



THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY of SOUTH CAROLINA

Memory, Monuments, and Memorials

Register now for spring meeting in Charleston
April 28–29, 2018



Volume XXIII Number 1 Spring 2018



THE
JEWISH
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY
OF
SOUTH CAROLINA

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On the cover

Top: Slave cabin at Mansfield
Plantation, Georgetown, SC.
Photo by Nancy Santos, 2008.

Bottom: Crematorium at Buchenwald
concentration camp,
Germany. Photo by Raja-Léon
Hamann, 2017.

In this issue

Not Fully Human: Why Racists Are the Living Dead ~ Simon Lewis ~ During the Civil Rights Movement in the United States and the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa, Jewish activists made common cause with black people to battle racism and injustice. The author urges us to apply lessons from this history of solidarity to combat the current resurgence of white supremacists, who have grown bold enough to espouse their ideology in public and wear their inhumanity on their sleeves like badges of honor. 4

In the Shadow of John C. Calhoun ~ Herb Frazier ~ As an African-American boy growing up in Charleston, South Carolina, in the 1950s and '60s, the author learned not to trust "Mister Charlie." He recalls feeling the "creepy sneer" of John C. Calhoun bearing down on him while walking past the statue that still stands, a shrine for some, a relic for others, and for many, an archetype of intolerance. Frazier found freedom—as his father had before him—in travel. 5

Beholding the Past at Magnolia and Buchenwald ~ Raja-Léon Hamann ~ A young scholar steps outside his comfort zone with visits to both a southern plantation where Africans and African Americans were enslaved and a Nazi concentration camp. Gazing into the "abysses of human nature," Raja Hamann discovers invaluable lessons about himself and about history. 7

Memory, Monuments, and Memorials ~ JHSSC meets in Charleston, April 28–29, 2018. 9

To Honor the Survivors and Remember the Dead: Building a Memorial in Marion Square ~ David Popowski ~ A son of Holocaust survivors describes his parents' harrowing experiences during World War II and their immigration to Charleston in 1949. He recalls the spark, 45 years later, that ignited a five-year drive to honor survivors and memorialize those who had perished in the Shoah. 10

To Teach the Children: Columbia's Holocaust Memorial ~ Lilly Stern Filler ~ The ambition of two Holocaust survivors to build a monument in their adopted city was realized through the efforts of their daughter and the greater Columbia community. The surplus of funds raised for the project led to the creation of the Columbia Holocaust Education Commission. 12

Confronting Our Complex Past at Historic Sites ~ Robin Waites ~ Incorporating information about enslaved people in historic narratives and exhibits makes possible a more comprehensive view of the past that challenges conventional wisdom and invites meaningful dialogue. 14

History Is Local ~ Martin Perlmutter ~ The Society's extraordinary success since its founding 24 years ago has been propelled by its members, its Pillars, and its ongoing relationship with the College of Charleston. Dr. Perlmutter may modestly downplay his effective leadership but all who know the story of the Society and Marty's role in marrying town and gown know that a visionary has been hard at work. 15

Keynote Speaker: Michael Arad

Michael Arad's design for the National September 11 Memorial at the World Trade Center site, titled "Reflecting Absence," was chosen from among more than 5,000 entries submitted in an international competition held in 2003. He joined the New York firm Handel Architects as a partner in April 2004. A native of Israel, Mr. Arad was raised there, the U.K., the United States, and Mexico. He earned a B.A. from Dartmouth College (1994) and a Master of Architecture from the Georgia Institute of Technology (1999). In 2017, Mr. Arad was selected to design a memorial to the victims of the 2015 mass shooting at Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina.



Letter from the President



It is with great excitement that I have assumed the presidency of the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina for the second time. My first presidency (2000–2001) occurred while I was a practicing architect, 18 years ago. Now in my third year of retirement, I will have much more time to devote to activities that I enjoy, such as working with all of you to continue the Society's growth and maintain its high standards of excellence.

JHSSC was conceived in 1993 when Isadore E. Lourie, *obm*, assembled a small group in Marty Perlmutter's office at the College of Charleston. Isadore has been duly credited as the founder of the Society, but it was Marty's efforts, drive, and vision that built it into the powerhouse it is today. One cannot talk about the successes of the Society without acknowledging his hand on the tiller.

Over the past two-and-a-half decades, the organization has grown in many ways, most obviously in its professional staff. With Marty serving as executive director, Enid Idelsohn as administrator, Mark Swick as community liaison, Rachel Barnett as our new program director, and Dale Rosengarten and Alyssa Neely as editors of this magazine, we have a talented and dedicated team handling day-to-day activities.

The Jewish Merchants Project, under the direction of Rachel Barnett and Katharine Allen of Historic Columbia, is moving forward as planned. We continue to look to our membership for information about their families' retail and wholesale businesses.

At our meeting on April 28–29, 2018, JHSSC will partner with the College of Charleston's Carolina Lowcountry and Atlantic World and African American Studies programs, and the Charleston branch of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History to explore a topic that has caught the attention of the nation—public memory and memorialization. Saturday's panels will focus on how communities pay homage to loss, or raise high their heroes, in heavily politicized environments. Keynote speaker Michael Arad, the celebrated Israeli-American architect of the 9/11 memorial in Lower Manhattan, now designing a memorial at

Mother Emanuel AME in Charleston, will offer his reflections on "Facing Memory: The Past, the Present, and the Public." Sunday's discussion will address issues surrounding the presentation of "difficult history" at former slave labor plantations in the American South and Nazi concentration and death camps in Europe.


