

THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY of SOUTH CAROLINA

SUMMER 2003 VOLUME VIII - NUMBER 2



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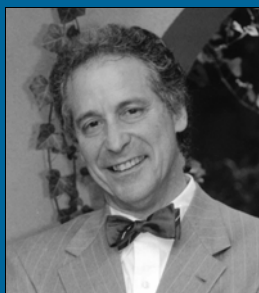
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From the President Robert N. Rosen

The Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina suffered an irreparable loss last month with the death of our Founding President, Isadore Lourie of Columbia. Senator Lourie not only had the vision to create the Jewish Historical Society, he also had the unique ability to inspire people to act on his vision. He virtually single-handedly created the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina and, together with Alex Sanders, former President of the College of Charleston, was instrumental in moving Jewish Studies to the forefront at the College of Charleston. There are many legacies left by Senator Lourie, but certainly the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina is one of his great achievements. He is already sorely missed. May Susan, his children, and family find comfort among the mourners of Zion.

The Society had a small but enjoyable and productive meeting in Camden on May 4th. The congregation of Beth El synagogue allowed us to use their beautiful sanctuary, provided us with refreshments, and put on a program on Camden Jewish life. Special thanks to Marlene and Michael Mischner, Garry Baum, Barbara James, and Skip and Allan Sindler.

Much of our time in Camden was spent in a special retreat devoted to the Society's future. Many ideas were discussed including; promoting South Carolina Jewish history at our state's colleges and universities; producing a booklet of memories and recollections; reaching out to younger people; publishing a modern history of the Jews of South Carolina; developing a center for Southern Jewish history at the College of Charleston; providing displays on Jewish life suitable for museums, colleges, and community centers in the South Carolina region; offering grants to historians to work on South Carolina Jewish history; and many others. The members at the retreat felt the most important short term projects for the Society are to identify Jewish sites of interest throughout the state; to continue to collect oral histories and materials; to expand our website; to help fund archival work at Special Collections; to create an award for the best essay on South Carolina Jewish history; and to have the Society's Speakers' Bureau begin its outreach efforts.

The Board of Directors agreed to appropriate \$7,500 from the coming year's budget toward the Special Collections Program at the College of Charleston Library for the purpose of collecting and processing archival material. One of the most important missions of any historical society is to preserve the historical record. I will spearhead a campaign for eight additional pillars to fund the Jewish Heritage Collection for the next five years. Please join me as a pillar (see page 11.)

The Society's next major event will be in Charlotte, North Carolina on September 13 - 14, 2003. This will be a joint meeting with the Jewish Heritage Society of North Carolina in conjunction with the opening of "...A Portion of the People" at the Levine Museum of the New South. It should be a wonderful weekend. The Charlotte community is already energized.

2004 is the 350th anniversary of the arrival of a bedraggled band of Jewish immigrants from Brazil to New Amsterdam, today's New York City (June, 1654). Jewish organizations will be celebrating across the country throughout 2004. On October 28-31, 2004 the JHSSC and the Southern Jewish Historical Society will be having a joint meeting in Charleston. We will also be celebrating Brith Sholom Beth Israel's 150th anniversary. It should be a wonderful weekend.

I especially want to thank the pillars of the Society who have been instrumental in funding the Society's operations and the loyal members who have made the Society what it is. Hope to see you in Charlotte.

President, Jewish Historical Society
of South Carolina

*Cover photo:
Baum Brothers' Store
and its employees,
circa 1890, Camden, SC*

Isadore Lourie

Founding President of the JHSSC

dies at 70

With the passing of Isadore Lourie on April 24, 2003, the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina lost its founding president and best friend. In 1993 Senator Lourie participated with Jack Bass and Paul Siegel on a panel on "Jews in Small Town South Carolina" that led to the formation of the JHSSC. He directed the Society's organizational efforts, served as its first president, and helped launch the Jewish Heritage Project.

Tirelessly, Lourie raised funds and made contacts to facilitate the collection of archival materials, the production of the exhibition "A Portion of the People," and the health and well being of the College of Charleston's Jewish Studies Program. He remained the Society's most prominent supporter as it blossomed to become the largest statewide Jewish organization in South Carolina. He was unanimously acclaimed as founding president five years ago, the only officer to be honored with a ceremonial title.

"Izzy was not only the founder of the Society, he was its moral compass. His passing leaves a permanent void. Izzy is irreplaceable," reflected Martin Perlmutter, JHSSC executive director. "He was also a wonderful human being."

