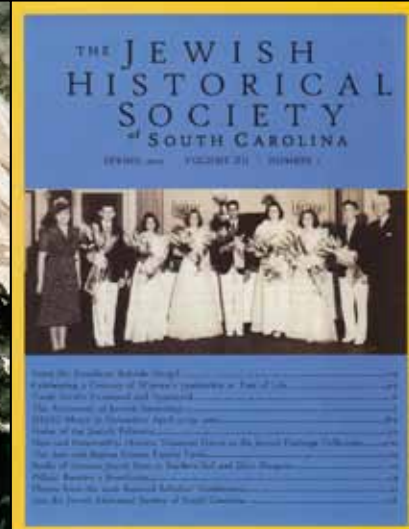
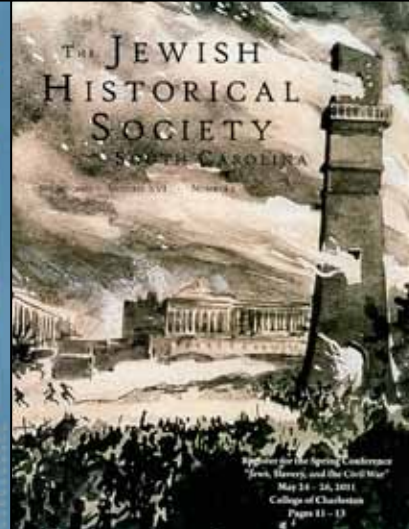
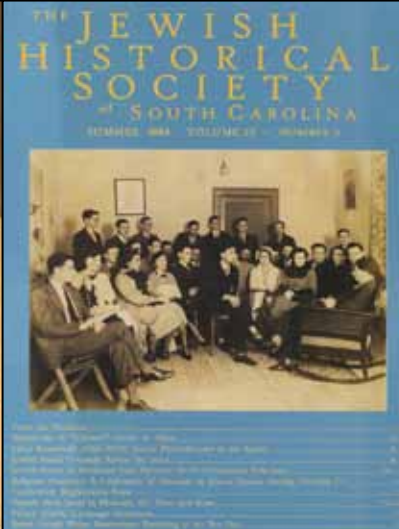
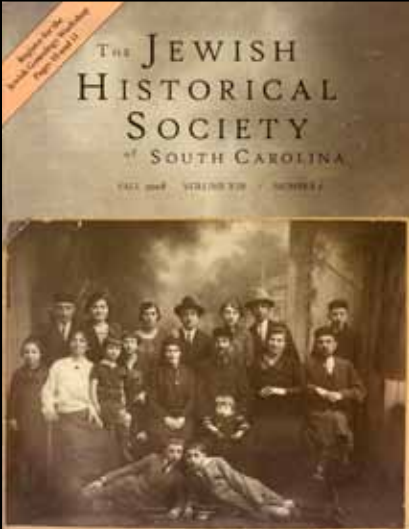
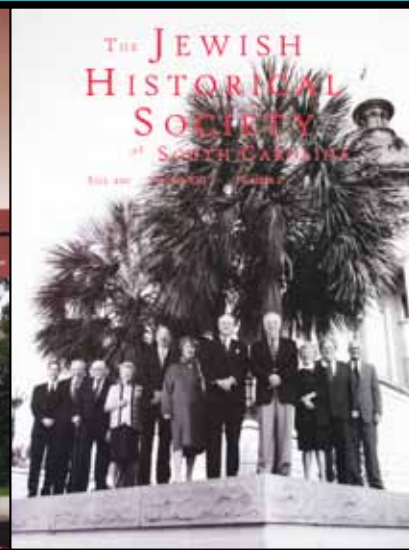
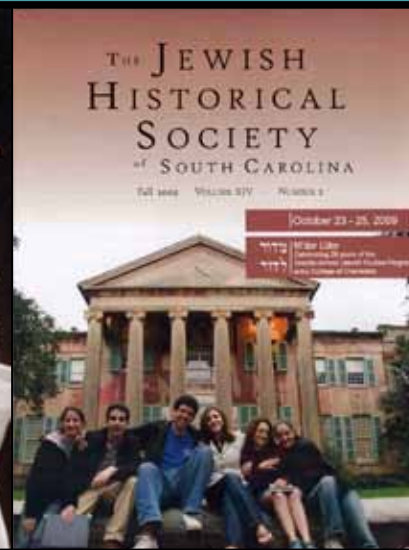
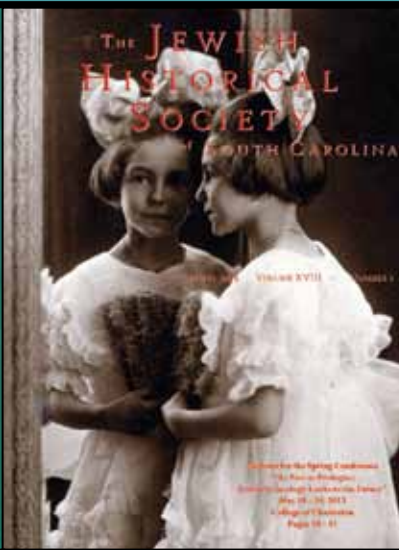
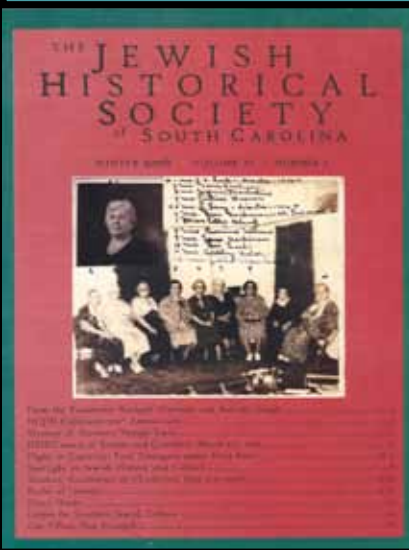


THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY of SOUTH CAROLINA

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS!

VOLUME XIX ~ NUMBER I

SPRING 2014





Dale Rosengarten
editor

Alyssa Neely
assistant editor
and designer

The JHSSC newsletter is
published twice a year.

Current and back issues
can be found at
jhssc.org

JHSSC PRESIDENTS AND TERMS IN OFFICE

Isadore Lourie 1994–95
Klyde Robinson 1996–97
Richard Gergel 1998–99
Jeffrey Rosenblum 2000–03
Robert Rosen 2002–03
Bernard Warshaw 2004–05
Belinda F. Gergel 2006–07
Edward Poliakoff 2008–09
Ann M. Hellman 2010–11
Rachel G. Barnett 2012–13
David Draisen 2014–15

In this issue

Only in America ~ Joel Lourie and Susan Lourie ~ Isadore Lourie's experiences growing up in St. George, South Carolina, a small town with a big sense of community, inspired both his progressive politics as a legislator and his dream of establishing a statewide Jewish historical society. 4

Focus on Oral History ~ Klyde Robinson ~ From a family with roots in rural South Carolina whose records were lost in the Civil War, Klyde Robinson became an early advocate of JHSSC's oral history initiative, chairing the Jewish Heritage Project and helping record interviews across the state. 5

Reflections on the First Twenty Years ~ Belinda and Richard Gergel ~ Built on a strong partnership with the College of Charleston and a creative collaboration with USC's McKissick Museum, JHSSC's success, according to the authors, "demonstrates the power of great ideas and the potential of talented people working together for a common purpose." 6

How Far We Have Come ~ Jeffrey Rosenblum ~ This transplant from Long Island, captivated by Isadore Lourie's stories of growing up in small-town South Carolina, was proud to be at the Society's helm during the production of the exhibit *A Portion of the People* and the filming of *Land of Promise*. 8

The Party President ~ Robert N. Rosen ~ Author and activist in equal measure, Robert Rosen's love of history impelled him to write books about his hometown and region, and to join the effort to establish a society that would secure the role of South Carolina's Jews in the American record. 9

Twentieth Anniversary Celebration ~ JHSSC meets in Charleston, SC, May 17–18, 2014. 10