Four times in the Society's history we have awarded individuals the Order of the Jewish Palmetto for outstanding service to JHSSC and contributions to the field of southern Jewish history. Senator Isadore Lourie, *obm*, was so honored in 2002 for his role in founding the Society and his service in the State Senate. Solomon (Solly) Breibart, *obm*, received the award in 2004 for a lifetime devoted to studying and teaching American history,

with an emphasis on the Jewish South. Max Heller, *obm*, and Trude Schöenthal Heller won in 2007—he for his innovative work as mayor of Greenville; she as an active Holocaust educator; and both for exemplifying the best of Jewish values through their civic involvement in their adopted home. Ann Meddin Hellman was awarded the Order in 2015 for her tireless efforts developing the Society's website and documenting and cataloguing Jewish burials across the state.

On Saturday evening, April 28, I look forward to presenting JHSSC's fifth "Order of the Jewish Palmetto" to Dr. Martin Perlmutter for his leadership of the Society and his accomplishments at the College of Charleston directing the Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program and establishing the Pearlstine/Lipov

Center for Southern Jewish Culture. Marty also was the catalyst for building the Sylvia Vlosky Yaschik Jewish Studies Center and its recent addition, which houses a kosher/vegan/vegetarian dining hall dubbed Marty's Place, in his honor.

With Marty's retirement at the end of this school year, JHSSC also moves to new ground with a new executive director—a changing of the guard for both Jewish Studies and the Jewish Historical Society. Please join us for a lively and provocative spring meeting in Charleston on April 28 and 29, and a bittersweet celebration as our fearless leader steps down from his post.


Jeffrey Rosenblum



Marty Perlmutter and Ann Meddin Hellman at the May 2, 2015 meeting in Charleston where Ann was awarded the Order of the Jewish Palmetto. Photo by Jeri Perlmutter.

Not Fully Human: Why Racists Are the Living Dead

by Simon Lewis, Professor of English, College of Charleston

Two years ago, JHSSC's annual conference examined the roles South Carolina Jews played (or did not play) in the Civil Rights era. Joining forces with the local chapter of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH), this year's conference continues and expands that exploration while actively exemplifying the alliance between blacks and Jews in the fight for social justice.

Connections between anti-black racism and anti-Semitism are well documented. The white nationalists in Charlottesville who chanted, "You will not replace us. Jews will not replace us," are only the most recent manifestation. In the United States, of course, the Ku Klux Klan notoriously targeted Jews and Catholics as well as people of color. South African apartheid, the set of segregationist policies that 20th-century French philosopher Jacques Derrida called "the last word in racism," was created by a political party many of whose leaders had been interned by the British during World War II because of their pro-Nazi beliefs. Thus, although the kinds of persecution Jews and black people worldwide have suffered vary in nature and degree, there is a shared consciousness of racist violence that, despite differences between the communities, fosters a fundamental anti-racist affinity.

That affinity and shared consciousness have historically motivated cross-community collaboration in pursuit of equal rights for all, notably in the courageous commitment of Jewish Freedom Riders during the Civil Rights Movement, and in similarly significant contributions by prominent Jewish activists

in the anti-apartheid struggle—sometimes at the cost of their very lives. The history of this solidarity offers important lessons for us in our current situation. Currently, locally, a network of faith-based congregations has come together in the Charleston Area Justice Ministry. While the stakes may not appear to be as high as they were in the 20th century, the principle that freedom is (or should be) universal demands that we actively combat the life-denying processes both of anti-Semitism and of anti-black racism.

When Alan Paton, the acclaimed South African author of *Cry, the Beloved Country*, re-visited the United States in 1954 after almost a decade, he wrote optimistically of the South's "Big Change": "The South is beyond question a different place from what it was when I last visited it," he wrote. "One gets a vivid impression that the Deep South, the Deep South of the grossest inequality, the worst discrimination, of murder and violence, is slowly retreating. Its theories of white supremacy and segregation are slowly being forced into the Gulf of Mexico, where they will be drowned, thus holding water for the first time."

As we have seen all too clearly over the last couple of years—notably in the mass murder in Mother Emanuel Church and in the alt-right demonstrations in Charlottesville, the Gulf of Mexico, rather than drowning theories of white supremacy, may instead have spread their deadly toxins. Like the living dead in the classic horror movies that the tiki-torch-bearing mob in Charlottesville evoked, racist ideology is hard to kill. Neither the presidency of



Above: White nationalists bearing tiki-torches march on the University of Virginia campus in Charlottesville, August 11, 2017, to protest the removal of a statue of Confederate General Robert E. Lee from a city park. Below: Unite the Right rally participants show their true colors with the statue of General Lee in Emancipation Park in the background. Photos by Evelyn Hockstein (see evelynhockstein.com).



mass murder in Mother Emanuel Church and in the alt-right demonstrations in Charlottesville, the Gulf of Mexico, rather than drowning theories of white supremacy, may instead have spread their deadly toxins. Like the living dead in the classic horror movies that the tiki-torch-bearing mob in Charlottesville evoked, racist ideology is hard to kill. Neither the presidency of

Nelson Mandela in South Africa nor of Barack Obama here in America has provided the silver bullet or stake through the heart to kill it once and for all.

Comparing theories of white supremacy and zombies seems appropriate to me for reasons other than the difficulty of laying them finally to rest. As a result of racism's failure to acknowledge the full humanity of people deemed "other" by the

"The only dream worth having is to dream that you will live while you are alive, and die only when you are dead. To love. To be loved. To never forget your own insignificance. To never get used to the unspeakable violence and the vulgar disparity of life around you. To seek joy in the saddest places. To pursue beauty to its lair. To never simplify what is complicated or complicate what is simple. To respect strength, never power. Above all, to watch. To try and understand. To never look away. And never, never to forget."

Arundhati Roy, *The Cost of Living*, 1999

dominant group, those in the grip of racist ideology are themselves not fully human, not fully alive to everyone around them. They have aligned themselves with the living dead.

