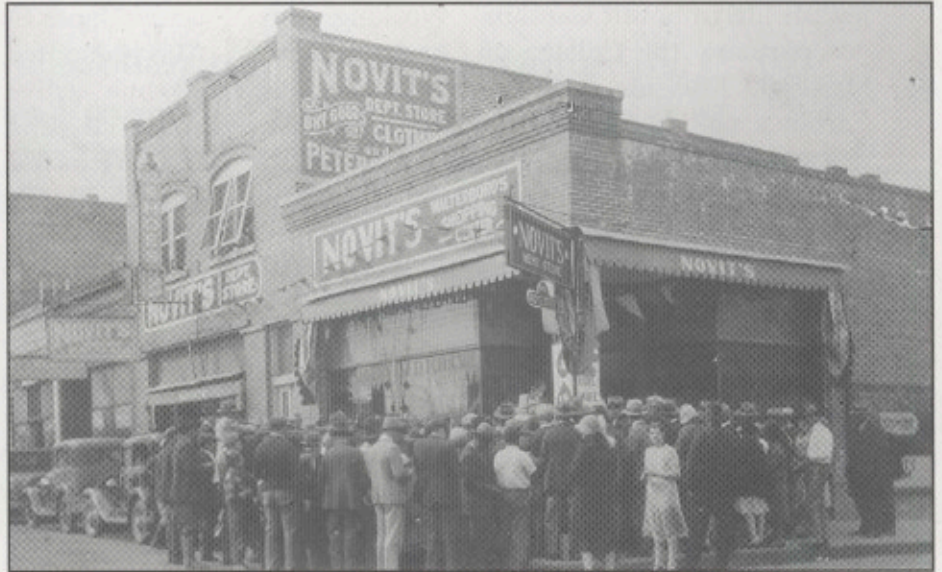
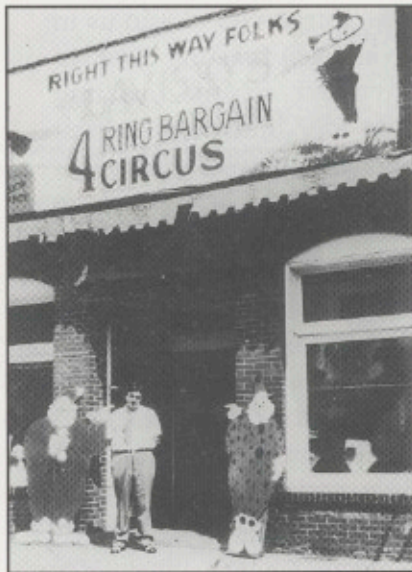
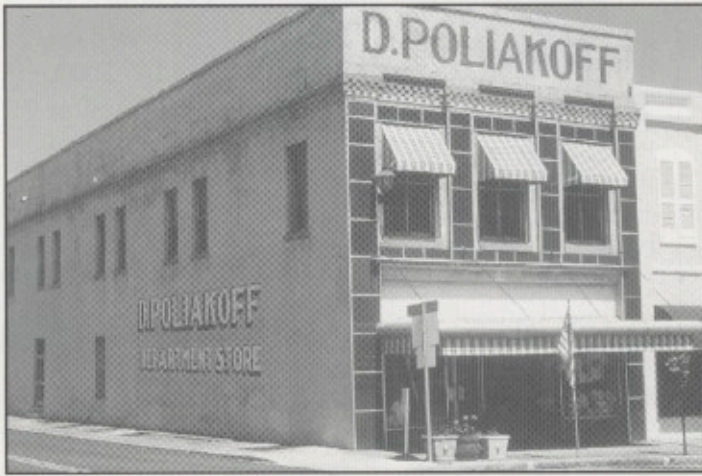




Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina

Spring 2000



Copies of these photographs are part of the extensive holdings on South Carolina Jewish merchants and businesses in the Jewish Heritage Collection at the College of Charleston library. Top left: Poliakoff Department Store, Abbeville. Top right: I. Cohen's store, Latta. Bottom left: Lavisky's store, Denmark. Bottom right: Novit's Department Store, Walterboro.

From the President.....



Dear Friends,

I have had the privilege for the past two years to serve as the President of the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina, following Isadore Lourie and Klyde Robinson in that capacity. This Society was formed to study, preserve, and promote our unique history. In its brief six year history, the Society has had a major impact in highlighting the notable Jewish history of South Carolina and bringing Jewish South Carolinians together in a common forum.

