

Register for the
Spring Meeting at Hobcaw Barony
Pages 10 and 11

THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY of SOUTH CAROLINA

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Ed Poliakoff, President

On the cover:

Baruch family, ca. 1897.

Left to right: Isabelle Wolfe, Simon, Sailing, Hartwig, Annie Griffen, Herman, and Bernard Baruch.

Photo courtesy of Belle W. Baruch Foundation



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

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Martin Perlmutter, JHSSC Executive Director

From the President of the JHSSC

I would like to report on several JHSSC activities that demonstrate the vibrancy of our Society. As South Carolina's largest statewide Jewish organization, we offer members any level of involvement they choose. *Old and new members alike are cordially invited to renew or join now at www.jhssc.org.* I extend thanks to Executive Director Martin Perlmutter, Administrator Enid Idelsohn, and to our executive committee members and committee chairs whose work contributes so much to our success.

The Society's 2009 spring meeting will be held on Sunday, May 3rd at Hobcaw Barony, a 17,500-acre estate near Georgetown acquired in the early 1900s by Camden native Bernard Mannes Baruch (1870–1965), renowned financier, statesman, and presidential advisor. Read about the Barony and check the weekend meeting schedule elsewhere in these pages, and register now. Thanks to Rachel Barnett, chair of our Program and Conferences Committee, to Dr. Albert Baruch Mercer, who made Hobcaw available to us, and to everyone working with them on this upcoming event.

Jewish Genealogy: Explore Your Family Tree, our October 2008 annual meeting, featured two nationally recognized experts on Jewish genealogy, used College of Charleston computer lab facilities for Internet research, and included a lavish reception at the College's Jewish Heritage Collection. Ann Hellman, vice president and chair of our Education and Publications Committee, with assistance from an excellent team, organized an exceptionally productive and entertaining meeting. Ann's committee also manages the JHSSC website, offering at the click of a mouse valuable information about Society events and other South Carolina Jewish institutions, as well as back issues of our superb newsletter.

Society Vice President Joe Wachter, chair of our Archives and Historical Sites Committee, solicits member involvement in two projects. The first is an ongoing effort to document Jewish cemeteries across the state; the second seeks to sponsor or co-sponsor state historical markers at sites of Jewish historical interest. So far we have designed a marker for Sumter's Temple Sinai and dedicated a marker at the site of Columbia's first synagogue, the latter co-sponsored by Beth Shalom and Tree of Life congregations.

JHSSC Pillar Members, who commit to dues of \$1,000 per year for five years, supply the funding that makes our programs and projects possible. We encourage each of you to consider Pillar membership, and to renew when the five-year commitment is fulfilled. We are grateful for the support provided by these bulwarks of the Society. Please contact me or Vice President Hy Brand about Pillar membership.

The Society's close association with the College of Charleston's **Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program** and the Addlestone Library's **Jewish Heritage Collection** provides access to professional and academic resources at the highest level. Anyone interested in philanthropic naming opportunities at the proposed College of Charleston Center for Southern Jewish Culture should contact Executive Director Martin Perlmutter.

In closing, I invite our members to become involved in JHSSC activities, visit our informative website, and attend our spring meeting at Hobcaw Barony, May 3, 2009.

With warmest regards,



Ed Poliakoff
ed.poliakoff@nelsonmullins.com

Pee Dee Pioneers

by Alyssa Neely

In 1888 the town of Dillon began sprouting up around a railroad depot built amid pine trees on swampy land of little value, not far from the North Carolina border. A number of Jewish immigrants and their families settled in Dillon and neighboring towns such as Little Rock and Latta. Many played important roles in the local community and one achieved success at the national level as an economist. Although Ben Bernanke, current chairman of the Federal Reserve, was born in Augusta, Georgia, he was raised in Dillon. His grandparents Jonas and Pauline Bernanke immigrated to the United States from Austria in the 1920s, moved to Dillon in the early 1940s, and opened a pharmacy, the Jay Bee Drug Company. In 2006, Dillon County and the South Carolina legislature honored Ben by declaring September 1st Ben Bernanke Day and presenting him with the Order of the Palmetto, the state's highest civilian award, in recognition of his accomplishments. Ben has come a long way from waiting tables at South of the Border as a college student during his summer vacations.

South of the Border was founded by Little Rock native Alan Schafer in the mid-to-late 1940s, when a North Carolina county bordering South Carolina changed its alcohol licensing laws, limiting sales. Alan seized the opportunity by setting up a beer stand not far from the state line. The acreage he bought



Lizzie Schafer and Leon Kornblut took over the Latta Dry Goods Company, "leaders in ladies' and gents'" furnishings, soon after their marriage in 1906. Kornblut family papers, Special Collections, College of Charleston.

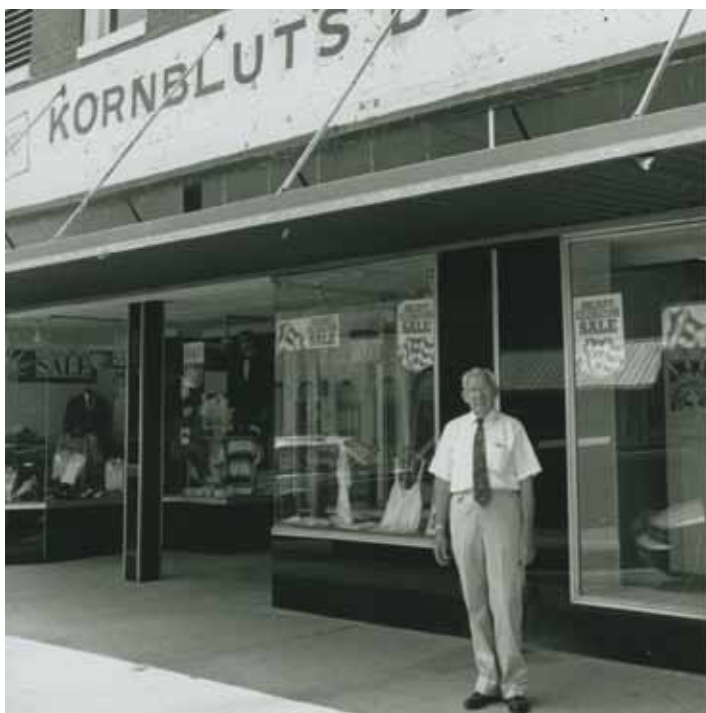
was near the north-south highway connecting New York and Miami, later supplanted by Interstate 95. In this ideal location, Alan's beer business expanded exponentially over the years to become South of the Border, employing hundreds of South Carolinians to run the Mexican-themed amusement park rides, hotels, restaurants, and gift shops. Like many Jews who grew up in small southern towns, Alan was a descendant of a merchant of modest means.