Rather than binge-watching zombie-apocalypse TV series, therefore, please come out to the JHSSC/ASALH conference and learn how we can actively combat zombie-racism whenever and wherever it raises its ugly and ignorant head.

In the Shadow of John C. Calhoun

by Herb Frazier, public relations and marketing manager for Magnolia Plantation and Gardens and co-author of *We Are Charleston: Tragedy and Triumph at Mother Emanuel (2016)*.

My daddy, Benjamin Frazier, sailed to Cuba with the U.S. Navy where he was welcomed as an American sailor more warmly than he was in his segregated hometown of Charleston, South Carolina. Daddy returned with souvenirs from Havana, including a special tablecloth decorated with a large map of the island.

That tablecloth stirred my childhood imagination. I admired the colorful drawings of palm trees, bongos, and scantily clothed women with fruit hats. My gaze, however, always returned to Cuba's plow-shaped outline.

I traced the map with my finger tip. "I want to go there," I said. That thick plastic tablecloth was my Aladdin's Lamp. When I touched it and spoke those words the ancestors cleared a path that would lead the tiny teddy-bear-hugging me not just to Cuba but around the world.

As a child in Charleston in the 1950s and 1960s, I was more aware of other nations than the dangers of Jim Crow in this racially divided city replete with symbols glorifying the Confederacy.

There really was never much to fear from whites, I thought, because I saw them mostly from a distance. In the Ansonborough Homes, a federally funded housing project at the east end of Calhoun Street, my neighbors looked like me. The people in my church,

Emanuel AME, and my school, Buist Elementary, looked like me. Daddy didn't say much about the implications of being black. His only lesson on race was a simple yet profound statement: "You can't trust Mister Charlie."

Daddy had reason not to trust "Mister Charlie." When he joined the military he was assured he'd become an electrician. Instead, his duty was in the kitchen as a cook in a segregated navy. He resented it, but he became good at what he did and he advanced. The navy opened the world to him and, as a result,

gave me a home filled with objects and conversations that reflected his travel.

A craftsman in Port-au-Prince carved the mahogany coffee table. Daddy crowned my head with a fez from the Kasbah. Cuban postcards depicted the Malecón, Havana's five-mile esplanade and seawall stretching along the coast. On the living room wall hung a framed painting with muted colors of Venice and its canals.

Daddy talked more about foreign lands than he did about the history of this country. He didn't explain how Charleston came to be a segregated town. He didn't say it was the cradle of slavery. He didn't say Laurens Street, which bordered the projects, was named for a slave trader. He didn't say the city's statues celebrated the

Confederacy. Maybe he didn't know this history or maybe he just wanted to protect me from it.



Benjamin Frazier, the author's father, circa 1945.

Daddy didn't have to tell me, however, about John C. Calhoun, whose statue stands on the street that bears his name. Black Charlestonians know two truths about the city. Streets flood on cloudless days and Calhoun was no friend to the black man. My eyes avoided his creepy sneer. Instead I focused on the date of his death—1850. He died a century before my birth. As a child I was thankful he was gone before I was born.

Daddy also didn't complain that black people were barred from the nearby Jewish-owned Sam Solomon department store. Because Daddy was in the navy we had options on where to shop. We didn't have to face the possible humiliation of being turned away from a white-owned business on King Street. We shopped mostly on the naval base in the North Area. After I was born the navy began to lift racial barriers.

That policy was most evident when Daddy was transferred in 1965 to the U.S. Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. In two days I went from an all-black high school on Charleston's east side to a predominantly white high school at Gitmo. No one protested that I was in a classroom with white children.

After college I got a chance to do what my father did—travel. I became a newspaper reporter. When I took a reporting job in 1972 at the then-*News and Courier* in Charleston, my father was stunned. He wasn't elated that his son was one of the first black reporters to integrate the white newsroom. He asked why I wanted to work

at that paper, the one that supported segregation and the one he wanted to burn down in the mid-'50s. His views softened by the 1970s. America and Charleston were changing for the better, and he was beginning to partially trust "Mister Charlie."

Decades later after working at other papers around the country, I returned to Charleston. I joined the staff at the *Post and Courier*. That's when I got a chance to report overseas. I saw the Berlin Wall crumble. I walked between the two Koreas. I watched workers unearth the dead following Rwanda's genocide. I called Daddy from sprawling Tokyo, a city he never saw. I lived in South Africa where I taught university students the importance of a free press and accurate reporting.

Initially, I didn't want the assignment in South Africa because of Daddy's stories of how the apartheid government kept him and other black sailors on the ship when it docked in Cape Town. My views on South Africa changed with Mr. Mandela's presidency.

Daddy taught me chess when I was 12. It was more than just a game. For him it was metaphor on life. In all matters, think of your next move. Years later, as we played, I had

travel stories to share, too.

I can revisit the places I've seen, but I can't return to Ansonborough. Gentrification had something to do with that. Even though Charleston has changed, the monuments to intolerance have remained.



Above: Herb Frazier, Charleston, SC., circa 1955. Behind him are the Ansonborough projects and Marsh Street (neither the street nor the projects exist today). Below: Herb Frazier (second from left) with his grandmother, Mable Frazier, and his parents, Albertha and Benjamin Frazier, at U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, mid- to late 1960s. Photos courtesy of Herb Frazier. Not pictured are Herb's brothers, Benjamin Frazier III and Terry Frazier.



Beholding the Past at Magnolia and Buchenwald

by Raja-Léon Hamann, master's candidate in social and cultural anthropology at Martin-Luther University, Halle, Germany

This summer I spent two-and-a-half months in Charleston working on a research project about the interplay of gentrification, cultural heritage tourism, and the politics of race and identity. It was my first time in the Lowcountry, and it was the first time in my life to visit former plantations. I had read about them, primarily in academic articles that criticize them for not paying sufficient attention to the history of slavery and the lives of enslaved people. Still, I was irritated when I saw for myself how former slave labor camps are being advertised as tourist destinations and wedding venues, lovely gardens to marvel at. One of my initial impulses was to think of Nazi concentration camps, and how inconceivable it would be to turn them into amusement parks. I do not want to imply that the slave labor camps of the American South, euphemistically called plantations, and the concentration, labor, and death camps set up by the Third Reich are the same. But there are similarities among them. All were places of unimaginable torment, horror, and pain, of the systematic subjugation of humans deemed less human than others.

