



THE JEWISH HISTORICAL
SOCIETY
of SOUTH CAROLINA

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*Endangered Congregations
Strategies for Survival*

*Register now for fall meeting
in Sumter and Camden
October 20-21, 2018*





THE
JEWISH
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SOCIETY
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On the cover:

Temple Sinai sanctuary
in Sumter, SC, and (top)
detail from a stained
glass window featuring
Moses bringing the Ten
Commandments down
from the mountaintop.
Photos: Perry Weinberg,
2018.

In this issue

Sumter's Temple Sinai Breathes New Life ~ Annie Rivers ~ It took a village to save this synagogue and its cemetery. The Charleston Jewish Federation, Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim of Charleston, Coastal Community Foundation, Sumter County Museum, and Sumter locals responded to the congregation's call for help to prepare for an uncertain future. Temple Sinai's Jewish History Center opened on June 2, 2018, ushering in a new era for a two-centuries-old community and assuring responsible stewardship of a historic landmark. 4

Eulogy for Elizabeth ~ Dale Rosengarten ~ Beloved friend and colleague Elizabeth Moses leaves a lasting legacy at the College of Charleston, Georgetown's Beth Elohim, and in the new Jewish History Center at Temple Sinai, which she helped to create. 6

Turning Out the Lights ~ Dr. Louis A. Drucker ~ Imagine growing up in a town so small, there aren't enough Jews for a minyan. And then imagine families from a few rural communities coming together in 1945 to form a congregation and build a synagogue to serve the Pee Dee region of South Carolina. The author describes how Temple Beth Or in Kingstree taught him the value of education, hard work, and compassion, but it was the sense of shared history and the feeling of belonging to an extended family that made closing the doors for the last time so painful. 8

Love and Loyalty: Temple Mt. Sinai in Walterboro ~ Paul Siegel, Gale Siegel Messerman, Penny Siegel Blachman, and Joseph Siegel ~ The post-World War II Baby Boomer generation was making its appearance when Walterboro's Jews began raising the necessary funds to build a synagogue and acquire land for burials. The congregation did indeed "boom" for the next three decades, followed by a period of steady decline. Though too few for a weekly minyan, the membership swells each year for the High Holidays, as the sons and daughters who moved away return, drawn by fidelity to a community that once flourished. 9

Endangered Congregations | Strategies for Survival ~ JHSSC meets in Sumter and Camden, October 20 -21, 2018. 11

Growing Up Jewish in Camden ~ Garry Baum, Becky Baum Lourie, Cheryl Baum, and Harry Baum ~ Four siblings share their memories of Temple Beth El in Camden. Growing up in this small Midlands city, their connection to the congregation of their childhood is renewed each year when they meet for the High Holidays in the same sanctuary where, at one time, three generations of Baums filled half the pews. 12

Holding On: Temple B'Nai Israel of Anderson ~ Barry Draisen, with contributions from David Draisen ~ Linger over the word "Hamelech" on Rosh Hashanah in 1947 was tough on a little boy in the hot second-floor room over a store. Anderson's congregation is rooted in Old World traditionalism but its practices have kept pace with the modern world, adapting as needed and thriving in the decades following World War II. The future of B'Nai Israel, however, is threatened by changing demographics—a dwindling Jewish population and the loss of families with young children to more vibrant congregations nearby. 16

Small-town Conundrum: Temple Sinai of Orangeburg ~ Barry Frishberg ~ In a small congregation the loss of one lay leader can cause a seismic shift and require exceptional dedication from other congregants to keep the eternal light burning. Despite decades of striving to sustain Temple Sinai, recruiting new members remains an ongoing challenge. Today, it seems Jewish families in this small city want either more than the congregation has to offer or no affiliation at all. 17

Telling the Story ~ Mark Swick ~ The Society's Jewish Merchant Project is up and running, documenting the generations of storekeepers who became the backbone of congregations in towns and small cities across the state. Waning Jewish populations have left synagogues struggling for survival. JHSSC's fall meeting in Sumter and Camden will consider the plight of endangered congregations and the special circumstances—partnership with a county museum, energetic lay leadership, or sun-belt migration—that sometimes save the day. 19



Letter from the President

2019 Will Mark the Society's 25th Anniversary

As we approach our upcoming fall meeting, I think back on our conference last spring in Charleston titled "Memory, Monuments, and Memorials" and realize how many times I have recalled the words of panelists, speakers, and participants. One debate that stands out had to do with the contested use of the terminology "slave" vs. "enslaved person." Especially memorable was the presentation by the Israeli-American architect Michael Arad, FAIA, describing how he arrived at his design for the 9/11 Memorial at Ground Zero in Lower Manhattan, and his work on a new memorial for Mother Emanuel Church in Charleston, a project recently unveiled and featured in the *Post and Courier*.

Other Charleston museums recently in the news include the Medal of Honor Museum and Memorial by Israeli-American architect Moshe Safdie, FAIA, and the proposed International African American Museum, by Pei Cobb & Freed Architects. All three projects involve world renowned design firms, making Charleston a natural site to talk about memorials and museums.

Saturday's sessions last April culminated with a reception for the Society's outgoing executive director, Dr. Martin Perlmutter, to whom JHSSC awarded its fifth Order of the Jewish Palmetto.

Our fall meeting on October 20 and 21 in Sumter and Camden, SC, "Endangered Congregations|Strategies for Survival," will highlight the exodus of Jewish families from small towns to larger cities in the state and across the country. "How can you keep them down on the farm after they have seen Paris?" In this case, Paris becomes Charleston, Greenville, Columbia, Charlotte, Atlanta, Houston, New York, and San Francisco—metropolitan areas with a lot to offer in terms of

education, career opportunities, and Jewish life. Small-town southern Jews remain present in the remnants of their homes, businesses, and religious buildings, even if they are too few to raise a minyan.

Just 25 years ago, South Carolina was one of only two states in America where more citizens lived in rural areas than in urban centers. Rural roads and railroads linked the towns to each other and to major population centers. Religion tied South Carolina's Jews together. In October we will explore what remains of families and buildings in these far-flung communities. South Carolina's population has almost doubled

over the past five decades; with that in mind, we will discuss strategies for the preservation or the reestablishment of Jewish life in small towns.

Looking forward to JHSSC's 25th anniversary year, I think back on our founding members, on those who have been involved since the early years, and on those who are no longer with us. We sadly add to the list of those we have lost our fellow board member and beloved friend Elizabeth Moses of Sumter. I met the Moses family through the Society, working

with Robert Moses when we founded JHSSC, and with his youngest daughter, Elizabeth, on our first and second Georgetown meetings. We all will miss her, and we extend our deepest condolences to the Moses family.

I look forward to seeing you in Sumter and Camden this fall. Please send me your suggestions, concerns, and ideas for future meetings.

Wishing everyone a healthy and happy New Year,

Jeffrey Rosenblum, FAIA, JHSSC President



JHSSC Founding Executive Director, Martin Perlmutter, poses with family members in the College of Charleston's Alumni Hall after being awarded the Order of the Jewish Palmetto on April 28, 2018. L to r: Daniel Perlmutter, Anahita Modaresi, Teddy McRackan, Estee Perlmutter, Marty Perlmutter, Jeri Perlmutter, Jake Perlmutter, Samantha Brock Perlmutter, Karen Kaplan Perlmutter, Aaron Perlmutter. Photo: Jessica Spence.

Sumter's Temple Sinai Breathes New Life

by Annie Abrams Rivers, Executive Director, Sumter County Museum

Sumter has a rich Jewish history. The first Jewish immigrants arrived here from Charleston around 1815. From the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s, there was a steady Jewish presence in town thanks to active retail, textile, and manufacturing opportunities aided by vital nearby rail lines. As in many small-town southern communities, however, the latter half of the 20th century saw the congregation dwindle. Younger generations of Temple Sinai families left for bigger cities. The ease of assimilation in Sumter contributed to the decline in congregation membership; as interfaith marriage became more common, children were raised in other faiths.

Anticipating the possibility of the congregation's demise, Roger Ackerman wrote a long letter to his fellow members in 2005, encouraging them to prepare for the future and create something like a living will.



Two years later, Sinai's board of directors appointed a long-range planning committee composed of Roger Ackerman, Harby Moses, Robert Moses, Ray Reich, and Jay Schwartz. The committee had to face the hard questions of what to do with the historic 1913 building if Temple Sinai no longer had sufficient members to keep the synagogue going. Would it be turned into something else? Sold? They also had to secure the future care of their cemetery. In 2007, the temple's archives were donated to Special Collections at the College of Charleston.

