions managed by religious school adjacent to Temple Sinai, dedicated in 1956 as local owners. Indeed, the tradition continued after World War II the Hyman Brody Educational Building. when the youngest brother, Alex (1922–1997), having returned The Brody Brothers Dry Goods Company of Sumter was from the war and attended college, became the manager of the the pivotal point from which the North Carolina Brody brothers original Brody's on Liberty Street in Sumter. He devoted his life catapulted. As long as retailing was in operation, the Brody to Sumter retailing, and the Alex Brody Pavilion on Main Street brothers and cousins worked together for mutual continuity was erected in his name. and excellence to serve the public good of the Carolinas. Thanks Ruth Brody Greenberg (1920–2012), the only daughter of to the children of the Brody brothers, that legacy continues Hyman and Bessie Brody, married Dr. Stephen A. Greenberg today with the Alex Brody Pavilion in Sumter, contributions to and moved to Florence, South Carolina, 40 miles from Sumter. Sumter's Temple Sinai Jewish History Center, the Ethel Brody Scholarship at the University of South Carolina in Columbia, Above: l to r, Rabbi J. Aaron Levy, Harold Brody, and Abram the aforementioned Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina Brody at the dedication of the Hyman Brody Educational Building, University in Greenville, the Brody Brothers Auditorium at Temple Sinai, Sumter, SC, 1956. Morris Brody's confirmation certificate, Temple Sinai, Sumter, SC, 1932. Facing page: The Kinston High School, and at Duke University in Durham: the Capitol Department Store, Sumter, SC, ca. 1959. Hyman Brody Brody Scholarships, the Brody Theater, the Café at the Nasher and his sons, l to r, back: Jake, Leo, Sammy, Abram, Reuben; Art Museum, and the Charlotte Brody Discovery Garden.

middle: William, Raymond, Hyman, Sam; front: Alex, Morris, After Reuben's untimely death in 1963, the Brody family 1930s. Hyman and Bessie Brody. Collection of Harold Brody, sold The Capitol Department Store to Alden's of Chicago. courtesy of Sumter County Museum.

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department store in

Greenville while her brothers served in the military. When she wasn't tending to her two sons, Philip and Stuartboth physicians who have been active in and served as board members of JHSSC—she was a stalwart for her brothers.

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North Carolina retailing operation after graduating from the reign of the Brody retail giants of Sumter. University of Pennsylvania.

Abram continued to operate a shoe department within the newly-owned Capitol. When The Capitol relocated to Jessamine Mall in 1980, the shoe department remained and became Abram Brody's Shoes at 16 South Main Street. In 1983, on Abram's death, the old Capitol store was renovated, and the shoe

1988. Abram Brody Shoes remained for another ten years—still eclipsed by Amazon and the internet.



Reuben's son David, born and raised in Sumter, joined the owned by the Brodys—and was sold around 1999, ending the

In a 1959 essay written by my parents, Sara and Abram Brody, in honor of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Capitol Department Store, they remarked that the growth of the Brody business "gives inspiration to individual ownership in today's great economic structure of chain stores and large combines." K-Mart, the first chain to come

store became part of the new Brody's On Main Department to Sumter, opened in the early '60s, signaling the decline of Store, managed by Alex and his son Mark. The store carried a locally operated stores. It's interesting that K-Mart—owned higher priced line of women's wear than the Brody's Department by Sears, which is also liquidating—is set to close in March store. Brodys on Main closed after Mark departed Sumter about 2019. After 50 years of rise and decline, the chain store is now

### The Furchgott Stores, since 1866

by David Furchgott, from family records and the meticulous research and editing of cousin Alison Walsh, aided by the personal recollections of cousin Maurice Furchgott

**D**Fürchtgott (1844–1921) migrated from Nitra (in present-day Slovakia) to New York City in the early 1860s. The reasons for their leaving are unknown. By all appearances the Fürchtgotts were a well-established family spread across

Charleston, S. C.

REIGN AND DOMESTIC DRY GOODS,

a region from Vienna to Budapest and into the hinterlands of what is now Slovakia. Upon arrival, the brothers Americanized their family name to Furchgott. After a brief few years of

acculturation in New York, they moved to Charleston in 1865 as the American Civil War ended, where they were joined by their brother Leopold (1852-1928).

**D** rothers Herman Fürchtgott (1841–1912) and Max The turbulence in central Europe at that time had been volatile as well, so it is curious that their father, Abraham Isaac, and his wife, Marie (née Herzog) Fürchtgott, saw all three of their boys emigrate nearly at once, leaving them with their four daughters in Nitra. America was a land of opportunity, and Charleston, up until a few decades before the Civil War, boasted its largest concentration of Jews.

> In 1866, the brothers opened their first dry goods store, Furchgott & Bro., near the southwest corner of Calhoun and King streets, probably living over the initial store and moving among three locations near that corner in a four-year period. In 1869, Charles Benedict (1848–1909) of Jacksonville became a partner, and the business became Furchgott, Benedict & Co., moving twice again to a prestigious location further downtown at 259 King Street.

Also in 1869, Leopold moved to Jacksonville, Florida, to establish another store with Benedict at the equally prominent location on Bay Street facing the St. Johns River. Charles Benedict was well established in Jacksonville. He was born in Austria and probably had family ties to the Fürchtgotts in Nitra, which is only 80 miles from Vienna, or possibly could have met them through the Masons, with which Max Furchgott was very involved.

Furchgott, Benedict & Co. In 1879, Morris Kohn created a New York buying office for the firm and provided additional financial backing. The Furchgott brothers' maternal uncle Philip Herzog of New York was also a silent partner and backer of the business. The

> Max and Herman Fürchtgott, 1860s. Receipt, Furchgott, Benedict & Co., 275 King Street, 1875. Courtesy of the Furchgott/Furchtgott family.



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They also lived through the devastating Charleston earthquake of 1886. It was the largest earthquake ever to take place on the east coast, with almost all the buildings in the city either flattened or damaged. Max Furchgott led a number of major charitable efforts to help with the recovery, but he moved his family to New York for several years. There the children attended religious school at Temple Emanu-El.

In 1887, soon after the earthquake, Kohn, Furchgott, & Benedict constructed a glamorous new building at 259 King Street on the site of their damaged store. Finding little success, Max moved to New York the following year, apparently to join his family, and then returned in 1901 to establish M. Furchgott & Co. Dry Goods at 265 King Street. In 1907, he moved the store to 240-242 King Street, advertising as being "in the bend of King Street." Three years later, the business was renamed M. Furchgott & Sons. The "& Sons" were Arthur, Melvin, and Oscar Furchgott. The location is now part of Charleston Place, a hotel and high-end shopping center that occupies a whole city block.

Herman left Charleston and moved west, first to Denver where he operated several business ventures, including at least one similar retail dry goods department store. He later moved to St. Louis and finally to Chicago, where he died in 1912. Herman had one son and seven daughters.

Both the Charleston and the Jacksonville stores were considered innovative: they were the first to have elevators, the first to have women salesclerks and home delivery by automobile. Also, they were among the first to have telephones and to serve black customers.

Clockwise from top: Furchgott banner advertising "Ladies Ready To Wear Garments" and "Dry Goods Matting, etc.," hangs over King Street, Charleston, SC, 1901, in this postcard reproduction of Morton Brailsford Paine's photograph, Special Collections, College of Charleston. Kohn, Furchgott, & Benedict, 259 King Street, Charleston, SC, with 1887 carved in the pediment, courtesy of George LaGrange Cook Photograph Collection, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina. M. Furchgott & Son, 242 King Street, Charleston, SC, courtesy of the Furchgott/Furchtgott family.

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firm became Kohn, Furchgott, & Benedict (Kohn became a partner in 1881). Kohn was also from Austria with the same likely connections to the Fürchtgotts as Benedict. Around 1875, a store was briefly opened in Atlanta, but was sold in 1878 to the Keely Company.

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Webb's Historical, Industrial and Biographical Florida of 1885 said of the firm: "Their amount of sales mark this as one of the largest drygoods houses in the South.... All members of the firm are practical men in the business, and are courteous, painstaking gentlemen; and, it need not be added, honorable, reliable business men, of which Jacksonville and Charleston have every reason to be proud."

Max Furchgott returned almost yearly to Europe on buying trips and to visit family. In fact, his first two sons, Herbert and Lionel, died in 1882 in the fifth cholera pandemic while visiting Nitra. They are buried in the Jewish cemetery there. Tragedy didn't end for the Furchgott family and its businesses.

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Following the 1921 death of Max Furchgott, the sons took over M. Furchgott & Sons. The Charleston store lasted through the first few years of the Great Depression with Melvin Furchgott at its helm. His brothers opened smaller stores elsewhere, Arthur first in Orangeburg, South Carolina, and then briefly in Goldsboro, North Carolina, and Oscar later in Florence, South Carolina.

In Jacksonville,

Furchgotts of Florida thrived under Leopold's the mid-1980s. The main store building is still standing as a leadership. He moved to New York, retaining the position testament to the heyday of Jacksonville's downtown and to as head of the company and passing the management the Furchgott family businesses.

and '70s and a location in Daytona Beach, all Furchgott's Department Store, Jacksonville, FL. Courtesy of metrojacksonville.com. of which were closed by

### Rails to Retail: Mercantile Pioneers in St. Stephens

#### by Deborah Lipman Cochelin

refuge from religious persecution for a portion of the French

Protestants actively recruited by the English in 1952. Proprietors of Carolina after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. The Huguenots, as they came to be called, some of whom had been wealthy landowners in France, were drawn to Carolina by the promise of religious freedom and large estates, advertised in glowing terms by the Lords Proprietor, who envisioned profits from trade generated by an agricultural colony. By the mid-1700s, dozens of rice plantations, cultivated by enslaved Africans, had been established along the Santee. In this region, about 50 miles north of Charleston, a town grew up around historic St. Stephen's

ong before Jews arrived in today's northern Berkeley Episcopal Church, erected in 1767, now a national landmark. LCounty, the area south of the Santee River served as a In 1871, the town was incorporated under the parish name of St. Stephens, which was officially changed to St. Stephen

> Northern Berkeley County has remained rural since the days of the Huguenot planters. Today, St. Stephen and nearby towns are economically depressed and thinly populated. During the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, however, the region profited from South Carolina's extensive network of railroads. Sawmills sprang up near rail lines, and Charleston merchants saw opportunities to build shops in towns like Moncks Corner, about 30 miles from Charleston, and Bonneau, another 10 miles farther north. According to Maxwell Clayton Orvin's history of Moncks Corner, the names of Jewish merchants who set up shop in Berkeley County just before the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century include Seligh (Zelig) Behrmann (whose nephew was Ben Barron, founder of Barron's Department Store in Moncks Corner), Sol Lurie, Louis Glick, Sol Goldberg, Mendel Dumas, Frank Read, Isaac Read, and Abe Read.

Not until about 1900 did the first known Jewish merchant

to his brother-in-law, Frederick Meyerheim. The main store in Jacksonville was six stories tall, with 60,000 square feet of floor space (they once expanded to include the building next door). By the 1940s, it was known as the largest department store in the Southeast. The Jacksonville business also had three mall locations in the 1960s

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settle in St. Stephens. Gus Rittenberg (brother of Sam Rittenberg and my great-greatuncle) arrived in the town with a young wife, Henrietta (Hennie) Behrmann, who had emigrated in 1893 from Russia, and three very young children, Anita, Corinne, and Walter. In the 1910 census, Gus was identified as a merchant with a general store, and the number of his children had doubled, now including Morris (Maurice), Arthur, and Rose. Also listed as members of the Rittenberg household and workers in the store were two brothers, Herman and Isadore Sanditen, Russian immigrants related to Gus's sister's husband, Samuel Sanders (Sanditen).

Around 1910, the enterprising Gus Rittenberg built a sawmill on his land not far north of St. Stephens Station, on the west side of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad's track, with a spur that would enable him to ship finished lumber to growing markets. On August 6, 1912, a train of passenger cars running south went dead on the track about 40 feet from the mill, idle at the time. A local train from Florence soon came behind and began to push. Cinders from the laboring engine were churned up by the wind and blown into the lumber yard. Sawdust and waste lumber caught fire and spread to the mill, causing much destruction. Rittenberg prevailed in his lawsuit against the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad and was awarded damages for the destroyed mill, inventory, and machinery.

Disaster from the railroads struck again early on a Sunday afternoon in March 1918. Shortly after a freight train of 36 loaded cars passed through St. Stephens, a fire was discovered on the roof of a house, which jumped to adjoining buildings and burned until most of the row was destroyed, including Gus Rittenberg's store. The

railroad company was held liable for damages in the amount of \$69,000, in what was considered to be St. Stephens' worst fire. By the time of the 1918 fire, the Rittenbergs were maintaining homes in both St. Stephens and Charleston. Corinne graduated with distinction from Ashley Hall that year. Gus and Hennie first appear in the Charleston city directory in 1917 and, over the next few years, some of their children are listed as well, including Edward, born in 1916. The 1917 directory shows Gus is in business—Southern Jute Products, 154 East Bay Street—with his brother Sam, who had served in the state legislature in 1913-1914 and was running Carolina Advertising Agency. A year later, the brothers established another company, Rittenberg Wood Yard, at Meeting Street near Magnolia Crossing. By 1920, Southern Jute and Rittenberg Wood disappear from the city





directory, and subsequent listings note that Gus is a general merchandiser and merchant, perhaps a reference to his St. Stephens store. He died in 1924 in a car accident near Moncks Corner.