During my time in Charleston, one experience left an indelible impression. Joe McGill, founder of the Slave Dwelling Project, invited me to an overnight stay at Magnolia Plantation on October 7th, and I readily agreed. When the day came, however, I got nervous. What was I supposed to feel? How would people behave towards me? And what kind of behavior and emotions would they expect of me as a "Black" person visiting the site of a former plantation?

I am not African American. My mother is German and my father Nigerian. I grew up and have always lived in Germany. But even though the experience of slavery has not been passed down to me as part of my family history, I regard slavery and the subsequent discrimination and violence against African

Americans as much more than mere historic events, appalling but distant. I feel deeply affected by that history. It forms an important part of my identity as an Afro-person. Besides the projections of other people upon me, there was thus much that I expected from myself as well.

I spent the whole day at Magnolia, and while it was very moving, emotionally and intellectually, it did not bring me what I felt it should have. There was no moment of revelation, no life-changing incident. Before we went to sleep in the



Slave Dwelling Project living historians, 1 to r, Germaine Jenkins, Gilbert Walker, Christine King Mitchell, George Hunter, Sara Daise, Joseph McGill, Rhiana Green, Jerome Bias, and Dontavius Williams pose in front of a slave cabin at Magnolia Plantation and Gardens, Charleston, SC, February 16, 2018. Courtesy of Joseph McGill.

though we barely knew each other, we had a long and intimate conversation. Magnolia felt magical. From the white of the moon to the black of the shadows everything was imbued with a soft and delicate blue. The trees and plants seemed to glow, and all the hardness and sharpness of things were gone. It was a dreamy and very comforting atmosphere, something I would never have expected to feel on a former plantation, a place that, not so long ago, I regarded as a reminder only of a horrible and dark past. We would stop and be quiet sometimes, listening in awe to the sounds of nature, the owls, the insects, and the purling and gurgling of the water.

I felt calm when we went to bed. The next morning, I realized that something unexpected had happened overnight. I felt different about the place where I had slept, the cabin and Magnolia in general. It meant something on a much more personal level now. But how so? Of course, the experiences Dontavius and I shared when we took that walk had a profound meaning to me, but there was something else as

well. Eventually it occurred to me that it must have been the sleeping itself.

Sleeping, of course, is a deeply intimate practice. We are vulnerable when we sleep and only relax and let go in an environment that feels safe to us. I believe that by spending the night in the former slave cabins, by physically facing such miniscule discomforts as cockroaches and other insects possibly crawling over my body, and by mentally confronting my anxieties about the site and my imagination of the horrors that happened there in the past, I was able to process deeper emotional conflicts I had about former slave labor camps.

This experience allows me to look at these sites differently. I see them as places of both peace and sadness now. The live oak trees epitomize that ambivalence to me. Elegantly adorning the alleys, the Spanish moss drooping from their branches, they bestow upon these landscapes a dreamy and surreal beauty. At the same time, crooked under the weight of the history they have witnessed, they are mournful reminders of the wrongs that built and sustained these places. It is this melancholic beauty I witnessed that sets the sites of former plantations apart from the sites of former Nazi concentration camps.

This winter, I visited Buchenwald. I participated in one of the tours offered by *Förderverein Buchenwald e.V.*, Association for the Promotion of the Memory of the Buchenwald Concentration Camp. We were a group of around 20 people. Most of the others appeared to be Germans, a few I could identify as Polish, and I also heard some speak English. I felt different than I did at Magnolia, somehow out of place. I was the only “Black” person in the group, and I wondered what people might think about who I was, where I belonged. I feel different in Germany in general, differently aware of my skin color, most of the time being the only “Black” person in class, on the bus, or like that day at Buchenwald. I am so used to this that the awareness of it has been pushed to the periphery of my attention. As such, it remains a constant companion of mine, the latent background of my every perception. At Buchenwald this caused me to feel a distance from the other Germans in the group. But it did not affect my emotional connection to the

site. I was moved to tears several times.

It was very cold that day. My hands hurt and even started to feel numb in the brief moments when I removed my gloves to take a few photos. As I walked the fields of debris in the former detainee section, the utter emptiness of the place, the only sound the wind whirling snow, created an almost haunted scene. I cannot imagine how it must have been for the people



“Jedem das Seine,” or “To each what he is due.” The view from inside the detainment area in Buchenwald concentration camp, Germany. Photo by Raja-Léon Hamann, December 2017.

who were forced to walk through the snow half naked or march up from nearby Weimar clothed in rags and often barefoot.

Our guide told us of the zoo built directly in front of the detainee section. The guards would go there on weekends with their families to “get some well-earned rest from the strains of their duty,” quoting the first commandant of the camp. There is nothing left today that

reminds visitors of a zoo, unimaginable as it is anyway. Most of the structures of Buchenwald have been destroyed; only a few remain. The crematorium where the imprisoned had to burn their fellow inmates is one of them. Upon entering that building, we first walked into the “pathology department.” Its purpose was not to find out why the detainees died, but to determine whether even in death their bodies might be exploitable. What was greatly valued was human skin. For one of his birthdays the commandant received a lamp as a gift from his officers whose shade was made from the skin of dead prisoners.

