

THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY of SOUTH CAROLINA


Fall 2009 VOLUME XIV - NUMBER 2

October 23 - 25, 2009

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M'dor L'dor
Celebrating 25 years of the
Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program
at the College of Charleston





Ed Poliakoff, President

Jewish Studies' students at the Cistern, Randolph Hall, College of Charleston, Fall 2005.
Photo by Loren Bridges.



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

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www.jhssc.org

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From the President of the JHSSC

As my two-year term as president comes to an end, I am proud to report on what the Society has achieved in the recent past and what we can look forward to in the future. Thanks to the dedication of Executive Director Martin Perlmutter, Administrator Enid Idelsohn, the JHSSC Executive Committee, and our members, we are successfully fulfilling our mission—to promote "the study and preservation of the history and culture of the Jews of South Carolina."

Last year's annual meeting, entitled "Jewish Genealogy: Explore Your Family Tree," featured talks by two experts on Jewish genealogy and hands-on practice in Internet research using College of Charleston computer facilities. In May 2009, at the Society's spring meeting at Hobcaw Barony near Georgetown, an overflow crowd listened to superb presentations on the legacy of Bernard M. Baruch and enjoyed a delicious buffet lunch and majestic views of Winyah Bay. Our thanks to Dr. Albert Baruch Mercer who arranged access to this unique historical site.

The upcoming 2009 annual meeting promises to be a landmark event as we join the College's Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program in celebrating its 25th anniversary and mark the Society's 15th birthday as well. The schedule for the meeting is detailed elsewhere in these pages. Please register now and encourage all friends of JHSSC to attend. The nominating committee will present an outstanding slate of officers for election. Please see the adjacent inset.

Vice-President Ann Hellman, who chairs our Education and Publications Committee, and Vice-President Joe Wachter, head of our Archives and Historical Sites Committee, are spearheading the Society's ongoing efforts to document South Carolina's Jewish cemeteries. The Society has undertaken a program to sponsor or co-sponsor historical markers at sites of Jewish interest across the state. I recently had the honor of representing JHSSC at the unveiling of a marker at Sumter's Temple Sinai. Last



Sumter's Temple Sinai dedicated its new JHSSC-sponsored marker in a ceremony held at the temple on May 22, 2009. Photo by Max B. Hellman.

year JHSSC co-sponsored a marker at the site of Columbia's first Jewish religious school. Society members are urged to suggest additional candidates for recognition, using the nomination form that can be found at www.jhssc.org.

On behalf of my fellow officers, I extend thanks to everyone who has served on our board in the past and a warm welcome to our new class of board members. All members are invited to participate at the level of activity that suits them best. We are especially grateful to our Pillars—stalwart supporters who commit to dues of \$1,000 per year for five years—as their contributions provide much of the funding that makes our programs and projects possible. We encourage everyone who can to become a Pillar and ask current Pillars to renew when their five-year commitment is fulfilled.

We endeavor to be careful stewards of JHSSC funds. Last year our income exceeded expenses and we hope at least to break even for 2009.

I hope to see you in Charleston for a gala celebration, October 23–25.

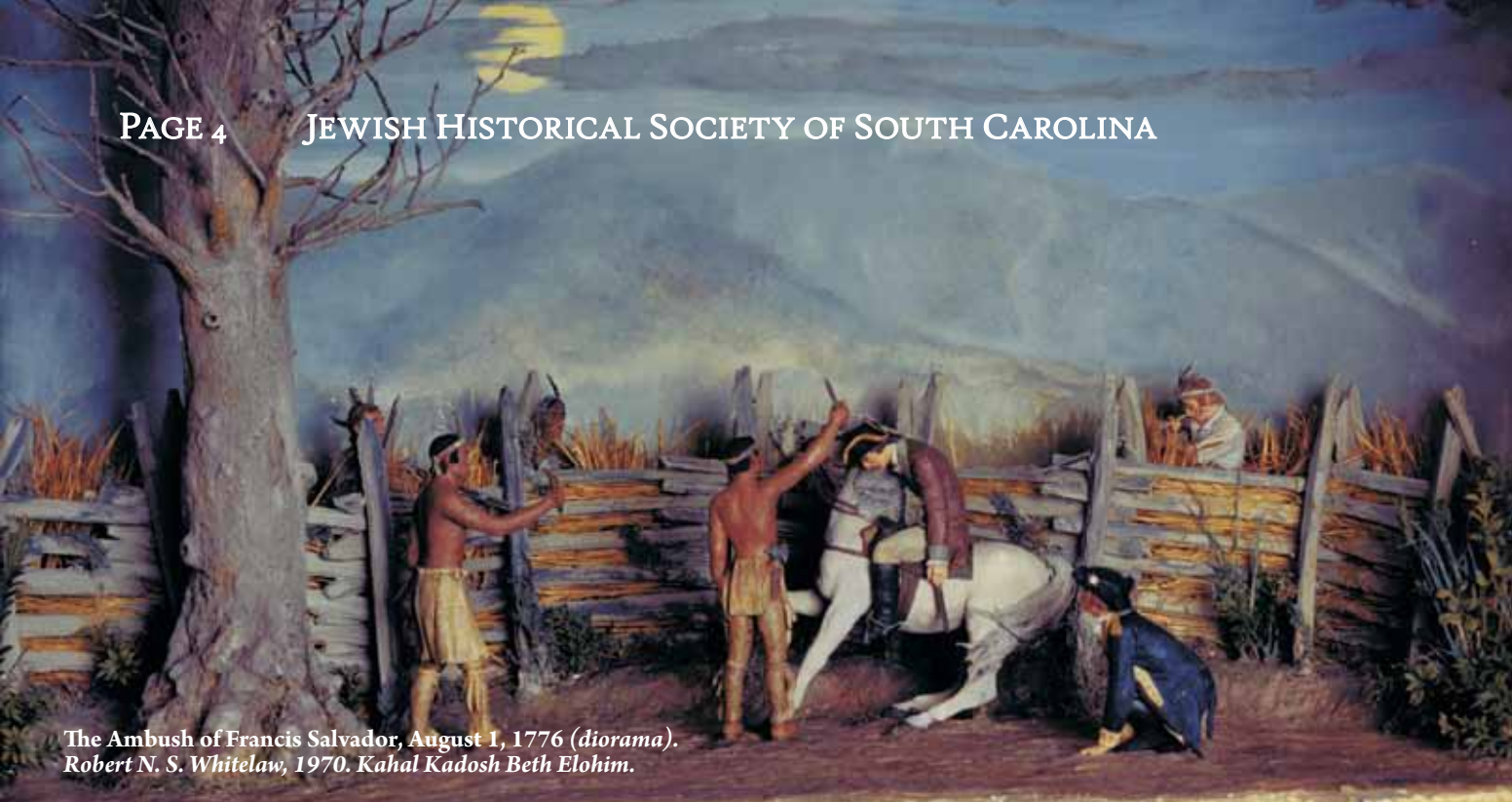
With warmest regards,

Ed Poliakoff

ed.poliakoff@nelsonmullins.com

Proposed Slate of Officers for 2009–2011

President: Ann Meddin Hellman
 V. P., Fundraising and Membership: Phillip H. Greenberg
 V. P., Education and Publications: Susan D. Altman
 V. P., Archives and Historical Sites: Joe Wachter
 Treasurer: David J. Cohen
 Secretary: Rachel G. Barnett
 Archivist: Moss Blachman



The Ambush of Francis Salvador, August 1, 1776 (diorama).
Robert N. S. Whitelaw, 1970. Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim.