In February 1920, the U.S. census lists my great-grandparents and their children living in St. Stephens: Rachel (Rae) Rittenberg Sanders (Gus Rittenberg's youngest sibling), her husband, Sam Sanders (listed as a naturalized citizen from Russia, a general merchant, and a former book peddler in Brooklyn, New York), and the children, Sara (Lipman), Hilbert (Bert), Wilfred, Leonard, and Charlotte (Karesh).

Above: Wilfred E. Lipman, the author's father, with his parents, Sara Sanders Lipman and Max David Lipman, ca. 1928. Left: Gus Rittenberg's store ledger, with entries dating to 1916, includes pages tracking purchases from wholesaler Baltimore Bargain House. Special Collections, College of Charleston.





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Max Lipman, my paternal grandfather, was working as bookkeeper for Mendel Dumas in Bonneau when someone suggested that he meet a young lady teaching at the public school in St. Stephens.

The day he visited the school, however, the teacher was a substitute. He peered into the schoolhouse window thinking the substitute was the young lady he was to meet. Max asked her for a date, and the rest is history. Max Lipman and Sara Sanders were married from 1922 until Sara's death in April 1981. Their wedding was officiated by Rabbi Jacob Raisin of K. K. Beth Elohim in Gus Rittenberg's home on Huger Street in Charleston, as recollected by a very young guest, Henry Rittenberg (1918–2012), son of Sam Rittenberg. During the time the Rittenbergs lived in St. Stephens, it is believed they

kept the Sabbath and observed other Jewish traditions.

Arthur (Adolph) N. Lipman may have learned of opportunities in St. Stephens when attending his younger brother Max's wedding. By 1922, he had served in the navy during World War I and was working in sales for I. M. Pearlstine & Sons in Charleston. Like Max, Arthur was born and raised in Ridgeland, South Carolina, to Bavarian parents, Solomon and Theresa Krapf Lipman, who had immigrated to America in the early 1880s. Arthur arrived in St. Stephens in 1925 and opened a



Arthur also worked at Paul's general merchandise store. Paul's children Sallie Kate and Robert shared with me their memories of the store and growing up in St. Stephens, as did town historian Elizabeth Carroll. Arthur stationed himself most of the time on the bench near the meat case. If someone needed something from the locked furniture store on the north corner of the block, he escorted the customer to the building. Although Arthur never married, he showed affection for children, letting the Read siblings ride along with him in his pickup truck when he delivered groceries or furniture, and giving many local children rides on the handcart used to carry purchases to a customer's car. Since the Reads



did not have a television until the late 1950s or early '60s, their children watched shows on TV sets in Arthur Lipman's furniture store.

In the 1930s, Arthur purchased a cottage at Folly Beach, where the Reads and other St. Stephens residents would stay during the summer; my family stayed there in the late 1950s. Arthur's Sunday visits to my Lipman grandparents on St. Margaret Street in Charleston during the winters of the 1960s brought such delight as he swept through the front door with his great shock of tumbling white hair with a slight curl. He greeted us in his Gullah-Geechee accent, with his ever-present broad smile and cheerful countenance, while toting a bushel

> basket of sweet potatoes or other seasonal vegetables. I remember the earthy smell clinging to his large overcoat, wafting in with the cold air that followed him into the living room.

Spanning the decades, Arthur's exhaustive and selfless contributions to important town affairs garnered him the Municipal Association of South responsible for organizing the town's fire department in the early 1930s, served

mayor pro tem for numerous terms, and functioned as the acting mayor to complete unexpired terms of office. Arthur was a charter member of the St. Stephens Lions Club and a member of the St. Stephens American Legion Post 62 and Mt. Hope Lodge 128. His health declined in the 1970s, and he died in August 1979 at the age of 86. Although his grandfather had been a rabbi in Wurzburg, Germany, Arthur was never an observant Jew. However, his character and deeds epitomized the Jewish concept tikkun olam (repair of the world) and were memorialized in his epitaph, "Gentle, Kind, Beloved."

Frank Read (1868–1940) arrived in America from Latvia through Ellis Island. The original family name was

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spelled "Redt" but was legally changed to Read after the ladies from Pinopolis, who had been teaching him English, insisted that "Redt" was not the proper way to spell his name, based on his European pronunciation. Frank married Fredericka (Fanny) Lief (1868–1958) and later brought over his Latvianborn son, Daniel, and his wife's mother, Dina Lief. Four more children were born to the Reads in South Carolina: Riva, Ludvig (Ludie), Joseph (Joe), and Paul.

In 1886, Frank Read and his brother Abe built and opened a large store on the south side of West Main Street in Moncks Corner. It was about a block long, where shoes, clothing, and

groceries were retailed; mules were sold from the yard. Since there were no undertakers in Moncks Corner, Frank also sold caskets, a business practice that Paul Read continued from his store in St. Stephens until at least the early 1960s.

Their sister, Esther Read (1879–1949), who married Mendel Davis Dumas, of Dvinsk, Lithuania, arrived in Moncks Corner about 1890. (Dumas operated a store in Bonneau

before moving to Charleston,



Former location of Paul Read's store, Main Street, St. Stephen SC. Photo by Deborah Cochelin, 2018.

where he went into business with Frank Read.) In November by the shooting that Paul went into the street and asked the 1898, their younger brother, Isaac Read, joined them, and Frank gunmen to stop firing because it was disturbing his wife. built a large two-story frame house, now known as the Coastal Incredibly, they obliged, stopping long enough for Sephra to leave for home, before resuming their shootout. Time stood Hotel, a short distance from the present railroad station. Frank and Fanny's son Paul was born around 1905; he next to the store accommodated customers needing a place to

still in St. Stephens until at least the 1950s, when a vacant lot lived in Moncks Corner until the family moved to Charleston, where he attended the High School of Charleston and The leave their mules, horses, and wagons. Citadel. After venturing into some real estate deals in Florida, Christmastime was always a memorable and exceptionally Paul was ready to settle down. Upon returning to South busy time for the Reads. Since they could not stop working Carolina, he met Sephra Savitz at a social event where it was for lunch, their cook brought platters of sandwiches to the love at first sight. Sephra, whose family were merchants in St. store. Family members who were merchants in Columbia and Matthews and Columbia, had been the roommate of Paul's St. Matthews came to St. Stephens on Christmas day for a big brother Joe's wife, Florence Panitz. dinner and fireworks.

In the early 1920s, Franklin Turner of Turner Lumber The main street in St. Stephen (as it is spelled today) may be a shell of what it was when these pioneering Jewish Company, Louisiana, opened the Santee River Hardwood Mill in St. Stephens. It drew many workers to the town, whose merchants had a presence, but the street named Lipman Drive population tripled by 1930. This boom may have influenced and the annual Arthur Lipman Day are reminders of their Paul to build his first store, with a residence on the second legacy. The town still is notable for grand houses on its outskirts floor, in 1928, the year he and Sephra were married. The store and the historic church. An Army Corp of Engineers facility burned down but was rebuilt in 1931, coinciding with the called the St. Stephen Powerhouse grows sweetgrass for use birth of their first child, Robert. This time, the residence was by Lowcountry basket makers. Berkeley County's economy is built behind the store, as was a warehouse for storing supplies on the rise again, this time with 21<sup>st</sup> century industries, such as and dry goods. The Read family expanded with the birth of Google in Moncks Corner, and J. W. Aluminum and defense two more children, Frank and Sallie Kate. contractor W International in Goose Creek.



Above: Deborah Lipman on the lap of her great-grandmother, Carolina's Public Service Rachel Rittenberg Sanders, mid-1950s. Special Collections, Award in 1973. He was College of Charleston. Top: This M. D. Lipman sign is on display in the Berkeley County Museum, Santee Canal State Park, Moncks Corner, SC. Photo by Deborah Cochelin, 2018.

Paul and Sephra Read managed to maintain their Jewish traditions while raising their family in St. Stephens. Sallie Kate recollects going to Sunday school at KKBE, which gave her parents the opportunity to meet with Charleston's Jewish wholesalers who were open on Sundays.

Paul sold everything from farm supplies to groceries,

clothing, and fabric. Robert remembers the big cookie jar, from which he filched cookies when his mother was not looking. He recalls his mother working full time in the store and his father breaking up dog fights with a broom. During the Depression, a truck transporting slot machines broke down on the highway

> near St. Stephens. Paul helped finance repairs of the truck by purchasing the slot machines. He installed them in his store and, for some time, he paid his clerks using money that was deposited into the slot machines.

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Even in the 1930s and '40s, St. Stephens, along with other towns in Berkeley County, was described as the "wild, wild West." Shootings occurred often, sometimes on Main Street in front of Paul Read's store. One time Sephra was so annoyed
#### JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

# The Sam Solomon Company

by Kate Stillman, Martha Stillman Silverman, Ellen Jacobson Terry, and Marilyn Solomon Brilliant

Sam Solomon emigrated from Russia in 1902 when he was 17 years old. Seven years later, he opened his own business in Charleston, South Carolina. Eventually, that business grew to 11 stores in four states and became known for pioneering a novel retail format and mounting the first legal challenge to South Carolina's Sunday closing laws.

T n 1902, Sam Solomon came to New York City with his father. Eventually, all six of Sam's siblings immigrated to America, settling in Charleston, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, New York, and Chicago.

In 1909, at the age of 24, Sam opened the business

that would become Sam Solomon Wholesale Jobbers at 526 King Street. Sam distributed general merchandise to retail outlets, focusing on dry goods and toys. Although it had several addresses on King Street over the years, by the 1940s Sam's store was located at 484 King Street. In 1912, Sam married Sophie Prystowsky, who had wide family connections in the city; Sophie's father owned E. Prystowsky and Sons-Mike Sam and Jake's at 525–527 King Street (later the Father-Son Store).

family was involved in the operation of Sam Solomon sons, Melvin and Aaron, and to his son-in-law, Joseph Stillman. Wholesale Jobbers. Sam and Sophie's five children-Naomi, Aaron, Muriel, Frances, and Melvin-all helped in the store and took turns staffing the register.

Sam Solomon was known for his compassion, generosity, and warmth. The Charleston News and Courier printed a special was "a kind and generous man who did not spare himself in helping others."



were just starting out, especially newcomers to the city. He extended credit and loans on generous terms and offered moral support and material assistance to many who would later become successful Jewish merchants. Traveling salesmen knew that they could find a minyan at the store on King Street and enjoy Sabbath dinner at the Solomon home on St. Philip Street. Sam and Sophie invited so many guests to their beach house on Sullivan's Island for Sunday night supper—including Jewish servicemen stationed in Charleston during World War II—that they had to serve supper in multiple shifts. Among many other mitzvahs, Sam regularly visited the sick in the Jewish community.

Sam was a man of strong faith. He was a charter

member of Beth Israel synagogue and an active and long-time member of Brith Sholom Beth Israel after the congregations merged in 1954. Following the founding of the State of Israel in 1948, he made the store's facilities available for packing and shipping literally tons of food and clothing to Israel.

In 1947, Sam Solomon opened Regal's Department Store at 501 King Street. He opened a second location on Reynolds Avenue in North Charleston. In 1960, both locations were sold.

Sam Solomon died on

As with many Jewish businesses at the time, the entire February 8, 1954, and ownership of the store passed to his two

#### **Novel Business Format**

In November 1953, just months before Sam's death, the store moved to a modern, custom-built, air-conditioned building at 338-340 East Bay Street. The business became tribute on the editorial page after his death, declaring that he known as Sam Solomon Company and changed from a wholesale to a retail discount operation and catalog showroom, while continuing to serve retailers in the As his own business thrived, Sam also helped those who Carolinas and Georgia. In 1962, the East Bay facility more

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than doubled in size to 50,000-plus square feet.

Retail customers at Sam Solomon Company had to have a membership card to enter and shop, but there was no charge for the card. Operating on a membership basis allowed the store to offer discounted prices. The store sold broad lines of nationally advertised and other brand merchandise, including jewelry, electronics, small appliances, toys, sporting goods,

housewares, giftware, health and beauty aids and, until 1968, clothing.

A popular feature of the store was its large color catalog, which grew to roughly 500 pages. Sam Solomon Company was a founding member of the Merchandisers' Association, Inc., an organization based in Chicago and composed of similar association members cooperated in the preparation of standard catalog used

by all members and

customized for each

on East Bay Street and

in all of its locations

had a different feel

from other catalog

were no clipboards

or one-item displays.

Just as in a department

store, customers

There

showrooms.

Sam Solomon Company's showroom

business.

Collections, College of Charleston.

bought most items directly from the showroom floor using shopping carts. The store also carried merchandise that was not included in the catalog.

#### Challenge to the Sunday Blue Laws

In April 1962, a law restricting sales and other business operations on Sunday became effective in South Carolina—



The Solomon family, l to r: Sam, Aaron, Frances, Naomi, Melvin, Muriel and Sophie, ca. 1924. Special Collections, College of Charleston.

VOLUME XXIV ~ NUMBER I

commonly known as the Sunday Blue Laws. Since its founding, Sam Solomon Company had closed on Saturday in observance of the Jewish Sabbath and had been open on Sunday.