I feel devastated by the insanity that ruled such places. But I believe that we need to gaze into these abysses of human nature. A fundamental part of being German to me is the responsibility to remember the history of the Holocaust, to search for and keep alive knowledge of the unspeakable crimes committed under the Nazi regime, and above all, of its victims. And as my emotional connection to African-American history shows, this urge to commemorate is not just a question of nationality. These visits to former slave labor camps and former concentration camps have been formative experiences for me. They have provided me with invaluable lessons about myself and my relation towards their respective histories. And as dark, irritating, and unpleasant as these sites are, I feel that my involvement with them has given me a certain peace.

Memory, Monuments, and Memorials

April 28–29, 2018 | Charleston, South Carolina

Saturday, April 28

- 11:30 – 12:30 P.M.** Registration and lunch, Hill Gallery, Albert Simons Center for the Arts, 54 St. Philip Street
Remainder of Saturday’s events take place in Simons Center Recital Hall, Albert Simons Center for the Arts
- 12:30 – 2:00** **Shared Memories, Equal Justice?**
 Moderator: The Honorable Richard M. Gergel, U.S. District Judge
 Panelists: Claire Curtis, Professor of Political Science, College of Charleston; Rev. Joseph A. Darby, Presiding Elder of the Beaufort District of the AME Church; Armand Derfner, civil rights attorney; Rev. Charles Heyward, Co-president, Charleston Area Justice Ministry; Bernard Powers, Professor of History, College of Charleston
- 2:00 – 3:00** **Monuments of Marion Square**
 Moderator: Theodore Rosengarten, Professor of Holocaust Studies, College of Charleston
 Michael Kogan, Professor Emeritus of Religion, Montclair State University
 Christine King Mitchell, History Interpreter, Old Slave Mart Museum
- 3:15 – 4:30** **Facing Memory: The Past, the Present, and the Public** – Michael Arad, architect, Handel Architects
- 6:00** Reception to honor Dr. Martin Perlmutter, Executive Director, JHSSC, and Director, Jewish Studies, College of Charleston, Randolph Hall, 66 George Street (behind the Cistern)

Sunday, April 29

- All Sunday events take place in the Sylvia Vlosky Yaschik Jewish Studies Center, 96 Wentworth Street**
- 9:00 – 10:00 A.M.** JHSSC board meeting and breakfast – everyone is invited!
- 10:15 – 12:00 P.M.** **Difficult History: Plantations, Concentration Camps, and Cultural Tourism**
 Moderator: Robin Waites, Executive Director, Historic Columbia
 Panelists: Sara Daise, Cultural History Interpreter; Shawn Halifax, Cultural History Interpretation Coordinator for Charleston County Parks; Lilly Filler, Chair, SC Holocaust Council and JHSSC Vice President; George McDaniel, Executive Director Emeritus, Drayton Hall; Joseph McGill, Founder, Slave Dwelling Project; David Popowski, attorney and Charleston Holocaust Council member; Robert Rosen, attorney, author of *Jewish Confederates*, and JHSSC Past President
- 1:30 – 3:00** **International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies – South Carolina Chapter**
 Following the JHSSC conference, all are invited to attend a meeting of the Jewish Genealogy Society of South Carolina. For more information contact Jeff Alexander: atjalexan142@gmail.com

Hotel reservations

Francis Marion Hotel
 387 King Street, Charleston, SC 29403
 (843) 722-0600 or (877) 756-2121

Special rate: \$289 per night + tax

To get the special rate, make your reservation by 5:00 P.M. on March 28 and mention “Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina.”

Meeting registration

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

Meeting fee: \$50 per person

Questions: Enid Idelsohn, idelsohne@cofc.edu
 Phone: (843) 953-3918 ~ fax: (843) 953-7624

To Honor the Survivors and Remember the Dead: Building a Memorial in Marion Square

by David Popowski, Chair, Charleston Holocaust Memorial Committee

I am the child of Holocaust survivors. Henry Popowski and Paula Kornblum Popowski were both from Kaluszyn, a Polish town 50 miles east of Warsaw. Before World War II its population numbered approximately 10,000—80 percent of whom were Jews. My father was 11 years older than my mother, so while they knew each other's families, they did not know each other until after they were liberated.

Their stories of survival differed dramatically. My father lived as a young man in Warsaw in the late 1930s. When Germany invaded Poland he was conscripted into the Polish army. After Poland surrendered, he found his way back to Kaluszyn to warn his family of the impending danger and urge them to leave. Two of his six siblings hid in the woods and the remainder of the Popowski family perished. My

father sought refuge in the Warsaw ghetto and subsequently was incarcerated in the following concentration camps: Kraśnik, Plaszow, and Ebensee, a sub-camp of Mauthausen. He survived because of his skills as a carpenter, his family's trade. When he was liberated by the U.S. Army in May 1945, he and several friends attached themselves to a MASH unit and ultimately reached Landshut, Germany, where a displaced persons community evolved.

My mother escaped from Kaluszyn to a labor camp four miles away. Her father, Moshe Kornblum, had buried a number of gold coins in the yard. My mother's family owned the largest enterprise in Kaluszyn, a flour mill, so she began her journey with the remaining assets of that business. My mother and her sister, Hannah, sewed the coins into their coats and dresses and used them for food, rent, and bribery. (A family friend, the late and beloved South Carolina author Pat Conroy, memorialized the story in the character "the Lady with the Coins" in his novel *Beach Music*.)

Hannah, with the help of Stanislaw Wozniak, a Catholic work associate of my grandfather, came to the labor camp and facilitated my mother's escape. My mother and aunt, with Mr. Wozniak's assistance, made their way to Warsaw where they acquired false identification papers, posing as Catholics.

They migrated to Częstochowa, nearly 200 miles from Kaluszyn. There they lived in a convent and worked in a glass factory, using their Catholic identities. After they were liberated in January 1945 by the Russian army, they made their way back to Kaluszyn. My grandparents, my mother's brother, and numerous family members were gone. The flour mill had been seized.