"A Grassroots Movement" ~ Alyssa Neely ~ The Warshaws of Walterboro typify the small-town Jewish merchants of South Carolina, just the kind of story JHSSC sought to preserve when it was formed 20 years ago. Bernard Warshaw's goal as president was to encourage organization at the grassroots level, so that each community was engaged in preserving its history. 11

JHSSC and Family Connections ~ Edward Poliakoff ~ With far-flung family ties and a fond attachment to his hometown, Ed Poliakoff invited JHSSC to Abbeville to celebrate the 95th anniversary of D. Poliakoff's, the store his grandfather established in 1900. As president of the Society, Ed initiated a program to sponsor historical markers at sites across the state. 13

Roots and Branches ~ Ann Meddin Hellman ~ A sixth-generation Charlestonian, Ann Hellman became an avid genealogist, unearthing her family's past, layer by layer. In 2003 she launched JHSSC's website, building a valuable resource for researchers, including a comprehensive database of South Carolina's Jewish burials. 14

Family Matters ~ Rachel Gordin Barnett ~ As Rachel Barnett steps down from her term as JHSSC's tenth president, she looks back to Isadore Lourie's desire to create a place for our collective memories, and she looks forward to the Center for Southern Jewish Culture as a way to further the mission of the Society's founders. 16

Center Talk: Looking Toward the Future ~ Adam Mendelsohn ~ While the center of gravity of the Jewish South has shifted from small towns to big cities, the author argues, southern Jewish life is far from dying. Indeed, the Jewish South is experiencing a period of growth and exuberance, as witnessed by the new Pearlstine/Lipov Center for Southern Jewish Culture established this spring at the College of Charleston. 17

JHSSC Celebrates Two Decades of Remarkable Growth ~ Martin Perlmutter ~ From the small acorn planted by Isadore Lourie and friends in 1994, a mighty oak has grown. Resting on the strong foundation of its statewide membership, JHSSC has inspired the College of Charleston to become an intellectual hub for the study of everything southern and Jewish. 18

Letter from the President



Thank you for electing me president of this great organization. With the help of our immediate past presidents, Rachel Gordin Barnett and Ann Meddin Hellman, treasurer David Cohen, secretary Garry Baum, archivist Steven Savitz, and our standing committees—Fundraising and Membership chaired by Alex Cohen, Education and Publications chaired by Susan Altman, Archives

and Historical Sites chaired by Barry Draisen and Ernie Marcus—I hope to have a productive year ahead. I also want to congratulate new board members Susan Brill and Sandra Conradi. Welcome aboard!

My first official action as the Society's president was to speak at the dedication ceremony of a historical marker commemorating more than 100 years of history of Beth Israel Congregation in Beaufort, South Carolina, sponsored by the Beaufort County Historical Society and Beth Israel. The ceremony, held on January 12, was well attended by local historians, longtime residents, political leaders such as Mayor Billy Keyserling, and representatives of JHSSC, including Marty Perlmutter and Dale Rosengarten from the College of Charleston. Dale outlined

the history of Jews who settled in Beaufort and vicinity and quoted extensively from a talk Joseph J. Lipton gave at a JHSSC meeting in his hometown some 15 years ago. Lipton remembered Beaufort's main thoroughfare, Bay Street, lined with Jewish-owned stores, and High Holiday services in the very sanctuary where we were sitting, conducted entirely in Hebrew, with women sitting apart, the patriarchs on the bimah, and Max Lipsitz davening.

The Society is approaching its 20th anniversary, to be celebrated in Charleston on May 17–18, 2014.

Please make every effort to attend the festivities marking this important milestone in JHSSC's history. We are busy making the final preparations for what promises to be a very fine gala. Saturday afternoon the program will begin with a panel of past presidents, to be followed by a dinner reception and remarks by Richard Gergel. Sunday we will reconvene with a bagel breakfast and open board meeting. The weekend concludes with a presentation by Stuart Rockoff, executive director of the Mississippi Humanities Council, on "The Changing Face of the Jewish South."

All our meetings have been highly informative, and I have learned a great deal about South Carolina's Jewish past. Last fall's conference in Columbia, titled "A Summer to Remember," brought back boyhood memories of growing up in Anderson. Even though I

attended Camp Blue Star only one year, many of my Jewish friends and relatives went there or to other Jewish camps in the area. The presentation by Macy Hart from the Institute of Southern Jewish Life (ISJL) was inspiring. I wish the great resources ISJL offers had been available when my now 25- and 27-year-old sons were attending religious school in Anderson.

I encourage all readers of this newsletter to join us as members

at whatever level you can afford, to support the work we do, and to help us pay tribute to JHSSC's past 20 years and look forward to the next 20.

See you in Charleston in May!

David Draisen
ddraisen@bellsouth.net



Beaufort Mayor Billy Keyserling unveils a new historical marker in front of Beth Israel synagogue on Sunday, January 12, 2014. The congregation was chartered in 1905; construction of the building was completed in 1908. Photo by Delayna Earley, Island Packet (Hilton Head).

Only in America

by Joel Lourie and Susan Lourie

“Only in America”—these words were uttered by the late Isadore Lourie throughout his life. He would speak passionately about how immigrants of any persuasion could come to this country, get an education, find a job, and have an opportunity to live the “American dream.” He lived and saw, firsthand, this dream become a reality.

In so many ways he would connect the American dream with the journey and success of Jews in the South. He, too, was a creation of this path. Both his parents came to this country in the early 1900s. They married and settled into a small, southern rural town in South Carolina—St. George. Like many of their kind, the Louries ran a clothing store on Main Street and lived in an apartment above their business. Isadore’s parents, Louis and Ann Lourie, raised six children who all were excellent students and observant Jews. The boys would be sent to study for their bar mitzvahs, either in Charleston, Savannah, or Columbia. Each of them went on to be successful in medicine, business, or the law.

This small-town experience played a major part in shaping Isadore Lourie’s views and principles. He once said that he never experienced any sort of prejudice until he left St. George. In St. George people of different races and faiths were trusting and helpful to one another. The barriers that exist even today were somewhat invisible there. From



this upbringing, Isadore became a pioneer leading a new generation of progressives—popularly known as the Young Turks—in the South Carolina General Assembly in the 1960s. He is recognized as one of the few legislators who could serve as a bridge between the African American and white communities during the era of the Civil Rights Movement.

Through all of his political and legal success, Isadore never forgot his small-town, Jewish roots. More than anything, that is what inspired him to help create the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina. He felt it was critical to study and honor the Jewish links throughout our state. Families who had landed in South Carolina from different places, in different circumstances, overcame similar obstacles to settle here. Many started businesses, educated

their children, contributed to society, yet maintained their commitment to Judaism. It is these stories that Isadore Lourie wanted to preserve forever.



Above: Isadore Lourie and his mother, Annie Friedman Lourie, in St. George, SC, June 1950. Courtesy of the Lourie family.

Left: Becky Baum Lourie, Joel Lourie, Susan Lourie, and Sam Strauss at the joint conference of JHSSC and the Southern Jewish Historical Society, Sights, Sounds, and Stories of the Jewish South, Ernest F. Hollings Special Collections Library, USC, Columbia, SC, October 29, 2011. Photo by Jeri Perlmutter.

Focus on Oral History

by Klyde Robinson

I have always loved history, in particular the history of the Jewish community of Charleston, which has made such significant contributions to the state of South Carolina. I’ve been told that my family has been here since the early 1800s, but much of our early history was lost during the Civil War. In those years the Robinsons were farmers and lived in Round O and Cottageville, near Walterboro. When General Sherman’s Union troops appeared to be marching to destroy Charleston, Walterboro authorities moved their records to Columbia to preserve them. Sherman unexpectedly changed course and burned Columbia instead, including our family records. And that is why I feel it is so critical to document the living histories of the Jewish people in the South.

According to family legend my great-grandmother Bertha started our family business in Charleston in the 1880s. For more than a century, Robinson’s Bicycle Shop was a mainstay on upper King Street. It may have been the largest bicycle store in the Southeast. My brother Rudolph (o.b.m.) designed a bicycle—the Newsboy Special—for Westfield Manufacturing Company, the maker of Columbia bicycles. At its height Robinson’s carried more than 1,000 bikes in inventory.