On a friend's recommendation, Ackerman reached out to consultant David Sarnat, former president of the Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta and current president of the

Jewish Community Legacy Project. Ackerman remembers being at an "impasse" until Sarnat visited. They decided to tackle the cemetery concern first. Sarnat connected them with the Charleston Jewish Federation. After several meetings, an agreement was drawn up for the Federation to manage perpetual care of the cemetery.

They then turned their focus to the temple building complex. Robert Moses suggested contacting Charleston's Reform synagogue, Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim (KKBE). Since most of the original Jewish settlers in Sumter came from Charleston, KKBE already had a strong tie to Temple Sinai. A large congregation with a robust historical consciousness, Beth Elohim was willing and eager to help Temple Sinai. Another agreement was drawn up, this time giving KKBE control over the temple board and the ultimate decision of when to turn the lights off. Temple Sinai set up two endowments with the Coastal Community Foundation: one for the Charleston Jewish Federation to use for the cemetery's care, the other for the "care, maintenance, and operation" of the synagogue as well as support for Jewish heritage programs.

With the agreements successfully concluded, the committee did not have any additional plans. However, word got around through various news articles about the temple's anticipated eventual closing. Local residents of Sumter without a Jewish background expressed concern and interest in helping. This led Roger Ackerman to consider turning part of the building into a museum about the Holocaust. With no permanent exhibit on the Holocaust between Atlanta and Richmond, he saw an opportunity for the temple to serve as an educational resource for the students of Sumter County and beyond.

Not knowing anything about running a museum, Ackerman and Jay Schwartz approached the Sumter County Museum Board of Trustees with the idea in 2015. Considering the temple's proximity to the museum and its significant historical value, the board quickly supported the idea but wanted to make sure it was feasible for a small museum staff to manage such an enterprise. The museum and temple boards and I decided that the social hall would make a great display area after a few

renovations. Temple Sinai agreed to raise funds for the project and I promised to assist by finding grants.

The Sumter County Museum, Temple Sinai, and Coastal Community Foundation signed an agreement in December 2016 with the mutual goal to preserve the Temple Sinai building "as a historic entity with the purpose of operating it as an educational and cultural facility." The document detailed a plan for the Foundation to manage and disburse the temple's cash assets to ensure the maintenance of the building. The Sumter County Museum agreed to develop a historical exhibit and oversee the building's care. Through all discussions, it was made clear that the temple would continue to be available as needed for Sabbath and holiday services as well as celebratory occasions and funerals. While it took several drafts to reach a final agreement, the signed document provides clear instructions for each party in the immediate and distant future. Ackerman and Schwartz got busy fundraising. I secured a Connected Communities grant from Central Carolina Community Foundation. By early 2017, the project was a reality.

I suggested hiring the Charleston-based company HW Exhibits, then known as the History Workshop, to help curate and design the exhibition. I had worked with its staff members on the museum's outdoor signage and was impressed with their skills in exhibit design and fabrication. We had a great team from HW Exhibits, led by Rachel Bragg as project manager and Kelly Bozarth as designer. First, we determined the exhibit's mission: to remember, celebrate, and share Jewish history with the people of Sumter and their visitors. While we knew we wanted a significant portion of the display to focus on the Holocaust, featuring the story of Sumter's own Holocaust survivor, Abe Stern, we felt it was also important to tell the history of Jewish life in our town. Jews played a major role in the development of both city and county. With the Jewish population declining in numbers, it seemed more important than ever to ensure the historic memory of this portion of the people would be preserved.

In spring 2017, we hired Elizabeth Moses as Sumter County Museum's Education and Outreach Coordinator. Moses, originally from Sumter, has deep Jewish roots in the community and had been a critical player in developing the landmark exhibit *A Portion of the People: Three Hundred Years of Southern Jewish Life*, a collaboration between the College of Charleston and McKissick Museum at the University of South Carolina. She helped connect the museum to long-standing members of the congregation and their children,

and as a result we acquired many artifacts and photos to tell the story of Sumter's Jewish life.

The exhibition is divided into seven sections: *Discover Judaism*, *Finding a Place: Jewish Immigrants Arrive in South Carolina*, *Jewish Life in Sumter*, *the Holocaust*, *Sumter Connections to the Holocaust*, a Holocaust reflection area, and *Congregation*



Sinai. After going through the galleries, visitors can pick up a guide to peruse as they walk through the sanctuary and marvel at the remarkable stained glass windows. Guests also can view Sumter's Holocaust memorial, recently relocated from the former site of the city and county government offices to the grounds of the temple, where it will enjoy greater visibility.

Temple Sinai Jewish History Center exhibits. Top right: section on the Holocaust, May 10, 2018, during installation. Photo: Annie Abrams Rivers. Opposite page and above: Opening preview, June 1, 2018. Photos: Perry Weinberg.

The Temple Sinai Jewish History Center, as we named the new museum, opened to great fanfare on June 2, 2018. We chose the word Center to call attention to the fact that it is more than a static exhibit. We plan to sponsor educational programming throughout the year with lectures, musical performances, and other events. While the exhibit installation is mostly permanent, portions will change, and artifacts will rotate over time.



Ribbon Cutting, Temple Sinai Jewish History Center, 11 Church Street, Sumter, SC, June 2, 2018. Photo: Perry Weinberg.

It was a long journey to reach this point, but we are all very proud of the temple's new life. Ackerman recalls, "We worked awfully hard. I can't tell you how many times we met over agreements. To see the end result is so gratifying." We can't wait to share the Center with members of the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina at their October meeting in Sumter. For more information, please visit our website at www.sumtercountymuseum.org.

Eulogy for Elizabeth, Temple Sinai, Sumter, SC

delivered by Dale Rosengarten on July 25, 2018

Today we are tasked with saying goodbye to Elizabeth, youngest daughter of Harriett and Robert Moses. We ache with her death because, whether we knew her as daughter, sister, colleague, co-worker, friend, mentor, or prayer leader, she was a loved one. In all the roles she played, under all the hats she wore, she never let anyone down. Elizabeth would do for you and go as far for you as she could, and then go some more.

When I first met her dad and mom in 1995, soon after we launched the Jewish Heritage Project at the College of Charleston, Elizabeth was living in Massachusetts, working as a biologist with a specialty in marine mammals. I heard about her as the younger sister of Natalie, Carol, Katherine, and Laura, as the one who loved animals and who decided to pursue her father's religion—studying diligently with rabbis Michael Mellen and Jonathan Magidovitch and, in 1997, converting to Judaism.

Armed with a bachelor's degree from Wofford and a master's degree from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Elizabeth spent the first dozen years of her professional career working with marine life—at

Sea World and the New England Aquarium, and on research cruises in the North Atlantic, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Eastern Tropical Pacific.

In 1999 she ended her seafaring days and returned to South Carolina. She began working for the College of Charleston as an archival associate for the Jewish Heritage Collection and as an administrative assistant for the Jewish Studies Program. That's when I came to know and love her. Among other tasks, she helped edit and lay out the newsletter of the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina. She was an essential ally in the development of *A Portion of the People*—the chronicle of 300 years of southern Jewish life. She connected us with members of her extended family and helped persuade reluctant lenders to let us borrow objects for the exhibition.

As many of us know, the roots of the Moses family tree run deep in South Carolina, going back to before the American Revolution. I used to like to rattle off the litany: Myer Moses I was a Patriot in the War of Independence, Myer Moses II in the War of 1812, and Myer Moses III, a rebel in the War between the States.

Elizabeth loaned an ambrotype of Myer III for the show.



Elizabeth Moses greets a diamondback terrapin during one of her marine animal surveys in North Inlet, east of Georgetown, SC, ca. 2003. Photo: Rob Young.

On her father's mother's side, the Emanuel ancestors came to America on the boat popularly known as the "Jewish Mayflower"—the St. Catherine—which, in 1654, carried 23 Jewish refugees from Recife, Brazil, to the port of New Amsterdam, later called New York.

Elizabeth was proud of her heritage and devoted to her family, but her most outstanding characteristic, in my opinion, was her commitment to truth-telling. She was one of those people who cannot tell a lie, or even a half truth. She told it like she saw it and would not hesitate to point out when the emperor had no clothes.