My mother and aunt found a group of family friends who had survived and together they traveled to Landshut, Germany, where my parents met. They

remained there until 1949, waiting for approval to immigrate to America. During that time, they married and the first of their four children, my brother Mark, was born.

My parents' immigration to Charleston was sponsored by cousins Joseph and Rachel Zucker. Charleston had a uniquely large number of ex-patriot Kalushiners dating back to the late 19th century. Thus, the city was a welcoming place for my parents to begin their new lives—indeed, they were the last Kalushiners to make Charleston their home. I was born in Charleston, followed by my two sisters, Sarah and Martha.

During our childhood, my parents did not discuss the specifics of their war experiences. I would tell my friends that my parents had accents because they were from Europe, my grandparents were killed in the war, and the few family members I had lived in Brooklyn and Israel. As we began our college years, my parents opened up—my mother more than my father. As a survivor of the Warsaw ghetto and the camps my father had seen the Holocaust in all of its horror.



Above: To avoid capture by the Nazis, Paula Kornblum assumed a false identity as Apolonia Borkowska. Below: Henry and Paula Kornblum Popowski with their son Mark in Landshut, Germany, 1949. Special Collections, College of Charleston.



Fast forward, I graduated from college and law school and returned to Charleston to practice law, start a family, and be near my parents. One day in 1994, I was working in my office when Pincus Kolender called. Like my parents, Pincus was a Holocaust survivor and he had known me, literally, from the day I was born. He and fellow Auschwitz survivor Joe Engel wanted Charleston to have a Holocaust memorial. He said Jerry and Anita Goldberg Zucker (Jerry was the grand-nephew of my parents' sponsors, Joseph and Rachel Zucker) had pledged \$60,000 in seed money and local architect Jeffrey Rosenblum had offered to help.

Anita is the daughter of survivors Rose Mibab and Carl Goldberg of Jacksonville, Florida, and Jerry's father Leon Zucker lost the vast majority of his family in the Holocaust. Also, Pincus and Joe had met with Mayor Joe Riley and he pledged his full support. Pincus asked me to chair the project and added that they felt it was so important, they were willing to pay me my hourly rate

to do so. They anticipated the cost of the memorial would be \$200,000. I told Pincus to give me a night to think about it. Guessing the project would take a year and an hour or so a week of my time, I agreed and told Pincus that paying me was out of the question.

Initially, I questioned the necessity of building a Holocaust memorial in Charleston. Would enough people in a small metropolitan area with a relatively modest Jewish population care? As the project evolved and I saw the gratifying response of both the Jewish and non-Jewish communities, my concern abated and my devotion to the mission intensified.

The five-year period of design, fundraising, and construction was time-consuming, at times contentious, and meaningful. A committee of approximately 20 members of the Jewish community, with survivors Joe Engel, Pincus Kolender, Charles Markowitz, and Sam Greene playing key roles, oversaw the project. An executive committee consisting of Jennifer Phillips, Anita Zucker, Jeffrey Rosenblum, and myself handled the daily tasks and issues. Jennifer Phillips was at the center of our work, devoting her energies full-time to the project. Mayor

Riley assigned City Parks Director Steven Livingston and head of Cultural Affairs Ellen Dressler Moryl to the committee, and they worked diligently with us.

From a group of 15 applicants, architect Jonathan Levi of Boston and landscape design firm Design Works of Charleston were selected. At the recommendation of Jeffrey Rosenblum and respected contractor and Jewish community leader Raymond Frisch, the committee chose contractors Stier, Kent & Canady to build the memorial. After receiving their cost estimate of approximately \$500,000, we began the fundraising

effort, led by Anita. Our timing was fortuitous because the economy was robust and we had broad support from the community at large. Contributions came from countless individuals and—owing largely to Anita's work—from numerous corporations.

The selection of the site was mildly controversial. A few people preferred the old museum property on Rutledge Avenue, but the consensus was

that Marion Square, fronting Calhoun Street, was best because of its visibility. There also was some disagreement about the design proposed by the professionals: some critics wanted a more striking structure and others a greater emphasis on Jewish symbols. The committee finally approved the memorial as you see it now. There was no discussion about the irony of it being next to a towering statue of former vice president and slavery advocate John C. Calhoun. Marion Square, by the way, is owned by the Washington Light Infantry and Sumter Guard and is leased to the City of Charleston. Their member and former South Carolina State Senator Robert Scarborough represented those organizations and skillfully handled the collaboration.

We broke ground on July 23, 1997, and on June 6, 1999, five years after the call from Pincus Kolender, we dedicated the memorial at Marion Square before a crowd of 1,500 people. It was a remarkable day that included a performance by the Charleston Symphony Orchestra conducted by David Stahl, generously sponsored by Walter Seinsheimer and Dr. David Russin. When it ended, I told my mother: "Now our *mishpacha* who perished have had a proper burial."



Dedication of Charleston's Holocaust Memorial in Marion Square, June 6, 1999. The spire of Emanuel AME Church can be seen in the background. Special Collections, College of Charleston.

To Teach the Children: Columbia's Holocaust Memorial

by Lilly Stern Filler, Chair, South Carolina Council on the Holocaust and
Co-chair, Columbia Holocaust Education Commission

My parents, Jadzia Szklarz and Ben Stern, *obm*, were Holocaust survivors who immigrated to Columbia, South Carolina, on June 8, 1949—their day of independence! Along with them came an 18-month-old daughter, Lilly (me), born in Munich, Germany. We were sponsored by a paternal uncle, Gabriel Stern, who had immigrated to the States in the early 20th century and ultimately made Columbia his home. We arrived at Ellis Island via the U.S. Army transport ship *General J. H. McRae* and, once in the United States, my parents chose never to look back. Our family grew to four children and my father built his own construction business. My parents' experience of the Shoah was so dreadful it was rarely discussed in our household, so when my father died unexpectedly while my mother was battling Alzheimer's, I knew I had to find a way to honor them and to memorialize the family members they had lost.