During December every member of the family would work in the store, no matter who we were or what we were doing. I did this all through college, law school, practicing law, and when serving as a public official. On Christmas my brothers and I would deliver bicycles to customers’ homes between midnight and 5:00 a.m. so the children would be surprised when they woke up. To this day my brother Melvin cannot walk downtown without being greeted by Charlestonians who remember buying their first bike from Robinson’s.

Learning and preserving the history of the Jewish community has always been very important to my family. I am pleased to have played a role as the initial chairman of the Jewish Heritage Project in preserving that history. In 1995 I traveled with Dale Rosengarten, director of the project, to communities across the state to collect oral histories, including anecdotes about what it was like to be Jewish in the South and stories about contributions Jews have made to our state. With audio

tapes donated by Itchy Sonenshine, equipment provided by McKissick Museum, and an archival home at the College of Charleston Library, the project was underway. When I was elected JHSSC president, Sandra Lee Kahn Rosenblum began accompanying Dale on these field trips, and the two continued recording interviews with great success.



Klyde Robinson (r) and Richard Gergel outside Tree of Life synagogue in Columbia, SC, where JHSSC held its April 1998 meeting. Photo by Dale Rosengarten.

By the end of my term of office, the Jewish Heritage Project had collected and preserved almost 300 oral histories of South Carolina Jews. These histories immediately became popular: everyone wanted to add his or her family history to the collection. The project generated significant interest in southern Jewish history. It helped the Society recruit members and, at the same time, attracted the attention of researchers far and near. The oral history archives—now accessible online through the College’s Lowcountry Digital Library, lcdl.library.cofc.edu/—is truly a legacy for future generations. It has helped fill the information gap on southern Jewish history, a field that is just now coming into its own.

I hope we will always collect oral histories and that a Jewish museum, administered by the College’s Jewish Studies Program, will eventually be built in Charleston to house this collection of invaluable recordings and other memorabilia.

Another project for the future is to raise the public profile of the Hanover Street Cemetery, one of Charleston’s first Jewish burial grounds, predating the extant Coming Street Cemetery. My great-grandfather was buried in the cemetery in 1858, along with other family members. My aunt Rachel Robinson was also buried there after dying of cholera, following the earthquake of 1886. She was the last female born in the Robinson family until my daughter, Amy, in 1954. Although a church and another building now occupy the property, it may be possible to put a memorial marker on the site, preserving the names of all 29 persons of the Jewish faith who were buried there.

I am grateful to the Society for supporting vital efforts to discover and preserve the heritage of the Jews of South Carolina over all these years, and I am confident it will continue to do so for generations to come.

Reflections on the First Twenty Years

by Belinda and Richard Gergel

As we reflect on the first 20 years of the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina, we remember the tremendous energy and creative ideas of the early organizers as they fused distinct but related interests into a coherent organizational mission. First and foremost came the dream of Senator Isadore Lourie to create a statewide organization to tie together urban and small-town Jewish communities in South Carolina, replicating the role that B'nai Brith had played in an earlier era. Senator Lourie recognized that small-town Jews were becoming an endangered species and he wanted to preserve their memories. He also understood that Jewish people—especially southerners—could be enticed to attend thoughtful lectures and visit interesting towns and historic sites, and would find any excuse to meet over good food and conversation. Thus, the Jewish Historical Society was born, with its twice-a-year meetings featuring noted speakers, panel discussions on local Jewish history, celebrations of historic anniversaries, and plenty of time to kibitz.

Simultaneous with Senator Lourie's efforts to start a statewide society, visionary philosophy professor Dr. Martin Perlmutter was seeking support for the College of Charleston's Jewish Studies Program, which had been founded in 1984 with an initial pledge from Henry and Sylvia Yaschik. When Marty became director of Jewish Studies in 1992, the College leadership had yet to appreciate the program's benefits—on campus and off—though its strong community focus was already paying dividends. Together Perlmutter and Lourie sought the backing of the College's new president, Alex Sanders, who was Senator Lourie's lifelong friend and political ally. The president needed little persuading. With Sanders's unqualified support, Perlmutter's tireless efforts, and Lourie's skilled leadership, both Jewish Studies and JHSSC were soon on a firm foundation.

Around this same time a young historian named Dale Rosengarten, who was working toward a Ph.D. degree from Harvard, approached Senator Lourie with a proposal she and her colleagues at the University of South Carolina's McKissick Museum had developed: to mount a major exhibition showcasing the state's Jewish history and culture. Lourie became a passionate advocate of the project and, at its inaugural meeting in April 1994, the fledgling Jewish Historical Society adopted the exhibit as its first venture. Recognizing talent when he saw it, Lourie also urged the College of Charleston to

Counterclockwise from above: Carolee Rosen Fox (Phoebe Pember), Jason Berendt (Isaac J. Levy), Jason Shaiman (J. A. Joel), and Elizabeth Moses (Eleanor Cohen Seixas), JHSSC's April 2000 meeting in Charleston, SC; Harlan Greene leading a walking tour, September 2010; garden reception at the Phoebe Pember House, April 2000; Richard and Belinda Gergel, and Susan and Isadore Lourie, Coming Street Cemetery, October 1998.



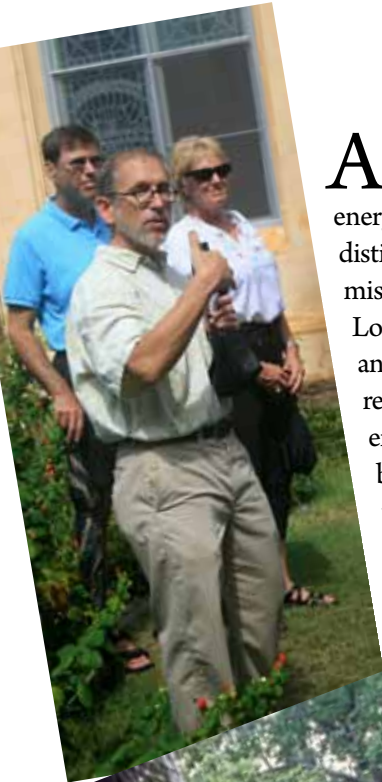
find a place for Dale to pursue her work, which included as a key element the recording of oral history interviews with Jewish South Carolinians. The College's Dean of Libraries, Dr. David Cohen, had been involved with JHSSC from its inception and within two years created a permanent, tenure-track position in Special Collections for the curator of the Jewish Heritage Collection. Elizabeth Moses soon joined the staff, splitting her time between the Heritage Collection and the Historical Society.

During the ensuing 20 years, JHSSC forged an ever stronger partnership with the College's Jewish Studies Program and Jewish Heritage Collection to pursue the mission they all share: to promote and preserve South Carolina's Jewish history and culture. The exhibition *A Portion of the People: Three Hundred Years of Southern Jewish Life* opened in Columbia in January 2002, and over the next two years traveled to museums in Charleston, New York City, and Charlotte, North Carolina. With help from co-curators Barbara Karesh Stender and Judith Alexander Weil Shanks, Dale and her writer/historian husband, Theodore Rosengarten, produced a big, beautiful book to accompany the exhibit. South Carolina native Paul Keyserling created a documentary titled *Land of Promise: The Jews of South Carolina*, sponsored by the Jewish Historical Society with funding from the Humanities Council of South Carolina, Jerry and Sue Klein, Harriet Keyserling, and other private contributors. The video was premiered on statewide television by South Carolina ETV and traveled to each of the museum venues.

JHSSC meetings have celebrated anniversaries of congregations in Charleston, Columbia, Aiken, Beaufort, Anderson, and Florence and have held programs in Sumter, Georgetown, Greenville, Abbeville, and Spartanburg. All of this was made possible by the commitment and skill of a broad array of leaders, including Klyde Robinson, Bernard Warshaw, Jeffrey Rosenblum, Ed Poliakoff, Robert Rosen, Ann Meddin Hellman, Rachel Gordin Barnett, Sol Breitbart, Harriet Keyserling, Robert Moses, and many others.