She also had a keen sense of humor, a deep interest in history, and a way with words.

Just as *A Portion of the People* began its two-year tour, Elizabeth made plans to move to Georgetown, SC. She never was a big city girl, she said, and always preferred small town life. She had heard that congregation Beth Elohim in Georgetown was in trouble, its members so few and so aged, they were talking about selling the synagogue and "turning off the lights."

Landing a job as instructor and research technician in the Department of Marine Science at Coastal Carolina University, and finding a small house that would accommodate her and her menagerie of dogs and cats, she made the move. With persistence, intelligence, and gentle persuasion, she sought out Jewish retirees who had migrated to the Grand Strand and brought them into the fold of Georgetown's longstanding Jewish community. Many of the newcomers had more Jewish education than the natives, but almost none knew how illustrious the town's history really was. From a struggling minyan of old-timers, Elizabeth built the membership to more than 40 families.

In 2006, she took a job as feature and copy editor for the *Georgetown Times* and the *Sun News*, and late the next year became an interpreter for the SC Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism, first at Huntington Beach State Park and then at Rose Hill Plantation, outside the town of Union. Leading tours at the home of William Henry Gist, known as South Carolina's "Secession Governor," may not have been Elizabeth's cup of tea, but as in everything she did, she gave it her all.

Then in the spring of 2017, her dream job became available.

She was eager to return to Sumter, to be near her beloved father, and she was ready to undertake a challenge even greater than the one she encountered at Georgetown's Beth Elohim: to bolster attendance at Temple Sinai, whose congregation was dwindling and greying. The Sumter County Museum had entered a partnership with Temple Sinai with the goal of creating a Jewish History Center in the synagogue's social hall. Museum director Annie Rivers needed help with the project. Elizabeth applied for the position of Education and Outreach Coordinator and was quickly hired. Over the course of a year she poured her



Elizabeth Moses with her father, Robert Altamont Moses, Temple Sinai, Sumter, SC, 2000. Photo: Bill Aron. Courtesy of Special Collections, College of Charleston.

energy into developing the exhibition galleries you now can see, just beyond the doors of this sanctuary. Temple Sinai's Jewish History Center is a wonder to behold: an inspired re-purposing of synagogue space as an educational facility, designed with extraordinary speed, efficiency, and a sense of beauty.

My dear friend Elizabeth died far too young. Few of us can know how long we have here on earth. We don't know the trials and misfortunes that will test us along the way. Elizabeth knew! It would have been easy for her to become bitter and hardened, or to surrender to self-pity and regret. But you did not hear that and you did not see that

from Elizabeth. The fact is her struggles with illness made her more acutely aware of the plight of others. She would answer the phone at work and it was not unusual to hear her comfort the person on the other end: "I'm sorry for your loss." "I hope you're feeling better." "How can I help you?"

The poet Wordsworth must have had her in mind when he wrote:

As tempted more, more able to endure
As more exposed to suffering and distress,
Thence more alive to tenderness.

Alas, Elizabeth was not given the gift of time. She had more work to do, more dogs and cats to rescue, more pen pals to befriend, more ports to visit. But in her 54 short years she created a lasting legacy—at the College of Charleston, in Georgetown, in the sanctuary where we now sit, and in the hearts of each of us.

May Elizabeth's memory be a blessing forever.

Turning Out the Lights

by Dr. Louis A. Drucker, Past President, Temple Beth Or, Kingstree, SC

Turn out the lights when you leave. It's a simple statement that we've all heard. Seems reasonable, seems easy, but how do you do it? How do you do it when it's your synagogue and you're not only leaving, you're closing? Such is the fate of many of South Carolina's small-town congregations, including mine, Temple Beth Or in Kingstree, South Carolina. In February 2005, the day after my father's funeral, I had to turn out the lights.

The congregation at Temple Beth Or taught me many things. I learned to read Hebrew. I learned the history of the Jewish people and their historic struggles with many kinds of strife. I learned how hard work and compassion for others could reward you with far more than wages at a job. I learned that not all the people in my temple were perfect, but each had a purpose and a place. I learned to be a leader of the congregation and of weekly Shabbat services. I learned how to make as much noise as possible when I heard the name HAMAN! But what I never learned was how to end it all. How could it be that I, the president of the congregation, was going to be the one to make the decision that it was time to close the doors? How, after only 60 years, did this happen? How can I go over to our cemetery and look at the headstones of all these great people who had built so much out of so little? What did I do, or not do, that could have averted this awful end?

What do you do with the memorabilia that documents the history of your congregation? How about the Torahs, the religious school books, the Haggadot, the memorial boards, the eternal light, the building itself? These were all questions without answers.

Temple Beth Or was founded in

April 1945 as a Conservative congregation by Jewish families that lived in small towns in the Pee Dee region of South Carolina. They met in members' homes until they finally decided upon a location for a synagogue in Kingstree. On April 10, 1949, the cornerstone for Temple Beth Or was placed. Like all congregations, there were Shabbat services, onegs, seders, Purim festivals, men's club and Sisterhood, religious school, Hanukkah parties, field trips, youth group, monthly bulletins, and fundraisers. We did it all. Except we didn't have a rabbi. How could we? We were only a small group of families in a small town.

Fortunately, Synagogue Emanu-El in Charleston was willing to take us under its wing for many years; with its help every child in our congregation for decades was either a bar or bat mitzvah. Every year, for the High Holidays, we hosted a rabbinical student from the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York to lead us in prayer. Our congregation prospered. Little did we know that our level of education, drive, and success would contribute to our demise. It wasn't long before our children, who had achieved excellence in the classroom and society, were now leaving our sleepy rural setting for life in bustling cities around the country. The job market was changing and our community wasn't. The proprietors of the many Jewish businesses in Kingstree and nearby towns were retiring and closing their businesses.

As our numbers diminished, so did our potential to attract new members. How do you convince that new Jewish couple with the four-year-old daughter to come to your temple when holding Shabbat services depends on finding a minyan; when you have no religious school because



Above: David Marcus blowing the shofar at Temple Beth Or, Kingstree, SC, no date. Courtesy of Louis Drucker. Below: Sid Dubin in the door of Temple Beth Or, no date. Courtesy of Neil Dubin.



there are only two children in the congregation; when all of that and more is offered at another temple 40 miles away?

I suspect similar scenarios have taken place in other small Jewish communities in South Carolina, such as Camden, Dillon, and Orangeburg—isolated towns negatively affected by changes in the local economy and population. Some small congregations, like Temple Beth Elohim in Georgetown, have been able to avoid extinction because of their geographical advantage. Retirees moving south help to sustain these congregations, though it's a different environment, where

religious school is taught by 70-year-olds to 70-year-olds and the only kids who are "members" are grandchildren who are visiting. The congregations dominated by older members are viable and dynamic, but to survive they must be located in an area with institutions and organizations that are vital to a thriving city or town. Many of our small communities in South Carolina don't have the societal infrastructure needed to retain their residents, let alone draw newcomers.

I only hope you don't have to be the person who turns out the light.

Love and Loyalty: Temple Mt. Sinai in Walterboro

by Paul Siegel, Gale Siegel Messerman, Penny Siegel Blachman, and Joseph Siegel

During the early years of Jewish religious life in Walterboro, South Carolina, dating to the early 1900s, Sabbath services were held in private homes, the Masonic hall adjoining Zalin's Department Store, and, for a time, at the Walterboro Army Airfield chapel. The Torah was kept at the home of Jacob Frank. Lewis Harris, the son of Ruth Horowitz and Abram Harris, proprietors of Hayes Jewelers on Washington Street in Walterboro, recalls seeing Mr. Frank walking from his house on Lucas Street to the Masonic hall, carrying the Torah wrapped in a sheet. Various members of the Jewish community led the prayers and delivered sermons. Among the earliest members were our maternal great-grandparents (Joseph's great-great-grandparents) Anna Barth and Hyman Zalin. Their daughter Bessie married Albert Novit, and their daughter Leona, our mother, married Anderson native Sam Siegel.

The cataclysmic events of World War II inspired this small Jewish community of approximately 40 members to build a temple in which to worship, celebrate, educate their children, and hold cultural and communal events. Minutes of the meetings from 1947 to 1976 demonstrate the dedication, concerted effort, and sacrifice of every member of Walterboro's Jewish community to attain these goals. After a few years of searching for an appropriate location for their sanctuary and social hall, the congregation bought a parcel of land on Neyle Street and

hired architect John Truluck, a Clemson graduate and World War II fighter pilot. Blueprints were drawn and approved, an official groundbreaking ceremony took place in 1950, and construction finally began. The building was completed by the fall of 1951, in time for the High Holidays.