Isadore Lourie was born August 4, 1932 in St. George, South Carolina, son of Louis and Anne Friedman Lourie, Jewish immigrants from Russia and Poland. The



Isadore Lourie addresses legislators during a 1993 public hearing.
Photo courtesy *The State*.

youngest of six children, Lourie grew up in St. George living above the department store founded by his father. His mother continued to manage the household and business after her husband suffered a heart attack in 1939. When Isadore completed high school in 1948, his mother closed the St. George store and, with her two eldest sons, Solomon and Mick, opened Lourie's department store in Columbia, now a landmark in the capital city. In 1959 Isadore married Susan Reiner and together they raised three sons, Lance, Joel, and Neal.

With both undergraduate and law degrees from the University of South Carolina, Lourie was first elected to the state legislature in 1964 and served as a lawmaker for 28 years. He was a state representative (1965-72); state senator (1973-93); senate majority leader (1989-93); and organizer of the state chapter of the Democratic Leadership Council.

"During the turbulent time of the '60s Isadore was . . . the most meaningful voice that connected black people and white people," former College of Charleston President Alex Sanders told *The State* newspaper. "He was so great because he was so good."

Longtime friend Eli N. Evans remarked that "Isadore Lourie had a Jewish heart. His pride in the biblical roots of his people and their role in human history anchored him through the stormy years of the civil rights era in South Carolina, where he was a conciliator, a builder and a hard-working visionary on behalf of a better and more progressive state."

Among the causes Lourie supported in the legislature were political ethics standards, school integration, compulsory school attendance, home rule for counties, the one-cent sales tax for schools, early childhood education, and the restructuring of state government. Just a week before Lourie died, his son Joel, now a representative in the South Carolina House, helped pass a mandatory seat belt law, a crusade his father had begun 15 years earlier.

The Isadore E. Lourie endowment has been established by the JHSSC to fund programs in his honor.



Lourie's Men Store, Columbia, SC, 2000.

l to r: Frank, A.M. (Mick), Joel, Isadore, and Louis Lourie

Photo: Bill Aron.

A Short History of Camden's Early Jews

Camden was one of the first places in South Carolina, after Charleston and Georgetown, to attract Jewish settlers. As evidence of this early presence historians cite a will that Camden's founder Joseph Kershaw wrote in 1788 providing for a lot for a burial ground and place of worship for "God's ancient people, the Jew." While the lot was never claimed, the town's first residents included several prominent Jewish families, notably the DeLeons and the Levys. There were three Levy families in Camden in the early 19th century, connected by marriage but apparently of separate stock.

Born in Camden on the 4th of July 1787, Chapman Levy studied law and was admitted to the bar in Columbia in 1806. His career epitomizes the extraordinary social acceptance and acculturation experienced by Jews in the Midlands town. As elsewhere in South Carolina, Jews in Camden were elected to office, rose to high rank in militia units and Masonic lodges, and upheld local mores when it came to slavery and states' rights.

A militia captain during the War of 1812, Chapman Levy served afterwards in both the state house and senate from Kershaw County. While remaining Jewish, he is listed in 1808 as an "incorporator" of the Camden Protestant Episcopal Church. Attorney and legislator, Levy also operated a brickyard, where 20 of his 31 slaves were employed. In the late 1820s he returned to his hometown and formed a law partnership with his lifelong friend, William McWillie. He was active in the Masons, an authority on dueling, and argued vigorously against the right of a state to disobey federal law in the Nullification Convention of 1832.

He served as a state representative from 1834 to 1838, ran for Congress in 1836, and was county sheriff in 1844.

At least four members of the DeLeon family made their homes in Camden: Dr. Abraham DeLeon, who on April 3, 1816 advertised his professional services in *The Camden Gazette*; his sisters Henrietta and Almeira (Mrs. Hayman Levy); and briefly his brother Dr. Mordecai H. DeLeon.

Worshipful Master of Kershaw Masonic Lodge No. 29, Abraham DeLeon was the recipient of a Grand Master's Jewel from General Marquis de Lafayette. Visiting America in 1825, Lafayette went to Camden to help lay the cornerstone of a monument, designed by South Carolina architect Robert Mills, to honor Revolutionary War hero Major General Baron DeKalb. The Marquis was so delighted to be addressed by Brother DeLeon in French, he impetuously removed the jewel and placed it around DeLeon's neck. After DeLeon's death, his son, Harmon Hendricks, gave the jewel to Charleston's Scottish Rite Friendship Lodge No. 9, which retains it to this day.