Charleston Jewry: 320 Years and Counting

by Stuart Rockoff, Dale Rosengarten, and Alyssa Neely

Charleston, South Carolina, was one of a handful of port cities where the early years of American Jewish history were played out. Jewish immigrants began arriving in the colonial capital as early as the 1690s, drawn by the promise of economic opportunity and the town's reputation for religious freedom. As late as 1820, Charleston was home to the largest Jewish community in the United States. As the city was outpaced by ports such as New York and New Orleans, its Jewish population failed to match the growth of

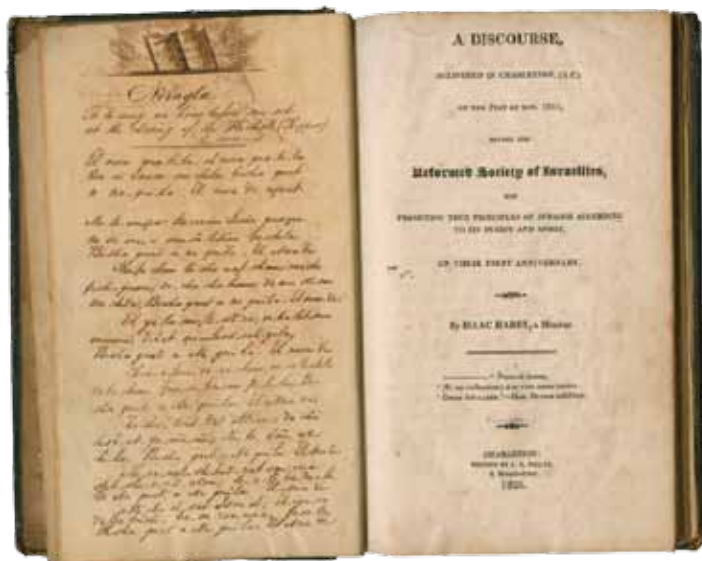
other communities in the young republic. Yet it remained a center of Jewish life in South Carolina and the region.

Traders and Patriots: 1690–1820

By the 1730s Charles Town (as Charleston was originally called) counted about ten Jewish households; by 1749 there were enough Jewish residents to form a congregation. Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim adopted the Sephardic rites of worship, as did her sister congregations in New York, Newport, Savannah, and Philadelphia.

During the American Revolution, the city's 200 Jews by and large supported the Patriot cause. As many as 28 Jewish men served in a company of the Charles Town Regiment known informally as the "Jew Company." Within a year of arriving in South Carolina, Francis Salvador was elected to the First Provincial Congress as one of ten deputies from the upland district of Ninety Six, thus becoming the first practicing Jew to serve in a legislative body in America. When fighting broke out the 29-year-old Salvador joined the local militia and was killed by British-allied Indians—the first Jew known to have died in the War of Independence.

Charleston's Jewish population grew to an estimated 500 by the turn of the 19th century, bolstered by war refugees returning from other seaboard cities and by immigrants from Europe and the West Indies. In 1791, Beth Elohim, numbering 53 families, purchased land for a synagogue, which was completed in 1794.



Prayer book manuscript by Isaac Harby, bound with his Discourse... before the Reformed Society of Israelites, 1825. Temple Sinai Archives, Special Collections, College of Charleston.

Civil Wars in Charleston: 1821–1865

In 1824, Charleston produced the first home-grown movement to reform Judaism in America. It was led by young, native-born Jews who believed that if Judaism did not change, it would not survive under the conditions of unprecedented freedom they enjoyed. To combat the “apathy and neglect” they saw afflicting Jewish youth, Isaac Harby and 46 others submitted a petition to Beth Elohim’s leadership calling for a style of worship more like that of their gentile neighbors, with shorter services, a more decorous system of offerings, and a sermon on the Sabbath preached in English.

When the adjuncta, or board of trustees, dismissed their plea, 12 petitioners, led by Harby, Abraham Moïse, and David Nunes Carvalho, broke from Beth Elohim and formed The Reformed Society of Israelites. They compiled their own “reformed” prayer book, the first of its kind in America, and made plans to build a sanctuary. By 1833, however, five years after Harby’s untimely death, the movement had lost some its steam; most of the reformers rejoined Beth Elohim, where they would work for change from within.

In 1836, Abraham Moïse, Jr., helped draft Beth Elohim’s new constitution, and two years later, following the model of Rebecca Gratz in Philadelphia, the congregation established a religious school. That same year, in April 1838, the synagogue was destroyed by fire. During rebuilding, a fierce debate over the installation of an organ led to a second split. In 1840, 40 traditionalists formed a new congregation, Shearit Israel, and seven years later built their own synagogue.

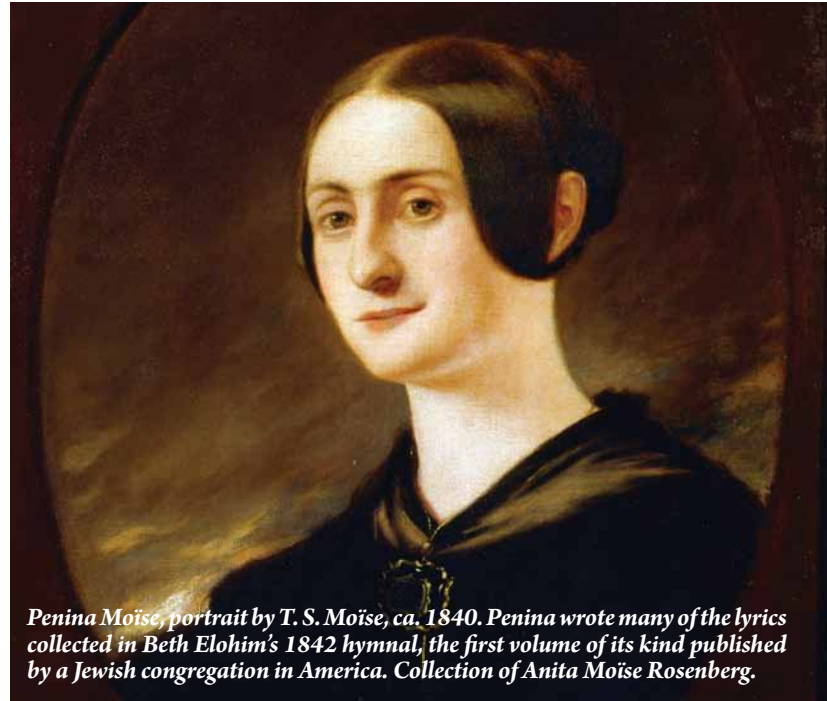
By 1852, a group of German and Polish immigrants, led by the Lithuanian-born Hirsch Zvi Margolis Levine, had



Rabbi Hirsch Levine (1807–1887), wearing tallit and tefillin. Courtesy of Carol Kaminsky.

begun meeting for prayer. Two years later they formed their own congregation, Berith Shalome (now Brith Sholom), which held services using the traditional Polish rite in a small building on St. Philip Street rented from John L. Francis, a free person of color.