In the late 19th century, Jewish immigrants began to arrive in the Pee Dee region, opening stores in Dillon and nearby towns. Abraham Schafer, Alan's grandfather, may have been the earliest Jew to settle in the area. Born in Oberheim, Germany, Schafer came to Darlington in the 1870s by way of New York and Charleston and worked for the Iseman family, who had sponsored his immigration. He married Isaac Iseman's daughter Rebecca, and they settled in Little Rock where they opened a general store. The family of six lived above the shop. Successful in the dry goods business, Abraham and Rebecca expanded their operation, opening stores in Dillon and Latta. When two of their daughters married, they turned the newest stores over to the newlyweds. Belle Schafer and Isadore Blum ran the Dillon location while Lizzie Schafer and her husband Leon Kornblut took over the Latta Dry Goods Company soon after their marriage in 1906.

A decade earlier, 17-year-old Leon Kornblut had emigrated from Austria and followed his brother to Latta. He partnered with his brother-in-law Isadore Blum during the 1920s. At one time, Blum and Kornblut owned as many as eight stores



South of the Border in Dillon, founded by Alan Schafer of Little Rock, SC, in the 1940s. Photo by Bill Aron, 2000.



Moses Kornblut in front of the department store in Latta established by his father Leon in the 1920s. Photo by Dale Rosengarten, 1995.

scattered throughout the area, staffed by Jews they hired out of Baltimore. Bankruptcy forced them to close their doors in 1928, however, and the two went their separate ways. Blum opened a store just across the state line in Rowland, North Carolina. Kornblut became a well-established businessman who was actively involved in Dillon County's civic affairs, serving as a director of the Dillon Merchants Association and the Dillon Industrial Corporation. He opened Kornblut's Department Store with "fashions for the entire family" in two locations, Dillon and Latta. His sons, Moses and Sigmond, followed him into the family business and ran both stores when he retired.

Austrian immigrant Morris Fass and his wife, Rosa Nachman of Charleston, moved to Dillon around 1910 and began a small business that over the years grew into the large Fass Department Store. The couple also acquired a significant amount of real estate, including farmland which they rented to tenants. Morris played key roles in the Dillon Chamber of Commerce and Board of Trade. He was an alderman, a Mason, and a charter member of the Dillon Rotary Club. Morris's brother Max also settled in Dillon and opened a store. A Mason and a Shriner, Max made his living in the insurance and real estate business.

Isadore Cohen left Lithuania in 1910 to avoid conscription into the Russian army. His brother Harry, who had ventured south peddling, urged Isadore to make his way to South Carolina, insisting he could make a decent living. The five dollars he sent took Isadore as far as Dillon, where he peddled before taking a job with one of the Blums in Latta. At some

point, he opened his own small store with credit extended by the Baltimore Bargain House. Cohen's clothing store, which catered to local tenant farmers, thrived and the business grew. Discharged from the military at the end of World War II, his son Leonard joined him and kept the store running until 1987, when I. Cohen's closed its doors for the last time. Leonard's children, who had professional careers that took them away from home, were not poised to take over the family business, and competition from the large chain stores had become fierce.



Interior of the I. Cohen store in Latta, ca. 1930. Isadore's son Leonard is sitting on the counter. Courtesy of Leonard and Mildred Cohen.

By the 1990s, Dillon and Latta's Jewish population had dwindled to a fraction of what it once was, yet Jews have made a lasting mark on the region. Moses Kornblut served as a Latta City Council member for nearly 50 years. In 1993, the Latta Rotary Club honored him by naming him Citizen of the Year. Kornblut was also active as president, treasurer, and secretary of Ohav Shalom in Dillon. A devoted member of the congregation, he filled other roles as well, including lay reader and organizer of High Holy Day services. He was also a founding member and president of the Dillon B'nai B'rith Lodge. Moses Kornblut passed away on January 10, 2009. Up to the end, he continued to sit on City Council, serve as Latta's Mayor Pro Tem, and operate Kornblut's Department Store, the last Jewish-owned shop in the area.

ISJL Digital Archive

Drawn from material in the College of Charleston's Jewish Heritage Collection, illustrated histories of several South Carolina Jewish communities have recently been added to the Digital Archive of the Institute of Southern Jewish Life, based in Jackson, Mississippi. Go to www.isjl.org/history/archive and click on SC. Please send comments and corrections to neelya@cofc.edu. We are especially interested in finding photographs of Jewish-owned stores, family events, congregational activities, and streetscapes in these South Carolina communities.

Ties that Bind: The Baruchs of South Carolina

by Lee Gordon Brockington

In writing his autobiography in 1957, Bernard Mannes Baruch created a narrative that began with the Reconstruction era and extended past the splitting of the atom. Baruch detailed his life of public service as a presidential advisor on economics, war policy, and mobilization of industry. His memoir emphasizes his formative years and the influences of his father, Dr. Simon Baruch, and his mother, Isabelle Wolfe Baruch. In the preface to *Baruch: My Own Story*, Bernard wrote, “None of us ever really outgrows his or her childhood. How we meet the problems of adult life usually does not differ greatly from how we met the problems of growing up.” Reaching beyond his own boyhood, he cited the early years of both his father and mother, who shaped the character of their son, the “Park Bench Statesman.”



In a classic public relations pose, Bernard Baruch was often seen on a bench in Lafayette Park across the White House in Washington, DC and in Central Park, NY. His nickname was “Park Bench Statesman” and his cocker spaniel was “Pat.”



Dr. Simon Baruch holds his first grandchild, Isabel “Belle” Wilcox Baruch, Bernard and Annie Baruch’s daughter born on August 16, 1899. She was named for her paternal grandmother, Isabelle, and her mother’s grandfather, W. J. Wilcox.

Simon Baruch was born in 1840 in Prussia, “whose standing army was larger than that of France or Britain. Many Jewish men became cannon fodder in a Hohenzollern army,” according to an article by historian Tom Horton. Simon slipped away from the village of Schwersenz, near Posen, and left Hamburg on a sailing bark bound for America in 1855. Upon his arrival in Charleston, Simon made his way to Camden where his sponsor, Mannes Baum, operated a store, and Simon started work as a bookkeeper. His interest in medicine led him to enter the

South Carolina Medical College and continue his studies at the Medical College of Virginia, graduating in 1862. Although he had immigrated to the United States to avoid conscription, Simon enlisted in the Confederate Army, citing allegiance to his adopted state. He became assistant surgeon in the Third Battalion, SC Infantry, Kershaw's Brigade, and a part of Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. On the battlefield, Simon Baruch treated both Confederate and Union soldiers. Twice he was a prisoner of war, after Antietam and at Gettysburg. During surgeries at field hospitals, he surprised fellow doctors by taking time to sterilize his instruments between amputations, and while imprisoned, he wrote a paper on how best to treat bayonet wounds, research that remained current through World War I.