Simon Baruch came to Camden in 1855 at the behest of the Baum brothers, *landsmen* from Schwersenz, near Posen, Prussia, who had arrived five years before and opened a small general store (see cover photo and page 2 of newsletter). Baruch went to work for Mannes Baum as a bookkeeper. Mrs. Baum – an aunt of Isabelle Wolfe, whom Simon later married – persuaded Mannes to send the promising young man to South Carolina Medical College in Charleston, and later to the Medical College of Virginia in Richmond. Fresh out of medical school, "without even hav-



Sarah Moses Levy



Chapman Levy as a youth



Chapman Levy



Eliza Levy Anderson

A miniature portrait of Chapman as a boy appears pinned to his mother's bodice in a portrait of her—both shown here. Chapman sat again for a portrait, perhaps on the occasion of his departure for Mississippi in 1838. At about the same time a portrait was made of his sister Eliza Levy, who had married Dr. Edward H. Anderson. The artist who painted Eliza has not been identified; Camden-born Isaac B. Alexander is a possibility. Courtesy of the Jewish Heritage Collection, College of Charleston Library.

Hayman Levy, a prominent merchant and cotton factor, became a warden of Camden in 1835, "intendant" or mayor in 1843 and 1844, and director of the Bank of Camden from 1842 to 1854. Mordecai M. Levy at one time was a partner of Dr. Abraham DeLeon in the drug business.

ing lanced a boil," as he used to say, Baruch joined the Third Battalion, S.C. Infantry in 1862 and became an assistant surgeon in the Confederate army. The uniform and sword he carried to war were a gift from his patron, Mannes Baum.



Photo: Dale Rosengarten



indeed had acquired property on DeKalb Street and argued about construction plans through the turn of the century, it was not until 1921 that they acquired a house of worship.

Picturesque Temple Beth-El began life as a white clapboard Roman Catholic chapel built in 1903 on Lytleton Street. By 1914 the Catholics had abandoned the structure for larger

quarters. The building remained unused for seven years until the Hebrew Benevolent Association purchased it from L. L. Block and renamed it Temple Beth-El. A star of David sculpture by local artist Allan Sindler graces the front lawn of this elegant Spanish Mission-style temple. Today the congregation meets in the old sanctuary only for the High Holidays.

Hebrew Benevolent Association

The first formal organization of Camden's Jews began in 1877, at a time when Ulysses S. Grant was president and Reconstruction was coming to an end. Ex-Confederate Major General Wade Hampton had won the riotous 1876 election and become governor of South Carolina, with E.W. Moïse, a Jewish attorney recently settled in Sumter, as his adjutant general. On October 14, 1877, 24 Jewish men signed a petition addressed to the "Israelites of Camden" stating their intention to organize a benevolent association. Their first order of business was to purchase a cemetery and build a fence. Within a year the Association confronted the prospect of admitting women to membership. Dr. Baruch argued that the constitution made no distinction based on sex and a Mrs. Benjamin was dutifully elected a member.

In August 1878 the Association sold seats to raise money to hire a "gentleman" to officiate on High Holidays. A year later Belle Baruch spearheaded the organization of a Sabbath school for her own four boys, three Baum children, five Williamses, the Wittkowsky boys, Wolfe children, Roseva Heyman, Mary Samuels, and others.

In November 1880, as the Baruchs prepared to leave Camden for New York City, Simon Baruch formally resigned as member and president of the Hebrew Benevolent Association. He admonished his co-religionists to fulfill their duties as parents and Jews: "to educate your children, not only mentally but morally"; "to instill...the grand fundamental idea of Judaism, the belief in One, Great Omniscient, Omnipresent, Unchangeable God"; and to "teach the children to observe the Sabbath day inviolate."

M. H. Heyman's unpublished history describes the Association's tenacious efforts over the next two decades to sustain Judaism in the absence of a permanent house of worship or a rabbi. In 1881 members paid \$10 to rent a Torah and the grand sum of \$1 to purchase books for the Sabbath School. In July 1882 a special meeting was called for the purpose of subscribing to the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, marking perhaps for the first time an affiliation with the Reform movement.

While Association members had considered purchasing a lot and building a synagogue as early as 1880, and

Walk through the Association's historic burial ground chartered in 1878, and you will discover a monument in memory of Prussian-born Marcus Baum, aide to Confederate General Joseph B. Kershaw. Baum was killed by friendly fire at the Battle of the Wilderness on May 6, 1864. Gravestones bear the names of Camden's old Jewish families, including: Baruch, Baum, Block, Geisenheimer, Heyman, Hirsch, Karesh, Levenson, Lipman, Lomansky, Rich, Schenk, Schlosburg, Simmons, Smith, Tobias, Wallneau, Weinberg, Wittkowsky, and Wolfe. A plat map of the original cemetery and the Benevolent Society Minute Book can be found at the Camden archives, along with a significant collection on the Baruch family.



