

Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina

FALL 1996



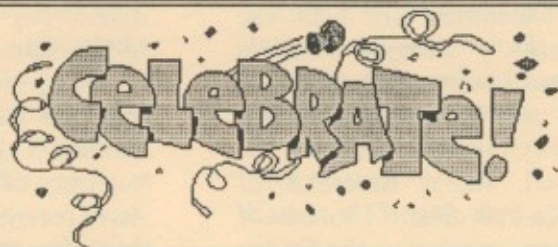
Rabbi Ted Levy and wife Ina Rae

Rabbi Levy Donates Collection

Rabbi Ted Levy and his wife Ina Rae, both of Hilton Head, donated a significant Judaica library collection to the College of Charleston, home of the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina. The collection of over 1000 volumes is of high quality and represents a significant addition to the Jewish Studies holdings of the library.

The College's Jewish Studies collection has been under significant pressure because of the rapid growth of the Jewish Studies Program, so the additional volumes are welcome and needed. Rabbi and Mrs. Levy wanted their books read, not merely housed at the College, so most of the volumes will go into general circulation and be available for students to use in their courses.

Rabbi Levy has agreed to help coordinate future Jewish Studies acquisitions for the College. Both he and his wife are founding members of the JHSSC and have been active with the Society since its inception.



JHSSC Begins Its Fourth Year

Join Us As We Celebrate And Learn!

It hardly seems possible that three years have passed since the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina was launched at an organizational meeting at the College of Charleston. That was in the Autumn of 1993. In April 1994, the Society held its first annual meeting.

Now, with over 250 members from around the state and beyond, we look forward to the beginning of our fourth year!

After a very successful regional conference in Sumter this past June (see page 2), the JHSSC will return to Charleston for our fourth annual meeting in January 1997.

Plans for excellent speakers, delicious meals, and wonderful company are well under way, and a number of hotel rooms conveniently located have been reserved at special conference rates. These are listed on the enclosed flyer.

Call early for your reservations, and ask for the special rates for JHSSC members.

Remember these dates:

Friday, January 24

through

Sunday, January 26, 1997

See you then!



JHSSC Regional Meeting In Sumter A Resounding Success

Ninety delegates attended the JHSSC regional meeting in Sumter, SC, this past June 14-16. Sumter's historic Temple Sinai hosted our meetings and provided warm welcomes for all the participants. Temple Sinai is living testimony to a once thriving and still active Jewish community. Dr. William A. Rosenthal, Rabbi Emeritus of Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim of Charleston, conducted the Friday evening services; Richard Moses welcomed the crowd and Morris Mazursky presented a history of Temple Sinai. The delegates got acquainted after services at a festive Oneg Shabbat sponsored by Virginia Moise Rosefield.

On Saturday morning delegates assembled at the beautiful Hebrew Cemetery to get a first-hand view of Sumter's rich Jewish history. The memorial stones were of great interest for their unique designs, touching messages and family histories. Delegates then went to Temple Sinai to learn more about the exquisite stained glass windows

that adorn the sanctuary. The clear morning light illuminated the beautiful and glowing colors of the windows believed to have been created in Germany in the late 1800s. Robert Moses led the discussion.

Katherine Richardson, director of the Sumter County Museum then gave an excellent account of the Moise papers that have recently been donated to the museum. Delegates spent Saturday afternoon sightseeing, and shared a delicious dinner at the Sunset Country Club, with some of the older members reflecting on growing up Jewish in the Sumter community.

At the business meeting Sunday morning, it was decided that the Spring 1997 regional meeting will be held in Greenville, SC, in an effort to encourage more participation in JHSSC from the Upstate. The group thought that if Sumter was any indication, regional meetings are an excellent way to highlight the important work of the JHSSC.

JHSSC and College of Charleston to Sponsor Elderhostels

JHSSC and the College of Charleston will sponsor two week-long Elderhostels in June 1997. Elderhostel is a national organization, based in Boston, which attracts senior citizens from across the country to different locations for extended study of a topic or theme. Participants in June's program will be housed at the newly renovated Francis Marion Hotel, across the street from the College of Charleston. The following is a description of the Elderhostel:

South Carolina has an historic Jewish presence that dates back at least three hundred years, with Sephardic Jews coming to the South Carolina coast through the Caribbean Islands. There have been subsequent influxes of German and East European (and Northern) Jews. Charleston's Jewish Community was the largest Jewish Community in the United States as late as 1830. Today, South Carolina has an active, increasingly urban, Jewish population. Charleston has large Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Congregations, a Hebrew Day School, and a prosperous, well-entrenched Jewish community.

This Elderhostel will explore South Carolina Jewish history. An overview of Southern history will provide the context of the Jewish story of South Carolina. Participants will discover a generally happy story of a society tolerant of religious diversity. The Elderhostel will visit historic Jewish sites in Charleston, including the oldest surviving Reform Synagogue in the world, and the oldest Synagogue building in continuous use in the United States.

The Elderhostel is located in downtown Charleston within walking distance of many of the historic sites of Charleston. It is hosted by the Jewish Studies Program at the College of Charleston and the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina.

For further information, contact the Jewish Studies Program at the College of Charleston at 803-953-5682.



View of Hebrew Cemetery in Sumter, SC, visited by delegates to regional meeting

Jewish Heritage Project Awarded NEH Planning Grant

With the aid of a \$40,000 Planning Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Jewish Heritage Project enters a new phase this fall. The award, made to McKissick Museum at the University of South Carolina, will fund the development of an exhibition tentatively titled "Pledging Allegiance: Jews in South Carolina, 1695-1995." McKissick Museum, the Jewish Historical Society, and the College of Charleston are co-sponsors of the project.