On May 25, 1952, Temple Mt. Sinai was dedicated in the presence of the entire Jewish community of Walterboro and

the population at large. Temple President Leon Gelson led the program with welcoming remarks in which he thanked the Town of Walterboro for its spirit of friendship and cooperation. The program reveals that our grandfather Albert Novit and Murray Warshaw placed the scrolls in the ark. Cantor J. J. Renzer of Charleston's Conservative Synagogue Emanu-El sang, and the eternal light was lit. Rabbi Lewis Weintraub, also from Emanu-El, gave the dedication address. In his prayer of dedication, Rabbi Julius Fisher, of Beaufort's Beth Israel, congratulated the congregation on its beautiful

temple and cultural center: "The completion of the Synagogue is not, in itself, the end. It is the beginning . . . the spirit of a congregation is more important than its beautiful temple. Gold and marble are never as bright as love and loyalty." The Rev. John Younginer extended formal greetings on behalf of the Walterboro Ministerial Union. A reception in the temple's new assembly hall followed the ceremony.

In the early 1950s, the congregation also arranged to



Temple Mt. Sinai groundbreaking, Walterboro, SC, 1950. L to r: Abe Harris, Karl Sutker, Benny Frank, Sol Cohen, Leon Gelson, Jay Frank, Sam Novit, unknown, Isadore Bogoslow, Mortie Cohen, and John Truluck, the architect. Collection of Paul Siegel.

have a parcel of land in Walterboro's Live Oak Cemetery set aside for a Jewish burial ground, freeing the city's Jews from having to purchase plots 50 miles away in Charleston, an accomplishment that was a high priority for our father, Sam Siegel. Congregants purchase their respective plots directly from the Live Oak Cemetery Association.

Our congregation has never formally affiliated with either the Conservative or Reform tradition. At the January 1952 annual meeting, Sam Novit, our great-uncle, moved that they affiliate with the Conservative Movement. A discussion followed with members expressing concern over the cost and a desire to determine personal preferences first. A straw poll was taken and the result was thirteen for Conservative and nine for Reform, but there was no motion, second, or formal vote.

Affiliation with United Synagogue of America (later renamed United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism) was proposed again in 1956, this time by Henry Kessler. The same concerns were raised but, in the end, the board decided to request materials to help plan services from both the United Synagogue and Hebrew Union College (Reform).

Although the Conservative label stuck, many members have felt a close kinship with Reform; a number have also held membership at either Synagogue Emanu-El or the Reform Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim (KKBE) in Charleston.

In their quest for knowledge, the young congregation engaged, besides lay teachers, scholars such as Rabbis Alan Tarshish and Burton Padoll of KKBE to present lectures and lead discussions about the challenges facing modern Jewry. Student rabbis commissioned through the Jewish Theological Seminary, a Conservative organization, conducted High Holiday services, and traveling rabbis supplemented Sunday school classes with Hebrew instruction. We celebrated the holidays—Passover Seders, Purim parties—in communal fashion. The Sunday school children put on plays and we had a sukkah at the synagogue. We were a close-knit group and, having grown up in the midst of what felt like an extended family, we have many warm memories.

Paul Siegel, president of the congregation for four decades, fondly remembers community leader Bernard Warshaw informing the congregation of attempts by Charleston synagogues to “swallow up” Temple Mt. Sinai. Paul remembers Bernard striding up to the bimah and announcing to the world “we are a proud community and will not give up our identity.”

In the three decades after building the synagogue, the Jews of Walterboro maintained a vibrant religious community with as many as 50 adult members in the congregation and 15 children attending Sunday school. Although the future looked bright, the changing business dynamics of small towns in the



Bernard Warshaw (center, in black), former president of the JHSSC, and his wife, Ann, surrounded by family and fellow congregants, Temple Mt. Sinai, Walterboro, SC, ca. 2006. Photo: Alan Gardner, MD. Courtesy of Paul Siegel.

United States presented a challenge. Once a thriving area for small businesses, many owned by Jewish families, downtown Walterboro no longer provided a fertile environment for this type of enterprise. Young people, looking for social, cultural, and economic opportunities, were drawn to urban areas. By the 1950s, U.S. Highway 301 offered travelers the fastest route between the Northeast and Florida. The South Carolina portion, completed in the late

'40s, is well inland from U.S. Hwy 15 and diverted tourists a good 40 miles west of Walterboro. Roads were better and gas was cheap. In the 1970s, with the advent of Charles Town Square and Northwoods Mall, more and more Walterboro residents did their shopping on the outskirts of Charleston. Further damage occurred when, first, Kmart came to Walterboro, then Walmart and Super Walmart.

Sixty-six years after the founding of Temple Mt. Sinai, Jewish life in Walterboro has drastically diminished. With fewer than ten members residing in town, holding weekly Shabbat services is not realistic. However, there is still something remarkable about the Jews of Walterboro. While most of the Baby Boomers and their children have moved to larger cities, the extended families, understanding that their roots lie in this small, southern town, come together every year to worship at Temple Mt. Sinai for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Although our numbers have dwindled, our connection to the community formed by our parents and grandparents remains strong.

Endangered Congregations | Strategies for Survival

October 20–21, 2018 | Sumter and Camden, South Carolina

Saturday, October 20 ~ Sumter

- 11:00 A.M.** Registration | Tour | Lunch – Sumter County Museum, 122 N. Washington Street
After lunch tour of Temple Sinai Jewish History Center, 11 Church Street
Unless otherwise stated, Saturday afternoon events take place in Temple Sinai sanctuary, 11 Church Street
- 1:00 – 2:00 P.M.** **What a Big City Boy Learned About Small Town Jewish Life: The JCLP Experience**
David Sarnat, President, Jewish Community Legacy Project
- 2:15 – 3:15** **Endangered Congregations**
Moderator: Noah Levine, Vice President, Jewish Community Legacy Project
Panelists: Garry Baum (Camden); Barry Draisen (Anderson); Louis Drucker (Kingstree); Barry Frishberg (Orangeburg); Jack Lieb (Orangeburg); Rhett Mendelsohn (Orangeburg); Paul Siegel (Walterboro)
- 3:30 – 4:30** **Strategies and Resources for Survival**
Moderator: Mark Swick, Executive Director, JHSSC
Panelists: Roger Ackerman, Temple Sinai; Rebecca Engel, Charleston Jewish Federation; Noah Levine, Jewish Community Legacy Project; Annie Rivers, Sumter County Museum; Anita M. Rosenberg, Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim; Dale Rosengarten, College of Charleston; Jay Schwartz, Temple Sinai
- 5:00** Reception – Sumter County Museum
- 6:30** Dinner at Hamptons, 33 N. Main Street – Dutch treat. Reservations are required.

Sunday, October 21 ~ Camden

Unless otherwise stated, Sunday events take place in Temple Beth El sanctuary, 1500 block, Lyttleton Street

- 9:30 – 10:30 A.M.** JHSSC board meeting – everyone is invited!
- 10:30 – 11:30** **Stories from Jewish Camden**
Barbara Freed James, Secretary and Treasurer, Temple Beth El
- 11:30 – 12:30 P.M.** **Community of Memory: Camden's Jews Then and Now**
Moderator: Dale Rosengarten, Curator and Historian, Special Collections, College of Charleston
Panelists: Cheryl Baum, Garry Baum, Barbara Freed James, Albert Baruch Mercer, Rita Tanzer
Box lunch provided
- 12:45** Beth El Cemetery tour, Campbell Street near Meeting Street

Hotel reservations

Hyatt Place Sumter/Downtown
18 N. Main Street, Sumter, SC 29150
803.774.8100

A block of rooms has been reserved at the Hyatt Place Sumter/Downtown for **\$124/night** on Friday October 19th and Saturday October 20th. To reserve a room please visit the hotel website, or call 803.774.8100 by September 20th and use the group code **G-JHSC**.

Meeting registration

Online at: jhssc.org/events/upcoming OR 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

Growing Up Jewish in Camden

by Garry Baum, Becky Baum Lourie, Cheryl Baum, and Harry Baum

Garry

When I was growing up in Camden, South Carolina, in the 1960s and '70s, the city had a population of around 8,000. Now it is about 7,000. But while the city itself has lost some residents, Kershaw County has really ballooned. The Jewish population of Camden was thriving when my siblings, Harry, Cheryl, Becky, and I were children, but it was starting its descent. Many kids, like me, left Camden after high school and did not return.