On Sunday, May 6, 1962, and again the next Sunday, the chief of police and a detective came to the store and presented an arrest warrant/summons for Aaron Solomon, who was identified as the manager of the store. The warrant charged



Above: Frances Solomon Jacobson (1) and Muriel Solomom Stillman (identity of men unknown) in front of Sam Solomon Wholesale Jobbers, King Street, catalog showroom Charleston, SC, date unknown. Collection of Kate Stillman. Below: Sam Solomon businesses. The Wholesale Jobbers, thought to be 484 King Street, Charleston, SC, ca. 1940. Special Solomon Company



Sabbath and observe someone else's."

In 1965, the South Carolina Supreme Court upheld the conviction, holding that the Blue Laws did not further Christian beliefs or discriminate against other faiths, but merely established a uniform day of rest for all citizens.

Sam Solomon Company then appealed the state ruling to the U.S. Supreme Court, but the court dismissed the case

Aaron with a general violation of the Sunday Blue Laws and for selling two baby strollers. Because the recognized parties that the violation was intended to be a test case of the Blue Laws, Aaron was placed only under "technical arrest."

PAGE 25

local Α court convicted Aaron on both counts and fined the store \$50 for each violation. Sam quickly appealed the conviction to the South Carolina Supreme Court, arguing, among other points, that the Blue Laws violated the religious freedom guarantees of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and similar provisions in the South Carolina state constitution. As Aaron told the press: "We feel certain it was not the intention of the lawmakers to force us to profane our own

JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH CAROLINA PAGE 26

WHOLESALE DISTRIBUTORS claiming, in effect, that the question was a matter of state law Sam. Solomon. Company / 338-340 EAST BAY ST. CHARLESTON, S. C. TELEPHONE: RAYMOND 2-B311 MANUFACTURERS' AGENTS (although three judges disagreed). Sam Solomon Company paid the fines and continued to close on Saturdays for as long as Aaron Solomon remained with the business. **Expansion throughout the Southeast** In 1971, the business opened a second store on Rivers Avenue in North Charleston. This store was roughly double the size of the store on East Bay Street. The following year, Sam Solomon Company went public, with Melvin Solomon as its president. By 1981, Sam Solomon Company operated 11 stores in South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. After several months reorganizing under the protection of Chapter 11 of the Federal Bankruptcy Code, Sam Solomon Company merged with Service Merchandise in 1982. At the time, Service Merchandise was the second largest operator of

Domanda el adiatama inere lices el der pecte entre i i tamos same brands ser esercit

AMPLE PARKI

Clockwise from bottom right: profit chart, courtesy of Kate Stillman. Sam Solomon Company, 338-340 East Bay Street, ca. 1962. In the foreground, l to r, Joseph Stillman, Melvin Solomon, and Aaron Solomon. Sam Solomon promotional shoe polish. Page from the 1960-61 Sam Solomon Company catalog. Special Collections, College of Charleston.

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THE RIGHT

RERCHANDIS

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A KING ST. CHARLESTON, S.C.

catalog showrooms in the country.

AM SOLOMON COMPANY NATIONAL BRANDS T POSITIVE SAVINGS

WIPE 'N SHINE

What Makes a Merchant?

SPRING 2019

by Mark Swick, Executive Director, JHSSC

While my love for South Carolina is tied to our state's remarkable Jewish history, it is not Rosenblum, a Swedish immigrant who operated The Hub I wrote in the pages of our fall magazine about the Such was the case with my grandmother and her

the story not told herein of my great-grandfather Meyer Every Crossroads. To peruse the accounts in this issue of the Poliakoffs, Kronsbergs, Brodys, Furchgotts, Rittenbergs, and Solomons is to better understand what life was like for ambitious Jewish immigrant families of the 19<sup>th</sup> and

a history that I claim as my own. I am From Off-my people come from Michigan and Illinois, and I grew up in Maryland. So how did a reformed Yankee connect to the mission of the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina? The answer can be found in the pages of this magazine and Clothing Co. in Iron Mountain, Michigan, for most of his professional life. I am no descendent of the Palmetto State, but I proudly trace my lineage to a hard-working Jewish merchant deeply embedded in his community. significance of Jewish merchants to the communities in which they lived and worked. Those words further confirm the stories in this issue: Jewish merchants operating on main streets across the state became, with their families, the backbone of small congregations, reaching their peak as the post-World War II Baby Boomers came of age. When that generation moved away to pursue higher education and occupations elsewhere, the Jewish populations of small towns began to wane and congregations faltered. siblings, who left Iron Mountain for The City as soon as they could. But the stories of my merchant patriarch remain vivid in memory, like hundreds of similar narratives that inform the work the Society has undertaken in our Jewish Merchant Project and its inaugural exhibition, A Store at 20<sup>th</sup> centuries—not only in South Carolina but across the nation. Few projects could be more synchronized with the Society's mission than that.

JHSSC has been membership-supported throughout the organization's proud history. As we look towards the next 25 years, our financial success rests on creating a robust endowment and sustaining our Pillar memberships-JHSSC members who commit \$5,000 over five years—so that in 2044 we can celebrate 50 years of success. I hope you will join us this May in Charleston to commemorate the Society, our achievements, and the many, many people who have helped us arrive at this happy time.

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## Pillars

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Susan and Charles Altman, Charleston, SC Ellen Arnovitz, Atlanta, GA Doris L. Baumgarten, Aiken, SC Harold Brody, Atlanta, GA Alex and Dyan Cohen, Darlington, SC Joan Cutler, Columbia, SC Lowell and Barbara Epstein, Charleston, SC Lilly and Bruce Filler, Columbia, SC Steven J. Gold, Greenville, SC Judith Green, Charleston, SC Stuart and Rebecca Greenberg, Florence, SC Max and Ann Meddin Hellman, Charleston, SC Alan and Charlotte Kahn, Columbia, SC Jerry and Sue Kline, Columbia, SC Michael S. Kogan, Charleston, SC Allan and Jeanne Lieberman, Charleston, SC Susan R. Lourie, Columbia, SC Bert and Robin Mercer, Charleston, SC Susan Pearlstine Norton, Charleston, SC Andrew and Mary Poliakoff, Spartanburg, SC Edward and Sandra Poliakoff, Columbia, SC Alan and Anne Reyner, Columbia, SC Deborah Ritter, Columbia, SC Benedict and Brenda Rosen, Myrtle Beach, SC Jeffrey and Mickey Rosenblum, Charleston, SC Sandra Lee Rosenblum, Charleston, SC Joseph and Edie Rubin, Charleston, SC Larry Simon, Isle of Palms, SC Mark and Gayle Sloan, Myrtle Beach, SC Gail (Altman) and Ronald Spahn, Baltimore, MD Richard Stern, Boston, MA Anita Zucker, Charleston, SC

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|  | Individual/Family Membership                       | \$36     |
|--|--|----------|
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|  | Pillar (\$1,000 per year for 5 years)              | \$5,000  |
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| Join or renew online at <i>jhssc.org.</i><br>Enroll your friends and relatives for an additional \$36 each.<br>Send us their information and we will inform them of your gift. |  |          |

Make checks payable to JHSSC and mail to the address above.

Register now for the May 18-19 meeting in Charleston. See page 15 for more information.

jhssc.org

# The JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY of South Carolina

Volume XXIV Number 2 ~ Fall 2019

In Search of Jewish Spartanburg November 9-10, 2019



# Тне

JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

> Dale Rosengarten editor Alyssa Neely assistant editor

The JHSSC newsletter is published twice a year.

and designer

#### Current and back issues can be found at jhssc.org

On the cover: Temple B'nai Israel congregants prepare to transfer the Torahs from their community center on Heywood Avenue, Spartanburg, SC, to their new sanctuary, also on Heywood, for the dedication ceremony, February 9, 1964 Courtesy of Temple B'nai Israel.



Correction: In the Spring 2019 issue on page 13, we mistakenly identified this gentleman as Harry Appel. He is Abraham "Abe" Appel, husband of Ida Goldberg and father of Harry, Fannie 'Faye," Sam, and Sidney.

## In this issue

In Search of Jewish Spartanburg ~ Joe Wachter ~ A marble tablet inscribed with the names of Temple B'nai Israel's founders inspired the author to find out who they were. Wachter's childhood memories and his tenacious research reveal a tightly-knit Jewish community, fostered by involved parents and a beloved religious leader of nearly 30 years, Rabbi Max Stauber.....4

Memories of Our Father and Temple B'nai Israel during the Youthful Time We Lived in Spartanburg ~ Ben Zion Stauber, Naomi Miriam Stauber, Alvin Stauber, and Lynn "Honey" Stauber Greenberg ~ The children of Rabbi Max Stauber, transplants from Patchogue, New York, recall the family's move to Spartanburg, South Carolina, in 1955, when their father was hired to lead Temple B'nai Israel. Even as a boy in Austria-Hungary, Max demonstrated his devotion to Judaism and family, according to his youngest child Ben's account. Naomi describes her father's "inner circle," the Uptown Nine, a group of locally prominent Christian ministers—resounding evidence of the city's ecumenical atmosphere. Alvin entertains with tales of his father's minyan-making exploits, and Honey fondly remembers twirling in the foyer of "the Rabbi's Parish," visiting Jewish-owned stores along Main Street, and her mother's challah—no guest left her house without one.....7

Price's Store for Men: "Ends Your Quest for the Best" ~ Harry Price ~ The author's grandfather Harry Price arrived in the thriving textile town of Spartanburg in 1900, and immediately launched a men's clothing store-first called The New York Bazaar-that flourishes to this day. Harry made a name for himself in civic organizations—the Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis Club, Woodmen of the World, and Loyal Order of Moose—and was a charter member of Temple B'nai Israel.....11

In Search of Jewish Spartanburg ~ JHSSC meets in Spartanburg, November 9–10, 2019....13

The Froms of Union: Merchants on Main Street for 100 Years ~ I. Allan From and Gloria From Goldberg ~ Israel and Bertha Kessler From of Lithuania raised six children in the small town of Union, South Carolina, where, in 1917, the Jewish population numbered 40, as reported in the American Jewish Yearbook. All the From children followed their parents into retail and, by the 1940s, the Carolina Upcountry was dotted with From family members and their relatives running stores. Siblings Allan From and Gloria Goldberg, grandchildren of Israel and Bertha, describe growing up in Union at a time when only two Jewish families remained......14

The Teszlers of Budapest and Spartanburg: Pioneers in Textile Engineering ~ Diane C. Vecchio ~ Hungarian textile manufacturer Sandor Teszler, after surviving the Holocaust, attempted to rebuild his business in Budapest, but fled to America with his wife, Lidia, and their sons Andrew and Otto, after the government seized his factory. Sandor and Andrew became leaders in the textile industry, while setting an example for fair hiring practices and philanthropy in their adopted hometown of Spartanburg......19

Growing up in Gaffney ~ Benjamin Franklin Sheftall III ~ Small town life for this Jewish boy in the 1950 and '60s was one of contrasts. He had plenty of friends who made no issue of his religion, but the Ku Klux Klan was much in evidence and discrimination against African Americans was overt. Ben traveled to Spartanburg to attend religious services, participate in youth group activities, and train for his bar mitzvah at Temple B'nai Israel, yet among his 

**Endowing our Future ~ Mark Swick ~** The strength and vitality of the JHSSC is evident through its meetings, public programs, archives, and special projects. Sustained by its members and its partnership with the College of Charleston, the Society has created a new endowment 

## FALL 2019

Tt's been a tough summer in the Our meeting on "Memory, Monuments, and Memorials," LUnited States. Shootings, discord for example, followed the Alt Right demonstrations in Charlottesville, Virginia, which turned deadly. Last spring's in Washington, and racist rhetoric 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary gala was indeed a celebratory event but also that hasn't been heard since the

1960s remind us of Winston's Churchill's

words (paraphrasing philosopher George Santayana): "Those who fail to learn from history are condemned to repeat it." In the spirit of remembering our history, the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina was established in 1994 "to encourage the collection, study, and interpretation of South Carolina Jewish history and to increase awareness of that heritage among Jews and non-Jews." Over the past 25 years, JHSSC has developed into the largest Jewish statewide organization and worked steadily to fulfill its mission.

With the Society's support, the Jewish Heritage Collection at the College of Charleston's Addlestone Library has recorded more than 500 oral histories and accessioned thousands of archival documents. In partnership with the College's Jewish Studies Program and the Pearlstine/Lipov

Center for Southern Jewish Culture,

we offer an array of public programs

and learning opportunities. Historic

Columbia's Jewish Heritage

Initiative has fueled our research and

fieldwork on merchants across the

state and assisted in the production

of the exhibit A Store at Every

Crossroads, on view this fall at both

Addlestone Library and the Temple

Sinai Jewish History Center in

Sumter. Our website and biannual

magazine help spread the word

about the history we are uncovering.

stay current, covering contemporary

and sometimes controversial subjects.

In our conferences, we strive to

**VP** Archives and Historical Sites Andrew Poliakoff, Spartanburg, SC

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# Letter from the President

This early 20<sup>th</sup>-century cash register from Worthmore in Spartanburg, South Carolina, is one of many merchant artifacts on display in the exhibit A Store at Every Crossroads, in Special Collections, through December 1, 2019.