Charleston’s Jews owned slaves in the same proportions as their Christian counterparts—according to historian James Hagy, in 1830, 83 percent of Jewish households in Charleston owned at least one slave—



Penina Moïse, portrait by T. S. Moïse, ca. 1840. Penina wrote many of the lyrics collected in Beth Elohim’s 1842 hymnal, the first volume of its kind published by a Jewish congregation in America. Collection of Anita Moïse Rosenberg.

and when the time came to fight, they joined the Confederacy in numbers greater than their share of the population.

Charleston’s Jewish Community: 1865–1900

The Civil War’s toll on Beth Elohim and Shearit Israel led the two groups to merge. In 1866 they negotiated a compromise on issues regarding leadership, rites, and rituals. A handful of members left the congregation, but most bowed to necessity and turned their attention to getting back on their feet.

By 1867, almost one-third of the city’s 50 dry goods stores and half of the 20 clothing businesses were owned by Jews. Among the most successful, Hornik’s Bargain House opened in 1886 as a small wholesale business. By 1901, it had grown to fill a four-story building and sent out 40,000 catalogs to its mail-order customers.

Meanwhile, Charleston’s “downtown Jews”—typically members of old families of German ancestry—embraced Reform Judaism fully. In 1872, Beth Elohim bought an organ to replace the one lost in the Civil War and, a year later, joined Isaac Mayer Wise’s new Union of American Hebrew Congregations. By 1879, the congregation had gotten rid of its shohet and instituted “family pews,” where men and women sat together.

Dissatisfied with the laxity of other congregants, members of Brith Sholom who practiced strict Orthodoxy formed their own congregation, Shari Emouna, in 1886. Eleven years later, for reasons lost to history, the two groups decided to reunite. Conflicts over the degree of observance remained a thorny issue and after two decades Brith Sholom split again.



*Elihu Mazo's grocery, 478 King Street, Charleston, S.C., ca 1925.
Photo courtesy of Harriet Spanier.*

New Waves of Immigrants: 1900–1945

Between 1900 and 1920, the number of Jews in South Carolina doubled from 2,500 to 5,000. Like those who had come in the mid-19th century, these new arrivals from Eastern Europe started as peddlers and often ended up owning small retail stores along King Street, north of Calhoun. Followers of Orthodox Judaism, most “uptown Jews” kept their stores closed on Saturday. Catering to the city’s African-American population, they were more likely to offer black customers credit and to allow them to try on merchandise than were other white merchants. In 1911, a group of strict Sabbath observers, including many recent immigrants, split from Brith Sholom to form Beth Israel.

Zionism attracted a small but dedicated following in Charleston. The city’s first Zionist organization, the B’nei Zion Society, was founded some time before 1917. Joseph Goldman was the longtime leader of the group. Zionism in Charleston was not exclusively an Orthodox immigrant cause. Breaking with other Reform rabbis, Jacob Raisin of Beth Elohim was an ardent supporter and, with official permission from the trustees, attended the World Zionist Congress in 1932. His wife Jane had helped to found a Charleston chapter of Hadassah in 1914.

Charleston Jews since World War II: 1945–present

By 1948, three quarters of Charleston Jews were American-born. Among the newcomers were GIs from the Northeast who had been stationed at one of South Carolina’s many military bases and refugees from Hitler’s war. Jews were still heavily concentrated in small enterprise, with 53 percent of household heads either owning or managing a business. Only 12 percent were professionals, while 7 percent were skilled laborers. The most common Jewish-owned businesses were clothing, grocery, furniture, and liquor stores. A few Jewish families were engaged in manufacturing such items as undergarments, ties, and mattresses. Two kosher butcher shops and several kosher delis operated in the city.

A majority of Charleston Jewish families—58 percent—identified as Orthodox. Beth Israel had 240 members in 1948, when they built a new synagogue on Rutledge Avenue. Brith Sholom had 280 members. The city’s Reform congregation, Beth Elohim, also remained strong, with 270 member families.

Even before World War II, some members of Brith Sholom were pushing for change. As elsewhere in the United States, the Conservative movement took hold in Charleston as urban residents abandoned their old neighborhoods and moved to the suburbs. They wanted to drive to shul on the Sabbath—prohibited by Jewish law—and to sit next to their wives in synagogue.

In 1947 the drive for change failed narrowly in a congregational vote. Almost half of Brith Sholom’s membership and much of the leadership walked out and formed a new Conservative congregation, Emanu-El. This split left the 100-year-old “Big Shul” greatly weakened. By contrast, Beth Israel—the “Little Shul,” or “Kaluzsyner Shul”—was thriving. It had hired its first full-time rabbi in 1945 and, soon after, moved into its new synagogue, with room to grow.

After years of negotiations made difficult by past disagreements, the two Orthodox congregations agreed in 1954 to merge as Brith Sholom Beth Israel. They decided to use Beth Israel’s sanctuary, and in a public ceremony, members of Brith Sholom carried their Torahs to the new BSBI. In 1955, the congregation hired Rabbi Nachum Rabinovitch. A tireless builder, Rabinovitch established the Charleston Hebrew Institute in 1956, which, in 1976, became Addlestone Hebrew Academy.

William Ackerman, a prominent Pennsylvania-born lawyer, helped lead Charleston into the suburban era, developing the first shopping mall and housing subdivision west of the Ashley River. As Jews moved to South Windermere, their institutions crossed the river with them. In 1959, the Jewish Community Center bought land west of the Ashley and seven years later completed a new facility. Following its membership, Emanu-El moved west to the suburbs in 1979.

Charleston’s changing Jewish geography has raised serious challenges for BSBI, with one faction, including many of the congregation’s old-timers, committed to keeping the synagogue downtown, while two Orthodox minyanim meet across the river. In the meantime, Beth Elohim’s membership has grown significantly, from 285 families in 1992 to 461 in 2008, and Emanu-El has experienced a modest increase.

For an in-depth study of Charleston’s Jewish history, go to Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities at The Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life, www.isjl.org.

Jewish Studies at the College of Charleston: The First Quarter Century

by Martin Perlmutter

Jewish Studies has come a long way in its 25 years. The program has developed a full-fledged Jewish Studies curriculum, with ten courses offered each semester, hired three full-time Jewish Studies faculty, and sponsors the **Arnold Visiting Chair in Jewish Studies** and a line-up of community outreach activities unmatched by any Jewish Studies program its size in the country. A vibrant **Jewish Student Union/Hillel, AEPi, and SDT** serve more than 700 Jewish students, while the **Sylvia Vlosky Yaschik Jewish Studies Center** has become a favorite destination for dinners, study sessions, and camaraderie.

Not everything was the result of careful planning. Happily some things just turn out right. Three major turning points come to mind.

- In 1984, **Henry Yaschik** wanted to make a gift to the **College of Charleston** to honor his father, Nathan, who had left Henry a small bequest many years earlier. **Nathan Yaschik** was an immigrant from Kaluszyn, Poland, and a Yiddishist with secular Jewish values, to the left politically, and connected primarily to Yiddish culture, as was common among many Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe. Henry was determined to establish a Yiddish-language program but was persuaded to go in a different direction. The foundation of a full-fledged Jewish Studies Program was the result.
- In the late 1990s, Jewish Studies needed additional



Jewish Studies Timeline at a Glance

1984: Henry and Sylvia Yaschik make initial pledge to the College of Charleston to develop the Jewish Studies Program.

