



Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina

Spring 1996

Mazel Tov to our New Officers and Directors

Good luck to our new officers, board, and committee chairs just elected for two-year terms at the annual business meeting of the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina on January 14 in Columbia. We suggest that our members save this list for further reference.

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Sandra Lee Rosenblum

JEWISH HERITAGE PROJECT
NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Dale Rosengarten
Helen Silver

Getting Acquainted with our New President Judge Klyde Robinson

Our new president, installed at the last session of the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina in Columbia in January, is well-known to many of our members.

A Charleston native, Klyde Robinson began his higher education in South Carolina at The Citadel, earning his bachelor of arts degree in 1946. He graduated from Harvard Law School in 1949, with a degree in jurisprudence, and in 1977 attended the National Judicial College. Returning to South Carolina, he has served as Circuit Judge, United States Attorney for the District of South Carolina and Attorney for Charleston County.

Robinson has played an active role in local and state organizations. He has served on the boards of directors of the Charleston Interfaith Crisis Ministry, Charleston Symphony Orchestra, South Carolina Heart Association, Charleston Jewish Community Relations Committee and Beth Elohim Congregation.

Through the years, Robinson has held numerous leadership positions, including President, Charleston Jewish Community Center; Chairman of the Board, Charleston County Heart Association; Campaign Chairman, Charleston County Muscular Dystrophy Association; Vice-Chairman, Charleston County Democratic Party; Vice Chairman, Simons

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A Visit with Dale Rosengarten, Historian and Curator for the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina

Stacks of old records, books, aging photographs, tape recorders, file cabinets, and computers catch one's attention when one arrives in Special Collections at the College of Charleston Library.

Presiding over a back corner of the archives is Dale Rosengarten, historian and curator for the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina since January 1995. She is waiting to greet me with a smile.

Dale is perfectly suited for the job both by education and experience. A native of New York City, she received her B.A. degree summa cum laude from Radcliffe College, Cambridge, MA., in 1969, with a major in social studies. In 1975 Dale received her M.A. in American History and at present is a Ph.D. candidate in the History of American Civilization at Harvard University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. Her expected date of completion is June 1996.

Her work experience is equally impressive, with many publications to her credit. Best known to Charlestonians is the exhibition catalog titled *Row Upon Row: Sea Grass Baskets of the South Carolina Lowcountry*. Mounted by McKissick Museum in

Columbia, the exhibit traveled to Charleston's Gibbes Museum and many other sites around the country.

Dale told me in an interview that "through the basket project, I entered the museum business... If I had to describe myself, I'd call myself a 'social historian,' but I love curatorial work because I enjoy putting history together with a visual interpretation. After *Row Upon Row*," Dale explained, McKissick Museum hired me to organize a conference focusing on sweetgrass as a natural resource. The conference spawned a community organization and helped initiate a transplantation project."

Dale and her husband, writer Theodore Rosengarten, moved from Massachusetts to McClellanville, SC, in 1976, and have put down deep roots. Their sons, Rafael David, now 16, and Carlin Isaiah, nearly 12, were both born in South Carolina.

The Jewish Heritage Project was initially suggested by one of Dale's colleagues at McKissick. In 1992 the Museum asked Dale to explore the feasibility of mounting a major research project and exhibition on South Carolina's Jewish history and culture.

This is when I met Dale. She called

one evening for an appointment and was on our doorstep the next day. I described some of the resources available in Charleston and throughout the South.

With the founding of the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina in April, 1994, the idea of the Heritage Project became a reality. The rest is history, as the saying goes. Over the past year, the project has gained tremendous momentum (see our Fall 1995 newsletter for a progress report).

I predict that Dale's enthusiasm and skills, together with the financial backing and support of the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina, the College of Charleston, and McKissick Museum, will one day lead to a traveling exhibition about the Jews of South Carolina, and looking to the future, to a permanent museum.

If you would like more information about the project or want to share your family's history, write to: Dale Rosengarten, Jewish Heritage Project, College of Charleston Library, Charleston, SC 29424.

Helen Silver

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Guild of the College of Charleston; and Secretary, Brith Sholom Congregation.

Robinson is very proud of his family. His wife, the former Claire Zuckernik, is a Boston native and a graduate of Mt. Holyoke College in Springfield, Massachusetts. She is currently employed as Director of the Elderhostel Program at the College of Charleston.

She, too, has been active in community organizations, including the League of Women Voters of Charleston County and the Charleston Chapter of the Council of Jewish Women.

The Robinsons have two daughters, Amy and Eve, both of whom live in the Washington area, and one granddaughter Robinson Gold.

Robinson has given much thought to the agenda he would like to see carried out by the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina. "I would like to increase the participation of volunteers in the Heritage Project in order to interview every Jewish family in South Carolina as to their family genealogy and provide them with an opportunity to reminisce and tell their story. These taped interviews will be transcribed, catalogued and housed at the College of Charleston so that scholars and others may have them available," said Robinson in his acceptance speech.

He also wants to make inquiries about the reestablishment of a Jewish cemetery on Hanover Street in Charleston. "As I understand it," he said, "these cemeteries were condemned and taken by the City of Charleston for failure to pay abut-

ment taxes in the 1930s. A few of the stones were removed, but the majority were desecrated by vandals. I do not know how we can continue to revere our ancestry, take pride in their accomplishments, and let this violation of sacred ground go unchallenged. To me it is indefensible."