I remembered that my mother, in the 1980s, had tried to form a committee to create a standing Holocaust Memorial in Columbia. Both of my parents lamented that their chosen American city did not have such a memorial, although they visited many in other cities. My mother's efforts were thwarted by fears of anti-Semitism, and the committee struggled to make decisions on design, location, publicity, and so forth. As a result, the project was tabled.

In the 1990s, my father began to raise money for a monument through our synagogue, Beth Shalom. He was forced to abandon the endeavor to care for my mother as her

memory dimmed. On December 6, 1999, my father died. In the following months I grappled with how I, the oldest of their children, could best honor my parents. By June 2000, I knew I had to take on the cause that had been so important to both of them—the erection of a Holocaust Memorial in the capital city of South Carolina.

I started with \$10,000 in seed money that my father had raised. Seeking committee members, I reached out to Columbia's Jewish congregations. I expanded the search for volunteers to the secular community, in particular, Columbia City Council, the University of South Carolina, and Fort Jackson. The monument was intended to memorialize the six million Jews and five million others murdered by the Nazis and their collaborators; honor the survivors and liberators living in South Carolina; and educate all South Carolinians about the Holocaust.

The committee grew to about 50 people. For the next year we met all together once or twice a month and more often in subcommittees. On the Internet we found an existing memorial in Boca Raton, Florida, that satisfied our criteria. Creator Irwin Hyman gave us permission to use his design, which we modified to incorporate a timeline and a list of liberators and survivors. I contacted Mayor Bob Coble, who advised me to request from city council a site for the stone edifice in the newly developed Memorial Park in downtown Columbia.

On June 6, 2001, the 57th anniversary of D-Day, we unveiled our beautiful granite monument in Memorial Park. A gentle rain was falling, but it was one of the most moving and memorable days of my life. More than 500 people attended the ceremony, which was filmed by SCETV; platform guests included South Carolina Governor Jim Hodges, Mayor Bob Coble, and other distinguished individuals. The grandchildren of survivors and liberators unveiled the monument. Each year in April, SCETV replays the hour-long dedication on television.



Ben and Jadzia Szklarz Stern with their children, from left, Herbert Joel, Helena, Lilly, and William Harry, 1960s. Courtesy of Lilly Stern Filler.

For more information online, see:

- Ben Stern's Jewish Heritage Collection oral history interview
- Columbia Holocaust Education Commission panel on Ben Stern
- South Carolina Council on the Holocaust's digitized survivor and liberator testimonies, including interviews with Ben Stern and Jadzia Szklarz Stern

The project raised more money than was needed, so with the remaining funds the [Columbia Holocaust Education Commission](#) (CHEC) was launched. Co-chaired by Lyssa Harvey and me, this commission was to adopt the original goals of the memorial and continue to pursue innovative ways to educate the people of the city and nearby towns. Since its inception in 2001, the commission has awarded mini-grants for teachers K–12, developed a speaker's bureau, and created a 24-panel exhibit, *Holocaust Remembered*, which tells the stories of liberators and local survivors. The exhibit has been shown in public spaces around the city and will travel this spring to four churches, two universities, and one Presbyterian retirement community in Summerville, South Carolina. CHEC publishes an annual newsprint magazine distributed by the McClatchy papers to more than 1.5 million South Carolinians every spring.

Holocaust education was not new to South Carolina. In 1989, Senator Isadore Lourie, *obm*, had introduced a bill creating the [South Carolina Council on the Holocaust](#) (SCCH). The legislature allocated funds, and the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker of the house appointed council members, charged with providing support to any community in the state that wished to have a Holocaust program. Later, prospects for funding were expanded to any educator teaching the history of the Holocaust, as well as training workshops for teachers who want to add the subject to their curricula. The council sponsors a Summer Workshop that brings to Columbia distinguished faculty from the non-profit organization Facing History and Ourselves, based in Washington, DC, for a three-day program following four weeks of online sessions. Every other year the council sponsors a trip to Eastern Europe for teachers interested in experiencing first-hand the locations and lasting legacy of the Holocaust. Both the workshop and the European tour are heavily subsidized by the council and graduate credits are offered.

With their common purpose of outreach, CHEC and SCCH collaborate seamlessly. Their work has become even more critical in the past two years as we have seen a rise in anti-Semitic acts and vile rhetoric, a willingness to be openly intolerant and racially bigoted. We need to teach our children, and all young people, the importance of respect, the value of diversity, the power of acceptance, and the love of mankind. Public reminders such as the Holocaust Memorial and programs offered by CHEC and SCCH become more vital as eyewitnesses of the Shoah pass away. Our small state has a large commitment to Holocaust education and remembrance. Time will not slow, and the need to educate, to recognize the facts, the causes, and the consequences of the Holocaust grows increasingly urgent.

We will not forget!



Top: Participants in the 2016 Summer Workshop for educators visit the Holocaust Memorial in Columbia's Memorial Park. Bottom: Lilly Filler (center) presented "Holocaust Remembered" to Dutch Fork Middle School 7th-grade students at their "Hate Won't Win" assembly, Irmo, SC, September 2015. Courtesy of the Columbia Holocaust Education Commission.

Confronting Our Complex Past at Historic Sites

by Robin Waites, Executive Director, Historic Columbia

In 2003, Historic Columbia opened a new exhibit at the Hampton-Preston Mansion, one of six historic sites for which we serve as steward. *A Home to Many People* was the organization's first attempt to document urban slavery at this antebellum property and more broadly in South Carolina's capital city. With panels addressing topics ranging from descriptions of the differences between enslaved labor in an urban versus a rural setting to the treatment of enslaved men and women by their owners, the exhibit broke new ground for Historic Columbia. Before this, the daily lives of 68 men, women, and children, without whom the property could not have functioned, were

scarcely mentioned. Introducing content about enslaved people and free blacks who worked for the Hamptons and Prestons provided visitors with a more authentic and complete view of life at the site. As difficult as this history is to share and to hear, it would be irresponsible to ignore it.

