

THE
JEWISH
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY
of
SOUTH CAROLINA

Beth Israel's
100th Anniversary

Register now
for fall meeting
in
Greenville, SC

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THE
JEWISH
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY
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*On the cover, left to right:
Max Heller, Carl Proser,
Rabbi Henry E. Barneis,
Cantor Julius Bloom, and
Meyer Lurey on the stage of
the social hall, Beth Israel
Synagogue, Summit Drive,
Greenville, South Carolina.
Photo was taken for a story
in the local newspaper at the
time of the High Holy Days,
likely the first High Holy
Days in the congregation's
new building. Courtesy of
Joan Bolonkin Meir and
Nancy Proser Lebovitz.*

**Greenville oral history
resources:**

[www.bethisraelsc.org/
centennial-celebration.html](http://www.bethisraelsc.org/centennial-celebration.html)
and
[jhc.cofc.edu/oral-history-
archives/interviews-by-
place/#greenville-county](http://jhc.cofc.edu/oral-history-archives/interviews-by-place/#greenville-county)

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Letter from the President

Why is it important to belong and contribute to the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina? As southerners and as Jews, we venerate our ancestors and hold tightly to objects that have been passed down through the generations: a shochet knife, a Victorian-era baby dress, candlesticks from the old country, photographs of our families, even accounting ledgers from a small-town dry goods store. But without context, things lose meaning after a generation. It is family stories that make history come alive and remain relevant for future generations. For the young adult who catches the family history bug, the academic researcher, or a newcomer to our state, the Society is committed to being the keeper of stories.

Through its programs and its affiliation with the College of Charleston, JHSSC also connects the unique qualities of the southern Jewish experience with broader, national themes. No better example exists than our spring 2016 conference, “Courage, Conscience and Conformity – South Carolina Jews and the Civil Rights Movement.” There were meaningful, charged exchanges between speakers and audience, heightened in the aftermath of the mass shooting at Emanuel in Charleston. Topics ranged from the integration of Rivers High to stories of what it was like – as a Jew or as an African-American – to live through a bitterly divisive period in American history. We heard about Jewish public servants who played critical roles during this turbulent time. We also learned not all South Carolina’s Jewish citizens welcomed the winds of change.

The board of directors and officers of the Society invite you to attend our fall 2016 conference, to be held in Greenville from October 21 to 23. The JHSSC bylaws make clear the importance of bringing our programs to all parts of the state. It has been a decade since we met in the Upcountry; Congregation Beth Israel’s 100th anniversary celebration this year provides a perfect opportunity to stage our autumn meeting.

Founded as an Orthodox shul in 1916, the congregation aligned with Conservative Judaism in 1954. Beth Israel has been a hub of social and religious life for generations of Jewish Greenvillians. Today many of the city’s Jews are from elsewhere, drawn by the strong and growing economy. The

centennial celebration, and the contents of this magazine, promise to remind members of the congregation where the long-standing families came from and reinforce a sense of belonging among old-timers and newcomers alike.

Our keynote speaker, Professor Diane Vecchio, will trace the socio-economic roots of Jewish immigrants to Upstate South Carolina in the late 1800s. Jewish peddlers and merchants were drawn to the region by the rapid growth of the textile industry; their entrepreneurial spirit filled an important niche in the economy. Saturday’s first panel, “From the Old Country to the Upcountry,” will feature stories of in-migration told by contributors to this issue. The second discussion, “From Main Street to the Board Room,” will explore the city’s economic transition and changes in Jewish demographics over the past hundred years.

The day will be topped off by the dedication of a State of South Carolina historical marker (co-sponsored by Beth Israel and JHSSC) in front of the synagogue. In the evening, conference attendees will be treated to “Musical Monuments” composed by Ernest Bloch and Leonard Bernstein and performed by the Greenville Chorale and the Symphony Orchestra at the Peace Center.

Sunday our focus will be on Max Moses Heller, a refugee of the Holocaust who served as mayor of Greenville from 1971 to 1979 and is widely credited with revitalizing the city. He brought a European sensibility to urban design with pedestrian-friendly sidewalks, outdoor seating surrounded by greenery and water features, public music and art. Heller was also a trailblazer on social issues such as affordable housing and diversity in the government workforce. His widow and children will share their memories, joined by former South Carolina Governor Richard W. Riley, who, in 1979, named Heller chairman of the State Development Board. The weekend will conclude with a walking tour downtown led by urban planners Abbie Rickoff and Barry Nocks.

Join us for a weekend of celebration, commemoration, and exploration in the beautiful city of Greenville!



Oveta Glover (left) and Millicent Brown speaking in Charleston, South Carolina, at JHSSC’s spring meeting, April 16, 2016. Photo: Jeri Perlmutter.

Ernest L. Marcus
Ernest L. Marcus

Congregation Beth Israel – 100 Years and Counting . . .

by Victor Alfieri

All stories have a beginning, yet the date may be debatable. For example, we are here to celebrate the centennial of Congregation Beth Israel (CBI), which received its Certificate of Incorporation on June 17, 1916. Its roots, however, go back at least six years earlier, when 25 families, predominantly Russian Jews, came together to form a congregation and elect officers. Orthodox services took place in congregants' homes and in the old Bank of Commerce building at the corner of Main and Coffee streets. In 1912 the congregation hired Charles Zaglin to come to Greenville to be the first official rabbi, shochet, and mohel. A mikvah was immediately built at the insistence of Zaglin's wife, Evelyn Rose. Membership dues were \$2.00 per family.

The first permanent synagogue was constructed on the north side of town where many of the Jews in Greenville lived—an area affectionately referred to as “Herring Alley.” Charles Zaglin donated a lot on Townes Street in 1925, and the building was completed in 1930 at a cost of \$18,000. Services

commenced on Friday evenings at 8:00 and religious school met Sunday mornings at 10:00. Congregants were heavily involved in retail trade. Jewish-owned businesses lined Main Street; all kept open on Saturday, the busiest day of the week.

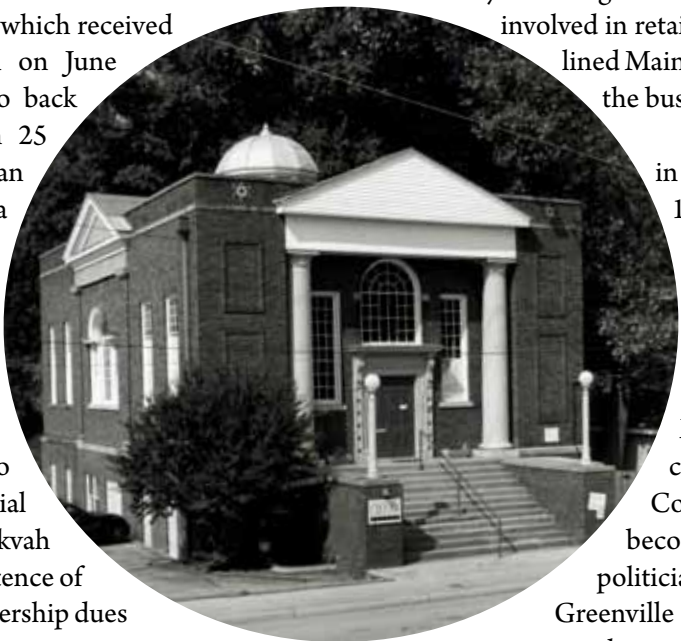
One of the most prominent Jews in CBI history came to Greenville in 1938. Through the help of a local girl, Mary Mills, whom he had met in Europe, Max Heller and his family fled Nazi-occupied Austria. Shep Saltzman provided affidavits to bring them over, and Max went to work as a shipping clerk at Saltzman's Piedmont Shirt Company. Heller would go on to become a successful businessman and politician. In 1969 he won a seat on the Greenville City Council. Two years later he was elected mayor of his adopted hometown and served for two terms. Max is widely credited with overseeing the revitalization of the city.

In December 1953 the congregation voted to join the Conservative movement and in 1954 was accepted into United Synagogue of America. This move appears to have been at least 18 years in the making. Recorded in the minutes of the congregation's regular monthly meeting, dated December 9, 1935: “The question of Friday night services came up for discussion with a unanimous decision to hold services at 8 P.M. and have conservative services.”

In 1957 CBI purchased land and erected the current place of worship on Summit Drive. The community flourished; a year later the religious school boasted 130 students. A new sanctuary and classroom additions were completed in 1966 for \$134,000.

The struggle for the women of CBI to have full rights of membership came to the forefront in the late '60s. Not until 1967 could an “unattached woman” be a voting member of the congregation. Before then, a member of the Sisterhood

Harry Zaglin (1) and Solomon Zaglin, with shovels, do the honors at the October 27, 1957 groundbreaking for Beth Israel's second building, still in use, on Summit Drive, Greenville, SC. To Harry's right is Nathan Stotsky. To Solomon's left are Recording Secretary Sol Shimlock; board members Julius Bloom and Carl Proser. According to Jack Bloom's notes, based on meeting minutes, the board, under the leadership of President Max Heller, held its final meeting in the Townes Street building on July 18, 1958. Courtesy of Jeff Zaglin.