One of our first tasks is to identify artifacts, documents, and images that tell the stories of Jewish life in South Carolina. We need your help!

The items we seek are on your shelves and walls, and in your trunks and attics. Of special interest are photographs and scrapbooks; letters, diaries, memoirs, and minute books; family, business, and congregational papers; vintage clothing; and fine art. We are looking for things people brought from the "Old Country," including

religious artifacts such as prayerbooks, *tefillin*, *kiddush* cups, *havdallah* spice boxes, and secular objects such as samovars, mortars and pestles, tablecloths and linen.

We are searching for items that convey the immigrant experience--a peddler's pack, a sign from a country store, koshering equipment, Yiddish language books and newspapers. And, of course, candlesticks, the traditional symbol of the Jewish home.

Competition for NEH funding this year was especially strong. The Division of Public Programs's available funds were reduced by almost 60 percent in 1996. Two hundred and sixty four proposals were submitted, of which 101 were requests from museums and historical societies. Our project was among the 25 chosen for funding. One reviewer judged it "one of the top four planning proposals."

The review panel was impressed by the "extraordinary community interest partnership"

that the proposal represents. We at the Jewish Heritage Project thank everyone who worked on the grant, wrote letters of support, and read the various drafts.

For more information about the exhibition, please contact Project Director Dale Rosengarten, or Archivist Katherine Fleming, at:

Special Collections
Robert Scott Small Library
College of Charleston
Charleston, South Carolina
29424
(803) 953-8016

Thomas Cooper Society and South Caroliniana Library to Honor Senator Isadore Lourie

The Thomas Cooper Society and the South Caroliniana Library will hold a reception in honor of Senator Isadore E. Lourie on Wednesday, October 30, 1996, from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m. at USC's Thomas Cooper Library. This celebration marks the completion of the major phase of the South Caroliniana Library's *Isadore Lourie Papers, Project, and Oral History*. An exhibit on Lourie's life and public career will be mounted just inside the entrance to the Thomas Cooper Library, which is located on Greene Street, near the corner of Sumter Street.

Ronald E. Bridwell, President of the Thomas Cooper Society, will welcome guests at approximately 5:15 p.m., after which Herbert Hartsook, Curator of Modern Political Collections, will briefly describe the project. Senator Lourie's remarks will follow.

The exhibit will remain on display at the South Caroliniana Library through January 2, 1997.

Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina

JHSSC Officers

Isadore Lourie	<i>Founding President</i>
Klyde Robinson	<i>President</i>
Richard Gergel	<i>Vice President</i>
Martin Perlmutter	<i>Secretary</i>
David J. Cohen	<i>Treasurer</i>
Helen Silver	<i>Newsletter Editor</i>
Dale Rosengarten	<i>Jewish Heritage Project</i>

Please Send Change of Address notices to:

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

Searching for your Past in the Present

by Warren A. Kohn

I am often asked why I am interested in my family's genealogy. The answer is simple: so that my ancestors will not be forgotten and so that my children will know. Our ability to discover our past has never been more available than it is today. I was fortunate to come across JewishGen as I began my research. JewishGen brings together JewishGenealogy researchers from all over the world as they read each day's computer messages entered into the system. Over 2000 researchers "gather" to share information, ideas, research and research problems. Their passion is Jewish family history with particulars on their own families. They are willing to share, they want to know more, and they are willing to help others along the way.

Literally, from the corners of the world, we access JewishGen and each other through our computers in our studies. Excitedly, we find relatives in common, gain assistance in the translation of ancient headstones and mysterious documents. I located a second cousin in Australia on JewishGen; I found a college fraternity brother that I had not seen or heard from since the day of graduation. My wife located a cousin who was in the military and stationed less than 100 miles

away. All of this was done from a computer in my study.

What is JewishGen? It is a non-profit, wholly volunteer, computerized communication network for people involved in Jewish family genealogy. It puts the vast resource of thousands of other like-minded individuals at your fingertips. They do accept contributions which are tax deductible but they do not charge for access to or use of the system. They operate a world-wide computer communication system with a Web Site and on-line information. All that is needed is a computer, a modem, communications software, and a telephone line. You can generally access the project with a local telephone call. In Columbia, I communicate with JewishGen through a local bulletin board system (BBS) and although my system operator (Sysop) will accept contributions, there is never a charge. I also access JewishGen at its Web Site through my Internet provider.

There are three ways to contact the forum: you may use your Internet provider (if you subscribe to a commercial Internet provider such as America On Line, Prodigy, Compuserve, AT&T Worldnet, etc., you already have access), USEnet (soc.genealogy.jewish) or Fidonet. If you

have access to a bulletin board system, ask your systems operator to subscribe to JewishGen for you. Simply ask him to subscribe to jewishgen.org. The rest is simple. Each of these will connect to the same message base for JewishGen. The message base averages 50 to 100 messages daily.

While on the Internet, you can access JewishGen's Web Site at www.jewishgen.org. Once at the Web Site, the amount of information is endless. As a beginner, you may want to read JewishGen FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) which will expedite your research - - no need to ask questions which have been asked and answered before. You may search JewishGen InfoFiles which contain volumes of information such as the calculation of past Jewish dates, the meaning of symbols and letters on headstones, the variances in language used by various Jewish ethnic groups, etc. Seeking a family name and/or community? Check out JewishGen Family Finder (JGFF) which is a database of others seeking the same names and/or communities.

This is the first part of a two-part article. The author is an attorney in Columbia, SC



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