Twenty years have passed since we first sat on the porch at the College of Charleston's Philosophy Department with Professor Perlmutter and Senator Lourie and dreamed great dreams about what our efforts might produce. It is fair to say that the achievements of the Jewish Historical Society, the Jewish Studies Program, and the Jewish Heritage Collection have far exceeded our expectations. This story of remarkable success in so many areas demonstrates the power of great ideas and the potential of talented people working together for a common purpose. May JHSSC continue to build on its accomplishments for the next 20 years and beyond.

Clockwise from above: Dale Rosengarten, Judith Shanks, Lynn Robertson, and Barbara Stender at the opening of *A Portion of the People* at the Gibbes Museum in Charleston, September 2002; American Jewish History Scholars' Conference on an outing to Middleton Place, June 2006; Ann Meddin Hellman, Stephen P. Morse, Eve Meddin Berlinsky, and Claudia and David J. Cohen, Addlestone Library reception for Jewish genealogy conference, October 2008. Photo credits for pages 6 and 7: Michael Levkoff, Jeri Perlmutter, Dale Rosengarten, Dana Sardet.



How Far We Have Come *by Jeffrey Rosenblum*

How can I forget the historic meeting with Senator Isadore Lourie when a handful of us agreed to form a Jewish historical society? To me, an immigrant from Long Island, Isadore's tales of growing up in St. George were both strange and heart-warming. Both my in-laws—Mickey Kronsberg's parents—were from outside South Carolina, one from Virginia and the other from Maryland. My family was from New York. Because of my affiliation with Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim, I had long known the history of Jews in Charleston, but I did not know there was so much Jewish history in the rest of the state or that Jews throughout the country, from New Orleans to New York, were one family that, in many ways, blossomed from Charleston and South Carolina.

The Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina became an instrument of understanding my own northern roots and my wife's dual origins in a southern and a border state. My paternal grandfather, an immigrant, had a fresh fruit and vegetable pushcart on Manhattan's East Side. As times improved he graduated to a horse and buggy and later to a truck, moving into the business of supplying restaurants. My maternal grandfather was a skilled diamond cutter and jewelry designer. Both my grandmothers were primarily housewives, though my paternal grandmother was also a dressmaker for Upper East Side Jewish and Italian women.

JHSSC helped me comprehend my own heritage, as Jewish life in South Carolina was not so different from my family's, with one major exception. The exception was that I grew up as a member of the majority while the mid-20th century Jews in South Carolina were a small minority of the population. All my grandparents came to this country during the great wave of immigration of the 1880s and '90s when the mass of America's Jewish population settled in large northern cities. Three sets of my wife's and my grandparents came from Eastern Europe (Poland and Russia), while the fourth came from Western Europe (Holland) with a distinctly different set of cultural and educational backgrounds. With this pedigree I took charge of South Carolina's relatively new Jewish Historical Society



Jeffrey and Mickey Kronsberg Rosenblum at Gibbes Museum of Art, 2002.

and began to grasp the southerners' relationships with northern Jewish families and business connections.

Having served as chair of Charleston's Community Relations Committee and president of the Charleston Jewish Community Center, I immediately foresaw the power of building the largest Jewish organization in the state. What an opportunity to put forth the untold history of one of the oldest religious groups, not only in South Carolina, but in the country! With

Marty Perlmutter's efforts and the support of Alex Sanders, then president of the College of Charleston, we established the JHSSC quickly and were blessed with immediate success.

My term as president was an active and productive time. I was in office when *A Portion of the People* opened at McKissick Museum at the University of South Carolina in Columbia, and I championed Paul Keyserling's production of the companion documentary, *Land of Promise: The Jews of South Carolina*. My two-year term was filled with meetings and phone conversations about both of these activities. The video reached a wide audience on SC-ETV, and the exhibition gave the Society national recognition as it traveled the country to venues in Charleston, Charlotte, and New York City.

The Society has benefitted from great leadership. As I write this in 2014, I can look back and see how far we have come and how we have matured. I welcome all the new friends I have made because of the Society. I am proud to be the lone non-southerner who became a founding leader of this great gathering of people from across the state and beyond its borders.



Left to right: Samuel Steinberg, Shirley Feldman Prystowsky, and Sunny Steinberg; Harold Fox and Melvin Robinson; Charleston Mayor Joseph Riley, South Carolina Governor Jim Hodges, and JHSSC President Robert Rosen at the opening of A Portion of the People at the Gibbes Museum of Art, Charleston, SC, September 12, 2002. Photos by Michael Levkoff.

The Party President *by Robert N. Rosen*

I am not sure when my love of history began but I was fortunate to be a student of Sol Breibart at Rivers High School. In the 1960s I studied southern history as an undergraduate at the University of Virginia and a master's student at Harvard University. I also lived through some real history during the Civil Rights Movement in Charleston, in which my father, Morris D. Rosen, played a significant role as the city's corporation counsel.

In any event, my love of southern history led me to write several books, including *A Short History of Charleston* (1982), *Confederate Charleston* (1994), and *The Jewish Confederates* (2000), which documents the significant role Jewish southerners played in the Civil War, as well as my most recent work, *Saving the Jews: Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Holocaust* (2006). My interest in South Carolina Jewish history was enhanced immeasurably by my involvement with the creation of the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina.

Twenty years ago a remarkable group of people, led by Senator Isadore Lourie of Columbia, came together to found the Society. The timing was right for Jewish South Carolinians to begin to study, celebrate, organize, and preserve their incredibly interesting history. This was a moment in time when we all recognized that a way of life—small-town Jewish merchants and some older Jewish institutions and traditions—was fading into history in front of our eyes, and



Robert Rosen at the JHSSC meeting at Temple Beth El, Camden, SC, May 2003. Photo by Dale Rosengarten.

that, as South Carolina Jews, we had an important story to tell. And what a story it is! While today the centers of Jewish population in the United States are in big cities like New York, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles, South Carolina played an important role in the early history of Jews in America, from colonial days to the Revolution, to the growth of Jewish institutions and the Reform Movement, to the Civil War and beyond.

I was excited to be involved with people who loved history and were eager to tell the story of South Carolina Jewry. We were talking, writing about, and preserving our own ethnic and religious history. We were doing something new. It was a heady and productive project. Creating archives, books, exhibitions, lectures, and documentaries are expensive and time-consuming activities but it was joyous work.

I had the honor to be the Party President of the JHSSC. We held a black-tie gala at the Gibbes Museum of Art to introduce the greater Charleston community to our proud Jewish history. The mayor and governor attended, as did hundreds of supporters.

Jewish American history has come a long way in the past 20 years. Once the province of amateurs remembering their ancestors, it has become a respected professional field. The JHSSC has helped create an important legacy to teach our children and our children's children, and I am proud to have participated in this worthy endeavor. Jewish history is now part of the broader American experience, exactly as it should be.



JHSSC 20th Anniversary Celebration

May 17–18, 2014

College of Charleston ~ Charleston, South Carolina

Saturday, May 17

- 5:00 P.M.** Past presidents panel, Arnold Hall, Jewish Studies Center
 Moderator: Martin Perlmutter, JHSSC executive director, 1994–present
 Participants: Rachel Gordin Barnett, Belinda Friedman Gergel, Richard Gergel, Ann Meddin Hellman, Edward Poliakoff, Klyde Robinson, Robert Rosen, and Jeffrey Rosenblum
- 7:00** Dinner reception, Alumni Hall, Randolph Hall, second floor
 Remarks by Richard Gergel, JHSSC president, 1998–99

Sunday, May 18

- 9:00 A.M.** Bagel breakfast, Arnold Hall
- 9:30** Open board meeting in Arnold Hall (everyone is invited to attend!)
- 10:30** Stuart Rockoff ~ Looking Away from Dixie: the Changing Face of the Jewish South ~ Exploring how southern Jewish life has changed since World War II, and what the future may hold for Jewish communities south of the Mason-Dixon line.
- 12:00 P.M.** Adjourn



Stuart Rockoff was born in Fort Worth and raised in Houston, Texas. He graduated from Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut, with a B.A. in history. He received his Ph.D. in U.S. history from the University of Texas at Austin with an emphasis on immigration and American Jewish history. He has taught courses in American

and ethnic history at such schools as the University of Texas and Millsaps College. From 2002 to 2013 he served as the director of the history department at the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life in Jackson, Mississippi. In November 2013 he became the executive director of the Mississippi Humanities Council, where he works to develop and support public humanities programs around the state. He lives in Jackson with his wife, Susan, and their two daughters.