Congregation Beth Israel's first building, still standing, on Townes Street, 2000. Photo: Bill Aron. Special Collections, College of Charleston.



could attend board meetings but was not allowed to vote. Sondra Umsted was the first woman with voting privileges, and her first documented action was to recommend paying for janitorial services.

The 1970s witnessed more changes in the community. The original Tree of Life in the CBI lobby was dedicated in July 1971. In November of the same year, the congregation held its first ecumenical Thanksgiving service with neighboring Northside Methodist Church. Fall 2016 will mark the 45th service that CBI has shared with Northside on the Sunday before Thanksgiving.

The religious school shrank to 70 children in 1972, and by 1977 had dwindled to 21. One reason for the decline is that average family size was decreasing. In 1973 Joyce Abrams successfully presented a recommendation to the board that women be allowed to wear pantsuits “in good taste” to services, as dictated by cold weather, health, or fashion.

Capping a long fight by women to have a say in the congregation, Sue Shager became the first female board president in 1985—eight years after women were finally allowed to serve as officers. In 1991 CBI broke new ground yet again by hiring Rabbi Jodie Futornick as its first female rabbi. Shabbat morning services began the same year. The second Tree of Life, located in the Davis Social Hall, was dedicated in October 1995. Over the next two decades, the demographics of Beth Israel shifted, with newcomers from the Northeast and the Midwest outnumbering native South Carolinians.

In 2016 CBI started its official second century with a new rabbi. Mathew Marko, a recent graduate of the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies in Los Angeles, led his first service on Friday, July 1. The congregation of approximately 100 families is excited about the future and committed to creating a fulfilling Jewish experience in Greenville, South Carolina.

In 2000 Rabbi Marc Wilson, Hy Brand, and Barry Nocks conducted an adult bat/bar mitzvah class at Beth Israel Synagogue, Greenville, SC. Left to right, 1st row: Bernard Geiger, Shirley Geiger, Linda Holtzman, Evelyn Kelman, Darla Kelman, Nan Tuckett, Terri Jermon, Freida Scharf. 2nd row: Denise Chumley, Zolli Kelman, Herbert Holtzman, unidentified male. 3rd row: Rabbi Marc Wilson, Hy Brand, Paul Rovin. 4th row: Dennis Reiche, Mitchell Litwer, Nat Litwer. Courtesy of Hy Brand.



Above: (1 to r) Helene Isaacs, Sisterhood president; Dan Shager, immediate past president and chairman, board of governors; Max Heller, past president and chairman, building committee; Jack L. Bloom, president; and Rabbi David Korb at the 1968 dedication of the new sanctuary, Beth Israel, Greenville, SC. Bloom family papers. Special Collections, College of Charleston.

The Zaglins of Greenville: A Jewish-American Saga

by Jeff Zaglin

This is an incomplete story of the Zaglin family of Greenville, South Carolina—incomplete because, as with so many European Jewish family histories, many of the dates are inconsistent. The discrepancies often can be attributed to poor records, the passage of time, and embellished memories.

For the Zaglins, the death of Marion Zaglin on December 6, 2015, in Atlanta, Georgia, marked the end of an era. He was the last of seven sons and one daughter of Charles (born Tzemakh) Zaglin, Lithuanian immigrant, rabbi, shochet, and mohel. The story of Rabbi Zaglin and his fledgling family is a Jewish-American saga with deep roots in the soil of South Carolina and the southern United States.

Around 1907, upon his arrival in New York City, Charles found employment in a kosher processing plant. Soon after, he began his travels south. With his wife, Evelyn Rose (Khava Reiza, or Eva Rachel), and son, Solomon Melton (born in 1906 in Vilnius, Lithuania), he moved to Wilmington, North Carolina, to fill a rabbinic position. The Zaglins' only daughter, Freida Selma, was born there in 1908. A son (my father), Harry Henry, was born in Bristol, Tennessee/Virginia, two years later. By 1912 Charles was hired to serve as rabbi by a handful of Orthodox families in Greenville, South Carolina. Congregation Beth Israel was formally recognized by the state on June 17, 1916.

Misfortune hit the Zaglin family a few months after their fourth child, Joseph, was born in 1912. According to Freida, Evelyn Rose died due to "bad blood." There was no Jewish burial ground in Greenville at the time, so she was buried in Columbia, South Carolina, at the House of Peace (Whaley Street) Cemetery. She is purportedly one of the first burials there.

After the death of his wife, Charles was forced to break up the family. Times were much different then. Joe, the baby, was sent

to live with family in Fayetteville, North Carolina. Sol and Freida were taken in by relatives living in Haverhill, Massachusetts. Harry stayed with an aunt and uncle in Bristol for a few months before returning to Greenville. Freida explained why in her February 27, 1997 interview for the Jewish Heritage Collection: "He was strange to them and they were strange to him, and he would not be trained . . . My aunt had a lot of little children and she couldn't cope . . ."



Charles, while acting as rabbi of Beth Israel, opened a business on Coffee Street. Zaglin's Market sold both kosher and non-kosher meat, as well as dry goods and other groceries. For well over a decade, the market was successful. Charles married divorcée Anna Glickman who, like Charles, had four children; they were older than his and did not live with them. Together Anna and Charles had four more children, all boys: Phillip, Louis, Marion, and Jack, born between 1922 and 1930.

Charles's business grew; he opened an abattoir and added delivery trucks. Freida described other improvements: "He enlarged the store and he built a smokehouse in the back. He smoked his own hams and sausage and bacon . . . He bought the first coolers, refrigerated coolers, and we had a water system up on top of the building that you ran with the coolers, and we had a freezer. It was in its infancy in those days. We froze and smoked,

Above: Charles, Freida, Solomon, and Eva Rachel Zaglin, circa 1909. Left: The Zaglin siblings at the wedding of Shirley Zaglin and Jules Cavalier, June 1950, at the Townes Street shul. From left to right: Harry H., Louis, Joseph G. (Joe), Phillip Hillal (Hicky), Freida (Kaplan), Marion (Butch), Jack, and Solomon Melton, father of the bride. Courtesy of Jeff Zaglin.



Above: Jeff Zaglin behind the counter of his Army & Navy Store, Greenville, SC, 2000. Photo: Bill Aron. Special Collections, College of Charleston. Below: Main Street, early 20th century, Greenville, SC. Courtesy of Congregation Beth Israel.

and he had trucks going out to all the little towns, distributing—with salesmen—distributing meats and things."

When the Great Depression hit, the business suffered. Despite the financial crisis, the small congregation began constructing a permanent shul on a lot on Townes Street that Charles had donated in the mid-1920s. The first phase of the building—the basement—was completed well before Freida's wedding, held in the new hall in June 1931.

Zaglin's Market faced an additional challenge in the 1930s. Freida recalled that competition from supermarkets made it "hard for us to make a living." In May 1937 Freida had returned to Greenville with her husband, Nat Kaplan, and taken over the market from Charles, who was in declining health. The former rabbi died in July and Zaglin's Market closed a few years later.

During the 1930s and early '40s, the Zaglin boys developed quite a reputation in Greenville. They were known about town for enjoying a good time and stories about their shenanigans. Harry, Louis, Marion, and Jack were all in the military in some capacity during World War II, although not all served overseas. After the war Marion moved to Atlanta and was followed by Jack, Louis, Phil, and eventually Joe. They all married and started families. Sol, Freida, and Harry remained in Greenville. Harry Zaglin opened the Greenville Army & Navy store some 60 years ago and it is still located at 660 South Main Street today. As proprietor of one of the oldest businesses downtown, I take great pride in seeing, on occasion, three generations of Greenvillians walk through the door at the same time.

The Zaglins have been involved with the Greenville Jewish community for more than 100 years. Charles Zaglin's children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren continue to be deeply engaged in the city's Jewish and civic life and will be for years to come.



Max and Trude Heller: Giving Back to Greenville

I left Greenville, South Carolina, more than 50 years ago, but every time the airplane touches down there, I feel like I'm home. I like to drive through the old neighborhood past our house, situated a few blocks from our synagogue, Congregation Beth Israel. Our house was a gathering place for people of all ages, interests, ideas, and cultures. Mom and Dad hosted dinners that were famous for Mom's food and my parents' hospitality. Many agreements and friendships were forged at our dining table. Mom and Dad encouraged me, my sister, and my brother to invite friends over. We always had a houseful!

Max and Trude Heller began their married life on August 2, 1942, in downtown Greenville. The rabbi from Congregation Beth Israel conducted the ceremony on a sweltering summer day at Ensor's on Main Street, the only air-conditioned restaurant in the city. The air conditioning broke, but their marriage lasted 69 years.

The romance began five years earlier at a summer resort outside of Vienna, Austria. Max was 17 and Trude was 14. The day they met he declared his love and said he would marry her someday. According to Trude, "He always kept his word."

That same week, for a reason Max could never understand, he decided to take the train back to

Vienna for a night. He met up with a friend and they agreed to go dancing. They spotted a table of young American women on a graduation trip to Europe. Max asked one of them, a girl from Greenville named Mary Mills, to dance, and the next day he took her for a walk around Vienna. They communicated using his newly-purchased English/German dictionary.

