

THE
JEWISH
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY
of SOUTH CAROLINA

Register now for
spring meeting
in
Charleston and
Summerville, SC
May 20-21,
2017



Volume XXII Number 1 Spring 2017

171
KING
STREET
by
NORMA
MAZO



THE
JEWISH
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY
OF
SOUTH CAROLINA

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On the cover: 171 King Street
by Norma Mazo Perlmutter,
1934. Sketches of George and
Sonia Mazo's grocery and deli
on King Street, drawn by their
daughter Norma. Courtesy of
Benjamin and Samuel Means.



Right: Aleck Ellison, circa
1930, in Ellison's Dry Goods,
560 King Street, Charleston,
SC, forerunner to Ellison's
Dress Shop. Special Collections,
College of Charleston.

In this issue

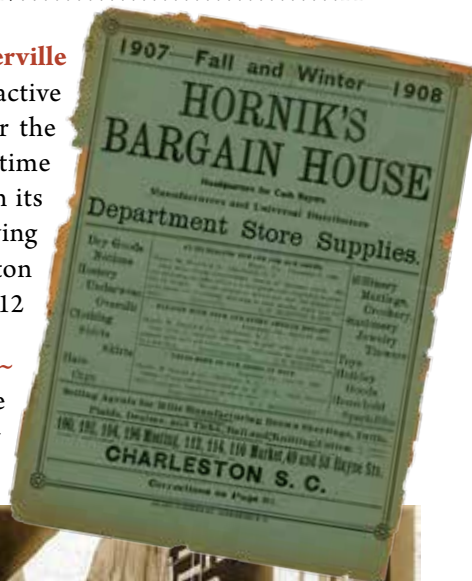
“Little Jerusalem” ~ Alyssa Neely and Dale Rosengarten ~ This photo essay features some of the many Eastern European Jewish immigrants who helped to shape Charleston's commercial district in the 20th century. It heralds a new online exhibit titled *Mapping Jewish Charleston*, which showcases numerous images of Jewish life in the port city from the era of the American Revolution to the present. 4

“The ‘Kingdom of Israel’ in this town”: Jewish Merchants in Antebellum Charleston ~ Shari Rabin ~ Jewish merchants in 19th-century Charleston, like non-Jews, were subject to the vagaries of running a business. It was important to cultivate relationships and earn a good reputation. Early credit reports not only assessed the soundness of a merchant's finances, but revealed his standing in the community. Jewish identity also was noted in the evaluations. 8

“The ‘Kingdom of Israel’ in this town”: Jewish Merchants of Charleston and Summerville ~ JHSSC meets in Charleston and Summerville, May 20 – 21, 2017. 11

From Pineland to Flowertown: Jewish Merchants of Summerville ~ Spencer Lynch ~ Summerville, South Carolina, was attractive to Jewish immigrants in the late 1800s and early 1900s for the economic opportunities it offered as a health resort. Over time it proved to be valuable for its proximity to Charleston with its Jewish institutions. This Summerville native describes growing up among the pines, while going to school at the Charleston Hebrew Institute and Porter Gaud. 12

A New Project and a New Endowment ~ Martin Perlmutter ~ The Society sets its sights on broader horizons with the announcement of an ambitious history project and a new means for raising funds. 15



Letter from the President

The Jewish Historical Society's Fall 2016 meeting in Greenville provided a wonderful opportunity to meet members of Beth Israel Congregation and learn about the region's rich history. On Saturday we listened as keynoter Diane Vecchio and participants in two panels traced the arc of change in Jewish life in the Upstate since the 19th century—a progression from peddling to retail and manufacturing to professional occupations, and from Old Country ways to Upcountry identities. Our Sunday panel and afternoon tour focused on the life and contributions of visionary mayor Max Heller, who is widely credited with inspiring today's vibrant urban fabric of downtown Greenville.

JHSSC's board and officers warmly invite you to our Spring 2017 meeting, **“The ‘Kingdom of Israel’ in this Town”: Jewish Merchants of Charleston and Summerville**, May 20th and 21st. The weekend will begin with a walking tour of Charleston's King Street and continue, after lunch, with a lecture by Steve Litvin, a professor in the College of Charleston School of Business, Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management. Dr. Litvin will describe the transformation of King Street over the past century, setting the stage for two panels of local experts: “Kings and Queens of King Street” will present eye-witness experiences of merchants who remember when King Street was something of a Jewish Mecca. “The New Royalty” will bring us into the present, as Upper King evolves into an upscale shopping and entertainment district, with bars and restaurants replacing dry-goods and furniture stores.