Hotel reservations

Francis Marion Hotel

387 King Street
 Charleston, SC 29403
 (843) 722-0600 or (877) 756-2121 toll free

To get the special rate of \$259 per night plus tax, make your reservations by April 1 and request a room in the "Jewish Historical Society room block."

OR

Holiday Inn, Mount Pleasant

250 Johnnie Dodds Boulevard
 Mount Pleasant, SC 29464
 (843) 884-6000 or (800) 972-2513 toll free

To get the special rate of \$159 per night plus tax, make your reservations by April 16 and request a room in the "Jewish Historical Society room block."

The conference packet will include maps.

Registration

Online at jhssc.org/events with Visa, MasterCard, Discover, or American Express OR by check, payable to JHSSC c/o Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program 96 Wentworth Street Charleston, SC 29424

Conference fee: \$100 per person
Questions: Enid Idelsohn
 Phone: (843) 953-3918 ~ fax: (843) 953-7624
 Email: IdelsohnE@cofc.edu

"A Grassroots Movement" by Alyssa Neely

"Growing up in Walterboro was really just delightful. . . . We've had the best of all worlds." In his 1996 interview for the Jewish Heritage Collection, Bernard Warshaw recalled a childhood free of antisemitism, where "there was no difference" between him and his Christian friends. He was "involved in nearly everything" as a boy, although his Saturdays belonged to his father, who insisted his son work in the family business, a clothing store in downtown Walterboro. In 2000 Warshaw's of Walterboro closed its doors for the final time, following a pattern that the founding members of the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina viewed with alarm: the shrinking Jewish presence in small towns throughout the Palmetto State.

As JHSSC president in 2004 and 2005, Warshaw encouraged members to become actively involved in collecting objects and information—"photos of congregations, Jewish artifacts, cemetery records, and information on marriages and bar and bat mitzvahs"—that tell the story of South Carolina's Jews. He sought to bring Jewish residents of the state together under an umbrella of "common history and heritage. . . . My project for my term as president," he wrote in the Summer 2004 JHSSC newsletter, "is to turn the Historical Society into a grassroots movement. . . . To encourage each community to become engaged in preserving its history, I am implementing structures to coordinate local efforts."

Warshaw's family typified the experience of Jewish immigrants of the early 20th century who became small-town southern merchants. His dad, Murray Warshaw, emigrated from Warsaw, Poland. "My father got to Charleston at the insistence of my uncle Mr. Hyman Berlinsky, who married . . . my mother's sister. Hyman

invited my daddy to come down to Charleston from New York; they were friends in New York." Hyman and Murray married sisters Tillie and Dotty Bebergal, daughters of Cecilia and Abraham Bebergal. The Bebergals were from the outskirts of Warsaw, Poland, and had followed family to Charleston. In Charleston Murray Warshaw worked for wholesale supplier Hyman Karesh in his Star Bargain House. In the spring of 1920, he got wind of an opportunity in a small city about 50 miles west of Charleston; Philip Bogoslow was selling his Walterboro store. Murray and Dotty took the leap, bought the store, and moved to the seat of Colleton County. Bernard was born that fall.

Murray and Dotty "were deeply involved in the community," coming forward to help people in need in their adopted hometown. Warshaw took their civic-mindedness to heart. Besides serving multiple terms as

president of Walterboro's Temple Mount Sinai, he dedicated his time over many decades to numerous local and state organizations, including the South Carolina State Development Board, the South Carolina Mental Health Commission, the Walterboro Chamber of Commerce, Shrine Club, Elks Club, Lions Club, Masons, Veterans of Foreign Wars and American Legion Post #93, and the Colleton County Literacy Council, to name just a few.

In 1973 Governor John West awarded Warshaw the Order of the Palmetto, the state's highest civilian honor, acknowledging his "extraordinary lifetime achievement and service to the state and nation." Colleton County recognized his local contributions in 1998 by naming its health and human services buildings the Bernard Warshaw Complex. The following year Governor Jim Hodges bestowed upon



Bernard Warshaw oversees his going-out-of-business sale in 2000, in Walterboro, SC. Photo by Bill Aron.

Warshaw the Silver Crescent, the state's top award for community service. In November 2013 Warshaw was the second person to receive the Exchange Club of Charleston's Defender of the Constitution Award.

After graduating from The Citadel in 1942, Warshaw spent three and a half years in the U.S. Army, serving in an anti-aircraft unit in the European theater. His experiences at the end of the war profoundly affected his outlook. "I had the fortune or the misfortune of being at Dachau the day after it was taken, when the ovens were still warm and the ashes were still smoldering . . . there were literally piles and piles of bodies, and the stench was such that you wouldn't believe. The thing that sticks in my mind the most is a little girl you see in one of the piles, about six years old, and I've seen that face since 1945."

When he joined the Society, Warshaw's goal was to foster "a more cohesive Jewish community" in South Carolina. "The lifeline of the Jewish people down south, wherever you are, is word of mouth.



Captain Bernard Warshaw outside of Frankfurt and Wiesbaden, Germany, August 1945. Gift of Bernard Warshaw. Special Collections, College of Charleston.

You cannot live in a community and not become involved." The cemetery project was one example of Bernard's push for statewide involvement at the community level. In the Winter 2006 newsletter, Bernard described it as "a major work in progress . . . aimed at documenting Jewish burial sites across the state. Our most capable chairman, Stanley Farbstein, heads the project, assisted by a committee of hard-working and efficient volunteers." The initiative took off, and today information and images documenting thousands of burials in 32 Jewish cemeteries across South Carolina are readily available on the Society's website.

Not willing to rest on his laurels, Warshaw saw the need to recruit young members, increase the participation of JHSSC's board and membership, and add to the list of \$1,000-dollar-a-year donors. He was proud of the

Society's accomplishments: "Most important," he wrote, "we have put South Carolina's long and significant Jewish story on the map."

Bernard Warshaw, JHSSC's sixth president, passed away on Thursday, February 27, 2014. A proud Citadel graduate, a decorated war veteran, a pillar of the Walterboro community, and perhaps South Carolina's best known haberdasher, Bernard expanded the mission of the JHSSC. Under his leadership the Society undertook the huge task of documenting the Jewish cemeteries of South Carolina. With impeccable taste and uncompromising integrity, Bernard and his wife, Ann, helped make the JHSSC a welcoming grassroots organization. Bernard's memory is already a blessing. — Martin Perlmutter

Left: Volunteer Stéphane Grauzam photographing gravestones in KKBE's Coming Street Cemetery, the oldest extant Jewish burial ground in South Carolina, 2013. JHSSC shares its cemetery information with jewishgen.org. Photo by Randi Serrins.



JHSSC and Family Connections

by Edward Poliakoff

As a longtime member and a former president of the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina, I welcome the opportunities the Society has provided to learn more about the rich history of Jewish people in the Palmetto State. Among JHSSC's many accomplishments over 20 years is a program started during my term to co-sponsor historical markers at sites of Jewish interest across the state. I have been happy to attend marker dedications in Columbia, Sumter, and Anderson. These markers and those to come are but one example of how the Historical Society achieves the purpose stated in its bylaws: ". . . to promote the study and preservation of the history and culture of the Jews of South Carolina."

I was asked to write about my family history, how my people got to South Carolina, and how that affected my interest in JHSSC—big subjects for a short essay. How and why grandparents Israel and Bertha From settled in Union and grandparents David and Rachel Poliakoff settled in Abbeville, and how and why their siblings and cousins settled in nearby towns is a research project for another day, but it resulted in my having cousins throughout northwest South Carolina.

My parents, Myer Poliakoff and Rosa From, were born and raised in Abbeville and Union, respectively, and now they rest in Aiken's B'Nai Israel Cemetery, near the graves of many other Poliakoffs.