1986: Stuart Knee (r) becomes Director of Jewish Studies, following Martin Perlmutter (l), and David Cohen, each of whom served one-year interim appointments. An academic minor in Jewish Studies is developed.



1992: Martin Perlmutter succeeds Stuart Knee as the Program Director.

1992: African American – Jewish Connection begins at the College and culminates with Operation Understanding.

1994: Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina is founded under the leadership of Senator Isadore Lourie and with the help of CofC President (and former state senator) Alexander Sanders.



1995: Jewish Heritage Collection is launched at the College of Charleston Library, with Dale Rosengarten as Curator. Jewish Studies Advisory Board is established.



1996: Three-Rabbi Panel initiated as a regular event each semester with Rabbis Edward Friedman (Emanu-El), Anthony Holz (KKBE), and David Radinsky (BSBI) discussing topical Jewish issues.

space, since the entire operation was housed in one faculty office in the Philosophy Department. We learned that Dry Clean USA at 96 Wentworth, formerly **Peroclene Cleaners** owned by **Jerold and Lilah Hirschman**, was becoming available. Grace Episcopal Church had an option to purchase the property, but passed on it because of other priorities. **Alex Sanders**, then College president, made it available to Jewish Studies with the stipulation that we raise the funds privately to buy the property and build the building. **Terry Fisher, Rosenblum-Coe Architects**, and **M. B. Kahn Construction** all worked hard to make it happen. Jerold and Lilah's children, the **Rivkins** and the **Hirschmans**, were delighted to have the family property put to such good use. The **Sylvia Vlosky Yaschik Jewish Studies Center** was ready for occupancy for the 2002–2003 academic year.

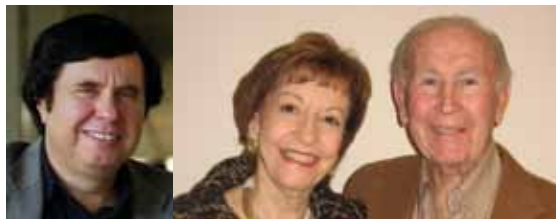
- Jewish Studies created a **Strategic Planning Committee** in 2003 to chart its future. With input from **Jerry Zucker, Mark Tanenbaum**, and **Tom Ervin**, CofC President **Leo Higdon** decided to assign two permanent lines to Jewish Studies. These two positions are now occupied by **Joshua Shanes** and **Adam Mendelsohn**, who have immeasurably broadened and deepened our Jewish Studies curriculum offerings.

The Jewish blessing for milestones is appropriate. We are thankful to have reached this point and we intend to plan carefully and work hard for the next 25 years, in the hope that the constellation—our mazal—continues to shine its bright light upon us all.



1997: JSP's first Elderhostel in South Carolina Jewish history becomes an annual tradition—a week's worth of activities organized each May.

1997: Sunday Morning Brunches begin in the Stern Center Ballroom, dishing up bagels, lox, and talks by eminent speakers on a wide range of subjects.



1998: JSP renamed the Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program, acknowledging a generous gift from Norman and Gerry Sue Arnold. Jerry Zucker's pledge of a matching gift completes the Program's first \$1 million campaign.

1998: The first annual World of Jewish Culture at Piccolo Spoleto, organized with help from the City's Office of Cultural Affairs, celebrates Israel's 50th birthday.



2002: Sylvia Vlosky Yaschik Jewish Studies Center opens at 96 Wentworth Street. Enid Idelsohn is hired as Program Administrator.



2003: Two academic positions are awarded to Jewish Studies. The Program is designated a "Center of Excellence" at the College of Charleston.

2004: Graduating seniors are hired as interns to help with JSU/Hillel. Kimberly Richey, Mary Karesh, Jeffrey Silverberg, and Maxine Bier occupy the post in successive years. Marsha Alterman becomes JSU/Hillel Advisor. Weekly Shabbat dinners introduced at Arnold Hall.



2006: Joshua Shanes hired as first full-time professor of Jewish Studies. The program officially becomes an academic department. First "Chanukah in the Square" at Marion Square.

2008: Adam Mendelsohn hired as second full-time professor of Jewish Studies. Hebrew instruction becomes part of the Jewish Studies Department and third-year Hebrew becomes a regular curriculum offering.



Featured Speakers: JHSSC Annual Meeting, October 23 - 25, 2009

Jeremy Dauber, Atran Associate Professor of Yiddish Language, Literature, and Culture at Columbia University and Director of Columbia's Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies, is the author of *Antonio's Devils: Writers of the Jewish Enlightenment* and *The Birth of Modern Hebrew and Yiddish Literature* and co-editor of *Landmark Yiddish Plays: A Critical Anthology* (with Joel Berkowitz). He is an editor of *Prooftexts: A Journal of Jewish Literary History* and lectures widely on Jewish and popular culture. Dauber studied with Ruth Wisse at Harvard University. He is the grandson of Judith and the late Melvin Solomon.

Adam Mendelsohn received his Ph.D. in American Jewish history from Brandeis University in May 2008 and spent the past academic year as a fellow at the Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. Born and raised in South Africa, Adam originally became interested in American Jewish history at the University of Cape Town. Mendelsohn's research focuses on English-speaking Jewish communities in the United States and the British Empire over the past 200 years. He is a board member of the Southern Jewish Historical Society and edits its newsletter, *The Rambler*.

Martin Perlmutter (B.A. City College of New York, Ph.D. University of Illinois), Professor of Philosophy, came to the College of Charleston in 1979 after appointments at the University of Texas at Austin and the University of Tennessee in Nashville. He chaired the College's Philosophy Department for eight years and, in 1991, became director of the Yaschik/Arnold Program in Jewish Studies. His teaching interests include the philosophy of religion, medical ethics, and Jewish thought.

Theodore Rosengarten received his B.A. from Amherst College and Ph.D. in the History of American Civilization from Harvard University. While his primary field of research and writing is African-American history, he has been a student of the Holocaust for more than 50 years and teaches courses on the subject at the College of Charleston and the Honors College at the University of South Carolina. He also directs workshops for middle and high school teachers and leads semi-annual study-abroad trips to Poland and Germany.

Joshua Shanes received his B.A. from the University of Illinois in 1993, his Ph.D. in History from the University of Wisconsin in 2002, and spent time in between studying in Israel. Professor Shanes's research interests focus on Central and East European Jewry in the 19th and 20th centuries, specifically turn-of-the-century Galicia and the rise of Zionism as a counter-movement to the traditional Jewish establishment.

Howard Steinmetz of Boulder, Colorado, asks...

Who Is This Bride-To-Be?

Can you identify the woman, second from the left, who is wearing the traditional engagement belt? She is believed to have emigrated in the World War I era from Poland to Charleston to marry a furniture merchant. The photo was taken in Poughkeepsie, NY, ca. 1920, on the occasion of a visit with relatives from the Old Country, before catching the train to Charleston. Howard is able to identify his mother, Eva Labensky (right), her siblings Mary (left) and Benjamin (center), and his grandmother, Rivka née Zutz (Sachs) Labensky (behind Benjamin). The future bride may have been related to Rivka's maternal family, the Belitzkys. When Eva married in 1931, two Charleston names appeared on her invitation list: W. Feldman and a member of the Gelson family.