Establishing a country practice in Camden after the Civil War, Simon Baruch married Isabelle Wolfe of Winnsboro, the daughter of a ruined cotton planter in Fairfield County. Together, they had four boys who enjoyed rural boyhoods while their parents witnessed Reconstruction era violence, political and social upheaval, and racial bitterness. In 1881, Simon and Belle moved the family to New York City and enrolled their sons in public school. Simon campaigned for better health, sanitation, and sewage treatment practices, established the first public baths for the poor, and pioneered surgery for appendicitis. In an address before the New York Academy of Medicine in 1889, Dr. A. J. Wyeth declared, "the profession [of medicine] and humanity owe more to Dr. Baruch than to any other individual for the development of surgery."

Isabelle Baruch, after the family's move to New York, became deeply involved in the city's civic and social affairs. Still a southern belle, she kept her membership in the United Daughters of the Confederacy and joined the New York Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.



Left to right: Front row – Hartwig, Isabelle Wolfe, Sailing. Back row – Simon's brother Herman, son Herman, Bernard, and Simon Baruch. Tintype, ca. 1895.



Hobcaw House on a bluff facing west above Winyah Bay. The house was rebuilt by Bernard Baruch after a fire destroyed the original residence in 1929. Photo by Lewis Riley, 1975.



Belle, Bernard, and Annie Griffen Baruch on a porch of the old plantation house, ca. 1916.



The Baruchs vacation in the redwood forests of northern California, 1915. Left to Right: Rear – Annie, Junior, John Jr., Gould, Belle. Front – the driver, Annie's brother, and Bernard Baruch.

A popular speaker at clubs and organizations, she was interested in Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic charities and helped found what became the Knickerbocker Hospital. “Belle” was brought up in a strictly kosher home and observed Jewish holidays. She worshipped at New York’s West 82nd Street Synagogue with Rabbi Frederick Mendes. Her husband was a highly moral person and encouraged the teaching of Judaism and the Bible, but told his son, “I don’t believe there is an avenging God standing over people with a sword.”

At his parents’ urging, Bernard maintained close ties with South Carolina, the land of his forebears. Beginning in 1905, he acquired a 17,500-acre estate on Waccamaw Neck and named it Hobcaw Barony. His mother had asked him particularly to “do something for the Negro,” and he hired 100 slave descendants and provided for their medical, educational, and housing needs. He established scholarships at South Carolina colleges and universities and built hospitals, schools, and auditoriums around the state. Bernard Baruch, who had begun his career as an errand boy in a stock brokerage firm and rose to become a Wall Street financier, gave away millions in his lifetime, a legacy to his parents’ instructions and their life experiences.

Bernard wrote, “The priceless heritage which America has given us—the heritage which is America—is this opportunity of being able to better oneself through one’s own striving. No form of government can give a person more than that. And as long as that heritage remains ours, we will continue our progress toward better religious and racial understanding as more and more, each of us comes to be recognized for his or her own worth.”



Belle Baruch holds three champions of world-class hunter-jumper competitions. Souriant III is in the center with full blaze. Belle moved her horses from France to America just before Sudetenland succumbed to Nazi intimidation.

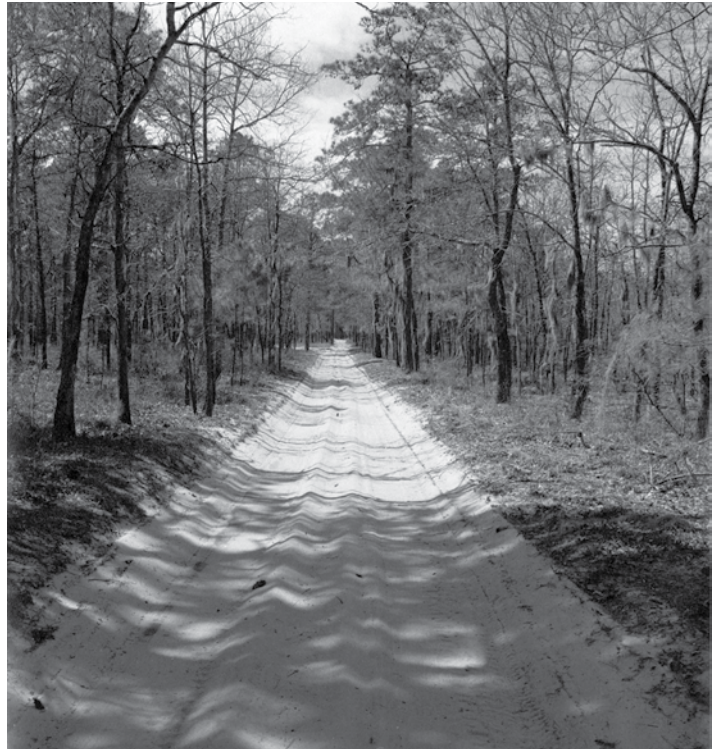
A History of Hobcaw Barony

Hobcaw Barony, a 17,500 acre research reserve, occupies a sparsely developed tract of land on Waccamaw Neck. Native Americans called the Neck “hobcaw,” meaning “between the waters,” because it is bordered by the Waccamaw River, Winyah Bay, and Atlantic Ocean. In 1718, Lord Carteret, one of the eight Lords Proprietors of the Carolina colony, claimed 12,000 acres—later resurveyed and discovered to be 13,970 acres—that became known as Hobcaw Barony. Sold and subdivided into plantations extending from the river to the sea, Hobcaw Barony remained part of the rice-growing empire of the South Carolina Lowcountry until the turn of the 20th century.

In 1905, Wall Street financier and native of Camden, South Carolina, Bernard Mannes Baruch began acquiring land that once was part of the original barony. He pieced together the current property from 11 old plantations, and renamed his winter residence and hunting retreat Hobcaw Barony. There, during the 1930s and '40s, he and his daughter Belle Wilcox Baruch entertained such dignitaries as Franklin D. Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, Irving Berlin, Jack London, and Claire Booth Luce.

By 1956, Baruch had conveyed all of Hobcaw to Belle and established his own seat at “Little Hobcaw” near Kingstree, South Carolina. At Belle’s death in 1964, her will created a foundation and trust to own and operate the barony as a teaching venue for colleges and universities. Today the Belle W. Baruch Foundations manages Hobcaw as a center for education and research in forestry, wildlife, and marine science.