They exchanged addresses. Less than a year later, as Hitler was closing in on Austria, Max wrote to Mary requesting help. She brought his letter to Shepard Saltzman, owner of Piedmont Shirt Company, and asked him to sponsor Max's immigration to the United States. Saltzman replied, "How can I, a Jew, refuse, when you, a Christian, is asking?" Max Heller arrived in Greenville a few months later and began working at Saltzman's shirt factory the very same day. For the rest of his life Max would call Mary Mills his "angel."

While Max Heller was working at Shepard Saltzman's shirt factory, Trude was in the middle of a harrowing flight from

Vienna. First, her father was taken away, leaving young Trude in charge of escaping the chaos in Europe with her mother. Then, after many attempts and close calls, they crossed the border from Germany to Belgium. A year and a half later they arrived in New York.

From the time Max emigrated in 1938, he and Trude had kept in touch as circumstances allowed. In 1940 Max decided to take the bus to New York to visit her. He arrived at her door at the same moment a Western Union man delivered a telegram from Trude's father that read, "I am alive." Since then, Trude proclaims my father to be her good luck charm.

Max convinced Trude and her mother to pay a visit to Greenville. After picking them up at the train station, he drove around the town three times to convince them it was a big city. Little did they imagine that 29 years later, Max would begin his first day of eight years as Greenville's mayor. My parents embraced their adopted hometown and played an important role in helping transform it into a city considered one of the best places to live in America. They did it side by side, as true partners.

At age 42 my father sold his successful shirt business and decided to devote his time to the community. He was persuaded to run for city council and had served two years, when, on a vacation in Florida, Max and Trude read in the *Greenville News* that Daddy was going to run for mayor. That was news to them!

My father credited Greenville with giving him a new life. In return, working with other forward-thinking people, he gave Greenville new life. Between 1971 and '79, during his tenure as mayor, his first hire was an African-American woman—the first in City Hall. He saw to it that affordable housing was built; diversity in municipal departments was achieved; community centers and senior housing were established; pensions for policemen and firemen were assured. He brought with him a European vision of downtown—pedestrian friendly and green—that could be enjoyed by citizens and visitors to the city. He was instrumental in bringing numerous businesses, such as Michelin, to the Greenville area. Max is often referred to as the "Father of Modern Greenville."



Max Heller and Trude Schöenthal, Greenville, SC, circa 1941. Courtesy of Susan Heller Moses.

by Susan Heller Moses

My parents remained active and dedicated to the Jewish community. Dad created a prayer breakfast for all religions. He twice served as president of Beth Israel Synagogue and Mom was a long-serving treasurer of the Sisterhood. They helped start a local BBYO chapter and housed many young Jewish people from across the South during conventions. My mom began speaking publicly about the Holocaust, going to business organizations, churches, and schools, teaching her audience "to love, not hate." At 94 she continues

to speak and can mesmerize an auditorium of young adults or a group of prominent business leaders. When asked by a young student, "What do I tell my father when he tells me the Holocaust never happened?" she looks him straight in the eye and softly says, "Tell him you met me."

Despite my parents' active lives, family came first. My mother, an only child, likes to say she could never replace the 90 family members we lost in the Holocaust, but she is well on her way with 3 children, 10 grandchildren, and 18 great-grandchildren.



Trude Heller (seated), with daughters Francie Heller (on Trude's left) and Susan Heller Moses (behind Trude), and son Steven Heller (2nd from Susan's right), surrounded by her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, gathered for Passover, 2016. Photo: Isabel Chenoweth.



The Greenville Chorale and the Greenville Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Maestro Bingham Vick, will perform works by two great Jewish composers on the Saturday evening of the conference. *Avodath HaKodesh (Sacred Service)*, by Ernest Bloch, is inspired by the Shabbat morning service. *Chichester Psalms*, by Leonard Bernstein, is based on three of the Hebrew psalms. Both works combine lush harmonies with texts of universal meaning and appeal. Join us for an evening of sublime music!

Sponsored by Nathan and Sugie Einstein, Dan and Liz Einstein, and Howard and Angi Einstein

Special ticket price (\$32.00 plus \$1.00 for group fee) is available until October 7, 2016.

To order tickets, call 800.888.7768 or 864.467.3000 if you live in the Greenville area.

Jewish Musical Monuments

Saturday,
October 22, 2016
8:00 P.M.

Peace Center for the
Performing Arts

From the Old Country to the Upcountry

by Ann Lurey

Tracking the Switzers from Ariogola to America

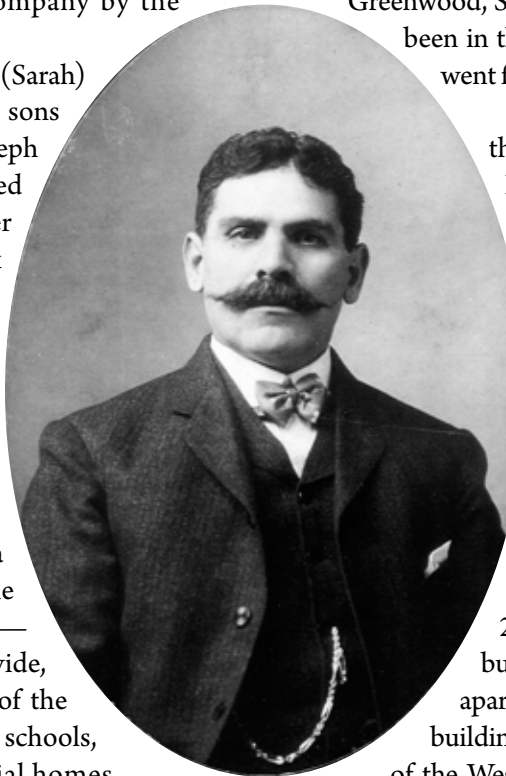
The Switzers, formerly Reyzliovich, were from Ariogola in the eastern portion of Prussia, an area that is now Lithuania but at one time was Russia. How did Reyzliovich become Switzer? My oldest brother, Milton Lurey, related the story that upon entering the port, a large sign advertising Switzer candy was seen and a new American name was started. It has been verified through the Internet that in 1888 a candy company by the name of S-W-I-T-Z-E-R did exist.

Tsale (Charles) and Surah (Sarah) Reyzliovich were the parents of five sons who immigrated to America. Joseph Switzer, the eldest of the brothers, resided in Lynchburg, Virginia. The other four—Morris (Maurice), Meyer, Marx (Marks), and Louis Switzer—came to Greenville, South Carolina, and were dry goods merchants. The only brother to remain in Greenville was Meyer.

Greenville city directories indicate that the Switzer brothers operated stores on Main Street and in the West End. According to Judy Bainbridge, a local writer, between 1890 and 1910 the West End was almost a separate town—the bridge between them seemed to divide, rather than connect, the two sections of the growing city. The West End had its schools, shops, industries, and many substantial homes.

Through the records we can trace the movements of my grandfather, Meyer, and his brothers, although we may never learn what motivated their choices. Each was married and had children, and among those children, four were named Charles after their grandfather. We now know for certain that Meyer was married in Europe to Lena Malka (Molly) Kohansky/Kahansky. The Kohansky family lived in Jonava, Lithuania. Meyer arrived in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1886. Lena, then 30 years old, and their three sons—Charles, Isaac, and Harry, ranging in age from seven to three—arrived April 17, 1889.

In New York in 1891, Lena Malka had one more child, a daughter—my mother—Ida Switzer Lurey. According to cemetery records, Lena died in Lynchburg, Virginia, of acute dysentery. Questions remain: was the family visiting Meyer's brother Joseph? Had the family decided to move south?



Meyer Switzer, no date. Courtesy of Ann Lurey.

It is believed that Meyer came to Greenville in 1895, seven years after Morris's arrival. In the 1896 and '97 Greenville city directories, Morris and Meyer are listed as merchants, with businesses at 115, 202, and 108 North Main Street. The 1899 directory lists Louis as a peddler.

The 1900 census finds Meyer, a merchant, with his second wife, Sarah Mervis Switzer, daughter, and youngest son, Harry, in Greenwood, South Carolina. Meyer reported that he had been in the United States for 13 years. Why Meyer went from Greenville to Greenwood is unknown.

The Greenville city directory shows that Marx was clerking for Morris in 1901. In 1903 the only Switzers listed in the directory were Marx and Meyer, yet four years later, it was Meyer and Morris who were recorded as merchants on Pendleton Street (West End). In 1909 Louis was also in the clothing business on Pendleton Street. In 1910 there was no listing for Morris.

Greenville property records show that in 1907 Meyer Switzer paid Alice Cely \$1500 for a lot and \$450 to add on to an existing structure. This later became 24 Pendleton Street. Meyer had his own building with a separate entrance for an apartment over the store. Our family owned this building until about 1990 when redevelopment of the West End began. Louis's son Irving stayed in Greenville and worked for Meyer Lurey.