JHSSC Celebrates the Jewish Studies

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23

- 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM **Registration**
Sylvia Vlosky Yaschik Jewish Studies Center
96 Wentworth Street
- 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM **Hospitality in Arnold Hall, Jewish Studies Center**
- 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM **Walking Tour of Charleston Jewish Sites**
(space limited, pre-registration required)
Leaves from Jewish Studies Center
- 1:00 PM – 1:45 PM **Class Sampler—Zionism: Ancient Dream or Modern Revolution**
Joshua Shanes, College of Charleston
Arnold Hall
- 2:00 PM – 2:45 PM **Class Sampler—Teaching the Holocaust**
Theodore Rosengarten, College of Charleston
Arnold Hall
- 3:00 PM – 3:45 PM **Class Sampler—Ecclesiastes: A Biblical Skeptic**
Martin Perlmutter, College of Charleston
Arnold Hall
- 5:30 PM – 6:00 PM **Shabbat Services**
Host: JSU/Hillel
Stern Center, Room 409
- 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM **Shabbat Dinner**
Host: JSU/Hillel
Stern Center Ballroom
- 8:00 PM – 9:30 PM **The Have Nots (Improvisation Group)**
Stern Center Ballroom
- 10:00 PM – Last Call **Jewish Studies Alumni Reunion Bar Crawl**
An Informal Gathering for JSU/Hillel Alumni

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24

- 8:00 AM – 10:00 AM **"Walk the Bridge"**
Hosted by: JSU/Hillel Parent Network
Cooper River Bridge
- 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM **Hospitality in Arnold Hall**
- 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM **AEPi Cookout (Members and Alumni)**
Host: Alpha Epsilon Pi, Chi Omicron chapter
103 Wentworth Street
- 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM **SDT Cookout (Members and Alumnae)**
Host: Sigma Delta Tau, Delta Eta chapter
15 St. Philip Street

Jewish Studies Program's 25th Anniversary



SPECIAL SATURDAY EVENTS HOSTED BY THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| 9:00 AM – 11:45 PM | Special Collections Open House
Addlestone Library, Third Floor |
| 12:00 PM – 1:15 PM | Lunch
Stern Center Ballroom |
| 1:30 PM – 2:30 PM | <i>Shmatas in the South: Jews and the International
Old Clothes Trade Before the Civil War</i>
Adam Mendelsohn, College of Charleston
Stern Center Ballroom |
| 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM | Parent Network Meeting
Host: JSU/Hillel Parent Network
Conference Room 323, Jewish Studies Center |
| 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM | Alumni Career Services Panel for CofC Seniors
Levin Library, Room 209, Jewish Studies Center |
| 3:00 PM – 4:45 PM | Film: <i>Walk on Water</i>
Israel, 2004, 103 minutes
Arnold Hall |
| 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM | Reception with President and Mrs. George Benson
President's House, 6 Glebe Street |

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| 8:30 AM – 9:30 AM | JHSSC Annual Meeting and Open Board Meeting
Levin Library |
| 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM | The Milton and Freddie Kronsberg Memorial Lecture:
<i>Woody Allen and American Jewish Comedy</i>
by Jeremy Dauber, Columbia University
Introductions by Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr. and
The Honorable Alexander M. Sanders, Jr.
Stern Center Ballroom (Brunch will be served) |
| 1:00 PM – 2:15 PM | Jewish Studies Program Advisory Board Meeting
Levin Library |

REGISTRATION FORM

REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS October 1, 2009.

Last Name _____ First _____

Spouse/Friend _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone () _____ E-mail _____

Name(s) on name tags _____

I wish to make reservations for the following additional people: _____

Fees are per person; advance reservations are required.

Registration fee @ \$75 per person \$ _____

Optional Walking Tour of Charleston Jewish Sites, Friday afternoon,
October 23rd from 1:00-4:00pm @ \$10 per person \$ _____

LATE REGISTRATION FEE. Add \$10 after 10/1/09. \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Go to www.cofc.edu/jsp25 for more information and to register online.**MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO:**Jewish Studies Program
College of Charleston
96 Wentworth Street
Charleston, SC 29424**QUESTIONS:**Enid Idelsohn
843-953-3918
IdelsohnE@cofc.edu
www.cofc.edu/~jwst**PLEASE MAKE YOUR OWN HOTEL RESERVATIONS BY OCTOBER 1, 2009.****MENTION "JEWISH STUDIES" TO RECEIVE THESE SPECIAL RATES.**

<u>HOTEL</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>PHONE</u>	<u>WEBSITE</u>	<u>PRICE/NIGHT</u>
Best Western	250 Spring Street	843.722.4000 888.377.2121	charlestonbestwestern.com	\$79.99
Springhill Suites by Marriott	98 Ripley Point Drive	843.571.1711 888.236.2427	marriott.com	\$125.00
Residence Inn by Marriott	90 Ripley Point Drive	843.571.7979 888.236.2427	marriott.com	\$135.00
Days Inn	155 Meeting Street	843.722.8411 800.329.7466	daysinn.com	\$199.00
Francis Marion Hotel	387 King Street	843.722.0600	francismarioncharleston.com	\$199.00
King Charles Inn	237 Meeting Street	843.723.7451 866.546.4700	kingcharlesinn.com	\$219.00
Mills House Hotel	115 Meeting Street	843.577.2400 800.874.9600	millshouse.com	\$249.00

Kits Will Put “South Carolina Face” on Holocaust Lessons

by Karen Tannenbaum

Even for an experienced teacher like Kris Cox, it was an exciting day this past February when she received a CD containing interview transcripts, memoirs, notes, and photos—lots of photos—related to South Carolina residents who had firsthand experience with the terrors of the Holocaust. These primary source materials were something new to the veteran classroom instructor.

“I have tons of materials [about the Holocaust],” the Blue Ridge High School teacher says, “but this gave me an opportunity to teach this period of history in a new way.” Cox has been teaching about the Holocaust for ten years and has attended workshops at South Carolina universities and training centers at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC, and the Jewish Foundation for the Righteous in New York.

Along with 11 other Greenville County middle and high school social studies teachers, Cox volunteered to create pilot lessons for a Holocaust Classroom Kit using primary materials drawn from the Holocaust Archives at the College of Charleston.