#### SLATE OF OFFICERS FOR 2020–21

President Lilly Filler, Columbia, SC

**VP** Fundraising and Membership Steve Savitz, Columbia, SC

engaged serious conversation among top scholars about what the future holds for American Jewry in the decades ahead. As I complete my second term as JHSSC president, I am proud of the work we are doing and confident the Society is in good hands.

PAGE

Our fall 2019 meeting is scheduled to take place in Spartanburg on November 9-10. The planning committee, headed by Spartanburg native Joe Wachter, has been hard at work designing the program. Spartanburg's Jewish history will take center stage on Saturday, with a talk and panel discussion, a site visit to the old synagogue, and dinner at Temple B'nai Israel with entertainment by Cap and Collar. On Sunday we will commemorate the 81<sup>st</sup> anniversary of Kristallnacht, the Nazis' "Night of Broken Glass," with a tribute to the Teszler family, refugees from Budapest, Addlestone Library, College of Charleston, Hungry, who developed double-

knit textile manufacturing in Spartanburg.

I want to thank the Spartanburg community for welcoming us with true southern hospitality. As always, hats off to the professionals, staff, and volunteers who help us run a highly successful organization. Without them there would be no Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina.

I look forward to seeing you all in Spartanburg in November!

Jeffrey Rosenblum, FAIA, **IHSSC** President

# In Search of Jewish Spartanburg

#### by Joe Wachter

Twas born in Spartanburg, South Carolina, at Mary Black Hospital on February 17, 1946. My parents, Joseph and Margaret Wachter, met while both were stationed at Camp Croft, a World War II–era infantry training camp in Spartanburg County. Growing up in Spartanburg, my brother, Charles, and I were aware that we were part of a Jewish family and members of Temple B'nai Israel Congregation. When I was six years old, I started attending Sabbath services and Sunday school at what was then called the Dean Street

PAGE 4

Synagogue in downtown Spartanburg. Eleven concrete steps led to the synagogue's two large front doors, I entered the building I saw a large marble tablet on the wall facing those doors. Engraved in stone were the names of the individuals who founded my Jewish community and built our first synagogue.

> About 14 years ago, while visiting Spartanburg, I decided to find out more about the people whose were names on the marble tablet. familiar with

the names Spigel, Price, and Hecklin. Some of their descendants were still living and working in Spartanburg. I also knew the Greenewald name. A clothing store by that name had operated in downtown Spartanburg for over 100 years. However, I knew nothing about the others. There are 24 family names on the tablet, representing 27 families, and I have uncovered a great deal of information about all of them. I have spoken to more than 250 descendants of Spartanburg's early Jewish settlers and later arrivals, including those not affiliated with the temple, and I am amazed at what I have thus far uncovered. I continue to discover new information about them. They were and are a remarkable group of people. (Some of their stories are forthcoming at *jhssc.org*. See p. 12 for details.)

My parents' generation at the temple did an outstanding job and each time of creating and nurturing a Jewish community for me and the other kids who grew up there. That sense of belonging meant a lot to me and it has a lot to do with why I wanted to find out more about the families of Temple B'nai Israel. Rabbi Max Stauber, who led our congregation for almost 30 years, contributed significantly to the sense of belonging we experienced. In many ways, he was the face of Spartanburg Jewry. He was respected by everyone in the city, Jews and non-Jews alike. He reached out to every member of our Jewish community and always saw the best in every person. He never uttered an unkind word about anyone. He was a father figure to us all.

> Our youth group, the Spartanburg Chapter of the B'nai Brith Youth Organization (BBYO), made up of members of Aleph Zadik Aleph (AZA) and B'nai B'rith Girls (BBG), also fostered feelings of kinship. I was a member from the late 1950s to the mid-1960s, along with about 50 other teens. Our advisors were Joel Tanenbaum, Kathy Steinberg, and Helga and Herb Moglin. We were extremely active during that time period. We had meetings every two weeks and we wrote and published *The* Shmooser, our own monthly newspaper, which was loaded with stories about who we were and what we were doing.

Because most of our parents were busy making a living was downtown (and despite none of us being particularly

Top: Greenewald's storefront, 1930s. Middle: Postcard image of the Camp Croft USO building operated by the Jewish Welfare Board at 291 E. Main Street, Spartanburg, SC. Bottom: B'nai B'rith Youth Organization (Spartanburg Chapter) members getting ready to hit the streets to raise money for the March of Dimes, Spartanburg, SC, 1965. Left to right: back row, Mark Tanenbaum, Ben Stauber, Charles Wachter, Helene "Sweetie" Cohen, Charles "Moose" Finkelstein; middle row, Michael Yoffee, Ellen Yogman, Sandy Gilpin, Sherrie Silverman, Saul Tanenbaum; front row, Larry Abelkop, Elaine Abelkop, Susan Price, Terri Massey, Lee Tanenbaum. Holding sign: Ricky Tanenbaum.

## FALL 2019

religious), our youth group made up the minyan at Saturday Earlier that year, at the invitation of temple member Joseph morning services conducted by Rabbi Stauber. Every Sunday Spigel, Rabbi Jacob Raisin of K. K. Beth Elohim in Charleston, we held a brief morning service, followed by a brunch catered South Carolina, came to Spartanburg to organize by our mothers and a cultural hour featuring talks by local fundraising to build attorneys, doctors, and college professors. the congregation's

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We had a debate team and participated in competitions. We also had a basketball team (with AZA emblazoned on our jerseys) in the local church league and were one of the best teams in the league each year. Our coach was Jack Steinberg. We organized social activities on a regular basis and visited and befriended other Jewish kids at weekend events in cities in Georgia and the Carolinas.

Those were special times. Some of the people reading this will remember that in 2003 we had a 40-year BBYO reunion in Spartanburg, which lasted three days. For those three days, we ate together, laughed together, and celebrated our friendships, memories, and collective history. It was truly a moving and memorable event, so much so that my wife openly cried when she saw how much like a family—a big Jewish family—we all were. Of the 50 or so kids I knew, 44 attended, traveling from far and near. Another four wanted to come but could not because they were on business outside the country or were ill and could not travel. That stands in my mind as a remarkable statement about how much the temple meant to all of us and how much we meant to each other.

No one yet knows when the first Jews arrived and settled in Spartanburg. Jacob Rader Marcus, in *To Count a People*: American Jewish Population Data, 1585–1984, notes that nine Jews lived in the city in 1878. The Carolina Spartan reported in September 1888 that the city's "Hebrew friends" met for Yom Kippur. By 1912, Marcus indicates the number of Jewish residents had increased to 80.

In 1912, a congregation was formally organized in downtown Spartanburg when a small group of men met in a tailor shop owned by Abe Levin, located at 113 1/2 East Main Street. Levin's shop was above a clothing store owned by Joe Miller called The Standard Cloak Company, known to locals as "The Standard." At that meeting Levin was elected the first president. Between 1912 and 1916, the group held services at the Herring Furniture Store (115 East Main Street), The Standard, and other downtown business establishments, including Goldberg's and the second floor of the Floyd L. Liles Department Store, both located on Morgan Square.

Rabbi Hyman Samuel Cohen was hired in 1914 as the first full-time rabbi. He died unexpectedly in October 1916.

Top: Temple B'nai Israel's AZA basketball team, ca. 1961. Left to right: back row, Harold Jablon, Harry Gray, Tom Shapiro, Coach Jack Steinberg, Bill Shapiro, Alvin Stauber, Michael Gelburd; front row, Mark Tanenbaum, name unknown, Ben Stauber. Missing from the photo: Ed Gray, Larry Minkoff, Joe Wachter. Middle: Postcard image of Temple B'nai Israel at the corner of Union and Dean streets, Spartanburg, SC. Bottom: The Spartanburg Chapter of B'nai B'rith Youth Organization 40<sup>th</sup> reunion in 2003.

All photos courtesy of Joe Wachter, except where otherwise noted.

#### NUMBER II

first synagogue. In May 1916, the board filed for incorporation under the name Temple B'nai Israel (Sons of Israel) and, two months later, the congregation purchased lot and house located at 104 Union Street (the corner of Union and S. Dean streets) for \$2,560.00, the home of local photographer, A. T. Willis. That same



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#### **IEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH CAROLINA**

year, a Sunday school was operating in Isabelle Fuchtler's house across the street at 162 S. Dean Street.

Temple B'nai Israel hired Spartanburg architect Luther Douglas Proffitt and construction of the synagogue started in the spring of 1917. Joseph Spigel, then serving as president of the temple, oversaw the project. On Israel, Spartanburg, SC, ca. 1953.

chaired a committee that Rabbi Samuel Wrubel presiding over confirmation ceremony, Temple B'nai the Great Depression,

May 10, once the exterior of the building was completed, a formal dedication ceremony was held and a cornerstone placed at the northeast corner of the building. The public was invited to the event and Rabbi David Marx of The Temple in Atlanta was the featured speaker. Two local Spartanburg officials

> also spoke: Ibra C. Blackwood, Spartanburg County Solicitor, who lived across the street and who served as governor of South Carolina from 1931 to 1935; and Samuel T. Lanham, the Spartanburg County Master-In-Equity. Work on the interior of the sanctuary was completed in time for High the Holidays

led by Rabbi Isaiah Sobel, who became B'nai Israel's second full-time rabbi.

From the end of World War I till 1930, the temple's membership declined as many of the founding families moved away. The congregation was without a full-time rabbi at that time. A bad economy in South Carolina in the mid-1920s, followed by the onset of contributed greatly to the

decline. However, starting in the early 1930s—and for the next 15 years or so-the membership steadily increased. Several rabbis served the community during those years, but none for a long period of time.

In 1942, as the temple's membership grew, B'nai Israel hired Rabbi Samuel Wrubel, who remained in the pulpit until 1954. An accomplished writer and speaker, he was frequently invited to address civic and religious organizations in the Spartanburg area. Prior to Wrubel's arrival, the congregation was not affiliated with any one branch of Judaism and tried to meet the needs of all its members. Sometime during Wrubel's tenure, the temple became affiliated with Conservative Judaism and the United Synagogue of America. In 1955, Rabbi Max Stauber came to Spartanburg from a congregation in Patchogue, New York, on Long Island, and he served our community until he passed away in 1986. During his lengthy tenure as rabbi, the membership in the congregation continued to grow.

In the early 1950s, our congregation purchased a large tract of land for a community center and Sunday school. The property included a three-story Victorian-style home and was located on Heywood Avenue, about two miles from the Dean Street Synagogue. The building was designed and built by Luther Douglas Proffitt in 1907, the same man who designed and built the synagogue in 1917. Abe Smith, who had been active in temple affairs since the 1930s, was primarily responsible for securing that property.

The Dean Street Synagogue operated at the corner of Union and Deans streets until 1961, when it was sold to a local church. After the sale, a ceremony was held to move the Torahs from the building and place them at the community center that year, on Heywood. Two years later a new synagogue was built on with the Heywood Avenue property. My father, then the president services

Above left: Rabbi Max Stauber and Sunday school class, Temple B'nai Israel, Spartanburg, SC, 1971. Left: Sisterhood members in their new kitchen on Heywood Street, 1964. Courtesy of Temple B'nai Israel.

#### FALL 2019

of the congregation, was heavily involved in planning and designing the new

building, along with Henry Jacobs, Andrew Teszler, Max Massey, Joel Tanenbaum, and Abe Smith. It was one of his most cherished memories and accomplishments. In 1971, largely through the generosity of Andrew Teszler, the congregation constructed a Sunday school building adjacent to the new synagogue.

The Dean Street building is now being used by a congregation called the look and feel-even Jewelers (owned and operated by brothers Joseph and David Spigel).

the smell—of the synagogue I remember as a child. I have not been affiliated with Temple B'nai Israel since the 1960s. Since that time, the congregation has continued to grow and prosper, and it has been served by a number of rabbis. In

# Memories of Our Father and Temple B'nai Israel during the Youthful Time We Lived in Spartanburg by Ben Zion Stauber, Naomi Miriam Stauber, Alvin Stauber, and Lynn "Honey" Stauber Greenberg

#### Ben

My father was born in Austria-Hungary in or around 1905. He would tell each of us a different date, probably because he didn't remember what he had told us before, which became a running family joke. In those days, very few male babies were registered at the government office for fear that in 18 years they would be drafted. He also told me that every time there was a

war, he changed nationalities:



The Stauber family in Vishel de Sus, Romania.

Austro-Hungarian, Hungarian, All photos courtesy of Ben Stauber, except where otherwise noted.







Morgan Square in downtown Spartanburg, ca. 1917. From left is The Bread of Life Christian Greenewald's (men's and women's clothing store owned and operated by would like to share, please Fellowship. When I go brothers Moses, David, Max, and Isaac Henry Greenewald); Globe Sample do contact me. I would be inside, however, it still has Co. (a discount shoe store operated by Meyer Levite); and Spigel Bros. happy to hear from you at

1995, the membership at Temple B'nai Israel voted to affiliate with the Reform Movement and join the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Since 2003, Rabbi Yossi Liebowitz has served with distinction as the spiritual and religious leader of the community.

As noted above, I am still researching Spartanburg's Jewish history. If you would like to discuss any of that history with me or if you have any information you any time. Thank you.