Meyer died in Greenville in 1932 at the age of 78. The Greenville Jewish cemetery was not established until 1938, so he is buried in Columbia in the House of Peace's Whaley Street Cemetery, which is now surrounded by the University of South Carolina. Meyer's wife, Sarah Mervis Switzer, is buried there as well, as is his only daughter, Ida Switzer Lurey, who died of pneumonia in 1935 at the age of 44.

I am grateful to those who assisted me in gathering this information. The Greenville County Library was very cooperative. Allen Ira Lurey, my nephew and Meyer's great-grandson, did many hours of complicated research. Bits of information were gathered from cousins. In one case a scrap of paper was sent from one cousin to another and finally to me, with a note saying, "It makes me nervous reading this. You figure it out."

The Lurey Family Story

The Lureys came to the United States from Bialystok, Russia/Poland, in the early 1900s. Mashe Lea and Zelic Lieb Luria (Lurey) were the parents of one daughter, Annie (Asnie) Lurey (Rosenthal), and four sons—Jake, Morris, Samuel (Schmuel), and Hymen (Chaim). The first family member to emigrate was Jake. At 18 years of age, after suffering persecution and being kicked by a horse, to boot, he decided to desert the army for a better life in America. A relative in Rhode Island was his destination.

At some point Zelic followed, and Morris arrived in 1903. With eight dollars to her name, 44-year-old Mashe Lea immigrated in 1905 with her youngest sons, Samuel, 16, and Hymen, 14, and joined her husband in Valley Falls, Rhode Island, just north of Pawtucket.

Jake married Annie Hecklin. Annie had two brothers, Beryl and Schmuel. The Hecklins moved to Spartanburg, South Carolina, and, around 1909, all the Lureys followed. Jake, a shoemaker, and Annie lived in various places and in later years moved to Warrenton, Georgia, to be near their oldest daughter, Minnie Tannenbaum. Jake and Annie maintained a kosher home wherever they lived.

It was in late 1910 that the Morris Lureys moved to Greenville from Spartanburg. Morris and Mollie Dolk Lurey raised six children in Greenville (see page 12 for Mollie's story). In 1912 Morris operated the New York Shoe Store at 116 East Washington Street. In later years he and his son Meyer, who would take over the business, moved the store to Pendleton Street, one block from Morris's brother Samuel.

Zelic, Mashe, and Samuel (my father) followed Jake and Morris to Greenville, where Samuel met and married my mother, Greenville Ida Switzer. I was raised in Greenville with my three older brothers, Milton, Ralph, and Harold. Dad ran a small department store—Lurey's—in the West End. Dad spoke mostly Yiddish, especially at home. He spoke English when necessary, but he couldn't

read it or write it, so he kept informed about current events by listening to the radio and reading the Yiddish daily *Der Tag* (*The Day*).

Hymen moved to Laurens, South Carolina; his parents lived with him until Zelic's health declined, at which point Zelic and Mashe moved to Greenville. In 1912 Hymen married Dorothy (Dora) Fayonsky of Greenville in a ceremony performed by Greenville's first rabbi, Charles Zaglin. Hymen and Dora raised three children in Laurens: Esther Lurey (Ginsberg), Sadie Lurey (Kennedy), and Meyer. Hymen was a very successful businessman.

The Lurey families were instrumental in founding Beth Israel, Greenville's Orthodox Jewish congregation. The oldest grandchildren all told tales of visiting the homebound Zelic on Rowley Street in Greenville and finding him always

studying the Pentateuch. At the insistence of Mashe Lea, all four Lurey sons chipped in to purchase the congregation's first Torah. Hymen and his heirs, as well as his nephew Meyer, were generous contributors to Beth Israel. On May 6, 1979, Esther Lurey Ginsberg presented a Sefer Torah to the congregation in memory of her husband, Leo, and her parents, Hymen and Dora Lurey.



Mashe Lea Lurey, no date. Courtesy of Ann Lurey.

Mollie Dolk Lurey: The Grandest Lady There Was

by Joan Bolonkin Meir

This is the story of Mollie Dolk Lurey—known to her grandchildren as “Mong”—and how and why she and her husband, in 1910, chose Greenville, South Carolina, to call home. Mong was the GRANDEST lady I have ever known. Fortunately for our family, in 1981, when she was 96, her oral history was recorded. The sound of her voice with her charming accent will forever conjure up loving and cherished memories of my childhood with her.

At age 17 Mong said goodbye to her mother, her brother, and the only life she knew, and made her way alone from Brody—then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire—to Trieste, Italy, where she boarded the S.S. Ultonia, bound for the U.S.A. According to the ship’s manifest, she arrived at Ellis Island on October 13, 1904, listed under the name Malke Dolg; residence: Brody; nationality: (citizen or subject of) Austria; race or people: Hebrew. The trip was long and hard. Her ticket was for accommodations in steerage.

I remember Mong telling the story of her arrival at her sister’s house in Providence, Rhode Island. After her 30-day journey by sea, she said she was indeed a sight to behold. In her oral interview she describes steerage as “the filthiest place you could ever imagine.” When asked what she had to eat, she said, “Dark bread and sardines.” After taking time to recover from this treacherous voyage, she found work, where she learned the trade of setting stones in jewelry. She worked full-time for four years and in the evenings went to class to learn English.

Mong always enjoyed telling this story: she overheard her sister say to her friends, “If I had known how homely my sister was, I would never have had her come to the U.S.A.” (At this point in the story, Mong would really start to giggle.) Mong said to her sister, “You don’t have to worry; in a few days I will be recuperated and looking good again.” Her sister asked, “What are you talking about?” Mong replied, “I heard what you said to your friends. You should have been speaking

in English and not Yiddish; then I would not have known what you said!”

A few years later Mong met and married my grandfather,



Morris Lurey, whom we affectionately called Gran. He was one of five children and his family welcomed her with open arms. His mother and father bought her beautiful clothes and gave them a lovely wedding in Providence. Shortly thereafter, Sarah (Campell), the first of their six children, was born. In 1908 they moved to the South, arriving by train in Spartanburg, South Carolina. One of Gran’s brothers was married

to a southerner and she had two brothers living there. The Lurey clan remained together, each brother settling his family in and around towns in South Carolina.

Not long after arriving in Spartanburg, the Lureys moved to Greenville. According to Mong, they were the third or fourth Jewish family to reside there. I recall her saying that when asked if they were religious and continued to keep kosher, she emphatically answered, “Oh yes, we order our kosher food from Atlanta.” She said that early on, the Jewish community did not have a rabbi or a synagogue. They held services in a Woodman of the World hall. In time the community purchased land, built a building, and hired a rabbi. Listening to her interview, I can hear the pride in her voice when she describes contributing money to help build the synagogue and buy the congregation’s first Sefer Torah. Originally Beth Israel was Orthodox, but decades later, it morphed into a Conservative congregation.

In Greenville, life continued for the Lurey family with the birth of five more children: Semmie Lurey Paul, Sam (Bubba) Lurey, Meyer Lurey, Hyman Lurey, and my mother, Ida Lurey Bolonkin. My grandfather Morris ran a store called the New York Shoe Store. Early on my grandmother had a little grocery and, in time, life became easier. All the siblings had a deep love and respect for Mong and Morris. As they graduated from high school, they either went to college or began working and helping their parents. My mother, Ida, the youngest of the siblings, remembers the older children helping the younger ones. She often tells the story of how her older sister, Semmie, bought her a bunny-fur stole to wear to a dance.

Interestingly, when Mong was asked about antisemitism in Greenville in the early years, she said she did not experience any. She said, “I never had a problem with anyone. I got along with everyone.” And while that may be true, I think it was because of the person she was. Everyone, and I mean everyone—her husband, her neighbors, her sons and daughters, her grandchildren—loved her and adored her. It is with great love and affection that I write this tribute to her.

Left: the author’s mother, Ida Lurey (Bolonkin) (r) with Lily Zaglin (Davis). Courtesy of Bobbie Jean Davis Rovner. Above: portrait of “Mong.” Courtesy of Joan Bolonkin Meir.

Looking Back and Moving Forward: Greenville’s Congregation Beth Israel ~ Building Community Since 1916

October 21–23, 2016 ~ Greenville, South Carolina

Friday, October 21 7:00 P.M. Shabbat service/Installation of Rabbi Mathew Marko

Saturday, October 22

10:00 A.M. – 12:00 Shabbat service

Noon Lunch

1:00 – 2:00 P.M. **Jewish Entrepreneurs in the Carolina Upcountry** – Diane Vecchio, Ph.D., Furman University

2:00 – 3:15 Panel discussion – **From the Old Country to the Upcountry**

Moderator: Diane Vecchio, professor of history, Furman University

Panelists: Miriam Chernoff, Ann Lurey, Joan Bolonkin Meir, Barbara Chardkoff Rabhan, Shirley Honigman Sarlin, Jeff Zaglin

3:15 – 3:30 Break

3:30 – 4:45 Panel discussion – **From Main Street to the Board Room**

Moderator: Victor Alfieri, vice president, Congregation Beth Israel

Panelists: Hy Brand, Michele Brinn, Fred Leffert, Herb Silver, Ken Zwerdling

4:45

Dedication of marker – Mindy Levy, president, CBI: History of the Congregation

Reception following marker dedication, synagogue social hall (dinner on your own)

8:00

Jewish Musical Monuments, Greenville Chorale and Symphony, Peace Center (see page 9)

Sunday, October 23

9:00 A.M. Open JHSSC board meeting—everyone is invited!