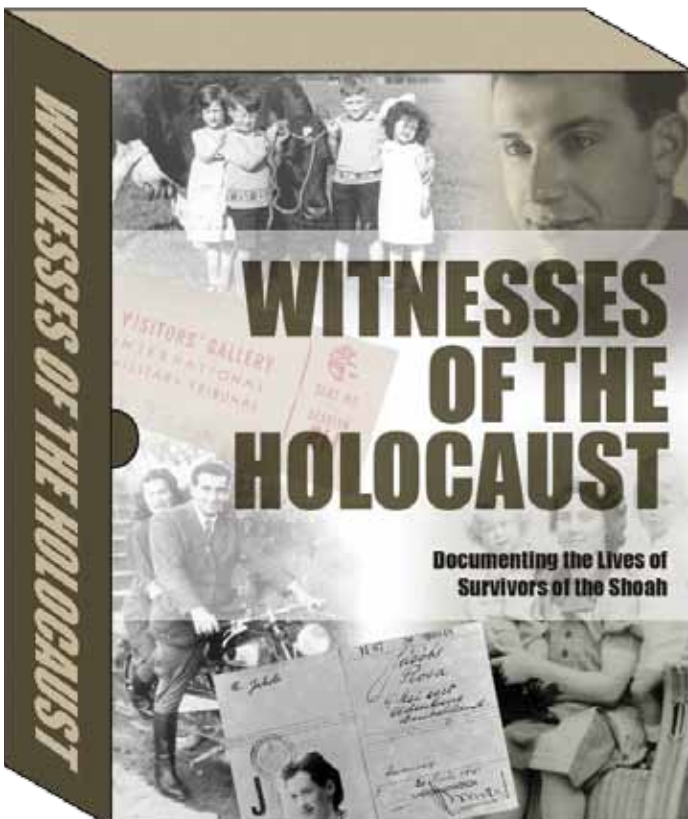
Paula Popowski's extended family outside the Roza family's flour mill in Kaluszyn, Poland, on the occasion of a visit from her aunt, Miriam Roza, and her husband, Chaim Lazar Kaluszyner in 1939. The couple, living in Palestine since 1936, survived the Holocaust. Paula is third from the left in the front row of seated adults. Miriam is to her right and sister Hannah, to her left. Paula and Hannah survived the war. The rest of the Roza family perished.

The kit, to be produced this coming year, will contain a teacher's guide, histories of seven survivors, refugees, or liberators, and facsimile photos, letters, and documents. All items selected and organized for the kit were collected from South Carolinians over the past eight years in a project jointly sponsored by the College and the South Carolina Council on the Holocaust.

Histories that Capture the Imagination

On the pilot CD, the teachers found an interview with Paula Kornblum Popowski, a longtime Charleston resident who, along with her teenage sister, “passed” as Catholic while being sheltered in a Polish village for two years. They also saw tattered, yellowed pages documenting the saga of Max Freilich, a Greenville resident who left Germany on one of the last Kindertransport trains in 1939 only to end up nine months later incarcerated by the British as a 16-year-old German enemy alien. While Popowski and Freilich survived, their parents and other family members did not.

The diary of Edith Jakobs, written while she was in hiding with her family in an attic in Holland, invites comparisons with Anne Frank's famous journal. The Jakobs diary was brought to the archives by a Pickens County veteran who had befriended the family at the end of the war and kept in touch with them over the years. Students involved in the pilot





שרה סמואל, כ"ב בשבט תשד"ט - 22 FEBRUAR 1984

Title page from the Jakobs family diary, 1984. Survivors of this Dutch family fled to Palestine. The saying is from Psalm 137: If I forget thee O' Jerusalem let my right hand forget [its cunning].

project also were encouraged to read aloud spine-tingling transcripts of interviews with Charleston resident Francine Taylor who fled Paris in 1942—alone, and only 14 years old—by train and bicycle, to find her family in the South of France. She evaded capture by the Nazis through courage, quick wits, and plucky intelligence. No teenager could read her story without wondering, “Could I have done that?”

A Teaching Tool to Fulfill a Mission

Primary sources like these make the learning process more immediate and personal. They “allow the students to draw some of their own conclusions about historical people and events, to be the historian, so to speak,” says Martha Bohnenberger, who teaches seventh- and eighth-graders at the Charles Townes Gifted Center

in Greenville and serves on the Teacher Advisory Committee of the SC Council on the Holocaust.

Following classroom trials this spring, teachers reconvened to share experiences and refine their ideas. A distribution system will be worked out so that every South Carolina school district, and eventually every middle and high school, will receive a copy of the kit.

“Since the start of the Holocaust Archives Project, it has been our goal not only to preserve these materials but also to make them available to students, teachers, and scholars,” Dale Rosengarten, curator of the Jewish Heritage Collection, asserts. “Ultimately, we will provide digital access, via the Internet, to all the collections we have gathered. For the moment, outreach to classrooms is a practical way to put the materials in the hands of a vital audience—school kids.”

Bonny Duncan, an instructor at Berea High School who has been teaching a nine-week elective course on the Holocaust for two years, says the South Carolina survivor materials she tested with students this spring helped them understand the variety of ways people responded to German terror in Nazi-occupied Europe. “They were all familiar with the image of Jews and other targeted groups as victims. But they had not heard the stories of people who were not in the camps, who survived other kinds of hardship,” she reports. “These wonderful primary sources really increased their interest.”

Kris Cox adds, “Authentic South Carolina materials put a face on the Holocaust. They helped the students think of the people affected as individuals and not just in terms of the large numbers of those who suffered. They will make this subject more realistic, presenting it on a human level that students can appreciate.”

Photos for this article courtesy of Special Collections, College of Charleston.



Francine Taylor's false identification card. Blond and blue-eyed, she passed as a Christian girl.



Max Freilich used these passes to gain entrance to the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials in 1945.

The Rise and Fall of Dillon's Ohav Shalom

by Alyssa Neely

Austrian immigrants Max and Morris Fass appear to have been the catalysts for establishing Dillon's first Jewish religious organization. By 1915, the Dillon Hebrew Congregation had formed and was meeting at one Fass home or the other. Charter members included Adolph and Hyman Witcover, William Brick, and Sam Levin, with Morris Fass as lay leader. Beginning in 1922, Rabbi Jacob S. Raisin of Charleston's Reform temple Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim traveled to Dillon one Sunday a month to conduct services. About the same time, Fannie Brick organized a Sunday school under Rabbi Raisin's supervision.

In 1928, the congregation and its Sunday school changed its name to the Teresa Witcover Fass Congregation in honor of Max Fass's wife who died in 1927 at the age of 48. Teresa's hallmark, noted by many Dillon area residents, was her generous and good-hearted nature. Two months after her death, 21 female members of the congregation, inspired perhaps by the Jewish tradition of carrying on the work of the deceased, founded the Teresa Witcover Fass Sisterhood. Sisterhood members became the backbone of the religious school, hosting holiday celebrations, participating in charitable work, and raising money to build a synagogue.



Sam Schafer of Little Rock, S.C., became the first president of the rejuvenated Ohav Shalom, ca. 1940. Photo courtesy of Harold Kornblut.

In 1937, 84 Jews lived in Dillon while another 75 lived in the nearby town of Latta. Dillon's small congregation struggled during the Great Depression, especially after the deaths of both Fass brothers in 1935. In 1939, the congregation hired Rabbi Samuel R. Shillman of Sumter's Temple Sinai to lead services. Under Shillman's leadership, the congregation was reorganized and officially incorporated under the name Ohav Shalom, or Lover of Peace. With a membership of about 20 families, the rejuvenated Reform organization built a house of worship in 1942 and added a community center in 1956.

In the 1950s, the Dillon Temple Sisterhood joined the Conservative National Women's League—the only South Carolina sisterhood to do so. This association reflected a shift toward Conservative Judaism, a trend noted as early as 1939



Ohav Shalom, Dillon, S.C., 1995. Photo by Dale Rosengarten.

by member Moses Kornblut. The congregation's willingness to hire rabbis of varying backgrounds suggests that the lines between Reform and Conservative remained blurred, a common survival strategy among small-town synagogues.