Ten years later, in 2014, our organization re-opened the Woodrow

Wilson Family Home as the

only museum in the country focused on the

Above: Mary Cantey Hampton's will. Richland County, South Carolina, probate case files, estate no. 1156 (box 47), Mary Hampton (1863); Probate Court Clerk's Office, Richland.

Below: Keith, owned by Frank and Sally Baxter Hampton, served as a body servant to Frank. This undated photograph was taken after the Civil War and depicts Keith as a freedman. Historic Columbia collection.

Reconstruction Era. Shifting the interpretive frame from a shrine to the 28th president to an in-depth and honest exploration of the years immediately following the Civil War, when the teenage Wilson lived in Columbia, allowed Historic Columbia to shed light on one of the most misunderstood and understudied aspects of our nation's past. Addressing the progress made by black leaders in public education, municipal services, and religious institutions, as well as the political terrorism employed by white supremacists intent on regaining power, themes at this site are meant to challenge visitors' perceptions of a key period in American history.

Exit surveys completed by visitors to the Hampton-Preston Mansion provide evidence of their reconsideration of a past they thought they understood, an acquisition of new information, and a desire to learn more. Transformations like these, resulting from personal experience, critical thinking, and dialogue, are goals towards which we strive. By introducing challenging stories and acknowledging our complex and interwoven past, we can engender change. As Dr. David Skorton, Secretary of the Smithsonian, explains: "In the end, many of the issues that all cultural institutions explore, from climate change to economic inequality, to race relations, may ultimately have political or partisan implications. Our role is to not advocate or judge. Instead, cultural institutions aim to provide context and information—and often the forum—to address the big issues knowledgeably and constructively." ["Trusted Sources: Why Museums and Libraries Are More Relevant Than Ever," American Alliance for Museums, February 27, 2017.]

Continuing the momentum established at the Wilson site, in May 2018, Historic Columbia will premiere a new tour at Hampton-Preston, which extracts the content from the *Home to Many People* panel exhibit and integrates it into the central visitor experience. Utilizing new research, primary documents, images and technologies, this tour offers a much deeper exploration of life at the estate. For example, visitors will learn about enslaved domestic workers William and Maria Walker, a brother and sister owned by the Prestons. William worked as John's body servant and steward while Maria served as Caroline's maid. In addition, guides will present Mary Cantey Hampton's valuation of her "property" found in her will, which includes people alongside objects. Visitors will be encouraged to consider ways the experiences of those both living and working at the estate intertwined, and to think about how these stories of the past remain present and relevant today.

Historic Columbia is committed to telling the stories of ALL people associated with the historic sites under our stewardship. Over the last 15 years, we have focused on those who were previously excluded from the chronicle, which has resulted in an increase in visitation from people who now see themselves reflected in the narrative. The journey to this point has not been easy, nor is it by any means complete. Our visitors have noticed the shift from a traditional house museum with period rooms to what amounts to a museum housed in a historic home, and they have been willing to engage in deeper conversations about content. By approaching each site and each visitor with the intention of revealing the full story, we have developed a better understanding of our shared past and are learning how to encourage meaningful dialogue.

History Is Local

by Martin Perlmutter

The Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina has been an important part of the Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program for most of the Program's history. The Society is an expression of one of JSP's central missions—community outreach—and by virtue of its remarkable impact, it has helped to define Jewish Studies. JHSSC was founded to study, preserve, and promote awareness of the history and culture of the Jews of South Carolina. It fosters public history at its best, supporting publications, exhibitions, oral histories, cemetery records, archives, and most important, a vibrant community galvanized by its mission and committed to its projects. Jewish Studies has no better example of town/gown cooperation than its relationship with JHSSC. This College/community synergy is also at the heart of the Jewish Heritage Collection at Addlestone Library and the Pearlstine/Lipov Center for Southern Jewish Culture.

The Society teaches us that much of history is local. The broader Jewish narrative encompasses slavery in Egypt, an exodus, great kings, destruction of the temples in Jerusalem, and long-term aspirations of a return to Zion. But for many South Carolinians, Jewish history revolves around the family store, the immigrant grandparents, quiet Sundays when most neighbors were in church, summers spent at Camp Blue Star, Camp Judea, or Barney Medintz, and efforts to sustain small congregations in towns with a declining Jewish presence.

JHSSC has surpassed the expectations of those who witnessed its birth nearly 25 years ago. Isadore Lourie would be proud to see how far the Society has come.

We owe much of our success to the loyalty of our dues-paying membership, now numbering over 500, and to our ongoing relationship with the College of Charleston—a bond that dates back to the friendship between Senator Lourie and his former desk mate in the state house, College President Alex Sanders.

Most of all, we are indebted to the Society's Pillars and Foundational Pillars—stalwarts who donate \$1,000 or \$2,000, respectively, each year for five years. With your continued generosity, I am confident the JHSSC membership and lay leadership will carry the Society far into the future, creating community and preserving memory even after the small town merchants of St. George, Summerton, and Walterboro are gone.

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JHSSC
Founding President,
Isadore Lourie (r), at the Society's
January 2002 meeting where he was presented
with the first Order of the Jewish Palmetto,
seen here with Past President Richard Gergel.



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Enroll your friends and relatives for an additional \$36 each.
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*Make checks payable to JHSSC
and mail to the address above.*

Register now for the **April 28-29 meeting in Charleston**. See page 9
for more information.