10:00 – 11:00

Panel discussion – **Max Heller: The Father of Modern Greenville**

Moderator: Ernie Marcus, president, JHSSC

Panelists: Trude Heller, Susan Heller Moses, Francie Heller, Steven Heller, and The Honorable Richard W. Riley, governor, South Carolina (1979–1987); U.S. Secretary of Education (1993–2001)

11:15

Depart for downtown Greenville

11:30

Max Heller Plaza: walking tour/lecture by Abbie Rickoff, AICP, and Barry Nocks, FAICP

Hotel reservations

Crowne Plaza Greenville

851 Congaree Road
(I-385 & Roper Mtn. Rd.)
Greenville, SC 29607
(864) 297-6300

Special rate:

\$129 + tax per night, includes
breakfast for 2

Additional breakfast available for
\$11.25 in lobby
Complimentary parking

To get the special rate, make your reservation by Sept. 20. To reserve online, click on this link where the “JHS” group code is already selected:

Jewish Historical Society of SC Fall Conference
or

call (877) 834-3613 and mention “Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina” or “JHS” code.

Unless otherwise noted, all events will take place at
Beth Israel Synagogue, 425 Summit Drive, Greenville

Meeting registration

Online at:

jhssc.org/events/upcoming

with Visa, MasterCard,

Discover, or American Express

By check, payable to JHSSC c/o

Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies

Program – 96 Wentworth Street,

Charleston, SC 29424

Meeting fee: \$50 per person

Questions: Enid Idelsohn, idelsohne@cofc.edu

Phone: (843) 953-3918 ~ fax: (843) 953-7624

Memories of Lillian and Jack Bloom in Greenville – A Dynamic Duo

by Miriam Chernoff

My aunt Lillian Chernoff met Jack Bloom in 1956 on a trip to Greenville, South Carolina, where she was attending a meeting of the National Council of Jewish Women—as an NCJW field representative, her task was to support southeastern Jewish communities in the work of the council. Lillian and Jack courted for seven years before marrying, at which time each was about 42 years old. Lillian loved New York City and the move was daunting. She was an apartment dweller; unlike most Jewish families in Greenville, she and Jack lived in apartments until they bought their first house at age 80. She learned to drive in Greenville; at 72 years old she was elected to the South Carolina Commission on Consumer Affairs and routinely drove to Columbia for meetings.

Lillian and Jack were very private. Their social life revolved around their Jewish friends, but in their professional and volunteer activities, they were fully integrated into the non-Jewish community. Early on, for example, Lillian served on the advisory committees of Head Start and the YWCA, and later volunteered as an English tutor to Asian immigrants. During her years in Greenville, she was active in dozens of community organizations and civic associations.

How they kept these two spheres of their lives—their Jewish social circle and their public service—so separate is a bit of a puzzle. As a young lawyer, Jack recounted that he had been denied entry to law firms because of his religion, and this discrimination may well have led him to nurture his separateness. Yet he was proud of being a southerner and of serving in the U.S. Army in World War II (he retired from the army reserves with the rank of colonel)—and he participated in both Jewish and non-Jewish organizations throughout his life.

Visiting Lillian and Jack as a child I recall watching Jack's niece, Stacy, ride a horse, and stopping at the children's clothing store owned by Jack's sister, Shirley Cohen. Once I was grown we

always toured Greenville, including the house where Jack grew up, the revitalized downtown area, and Liberty Bridge at Falls Park. Jack was proud to take me to Furman University, his alma mater. And he was equally excited to show off the Greenville farmers' market and the local peach orchards. He relished peaches and Lillian tried hard, usually unsuccessfully, to control the number he consumed. Jack loved pimento cheese and black-eyed peas; I remember the latter being served as a traditional southern dish on New Year's Day. Despite hearing problems, which began as a young adult, Jack could sing any American folk or popular tune you named. He was also an avid bird-watcher.

For several years, I joined Lillian and Jack at the B'nai B'rith Institute of Judaism, Wildacres Retreat (now in its 69th year), a spectacular setting in an eastern woodland forest in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina. There, within the context of a Jewish retreat, we learned about Middle Eastern politics, the archaeology of early Christianity, and other equally fascinating topics. Lay leaders led Shabbat services and dining was kosher. Then in my thirties, I was the youngster of the crowd; the Blooms and their friends were in their sixties and early seventies. The retreat epitomized Lillian and Jack's commitments to Judaism, intellectual life, and community.

Jack and Lillian held leadership roles at the synagogue and maintained a kosher kitchen until they required round-the-clock caretakers. Jack's father had been Beth Israel's cantor. Although Jack never learned Hebrew, he knew all the prayers. He and Lillian attended Shabbat services regularly until they became too frail.

They maintained their intellectual interests through the Furman University Learning in Retirement program, where they attended classes and coordinated curricula; Jack even taught a course on constitutional law, if I remember correctly. One year Jack prevailed upon my mom and me to help him

research Jewish families in Greenville by consulting the R. G. Dun & Company records at the Baker Library of the Harvard Business School; later he presented and published his findings. Lillian was always curious about my work as a biostatistician; she avidly questioned me about the HIV/AIDS studies I was involved in—the findings and the meaning of the research.

Jack and Lillian bantered incessantly but loved each other dearly. After Lillian's death, Jack found it difficult to hide his grief. I last visited the two when Lillian was nearing the end. She rallied the weekend my sister, Ellen, and I came, and we conversed as if she was not ill. I only wish I had visited Jack after that—he must have felt quite alone. Melvin, his brother, and Vera, Melvin's wife, were also aging, and the brothers had not seen eye-to-



Above, left to right: Jack Bloom, his wife, Lillian Chernoff Bloom, and his father, Julius Bloom, 1964. Below: Lillian is seated in the second to top row, second from left. Bloom family papers. Special Collections, College of Charleston.

eye for some time. Jack was surrounded by caring health professionals, but his closest friends were aged or gone.

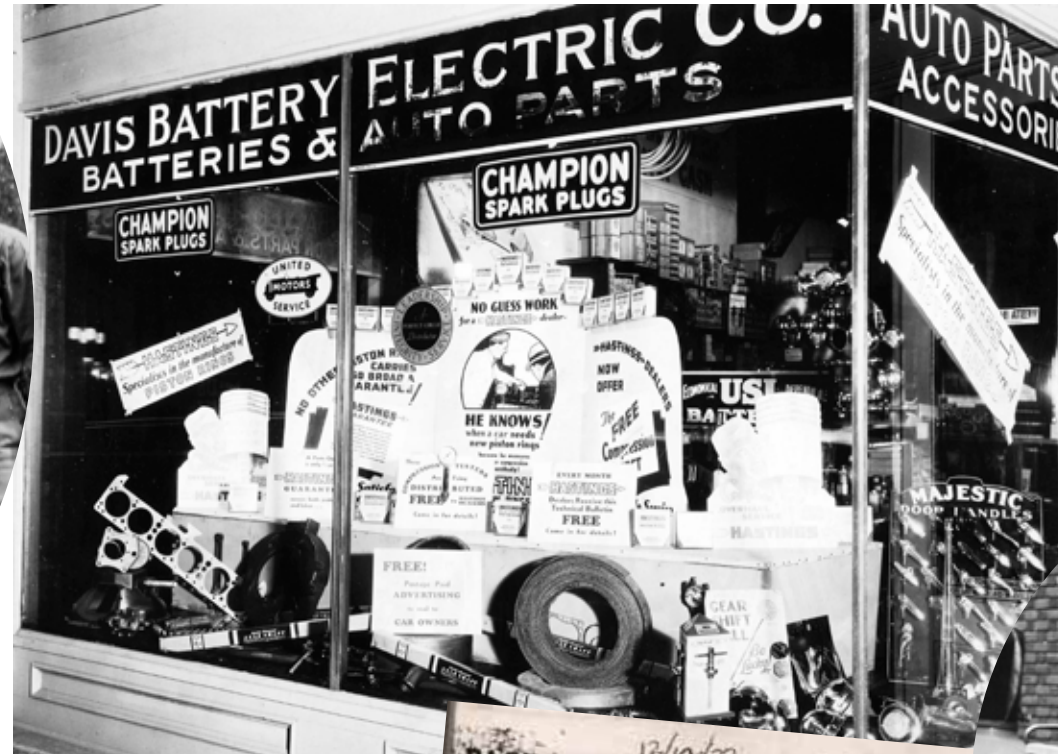
Jack had grown up in the midst of a large extended family and relished the company. He and Lillian, in contrast, formed a small nuclear unit. Jack was greatly saddened by the premature deaths of his sister, Shirley, his niece, Stacy, and nephew, Mark. I wonder if, as he aged, he ever regretted not having a large, extended family of his own.

