

## DaCosta Burial Ground, Cemetery of the Hebrews, Beth Elohim Unveh Shallom Cemetery

55 Amherst Street, SE corner of Amherst and Hanover streets

TMS: 4590902040

UTN (Zone 17, NAD 27): E 599550 N 3628740

This cemetery was established in the early 1780s on the southeast corner of Hanover and Amherst streets. The 1793 will of Sarah DaCosta, Isaac DaCosta's widow, directed the "purchase [of an] eighty foot square of land situate in Hampstead . . . for the sole purpose of a burial ground for my family and the Portuguese Jews." This originally formed part of Lot 48 of Hampstead. Since graves dating to 1783 were present it is likely that it was used first as a family burial ground. A newspaper account describes how the "Portuguese Jewish Congregation of this City, called 'Beth Elohim Unveh Shallom,' or the house of the Lord and Mansion of Peace, proceeded to their burying found in Hamstead [sic], in order to lay the Foundation Stones of the Wall" (*Charleston Evening Gazette*, February 6, 1786).

The cemetery remained in the DaCosta family until 1809 when it was conveyed to trustees. In 1847 the trustees relinquished their charge, conveying the property to Beth Elohim. After this time it seems to have been used for the Jewish poor or non-members of the congregation. In the 1852-1856 City Ward Books (Ward 5, 1W, pg. 17) the cemetery is identified as the "Jewish Burial Ground" situated immediately north of the African Burial Ground. In the 1856 Charleston City Directory the cemetery is simply listed as an Israelite Cemetery, located at the "cor Hanover and Amherst." It is only sporadically listed afterwards; in 1889, for example, it is identified as the "Jewish Cemetery" at 189-195 Coming Street.

About 1900 the cemetery had fallen into serious disrepair with only 19 headstones still standing. These were apparently removed from the cemetery and taken to Beth Elohim's Huguenin Avenue Cemetery in 1935 when the congregation lost the cemetery to the City of Charleston for an unpaid paving assessment (Charleston County L41, pg. 9). The "Hebrew Burial Ground," as it was called, was \$1,034.67 in arrears when it was seized by the Sheriff on May 27, 1935. It was sold to the City of Charleston on July 1, 1935.

Today the cemetery is owned by the Beard Chapel AME Church.

Breibart, Solomon

1993     The Jewish Cemeteries of Charleston. *Carologue*, Summer, pp. 8-9,14-16.

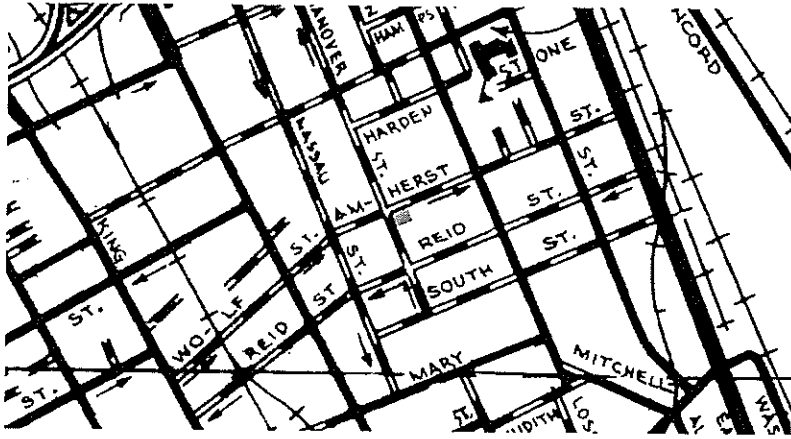
Breibart, Solomon, Jack Bass, and Robert N. Rosen

2005     *Explorations in Charleston's Jewish History*, The History Press, Charleston, SC.

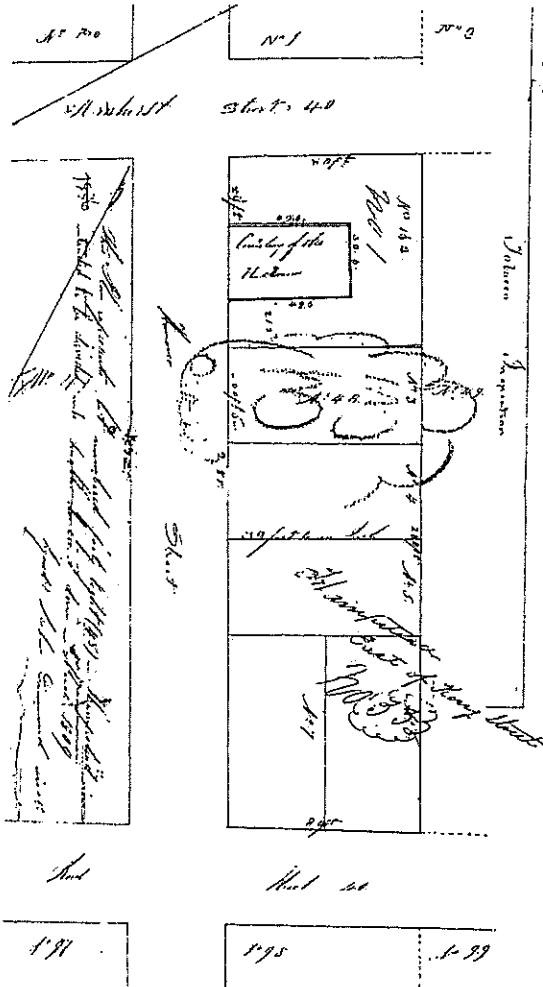
Elzas, Barnett A.

1903     *The Old Jewish Cemeteries at Charleston, S.C.* Daggett Printing Co., Charleston, SC.

CHARLESTON CEMETERIES



McCrary Plat 7826 (1809)



## CHARLESTON CEMETERIES

### Harby Cemetery

West side of Hanover Street, about ¼ block north of Amherst Street

TMS: 4590902082, and a portion of 4590902096

UTM (Zone 17, NAD 27): E599475 N3628815

The cemetery was acquired in 1798 by six individuals, identified as trustees, who had apparently split from Beth Elohim. One of the trustees was Solomon Harby. In May 1876 Carolina DeLitchfield Harby, who had been maintaining the cemetery, died. Her executors signed an agreement with J.C. Claussen in 1879 to build a dwelling on the front part of the lot in exchange for keeping the cemetery clean, particularly that portion containing the graves of the Harby and Hyams families, as well as in exchange for his agreement "to repair the dilapidated tombs" and "to allow no interments without the written consent of parties of the first part."

By 1900 it was reported that there remained 17 markers and six unidentifiable graves. In 1935 when the owners failed to pay their paving assessment to the City of Charleston, the property was seized by the Sheriff and sold at auction to the City of Charleston (Charleston County DB L41, pg. 8). The seven remaining stones identified at that time were removed to Beth Elohim's Huguenin Avenue cemetery. There is no indication that any graves were removed and the cemetery has been built over.

The 1944 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map reveals that the eastern portion of the cemetery was still intact, but the western portion had been used for tenements.

This may be the Israelite Cemetery identified in the 1856 Charleston City Directory as located at 11 Hanover. This address, while on the west side of the street, should be about a block south, opposite the DaCosta Cemetery (which is also identified in the 1856 City Directory).

Breibart, Solomon

1993 The Jewish Cemeteries of Charleston. *Carologue*, Summer, 8-9, 14-16.

Breibart, Solomon, Jack Bass, and Robert N. Rosen

2005 *Explorations in Charleston's Jewish History*. The History Press, Charleston, SC.