In 1964, Ohav Shalom celebrated its 25th anniversary. Served on a part-time basis by Rabbi Charles B. Lesser, who led Florence's Beth Israel between 1961 and 1970, the congregation of 25 families had added a third building, used for educational purposes. Slightly fewer than half the membership lived in Dillon, while the rest made their homes in Latta, Marion, Clio, Hamer, McColl, Mullins, Florence, and across the state line in Fairmount, North Carolina.

The Dillon synagogue maintained its numbers through the 1970s and into the 1980s. By the early 1990s, however, only a handful of Jewish families remained in Dillon. The fate of Ohav Shalom was typical of small-town Jewish life across America, as out-migration, intermarriage, and the deaths of the elderly all took their toll. In 1993, the seven remaining members agreed to close and sell the synagogue. Proceeds from the sale, plus funds remaining in the sisterhood and congregation accounts, were split seven ways, with the stipulation that the recipients would donate the money to the Jewish charity of their choice. The majority gave their portion to Florence's Temple Beth Israel and most became members of the congregation as well.

This article is a sequel to Pee Dee Pioneers, which appeared in our Spring 2009 issue. Both stories are based on community histories written by Alyssa Neely for the Institute of Southern Jewish Life's Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities, accessible at www.isjl.org.

All in the Family

by Judith Alexander Weil Shanks

“Cuz” is a handy word for distant kin. I recall my father, Roman Weil, of Montgomery, Alabama, addressing his long-time friend and neighbor Jo Baum this way, even though they were not related. I hadn’t thought about that for years, but now that I am immersed in family history and have newly discovered cousins, I use the term a lot.

Some years ago, while working with the College of Charleston’s Jewish Heritage Collection on research for the exhibition, “A Portion of the People,” I encountered several people who are descended from some of my early American ancestors, including Hannah Mears Isaacks and her husband Abraham Isaacks of Emden. Three of us—John L. Loeb, Jr., Larry Freudenberg, and I—have been pursuing family history with what seems a lifelong passion. Coincidentally, the efforts of each of us have borne fruit this year.



Adeline Moses Loeb. Portrait by G. L. Brockhurst, ca. 1925.

John L. Loeb, Jr., once a partner at the New York investment firm Loeb Rhoades and former U.S. ambassador to Denmark, has sponsored a beautifully produced, book-length biography of his grandmother—*An American Experience: Adeline Moses Loeb (1876–1953) and Her Early American Jewish Ancestors*. Featuring an introduction by Eli N. Evans, a narrative account of Adeline and Carl Loeb’s “Cinderella story,” and two first-person memoirs, the volume concludes with an extensive investigation by genealogist

Judith Endelman into Adeline’s lineage. Ambassador Loeb has also created a tangible monument to our forebears by underwriting construction of a Visitors Center at Touro Synagogue, where Jacob Phillips, Loeb’s ancestor, was a founding member. (See www.loeb-tourovisitorscenter.org for more information.)

Drawing on 20 years of research, Larry Freudenberg has painstakingly documented his family history in three volumes, collectively entitled *Ordinary Jews in an Extraordinary Land*. Volume I contains genealogies, Volume II is an annotated scrapbook and photo album, and Volume III, *The Memoir*, is



Boating on “the pond” (Colonial Lake). Maier Triest is in the second row, second from the left, ca. 1918. Photo courtesy of Larry Freudenberg.

a first-person account of Larry’s exploration of 11 generations of family history. While the work suffers from a disregard of some publishing conventions—for example, listing bibliographic entries alphabetically by the author’s first name—and also quotes extensively from inadequately credited sources, the compendium of information and Larry’s unabashed “native” point of view provide a mother lode of material for future research.

My interest in family history revolves around heirlooms handed down, evidence of the material culture of past generations. I have focused primarily on three southern Jewish women—Rebecca Moses (1792–1872), Charlotte Joseph (1803–1883), and Eleanor Solomons (1794–1856)—and the things they left behind. *Old Family Things: An Affectionate Look Back*, my recently launched website, devotes a chapter to each of these women, and one to the album quilt that linked them with 60 other members of their circle—friends and family whose bonds were stitched in fabric and thread. For a closer look, go to www.serve.com:80/~rim/Judith_Old_Family_Things.



Album quilt made, ca. 1851–1854, for Eleanor Israel Solomons, née Joseph. Collection of Judith W. Shanks

May their Memories Be a Blessing

Carolee Rosen Fox (January 19, 1930–July 11, 2009)

Harold Jacobs (December 7, 1913–July 14, 2009)



Carolee performing Phoebe Pember during a JHSSC dinner program, April 13, 2000. Photo by D. Rosengarten. Special Collections, College of Charleston.

energy and flair. A member of both Beth Elohim and Brith Sholom Beth Israel, she was a long-term docent at KKBE and led tours for Historic Charleston Foundation as well. Known for her quick wit and infectious sense of humor, she went out of her way to make her presentations memorable.

A popular teacher at the temple's religious school, Carolee served on the KKBE board and as president of the sisterhood, and was active with (and honored by) the Charleston Chapters of Hadassah, ORT, and the National Council of Jewish Women. She was a pillar of the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina and was among the first volunteers who helped to build the College of Charleston Library's Jewish Heritage Collection.

Married in 1965 to Harold I. Fox, Carolee worked for 17 years at Keys to Music, Harold's piano and organ dealership. She had a passion for theater and opera and enjoyed acting with the Footlight Players, the Dock Street Theater, and the Jewish Community Center.

Carolee's enthusiasm for story-telling and appreciation of history is evident in a 1997 oral history interview. In her silken-toned voice, she jumped with both feet into tales of her family and the Charleston of her grandmother's and mother's day. She spoke rapidly, but clearly, providing stories vivid with details. There was an urgency to her pace, as if she felt compelled to convey all that was most important. "Now, I've got more to tell you!" she declared early in the interview. We never got enough.

Carolee will be sorely missed by all those who knew and loved her, and also by scores of people who met her only once.

The first baby boy born in the new Baker Sanatorium on Ashley Avenue, Harold Jacobs's Charleston roots ran deep. Son of Sam Jacobs and Mignonette Cohen and grandson of Isaac and Jeanette Jacobs on his father's side, Harold's Jacobs/Karesh/Pearlstine ancestors first arrived in Charleston in the 1850s and helped found Berith Shalome. After the Civil War, the Pearlstines became major wholesalers in South Carolina, while the Karesh/Jacobs clan went into dry goods, especially hosiery and shoes.

After military service in North Africa and Italy during World War II, Harold married Lillian Breen of Anderson, South Carolina, and they worked together in the family's grocery store, Harold's Cabin, located at Congress and President Streets. Under Harold and Lillian's stewardship, the business grew into a premiere purveyor of gourmet foods and delicatessen items. In new quarters on Wentworth Street between King and St. Philip, the store featured a luncheon balcony on the mezzanine floor, mail order and catering departments, and a large delicatessen offering specialty foods, including more than 200 cheeses and Charleston's first frozen kosher chickens.

The innumerable roles Harold played in Charleston's Jewish community are legendary. He was the youngest president of B'nai Brith's Dan Lodge, the first vice-president of the South Carolina Association of B'nai Brith Lodges, second vice-commander of the Samuel Turteltaub Post of the Jewish War Veterans, and recipient of the first Lifetime Achievement Honor awarded by the Greater Charleston Christian Jewish Council, on whose board he served for 12 years.