Joe Wachter, jhw@48th.com P.O. Drawer 2567, Myrtle Beach, SC 29578 843,449,2000

Romanian, and probably others he didn't bother to share with me. Also, since births were not registered, he didn't know the actual day he was born, but he knew it was around Shavuot. It was cold, he said, and I always wondered how a newborn remembered this.

I will share a story he told me that shows his bravery and his devotion to Judaism. Some of the details may need a stretch of belief but he said it was true, and, knowing my father, I believe every word.

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Of course it was cold, very cold in Austria-Hungary in local congregation. Gatherings, celebrations, holidays, mitzvahs, winter. Snowing, winds, and even worse, Cossacks. A war was going on, World War I, I imagine, which works out to around his pre-bar mitzvah age. My grandfather called to Mordechai

Shlomo (Max)-my father-and told him to tend to the horses and the buggy. Not long after the words were out of Zadie's mouth, a group of not-sofriendly soldiers told Zaide they needed the horses because their horses were exhausted. He also said that they would return Zaide's horses when they were done with them. Hah! Ptooey! Liars!

Zaide told my father to go with the soldiers and bring his horses back home. Young Max obeyed and walked with the soldiers, gripping the reins as tight as he could. For many miles and days, he kept a watchful eye for anything that did not appear kosher. Finally, one day when the sun set and the darkness came over them, the captain of the Cossacks gave Max the full reins for the horses and told him to hop up on the buggy seat. A Above: Wedding of Rabbi Max Solomon Stauber he replied, "It's Shabbos, I can't ride an animal on Shabbos."

When the soldiers were done with Zaide's horses, Max turned them around and, step by step, village by village, he led the horses back home. He not only knew the laws of Shabbos, he lived them at great peril. This is one of my favorite Father stories because it exemplifies his obedience to his father, obedience to the laws God gave us, and his devotion to his family.

This is how my father lived his life.

#### Naomí

Moving from Patchogue, Long Island, New York, to Spartanburg, South Carolina, in August, 1955, was beyond culture shock. What we knew of "The South" was from the movie Gone with the Wind, which my Spartanburg High School history teacher convinced the local movie theater to show once a year, every year. Going from a congregation of 200 families in a tiny town to 50 families in a much larger town required its own adjustment.

Sunday school and Hebrew school classes, men's and women's organizations all were held at the temple.

The rabbi before my father occupied a respected place in the

Spartanburg community and my family was pleased to continue that position. Daddy was asked to join the Spartanburg County Ministerial Association and, at appropriate times, he gently encouraged the group to include black ministers. It took five years for this to happen and another five for an African American to become association president.

The largest white churches in Spartanburg were located on Main Street—truly the main thoroughfare through the life of the area. The Christian ministers of those churches were called the "Uptown Nine," and Daddy was invited to join them. When Daddy was turning 70, the oneg after Friday night services was his birthday party. Unbeknownst to him, right before services started, in walked the Uptown Spartanburg life, and took their seats on the front row. Many of our relatives from the New York area had flown or driven down to Spartanburg to help share in the milestone.

The Uptown Nine were Daddy's inner circle, dealing with the same issues with their congregants, no matter what the religion, as he did with his. When Daddy was dying from a stroke, Mother allowed only the congregation president and the ministers of the Uptown Nine to visit in the hospital. They were paying their respects, with many

honest tears and much affection. The local Spartanburg newspaper called Daddy the "Little Giant" in its editorial page obituary and devoted a third of a page that day to describing his contributions to Spartanburg and South Carolina. Governor Richard Riley had asked Daddy to write the "Ten Commandments of Mental Health for South Carolina" and he did. He had served on the Spartanburg County Mental Health Association for years.

Somewhere in the middle of the 28 years of Daddy's tenure Temple B'nai Israel was a shul and a home to and for the in Spartanburg, faculty from Wofford College and Converse

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College asked him to teach them the Old Testament from the

as dedicated in 1964.

Jewish perspective. He became an adjunct professor at Converse Making a minyan is a big deal in Judaism. A synagogue in San Francisco has, from time to time, issued to members College and taught faculty courses for years. He also taught Hebrew to the rare Converse student who wished to learn the Bible in the original language.

From time to time the

Sisterhood held bake sales to raise money. Temple B'nai Israel's reputation for delicious goodies spread. The temple parking lot was full of cars the day of the sale with visitors from across Spartanburg County. My mother baked eight challahs in the beginning years and cringed at the high price the women running the sale charged for her homemade challahs. Each year they asked Mother to bake more and more Above: Rabbi Max Stauber (left, rear) oversees the first meeting of as there was such a calling for them. Her strudel and rugelach flew off the tables. Everyone had a good time: there was lots his shoulder), Bennie Sheftall, Joel Spigel, Helene Cohen, Mrs. Smith of fun, lots of laughter, and the (advisor), Sandra Gilpin.

Twice a year Mother and Daddy would host a luncheon in their home for eight to ten of the Uptown Nine Ministers: mid-February for Black History month and another significant time six months later. Mother's menu was that of a Yom Tov dinner, including several courses and many dishes no one had previously tasted in their lives. The guests each went home with a fresh baked challah, looking forward to the next time, they exclaimed.

was represented.

The four years I spent in Spartanburg before departing for college left indelibly etched moments and experiences that influenced the rest of my life. My frequent return visits-for holidays, birthdays, anniversaries, my three sons' bar mitzvahs, and my parents' burial services were always extraordinary and soul-enriching.



very exhausted young man declined the and Phyllis Weiss, Brooklyn, NY, 1941. Below: The Nine Ministers, a real powerhouse in offer to ride. When he was asked why, Stauber children, Patchogue, NY, 1952. Left to right: Ben (4), Alvin (8), Naomi (10), and Lynn (6).





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Young Judaea, Spartanburg, SC, ca. 1961. Left to right: seated, Elaine Abelkop, Ben Stauber, Saul Tanenbaum; standing, behind Ben's right houlder, Charles Wachter, Larry Abelkop, Lee Tanenbaum, Sara Beth Bernanke; standing (rear), Marc Tanenbaum (with rabbi's hand on

Israel's Torahs were moved to the house serving as the community tenth man for the 7:30 A.M. center on Heywood Street, Spartanburg, SC, until the new sanctuary

a "Summons for Jewry Duty" to encourage them to attend the shul's morning minyan. And who/what should be counted as part of the quorum of ten-Women? Children? The Torah scroll? A sleeping congregant?-has been hotly debated among Jewish scholars for centuries. In the reminiscences below, I present memories of a minyan or two or three where my father, Rabbi Max Stauber, was a central character.

When I was only ten years old, before our family's move to Spartanburg from Patchogue, New York, my father would sometimes call me at home as I was preparing entire Spartanburg community Below: Preparing to leave the Dean Street synagogue in 1961. B'nai to go to school to serve as the weekday minyan at my father's synagogue located right next door to our house. I was glad to attend

and happy I could be the tenth man. At the end of the service, I trotted next door, finished my breakfast (wolfed it down!), and do not remember ever being tardy for school.

I also recall a "minyan mitzvah" some might call it "minyan chutzpah"—after we moved to Spartanburg. During Sukkot, Shavuot, or Passover morning weekday services at the synagogue's downtown location on Dean Street, with my family in attendance, my father would sometimes send me to the high school, conveniently located next door, to ask the administrative staff for permission to "yank" the Shapiro twins out of class (only for an hour or so), so we could make a minyan and thereby be

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able to recite certain prayers, as well as read the Torah portion E. Main Street, dubbed "the Rabbi's Parish." Across the for the day. This Make-a-Minyan effort was usually successful street was a small outdoor market where my siblings and did not seem to impair the Shapiro twins' academic or and I were sent to pick up milk and eggs for our mom professional success as they went on to illustrious careers in who was always baking challah and rugelach to have on law and medicine.

When I told my parents I would be visiting them in Spartanburg during my law school semester break in 1968, my father invited me to deliver the sermon at Friday evening services. I respectfully declined because I was exhausted after end-of-semester exams. I did go to Shabbat services on Friday evening and felt relaxed there and felt my stress level diminishing. Said stress level reduction was short-lived. When it was time for the sermon, my father announced, "My son Alvin will now deliver the sermon, a D'Var Torah." I was in shock! I was stunned! Somehow I organized some thoughts on my way up to the bimah and followed one of the guiding principles of Jewish public speaking, which is: "When in doubt, KVETCH."

So I babbled on for ten minutes about the malaise that Jewish university students felt in the turbulence of the Stauber, and Rabbi Max Stauber celebrate gas station; and walking down '60s. After the service, I asked my father Alvin's bar mitzvah, Spartanburg, SC, 1957. Main Street with my dad, visiting

why he called on me to give the sermon after I had told him that I couldn't do it. With a mischievous smile, he replied, "I was confident that you would come up with something. Anyway, you're going to be an attorney, right? Eventually, every lawyer needs to develop the ability to think on his feet, right? Tonight I gave you the chance to develop that ability." More smiles . . . all around!

## Honey

y first memory of Spartanburg, South Carolina, all visitors left with a challah loaf under their arm. B'nai where we moved when I was nine years old, was Israel is a warm and welcoming place and my childhood twirling around in the foyer of our new home at 844

hand for the endless trail of visitors to our house. The owner of the store was so southern and nice, and one day after my purchase, he said, "Ya'll come back." So I did, and he said "Did you forget something?" Friday nights and Saturdays we walked the one and a half miles to Temple B'nai Israel downtown for Shabbat services. Someone driving by would always stop and ask if we wanted a ride. Real southern hospitality!

We eventually built our new synagogue on Heywood Avenue, and I was the first to become bat mitzvah there. Years later, I was married in that same sanctuary. My fondest memories as a child were babysitting for Helga and Herb Moglin; buying clothes from Mac Massey's store, The Kiddie Korner; getting gas at Junie White's

> stores like Marion's (Speedy Feinstein's lady's clothing store), Joseph H. Wachter, Sr.'s Elliott's Jewelers, and Sheila Rose's bakery. Saturday nights were filled with playing cards at the Sun 'n Sand Motel, run by Aunt Flo and Jack Price. Cooking with the women of our temple was a blast and listening to Alan Silverman play the piano for our spectacular shows leaves my heart so warm. And who can

forget Mozelle Harris? There could be no function without Mozelle's help. Our door was always open and reflects that.

## Price's Store for Men: "Ends Your Quest for the Best" by Harry Price

**T**t was said he bore a resemblance to George Gershwin, with parents, Harry Price married Dora whom he shared New York City beginnings and Lithuanian Mann in 1909 in Newberry, South heritage. They both died too young in 1937, and they obviously Carolina. Worthy of note, two future had a South Carolina connection: Gershwin's "working South Carolina governors were in vacation" \* at Folly Beach, near Charleston, to research Porgy attendance—Ibra Blackwood, a friend and Bess, and my grandfather Harry Price's random selection of the groom from Spartanburg, and of Spartanburg to start his business. Cole Blease, a friend of the bride's Visiting his brother-in-law, J. J. Saul, in Hartwell, Georgia, father from Newberry. Each governor Harry heard that Spartanburg "was a good town for business," became notorious in his own right.

bustling from the thriving textile industry. Marketer that Not surprising given he was, he adjusted his business plan several times. In 1900, her German heritage, Dora his first store was named The New York Bazaar, sounding Mann Price was disdainful sophisticated to him, but not so much to the Spartanburg of her husband's Eastern market, a mere 35 years after the Civil War. By 1903, the European antecedents. year of Spartanburg's great flood, with a name change and a Shewasalsosomewhat new location on the square, Harry Price's store for men was ambivalent about being Jewish. Her launched. Harry became known for his gracious and courteous interest in the manner and he easily made friends with Mayor John Floyd, Temple's Ladies

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who owned the neighboring dry goods store and sold caskets from his back door. Price's targeted Wofford College students, who would come to school from small South Carolina farming communities without proper dress clothes.

In the 1920s, sporting goods and a boy's department were added on the second floor. In his late 90s, Mr. Robert Pickens stated it was the "proudest day of his life, when his mother took him to Harry Price for his first pair of long pants." The Pie Eater's Club was created for local boys, circulating monthly comic books that showcased new styles.

As would be expected, Harry Price was civically engaged. Landrum's 1933 book of South Carolina biographies states that he was a founding member of the Chamber of Commerce and the Kiwanis Club and affiliated with the Woodmen of the World and the Loyal Order of Moose. He was a founding member of Congregation B'nai Israel and served on the building committee for its first temple.

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At the home of the bride's

\* David Zax, "Summertime for George Gershwin," Smithsonian Magazine, August 8, 2010.





Above: Kiddie Korner, Spartanburg, SC.

Below: Phyllis Weiss Stauber (1), Alvin

Courtesy of Joe Wachter.

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'im's Book From

Tim's Store for House

Top: Dora Mann, Newberry, SC, **1903.** Middle: Promotional logo for the **Pie Eaters** Club. Spartanburg. Bottom: Harry and Dora Mann Price, Spartanburg, SC.

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partners. After her husband's death, she remained the cashier at Lindbergh's honor at Converse College. There is an iconic Price's for more than 30 years.

was able to meet another notable 20th-century American. Spartanburg was Charles Lindbergh's only stop in South Carolina on his national tour after his triumphant flight across the Atlantic. At that time, Spartanburg had the only airport arrived in town, but certainly Spartanburg cheered him on.