Hebrew Benevolent Association Cemetery, Camden, SC 2000. l to r: Harold M. Aronson, Rose Louise Aronson, Carolyn Baruch Levenson, Ella Levenson Schlosburg, Deborah Baruch Abrams, Ann Briskin Baum, Bernie Baum, Cheryl Baum, Garry Baum, Faye Lomansky Levinson, and Arnold Levinson. Photo: Bill Aron

Fall Meeting in Charlotte

Saturday, September 13

Shalom Park

in cooperation with the Carolina Agency for Jewish Education

Temple Israel

4901 Providence Road
Charlotte, NC 28226
704.362.2796

Saturday Morning Services

Rabbi Murray Ezring 9:30 am
(please arrive no later than 10:00 am)

Dale Rosengarten

A Portion of the People: The Making of an Exhibition

Luncheon

Noon

Afternoon sessions will be held
in Gorelick Hall at the
Jewish Community Center
5007 Providence Road
Charlotte, NC 28226
704.366.5007

Richard Gergel, Esq., Past President JHSSC 1:15 pm
Memorial Reflections on Isadore E. Lourie

William Ferris 1:30 pm
Personal Reflections on the Southern Jewish Experience

Coffee Break 2:30 pm

Meet the Authors: 2:45 pm
Three New Books Explore the Southern Jewish Experience

Eli N. Evans, Moderator

Emily Bingham, *Mordecai: An Early American Family*

Judy Goldman, *The Slow Way Back*

Louis D. Rubin, Jr., *My Father's People: A Family of Southern Jews*

Saturday evening

Levine Museum of the New South
200 East 7th Street
Charlotte, NC 28202
704.333.1887

Gala Reception for "A Portion of the People:
Three Hundred Years of Southern Jewish Life"

Heavy hors d'oeuvres and cocktails will be served 7:00 pm

Sunday, September 14

Concurrent Meetings: 8:45 am
Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina
Jewish Heritage Foundation of North Carolina

Bagel Breakfast 9:45 am

Eli N. Evans 10:30 am

Keynote Address:

"This City is our Jerusalem; this Happy Land our Palestine"

*"A Portion of the People:
Three Hundred Years of Southern Jewish Life"*
The exhibition opens to the public Noon

Highlights from the Exhibition 1:00 pm

Eli N. Evans
Dale Rosengarten

Growing Up Jewish in the Carolinas 3:00 pm
Panel Discussion: Three Carolinians will reflect on their
experiences growing up in small towns in the Carolinas.

SEE PAGE 7 FOR HOTEL INFORMATION —>

Name(s): _____
(Please list full names as you would like them to appear on nametags)

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

Receipt of registration will be acknowledged by postcard or e-mail.

JHSSC FALL MEETING REGISTRATION FORM

Registration(s) @ \$95.00/person for _____ people

Membership @ \$36.00/family for _____ membership(s)

Amount Enclosed \$ _____ made payable to JHSSC

Please mail this form along with your check to:

JHSSC, Jewish Studies Program

College of Charleston

Charleston, SC 29424



Keynote

Eli N. Evans

President, Charles H. Revson Foundation

Born and raised in Durham, North Carolina, Eli N. Evans earned degrees from the University of North Carolina and Yale Law School. He served in the U.S. Navy and worked as an aide and speechwriter in President Lyndon B. Johnson's administration. His first

book, *The Provincials* (1973), inaugurated the current renaissance in Southern Jewish letters. Reissued in a new edition in 1997 it is considered a classic in the field. Evans has written two other highly acclaimed works: *Judah P. Benjamin: The Jewish Confederate* (1988) and *The Lonely Days Were Sundays: Reflections of a Jewish Southerner* (1993). Since 1977, he has been president of the Charles H. Revson Foundation in New York City. In 2001 Evans was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and in May 2003 he was awarded an honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters by the Jewish Theological Seminary.