Hobcaw’s swamps, abandoned rice fields, pine and



Plantation Road at Hobcaw Barony. Photo by Lewis Riley, ca. 1975.

hardwood forests, salt marsh and barrier island environments provide habitat for many animals native to the coastal plain, including hogs and game species such as duck, turkey, deer, quail, and foxes. Historic sites include Hobcaw House, rebuilt in 1930 on a bluff overlooking Winyah Bay; Bellefield House and stables, built in 1936 for Belle Baruch; and Friendfield, a 19th-century slave village inhabited until 1952.

Directions

Hobcaw is a right turn off of US Highway 17 North, one mile east of Georgetown after the bridges.



Van Tour

Take a magical trip by van through the diverse eco-systems and historical sites that make up Hobcaw Barony. Historians Lee Brockington and Richard Camlin will narrate the excursion as you traverse forests, fields, swamps, and marshland, and make stops at Bellefield stables, Friendfield village, and Hobcaw House.

To take the 2 1/2 -hour tour, meet the van at 2:30 p.m. on May 2 or 8:30 a.m. on May

3, at the **Hobcaw Barony Discovery Center** (22 Hobcaw Road) at the entrance to Hobcaw on Highway 17 North.



Belle Baruch bags a turkey at Bellefield, ca. 1936.

All Hobcaw Barony and Baruch family photos courtesy of Belle W. Baruch Foundation.

JHSSC Meets at Hobcaw Ba

Profiles of Speakers

Ed Poliakoff, master of ceremonies of the spring meeting at Hobcaw, is president of the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina. A partner in Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough, LLP, he chairs the firm's government relations group. Originally from Abbeville, South Carolina, where for 100 years his family ran Poliakoff's Department Store, Ed is a graduate of Harvard College and Georgetown Law School. He and his wife, Sandra Altman Poliakoff, live in Columbia.

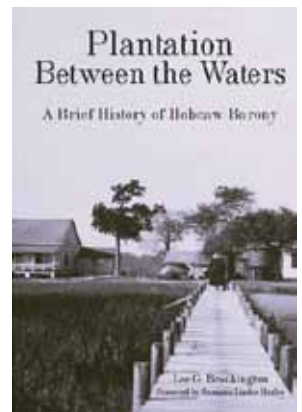


Dr. Albert Baruch Mercer is a cardiologist in Owensboro, Kentucky, and a great-grandson of Dr. Simon and Belle Wolfe Baruch. His father and grandfather (Bernard's older brother) were both named after Hartwig Cohen, *hazzan* of Charleston's Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim from 1818 to 1823. On Belle Baruch's side, Dr. Mercer descends from Isaac Rodrigues Marques, a sea captain who was the first Jewish person deeded property on Manhattan Island. Marques's home on Spring Street, near today's Hanover Square in New York City, dates from the late 1600s.

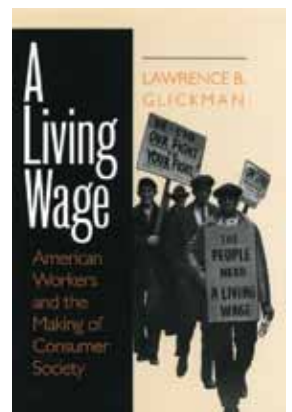
Bert, a trustee of Hobcaw Barony, attended Creighton University and received his medical training at the University of Louisville School of Medicine, Duke University Medical Center, and the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. He and his wife Robin have two children, Nathaniel and Megan.



Lee G. Brockington is the senior interpreter for the Belle W. Baruch Foundation at Hobcaw Barony. A graduate of Columbia College and participant in the Seminar of Historical Administration at Colonial Williamsburg, she is a former curator of education at Historic Columbia Foundation. Her research has appeared in newspapers and magazines and she is author or editor of three books, *Pawleys Island: Stories from the Porch* (2003), *Plantation Between the Waters: A Brief History of Hobcaw Barony* (2006), and *Pawleys Island: A Century of History and Photographs* (2008).



Lawrence B. Glickman is a professor of history at the University of South Carolina, Columbia, where he has taught since 1992. He earned his undergraduate degree from Princeton University and his doctorate from the University of California, Berkeley. A specialist in labor history, cultural history, and the history of consumer society, he is the author of *A Living Wage: American Workers and the Making of Consumer Society* (1997) and *Buying Power: A History of Consumer Activism in America* (forthcoming in June 2009). His hobbies include distance running and coaching his children in soccer.



Barony on Sunday, May 3, 2009

Meeting Schedule

A 2 ½-hour van tour of the Hobcaw property is available to conference attendees on Saturday afternoon or Sunday morning.

Registration required. Space is limited.

SATURDAY, MAY 2, 2009

2:30 p.m. Pre-conference tour of Hobcaw Barony

SUNDAY, MAY 3, 2009

8:30 a.m. Van tour of Hobcaw Barony

The following activities take place
in Hobcaw House
(located four miles from the main entrance)

11:30 a.m. Registration and check-in

12:00 p.m. Greetings and welcome:
Ed Poliakoff, Albert Baruch Mercer

12:30 p.m. Buffet lunch in the dining room

1:30 p.m. *Baroness of Hobcaw: The Life of Belle Baruch* – Lee G. Brockington, author of *Plantation Between the Waters*

2:30 p.m. *Bernard Baruch and the Transformation of American Liberalism* – Lawrence Glickman, professor of history at the University of South Carolina, Columbia

3:30 p.m. Open JHSSC Board Meeting

GEORGETOWN HOTEL INFORMATION:

Hampton Inn – Georgetown

420 Marina Drive

Georgetown, SC 29440

Phone: 843.545.5000 / Fax: 843.545.5009

Block of rooms reserved for Saturday night, May 2nd.

SPECIAL RATE: \$119/night available until April 10

You must make your own reservations.

(Reservation Code: JHSSC)



Hobcaw House.

JHSSC Spring Meeting at Hobcaw Barony May 3, 2009

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State ____ Zip ____

Phone _____

E-Mail _____

Registration fee: \$30 per person.