Another of Robinson's goals is "to create a long-range plan to establish a Jewish museum in Charleston. It is well-recognized that South Carolina, and particularly Charleston, is steeped in Jewish heritage from the earliest colonial days. The Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina is the ideal organization to sponsor and provide the leadership for this movement. With a united effort we can begin, and ultimately, accomplish this necessary and deserving achievement!" Robinson declared.

Conference Highlights to Cherish

Jewish history enthusiasts from around the state gathered in Columbia on January 12-14 for the Third Annual Meeting of the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina.

Held in conjunction with the centennial celebration of Tree of Life, Columbia's oldest Jewish congregation, this year's meeting was well attended and had overflow audiences at several events. The program began with a kick-off ceremony at Columbia's City Hall that highlighted the involvement of the Jewish community in the life of the capital. Columbia Mayor Bob Coble served as master of ceremonies, and was joined by Charleston Mayor Joe Riley. Special guests included former Columbia City Councilman and State Senator Hyman Rubin, who reflected on his many years of public service. The ceremony concluded with the presentation of a portrait of Henry Lyons, Columbia's Jewish mayor in 1850, on loan from Mobile, Alabama, and the Proclamation of "Tree of Life Congregation Day" by Mayor Coble.

United States Senator Fritz Hollings and South Carolina Supreme Court Justice Jean Toal brought special greetings at a luncheon following the ceremony at the Capital City Club. Columbia College professor, Dr. Belinda Gergel, was the luncheon speaker and presented a slide/lecture on the establishment and development of Columbia's antebellum Jewish community. After the luncheon, Society members toured the historic Hebrew Benevolent Society cemetery on Taylor Street, one of the oldest cemeteries in the state. Dr. Gary Zola, Dean of Admissions at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati and a noted scholar of

American Jewish history, was the featured speaker at Tree of Life's Centennial Shabbat Service, which included Reform rabbis from around the state.

The Saturday session began with morning services at Columbia's historic "Big Apple," once the synagogue of the House of Peace Congregation and later a nightclub where the Big

author of a new biography on Charleston Jewish reform leader Isaac Harby, as the featured speaker. The afternoon program included presentations on Confederate Jewish history by Jacob Greenberg, a National Endowment for the Humanities' Junior Scholar, and Mel Young, author of a recently published work based on the Civil War correspondence of the Raphael Jacob Moses family. In the evening, Society members attended an elegant Tree of Life Centennial Dinner Gala at the Adams Mark Hotel.

The Sunday morning session convened at the beautiful South Carolina Library on the horseshoe of the University of South Carolina campus. Members of the library staff described the library's holdings of Jewish interest. Staff members of the South Carolina Archives and History Division displayed a number of historical documents including the citizenship papers of Simon Valentine, who

in 1697 became South Carolina's first Jewish citizen.

During the business session that followed, Dale Rosengarten provided an update on the Jewish Heritage Project and the meeting concluded with the election of new officers. Members gave a round of applause to outgoing president Isadore E. Lourie for his outstanding work and elected Clyde Robinson of Charleston as the new president.

Rabbi Ted Levy of Hilton Head introduced a resolution to elect Isadore E. Lourie Founding President in Perpetuity. The motion was passed by acclamation.

Contributed by Belinda Gerge

Isadore Lourie, Alan Kahn and George Vogt, Director of S.C. Department of Archives and History

Apple dance was first performed.

The morning program was held at the adjacent Richland County Public Library and featured Belinda and Richard Gergel, co-authors of a new history of Columbia Jewry. The Gergels' slide/lecture focused on the lives and contributions of three prominent members of Columbia's Jewish community in the early twentieth century - newspaperman and business leader August Kohn; his daughter Helen Kohn Hennig, a noted historian, clubwoman and leader in Jewish women's organizations; and University of South Carolina professor and humanitarian Dr. Josiah Morse.

A lovely luncheon followed at the Summit Club with Dr. Gary Zola,



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books you'll want to own.
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IN PURSUIT OF THE TREE OF LIFE

A History of the Early Jews of Columbia, South Carolina,
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Celebration to Tree of Life, 6719 North Trenholm,
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Course Offerings - Jewish Studies - College of Charleston - Fall 19

HEBREW 101	Elementary Hebrew - A first-semester introduction to modern Hebrew. No Prerequisite. Talia Arnon
HEBREW 201	Intermediate Hebrew - A third-semester study of modern Hebrew. Prerequisite Hebrew 102 or the equivalent. Talia Arnon
HISTORY 344	Modern European Cultural History - A study of European High and Low Culture from Romanticism to Existentialism. Professor Richard Bodek
HONORS 390	History of the Holocaust - An examination of the genocide of European Jewry during the Second World War. Professor Beatrice Stiglitz
JWST 300	Jewish Thought - An examination of some important thinkers and ideas within the Jewish tradition. Professor Martin Perlmutter
POSC 324	Politics of the Middle East - An analysis of the politics of the Middle East with emphasis on political, social and economic patterns and processes. Professor John Creed
RELS 201	The Old Testament - An introductory study of the Hebrew Bible which considers the development of biblical literature in the context of ancient Near Eastern culture and history.

On Tuesday, March 19, at 7:45 pm, Room 118, Education Center, a panel of three local rabbis will present the views of Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Judaism respectively on the Messianic Age and the World to Come. This event has become a regular occurrence and a highlight of the Jewish Studies Program.

The Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina
College of Charleston
Jewish Studies Program
Charleston, SC 29424-0001



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