The Society is the brainchild of former Senator Isadore Lourie, who wanted to unite his friends and fellow South Carolina Jews who have an active interest in studying their history and traditions. His goal was to capture some of the solidarity created in earlier days by B'nai B'rith, which brought Jews from across the state together, regardless of where they lived or what branch of Judaism they practiced.

From its inception, the Society has had as its mission the development of a major museum exhibit on the three hundred years of Jewish life in South Carolina. Working with our partners, the College of Charleston and McKissick Museum at the University of South Carolina, we have raised almost \$500,000 for this exhibit, which is scheduled to open in Columbia at McKissick on September 9, 2001. The exhibit will then travel to the Gibbes Museum in Charleston in the Spring of 2002, and thereafter, to major museums across the country. The extraordinary story of the Jews of South Carolina, one of the great secrets of American history, will soon be known throughout South Carolina and beyond.

In conjunction with the exhibition opening, the Society is planning a comprehensive educational program to increase public awareness and understanding of the South Carolina Jewish story. As a result of generous gifts from Harriet and Dr. Herbert Keyserling, Jerry and Sue Kline, and the Jesselson Foundation of New York, the Society

is actively planning a "cutting edge" educational program. This will include the production of curricular materials for public schools and Jewish religious schools, an interactive, user-friendly Web site, teacher training for public and Jewish school educators, and possibly, a short video that will be appropriate for classroom use and public television.

I hope you will have the opportunity to join us at our annual meeting, which will be held in Charleston on April 15 & 16, 2000. This weekend will include a panel discussion on Jewish merchants in the South and an interfaith seder commemorating a Civil War seder held in 1864 in Adams Run by the Levy brothers. Rabbi Ted Levy (no relation) of Hilton Head will preside.

Our South Carolina Jewish heritage is an important one. Please become a part of our living history and join the Society. Our continued success is tied directly to the active participation of neighbors and friends across South Carolina. I urge you to join us in Charleston for our annual meeting and to become actively involved in the exciting events leading up to our museum exhibit opening in the Fall of 2001, "*...A Portion of the People: Three Hundred Years of Jewish Life in South Carolina*."

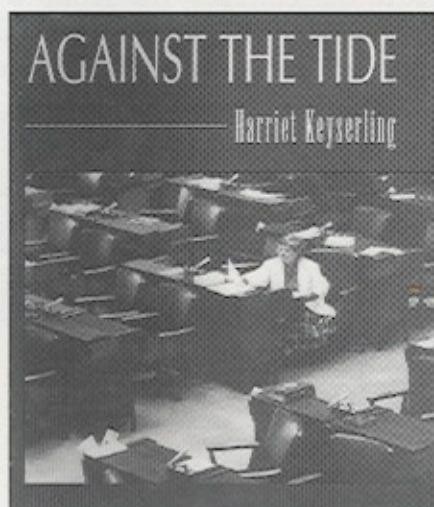
We are all South Carolinians now, whether our roots are in Charleston, Greenville, New York, Michigan, or Russia. As South Carolinians, we are heirs to a wonderful legacy of religious tolerance and acceptance. We need to continue to record and educate ourselves and others about our history; as Jews, we have always been concerned with our history. We need new members, both young and old, native and immigrant, to continue the work we have begun. Please join.

Sincerely,

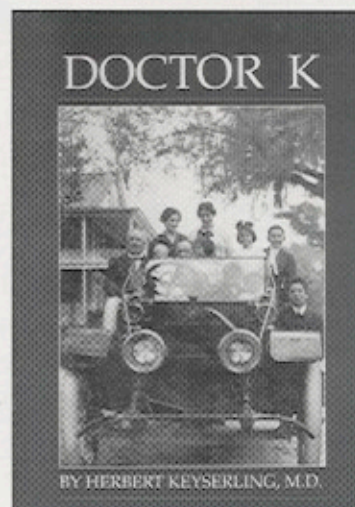
Richard Mark Gergel

Authors Harriet and Herbert Keyserling

Harriet Keyserling, who in 1998 published, *Against the Tide: One Woman's Political Struggle*, a personal account of her career in Southern politics, has been joined in the literary world by husband, Herbert, author of the newly released, *Doctor K.*, a memoir of Dr. Keyserling's family and experience as a Jewish doctor in the Low-country of South Carolina.