**I am enclosing an additional \$5.00 for each person
taking the Hobcaw Barony van tour.**

**Please make tour reservation(s) for the
following name(s):**

_____ people for tour on Saturday, May 2, at 2:30 p.m.

_____ people for tour on Sunday, May 3, at 8:30 a.m.

Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Return form to:

JHSSC / Jewish Studies Program

96 Wentworth Street

Charleston, SC 29424

You may also register online at: www.jhssc.org

Yiddishkeyt in

"The secret to being accepted is this:

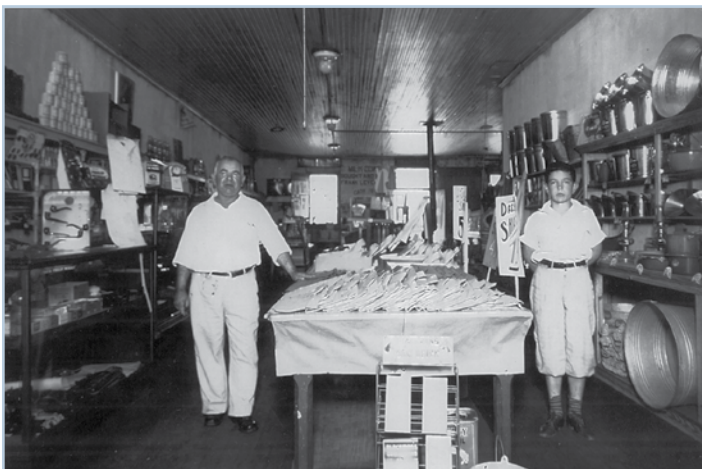


Jennie Levinson Krasnoff's father was a watch repairman and ran a general store. When Jennie married Meyer Krasnoff, the following announcement ran in the Lee County Vindicator (July 23, 1902): Last Sunday evening at 7:30 o'clock the invited friends and relatives of Mr. Myer [sic] Krasnoff and Miss Jennie Levinson assembled to witness the pretty but solemn Jewish marriage ceremony of the above named young people by the Rabbi from Manning. After the ceremony, an elegant collation was served. The presents were numerous and handsome. Mr. and Mrs. Krasnoff and son from Manning came over to the marriage. The next morning, the bride and groom left for Manning and Charleston for a pleasure trip.

Bishopville, with a relatively constant population of 3,000, sits at the center of cotton-farming country halfway between Columbia and Florence. In 1927, this dot on the South Carolina map was home to 93 Jewish individuals, earning the town a place on the American Jewish Committee's list of 871 independent Jewish communities in the United States. Bishopville boasted an incorporated congregation and other services to meet the communal needs of resident Jews. The Levensons, Krasnoffs, Levys, Cahns, Slesingers, Steinbergs, Levinsons, Sindlers, Katzes, Traubs, and Ginsbergs, among others, were a strong presence on Main Street. Some Jewish families came and went, especially in the Depression years, while others persevered. In 2008, the Ginsbergs closed the last remaining Jewish-owned retail shop in Bishopville, and by 2009 the Jewish population had dwindled to two.

The patriarchs of many of the town's Jewish families had peddled their way south from Baltimore, a center of Jewish population in the early 20th century and site of the Baltimore Bargain House, a large wholesaler famous for providing collateral-free credit to greenhorns who wanted to try their luck. It is no surprise that many Jewish merchants who established themselves in Bishopville had arrived at the encouragement of a Baltimore uncle or cousin.

Bishopville offered newcomers a rural landscape reminiscent of the Russian and Lithuanian hamlets of their youth. In the Old Country they had engaged in raising and trading livestock, butchering, and baking, occupations that served them well in Lee County. The new arrivals brought skills that were needed and appreciated and they depended



Frank and Jacob Levenson at Frank's store in Bishopville, ca. 1938. Photo courtesy of Ella Levenson Schlosburg.



The Levensons traded in mules and wagons from the stables at the rear of their general merchandise store, ca. 1930.

Bishopville

a photo-essay by Rachael Bowman Bradbury

you be what you are and I'll be what I am."

—Ella Levenson Schlosburg, 2008

in turn on the business that farmers and fellow townspeople provided.

The inaugural edition of the *Lee County Vindicator*, published March 14, 1902, contains a comprehensive list of downtown merchants, many described with humorous, stereotypical quips. Of note are four Jewish businesses:

- Hirsch Bros & Co. has a large brick store they occupy built especially for them. However, this is only a branch of the immense store in charge of this branch.
- Mr. A. F. [sic] Krasnoff, an Israelite in whom there is no guile, is a native of Russia, but has been in America eight years and doing business here three years. He is a hustler as will be seen from his card elsewhere.
- Mr. J. Levinson, the jeweler and watch repairer does good work or no pay. He keeps a general merchandise store also and does a thriving business. Read his ad and then call on him.
- Mr. L. Slesinger, a native of Russia and heretofore one of the come and go business men of Bishopville, says he is here to stay the year round. He is a good business man and knows how to turn a dollar to advantage. He deals in Dry Goods, Notions, Clothing, etc.

Mutual respect between Jew and Christian, as well as the immigrants' remarkable adaptability, were key to forging friendships and good business relationships. Though raised in a kosher home, when Frank Levenson paid a visit to a farmer's house and was served ham, he ate the ham and didn't comment. "[My father] liked people," his daughter Ella Schlosburg reports, "and people liked him. I don't know



Slesinger stables, ca. 1950. One of several Jewish-operated livery stables in Bishopville was owned by Morris Slesinger. A cousin of Frank Levenson, he and Frank were in the livery business together before Frank opened his own store and stables.



A moment of camaraderie between brothers Aaron and Leo Krasnoff, ca. 1917. While best known as owner of a liquor store, Leo's early enterprises included the L&S Department Store and a general store on Main Street. Aaron graduated from Bishopville High School in 1922 and died the next year, at age 18, from a ruptured appendix and the ensuing infection.



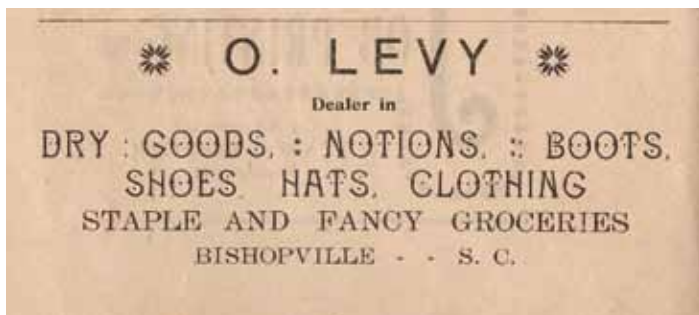
"Uncle" Harrison and Nettie Levenson with one of the Levenson's many dairy cows. The barn for the livestock business was in their backyard and Nettie made cheese, buttermilk, sour cream, and clabber from the abundance of cow and goat milk on hand. "Uncle" Harrison worked for the Levensons at home and in the store and delighted the Levenson children with treats like sugar cane.