Judy Goldman

Poet and novelist

Judy Goldman's first novel, *The Slow Way Back*, won the Sir Walter Raleigh Award for Fiction and the Mary Ruffin Poole First Work of Fiction Award. Author of two books of poetry (*Wanting to Know the End* and *Holding Back Winter*), she has received the Fortner Writer and Community Award,

which recognizes "outstanding generosity to other writers and the larger community." Her work has appeared in such literary journals as *Southern Review*, *Gettysburg Review*, *Kenyon Review*, *Shenandoah*, *Ohio Review*, and *Prairie Schooner*. A local commentator for National Public Radio, she teaches at writers' conferences throughout the Southeast, including the Duke University Writers' Workshop. Born and raised in Rock Hill, South Carolina, Goldman now lives in Charlotte, North Carolina.



William Ferris

Senior Associate Director, Center for the Study of the American South, University of North Carolina

Author, folklorist, filmmaker, and historian William R. Ferris has compiled a distinguished record of achievement and leadership during a career spanning nearly three decades. Before becoming chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities in November 1997, Dr. Ferris served for 18 years as founding director of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi in Oxford. He has produced 16 documentary films and ten books, including the *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*. Ferris is a professor of history and folklore at UNC in Chapel Hill and serves as associate director of the University's Center for the Study of the American South.



Louis D. Rubin, Jr.

Distinguished Professor of English Emeritus
University of North Carolina

Editor, novelist, critic, essayist, teacher, and publisher Louis D. Rubin, Jr., has had an immeasurable effect on a generation of American writers and readers. Aptly termed "a living giant in the field of southern letters," Rubin has authored

52 books, including *The Golden Weather*, *Surfaces of a Diamond*, *Small Craft Advisory*, *The Mockingbird in the Gum Tree: A Literary Gallimaufry*, and most recently *My Father's People: A Family of Southern Jews*. Founding director of Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, he is Distinguished Professor of English Emeritus at the University of North Carolina and a member of the Fellowship of Southern Writers.



Emily Bingham

Independent scholar and historian

Born in Louisville, Kentucky, Emily Bingham graduated summa cum laude from Harvard College, where she earned a prize for her undergraduate thesis in American history. She received her M.A. and Ph.D. in history from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Returning to Kentucky in 1995, she has taught at Bellarmine College and the University of Louisville. Ms. Bingham, who comes from a long line of distinguished newspaper editors and publishers, has written for both Louisville's *Courier-Journal* and for *The Raleigh News & Observer*. Bingham is the co-editor, with Thomas A. Underwood, of *The Southern Agrarians and the New Deal* (University Press of Virginia, 2001).

You are responsible for making your own hotel reservations.

Special JHSSC rate (\$75 + tax for single or double) is available at :

Omni Charlotte Hotel

132 E. Trade Street, Charlotte, SC 28202
704.377.0400

Easy walking distance to

Levine Museum of the New South.

Rooms are limited, so reserve early.

Be sure to mention "JHSSC" for the special rate!

Reservation deadline: Friday, August 22, 2003

Pillars: Building a Strong Foundation



The Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina has made great strides in its brief history. Less than ten years old, it has sponsored a major national traveling exhibition, an excellent historical video, regular newsletters like this one, and well-attended and excellently programmed bi-annual meetings. In fact, the Society has already become the largest statewide Jewish organization in South Carolina with 540 dues-paying members. Last fall we moved into our permanent home at the **Sylvia Vlosky Yaschik Jewish Studies Center** at the College of Charleston. All of these are major accomplishments; each by itself would be a significant achievement for such a young organization.

The Society has no endowment yet. We need an operating budget to fund all of our activities. Membership dues do not cover the Society's operating expenses. The pillar campaign is designed to make up for the shortfall.

At its meeting in Camden in May, the Society allocated \$7,500 a year to help support the archival work of the Jewish Heritage Collection. Since 1997 the College of Charleston has absorbed all of JHC's expenses, with the Society as a huge beneficiary of the College's efforts. A "good faith commitment" to defray some of the expenses requires the Society to identify eight (8) additional pillars. Please help us reach our goal dedicated to the support of the Jewish Heritage Collection.

pillar photos by Enid Idelsohn

To date our list of pillars includes:
(parentheses indicate the year in which donations began)

John and Marcie Baker, Columbia, SC (2003)

Alan Coleman, Charleston, SC (2003)

Richard and Belinda Gergel, Columbia, SC (2002)

*** Mimi Gleberman, Spring Island, SC (2002)**

Mark and Judith Green, Charleston, SC (2002)

Ruth Greenberg, Florence, SC (2002)

Michael Kogan, Little Falls, NJ (2002)

Ronald and Anne Krancer, Villanova, PA (2002)

Rabbi Ted and Ina Rae Levy, Hilton Head, SC (2002)