Harriet Keyserling's book may be purchased through www.amazon.com (\$22.46) or through Barnes & Noble (\$20.96).



Herbert Keyserling's book may be purchased by sending \$15.95/per book to Dr. Herbert Keyserling, P.O. Box 1108, Beaufort, SC 29901.

Don't forget to keep up with us through the Internet!!!

Jewish Heritage Collection: www.cofc.edu/~jhc

Jewish Studies Program: www.cofc.edu/~jwst

Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina

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Martin Perlmutter	Secretary
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Newsletter

Martin Perlmutter	Editor-in-Chief
Elizabeth Moses	Managing Editor
Dale Rosengarten	Copy Editor

News Notes...

Seeking Rebecca I. Moses...

In search of the daybook belonging to Rebecca I. Moses (née Phillips, 1792-1872), who lived most of her adult life in Charleston, South Carolina. The daybook has entries dating from c. 1840-1860 and is known to have been in the possession of Adolph Brady Rosenfield, 1044 Redondo Avenue, Long Beach, CA. in 1945. Rosenfield is descended from Rebecca's daughter, Adeline Moses, who married Adolph Brady of Savannah. Rebecca died in Savannah, Georgia, at the home of her daughter, Cecilia Moses, who married Abraham Alexander Solomons. Any leads are appreciated. Please contact Judith Shanks, P.O. Box 42456, Washington, DC, jshanks@mindspring.com.



Joint Study Program on Sephardim in Spain and the Americas

In 1996, the Xavier de Salas Foundation in Trujillo, Spain, a partner of the College of Charleston in its semester and summer study abroad programs, began a project to investigate the continuity, changes, and influences of the Sephardic traditions in the modern and contemporary histories of Argentina and Mexico.

The Foundation would like to broaden the comparative approach with research on Sephardic communities in the Americas and specifically in the Low-country of the Carolinas. The research envisioned is of individual and community case studies, for inclusion in a publication on Judeo-Spanish cultures. The archive will be located at the Convento de la Coria in Trujillo. For more information, contact Dr. Jack Parson, Director of International Education and Programs at the College of Charleston, Charleston, SC, 29424. 843/ 953-7662 or parsonj@cofc.edu.

Sephardim in Charleston

An informal group has begun meeting in Charleston to bring together people of Sephardic ancestry and traditions and those with an interest in this culture. The group will meet to explore their common background and to increase their knowledge and awareness of this often overlooked Jewish heritage. Social gatherings will include sharing resources, family histories, religious traditions, music, and food. For information, contact Luna Gainer at 843/ 740-6907.



New Jewish Studies Program Center at College of Charleston

The Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program at the College of Charleston is developing a Jewish Studies Center. The Center will be the home for all of the activities of the Jewish Studies Program, which include the Jewish Student Union/Hillel, the academic and administrative offices of the Jewish Studies Program, and outreach efforts to the larger South Carolina community. The Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina is housed at the College and is part of Jewish Studies outreach efforts.

With College of Charleston President Alex Sanders' help, the Program has purchased a property on the corner of Glebe and Wentworth Streets, in the heart of the historic campus and two door down from the President's house. It is now undertaking a capital campaign for the Center, and will begin construction in the not-too-distant future.

The new Center is a wonderful opportunity, combining as it does, the three hundred year history of Jewish South Carolina with the two hundred year history of the College. It represents a new dimension of the rich South Carolina Jewish story to which we are heirs.

Seventh Annual Meeting Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina April 15 & 16, 2000

Saturday, April 15, 2000

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 12:45 PM | Registration, Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim
Please register and pick up your name-tag for the events. |
| 1:15 PM | Stella Suberman, author of <i>The Jew Store</i> (Algonquin Books, 1998).
Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim sanctuary |
| 2:15 PM | Panel Discussion of small town Jewish merchants with Alvin Fleishman (Anderson), Alwyn Goldstein (Georgetown), Mick Lourie (St. George/Columbia), Rose Y. Mark (Beaufort), Ray Stern (Andrews), and Bernard Warshaw (Walterboro). |
| 3:30 - 5:00 PM | Opening reception, The Phoebe Pember House, 301 East Bay Street |
| 6:00-9:00 PM | Dinner (included in registration for weekend)
Alumni Hall, Randolph Hall, College of Charleston
Havdalah service by Cantor Marie Betcher, Columbia, SC
Dramatic readings of letters of Phoebe Pember, the diary of Eleanor Cohen Seixas, and a letter of Isaac J. Levy describing the Civil War Seder in Adams Run. |