Harry Levinson was among the soldiers taking part in a Passover Seder while stationed with the U.S. Army in Paris, France, during World War I. Harry, born in Manning in 1894 to Russian immigrants, grew up in Bishopville where he worked as a salesman in a family clothing store. After the war, he returned to Bishopville. His bride, Anna Katz of New York, joined him in 1921. Harry and Anna and their two children moved to Fairmont, North Carolina, in 1929, where Harry became a prominent and successful merchant. Photo gift of Irene Levinson Schwartz, Special Collections, College of Charleston.



Frank Levenson (left) and son Sam chat with customers outside Levenson's Main Street store. Frank peddled with his father from Baltimore to Bethune. The elder Levenson died of injuries sustained when he was crushed by his own wagon. Frank chose to stay in Bishopville and, in 1915, married Nettie Cahn of Baltimore, whose brothers Julius and Ellis had been shopkeepers in Bishopville for some years.



Oscar Levy was listed as president of the Bishopville Hebrew Congregation when it was incorporated in 1925. Records of O. Levy keeping shop in Bishopville date as far back as 1902.

what it was, but he just got along with everybody. I mean when you're invited to—when a Jew is invited to join the Ku Klux Klan, you know you get along with everybody.” (Frank, of course, politely declined the invitation.) In Bishopville, amidst an unexpected mix of cultures and traditions, a Jew might provide an extra voice in the Presbyterian choir or a Christian might dance at a bar mitzvah.

Born in Bishopville in 1916, the late Joe F. Stuckey, Jr., vividly remembered friendships cultivated between the town's Jewish and non-Jewish youth. “Since Jewish people did not eat meat that was sold in stores,” he recalled, “one social event of kids my age was to follow the rabbi from yard to yard and watch him with the chicken butcherings. The cow butchering was done on the edge of town at a regular meat establishment.” What might appear on the surface an afternoon of boyish amusement was in reality a first-hand education in Jewish custom.

While not all the Jewish families in town leaned towards Orthodoxy, families who wished to keep kosher were able to do so thanks to the services of Rabbi David



Krasnoff Store ad, Lee County Vindicator, 1:2 (March 28, 1902). It was customary in Krasnoff's general store for the farmers to have charge accounts and pay their bills when the crops came in. Meyer had an old black coal stove to heat the store and the farmers would sit and chat around the fire on winter days. On one occasion during the Great Depression, Meyer reportedly threw his ledgers into the fire and announced, “Let's all start over together.”



Meyer Krasnoff (foreground) and family gather for a picture in front of his Lee Street home, ca. 1917. The seated ladies are Meyer's sister, Fanny, and his wife, Jennie. Also pictured are his brothers, Augustus and Perry Krasnoff, and Morris Yoffee, who became Fanny's husband. The three young men are Meyer and Jennie's sons Leo, Aaron, and Sollie.

Karesh of Columbia and others who were trained as *shoheitim*. In a letter to his friends Frank and Nettie Levenson, postmarked November 24, 1957, Rabbi Karesh wrote: "I have Thursday slaughtered for you a large, good cow. And that reminded me of the times when the Bishopville Jews, in general, were for old, traditional Jewishness. And I was with them an invited guest."

Jews had long been an integral part of life in South Carolina. The Eastern European-ness of the newcomers to Bishopville was likely more alien to the natives than their religious preference. Ruthie Stevenson Bowman, who grew up in Bishopville in the 1940s and '50s, recalls, "I realized there were Jewish people in Bishopville but never gave the difference in religion much thought. I simply regarded them as another denomination."

Unquestionably, small-town Jews made concessions to local custom, such as keeping shops open on Saturdays. Yet in Bishopville, Jewish families were able to maintain a unique sense of community while the friendship provided by their neighbors made southerners out of more than one "Israelite."



Fanny Krasnoff and her sister-in-law, Jennie Levinson (Mrs. A. M.) Krasnoff, ca. 1920.



Opened by Sam Ginsberg in 1929, this Bishopville landmark—the last Jewish-owned business in town—closed its doors in February 2008.



Frances Bass and Arthur Ginsberg fishing for large-mouth bass in Florida, ca. 1950. Photo courtesy of Frances B. Ginsberg.

About the author

Rachael Bowman Bradbury's maternal ancestors settled near present-day Bishopville in the 1790s. Following the lead of her great-grandfather, Lee County historian Joe Stuckey, she is collecting materials and information for her forthcoming book, *Images of America: Bishopville and Lee County*. She became fascinated by the town's Jewish history when she learned that, in the early 20th century, upwards of 30 Jewish families lived there. To share your Lee County photographs and information, please contact Rachael at: rachaelbradbury@gmail.com or visit <http://bishopvillephotos.wordpress.com>. Unless otherwise noted, all photos courtesy of the author.

Rabbi Burton Padoll and Civil Rights in Charleston

by Solomon Breibart

An essay by Rabbi Allen Krause, “Charleston Jewry, Black Civil Rights, and Rabbi Burton Padoll,”* which appeared in the latest issue of *Southern Jewish History*, is attracting intense interest in South Carolina. Part of a larger study of the role southern rabbis played in the civil rights controversy, the article relies heavily upon the holdings of the Jewish Heritage Collection at the College of Charleston, especially its impressive oral history archives, as well as interviews Krause conducted himself.

The essay begins with a brief social history of the Charleston Jewish community that sets the stage on which the drama of the civil rights movement unfolded in South Carolina. “As well integrated and as proud as the Jewish community was,” Krause concludes, “Charleston was not Camelot.” Although Charleston Jews denied that they experienced anti-Semitism, “many spoke of feeling not completely accepted.”

On the issue of civil rights for African-Americans, Jews tended to be moderates, rather than “dyed-in-the-wool segregationists.” Yet, Krause acknowledges that the Jewish community was “nervous about ... what became known as the Charleston Movement” and he proceeds to analyze the movement in some detail.

By the time Rabbi Burton Padoll came to the city in 1961, the lines of struggle between African-Americans and whites were sharply drawn, with the NAACP on one side and the segregationist White Citizens Council on the other. The Supreme Court decision in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* in 1954, in which South Carolina’s Clarendon County played a seminal role, found segregated schools inherently unequal, hence unconstitutional. The decision stirred strong reactions from the whites and resulted in delaying tactics by the State of South Carolina. Not until nine years later did the integration of public schools begin.

When Padoll settled in Charleston as

Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim’s rabbi, he became involved almost immediately in the struggle for civil rights. In fact, he had accepted the pulpit in a southern community because he wanted to make a difference. Before he was hired, he had made clear to the leaders of the congregation his views on civil rights. He was particularly interested in “establishing lines of communication with the black community.” In 1962, with the support of the Jewish Community Relations Council, he attempted to create a biracial committee. City administrators rebuffed the effort, though eventually, after African-American activists raised the stakes by more aggressive tactics—boycotts, marches, sit-ins, and volatile mass meetings—the city did form such a committee.