Auxiliary was primarily to provide readily available bridge in the state. Harry Price attended the formal banquet held in photograph of Spartanburg's best attended parade. It shows While Harry Price never met George Gershwin, he Lindbergh in an open-air car riding down Main Street, Harry Price standing in the cheering crowd in front of his store with his young daughter, Anne (later Gray), and his father-in-law, Joseph Mann. There wasn't a parade when Harry Price first



Parades were held across the country in honor of Charles Lindbergh after he made history by piloting the first solo non-stop trans-Atlantic flight in 1927. The parade in Spartanburg, SC, was attended by Harry Price, his daughter, Anne, and his father-in-law, Joseph Mann (inset).



## Spartanburg Stories

To learn more about the lives and careers of notable Jewish people who are part of the history of Spartanburg, see Joe Wachter's upcoming "Spartanburg Stories" at *jhssc.org*. Profiles will include:

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~ Anna Kramer Blotcky, life-long music and voice teacher, recognized as a skilled contralto in the world of opera

~ Harold Cohen, whose World War II partnership with Creighton Abrams earned them the moniker "Roosevelt's Highest Paid Butchers"

~ David Max Eichhorn, U.S. Army chaplain who conducted religious services at Dachau after the concentration camp was liberated in 1945

~ Dr. Love Rosa Hirschmann Gantt, first woman to graduate from medical school in South Carolina and Spartanburg's first female physician, who fought pellagra, worked to combat delinquency among young girls, and found time to crusade for women's rights

~ Dr. Joseph Goldberger, epidemiologist who ran the Pellagra Hospital in Spartanburg between 1914 and 1920, and was nominated five times for the Nobel Prize

~ Simon Hecklin, basketball star and team captain at Wofford College in the early1920s; considered one of the best guards in college basketball in the South

~ Al Rosen, a feared slugger for the Cleveland Indians between 1950 and '56, who came to be known as "the Hebrew Hammer of Major League Baseball"

~ Seymour Rosenberg, whose column for the *Spartanburg* Herald, called "The Stroller," entertained and sometimes angered readers for more than 33 years

~ Bill Shapiro, track & field champion at Spartanburg High School and Tulane University, who brought home two gold medals from the 1965 Maccabiah games in Israel

~ Abe Simon, who fought with the Jewish Legion in Palestine during World War I, married Lottie Geffen, daughter of Atlanta Rabbi Tobias Geffen, and operated a women's clothing store in Spartanburg for 20 years

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## In Search of Jewish Spartanburg November 9–10, 2019 ~ Spartanburg, South Carolina

All events take place at Temple B'nai Israel, 146 Heywood Avenue, unless otherwise noted.

#### Saturday, November 9

| •             |   |
|---------------|---|
| 11:30 а.м.    | Registration and lunch  |
| 12:00 р.м.    | Welcome – Jeffrey Rosenblum, JHSSC  |
| 12:30 - 1:30  | <b>In Search of Jewish Spartanburg</b><br>Joe Wachter   |
| 2:00 – 3:30   | <b>Hub City Reminisces</b><br>Moderator: Joe Wachter<br>Panelists: Dot Frank, Allan From, Glori<br>Gary Smiley, Sandy Smiley, Ben Staube  |
| 4:00          | Tour of former Temple B'nai Israel, 1   |
| 6:00          | <b>Reception, buffet dinner, and enterta</b><br>For more than three decades Rabbi Yos<br>humor to their respective pulpits. Joinir<br>and original songs that serves as a bridg |
| 0 <b>1</b> NT | 1 10  |

#### Sunday, November 10

9

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| 9:00 а.м.  | <b>Membership meeting and executive committee electio</b><br>Coffee and bagels will be served. |
|------------|--|
| 0:30-12:00 | From Budapest to Spartanburg: The Teszlers, Textile (  |
|            | Moderator: Diane Vecchio, Professor Emeritus, Furman U   |
|            | Panelists: Mr. Oakley Coburn, former Head of the Library                                       |
|            | Dr. Charles D. Kay, Professor Emeritus, Wofford College  |

800.327.6465





president

ria Goldberg, Andy Poliakoff, Harry Price, er

191 S. Dean Street (a short drive from current synagogue)

#### ainment by Cap and Collar

ssi and Pastor Paul have brought their musical talents, charm, and ing forces in 2003, they perform a mix of traditional folk, country, ge among faiths and peoples.

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**committee elections**—everyone is invited!

#### Teszlers, Textile Giants in the American South

meritus, Furman University

Head of the Library Department & Archives, Wofford College, and

### The Froms of Union: Merchants on Main Street for 100 Years by I. Allan From

n Friday, October 7, 1927, the front page of the *Union* opportunities in Union, and the Froms moved there around Daily Times featured a picture of Israel From and an article about his life in Union. "To tear loose from the land of your Fathers, leave all of the surroundings of the childhood's happy days and jump from Lithuania, in Northern Europe to Union, South Carolina, is no little jump," the story began. "Then to realize that you are burning all of your bridges behind and that you are landing in a strange country without money been a cobbler in the Old Country and who now opened a or knowledge of the language, nothing between you and darkness but your own determined efforts, requires unbounded confidence in your capabilities and plenty of physical energy."

Israel From was born in Lithuania in 1878; his wife, Bertha Kessler, was born in 1879. They knew each other growing up and fell in love. Israel immigrated to Worcester, Massachusetts, in the 1890s and lived with relatives, possibly one or more of his brothers. (Eventually three of his brothers, his sister, Eva, and his parents all settled in Worcester.) By 1900, Bertha had joined him and the couple were married.

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What brought the Froms to Union? The tale is a typical one of chain migration. Bertha's cousins Hyman and Phillip Berlin lived in Baltimore and, in the 1890s.

decided to make their way south. They peddled in North Carolina, with their base in Moncure, near Raleigh, then in Burlington, and later in Haw River. Hyman married his first cousin Alte Kessler, who was Bertha's older sister. After trying their hand at dairy farming and a stint in Baltimore, the brothers moved to Union, peddling in the countryside and then succeeding in opening small stores in town.

The Berlins told Israel and Bertha, then living in Worcester, about

1901. Israel began peddling in the northern part of Union County in an area called Pea Ridge, walking from house to house selling cloth, clothes, kitchen items, and sewing supplies. He later purchased a horse and then a wagon and, in 1904, he opened a dry goods shop on Main Street. Soon thereafter he welcomed his brother Solomon Fram<sup>\*</sup> who had store across the street in Union.

> Israel had a reputation as hardworking, fair, and civic minded. He and Bertha reared six children, all of whom ended up in the retail business. Lena, the eldest child, married Louis Reimer from Augusta, Georgia, and they operated a store on Main Street in Woodruff, South Carolina, for more than 60 years. Ellis, the first son, married Maie Meyerson from Rock Hill; after attending Clemson, he worked with his father in Union: "I. From" became "I. From & Son." Mary From married Harry Antopolsky from Augusta, Georgia; along with other family members, they operated one of the largest hardware stores in Georgia. Sarah From married Joe Freedland of Wilmington, North Carolina, where the family ran a fine clothing store

Above: Israel and Bertha Kessler From, ca. 1907. Below: The From family, for more than six decades. Worcester, MA, ca. 1921. Israel From is seen on right holding son Harry on his lap, with his wife, Bertha, standing at his right shoulder. Courtesy of Allan From.



Rosa From married Meyer Poliakoff and was actively involved in running D. Poliakoff Department Store on the square in Abbeville, South Carolina, a business that spanned the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Fram, From, Frem: The family's original name was Fram, pronounced 'From" in Europe. Hence Israel became From in America, where the name was sometimes pronounced and spelled Frem. There were five brothers and one sister, Eva. Among the brothers, three became Fram, one From, and one Frem. Two Frams and the Frem stayed in Massachusetts; one Fram and one From ended up in Union, SC.

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My father, Harry, the last of six children, married Edith last year in high school he decided to stay home and work in the Small of Asheville, North Carolina, and opened Harry From's store with Ellis. on Main Street in Union. The store sold men's, women's, and Photographs show Israel to be a sharp dresser. He loved the children's clothing and shoes, mostly to lower and middle class latest in inventions and was one of the first in Union to acquire whites and African Americans. My father always said, "Treat an automobile, a radio, and an electric shaver. He learned to everyone with respect. Money is not white or black, it's green." speak English without a European accent and enjoyed taking My grandmother rarely worked in the store; according an occasional drink and playing cards with friends, Jewish and to Israel, he could hire people to sell goods but couldn't hire non-Jewish. My father remembers driving with his father into

someone to rear his children. Bertha was deeply religious. Both the country during Prohibition to purchase bootleg whiskey.

she and Israel were proud of their Jewish heritage and faith and never shied away from telling their neighbors in Union County how much Judaism meant to them. In Lithuania Bertha's mother had taught Hebrew and Bertha was well versed and observant. She kept a kosher home, ordering meat from Atlanta, which sometimes arrived in not the best condition. She



learned to properly salt Postcard (postmarked 1908), Main Street in Union, SC. Courtesy of Allan From. merchants elsewhere in the state-clearly the tensions between small town shopkeepers and their Klan customers hover not far beneath the surface Bertha davened three times a day until the day of her in the collective consciousness of southern Jews. Indeed, my sister remembers essentially the same encounter in our father's generation, as described in Gloria's account below.

the meat so it was edible. She served chickens raised in the backyard and slaughtered according to the laws of kashrut. death in 1969. She also recited Musaf whenever necessary. I can remember my parents encouraging me to stand next to my grandmother when she prayed but not to disturb her. Israel, When our family closed my father's store, I was told by

on the other hand, was not so Orthodox and would eat nonkosher food outside the house. Family lore has it that if Israel brought home trevf (nonkosher) food, Bertha



backyard where he would sit on a tree stump and eat in the and he explained they would measure the length of their foot company of the horse he kept from his peddling days. with a string, go to the store and ask for a shoe of that length. My aunt Rosa Poliakoff, in an oral history recorded in 1995, I was proud to hear my immigrant grandfather had treated all

claimed the only time she heard her parents disagree was when people with respect. Bertha wanted her children to stay home from school for all The Belk family opened a store in Union around the Jewish holidays and Israel wanted them to go to school, except same time Israel opened his. It was one of their earlier stores, on the High Holidays. I believe Israel won this discussion. All perhaps the second. Israel and Mr. Belk knew one another and the children attended college except my father. Ellis went to when other stores went out of business, the two of them would Clemson, Lena, Mary, and Sarah attended Winthrop College, purchase the merchandise together and share it. Obviously, this and Rosa matriculated at Agnes Scott College in Atlanta. My did not last very long, as Mr. Belk went on to create the largest father was headed to Georgia Tech, but when his father died his department store chain in the Carolinas.

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During Israel's time, when the Ku Klux Klan would parade on Main Street in white robes with their faces hidden under hoods, it is said he would call them by name. Afterwards the marchers confronted Israel and asked how he knew who they were. "I sold you your shoes," he replied. Versions of this story are told about other Jewish

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would send him to the Harry From's Mens Store, Union, SC, ca. 1982. Courtesy of Gloria From Goldberg.

an elderly African American that my grandfather was the first merchant on Main Street to allow people of color to try on shoes. I asked him how African Americans bought shoes in other stores

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Other Jewish merchants in Union, apart from the Froms and Berlins, included the Kassler family, who lived in Buffalo, a few miles from Union. Two of their children were Norma Shapiro and Ethel Bernstein of Gaffney. Jacob Cohen owned a fine store in Union and was well established before my family arrived. There were also the Berelovits family (Mr. Berelovits had married a cousin of Bertha From); the Levine family; the Krass family; the Nathan Shapiro family, whose son Louis

married Norma Kassler and lived in Gaffney. Solomon Fram also came to Union, owned stores in Union and Lockhart, and lived with his wife, Katie, in Union until the late '40s.

In 1917, the American Jewish Yearbook counted 40 Jews in Union, likely enough to make a minyan (a quorum of 10 Jewish men required to hold prayer services). Jacob Cohen and my grandfather Israel are said to have held services at their homes, using a Torah Israel bought. According to my aunt Rosa Poliakoff, after the congregation

Israel since there were more Jews in Spartanburg than Union.

When Israel and Bertha arrived in Union, they joined the Conservative congregation in Charlotte, North Carolina, where they had relatives, then began attending services in Spartanburg once B'nai Israel was formed. Israel died in 1934 at age 56. At that time, Ellis had been working at I. From & Son for several years. My father worked there until the United States entered World War II, enlisting the morning of December 8, 1941, the day after the Japanese attack on Pearl respected for our faith, and we've tried to give back in kind.

Harbor. After two weeks of basic training, he was put on a ship in Charleston and ended up with the Flying Tigers, one of the first 150 Americans soldiers to go to China.

Harry served his time, came back to Union, and rejoined his brother Ellis at I. From & Son, later opening his own business. Both stores continued to flourish. Following in their father's footsteps, Ellis and Harry were among the first store owners in Union to hire African Americans to wait on customers. They

> and their wives were deeply involved in civic affairs. Ellis and Harry were co-founders of the Union Country Club in the late 1940s. My mother, Edith, was a volunteer for the Junior Charity League. And Maie was a founder and served on the local board of the University of South Carolina at Union.