Sunday, April 16

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 9:00-10:00 AM | Bagel Breakfast served. |
| 10:00-11:30 AM | Judith Shanks with Larry Freudenberg and Dale Rosengarten, slide lecture on Eleanor Joseph Solomons Friendship Coverlet.
Room 309, Simons Center for the Arts, College of Charleston |
| 11:30 AM | Business Meeting, Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina
Room 309, Simons Center for the Arts, College of Charleston |
| 3:00 PM | Interfaith Commemorative Civil War Seder, Christ-St. Paul's Episcopal Parish, Hollywood, SC. Limited seating, first-come, first-served basis for weekend registrants. |

Special Hotel Accommodations

Rooms are available at a special rate of \$129/per night (single or double occupancy) at the Spring Hill Suites by Marriott, located on the Ashley River, across from the Ripley Light Marina. Tel. 843/ 571-1711 or toll free, 1-888-287-9400 and mention that you are with the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina. **Rooms at this rate must be reserved by March 14th.**

Creation of the Council for Jewish Culture in South Carolina

The Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina (JHSSC) announces the formation of the Council for Jewish Culture, which will help to support and promote Jewish arts and culture in South Carolina. The Council held its first meeting at the McKissick Museum at the University of South Carolina on Sunday, January 9, 2000. Richard Gergel, Columbia attorney and president of the JHSSC, expects this new group to generate statewide interest and further enhance the cultural environment in the state.

The next meeting of the Council for Jewish Culture will be held April 16th, in Charleston, SC, in conjunction with the annual meeting of the JHSSC. There will be a special reception for Council members at the King Street Studio of Bea Aaronson.

Performing artists, visual artists, writers, and filmmakers of all faiths are invited to submit projects of interest to the Council. For further information, please contact Lyssa Harvey at 803/ 920-0707.

Speech given by JHSSC President Richard Gergel at the 250th Anniversary of Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim October 22, 1999 - Charleston, SC

We celebrate this weekend the 250th anniversary of the oldest continuously operating synagogue in America, Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim, but we do more than that.

We celebrate the 304 years of recorded Jewish history in this city and this state, which have afforded their Jewish citizens so much opportunity.

We celebrate the original colonial constitution of the Carolina Colony, authored by the great political philosopher John Locke, which was the first constitution in human history to guarantee religious freedom.

We celebrate the election of Francis Salvador in 1774 to South Carolina's First Provincial Congress, making him the first Jew ever elected to public office.

We celebrate the opportunity for public service Jews have been provided throughout South Carolina's history. In antebellum Charleston, this county was represented in the state senate by M. C. Mordecai, a member of K.K. Beth Elohim who was one of the state's most influential political figures. Jewish mayors were elected before the Civil War, in Georgetown, Camden, and Columbia, and the first Jew ever elected chief justice of any state's Supreme Court was in South Carolina. In the modern history of this state, elected officials with names like Heller, Goodstein, Rubin, Rudnick, Blatt, Keyserling, and Lourie have served with distinction.

We celebrate here today the city of Charleston, whose citizens welcomed, accepted, and supported their Jewish neighbors, which gave rise by 1820 to the largest Jewish community in North America. Indeed, Charleston, with its rich heritage of religious tolerance, can justly lay claim as the mother city of religious freedom in America.

Yes, we celebrate here today three centuries of Jewish life in South Carolina and 250 years of this historic synagogue. When the building in which we now meet was dedicated in 1840, KKBE's legendary rabbi, Gustav Poznanski, spoke for all Jews of this city and this state when he said,

"This synagogue is our temple, this city our Jerusalem, this happy land our Palestine."