At the unveiling in 2011, I was comforted to see both Lillian and Jack resting peacefully in a family grave site, under trees, in proximity to their Jewish neighbors and Jack's immediate family—his parents, his sister, and her three children (a third child had died as an infant). The Jewish cemetery was gated and nestled within a much larger one, symbolic, perhaps, of the way Lillian and Jack lived their southern Jewish lives.

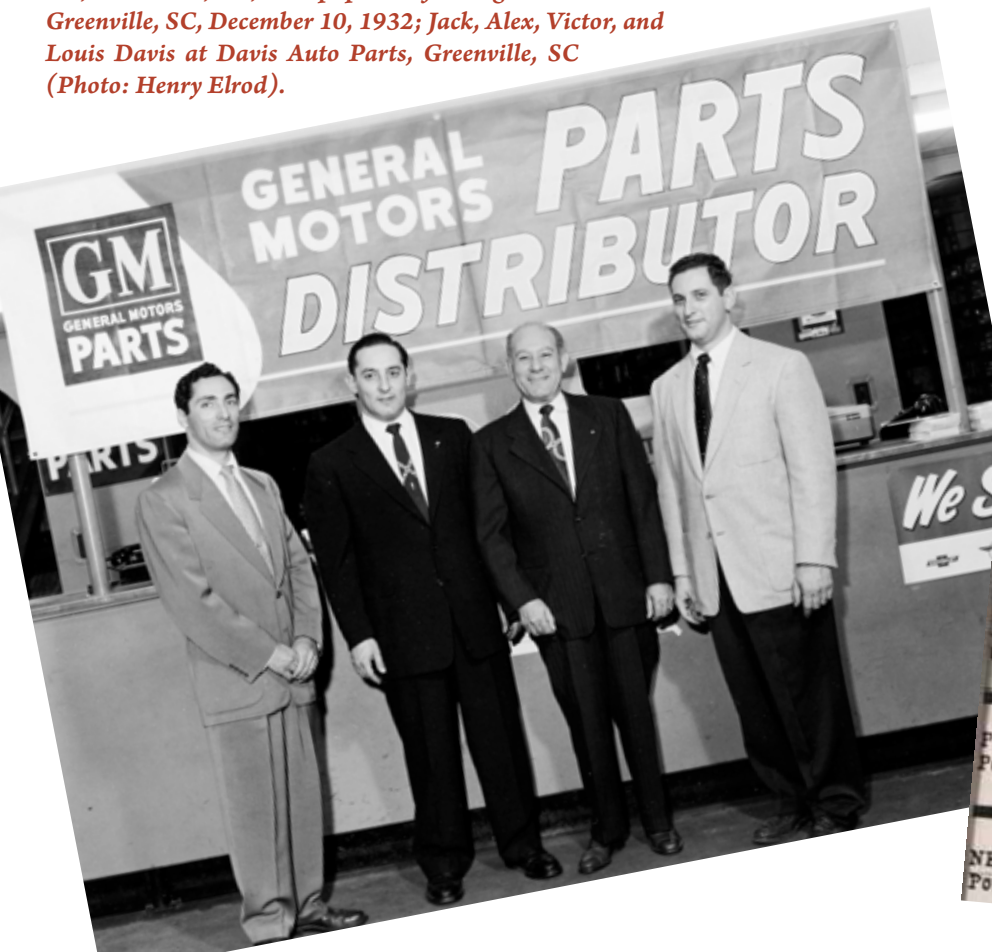


Davis, Zaglin, and Lurey Family Photographs

from the collection of
Bobbie Jean Davis
Rovner



This page, clockwise from upper left: Victor and Mollie Davis, flanked by sons Louis (l) and Alex (Bobbie Jean's father); Storefront window of the Davis Battery Electric Co., Greenville, SC; newspaper ad for Zaglin's Market in Greenville, SC, December 10, 1932; Jack, Alex, Victor, and Louis Davis at Davis Auto Parts, Greenville, SC (Photo: Henry Elrod).

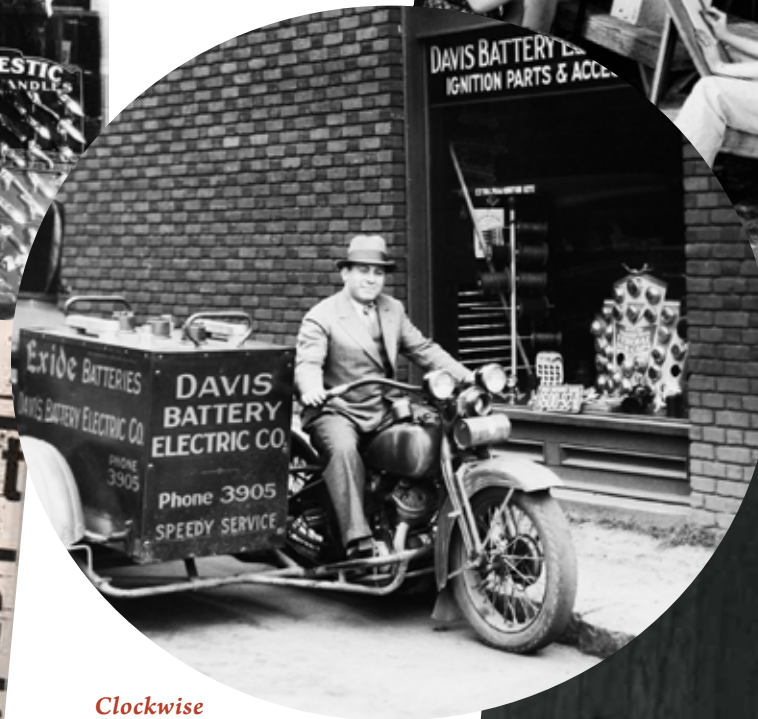


PAGE TEN 12/10/32

Zaglin's Market

13 W. COFFEE—PHONE 4197

STEAK T-BONE	Lb. 15c
Good BEEF STEAK,	
Good BEEF ROAST, Lb.	10c
BREAKFAST BACON	
Sliced, Pound	15c
SHOULDERS,	
Home Killed, Pound	9c
HAMS,	
Home Killed, Pound	11c
100 Per cent Pure	
PORK SAUSAGE, Pound	10c
75 Per cent	
PORK SAUSAGE, Pound	7½c
PORK	
CHOPS	10c
PORK ROAST,	
Pound	10c
Pork STEAK	
Pound	12½c
Grandma's Pure	
LARD, 8 Lbs.	48c
VEAL	
CHOPS,	
VEAL	
ROAST	lb. 9c
NECK BONES,	
Pound	5c



Clockwise from above:
Victor Davis on the company's delivery motorcycle; Greenville High School art class, 1939 (Bobbie Jean's mother, Lily Zaglin, is standing, 3rd from the right); Dean Davis's bar mitzvah party at Ye Olde Fireplace Restaurant (no longer standing) on Pleasantburg Drive, Greenville, SC, 1965. Seated, left to right: Sarah Lurey Campell, Ella Sarlin, Mollie Lurey, Morris Zaglin. Standing, left to right: Rabbi David Korb, Charlotte Katz, Semmie Lurey Paul, Annie Tuckfeld Zaglin. (Annie and Morris Zaglin were Bobbie Jean's maternal grandparents.)



Proser Family Values: L'dor, V'dor

by Nancy Proser Lebovitz

My father, Carl Proser, met my mother, Helen Poliakoff, at the University of South Carolina, when he was travelling the South selling ladies' millinery. They married in 1941 and lived in Anderson, South Carolina, with my grandmother Rachel Poliakoff. The navy called in 1944 and Carl went to war, leaving their two-year-old daughter, Marsha, with family in Anderson. When he returned, Helen and Carl moved to Greenville and started a restaurant supply business. I was born in 1947. In 1951 my brother, Sylvan, arrived to complete our family.

The restaurant supply business failed, and Helen and Carl, with the help of three dear friends in the Jewish community, started the first cancellation (discount) shoe store in South Carolina. Carl would buy overstocked merchandise and previous seasons' shoes from wholesalers in New York City, as well as from retail stores around the South. At one time he carried men's shoes. When the Atlanta Falcons trained in Greenville, many players came to the Cancellation Shoe Mart because he sold large sizes. Because of the difference in stature, it was comical to see my father alongside some of the players. The original Cancellation Shoe Mart was located on Washington Street in downtown Greenville. As the business grew, they moved to a bigger building on Main Street, which was to become a fixture in downtown Greenville for years to come. After working side-by-side for more than 40 years, Helen and Carl retired in the mid-1990s. The "pink building" became Soby's restaurant.

It was not always easy to be a Jewish family in a mid-sized southern town. Beth Israel Synagogue was an important part of our family's existence and became the center of our Jewish lives. Because Greenville had such a small Jewish community, the shul served not only our spiritual lives, but also our social lives. There we attended services, Hebrew school, youth activities, carnivals, and many other gatherings. Located first on Townes Street in

downtown Greenville, the congregation later moved to a new sanctuary on Summit Drive, where it grew and prospered.