Jack and Frieda Margolies, Charleston, SC (2002)

Rose Mark, Beaufort, SC (2002)

Susan Pearlstine, Park City, UT (2003)

Benedict and Brenda Rosen, Myrtle Beach, SC (2003)

Robert and Susan Rosen, Charleston, SC (2002)

Jeffrey and Mickey Rosenblum, Charleston, SC (2002)

Paul and Jayne Siegel, Waltherboro, SC (2003)

Steve and Harriett Steinert, Asheville, NC (2002)

Gordan and Barbara Stine, Charleston, SC (2002)

Mark Tanenbaum, Sullivan's Island, SC (2002)

Bernard and Ann Warshaw, Waltherboro, SC (2002)

*** Harvey Gleberman passed away this Spring in New York.
May his memory be a blessing.**



SJHS to join JHSSC for October 2004 Meeting

Planning is underway for the Fall 2004 Meeting, when the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina will host the Southern Jewish Historical Society. The meeting will celebrate Brith Sholom Beth Israel's 150th anniversary, as well as the 350th anniversary of Jewish life in America and the 10th anniversary of JHSSC.

The joint meeting will take place October 28-31, 2004 in Charleston. All three Charleston congregations will highlight the weekend with special services, meals, and other hospitality arrangements.

JHSSC's steering committee has already met several times, rooms have been reserved at three hotels, and a special concert is being planned for Saturday night at BSBI. Mark the dates on your calendar.

Committee members include Eve Berlinsky (KKBE), Leah Greenberg (Emanu-El), Enid Idelsohn, Sue Michalow, Martin Perlmutter, Robert Rosen, Sandra Rosenblum (BSBI), Dale Rosengarten, and Bernard and Ann Warshaw. If you want to help, call us at 953.3918.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

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

Check enclosed \$ _____

~Membership Included~



Jewish Revival at Georgetown's Temple Beth Elohim

by Elizabeth Moses

Re-vi-val. Noun.

1. An act or instance of *reviving* : the state of being *revived* : as a) renewed attention to or interest in something, b) a new presentation or publication of something old, c) a period of renewed religious interest.

— Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online

Revival. Not quite the word, here in the Bible Belt, that one associates with Judaism, is it? That was my feeling when we asked the local paper to write an article about Temple Beth Elohim for publicity. The reporter used the word “revival” a half dozen times and I was aghast. Having grown up in the small town South, to me, “revival” had to do with tents, wailing preachers, and speaking in tongues. But according to the dictionary definition, that’s exactly what is happening here in Georgetown, South Carolina.

Two summers ago, in June 2001, the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina (JHSSC) held its regional meeting in Georgetown. It was a small, laid-back affair. The Kaminski House and the Jewish cemetery were open for tours. We attended services at Myrtle Beach’s Temple Emanu-El, took a tour of Bernard Baruch’s former plantation, Hobcaw Barony, and saw what sad shape Georgetown’s Temple Beth Elohim was in.

The congregation had dwindled to five faithful members: Debbie Abrams, Rita Fogel, Alwyn Goldstein, Meyer Rosen, and Philip Schneider. These five came every Friday night for services. Alwyn, the only one with knowledge of Hebrew prayer, was affectionately known as “the rabbi.” The service lasted 15 minutes, the Torah was not taken out, no songs were sung, no *oneg* was prepared. Yet they came. Every Friday night. To temple. To worship. To keep the faith.

People at the JHSSC meeting shook their heads sadly; this congregation was clearly on its way out. Assimilation, the lure of bigger cities and more lucrative careers, intermarriage — all the usual reasons were given to explain why their children and grandchildren had moved away and why Beth Elohim was failing. One of the two Torahs was given to a synagogue in Texas. Discussions were held about selling the building and using the proceeds for perpetual care of the Jewish cemetery. Georgetown’s Jews, with their long and influential history, were soon to be a memory.

But a revival happened. No wailing and crying, no baptisms and shouting preachers. Quietly. One step at a time. Renewed attention and religious interest from a new set of people. As we all know, the Grand Strand is booming and along with the general populace, many Jews are moving here too. And some of these Jews are seeking a Reform congregation. Scraps of paper surfaced, with the names and numbers of previous visitors to Temple Beth Elohim. Phone calls were made. Word began to spread, and people began to come.