Between these two panels, College of Charleston faculty Shari Rabin, Harlan Greene, and Dale Rosengarten will introduce the audience to *Mapping Jewish Charleston*, an online exhibition created under the auspices of the Pearlstine/Lipov Center for Southern Jewish Culture. The afternoon will wrap up with a reception at Norman's Patio, behind the College's kosher dining hall, which surely represents one of the latest of Charleston's Jewish “firsts.”

On Sunday the conference moves 25 miles west to Summerville, popularly known as “Flowertown in the Pines.” Famous for its azaleas and the invention of sweet tea, Summerville emerged in the 1890s as a world-class health resort, attractive

especially to patients with respiratory problems. Jewish-owned shops once peppered picturesque Hutchinson Square in downtown Summerville. In partnership with the Summerville Dorchester Museum, we have arranged to meet for lunch just off the Square and hear from members of families who were among these early merchants. Together we will unveil a state historical marker, a permanent reminder of the significance of Summerville's Jewish community, and take a walking tour of nearby sites. The program will conclude—you guessed it—with sweet tea, served at the former home of storekeeper and philanthropist Saul Alexander.

The May meeting is designed to launch a research project now on the Society's drawing boards—an effort to document



Congregation Beth Israel of Greenville celebrated its 100th anniversary with the dedication of an historic marker, October 22, 2016. Photo by Jeri Perlmutter.

Jewish-owned stores, past and present, across South Carolina. We propose to collect written memoirs, oral histories, and photographs of businesses and the people who ran them, and artifacts such as account books, lay-away ledgers, advertisements, invoices, and correspondence. Once compiled, the information and images will be presented on JHSSC's website. Archival material, if donated, will be housed and catalogued by the College of Charleston's Jewish Heritage Collection.

Why make this particular subject a centerpiece of our work? The history of Jews in the South, indeed, throughout the Diaspora, is dominated by the narrative of immigrant peddlers selling their wares in rural backwaters. After some level of success, peddlers would open stores in small towns or a neighboring city and become part of the civic fabric of that place. The Jews of South Carolina in the 19th and 20th centuries follow this characteristic pattern, including my family, which at one time or another operated at least 16 stores in the state, from the cities of Columbia and Charleston (including three businesses on King Street) to Abbeville, Greenwood, Kingstree, Manning, and other small towns. My siblings and I spent years working in Marcus Department Store in Eutawville, established in 1901 by my peddler grandfather, Morris Marcus. The importance of family stores in the economic and social history of Jewish life in South Carolina is hard to overstate, and I am delighted to help document this story.

Hope to see you in May!

Ernest L. Marcus

“Little Jerusalem”

by Alyssa Neely and Dale Rosengarten

In the first half of the 20th century, upper King Street became a Jewish enclave, affectionately dubbed “Little Jerusalem.” Starting as an Indian trade route known as “Broad Path,” the trail up the spine of the peninsula emerged in the colonial period as Charleston’s major commercial artery. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, an influx of immigrants, notably East European Jews, Italians, Greeks, Chinese, and Lebanese, joined Germans, Irish, and English and changed the city’s demography. For several decades a visible Yiddishkeit bloomed in the upper wards, and the neighborhood north of Calhoun and west of King became a small southern version of Manhattan’s Lower East Side. Men who began as peddlers established businesses—dry-goods, furniture, shoe-repair, and tailor shops; hardware, jewelry, and secondhand stores or pawn shops; mattress factories; groceries and delicatessens. At one time some 40 stores on upper King were closed on Saturdays for the Jewish Sabbath. Shopkeepers held daily prayer services above Zalkin’s kosher meat market and in back of Sam Solomon’s wholesale jobbers. Their wives often worked behind the counter; at home they kept kosher kitchens, with African-American cooks standing at the stove and Jewish bubbes giving instructions. The “greenhorns” attended Beth Israel, while the older families went a couple of blocks south on St. Philip Street to Brith Sholom.

“My father had a sense of humor that was really something else . . . if you asked him how business was, he would tell you in Yiddish . . . ‘I haven’t spoken the first word of English yet today.’ He hadn’t had a customer.”