Harold became a Bar Mitzvah at Brith Sholom in 1926. Later, he joined Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim, serving as co-editor of the first Temple Bulletin and chairing several committees. In 1979 he was elected president of KKBE, and in 1996 was named its first, and so far, only president emeritus. Always positive, always engaged, Harold was a one-man welcome bureau for the temple, greeting every visitor with grace, gentility, and genuine interest, making friends wherever he went.



Harold standing in front of his new store at 84 Wentworth Street, 1954. Gift of Harold Jacobs, Special Collections, College of Charleston.

Center Talk *by Adam Mendelsohn*

Until a few months ago, the Center for Southern Jewish Culture was little more than a distant dream. But when the energetic duo of Marty Perlmutter and Dale Rosengarten are involved, dreams have a way of becoming reality.

Based in the Yaschik/Arnold Program in Jewish Studies at the College of Charleston, the new Center will focus on teaching, researching, documenting, and popularizing the historical experience of Jewish people in the American South. It will be the first of its kind at any American college or university.

This ambitious vision has attracted the attention of the scholarly community. The Center has already appointed a star-studded academic council to advise us as the program develops, review our activities, and visit us in Charleston as often as possible. This minyan of movers and shakers in the fields of southern and American Jewish history includes:

Marcie Cohen Ferris, Assistant Professor of American Studies at the University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill, author of the award-winning *Matzoh Ball Gumbo: Culinary Tales of the Jewish South* (2005) and co-editor of *Jewish Roots in Southern Soil: A New History* (2006). She is currently at work on a social history of food in the American South.

Eric L. Goldstein, Associate Professor of History and Jewish Studies at Emory University and author of *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race and American Identity* (2006). He is the current editor of the journal *American Jewish History*.

Jeffrey S. Gurock, Libby M. Klaperman Professor of Jewish History at Yeshiva University, and author or editor of 14 books, including *Orthodox Jews in America* (2009), *Judaism's Encounter with American Sports* (2005), and *Orthodoxy in Charleston: Brith Sholom Beth Israel and American Jewish History* (2004). Gurock chairs the Academic Council of the American Jewish Historical Society.

Jenna Weissman Joselit, Charles E. Smith Professor of Judaic Studies at The George Washington University. She has published eight books, including *The Wonders of America: Reinventing Jewish Culture, 1880–1950*, winner of the National Jewish Book Award in History in 1995. A frequent contributor to *The New Republic*, *TNR Online*, and *Gastronomica*, Joselit also writes a monthly column on material culture and American Jewish life for *The Forward*.

Phyllis Leffler, Professor of Public History at the University of Virginia and co-curator of two exhibitions on southern Jewish life: "To Seek the Peace of the City: Jewish Life in Charlottesville" (1994) and "Jewish Life at Mr. Jefferson's University" (1993). She serves on the board of the Southern Jewish Historical Society, where she currently holds the position of secretary. Her publications focus on public history, museum studies, and institutional history.

Deborah Dash Moore, Frederick G. L. Huetwell Professor of History and Director of the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan. Her publications include *American Jewish Identity Politics* (2008), *GI Jews: How World War II Changed a Generation* (2004), *Cityscapes: A History of New York in Images* (2001), and *To the Golden Cities: Pursuing the American Jewish Dream in Miami and L.A.* (1994).

Stuart Rockoff, Director of the History Department at the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life in Jackson, Mississippi. President-elect of the Southern Jewish Historical Society, he is currently working on a general history of Jewish life in the South.

Leonard Rogoff, Historian of the Jewish Heritage Foundation of North Carolina and author of *Homelands: Southern Jewish Identity in Durham and Chapel Hill, North Carolina* and the forthcoming *Down Home: Jewish Life in North Carolina*. A frequent contributor to journals and anthologies, he edited *The Rambler*, the newsletter of the Southern Jewish Historical Society, and currently serves as the Society's president.

Jonathan D. Sarna, the Joseph H. & Belle R. Braun Professor of American Jewish History at Brandeis University and Chief Historian of the National Museum of American Jewish History. He has written or edited more than 25 books, including *American Judaism: A History* (2004), winner of the Jewish Book of the Year award from the Jewish Book Council.

Gary P. Zola, Executive Director of The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives and Associate Professor of the American Jewish Experience at Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati. His publications include *American Jewish History: A Primary Source Reader* (forthcoming), *A Place of Our Own: The Beginnings of Reform Jewish Camping in America* (2006), and *Isaac Harby of Charleston: Jewish Reformer and Intellectual* (1994).

The Center's founders have set serious academic goals, such as expanding the College's course offerings on southern Jewish history, organizing lectures and conferences, adding an archivist to work on the already impressive collections housed in Addlestone Library, and creating an internship program to recruit out-of-town talent. Yet we see our mission more broadly. We plan to make the Center and its resources welcoming to everyone interested in southern—and particularly South Carolina—Jewish history, and to engage the general public through workshops, lectures, historical tours, and cultural events. Our dream will be realized only with the support and partnership of the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina. As the Center grows, we look forward to working with the JHSSC to bring our shared passion for Jewish history to a wide audience.

Become a Pillar: Help Our Past Inform Our Future

by Martin Perlmutter

The Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina is now in its 15th year and, I'm happy to say, we are thriving. With a membership topping 400, the Society hosts annual and regional meetings, publishes a bi-annual newsletter which is mailed to 9,000 households, sponsors **Elderhostels** on South Carolina Jewish history every spring, and supports a world-class archive—the **Jewish Heritage Collection** at the College of Charleston's Addlestone Library. The Society also has launched several special projects. We are producing a survey, in print and online, of all Jewish burials in South Carolina. We have sponsored official markers of historic Jewish sites in Columbia and Sumter, with more to come. We have developed a dynamic website, designed and maintained by Ann Hellman, our incoming president. At www.jhssc.org you can find announcements of upcoming activities, photographs of past events, copies of all our newsletters, records and images from our cemetery surveys, selected archival documents, and links to other Jewish institutions around the state and region.

The Society is not slowing down. To the contrary, we are now undertaking our most ambitious project ever. The Society's next major goal, in partnership with the **Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program** and the **Jewish Heritage Collection**, is to establish a **Center for Southern Jewish Culture** at the College of Charleston. The Center will help ensure the JHSSC's long-term excellence by expanding on-campus leadership and broadening our academic offerings.

Specifically, we aim to further develop the library's Jewish collections and make these research materials available to a growing audience; to hire a new faculty member specializing in southern Jewish history; and to create an internship program that will bring graduate students and young scholars to Charleston to pursue their research. The Center will guarantee that future generations have the opportunity to study southern Jewish history, work with first-rate collections, and learn from top scholars in the field. The Center will crown the extraordinarily productive partnership JHSSC has forged, from its inception, with the College of Charleston. There are naming opportunities associated with this initiative and we solicit community involvement and support.

Major gifts will help us reach our goals, but it is membership dues and the generosity of our **Pillars** that keep our operations running. Become a Pillar by pledging to contribute \$1,000 a year for five years. Help make South Carolina's Jewish history a living legacy.

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See pages 9 - 12 for more information.**

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