Members of Temple Beth Elohim — Georgetown, SC, May 2003.
Photo: Sylvia Cooper

In the fall of 2002, Temple Beth Elohim held six High Holy Day services, conducted entirely by lay leaders. Attendance at most of the services ranged from 25 to 35 people. A grand Break-the-Fast was put together, friends found friends, and most importantly, Jews found fellow Jews. New ideas came up in conversations and thinking began to shift. Perhaps this congregation could see a turn-around; perhaps there were enough people in the area who want to join a Reform congregation.

Shortly after Yom Kippur last year, Temple Beth Elohim began holding one full Torah service on the fourth Friday of each month, followed by an *oneg*. Attendance has been steady at 15-20 people at these services. Thousands of dollars have been donated to the temple and major grounds keeping done, the roof repaired, and a new heating and air conditioning system put in. The organ, which hadn’t been used in 10 years, was repaired and we are slowly weaving songs and music back into the service. Lay leaders conduct services, teach Hebrew, and address religious and ritual questions. Our seder this year, catered at a local restaurant, drew a crowd of 52. Next year we will have to hold it at the temple since we have outgrown the restaurant.

For the first time in years, the temple will remain open for services over the summer. We will be re-listed in the telephone directory and we have launched a website. Most joyous of all, the congregation, founded in 1904, will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2004. Come join us, we will *most certainly* be here. “Revivals” every Friday night at 7:30 pm!

For further information, please visit our website <www.templebethelohim.com>, or contact Elizabeth Moses at P.O. Box 5, Georgetown, SC, 29442, call 843-520-4833, or e-mail <embigblue@yahoo.com>.

Elizabeth Moses, a JHSSC board member, lives in Georgetown and is a member of Temple Beth Elohim. She is a researcher in the Marine Science Department at Coastal Carolina University.

Summer Reading



Mordecai:

An Early American Family

By Emily Bingham
Hill and Wang, 2003

Mordecai is an intimate portrait of a Jewish American family in our nation's first century. Emily Bingham follows the generations as they define themselves as

Southerners, Jews, and members of the rising middle class. The Mordecai family recorded their struggles and triumphs in voluminous letters, diaries, newspaper articles, and books. Drawing on these rich sources, the book tracks national events through the relationships that speak most immediately to us – parent and child, brother and sister, husband and wife.



The Slow Way Back

By Judy Goldman
William Morrow & Co., 1999

Tracing three generations of a Southern Jewish family, this remarkable debut novel peers into deeply rooted family secrets, explores the complex love between sisters, and celebrates the constant human struggle

to keep one's history alive. Set in the Carolinas, it tells the stories of three sets of sisters, each of whom shares a delicate closeness that is shattered by secrets and truths, by matters of faith, and by long-held resentments. This beautifully rendered novel raises penetrating questions about filial love, marriage, and belonging.



Chicken Dreaming Corn

By Roy Hoffman
Hill Street Press, 2003

"In bursts of generosity, with all their warts and shortcomings visible, the characters seize their own lives and a piece of the reader's heart. Enveloped by his family, his friends, and his dreams, Hoffman's Morris Kleinman, of Piatra Neamt, Romania, and

Mobile, Alabama, is destined to join the ranks of fiction's immortals." – Sena Jeter Naslund, Distinguished Teaching Professor at the University of Louisville.

The JHSSC wishes to thank the following people for their contributions to the Summer 2003 Newsletter: Garry Baum, Rost Beyder, Stanley Farbstein, Susan Michalow, Kimberly Richey, Marlene Mischner, and Dale Rosengarten.

— Design and Layout by Enid Idelsohn



The Ladies' Auxiliary

By Tova Mirvis
W.W. Norton & Co., 2000

"A dash of *The Crucible*, a pinch of *The Golem*, a sharp eye, a keen ear, an engaging sense of humor, and an incomparable narrative voice render *The Ladies' Auxiliary* a small miracle. Tova Mirvis has transported the Salem witch hunt from

Puritan New England to a contemporary Orthodox Jewish community in Memphis, Tennessee, and the result is a highly original, wise and wonderful novel." – Binnie Kirshenbaum, author of *History on a Personal Note*.

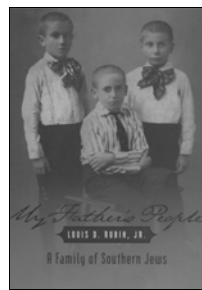


Homelands: Southern-Jewish Identity in Durham and Chapel Hill, North Carolina

By Leonard Rogoff
University of Alabama, 2000

"*Homelands* is the best monograph published thus far detailing the life cycle of small southern Jewish communities. Separating myth from reality, the book

does a marvelous job intertwining changes in community identity and demographics and providing insights into contemporary concerns for group continuity. This is a model community study." – Mark K. Bauman, editor of *Southern Jewish History*.