As integration proceeded gradually in South Carolina and economic and social demands were slowly addressed, Krause reports, Padoll constantly criticized the failure of

the Jewish community and especially his congregation to become active participants in advancing the cause of civil rights for African-Americans. Padoll could not understand how Jews, with their long history of discrimination and persecution, were not motivated to promote civil rights for all.

It is true that a number of KKBE’s members were “not pleased with the causes that their rabbi advocated.” Krause cites one confrontation that occurred between Rabbi Padoll and the leaders of the KKBE Brotherhood who were planning a dinner dance at the segregated Fort Sumter Hotel. The rabbi protested vigorously. When the Brotherhood ignored his pleas, Padoll informed them that he “considered it a personal affront” and refused to attend the affair.

Edwin Pearlstine, Jr., was president of the KKBE Brotherhood at the time; Krause terms him a formidable opponent. To show what Padoll was up against, Krause discusses the Pearlstine family and its place of influence and importance in the community and especially at KKBE, which they supported with generous financial contributions. The article fails to mention,

Black List

Condon's Department Store
Belk-Robinson Company
J. C. Penney Co., Inc.
Berlin's
Kerrisons Department Store
Western Auto Store
Legerton & Co., Inc.
Hanover Shoe Store
Walgreen Drug Store
Federal Bake Shop
Haverty Furniture Co.
Levy's Boys' Store
The Bandbox
Southern Furniture Co.
Rosalee Meyers
Jack Krawcheck
Thom McAnn Shoe Store
Lesser-Tanenbaum
Richards Men's Wear
Red & White Food Stores
Gloria and Riviera Theatres

DON'T BUY WHERE YOU CAN'T WORK!

Stay Out of These Places!!!

THE CHARLESTON MOVEMENT
N.A.A.C.P.

* Allen Krause, “Charleston Jewry, Black Civil Rights, and Rabbi Burton Padoll,” in *Southern Jewish History*, Journal of the Southern Jewish Historical Society, vol. 11 (2008), 65–122.

Charleston NAACP's Black List, ca. 1963, included several Jewish-owned stores. Courtesy of Avery Research Center, College of Charleston.

however, some leading congregants who allied with Padoll, including Doris Levkoff Meddin. Meddin opened her home on Murray Boulevard to a Padoll study group, whose invited speaker was Father Henry Grant, an African-American minister of the A.M.E. Church.

It became evident that despite the backing of a large majority of the congregation, an influential minority demanded an end to Padoll's tenure at KKBE. The rabbi, disappointed by his failure to move his flock ahead on civil rights and discouraged about the tense atmosphere in the congregation, resigned.

In a letter to the KKBE Board of Trustees, he wrote:

I am painfully aware of the negative attitudes toward me that exist in the congregation. Although they have not influenced my ultimate decision, with all my heart I wish they were not so.

At the same time, I am gratefully aware of the strong positive feelings regarding my ministry which are shared by so many in Beth Elohim ... They, more than anything, have made my decision a difficult one ...

Krause then seeks to answer the question that spurred his research: what caused Padoll to leave Charleston? With the aid of oral histories, numerous interviews, and an examination of congregational correspondence, he assessed the rabbi's strength and weaknesses. He found general accord, even among Padoll's opponents, about his effectiveness in the pulpit, his stimulating leadership of the religious school, and especially his rapport and influence with the youth of the congregation. On the negative side was his inability to play the game of congregational politics, his refusal to socialize with some congregants, his wife's coldness to members of the congregation, and her evident dislike of living in Charleston. Krause concludes that the reasons Padoll left Charleston were more social than political.

"In every good way," Krause writes, "Padoll was a true reincarnation of his Biblical heroes, men like Amos and Jeremiah. They too would have been forced out of town if they had come to Charleston."

Rabbi Padoll did not realize his goal of rousing his congregation and community to champion the cause of civil rights, which he equated with social justice. However, he did shake many of his congregants from their complacent acceptance of the status quo for African-Americans. He also provoked many to question the role of religion in society and conventional attitudes toward social conditions. This was especially true among the youth, whose reflections Krause quotes in the essay.

Padoll was especially proud of his ability to reach across the color line. In an interview in Charleston in 1999, he recalled his warm relationship with leaders in the black community, his participation with his African-American friends in several sit-ins, and the impact he had in practically forcing a Charleston association of clergy to accept Jews and blacks as members. He remembered, with pride, the visits to South Carolina State and Voorhees College, all-black at that time, to discuss Judaism and social justice with students and professors.

It is sad that Padoll did not live to see the inauguration of the first African-American president of the United States. He would have been elated at the outpouring of enthusiasm and support from people of every race and religion, old and young, rich and poor. In downtown Charleston, at Marion Square, over 500 people gathered on a very cold day to view the inauguration ceremony on a wide screen erected by the city. Rabbi Padoll might well have joined with whites and blacks to say reverently, "Thank God, free at last."



Natalie and Burton Padoll celebrate the first birthday of son Bill, March 20, 1963. Photo gift of Sheila Padoll, Special Collections, College of Charleston.



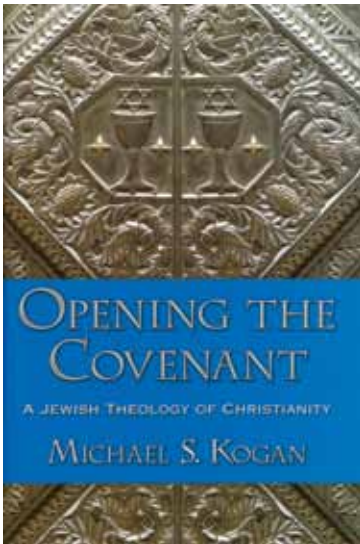
Solomon Breibart and Rabbi Burton Padoll, Charleston. Photo by Dale Rosengarten, Special Collections, College of Charleston, 1999.

Books of Interest

Opening the Covenant: A Jewish Theology of Christianity

by Michael S. Kogan

Review by Adam Parker



Oxford University Press, 2008.
304 pages, www.oup.com

When it comes to Judaism, Christians are caught between a theological rock and a hard place. Is Christ the only way to heaven? Or is God's covenant with the Jews enough to ensure members of this ancient tribe a place in God's kingdom?

It is this dilemma, among others, that Michael S. Kogan boldly confronts in his fascinating hybrid of a book, *Opening the Covenant: A Jewish Theology of Christianity*. Kogan, professor of religious studies and chairman of the department of philosophy and religion at Montclair State University, is a long-time proponent of Jewish-Christian dialogue. His roots in South Carolina run deep and include the Winstocks, who immigrated to Charleston in the 1830s. Twenty years later, they brought over their brother-in-law, Rabbi Hirsch Zvi Levine, who led the minyan that became Brith Sholom. Kogan spends his summers in Charleston lecturing and writing.