D. Poliakoff Department Store on the square, prior to renovation of the building. Below: Edward Poliakoff, Elaine Poliakoff Fenton, and Doris Poliakoff Feinsilber pose in the office of their mother, Rosa From Poliakoff, at the back of the showroom, Abbeville, SC, October 2000. Photos by Bill Aron.



Growing up in Abbeville, for my sisters, Doris and Elaine, and me, our childhood Jewish connections outside our extended family and observant Jewish home consisted mainly of Temple B'Nai Israel in Anderson and Camp Blue Star in North Carolina. My wonderful wife Sandra (née Altman) was a Blue Star camper from Charleston, but she is younger than I and we did not meet until years later in Washington, D.C.

David Poliakoff founded D. Poliakoff dry goods store on Abbeville's court square in 1900. He later sent for his childhood sweetheart, Rachel Axelrod, in Minsk, and they were married in Augusta by Rabbi Abraham Poliakoff, a cousin who was the first spiritual leader of Synagogue Adas Yeshurun. The D. Poliakoff store was in business for 100 years, an institution beloved by generations who shopped and

worked there, operated in its second half-century by Myer Poliakoff and, after his passing, by Rosa Poliakoff. One of my fondest JHSSC memories was its 1995 meeting in Abbeville, led by the Society's founding president, the late Senator Isadore Lourie, to help celebrate the store's 95th anniversary. When the business closed in 2000, we renovated its National Register-listed historic building and in the process gathered cherished family objects, store documents, and legacy retail fixtures, some of which we were proud to see displayed in *A Portion of the*

People: Three Hundred Years of Southern Jewish Life, the superb exhibit produced by JHSSC, the College of Charleston, and USC's McKissick Museum.

Another favorite JHSSC memory is the day I drove to Abbeville to meet Dale Rosengarten, founding director of the College's Jewish Heritage Collection, Lynn Robertson, executive director of McKissick Museum, and Jane Przybysz, a curator at McKissick, who were traveling the state collecting items for the exhibition they

were developing. They expressed polite interest when I invited them to the town's visitors' center to see the collection of American Western art donated by my late uncle Dr. Samuel Poliakov. But on the way to the cases where the collection was installed, we walked under a huge mural hung high on the wall depicting an event in



Ed Poliakov, a partner in Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough LLP, lives in Columbia, SC, with Sandra Altman Poliakov, his wife of 42 years. Their daughter, Beth, and son-in-law, Greg Nikolayevsky, pictured at their March 2012 wedding in Columbia, live in Denver with their newborn daughter, Ayla. Son Eli and daughter-in-law Robin Grossman Poliakov live in Charleston with daughters Sydney (r) and Anna (l). Courtesy of Ed Poliakov.

local history: the final meeting of the disbanding Confederate cabinet. In the painting President Jefferson Davis is addressing his military advisors, with Secretary of State Judah P. Benjamin seated to his left, just below a portrait of John C. Calhoun. Any interest in the collection disappeared! McKissick convinced the city of Abbeville to lend the mural, arranged funding for its restoration, and it became a centerpiece of *A Portion of the People*.

Looking ahead, my hope and expectation for JHSSC is that its programs, website, and publications, plus its close connections with the Jewish Heritage Collection and the Jewish Studies Program at the College of Charleston, will continue to help each of us understand how our own family narratives fit in the rich history and culture of the Jews of South Carolina.

Roots and Branches

by Ann Meddin Hellman

My interest in southern Jewish history grew out of a passion for genealogy, which simply means the study of family history with an emphasis on lineages—who begat whom. I began to document the history of my family and my husband's family, the Kareshes, around 1997, when I discovered *jewishgen.org*, a website geared to researching Jewish families around the world. I put in my mother's maiden name, Levkoff, and I found a cousin who was also researching the family. The more I discover about our forebears, the more I learn about the history of Jews in South Carolina.

On my mother's side I am the sixth generation to have lived in Charleston. My great-great-grandfather Rev. Barnett Rubin arrived



Barnett Rubin, ca. 1873.

in the United States in 1868. His wife, Hannah Frank Rubin, and their son Abraham followed three years later. The first documentation I found of Barnett in Charleston dates from September 16, 1873, when he performed the marriage of Mitchell A. Phillips to Miss Augusta, only daughter of Mr. H. Golliner—an event reported in the local press and duly noted in Rabbi Barnett Elzas's book *Jewish Marriage Notices from the Newspaper Press of Charleston, S.C., 1775–1906*. Rubin served as rabbi of Brith Sholom for 35 years, as I found out from his tombstone in Brith Sholom Congregation Cemetery, also known as Brith Sholom Magnolia Cemetery. His wife's mother—my maternal great-great-grandmother, Esther Frank—lived with Rev. Rubin and Hannah at 418 King Street.

Henry and Miriam Feintuch, my mother's great-grandparents, came to South Carolina from Warszawa, Poland, in 1877 and 1879 respectively. Miriam arrived with their daughters, Eva and Mollie. The 1880 census shows them living in St. Stephens, where Henry was a country merchant. In 1883 the Charleston city directory has Feintuch at 557 King Street. Eva eventually married Abraham Rubin, son of Barnett and Hannah, and Mollie married Jacob Needle.

My other maternal great-great-grandparents, Dvosy and Jacob Piatigorsky, left Kiev, Ukraine, in 1881, traveling with their five daughters, their husbands, and children. Their daughters were Hannah (Henry) Levkoff, Darby (Israel) Birlant, Betty (Meyer) Bluestein, Esther (Benjamin) Warshavsky Bercoff, and Simmie (Mordecai-Morris) Patla. Their first home in the United States was in Macon, Georgia. The entire family eventually moved to Charleston. The Levkoffs' son Shier married Rebecca Rubin, the daughter of Abraham Rubin and Eva Feintuch Rubin.

Genealogical research tells you about births, marriages, and migrations, and also about what people did for a living and how they moved up (or down) the social ladder. In 1883 Charleston's city directory lists Henry Levkoff as a peddler. From 1886 to 1894 he was in dry goods. In 1895 he was working for Marks and Needle, and three years later moved with his family to Augusta, Georgia, where he eventually opened H. Levkoff and Sons, a clothing store. After Shier Levkoff died in 1935, his wife Rebecca, his daughter Doris (my mother), and his son Abner Harris Levkoff moved to Charleston. A second daughter, Estelle, was married and lived in Greenville.

I was deeply involved in family history when, in 2003, Marty Perlmutter asked me to do something with a batch of Jewish Historical Society photographs that he had



Barnett Rubin's grandsons, Ben, Mitch, and Isadore Rubin, and his great-grandson Abner Levkoff in the French Boot Shop, King Street, Charleston, SC, ca. 1940.

this information into an online spreadsheet which lists burials by town and burial ground, and I continue to add photographs of gravestones and memorial plaques as they become available.

In 2010, during my first spring as JHSSC president, we visited Bluffton, where a brand new congregation called Oseh Shalom had grown from 17 to 500 members in four short years. In Anderson the next fall, we listened to a panel of local people talk about what it was like being Jewish in the Upstate. In spring 2011, in partnership with the College of Charleston's Jewish Studies Program, we

co-sponsored a conference on "Jews, Slavery, and the Civil War." The program, commemorating the sesquicentennial of America's bloodiest conflict, attracted academic heavyweights from far and wide, and the newsletter featured original essays by leading scholars in the field. In my last season as president, I presided over a joint meeting with the Southern Jewish Historical Society, held at the University of South Carolina, where four special exhibitions had been mounted to complement the conference.

When I turned over JHSSC's reins to Rachel G. Barnett, who had proven her talents organizing the Columbia meeting, I was proud of our accomplishments and happy to have more time to devote to my work as the Society's webmaster. Please visit the site and let me know if you want to get involved!



Left to right from back row: Ben Rubin, Maizie-Louise Cohen Rubin, Estelle Levkoff Poliakov, Beck Rubin Levkoff, Evelyn Selz Rubin, Frances Rubin Rothschild, Alan Rubin, and Doris Levkoff Meddin, at the family home, 64 Pitt Street, Charleston, SC, ca. 1938. Photos gift of Ann Meddin Hellman. Special Collections, College of Charleston.