Our family was observant, and my father, being well-educated religiously, served as Beth Israel's "shammes." Whenever the rabbi was out of town or the shul was "in between" rabbis, my father was called upon to lead services and perform ritual functions as needed. Carl also served for many years as president of the congregation, and subsequently was on the board.

My parents stressed the importance of family. You could find the Proserers together for every holiday. As a child, we celebrated all the holidays with our Draisen cousins from Anderson, South Carolina. They usually came to Greenville for the High Holy Days, and we alternated the seders at Passover, my uncle Hy leading one and my father leading the other. Our grandmother Rachel Poliakoff (Bebe) was the matriarch—always there to make sure everything was as it should be.

As the years passed, grandchildren became a part of family celebrations. I will never forget the look of pride and happiness on the faces of his grandchildren as they sat on the bimah with all the children of Beth Israel and watched their Zadie blow the shofar on Rosh Hashanah. For many years to come we would call on my father, as did many others in

the community, to answer any and all religious questions.

Both my father and my mother were active and enjoyed celebrating happy events with friends and family. My parents were the first ones on the dance floor and my father always led the conga line. When I pledged a sorority at the University of Georgia, my father became president of the Parents' Club. He was instrumental in building the new sorority house, which still stands on campus today.

The values, both religious and cultural, taught in my parents' home continue to be practiced today in different parts of the country by our children and grandchildren. L'dor v'dor.



Passover Seder with the Draisen cousins, 1954. Clockwise from left: Sam Draisen, Marsha Proser (Cohen), Nancy Proser (Lebovitz), Bernice Draisen (Goldman), Helen Poliakoff Proser, Eunice Poliakoff Draisen (Helen's sister), Sylvan Proser on Eunice's lap, Judy Draisen (Glassman), Carl Proser. Courtesy of Nancy Proser Lebovitz.

Jewish Greenville: From Ethnic Enclave to Multicultural City

by Fred Leffert

My father, Morris Leffert, came to America from a small village in Poland in 1920, and the family settled in New York City. He relocated to Greenville for the same reason that many Jews came here in the early 20th century—the growing textile and apparel industry. In 1928 his cousin Shepard Saltzman founded the Piedmont Shirt Company and offered him a job. He married my mother, Fannie Mendelson, who had come to New York from Minsk as a child, and brought her to the small but developing Upcountry city in 1940. So I grew up in the Greenville of the 1940s and '50s. The Greenville of that era was markedly homogenous—solidly white Protestant—with an invisible black population segregated from mainstream society, two small Jewish congregations with fewer than 150 members between them, one Catholic Church, and no mosques or Hindu temples. The only Spanish speakers were language teachers in the high schools.

In the public schools each day began with the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by the Lord's Prayer and a few verses of scripture, occasionally supplemented with a sermonette by the teacher. This had the effect of providing me with a good, free Christian education and also making me very conscious of being Jewish.

The Jewish community was tightly knit. Jews generally socialized with each other and had few gentile friends; intermarriage was unusual. Almost

everyone, religious or not, affiliated with one of the congregations. For members of the old Beth Israel Congregation the high point of the week was the Friday night service. There was no Saturday morning service, as those Jews not in the apparel business were retail merchants who had to work on Saturdays; professionals were rare. Although there were few traditionally observant Jews in Greenville, the Friday evening service was a sort of ethnic solidarity rally. While not particularly knowledgeable or observant, many of these first- and second-generation Americans still felt the strong pull of immigrant memory, giving the services, especially the High Holy Days, a deep emotional aura. The synagogue was, for them, a second home, the focus of much of their energy and devotion. Members vied for offices and seats on the board,

and congregational meetings were often marked by passionate arguments, including the throwing of chairs.

The strong ethnic feeling was reinforced by the external environment. There was significant antisemitism in those years, both tacit and overt. The wider community offered few cultural or entertainment attractions; the vibrant Greenville restaurant scene, the Peace Center, the Warehouse and Center Stage theaters were all in the future. There was little to compete with the strong inner life of the congregation.

I left Greenville in 1958 reasonably certain I would not want to come back. After receiving my undergraduate and medical degrees

at Emory, I spent four years in residency in New York

City (where at seders my cousins marveled that Hebrew could be read with a southern

accent). After two years in the navy

at Portsmouth, Virginia, I spent

the '70s in academic medicine at

the National Jewish Hospital in

Denver and then the University

of Chicago. On visits to my

parents during those years I

was surprised to see Greenville,

under the leadership of its

first Jewish mayor, Max Heller,

evolving into an attractive place

to live and work. When I decided to

leave academic medicine, it was to return

to Greenville to practice.

I returned to Greenville in the

1980s to find a very different milieu

and a changing Jewish community.

The city had begun its transition

to a multicultural, multiethnic urban center. The Jewish population was undergoing its own transformation from apparel manufacturers and retail merchants to professionals. Antisemitism was no longer a significant factor; intermarriage was common. The majority of Jews had friends and interests outside the Jewish community. Perhaps most telling: despite rapid population growth, neither congregation was significantly increasing its membership.

The emergence of Greenville as a vibrant modern city appears to have created a paradoxical situation in which individual Jews are living freer, more secure, and more interesting lives, while Jewish communal life is waning. It is this paradox that likely will be the major challenge for Greenville's Jews as they move toward an uncertain future.



Above: Judy Leffert, the author's sister, became a bat mitzvah in 1957 at Beth Israel Synagogue on Townes Street, Greenville, SC. Courtesy of Fred Leffert and Congregation Beth Israel.

The Rabhans Come Full Circle

by Barbara Chardkoff Rabhan

This is the story of how we found a home in Greenville, South Carolina. Harold Rabhan was from High Point, North Carolina, and I had spent my childhood in Jacksonville, Florida. We met at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1953 and were married a year later in Jacksonville—the start of 63 years of happiness. Our first home was in High Point, North Carolina, where Harold worked in the furniture manufacturing business. Mindy and Andy were born there. We later moved to Jacksonville—my father had died suddenly of a heart attack and we went there to help my mother organize her affairs. Abby was born while we were in Jacksonville, completing our beautiful family.

In 1960 Harold had an opportunity to sell industrial cleaning supplies for Zep Manufacturing Co. in Greenville, South Carolina. What a wonderful move! Thank you, Zep, for bringing us here. It has been a great place to live and raise our family. It certainly wasn't the city in the '60s it is today, but it was and is a delightful place to be. Our children were one, three, and five years old when we arrived. Our life was centered around school activities, swim meets, dance, and of course, Beth Israel Synagogue. Harold and I both served on Beth Israel's board. I held many offices in Sisterhood and was honored with the Woman of Achievement award in 1998. Our children went through Sunday school and Hebrew school at Beth Israel and had their bar and bat mitzvahs here. Our two daughters were married in the sanctuary. So we naturally have always had a deep attachment to the synagogue.

We were active in many civic organizations (I served, for example, in the Lake Forest Elementary and Wade Hampton High School PTAs, as well as on the boards of the Greenville Forum of World Affairs, the Greenville Civic Ballet, and the Greenville County Commission for the Prevention of Child Abuse; Harold was a 32nd degree Scottish Rite Mason, a member of the Hejaz Shrine Temple, president of the Greenville

Salesmen's Club, and the Big Chief of the Indian Guides at the YMCA). We experienced no antisemitism. To underscore this point, our children attended Wade Hampton High School with an enrollment of over 2,000 students, of whom only five percent were Jewish, and yet they were recognized as leaders. Mindy was chosen Best All-Around Student in her senior class, Andy was president of the student body as a senior, and Abby was very active in student government.

Mindy went to Duke University. Andy followed her two years later. Abby graduated from the University of Alabama. Mindy and Abby went to Houston, Texas, after their graduations. While there Mindy met her husband, Louis Kandel, of Columbus, Ohio, and Abby met and married Daniel Vines of Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Thirty years ago the two couples moved to Atlanta and have raised four of my wonderful grandchildren there. Both families have been very involved in Etz Chaim Synagogue.

With a graduate degree from Duke University Engineering School, Andy went to Lake Charles, Louisiana, to work on oil rigs. After a few years, wanderlust ensued and he traveled cross country, then to Australia, and then to Israel. In Israel he met Nancy Page of Kinston, North Carolina. They were married and, after stops in Atlanta and Sweden, they settled in Dallas, Texas, with my other two fantastic grandchildren. They, too, have been active in their synagogue.

We were sad none of our children chose to stay in Greenville, but during the years they were growing up, Greenville did not have a lot to offer. Now, however, our oldest grandson, Matthew Kandel, is here, working for Michelin Tire Co., so we've come full circle. We love Greenville and Beth Israel Synagogue and have decided we would never live anywhere else.



Abby Rabhan's bat mitzvah, Beth Israel Synagogue, Greenville, SC, November 9, 1973. Left to right: Harold, Andy, Abby, Mindy, and Barbara Rabhan. Courtesy of Barbara and Harold Rabhan.

For more on the history of the Rabhan family (aka, Rephan, Raphan, Rebhun), see *Our Family Story, 1840–1979*, by Morris Rabhan.

