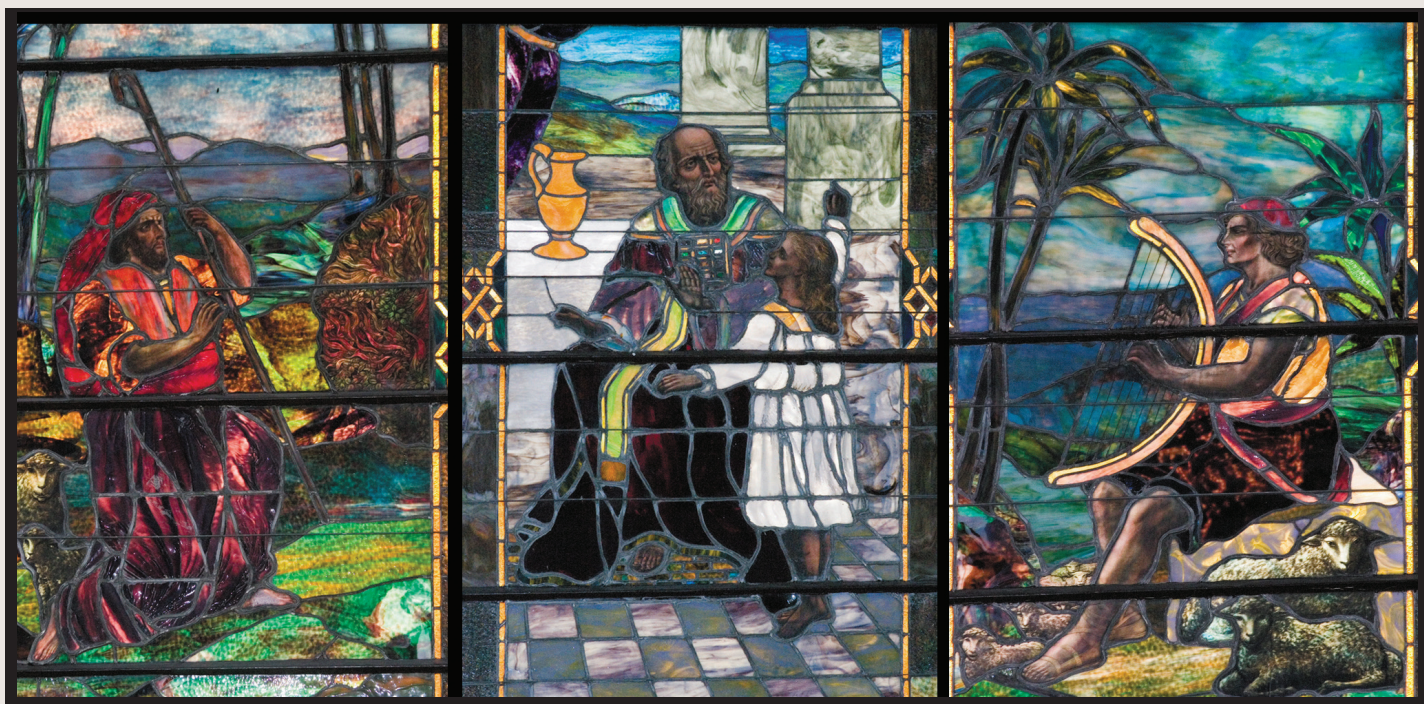


# THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY of SOUTH CAROLINA

SPRING 2008 VOLUME XIII - NUMBER 1



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*On the cover:*

*Three panels of stained glass in the sanctuary of Temple Sinai, Sumter, SC. left: Moses and the burning bush.*

*center: Samuel and Eli. right: David playing the harp.*

*Photographs by Edie Rubin*



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

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Joseph Rubin

# From the President of the JHSSC

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

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

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

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

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

With warmest regards,

Ed Poliakoff, president  
[ed.poliakoff@nelsonmullins.com](mailto:ed.poliakoff@nelsonmullins.com)



# Strangers in Paradise

## A Century of Jewish Settlement in Aiken, SC

by Alyssa Neely

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

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

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



*Laurens Street, Aiken, SC, ca. 1922.*

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

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



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



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



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

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

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



*Adath Yeshurun Synagogue, 2007. Courtesy of Doris Baumgarten.*

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

# Synagogue Emanu-El at 60

by Joan Halushka

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

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

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



*Synagogue Emanu-El's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary gala evening, November 11, 2007.*