—Irving “Itchy” Sonenshine, October 21, 1997

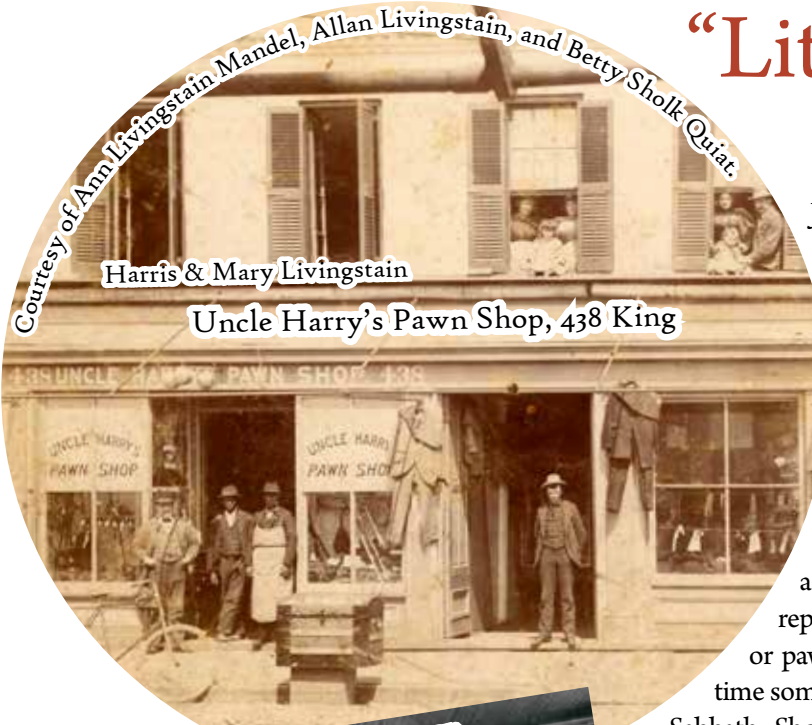


“Mazo’s was an institution in the Jewish community. There was never a Sunday that we wouldn’t go for a ride and stop by Mazo’s to get some delicatessen.”

—Abel Banov, April 3, 1996



Charles Nachman’s dry goods, corner King & Queen



Harris & Mary Livingstain

Uncle Harry’s Pawn Shop, 438 King



corner Percy & Bogard

“We had a shtetl . . . bordered by Meeting, Cannon, Rutledge, and Warren . . . a Jewish enclave. . . We were called Little Jerusalem . . . by people who were outside the Pale, so to speak . . . there was no meanness connected with it.”

—Gus Pearlman, June 10, 1997



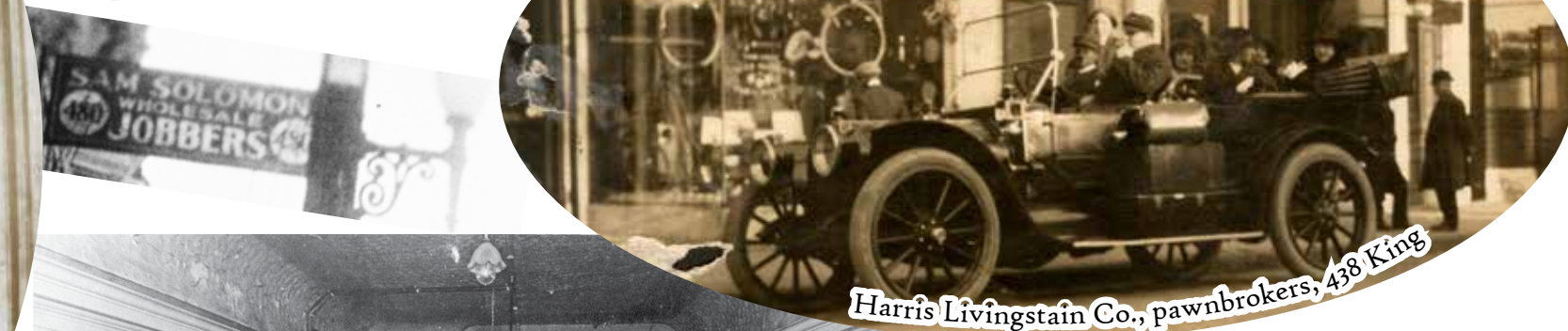
Max & Rosie Goldstein's clothing, 559 King



Abe & Emily Novit's chinaware, 485 King

“We didn’t hang out on King Street. In fact I never went to upper King Street. . . That was like a different county or city to me.”

—Marcelle Kleinzahler Furchgott, May 14, 2014



Harris Livingstain Co., pawnbrokers, 438 King



Meyer & Lena Collis's bakery, 165 King

“The ones who wanted to close on Saturday wanted to observe Shabbos, see. I remember vividly Sonny [Goldberg] telling me, not long before he died, that he used to love Friday afternoon. Friday afternoon he would get ready to leave the store and go home . . . dress up, shower, get ready for Shabbos. It’s like he was reborn again. He didn’t care what happened to the business. He just was going to take it easy on Shabbos, and he did.”