Living in Liberty, SC

by Shirley Honigman Sarlin

In the late 1800s my father-in-law, Reuben Sarlin, immigrated with his family from a village in Russia to New York City. He left New York in his twenties to work for his cousin Sprintsia Drucker, who owned a dry goods store in McCormick, South Carolina. Around 1920 or so Reuben had the opportunity to purchase his own store in Liberty, South Carolina, from a Jewish couple living in Pickens. After opening the Liberty store, Reuben opened another store in nearby Easley. Sarlin's Department Store remained a vital part of both towns for more than 50 years.

After establishing his business, Reuben married Ella Fedder from Baltimore, Maryland, and they had two sons, Stanley and Ralph, and a daughter, Lillian. Reuben became an active member of his community, serving on the Pickens County School Board and participating in numerous civic endeavors. Reuben worked closely with the many local clergy, offering them personal discounts as well as helping support their church members who were in need. He and his family attended Beth Israel Synagogue in Greenville, 20 miles away.

In late 1946 Ralph joined his father's business and continued Reuben's philanthropic endeavors. Ralph and I met at the University of North Carolina and were married in 1947. (I was considered a "Yankee southerner" because I came from North Carolina.) We had a son, Milton, and three daughters, Becky Lou, Janet, and Linda. Both of us were very active in the Liberty and Pickens County communities. Ralph served as chairman of the Pickens County

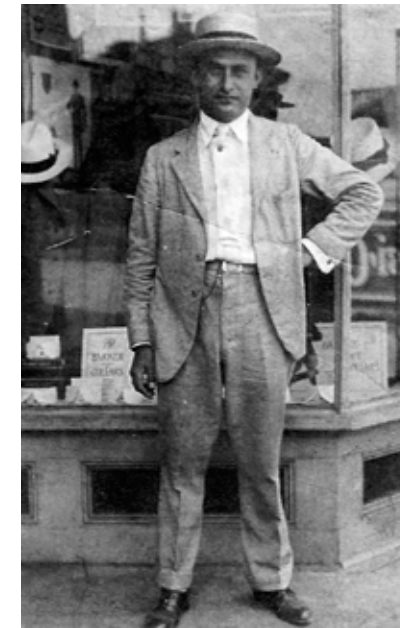
Planning Commission, board member of the Pickens County Cancer Society, commander of the local American Legion Post, and president of the Liberty-Pickens Lions Club. For more than two decades, he provided storage space for medical equipment that was loaned out to cancer patients in the county. I served

as chairman of the Pickens County Arts Commission, secretary of the Pickens County Cancer Society, president of the Liberty Friends of the Library, and was an active member of the Pickens County Library Board and the local American Legion Auxiliary. The Sarlin family donated money and land on which the town of Liberty built the Sarlin Community Library and a park.

Ralph and our family were active members of Beth Israel Congregation, with Ralph serving as its treasurer for 17 years. Our son had a bar mitzvah and each of our daughters had a bat mitzvah in the synagogue. Living in a small town and being the only Jewish family, we had the disadvantage of not having everyday contact with other Jews. Growing up, Ralph had an uncomfortable experience at school when, during an assembly, a minister asked everyone who believed in Jesus to stand up. Ralph was the only one who remained seated. Although the two older children experienced some antisemitism in school, the family, for the most part, felt accepted by the community.

One terrifying incident, however, occurred when Ku Klux Klan members and men in Nazi stormtrooper uniforms gathered directly across the street from the store and remained there for quite some time, determined to make their presence known.

In 1973 when Ralph announced the business was closing, the people of Liberty flocked to the store to buy their favorite items before they were gone. Ninety percent of the merchandise was sold in less than two weeks. The remaining goods were given to a local youth minister to be used for his church's youth group. Ralph and I remained in Liberty until 2006 when we moved to Greenville. Ralph died in 2007, but I am still an active member of the Greenville Jewish community.



Above: Reuben Sarlin, in front of his store in Liberty, SC, 1925. Below: Shirley and Ralph Sarlin, closing their store in Liberty, SC, early 1974. Courtesy of Shirley Sarlin.



Hyman J. Brand: A Man of the Cloth

by Alyssa Neely, with Hy Brand

Minneapolis, Minnesota, native Hyman “Hy” Brand had completed a degree in business administration at the University of Minnesota when he signed on to work for textile giant Riegel Textile Corporation in New York City in 1957. After a year of training, he was promoted in rapid succession from sales to management. He was transferred in 1966, and moved with his wife, Janet Franklin Brand, and their daughters, Diane and Cathy, to Greenville, South Carolina, where he became corporate manager of marketing. “Needless to say,” Hy reports, “the move required many adjustments. For example, there were no restaurants open on Sunday. At that time women dressed up to go downtown. Everyone would dress nicely to go to church or synagogue.”

The Brand children had been born a year apart in Quantico, Virginia, where Hy, then a marine, was stationed. In Greenville they attended J. L. Mann High School. Diane (Hundley) went to North Carolina State, and Cathy went to the University of South Carolina. Cathy worked for Dell computer and, in 1982, married Alex Harvin (Charles Alexander Harvin III, 1950–2005), who served in the South Carolina legislature for 30 years. Following Alex’s death, Cathy was elected to his seat and served for five years, until her death in 2010.

After parting on good terms from Riegel, Hy founded his own business in the early 1970s, buying and selling cloth of all kinds from his home. He opened several retail stores—Brand Fabric—in South Carolina, and sold wholesale to other

retailers and to manufacturers such as Max Heller, who owned Maxon Shirts. Hy first met Max while in Greenville selling for Riegel; after the Brands moved to the Upcountry, the two became close friends. One of Hy’s business strategies that paid off was his decision to buy damaged fabric sold in insurance losses and bankruptcies. He bought it at a heavily discounted price, paid a mill to clean it, then sold it for a profit. Hy stored his inventory in Conestee Mill, which he bought in 1972. The building is located on the Reedy River in the mill village of Conestee, less than ten miles south of Greenville. After decades of campaigning to see the mill listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Hy’s dream was realized in 2014.

A member of

Congregation Beth Israel for 42 years, Hy served as president six times. During one of his terms, the sanctuary and the social hall were renovated, and the first sign was placed out front. Hy is one of a handful of men who have served as lay leader for Sabbath services in the years when the Conservative congregation was without a rabbi. He was well prepared for the role by male members of his Minneapolis synagogue, Mikro Kodesh, who took him under their wing after his father died when he was 12. Hy, in turn, has embraced the congregation in his adopted hometown. He notes, “Beth Israel is warm and welcoming, capable of fulfilling religious, educational, and social needs. Needless to say, as with all congregations, there is constant change, but our future is a positive one.”



Above: Hy Brand at Conestee Mill, Greenville County, SC, 2000. **Photo:** Bill Aron. **Special Collections, College of Charleston.** **Below:** Hy preparing to sound the shofar on Rosh Hashanah at Beth Israel Synagogue, Greenville, SC, circa 2005. *Courtesy of Hy Brand.*



JHSSC: Building on a Broad Base

by Martin Perlmutter

The Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program at the College of Charleston has been the administrative hub of the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina since the late Isadore Lourie founded the Society in 1994, with the help of his friend and fellow-state senator Alex Sanders, then the president of the College. That connection between JHSSC and the College has been a win-win, providing the Jewish Studies Program and the Jewish Heritage Collection (JHC) with statewide reach and giving JHSSC a strong foundation on which to build. The Society hosts bi-annual meetings, produces an incredible newsletter (for which Dale Rosengarten and Alyssa Neely deserve accolades), sponsors cemetery surveys and historic markers across the state, and makes all of this publicly accessible through an impressive website, *jhssc.org*, maintained by Ann Meddin Hellman, our indefatigable web diva and former president. As administrator of the Jewish Studies Program and JHSSC since 2002, Enid Idelsohn has worked tirelessly and effectively for the well-being of both organizations, and with great success.

JHSSC’s financial structure is as noteworthy as its activities and accomplishments. Except for occasional grant support and sponsorships of special events, JHSSC has relied on its broad membership to fund all of its programs; it raises its annual budget each year from modest membership dues and the generous support of its Pillar members. Pillars donate \$1000 a year for five years, and the Society needs a quorum of some 40 Pillars to meet our annual budget. I am deeply thankful to those of you who have stepped up to be Pillars, and I hope this appeal encourages more of you to join such distinguished company. Increasing Pillar support was a major objective of the Society’s 2015 Strategic Plan and remains a priority for me.

I envision a time in the not too distant future when JHSSC will reach out to the community for endowment funds to supplement its Pillar program. As they mature, organizations need to become less reliant on annual giving for ongoing operations. This reality confronts synagogues, Jewish day schools, and Jewish Studies programs, as well as other non-profit institutions. Nevertheless, it says something genuine and reassuring when an organization can raise sufficient annual funds from its membership to support robust operations. Our broad financial base affirms the late President Bernard Warshaw’s wish that JHSSC remain a grassroots organization. Please become a Pillar and help JHSSC continue to tell this happy story.

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See page 13 for more information.