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

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



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

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

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

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



*Synagogue Emanu-El in West Ashley, November 2007.*

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

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

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

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

### Looking Back . . . Looking Forward

by Theodore Levin, Emanu-El president

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



# Upcoming Events

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

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

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

### Meeting Registration Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ I request a Kosher lunch

*\$18.00 registration fee includes lunch*

*Reservations online at JHSSC.org*

Return form to:

**JHSSC/Jewish Studies Program**

**96 Wentworth Street**

**Charleston, SC 29424**

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

*New and Noteworthy:*

# Temple Sinai Archives Donated to the College of Charleston

*by Harlan Greene and Dale Rosengarten*

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

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

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



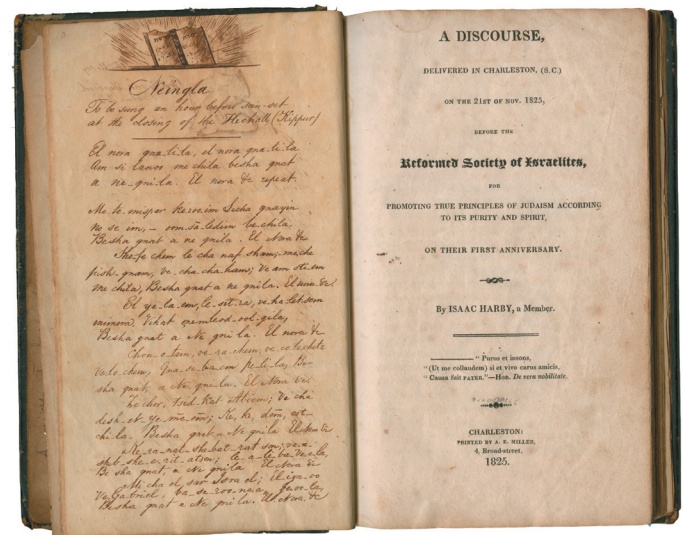
*Temple Sinai, Sumter, SC, 2007.*

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

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

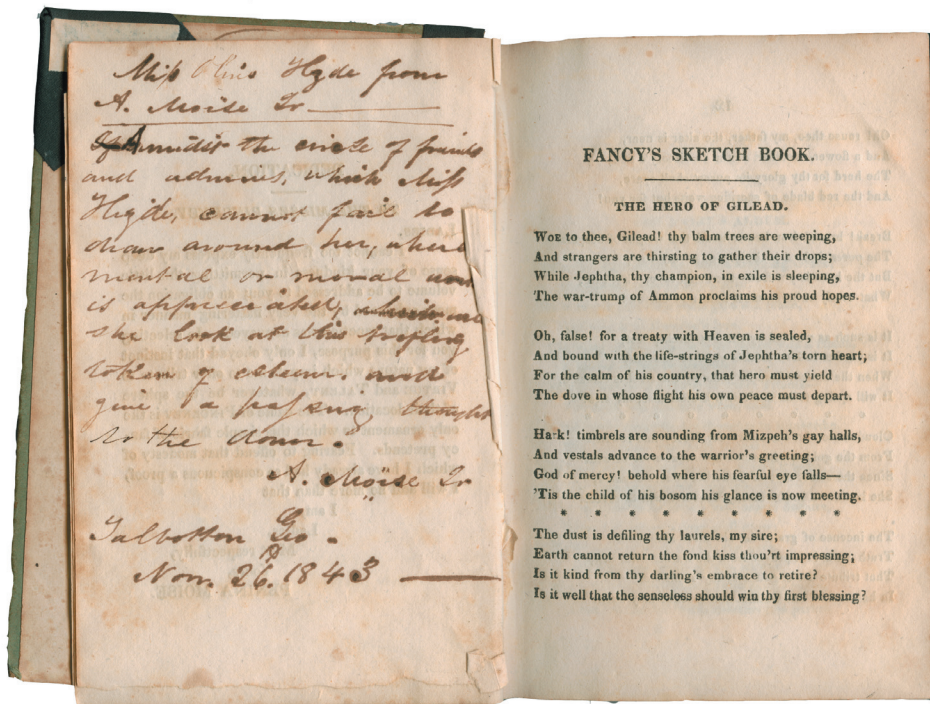


*Harlan Greene, Dale Rosengarten, Elizabeth Moses, and Robert Moses packing the archives, September 2007.*



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





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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### *For Those Who Live in the Sun*

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



# Camp Art

by Joseph Rubin

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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



# Pillars:

## Creating a Center for Southern Jewish Culture

*by Martin Perlmutter*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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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.

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

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