Family Matters by Rachel Gordin Barnett

My college-age daughter, Emily, recently sent me an email asking about her family history. I was thrilled, of course, to share what little I know about my grandparents and how they arrived in South Carolina. This got me thinking about how fortunate we are to have the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina not only as a repository for our state's history, but as a headquarters for learning and engagement now and for coming generations.

The Society's founding president, Isadore Lourie, aimed to create a place for our

collective memories. Over the past twenty years, his vision has become a reality. Because of Izzy's foresight, Emily can now go online and hear her great-grandmother Libby Levinson reminisce about her journey from Bialystok to Charleston. She can check cemetery records at jhssc.org and find out who in the family was buried where and when. She can visit Special Collections at the College of Charleston and examine photographs, diaries, store records, letters, artifacts, and memorabilia relating to her forebears.

All sides of Emily's family are firmly rooted in South Carolina's Jewish community. Her dad's people include Levinsons, Louries, Kalinskys, Gergels, Lomanskys, Kligmans, Levys, and all those inter-related branches that make southern Jewish genealogy such a challenge. My lineage is more limited in scope but equally entrenched, with long tenures in Charleston and Summerton, and extended family in St. Matthews and Greeleyville. Emily's step-dad's family, the Barnetts, arrived in Clarendon and Sumter counties well before the Civil War.

Both my grandfathers emigrated from Russia. My maternal grandmother left Galicia after World War I—a region that was



The "uptown" crowd, including the author's mother's family, in their old neighborhood, St. Philip Street, Charleston, SC, 2000. Photo by Bill Aron.

formerly part of Austria, then Poland. My paternal grandmother's family came a generation before and settled in Baltimore. I have yet to hear the story of how my Russian-immigrant grandfather and my American-born grandmother met, but they married and put down roots in Summerton, South Carolina. I can only imagine what my grandmother must have thought about this tiny southern town! In any case, she became a part of the community. She was an exceptionally kind person, had lots of friends, and worked in the business.

My grandfather's brothers and their

families lived in the town as well. They were all merchants, but their sons and daughters, as they came of age, left Summerton to pursue college and then settled in Washington, D.C., and vicinity—Bethesda, Silver Springs, etc. My father, however, broke the pattern. Following graduation from USC's School of Pharmacy in the late 1940s, he returned to Summerton to run his father's dry goods store and to open a pharmacy. He had been only 15 when his father dropped him off at the USC Horseshoe and said, "Good luck!" As a "semi-helicopter" parent, I find that really sad. When I asked Dad about this, his reply was, "Rachel, he spoke little English and he had no idea what to do!" But he did know a college education would open doors for his children that he could merely dream about.

Mom grew up in Charleston, the only child of Charlotte and Ralph Brotman. Her father died when she was 12 and for years my grandmother ran the family business, an army-navy store on King Street. Mom graduated from the College of Charleston in May 1955 and married my father that August. She moved to Summerton where they raised four children. This is where my family fits in the mosaic of South Carolina's

Jewish history. There are gaps and holes in the story I want to fill so that I can pass along a fuller picture to my children.

As kids we would tease our parents about playing "Jewish geography." They could sit for hours with friends and family and talk about who knew whom, who was related and how—having a grand time while they indulged in what we now call oral history. Weaving together these family stories and relationships is what got me interested in South Carolina Jewish history and why I chose to get involved in the Society. During my two years as president, I steered our attention toward family history, genealogy, and civic life. From a program called "To Heal the World: Jewish South Carolinians in Public Service," to a two-day celebration of the 100th

anniversary of Florence's Beth Israel Congregation, to *Family History Roadshow*, an exhibition produced in conjunction with our May 2013 meeting, I relished the planning process and welcomed the opportunity to encourage others to share their stories.

I hope that JHSSC will deepen the commitment of its current members and spark the interest of younger audiences. We need to find ways to inspire and engage the rising generation in meaningful ways. The new Center for Southern Jewish Culture at the College of Charleston provides a vehicle for us to expand our outreach both to students and to the wider world. Isadore Lourie, I feel sure, would be delighted, but not surprised, by this next chapter in our evolution.

Center Talk: Looking Toward the Future

by Adam Mendelsohn

As a historian I don't have to predict the future, just the past—an easier task, though scholars don't always get that right either. Whatever my limitations as a seer, I know enough to tell that the grim tidings in the Jewish and the general press about Jewish life in the South are misplaced.

Every six months or so, a journalist stumbles across a synagogue in a small town in the Mississippi Delta that is either shuttered or on its last legs. Returning to New York, Chicago, or Los Angeles, the reporter pitches a story about the decline of Jewish communities in the South to the editors. The resulting copy is almost always maudlin, lamenting the imminent demise of southern Jewish life. Last year the *Forward* eulogized southern Jews as a "dying breed." BBC News predicted "The end of a Deep South way of life."

Judging by these headlines, you'd think that newspaper editors are delighted to have finally found something more endangered than the newspapers themselves. If we are to believe the morbid theme that runs through these articles, southern Jews are not in need of historians

but morticians. A declension narrative has taken root—newspaper readers now expect to find Jewish life in the South breathing its last.

Particularly striking about this coverage is not how interested newspaper editors assume their readers will be about southern Jews, but how wrong, or at least misconceived, this narrative of doom and gloom is. Reports of the death of southern Jewry, to paraphrase Mark Twain, are greatly exaggerated. Yes, Jewish communities in the rural South are in demographic decline, as is the rural South itself. The region's economy is no longer rooted in the soil, and its people have flocked from the countryside and small towns to the cities. In 1940 only 36 percent of the South's population lived in urban areas; today more than double that percentage do.

The center of gravity of the Jewish South may have shifted away from its historic pattern, but far from dying, southern Jewish life is experiencing a period of extraordinary growth and exuberance. More Jews live in the South today than at any previous point in American history, many of them in Atlanta, Charlotte, Dallas, and



Tour of historic sites, Charleston, SC, October 1998.

other cities in the Sunbelt. And more organizations and groups than ever before are working to sustain Jewish life in the South.

The creation of the Pearlstine/Lipov Center for Southern Jewish Culture, the result of a generous gift from Edwin Pearlstine, his daughters, and their families, is a further sign of the vitality of the Jewish South, especially in the state of South Carolina. What better vote of confidence in our future than a Center devoted to exploring our roots in the region? The Center will build upon the successes of the Jewish Heritage Collection and the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina to promote teaching, research, and publication on the culture and history of southern Jews. It will be a source of distinction for the College of

Charleston—no other university has anything like it—and an intellectual hub for the study of everything southern and Jewish. Dale Rosengarten and I are in the process of planning a full slate of programs for the next two years—lectures and walking tours, oral history interviews and group discussions, film screenings and cultural events—enough to keep even the most tireless enthusiasts busy in 2014–15.

Far from breaking out the mourning rags, this is a moment to celebrate Jewish life in the South and the foresight of those who have supported the Center for Southern Jewish Culture. Never before have we had a sturdier platform to ensure that the bright future we anticipate for Jews in the region remains connected to its colorful past.

JHSSC Celebrates Two Decades of Remarkable Growth

by Martin Perlmutter

The seeds Senator Isadore Lourie planted for both a Jewish historical society and a Jewish archives were sown in fertile soil. While he was painfully aware that a mercantile class of small-town Jews was aging and their children were heading off to careers as professionals in the cities, he believed that Jewish South Carolinians understood the value and merit of preserving the record of this changing demographic. The Jewish community in Izzy's hometown of St. George—as well as in places such as Kingstree, Dillon, Walterboro, Georgetown, Sumter, Camden, and Abbeville—was rapidly shrinking by the 1980s.

During a panel discussion sponsored by the College of Charleston's Jewish Studies Program in 1993, Jack Bass, Paul Siegel, and Izzy spoke with a sense of urgency about the decline of Jewish life in the small towns where they grew up and, more generally, about the disappearance of the "country Jew." In 1994, two years after Alex Sanders, Izzy's longstanding friend and desk mate in the state senate, became president of the College, the time seemed right to realize the dream of founding a new statewide Jewish historical society.

The Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program, initiated in 1984, would be a natural home for the Society, while the

College library, headed by David J. Cohen, was an able and willing partner. Thanks in large measure to Sol Breibart, the library's Special Collections department had just received the congregational records of Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim—arguably the most important collection of its kind in the South—and David saw the virtue of building a Jewish heritage archives on this base.

Twenty years have passed since then, and JHSSC has benefitted from consistently excellent leadership, from Klyde Robinson, who had the unenviable task of following in Izzy's footsteps, to David Draisen, our vigorous current president. Under Richard Gergel and Jeffrey Rosenblum's guidance, the exhibition *A Portion of the People* was developed by historian and curator Dale Rosengarten in partnership with USC's McKissick Museum. Richard and Jeffrey secured financial support from the South Carolina Arts

Commission, Jerry and Sue Kline, and Harriet Keyserling for the companion video, *Land of Promise*, created by Paul Keyserling. Robert Rosen launched the pillar membership program to secure JHSSC's budget. The late Bernard Warshaw advanced the Society's agenda as a grassroots organization, supporting local initiatives such as the statewide cemetery survey. Belinda Gergel and Ed Poliakoff promoted historical



Left to right, standing: Saul Viener, Isadore Lourie, Klyde Robinson, Jeffrey Rosenblum, Martin Perlmutter, Sol Breibart, and Richard Gergel; seated: Leah Chase, Belinda Gergel, and Janice Kahn, College of Charleston, October 1998.

markers and Ann Meddin Hellman built the Society's impressive website. Rachel Gordin Barnett made my job as executive director easy, taking charge and orchestrating our bi-annual meetings with imagination and grace. Her focus on family history resonated with our membership.

Others, too, played important roles. Elizabeth Moses worked as Dale's research assistant and JHSSC's administrative aide for several years, before moving to Georgetown and reviving its congregation, Beth Elohim. Stanley Farbstein (o.b.m.) initiated a survey of Jewish burial grounds across the state and enlisted Doris Baumgarten as his assistant; Joe Wachter and Ann Meddin Hellman picked up where they left off. Sol Breibart lit our path as chief historian of the tribe and keeper of Robert's Rules of Order. Enid Idelsohn turned everyone's ideas into events and happenings. Each of these dedicated individuals has left an indelible mark; together they have provided the energy and expertise to make JHSSC what it is.

In its 20-year history, the Society has exceeded all expectations. It is the largest statewide Jewish membership organization in South Carolina, with close to 500 dues-paying members. The Jewish Heritage Collection at Addlestone Library is a thriving archive, housing important synagogue records, oral histories, business accounts, art, artifacts, and family memorabilia. JHSSC has helped produce a landmark exhibition and a nationally televised video, and continues to document South Carolina's Jewish cemeteries, sponsor historical markers at sites of Jewish interest, and maintain an informative website (jhssc.org). Our biannual meetings have surpassed B'nai Brith gatherings of years past in bringing together people from across the state and well beyond for enjoyable weekend get-togethers. Our newsletter, edited by Dale and her associate Alyssa Neely, is mailed to more than 8,000 households every spring and fall. The Jewish history of South Carolina is now on the national map.

The recently announced Pearlstine/Lipov Center for Southern Jewish Culture represents our next big step forward. The Center establishes southern Jewish history as a priority at the College of Charleston and promises to bolster resources for research, teaching, and community outreach. JHSSC's success was instrumental in launching the Center, and the Center will assure the Society's success in the future.

Yes, I/we want to become a Pillar of the JHSSC.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Check enclosed \$ _____ (includes annual membership)

Pillars

Susan and Charles Altman, Charleston, SC
Ellen Arnovitz, Atlanta, GA
Doris Baumgarten, Aiken, SC
Betty Brody, Coral Gables, FL
Harold Brody, Atlanta, GA
Alex and Dyan Cohen, Darlington, SC
Barry and Ellen Draisen, Anderson, SC
David and Andrea Draisen, Anderson, SC
Lowell and Barbara Epstein, Charleston, SC
Harold I. Fox, Charleston, SC
Phillip and Patricia Greenberg, Florence, SC
Ann and Max Hellman, Charleston, SC
Alan and Charlotte Kahn, Columbia, SC
Michael S. Kogan, Charleston, SC
Ronald Krancer, Bryn Mawr, PA
Allan and Jeanne Lieberman, Charleston, SC
Susan R. Lourie, Columbia, SC
Susan Pearlstine, Charleston, SC
Edward and Sandra Poliakoff, Columbia, SC
Benedict and Brenda Rosen, Myrtle Beach, SC
Robert and Susan Rosen, Charleston, SC
Sandra Lee Rosenblum, Charleston, SC
Joseph and Edie Rubin, Charleston, SC
Jeff and Walton Selig, Columbia, SC
Sandra Shapiro, Wilsonville, OR
Lois and Raphael Wolpert, Tampa, FL
Anita Zucker, Charleston, SC

Foundational Pillars

Henry and Sylvia Yaschik Foundation, Charleston, SC

Founding Patrons

Anonymous, Charleston, SC
Henry and Rachel Barnett, Columbia, SC
Raymond Lifchez, Berkeley, CA

O.B.M.

Carolee Rosen Fox
Harvey and Mimi Gleberman
Ruth Brody Greenberg
Anne Oxler Krancer
Raymond Rosenblum
Raymond and Florence Stern
Jerry Zucker

Pillars are our backbone; without them we could not fund our operations. They enable the Society to do its work day in and day out. Pillar members commit to donating \$1,000 a year for five years. To continue and to expand the work of the Society, we need to add you to our list of staunch supporters. Please join us as a Pillar and watch the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina prosper for another 20 years. Go to jhssc.org for more information. All contributions are tax deductible.



THE
**JEWISH
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**
OF
SOUTH CAROLINA

Martin Perlmutter, *Executive Director*
Enid Idelsohn, *Administrator*

Officers

David Draisen, *President*
Susan Altman, *Vice-President*
Alex Cohen, *Vice-President*
Barry Draisen, *Vice-President*
Ernie Marcus, *Vice-President*
David J. Cohen, *Treasurer*
Garry Baum, *Secretary*
Steven Savitz, *Archivist*

Past Presidents

Isadore Lourie, o.b.m., *Founding President*
Klyde Robinson
Richard Gergel
Jeffrey Rosenblum
Robert Rosen
Bernard Warshaw, o.b.m.
Belinda Gergel
Edward Poliakoff
Ann Meddin Hellman
Rachel Gordin Barnett

Board of Directors

Moss Blachman, Columbia
H. J. Brand, Greenville
Susan Brill, Columbia
Sandra Conradi, Mount Pleasant
Robert Dreyfus, Greenville
Barbara Ellison, Charleston
Fred Glickman, Lake Wylie
Phillip Greenberg, Florence
Alan Kahn, Columbia
Billy Keyserling, Beaufort
Michael Kogan, Charleston
Harold Kornblut, Latta
Mike Krupsaw, Anderson
Gail Lieb, Columbia
Burnet Mendelsohn, Charleston
Herbert Novit, Hilton Head Island
Eli Poliakoff, Charleston
Alan Reyner, Columbia
Mickey Rosenblum, Charleston

jhssc.org

Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina
96 Wentworth Street
College of Charleston
Charleston, SC 29424
Phone: 843.953.3918
Email: jhssc@cofc.edu

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE

P - A - I - D

CHARLESTON, SC
PERMIT No. 485

Join the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** ____ **Zip:** _____

Phone: _____ **Fax:** _____

E-mail Address: _____

ANNUAL DUES FOR 2014 (JANUARY–DECEMBER)

_____ Individual/Family Membership	\$36
_____ Friend	\$200
_____ Sponsor	\$350
_____ Patron	\$750
_____ Founding patron	\$1,000
_____ Pillar (\$1,000 per year for 5 years)	\$5,000
_____ Foundational Pillar (\$2,000 per year for 5 years)	\$10,000

Join or renew online at jhssc.org.

Enroll your friends and relatives for an additional \$36 each.
Send us their information and we will inform them of your gift.

*Make checks payable to JHSSC
and mail to the address above.*

**Register now for the May 17–18 meeting in Charleston.
See page 10 for more information.**