

THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY of SOUTH CAROLINA

SPRING 2007 VOLUME XII - NUMBER 1



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

From the President



Dear friends,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

of the JHSSC

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

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

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

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

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

Fondly,



Belinda Gergel, President

Jewish Studies Elderhostel: May 20 - 25, 2007

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

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

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

by Belinda Gergel

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

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

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

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



*Irene Goldsmith Kohn,
1868-1913*

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

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

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

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

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

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



*Carrie Goldsmith Cohen,
1872-1944*

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

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

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

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



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



*Helen Kohn Hennig,
1896–1961*

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Torah Scrolls Examined & Appraised

by Doris Baumgarten



Showing damage: faded and missing letters



*Scribe Druin
reattaching scroll
to roller.*



90-year-old Aiken Torah

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

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

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

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

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

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

and mold damage in the future.

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



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

Photos by Doris Baumgarten, Aiken, SC

The Adventure of Jewish Genealogy

by Sandra Garfinkel Shapiro

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



Annie and Sam Garfinkel,
ca. 1913

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

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

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

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



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



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

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

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

JHSSC Meets in Columbia, SC

April 27-29, 2007

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

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

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



Tree of Life Congregation today.

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

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



Karla Goldman

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

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

Saturday, April 28 (continued)

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

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

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



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

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

9:30 a.m. Coffee and bagels

Jewish Women of South Carolina: A Celebration

JHSSC Meeting
Columbia, SC

April 27 – 29, 2007

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

E-MAIL _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

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

Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Return form to:

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

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

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



Dale Rosengarten



Marcie Cohen Ferris

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

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

COLUMBIA HOTEL INFORMATION:

Wingate Inn - Northeast

8300 Two Notch Road
(I-20 and I-77 @ US Highway 1)
Columbia, SC 29223
Phone: 803.699.9333
Fax: 803.699.6588

email: 7655@hotel.cendant.com

RATE: \$89/night

Special rate available until April 13, 2007

You must make your own reservations

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

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

by Martin Perlmutter



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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

JHSSC
College of Charleston
Charleston, SC 29424

New and Noteworthy: Historic Treasures Given to the Jewish Heritage Collection

by Dale Rosengarten

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

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

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

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

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



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



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

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



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

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

Historic Treasures (continued)

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

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

1

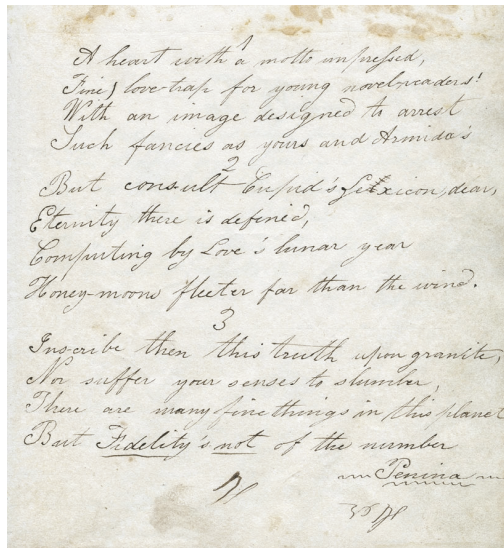
A heart with a motto impressed,
Fine love-trap for young novel readers!
With an image designed to arrest
Such fancies as yours and Armida's

2

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

3

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



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



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

The Sam and Regina Greene Family Fund

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

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

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



Regina and Sam Greene, ca. 1948.

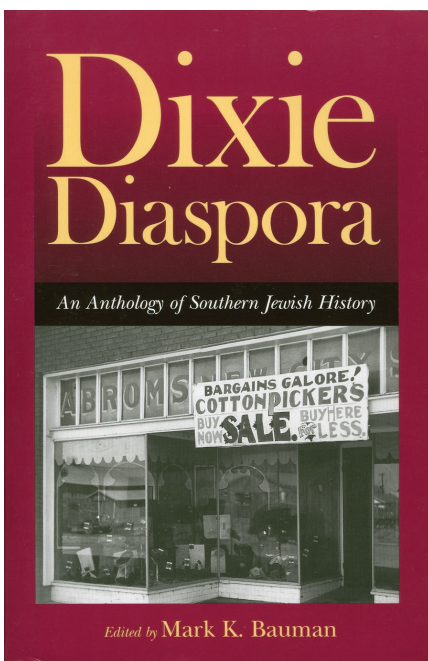
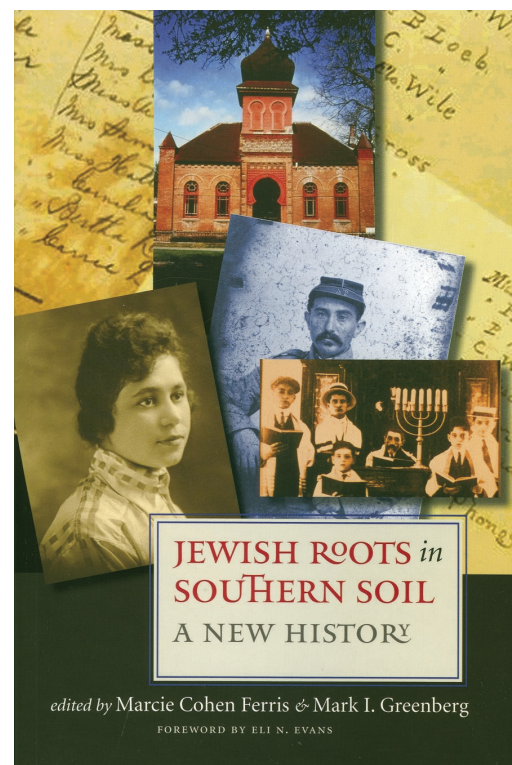
Books of Interest

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

Pillars: Become a Benefactor

by Martin Perlmutter, Executive Director

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

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

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

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

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

The Pillars of the Society (2007)

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

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

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

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

Check enclosed \$ _____ (includes annual membership)

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



Photos by Dana Sardet



THE
**JEWISH
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**
OF
SOUTH CAROLINA

Martin Perlmutter, Executive Director
Enid Idelsohn, Administrator

Officers

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

Past Presidents

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

Board of Directors

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

Jewish Heritage Collection

Dale Rosengarten, *Curator*

Join the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: () _____ Fax: () _____

E-mail Address: _____

ANNUAL DUES FOR 2007 (JANUARY–DECEMBER)

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

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

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

Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program

96 Wentworth Street
College of Charleston
Charleston, SC 29424

phone: 843.953.3918

fax: 843.953.7624

website: www.jhssc.org

e-mail: jhssc@cofc.edu

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE

P-A-I-D

CHARLESTON, SC
PERMIT No. 437