The Froms and our Berlin relatives were scattered across the Upstate, with stores in Union, Gloria From Goldberg (1) and her brother Allan From gave Abbeville, Woodruff, Greer, Belton, Wagener, and Greenwood, South Carolina. Today, none are left. I. From closed in 1974 and

in Spartanburg was established, Israel gave the Torah to B'nai Harry From in the latter part of 2005, marking 100 years of Froms on Main Street in Union. My sister and I gave the old Harry From building to Union County, which built offices in most of the space. In 2018, the remaining unused space was sold by the county to a developer from Columbia, who turned it into dormitory-style rooms for students at USC-Union, where Ellis, Harry, and their children have established four scholarships.

> Union County has been good to the From family and its relations. We have always been proud to be Jews, proud to be

## Being Jewish in Union by Gloria From Goldberg

teacher, the late Sara Sutherland, who chose me. I'll bet I was the only Jewish star on a Christmas tree in history.

It was drilled into Allan and me that we were Jewish. When my dad closed his store for the High Holidays, he placed a sign on the door: "Closed for the Jewish Holidays." I remember as a little girl watching the Ku Klux Klan march down Main Street on Saturday afternoon with covered faces. I was scared and would run into Dad's store. He would assure me no one would hurt me and would take me into the window of the store and tell me some of the people's names as they walked by. I asked him one time how he knew who they were with their faces under hoods. He replied, "I look at their shoes-they buy their shoes from me."

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One incident I will never forget is the time in middle school I went to my science teacher to tell him I would be absent for a test that was to be given on Yom Kippur. He looked me in the eye and told me if I missed the test he would give me a failing grade. I was very upset and told my parents. The next morning Dad went to the school. I don't know exactly what happened but I got no failing grades.

parents that we attend a school with a large Jewish population. their son attends a Chabad school, which Adam's wife, Toni, I attended the University of Georgia and my brother attended has served by heading up fundraisers and attending Shabbat George Washington University. We were expected to marry services with son Jack. Jason and Samantha are very involved within the faith and keep the religion, and indeed we did. My with D'or Tikvah in Charleston and send their boys to the husband, Henry Goldberg, was born in Germany after World Addlestone Hebrew Academy. I am amazed at their knowledge War II. Both of his parents are Holocaust survivors. He impressed of Jewish history and of Hebrew. Both families celebrate upon me, even more than before, the importance of Judaism. Shabbat every Friday night. We did as our parents expected.

#### All the Bases Covered: Memories of my Childhood in Union by I. Allan From

T ven though the only Jewish families in Union while I me drink whisky and honey. Evidently, this was a cure for Ewas growing up were that of my father and his brother, I anything. experienced a wonderful childhood. I was born in Union in When I was five years old, before South Carolina had 1950 and can remember growing up in a large house on South public kindergartens, I was sent to First Presbyterian Church Street. My grandfather Israel From had purchased this home in for pre-school. My sister and I were the only Jews. I don't the early 1920s from a prominent banker in town. The house remember any bad experiences; in fact, our teachers were was big, painted white, with a wrap-around porch. This is wonderful ladies. I attended public schools in Union from 1st where my father and his brother and sisters spent most of their through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. I belonged to a Cub Scout troop associated childhood. with First Presbyterian, a Boy Scoot troop associated with the To the best of my memory, the house had three bedrooms Episcopal church, and remember attending on many occasions downstairs, along with two kitchens, and there were five teen clubs associated with the Presbyterian and Methodist bedrooms upstairs. Having a milk and meat kitchen made churches. All my friends, no matter what religion they were, things easier for my grandmother and was probably a major would attend teen clubs at different churches.

reason why this home was purchased. Obviously, with six I never felt like an outsider and grew to be friendly with to convert me. Obviously, when prayers were said, I did

children, the family needed a much bigger home than the twothe ministers. I don't remember any minister ever trying or three-bedroom house where they lived before. My grandmother lived with us for the first three or four feel uncomfortable and realized that I was in a church and years of my life, so my memories of her are vague. She had the they were going to practice that religion. None of the other back room in the house with an adjoining kitchen. I remember youngsters made me feel awkward about the situation. I have her praying, and when I had a cold, I remember her making been told by many of my friends, at a much later time, that

**D**elonging to the only Jewish family in Union, South Carolina, **D**gave my brother, Allan, and me a unique perspective. We were taught at an early age that we were Jewish and different. Our parents drove us 30 miles to Spartanburg and waited two hours for us to attend Sunday school. My dad hired a driver to take us to Hebrew school in Spartanburg during the week.

We were always proud of our Judaism and we got along well with our Christian friends. At the age of four I attended kindergarten at the First Presbyterian Church near my house. I'll always remember the Christmas program when I was chosen to be the "star" on the Christmas tree. It was my



Union County the building that housed their father's store, after

it closed in 2005, in memory of their parents Harry and Edith

From. Courtesy of Gloria From Goldberg.



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UNION: EXIT OF AN ICON

Gloria From Goldberg and Harry From's Going-Out-Of-Business When it was time to go to Sale made front-page headlines in the November 15, 2004, Herald- Judaism. Adam married a college it was important to my Journal, Union, SC. Courtesy of Gloria From Goldberg.

Henry and I are both very involved with the Jewish community. He has served on the boards of numerous organizations, including Beth Shalom synagogue and the Columbia Jewish Federation. He has been president of the Columbia Jewish Community Center. He has taught Haftorah lessons when Beth Shalom had no rabbi. I belong to Hadassah, Beth Shalom Synagogue and Sisterhood, and other Jewish associations. Our sons Jason and Adam both practice young lady who converted and

#### **JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH CAROLINA** PAGE 18

they never thought of me as a Jew, but as another person who a legend there. For my bar mitzvah many people from my happened to be Jewish. Many of them have also told me, they don't understand anti-Semitism, as I was the only Jew they knew growing up and was just like them.

On occasion, I would attend church with my non-Jewish friends and was always made to feel welcome. On Christmas mornings, I remember getting up early and going to visit several of my friends to help them open their Christmas presents. It was just part of growing up. My parents had no problems with my ecumenical activities. We talked constantly about being Jewish. My parents encouraged me to engage with my Christian friends, but made sure I maintained my Jewish beliefs and values. I believe they thought this is fine now, but you are going to marry a Jewish woman. I surprised them by marrying two Jewish women, but not at the same time.

When I was young, we joined Temple B'nai Israel in Spartanburg where I attended Sunday school and Hebrew school. My mother was from New York City and did not drive, so my parents would hire teenagers to drive me to Hebrew school in Spartanburg several times a week. On Saturdays I would take the bus from Union to Spartanburg, where a family friend would pick me up and take me to temple. After attending services, I would go back to the rabbi's house, have lunch with him and his wife, and then have a private Hebrew lesson.

Rabbi Max and Mrs. Stauber were wonderful people and treated me as one of their own. Rabbi Stauber served at B'nai Israel for more than 30 years and is still

From's Ladies Shop FRIDAY AUGUST 8 at 9:00 A.M. 100 FREE GIFTS Here's A Picture Ot Our New Store... Famous Name Merchandise BARRY TROW'S 明む An Open Letter To The People Of Union Ladies Shop CONVENIENT AY AWAY PLAY

hometown of Union came and were quite interested in the ceremony as none of them had ever attended a bar mitzvah before. I believe they were fascinated by hearing Hebrew and holding a book where you read from right to left. Many of my parents' friends said they would like to be Jewish because we served great food and gave a good party.

I was involved in activities at Union High School, such as student government and sports. I really was not much of an athlete but enjoyed playing. My senior year I was elected president of the student body at Union High School. Among at least 1,000 students at Union High School, my sister and I were the only Jews. I felt if there was any anti-Semitism, it certainly would have shown up at that time. During the campaign, I would walk around the school early in the morning to make sure that my signs were in the proper place. I probably had 100 signs and on only one occasion on one day was there an anti-Semitic remark. I immediately took the sign down and replaced it with another. There were no other issues.

I knew students at Union High School whose parents were involved in the Klan. One such person came up to me one day and asked if I knew his father was head of the Klan in Union. I indicated that I did, and he told me that he had known me for most of his life and considered me a friend. He further told me that though he liked me, he didn't want to know any more like me. I was speechless, not knowing how to take that comment. On another occasion, at a local drive-in restaurant, I remember when some boys I knew asked me to help erect a cross for a Klan rally. I asked them if they knew I was Jewish, and they said they knew but didn't care. I declined their invitation.

My sister, Gloria, and I were the only two Jewish students in the Union County public schools, but one of my best friends growing up was Jewish. Chuck Bernstein lived in Gaffney, about 30 miles from Union. His grandparents, the Kassler family, had operated a store in Buffalo, South Carolina, a few miles from Union. Chuck's mother, Ethel, was born there and later moved to Gaffney. Chuck was exactly my age and our grandparents had been friends, our parents were friends, so it was only natural we became good friends. We met first when we were about six years old and Chuck beat me up, but we never had another fight. He was a star football player at Gaffney High, was involved in student government, and was as much a part of the Gaffney community as I was in Union. Neither of us spent much time with the Spartanburg Jewish community as we were very happy and busy in our hometowns. We spent many weekends together; when he came to Union, I got him dates, and when I went to Gaffney, he did the same. Not one of these

Advertisement for Harry From's Ladies Shop grand opening in the Union Daily Times, August 7, 1952. Courtesy of Gloria From Goldberg.

#### FALL 2019

girls was Jewish as Gaffney only had three Jewish families. We confided in each other about what it was like to be one of the few Jews in school but not much time was spent on that. We were having too much fun growing up in our communities. Chuck unfortunately passed away and I do miss him as we had so much in common, including close to 100 years of family history.



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Postcard picture of Main Street in Union, SC, no date. Courtesy of Allan From.

When I was in sixth grade, we moved from the old family home to a new one in Union next door to First Presbyterian's Nine years later my father married an Episcopalian parsonage. A new minister moved in and my parents became woman. When he died in 1993, the funeral was conducted good friends with him and his wife. They socialized, I played by the next-door Presbyterian minister, the Episcopalian with their children, and I shot one-on-one basketball with priest, and a Chabad rabbi. I like to say that my family had Reverend Blumer. He played to win as he was a proud graduate all the bases covered. I have always felt there was no better of the University of Kentucky. At Christmas he would invite place to grow up than Union. When my mother was sick the community came out to visit and care for her. People my sister and me over to his house when other college students came home. We were part of his family. When my in Union respected us for who we were and a difference in mother died in 1970 at the age of 48, Reverend Blumer and his religion was really never a problem. I sometimes think how family were on vacation. Rabbi Stauber and the Spartanburg fortunate I was to grow up in a small town and enjoy the community had been very supportive of my sick mother, but advantages of knowing I was the same as the others but only the Blumers gave her much needed support as well. A member with a different religion. The Froms certainly blended into of Reverend Blumer's congregation called him to let him and loved our community.

# The Teszlers of Budapest and Spartanburg: Pioneers in Textile Engineering by Diane C. Vecchio

Tn 1959, Andrew Teszler, a Holocaust survivor Land a graduate of North Carolina State University, pitched an idea to David Schwartz, the president and CEO of Jonathan Logan, Inc., of New York City, the country's leading manufacturer of women's apparel. Teszler's idea was to start the first double-knit garment operation in the United States. After a feasibility study, the two men agreed on a vertically integrated manufacturing facility, producing double-knit garments from raw fiber.

Schwartz sent Andrew to Spartanburg to organize the Butte Knit Division for parent company Jonathan Logan. The mill opened in 1960 and eventually became the largest County Public Libraries.



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know that my mother had died and Reverend Blumer called my father. He said he would be coming home for the funeral. My dad told him not to come, that he had very little vacation time and that we would get together when he got back. Reverend Blumer insisted upon attending and my father told him, if you come you will participate. So on May 31, 1970, Rabbi Stauber and Reverend

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Blumer conducted my mother's funeral service.

Andrew Teszler. Courtesy of Spartanburg Herald-Journal Collection, Spartanburg

manufacturer of women's clothing in the world and the first company to produce double-knit fabric in America.

Andrew was the eldest son of Sandor and Lidia Teszler, Hungarian Jews who survived the brutality of the Holocaust and the communist take-over of their country. Fleeing their homeland, first to England and then to America in 1948, the Teszlers found a refuge and prosperity in the textile industry that so powerfully shaped Upstate South Carolina.

Andrew's father, Sandor, studied textile engineering in Germany, graduated in 1925, and returned to Budapest to work in a knitting factory. Sandor and his brother Joseph, who

#### JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

was also a textile manufacturer, opened a plant in Belgrade in January 1941, during the Nazi take-over of Europe. The brothers operated factories throughout central Europe and Sandor admitted that "we lived in a dream world, never believing that deportation could happen to us." \*

On April 6, 1941, Germany declared war on Yugoslavia. Sandor South. In his factory there were no segregated bathrooms,

and his family continued operating the plant under the watchful eye of a German officer. Eventually, the family's luck ran out. The Teszlers, along with hundreds of other Jews, were relocated to Budapest. Miraculously, Sandor and Lidia were saved by Carl Lutz, of the Swiss Consul, who is credited with saving thousands of Hungarian Jews. Sandor's brother, Joseph, was not so fortunate. He and his B'nai Israel's groundbreaking ceremony, Heywood Avenue, Spartanburg, SC. family lost their lives in With him are (1 to r) Henry Jacobs (co-chair architectural committee), Mayor of Andrew's company the Holocaust.

controlled Yugoslav government seized the factory, claiming and Lidia fled to Great Britain to join their two sons who had been sent there earlier.