In *Opening the Covenant*, Kogan blends rigorous scholarship, advocacy, and personal opinion, with the goal of promoting interfaith understanding. He makes an effort to convince his fellow Jews that it is time to accept Christianity as a sister faith despite all the suffering it caused over the course of two millennia. Christians, he argues, have taken historic steps toward reconciliation, acknowledging, at least to some degree, that Christ's appearance did not invalidate God's distinct and living covenant with the Jews.

The Protestant World Council of Churches meeting in 1948, for example, denounced anti-Semitism as "sin against God and man," and, in 1968, published a statement calling for "rethinking the place of Jews in the history of salvation." The Second Vatican Council (1962–65) issued its Conciliar Declaration *Nostra Aetate* in 1965, effectively rejecting the charge that Jews

were guilty of deicide and affirming the validity of Judaism.

These changes provide a solid basis upon which interfaith dialogue can ensue, Kogan argues. The ball now is in the Jewish court.

"Great progress has been made in the last 40 years—so great, in fact, that we are now prepared to take the next step in mutual understanding. That step must be one in which we truly attempt to see the other as closely as possible to how she sees herself," Kogan writes. Jews can "come to see Christianity as a means of extending their core conceptions into the wider world."

Through Christ, in other words, God has opened his covenant to the Gentiles.

Kogan's thoughtful and controversial interpretations of the sacred texts, bolstered by his scholarly understanding, make for a captivating read, and it would serve all who claim to be interested in interfaith reconciliation to consider the eloquently expressed ideas he offers in *Opening the Covenant*.

© *The Post and Courier*. Revised review reprinted with permission from Faith & Values section, November 9, 2008. For original article, go to: http://www.charleston.net/news/2008/nov/09/professor_calls_interfaith_dialogue60877/

Office Upstairs: A Doctor's Journey

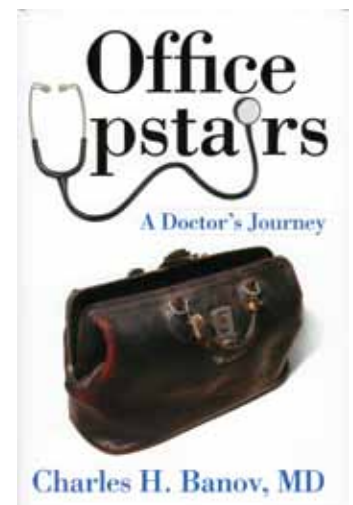
by Charles H. Banov, MD

Review by Dr. Alan Nussbaum

Charles Banov has lived an extraordinary life. His memoir, *Office Upstairs*, provides insight into the experience of being Jewish in Charleston in the 1940s and '50s, the adventures of medical education and practice, and how raising a daughter with special needs led both Dr. Banov and his wife Nancy into years of political and medical advocacy.

Dr. Banov has been a friend and mentor to generations of our family and a model of commitment and leadership in medicine and the Jewish community. Yet reading *Office Upstairs* convinced me that I have known only the "Clark Kent" side of his life. Little did I realize that he frequently slipped into "Superman" mode, having unusual and sometimes crazy adventures like working on a merchant tanker sailing to Venezuela and being captured by pirates, traveling to Soviet-era Russia and drug trade-infested South America in medical liaison groups laced with intelligence agents, delivering volunteer medical care under Third World conditions in Hurricane Hugo-ravaged South Carolina and post-Hurricane Katrina Texas, and training to provide emergency medical back-up to the Israel Defense Forces.

Never in this intimate account does Charles Banov lose the sense of amazement and gratitude for having been able to live his life with joy and humor, and to make such outstanding contributions. Surely, the world is better for his gifts.



History Press, 2007. 192
pages, 19 images, www.officeupstairs.thebook.com

Tough times, more pillars needed

by Martin Perlmutter, JHSSC Executive Director

In difficult economic times, philanthropic giving is one of the first casualties. I know, because just as the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina is hitting its stride, our financial resources are challenged. I am taking this opportunity to appeal for your support, which is more vital today than ever.

Last fall, our Jewish genealogy workshop introduced dozens of participants to exciting resources for researching their family histories. Our cemetery project continues to gather information, document tombstones, and digitize records of South Carolina's Jewish burials. Following Belinda Gergel's initiative, the Society sponsors or co-sponsors the placement of historic markers at sites of Jewish significance across the state.

The Jewish Heritage Collection, which the Society helps to support with Pillar dollars, has undertaken several new projects: cataloguing the extraordinary Rabbi William A. Rosenthal Judaica collection; building a website based on the Holocaust Memorial Quilt; developing curriculum kits for high school teachers with materials collected for the College library's Holocaust Archive; and composing illustrated histories of Jewish communities of South Carolina for the digital archive of the Mississippi-based Institute of Southern Jewish Life.

While our research and publishing engine at the Addlestone Library is humming, the Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program has hired a second full-time faculty member, Adam Mendelsohn, a gifted young scholar who studied with Jonathan Sarna and earned his Ph.D. from Brandeis University. Jewish Studies also has made the Center for Southern Jewish Culture a high priority for future funding, to ensure a permanent academic home for the work of the Society.

With more than 350 family memberships to date for 2009, JHSSC can claim the distinction of being the largest statewide Jewish organization in South Carolina. Our operating budget depends entirely upon your contributions. The Society's Pillars program, since its inception in 2002 during Robert Rosen's presidency, accounts for the bulk of our annual giving. Pillars commit to dues of \$1,000 per year for five years. Until now, enough people have stepped forward each year to underwrite our projects and to keep our membership fees low and our modest endowment intact. We need your help to continue to build an effective grassroots organization driven by an active membership.

Your support has enabled the Society to make incredible progress in its brief 15-year history. Our founding president, Isadore Lourie, o.b.m., would be proud of what his hands have wrought. May we go from strength to strength!

For a list that includes past Pillars, please go to www.jhssc.org.

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Doris Baumgarten	Aiken	SC
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Anita Zucker	Charleston	SC

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Our list is current as of publication. We encourage JHSSC members to join or renew as Pillars. We apologize if there are inadvertent omissions.

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Yes, I/we want to become a Pillar member of the JHSSC. In doing so, I/we commit to dues of \$1,000 per year for five years.

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Join or renew JHSSC online at 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.

**Register now for the May 3rd meeting at Hobcaw Barony.
PLEASE REGISTER EARLY.**

See pages 10 - 11 for more information.

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