There were a few Jewish families in Camden with children: the Kareshes, Schreibers, James, and others. We would see each other at Jewish functions. My brother, sisters, and I were socially friendly with all of them. One of my earliest memories associated with Judaism was my brother Harry's bar mitzvah. It was a big event and many of our out-of-town relatives attended. The celebration took place at the Holiday Inn in Lugoff, which may have been one of the few hotels in the Camden area and probably the only one that could hold the large crowd that attended.

Growing up Jewish in a small town was different from being raised in a city that had enough Jewish families to fill a synagogue and maintain a youth group. Most of my friends were not Jewish. They really didn't understand my religion, but it was never an issue. The only difference was I got out of school for two days during the High Holidays, and we didn't celebrate Christmas with a tree, though one time we had a "Hanukkah bush" made of tree branches and gum drops. We usually had gifts during the eight days of Hanukkah and on Christmas morning.

My sister Becky and I were the only Jews at our small, private Christian school, Thomas Sumter Academy in Dalzell. The school gave us a quality education. My classmates may not have known why we got out of school each year for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, but the

headmaster, Chuck Owens, was a good friend of my Camden grandmother, Minnie Tewell Baum, and he always excused us so we could attend services.

Besides opening every fall for the High Holidays, our active Jewish congregation held some Friday night services at Temple Beth El on Lyttleton Street. Behind the small sanctuary is an annex that housed a Sunday school. While we were growing up, however, there were not enough children to warrant weekly classes, so my brother, sisters, and I were driven to Temple Sinai in Sumter every Sunday morning. After Sunday school, we were treated to lunch at one of the restaurants in town.

Our home was next to the temple and served as the place for oneg after Shabbat services. My mom, Ann Briskin Baum, would have coffee and such for the Jewish families that would stop by.

Our house also served as a landing spot of sorts for a number of relatives. They would either come for a visit on their way somewhere, or they would plan a vacation and stay with us for a few days. We had a large dining room table that accommodated several guests at various meals; of course, there was a kids' table as well. My grandmother, Minnie, whom we called Nannie, would make the best chopped liver and that is when I learned to like it. To this day, all others are judged by hers.

Leon Schlosburg (wife Trixie) was our lay rabbi when I was little. Sometimes we would meet at one of Camden's restaurants after services, and on a couple of occasions congregation members gathered to celebrate Hanukkah together; I remember spinning the dreidel with the other children. After Leon died, my dad, Bernie Baum, became the temple's lay leader and conducted services for many years. When he and my mom moved to Myrtle Beach in the late 1980s, Jay Tanzer (wife Rita) led services. I remember Jay would also give a thoughtful



Above: Garry, Harry, and Cheryl Baum (front to back) at Burger Chef in Sumter, SC, where the Baum siblings often stopped for lunch after Sunday school at Temple Sinai. Below: Bernie Baum (l) and Jay Tanzer, former lay leaders of Temple Beth El, Camden, SC, Rosh Hashanah 1995. Courtesy of the Baum family.



and informational "sermon." I always made it a point to return to Temple Beth El for High Holiday services. I still do.

Becky

When I was growing up in Camden there were maybe 20 Jewish families who belonged to Temple Beth El—down from around 100 families in 1927. Our house was right next door to the temple, which, by the way, used to be St. Mary's Catholic Church, built in 1903. I remember going to temple as a young girl for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. There would always be a visiting, retired rabbi to conduct the services. Eventually, my father, Bernie Baum, took over leading the prayers for the holidays. My dad was not a rabbi; he owned Fox Pawn Shop, which was on Broad Street in the heart of downtown Camden. After he and my mother moved out of Camden, Jay Tanzer served as lay leader and he continued in that role for a number of years. Then my younger brother, Garry, took over, and he leads services twice a year for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. I still go home with my family for Rosh Hashanah.

My siblings and I went to Sunday school classes in Sumter at Temple Sinai. I remember my sister, Cheryl, driving us there every Sunday and how I never wanted to go. My older brother, Harry, had a bar mitzvah at Temple Sinai, and Cheryl and my younger brother, Garry, and I were confirmed there.

At home my family celebrated Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Passover, and Hanukkah, but I don't remember having a Shabbat meal on Fridays or lighting Shabbat candles as a child. The first time I lit Shabbat candles, we were having a meal with

my husband's parents, Susan and Isadore Lourie. I remember thinking how special that felt and tried to do it often with my children when they were young.

I loved growing up in a small southern town and being Jewish was just that. I was Jewish and my friends were not, but that was okay. Life in Camden was good.

Cheryl

In school, I gave my friends cards and presents at Christmastime. There was no one to give Hanukkah cards to and my schools did not recognize Hanukkah as a holiday. We never had a tree to put our presents under like my friends whose families celebrated Christmas.

The sanctuary at Temple Beth El has not changed much. We do have air conditioning and heat now. Before that, we had large fans to cool us off. We have an annex in the back of the temple where the children—when there were enough for a class—went to Sunday school. My classmates learned more than I did about our Jewish heritage. I never learned much. Our class, which consisted of me, my brother Harry, and the Schreiber and Karesh kids, was very small—about eight altogether—so

my family sent us to Temple Sinai in Sumter for Sunday school.

In the 1960s and early '70s, our temple had a nice crowd of about 40 people. Now we have only about ten families. We open up only four times a year for evening and day services on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

My father, Bernie Baum, became our rabbi after Leon Schlosburg died. Now my brother Garry Baum leads our services and we have different people read from the Torah. A



The Baum family (l to r): Garry Baum, Bernie Baum, Becky Baum Lourie, Cheryl Baum, Harry Baum, and Ann Briskin Baum, Temple Beth El, Camden, SC, Rosh Hashanah 1995. Courtesy of the Baum family.

member takes the Torah home after services to keep it safe.

It was not hard living in Camden with such a small Jewish community. That's all I know. I still live in Camden and I love it. Opening the temple for our holidays is very exciting. Now we have families coming from large cities to celebrate with us. They say it's because we are small and they would rather come to a small temple instead of one of the larger ones.

Harry

During the 1960s I remember having Temple Beth El next door to the house where I grew up in Camden. That was good about 14 days a year, because those were days when the congregation gathered for services. Temple was very formal, but also—little did I know at the time—very English. Hebrew was never spoken, except for the Sh'ma and the Bar'chu, which were recited from memory, not read. We had a rabbi from Sumter come during the school year once a month, on Sunday afternoons, to lead Shabbat services. During the High Holidays, the president of the congregation led the services—that is, the part in English. We would take out the Torah but never open it. As a child all I remember was being told to be quiet.