In January 1948, Sandor and Lidia immigrated to New intensive-care heart unit for Spartanburg General Hospital,

York where another Teszler brother, Akos, had established a textile factory. Akos made Sandor a partner in the business. Andrew and his brother, Otto, enrolled in the textile engineering program at North Carolina State University, recognized as a world leader in textile education and research.

After his move to Spartanburg in 1960, Andrew Teszler recruited upper-level managers and specialists for Butte Knit through familial and social networking. The connections between Andrew Teszler and the people he hired at Butte ran deep. Many were Holocaust survivors like himself. These former refugees found a patron in Teszler who provided them Herald-Journal Collection, Spartanburg with a job and security in a growing company. County Public Libraries.



Andrew Teszler (3<sup>rd</sup> from left), chair of the architectural committee, at Temple

Sandor Teszler. Courtesy of Spartanburg

impacted the Spartanburg community. He purchased the first

donated monies for the education building at Temple B'nai Israel, and spearheaded a campaign to raise \$950,000 for the Charles Lea Center for handicapped children. In 1969, Andrew became a member of the Board of Trustees at Wofford College and donated money for the building of a new library honoring his father, named the Sandor Teszler Library.

After Andrew's death, followed by the passing of his wife in 1981 and his son Otto in 1990, Sandor coped with his loneliness by attending classes at Wofford College. There, he forged a close relationship with students who affectionately called him "Opi," for grandfather. Teszler remained



The meteoric rise Butte was the largest

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engaged with the community as a member of Rotary, the and the Soviet take-over of Hungary. They immigrated to America where their leadership in the field of textile Chamber of Commerce, and as a trustee of the Charles Lea Center. In 1997, Wofford College awarded him an manufacturing revolutionized the production of women's honorary doctorate and, at the age of 93, he was named clothing and provided employment to thousands of people. Professor of the Humanities by a vote of the faculty. They gave back to America through philanthropy that spanned After his death at the age of 97 in 2000, Wofford created the community from Temple B'nai Israel to Wofford College the Sandor Teszler Award for Moral Courage and Service to and the city of Spartanburg.

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Humankind in his memory, a fitting memorial to a Holocaust survivor whose intelligence, perseverance, righteousness, and kindness guided his life.

\*\* Memoirs of Sandor Teszler, 75. The Teszlers were survivors. They survived the Holocaust

Twas the youngest of three children born to Benjamin and had a lot of friends my age. I was a Boy Scout, an Eagle Scout. If Norma Kassler Sheftall. My father, Benjamin Jr., was the son of it snowed, we got out of school for a week. I went to grammar a Savannah, Georgia, fire chief and a member of the prominent school, junior high school, and high school in Gaffney. Judaism was my religion. We participated during the High Holidays. I Sheftall family of Savannah, whose ancestor, also named Benjamin Sheftall, was among the founders of Congregation got out of school and went to Yom Kippur services. Everybody Mickve Israel in 1735. I was told that my mother's father said knew I was Jewish. It wasn't a *really* big deal with most people. to my father, "Bennie, if you want to marry Norma, you've got Nobody made reference to it, for the most part. My particular family and my particular upbringing was very liberal-not to leave Savannah and move to Gaffney." So he did. He was in the beauty supply business. He could work from anywhere. associated with any type of strict Judaism. It was kind of His office was over Norma's Smart Shoppe, where my mother convenient. We did this, we did that. I wasn't totally ingrained had a dress shop business, and next door to his father-in-law's with religion. haberdashery. Benjamin Jr. did not live to see his namesake I remember three other Jewish families living in Gaffney. One born, succumbing in 1947 to a heart attack—his third—just six family was my mother's younger sister, Ethel Kassler Bernstein.

weeks before I came into the world. I grew up in the late 1950s, early '60s, in Gaffney, South Carolina, a small textile town in the upper part of the state where discrimination was rampant. There was a preponderance of white supremacists. The Klan was very big in those days. We used to go to this place, which was kind of an open-air 7-Eleven, called the Cold Spot. They had applications for the KKK right there on the counter! There were crosses burned in front of the Catholic Church. I grew up with discrimination against religion, as well as for the color of one's skin. The president of Limestone College in Gaffney had his house bombed in the mid-'50s for writing an article promoting racial equality and integration in South Carolina.

Despite the presence of the Klan, it Norma Kassler and her sister Irene at was a good small town to grow up in. I Winthrop College, Rock Hill, SC, 1929.



In 1961, Sandor and Lidia sold their textile plant in New

York, moved to Spartanburg and launched Shannon Knit, a

textile mill at Kings Mountain, North Carolina. A Jew who had

experienced the humiliation of segregation in Europe, Teszler

refused to abide the racial segregation that dictated life in the

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\* Memoirs of Sandor Teszler, Wofford College, 1991, 34. Sandor Teszler Files, The Sandor Teszler Library, Wofford College Archives.

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# Growing up in Gaffney

#### by Benjamin Franklin Sheftall III

Ethel and Dick Bernstein took over the clothing store from my grandfather when he passed away. So, for a while, he had two clothing stores, two daughters, side by side. Then there was another family named Bernanke. The Bernankes had three children—one a little younger than me, one about my age, and one ten years younger than me. Fred Bernanke was a pharmacist at Walgreens. His son David became an anatomy professor at the Medical University of South Carolina School of Medicine. There was one other family, the Van Pragues. Joe Van Prague was a textile executive. I didn't really know them that well.

When I was eight years old, my mother married Louis Shapiro from Union, South Carolina. Up until that time, 1958, my mother had been taking my brother, sister, and me to synagogue in

#### **JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH CAROLINA**

My mother had a strong bond there. She knew a lot of people. But then when she remarried, I think the Jewish families in town decided to move to the synagogue in Spartanburg. Maybe that was an up-and-coming congregation, increasing in size. Spartanburg was a big textile mecca with a strong Roger Milliken presence. Also, they had the I-85 corridor and they had hotel, motel owners. They had a lot of people who had migrated down from the Northeast. My experience with organized Judaism, so to speak, was really from Spartanburg.

I just think that we were outsiders. Going to temple in Spartanburg, being from Gaffney, was difficult for a young person. The rabbi in Spartanburg, Max Stauber, was a New Yorker. He wanted an Orthodox temple. B'nai Israel

was Conservative at best. I just never Above: The author, Benjamin "Bennie III" Sheftall enjoyed it. It was very difficult for me (r), with his sister, Myrna Sheftall, 1958. Below: when I was 9, 10, 11 years old to be Bennie (r) and his brother, Stanley Sheftall, and transported from everything I knew to a strange place to try to make friends and learn about religion. There are some people there that I did admire, looking back at it. But I didn't think the rabbi loved being in the South. I don't think he was happy there. He never smiled.

Nevertheless, the rabbi and Mrs. Stauber really tried hard to get the young people involved. They had a Sunday Tallis and Tefillin Club, breakfast on Sundays. I was a faithful attendee. Alvin Stauber has been married to my first cousin Susan for almost 50 years.

Along with three or four other youngsters, I was trained by Rabbi Stauber for my bar mitzvah. He did it on an individual basis based on what time of year we turned 13. So mine was in May. It was a very Orthodox Friday night service. How many people came? I don't know,

maybe 175. Then Saturday was a more Conservative service. One of the leading families in Spartanburg I really admired were the Feinsteins. Marion Feinstein was a professional dancer who had a dance studio downtown called Miss Marion's School of Dance. Her husband, affectionately known as Speedy, was a Hebrew teacher. He taught Hebrew classes. He also taught dancing for

Gastonia, North Carolina, about 30 miles northeast of Gaffney. his wife in Gaffney. He'd come over and he would conduct dance That's where my family had gone before my father passed away. classes for his wife's school. He was a character. I can remember him probably more than anyone from the temple. Marion and Speedy had a daughter who danced with the Rockettes—a beautiful girl named Sandy.

> In terms of relations between white families and African Americans in Gaffney, we had a maid, a caretaker named Mamie Rankin, who basically raised my sister and me. Mamie worked for my mother 35 years. I remember she wore a uniform with the little hat and spent time on the back porch. When my second child was born, who is 44 today, Mamie actually came down to Charleston, and helped my wife, Kay, for about a week after she came home from the hospital. Mamie was a surrogate mother to me because my mother worked and my stepfather traveled.

I never went to an integrated school until I entered the Medical University of South Carolina School of Dentistry in 1972. I graduated from the University of Richmond in 1969 and went to Wake Forest University for graduate school in microbiology until 1972. I had graduated from Gaffney High School in 1965, when it was still a segregated school. African Americans in Gaffney attended Granard High School. As is still the case today in South Carolina, Gaffney High School, and all the other white high schools, played their football games on Friday night. The exception was the annual Gaffney vs. Spartanburg Thanksgiving Day game. This tradition was discontinued in the late 1950s. On Thursday nights, Granard played their football games. On Thursdays-I'd go to the games myself-the African Americans would sit on the 50-yard line. It was their game night. Friday, they were relegated to the end of the stadium again. They were segregated. Gaffney had two movie theaters, one of which had a

balcony for African Americans. I see a tremendous change in the race relations I grew up with. I'm always impressed with any minority kids who have really made something of themselves, especially in the healthcare professions, because it was probably harder. But we still have a long way to go. All photos courtesy of Benjamin Sheftall.

## Endowing our Future by Mark Swick, Executive Director, JHSSC

FALL 2019

The seeds of the Jewish Historical Society of South L Carolina were planted in fertile soil more than 25 years ago. Our founding president, the late State Senator Isadore Lourie, along with several compatriots, saw a pressing need to preserve the record of South Carolina's Jewish communities and their shifting demographics. In 1994, they proposed the creation of a new historical society dedicated to the mission of promoting the history and culture of South Carolina's Jewish communities through research, preservation, documentation, and education. Twenty-five years later, I can testify that JHSSC is in very good shape. The Society is strengthened by the robust manuscript and oral history archives housed in the Jewish Heritage Collection at the College's Addlestone Library, as well as the public programs and research facilitated by the Pearlstine/Lipov Center for Southern Jewish Culture. We maintain a multi-faceted website, *jhssc.org*, featuring statewide records of Jewish cemeteries and memorial plaques, a full run of our biannual magazine, and our newest and arguably most ambitious effort to date, the Jewish Merchant Project. The Society also benefits from a strong relationship with our host institution, the College of Charleston's Yaschik/ Arnold Jewish Studies Program. The College provides critical staffing and infrastructure, allowing us to deploy our operating budget on programming and content rather than keeping the

lights on. Annual expenses are supported by membership dues and especially the generosity of our Pillar members, who commit to donating \$1,000 per year for at least five years.

That said, we cannot afford to rest on our laurels. We find ourselves in a period of tremendous generational wealth transfer: according to the AARP, over the next 25 years Baby Boomers will pass along nearly \$48 trillion in assets to their heirs and charities. We need to make sure our constituents and supporters have the opportunity to contribute to the Society's future well-being by making a gift to JHSSC's newly established endowment. Gifts to the endowment will allow the Society's leadership to pursue ongoing projects, propose additional ventures, and engage the next generation in our work.

If you find value in what we do-whether you attend meetings, make use of our digital resources, read the pages of the magazine, or simply take pride in South Carolina's vibrant Jewish heritage—I hope you will consider becoming a Pillar member or making a gift to our endowment, so that in another quarter century, JHSSC will still be in the business of promoting research, documenting, preserving, and educating the public about our state's Jewish history and culture.



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## Pillars

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Susan and Charles Altman, Charleston, SC Ellen Arnovitz, Atlanta, GA Doris L. Baumgarten, Aiken, SC Harold Brody, Atlanta, GA Alex and Dyan Cohen, Darlington, SC Joan Cutler, Columbia, SC Lowell and Barbara Epstein, Charleston, SC Lilly and Bruce Filler, Columbia, SC Steven J. Gold, Greenville, SC Judith Green, Charleston, SC Stuart and Rebecca Greenberg, Florence, SC Max and Ann Meddin Hellman, Charleston, SC Alan and Charlotte Kahn, Columbia, SC Jerry and Sue Kline, Columbia, SC Michael S. Kogan, Charleston, SC Allan and Jeanne Lieberman, Charleston, SC Susan R. Lourie, Columbia, SC Bert and Robin Mercer, Charleston, SC Susan Pearlstine Norton, Charleston, SC Andrew and Mary Poliakoff, Spartanburg, SC Edward and Sandra Poliakoff, Columbia, SC Alan and Anne Reyner, Columbia, SC Deborah Ritter, Columbia, SC Benedict and Brenda Rosen, Myrtle Beach, SC Jeffrey and Mickey Rosenblum, Charleston, SC Sandra Lee Rosenblum, Charleston, SC Joseph and Edie Rubin, Charleston, SC Larry Simon, Isle of Palms, SC Mark and Gayle Sloan, Myrtle Beach, SC Gail (Altman) and Ronald Spahn, Baltimore, MD Richard Stern, Boston, MA Haskell and Dale Toporek, Augusta, GA Anita Zucker, Charleston, SC 

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Register now for the November 9-10 meeting in Spartanburg. See page 13 for more information.