My Father's People:

A Family of Southern Jews

By Louis D. Rubin, Jr.
Louisiana State University Press, 2002

"In *My Father's People: A Family of Southern Jews* – his 52nd book – Louis Rubin returns to his origins.... In a ghostly scene in the prologue [he] revisits his Charleston family haunts and searches

again for the absent figures in the landscape. 'This book is not a eulogy,' he writes, 'but an effort to know.'... Here is the Jewish generational rise from storekeeping and immigrant poverty into the professions. The grandfather who writes fractured English yields to children who are journalists and playwrights. The grandson becomes a distinguished professor of American literature." – Leonard Rogoff, research historian at the Rosenzweig Museum and Jewish Heritage Foundation of North Carolina, and editor of the *Rambler*, the newsletter of the Southern Jewish Historical Society.

Sumter Celebrates Jewish Heritage Days

Congregation Sinai and the Sumter County Museum co-sponsored Jewish Heritage Days on April 12-13, 2003 with an exhibition on "Sumter's Jewish Community in the 1800s" at the museum and displays of historical material in the archives of Temple Sinai. The program began during Friday evening Services. Led by Rabbi Robert A. Seigel.

Saturday morning Dale Rosengarten presented a slide show to an overflow crowd at the museum. Dale focused on Sumter contributions to the making of the exhibition, "A Portion of the People: Three Hundred Years of Southern Jewish Life." Morris Mazursky followed with a talk on notable Jewish families of Sumter.

Participants then chose either to tour the Jewish cemetery or to watch Dr. Hannah Kirschenfeld mix, knead, and bake challah.



Picnic at Sumter County Museum
Photo: Phil Moise

Everyone convened behind the museum where a homemade picnic lunch was served. The program ended back at Temple Sinai with a demonstration of *shofar* blowing and a wonderful performance by Koleinu, the choir of Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim of Charleston

Speakers' Bureau Up & Running

by Rabbi Robert A. Seigel

For the past several months a dedicated group of JHSSC members have been meeting regularly to develop a Speakers' Bureau. When it is ready to be fully launched, the JHSSC will be able to offer programs to every Jewish congregation and affiliate in the State as well as to civic organizations and church groups. The dual purpose of the Speakers' Bureau is to educate as many people as possible about the rich Jewish heritage of South Carolina and to increase the Society's membership base.

The program will begin slowly and grow. It will start with a pilot program in the Charleston area, then move to the Columbia area, and then throughout the entire State.

The Speakers' Bureau has been viewing the several chapters of the JHSSC video, *Land of Promise*, and discussing "talking points" so that a presentation might include a segment of the film followed by a discussion. In this way the Bureau can offer a variety of subjects to prospective audiences. A template on each segment of the video is being created to foster discussion.

The Speakers' Bureau Committee consists of Jack Bass, Sol Breibart, Carolee Fox, Harlan Greene, Jeanne Lieberman, Morey Lipton, Martin Perlmutter, Klyde Robinson, Robert Rosen, Anita Rosenberg, Jeff Rosenblum, Dale Rosengarten, and Bob Seigel. We are actively seeking new recruits. To join the committee or suggest possible venues, please contact jhssc@cofc.edu.

Happy 100th Birthday to Hanna Pearlstine

- Born April 28, 1903
St. Matthews, SC
- B.A.: History, Converse College
Spartanburg, SC, 1924
- History teacher, Columbia High School
Columbia, SC
1928—1968
- pioneer member, Plantation Village,
Wilmington, NC, 1988
- proud aunt to 44 descendents
- beloved senior member of JHSSC



age 4



age 21



age 100



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Jewish Heritage Collection
Dale Rosengarten, *Curator*

ANNUAL DUES FOR THE SOCIETY
(MEMBERSHIP RUNS ON A CALENDAR YEAR, JANUARY- DECEMBER)

Please join the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina.
Fill out this form and return it to:

JHSSC, Jewish Studies Program,
College of Charleston, Charleston, SC 29424
Please make checks payable to JHSSC

Name:		
Address:		
City:	State:	Zip:
Phone: ()		Fax: ()
E-mail Address:		

ANNUAL DUES FOR 2003
(MEMBERSHIP RUNS ON A CALENDAR YEAR, JANUARY- DECEMBER)

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

2003 GIFT MEMBERSHIPS AVAILABLE

Enroll a friend or family member for an additional \$36.
Please provide their information and we will inform them of your gift.