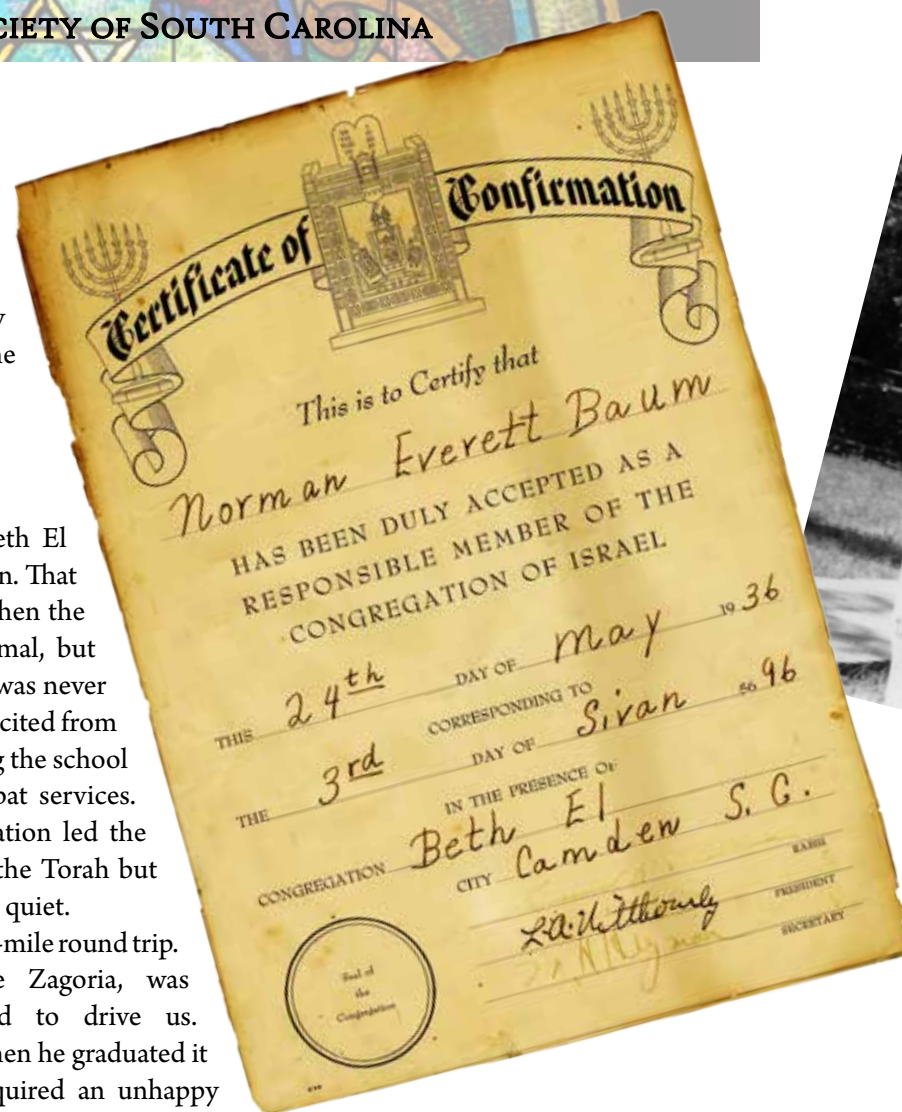
Sunday school meant going to Sumter every week—a 70-mile round trip. At the beginning, a high school student,

Steve Zagoria, was hired to drive us. When he graduated it required an unhappy parent. Then three of us—David Karesh, Harry Kline, and me—had our bar mitzvah. We became the Hebrew experts. Even if we said something wrong, who knew?

Today the reality is the size of the congregation at Temple Beth El continues to shrink. I remember three generations of the Baum family—our grandparents Minnie T. Baum and Morris and Cille Briskin; Minnie's sisters, Rose Israel and Augusta Simons; Uncle Norman Baum; and my parents and siblings—taking up the entire right side of the temple, while the rest of

Top: Norman Everett Baum's confirmation certificate, Temple Beth El, Camden, SC, May 24, 1936. Special Collections, College of Charleston.

Left: Harry Maurice Baum's bar mitzvah cake, created by Sura Wolff Wengrow of Columbia, SC, and Harry's thank you note. Mrs. Wengrow made elaborately decorated cakes for many bar and bat mitzvah celebrations, and other occasions. She compiled an album filled with photographs documenting her creativity. Courtesy of Sura's son Arnold Wengrow and daughter Reberta Wengrow Karesh.



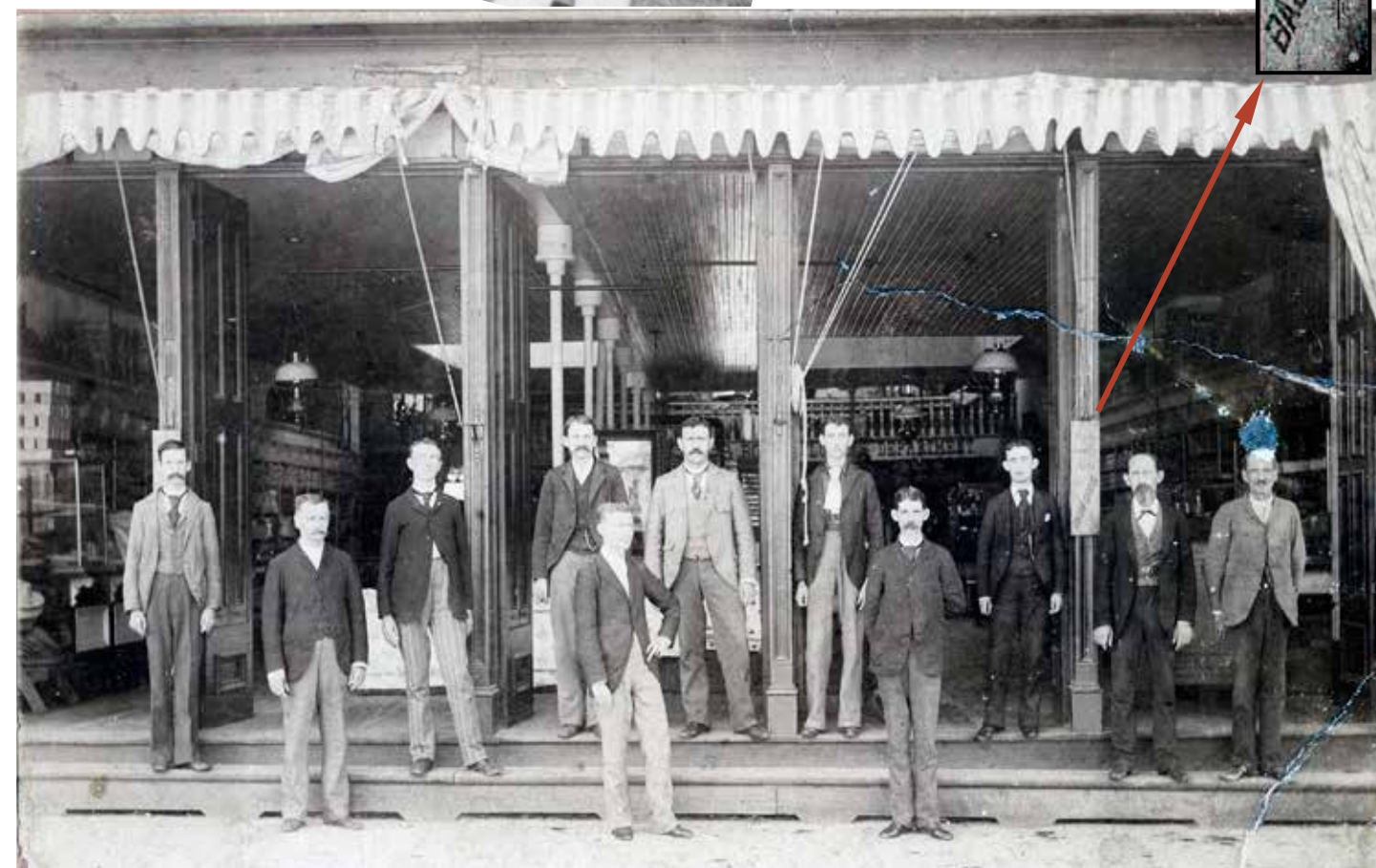
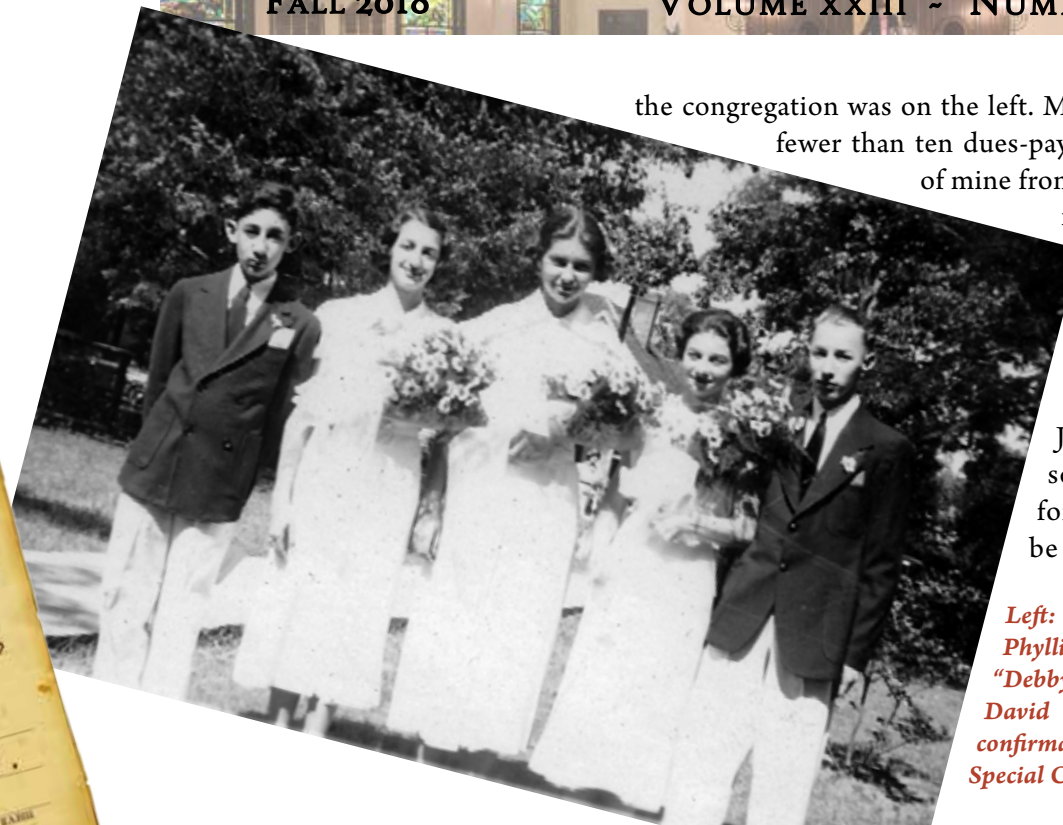
Dear Mr. & Mrs. Wengrow
Thank you very much
for the beautiful Jewish
mazus and also for
the lovely cake. We
certainly enjoyed it.
Harry
Baum