The Poetry of Aaron Moses

transcribed, copyright, and with bibliographical information by Lani Florian

Aaron Moses was born, the sixth of twelve children, to Isaiah and Rebecca Phillips Moses, on January 5, 1817, in Charleston, SC. Within the family, he had the reputation of a scholar and wrote many poems, some romantic, others commenting on current events or commemorating events in the lives of his extended family. Some of these poems were published in New York newspapers. He married Judith Ottolengui in 1844 and they had two children, "Otto" and Sarah. An original notebook of Aaron Moses' poetry now belongs to Lani Florian, his great-great-granddaughter. She has undertaken the transcription of his poetry and provided these examples for our newsletter.

untitled

(1874)

When basking in thy sunny smile
And melting 'neath thy eyes,
What tender thoughts are born the while
And in my bosom rise!
Those witching eyes have power to move
A heart of brass or stone
Then why shan't mine so filled with love
Their conquest freely own?
By night I dream, by day I think
Of thy sweet presence e'er,
And in my dreams I frequent drink
Of bliss beyond compare.
Oh could I know thro' thy sweet voice
That I your love inspire
Then since thy lips have sweetly spoken
And filled my heart with bliss
We'll pledge our love shall ne'er be broken
In sweetest loving kiss
Like this, like this, like this...

The Earthquake of August 31, 1886

(1886)

The revolving earth had turned its face away
Obscured in utter darkness, from the god of day.
The busy hum of life had ceas'd ev'ry mart,
And rest about to crown the overburden'd heart.
The lurid sky and mephitic atmosphere
Oppress'd the senses, with feelings sad and drear;
As if conscious of some great impending doom,
The lower animals were filled with gloom,
And with hasty pace, retreated from their stalls,
And terror o'er them, with dread confusion falls.

The little ones at rest, in simple ignorance,
Slept the sweet sleep of infantile innocence,
While o'er them watch'd the deep maternal care
To shield them from all danger that might be near;
When sounds like those from angry thunders roll,
Shaking the earth, as the lion shakes his pole
And crash follows crash at each tremendous shake,
When cries and screams announce the dread earthquake!
The mothers seize their tender slumbering babes to save
And men seek shelter to save them from the grave.

Then Death went forth to strike his unprotected prey,
Who flying from the danger, met him on his way.
Full fourscore persons unconscious victims fell,
Mangled unto death, no time their tale to tell.
The servile race, in superstitious dread,
From their rack'd homes, in awful terror fled;
With groans and sobs they bend their knees in prayers,
While clinging to their white friends, supplicate their care
"It is doomsday!" they cried, "The world is at an end,
Join and pray to Him, a saving arm to send."
With phrenzied fear in tumultuous throngs,
They seek the safest place, confess their wrongs.

The trembling earth beneath and firmament on high,
They seek out for a refuge and hither hurried fly...
With what hopes and fears all passed that horrid night!
The earth might yawn and with violence might
Engulf them there; or by a monstrous tidal wave,
Consign them to one common watery grave...
For three successive days in painful anguish kept,
Whilst beneath their feet, the angry quiv'ring swept
The ruined homes and cumber'd streets attest,
What violence that earthquake expressed...
Sad tho' it was, a pleasing lesson taught,
That "all the world's akin" by the offering brought
To aid the suffering, relieve their pressing need
By contributions sent by each and every creed.
The stricken place now feels it has a goodly part
In this fair country, and shares its common heart
From North and East, from South and West there came,
A golden stream of sympathy to help the poor and maim.

Yet, many a heart is bleeding and in pain,
For the lov'd and dear ones, they shall not see again;
No help on earth, can restore them to their friends,
And time alone its consolation sends...
With courage high, these world encouraged men
Exert their pluck, and restore their homes again...
And now, three months have sped upon their way,
Their troublous night is converted into day;
With faces bright and mansions looking new,
Their ruin'd to a handsome city grew
The wonder of the age, that, in so sort a space,
They could rebuild and beautify the place.
Long may she thrive the "City by the Sea"
And ever keep her country's sympathy.



Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina
Jewish Studies Program
College of Charleston
Charleston, SC 29424

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Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina
Annual Membership and Spring 2000 Events Registration

NAME _____ ADDRESS: _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ PHONE _____

JHSSC Annual Membership (through Dec. 2000) \$35 per family
\$15 per student _____

Registration for the weekend: includes meals, speakers, and reception
(Does not include hotel accommodations) \$50 per person _____

Support the activities of the JHSSC by considering these additions - all donations are tax deductible.

<input type="checkbox"/> Friend (\$36 to \$99)	<input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor (\$500 to \$999)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining (\$100 to \$249)	<input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor (\$1000 to \$5000)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Patron (\$250 to \$499)	<input type="checkbox"/> Founder (More than \$5000)	_____

TOTAL _____

Make checks payable to JHSSC and mail to: Jewish Studies Program, College of Charleston,
Charleston, SC 29424.