the congregation was on the left. Many of us have moved away. Today, we have fewer than ten dues-paying families. Once we invited some friends of mine from a local Baptist church, who were interested in attending a service, and they outnumbered the Jewish people.

My brother, Garry, is in charge of services. Without him and Barbara Freed James, who is temple secretary and treasurer, we would not exist. I hope more Jewish people come to Camden so we can keep the temple alive for many years to come. It would be a shame for it to close.

Left: Norman "Nicky" Everett Baum, Phyllis Karesh, Frances Deborah "Debby" Baruch, Rose Louise Rich, and David Wolfe Wallnau, Temple Beth El confirmation, Camden, SC, May 24, 1936. Special Collections, College of Charleston.



Baum Brothers Store, ca. 1890, Camden, SC. Three Baum brothers emigrated from Schwersenz, Prussia, settled in Camden and, in 1850, opened a mercantile store. All were soldiers in the service of the Confederacy. Marcus Baum lost his life to friendly fire in 1864. After the Civil War, Herman and Mannes operated what their sign described as "The Mammoth Store" at 1000 Broad Street. In 1902, Baum Brothers stocked buggies, groceries, dry goods, and hardware. Special Collections, College of Charleston.

Holding On: Temple B’Nai Israel of Anderson

by Barry Draisen, with contributions from David Draisen

My earliest recollection of going to shul in Anderson was around 1947. I was about five years old. The service was held in a room over a grocery store on East Whitner Street. I remember looking down out of the window at the children walking to town when school at McCants Junior High was over for the day. I don’t remember anything about the service but I do remember that my new wool suit itched terribly and I was very uncomfortable. The next year we had our own synagogue. There was no air conditioning back then, the wooden pews were hard, the sanctuary was crowded with a lot of big loud people I didn’t know, and my wool suit still itched. The cantor was Nahum Rosenblum and he made each Hebrew word he chanted last forever and ever. I remember he would spend an eternity on just the one word “Hamelech.” I wanted to go outside and play, where at least there would be a breeze.

I was six years old when Temple B’Nai Israel opened in 1948. I found out later that a committee led by Max Siegel, with Herman Poliakoff (my uncle), Hyman Draisen (my father), Nathan Fleishman, Nahum Rosenblum, and others led the drive to build the synagogue that presently stands on Oakland Avenue in Anderson. It was built at that time because Mr. Siegel wanted his grandson Ronnie Bern to have his bar mitzvah in a “proper” synagogue. At the time bar and bat mitzvah candidates were trained by Joe Fleishman and Hyman Draisen.

I remember going to Sunday school with many other kids up until the time of my own bar mitzvah. Flo Fleishman was the religious school leader and classes were taught by volunteer members. In the 1970s, my sister Bernice Draisen Shuman (now Goldman), my wife, Ellen Cherkas Draisen, and Lynn Vinson Friedman taught our young children there. As president of the congregation in the early ’80s,

I remember recruiting (begging) Lynn, who was a teacher, to add Hebrew to the curriculum. She agreed, even though she didn’t know how to read Hebrew. I bought the books and told her she just had to stay one lesson ahead of the kids. She did great with it!

The congregation was initially Orthodox, with services led by George Ackerman of Walhalla, South Carolina, and a series of part-time rabbis, including Rabbis Norman Goldberg, William (Bill) Feyer, and Israel Gerber. In the 1950s, there was a shift toward Conservative practices. For a few years the Shabbat services were Conservative but High Holidays were Orthodox. In the late ’70s, the congregation shifted to Reform services. We briefly joined the Reform Movement and still use the Reform Gates of Prayer as our prayer book on Shabbat.

Many improvements have been made to the sanctuary, which can seat 150 people. We installed air conditioning in the mid- to late ’50s, replaced the carpeting, and added padding to the pews. We replaced the old 1940s roll-out windows with 12 beautiful stained glass windows, and we recently added stained glass doors to our ark in memory of Alvin Fleishman, reportedly Anderson’s first bar mitzvah. The ark now houses three Torahs. The original was brought over from Kiev by my grandfather Zalman Poliakoff. We also have a Holocaust Torah from a community in Czechoslovakia that we traditionally use for the afternoon service on Yom Kippur.

In recent times, Dr. Robert Kimmel, Dr. Peter Cohen, and Mike Krupsaw have provided bar and bat mitzvah training. Lay leaders conduct services every Friday night, and Dr. Kimmel leads services for the major

holidays, as well as several Shabbat services.

The membership of our congregation has stayed fairly steady over the past ten years. At its peak Temple B’Nai Israel served



Above: Irvin (1), Caroline, and Raymond Rosenblum, children of founding member Nahum Rosenblum, in front of Temple B’Nai Israel, in Anderson, SC, 1954, six years after it was built across the street from their home. Collection of Sandra Lee Kahn Rosenblum. Below: Bonnie Mitchell lights the candles, Temple B’Nai Israel, Anderson, SC, Hanukkah 2017. Photo: Barry Draisen.



36 member-families, a number that now stands at 25. The demographics are a cause of concern. When we had 36 families most members were in their 30s and 40s and there were about 50 kids. Now there are almost no children—in the 1990s our Sunday school classrooms were converted to one large area for break-the-fast meals and Passover Seders. Our membership ranges in age from 60 to 80.

I’m not sure what the future holds for Temple B’Nai Israel of Anderson. While the general population of the Anderson area is growing, the number of Jews is declining. We do lose some



David Draisen (l) and Dr. Robert Kimmel, Purim 2017, Temple B’Nai Israel, Anderson, SC. Photo: Barry Draisen.

potential members, especially those with young children, to Temple of Israel, Beth Israel, and Chabad in Greenville. New industry is coming to Anderson all the time and there is a major push to build hotels, parks, and a convention facility in the Lake Hartwell recreational area. We have some new members, recent retirees who have moved to our area from other parts of the country. Maybe if we hold on long enough, a retirement community like the one Del Webb built near Bluffton will come here and bring with it sufficient numbers of Jewish residents to spark a revival in our congregation.

Small-town Conundrum: Temple Sinai of Orangeburg

by Barry Frishberg

When we moved to Orangeburg in 1981, Lillian Goldberg, our next door neighbor, invited us to Friday night services at Temple Sinai, which were conducted by her brother Mordie Rubenstein. It wasn’t until a few years later that we finally accepted the offer. During our first visit we were warmly greeted by the dozen or so congregants. They welcomed our three-year-old daughter and newborn son, expressing joy about seeing children in the synagogue again.

In 1956, after years of fund raising and holding services in family homes, Temple Sinai was built at its current site on Ellis Avenue, in a residential neighborhood. By the 1980s, Temple Sinai’s membership—like that of many synagogues in small southern towns—was shrinking. As children grew up they moved out of town seeking employment elsewhere; parents were aging and some passed away. There weren’t enough younger people to replace them in the congregation. At that time, a minyan was unusual for Friday night services, and most of the congregation attended only holiday services.

Then, on January 24, 1987, Mordie Rubenstein died. Without our lay rabbi, services were discontinued until Rosh Hashanah, when the son of a rabbi was hired to conduct

services, which was tradition. We broke the Yom Kippur fast in the basement of the synagogue with food brought in by the members. It was always our best attended event of the year. That year, at the Yom Kippur break-the-fast, Mordie’s widow, Yetta, got up and remarked that since her husband passed away we had not had one service; she felt we were no longer a functioning synagogue and, as treasurer, proposed that we hold a business meeting in two weeks to discuss closing the synagogue and distributing its assets.

Approximately 30 people attended the business meeting, including—to my surprise—several non-members. One gentleman was an accountant who was Jewish but converted to Unitarianism and attended a church in Columbia, South Carolina. While claiming no affiliation with Temple Sinai, he said he felt a tie to Judaism and he had the expertise to help us liquidate the assets.

There were two primary opinions on how to proceed. The first was we should sell the building

and distribute all assets to other places of worship in Orangeburg. The rationale was that these churches helped us when we were raising money to build Temple Sinai since they thought bringing a synagogue to Orangeburg would complete the major institutions of religious worship in the area. The second strategy, endorsed by most of the congregation, was to continue as we had in the past; no one, however, was willing to assume the leadership position.



Phillip Scott Reynolds, Temple Sinai, Orangeburg, SC, September 10, 2010. Photo: Larry Hardy. Courtesy of The Times and Democrat (Orangeburg, SC).

Finally, a compromise was proposed: three members would alternately conduct services, so as not to put a big burden on one person. In addition, instead of Friday nights, services would be conducted on Saturday mornings to accommodate elderly members who preferred to drive in daylight. The last and most significant change was the decision to hold services only on the first Saturday of the month. Our thinking was that members would be more likely to attend regularly if the obligation was less demanding.

That year was a resounding success. Attendance was high and most members expressed satisfaction with the renewed fellowship. Unfortunately, at the end of the year, two of the lay readers moved out of state, leaving me with the responsibility of running services. Over the last two decades, new members, David Farr in particular, have shared the leadership of the synagogue.

From about 1988 to 2000, things went smoothly. Since former members were persuaded to rejoin under our new format, enrollment expanded to roughly 50 members at our peak. Among those who joined were a few well known citizens, whose participation improved our visibility. We invited non-Jewish residents to special events such as our Passover Seder, which helped to increase awareness of Judaism in the area. But recurring problems—an aging population, children leaving the area, and the synagogue's low profile—have once again caused membership to dwindle to historically low numbers. Since Passover 2017 only a few have attended services.

While Temple Sinai is financially stable, despite its small membership and a low dues structure, the future is once again

in doubt. Part of the challenge is this: what I call the “low effort” model (once-a-month services of less than one hour duration, minimal dues, etc.) that attracts our members is at the same time a deterrent to recruiting newcomers who are looking for a more traditional congregation led by an ordained rabbi and who find their needs met in synagogues located in Columbia or Charleston, South Carolina. It appears that most new Jewish citizens in the Orangeburg area are either traditionalists, or they are secular Jews who are not likely to join any synagogue.

Over the last few decades I have contributed much to



Barry Frishberg, lay leader of Temple Sinai, Orangeburg, SC, Rosh Hashanah 2010. Photo: Larry Hardy. Courtesy of The Times and Democrat (Orangeburg, SC).

Temple Sinai, but I have received far more in return. My wife, Debra Mergel Frishberg—may her memory be a blessing—did as much or more for Temple Sinai as I did. She served as secretary and treasurer for about as long as I conducted services. She typically wrote the letters to the J. J. Miller Foundation documenting our need for funds. She organized our Passover Seders and the break-the-fast dinners on Yom Kippur. She hosted Hanukkah parties for the children, attended

mostly by their non-Jewish friends. My son's bar mitzvah—a major event in our lives—took place in Temple Sinai. The congregation has become an extended family to me and my children. Whenever I run into a member in the community, I notice that the bond we share is unique to members of Temple Sinai. The relationships I have developed over the years have enriched my life and will always be greatly appreciated. Today, Temple Sinai finds itself in a similar place as it was three decades ago. A solution needs to be found to re-energize the congregation, preserve the history of Temple Sinai, and once more become a viable synagogue.



Solomon Lipman

Living by the Rails: A History of Lowcountry Railroads **The Morris Center for Lowcountry Heritage, Ridgeland, SC** **April 28, 2018 – March 19, 2019**

While researching her family history, attorney and Charleston native Deborah Lipman Cochelin discovered that her great-grandfather Solomon Lipman, who lived in Ridgeland, South Carolina, filed a lawsuit against the Atlantic Coastline Railroad in 1913. The outcome resulted in a ruling that stands today. Solomon's story is featured in the exhibit *Living by the Rails* currently on display at the Morris Center for Lowcountry Heritage in Ridgeland. The center is open, free of charge, Tuesday through Saturday, 10 to 5. Its third annual Dine, Dance, and Discover Fundraising Gala will be held on October 26.

Telling the Story

by Mark Swick, Executive Director, JHSSC

As of press time, it has been nearly four months since JHSSC's spring meeting when I stepped into Marty Perlmutter's gigantic shoes as the Society's executive director. I have spent that time working with JHSSC staff and lay leadership on our major initiatives, including our upcoming fall meeting in Sumter and Camden and next spring's 25th anniversary gala, to be held in Charleston.

We continue to make great progress with our newest venture, the Jewish Merchant Project (JMP), which aims to collect the story of every Jewish merchant who has operated in South Carolina and document the impact Jewish businessmen and women have had on their communities, large and small. The JMP website is up and running—awaiting input from all of you who have information to share. Check it out at www.merchants.jhssc.org. Take the survey, explore the map, volunteer to help.

The merchant information we've gathered so far confirms what we have long known: that Jewish storekeepers who set up shop on main streets across the state became, with their families, the backbone of small congregations, reaching their peak as the post-World War II Baby Boomers came of age. When that generation moved away to pursue higher education and occupations elsewhere, the Jewish populations of small towns began to wane, and congregations faltered. Sensing the shifting tide, the Society's founders, led by Isadore Lourie, felt compelled to record and remember what they saw as an endangered contingent of South Carolina Jewry. Telling the story of the small-town Jewish merchant was very much at the heart of JHSSC's mission.

Small and mid-sized Jewish communities, not only in South Carolina but across the nation, continue to suffer from demographic decline, with some disappearing entirely. A few have found creative strategies for survival, while others are searching for a way forward. As you've read in this issue, our fall meeting in Sumter and Camden will focus on the plight of endangered congregations and consider approaches that may reverse the downward spiral. While looking backwards is a quality inherent to all historical societies, I am proud that JHSSC also looks to the future.

Our most ambitious initiatives, not to mention day-to-day operations, are made possible by the generosity of our Pillars—JHSSC members who commit \$5,000 over five years. Pillars allow us to think big and take our work seriously. For that you have my deepest gratitude, as well as an invitation to join us in October. Please come to the open board meeting Sunday morning and help us plan events to commemorate our 25th year. We have much to do, and much to celebrate.

Pillars

Susan and Charles Altman, Charleston, SC
 Ellen Arnovitz, Atlanta, GA
 Doris L. Baumgarten, Aiken, SC
 Harold Brody, Atlanta, GA
 Alex and Dyan Cohen, Darlington, SC
 Joan Cutler, Columbia, SC
 Barry and Ellen Draisen, Anderson, SC
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 Steven J. Gold, Greenville, SC
 Judith Green, Charleston, SC
 Stuart and Rebecca Greenberg, Florence, SC
 Max and Ann Meddin Hellman, Charleston, SC
 Alan and Charlotte Kahn, Columbia, SC
 Jerry and Sue Kline, Columbia, SC
 Michael S. Kogan, Charleston, SC
 Allan and Jeanne Lieberman, Charleston, SC
 Susan R. Lourie, Columbia, SC
 Bert and Robin Mercer, Charleston, SC
 Susan Pearlstine, Charleston, SC
 Andrew and Mary Poliakoff, Spartanburg, SC
 Edward and Sandra Poliakoff, Columbia, SC
 Alan and Anne Reyner, Columbia, SC
 Deborah Ritter, Columbia, SC
 Benedict and Brenda Rosen, Myrtle Beach, SC
 Jeffrey and Mickey Rosenblum, Charleston, SC
 Sandra Lee Rosenblum, Charleston, SC
 Joseph and Edie Rubin, Charleston, SC
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Charleston, SC 29424
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