—Irving “Itchy” Sonenshine, October 21, 1997



Alex Karesh

545 King

"My daddy was George Goldberg . . . owned a store . . . at 569 King Street, which is two doors south of Cannon Street. There were no less than six men's clothing stores on that block. First we had my daddy, of course. Then across the street was M. Dumas, a branch of the downtown [M. Dumas] at the corner of Woolfe and King Street, run by Nathan Goldberg, who was his son-in-law. A very famous clothing store and a very high competitor of ours was Brickman's . . . then you had . . . J. Needle & Company, and . . . the Bluesteins, of course, the most historic and famous store, and then you had Mike, Sam, and Jake. They were the Prystowsky brothers and they owned sort of a nicer store. They really shouldn't have been on that block."

—Charles Goldberg, January 24, 2013



Leon Rabin

Leon's Men's Wear, 490 King



Joe Frazier at Leon's Men's Wear, 497 King



Fox Music House, 535-537 King

Otto & Sarah Fox

Photo by Louis J. Schwartz, courtesy of Harold I. Fox.

"Uptown, where we operated, had the . . . merchandise that was more inferior [than in downtown stores]. The clientele at that time was about eighty percent black. The other end of King Street was probably the very opposite."

—Sam Kirshtein,
January 24, 2013

"When I came out of the air force in 1956, there were thirty-two furniture stores on King Street. We had no problems with each other. Most of us worshipped together. If you needed a particular piece of furniture from a bedroom suite, you called up somebody that you know that had them and they lent them to you. You either paid the money for it—the wholesale, by the way—or you returned the item."

—Joseph Chase, January 24, 2013



Sam Solomon Co., wholesale clothing, 480 King

Quotes are from the Jewish Heritage Collection Oral History Archives:
<http://jhc.cofc.edu/oral-history-archives/>

All photos courtesy of Special Collections, College of Charleston, unless otherwise noted.

Edward's, Inc., discount department store, grand opening, 517 King
Edward Kronsberg, with brothers Milton and MaceyMyer "Al" Spikler, Al's Delicatessen
478 King

formerly Mazo's

"Mama's social life was that all these salesmen would come in for their Coca-Cola and slice of bologna . . . she would become friends with them. So this Christian insurance man said, 'Jews are just so lucky, so lucky. You send your children to college; I can't send my children to college.' My mother said, 'You call this lucky? I wake up at five in the morning and I go to bed at twelve and one o'clock at night. You think I'm lucky?'"

—Dorothy "Dutch" Idalin Gelson Cohen,
March 5, 1995

520 King
Appel Furniture Co.

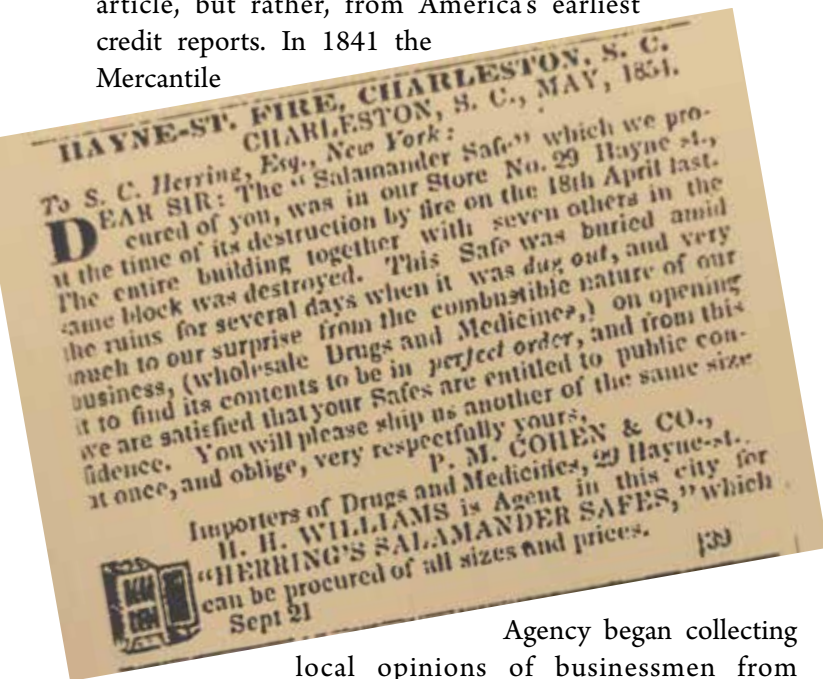
Abe & Ida Appel

“The ‘Kingdom of Israel’ in this town”: Jewish Merchants in Antebellum Charleston

by Shari Rabin

In 1845 pharmacist Philip M. Cohen (1808–1879) was described as “a Jew . . . doing a large fine bus[iness who] has made [considerable] money. In[dustrious] and indefatigable.”¹

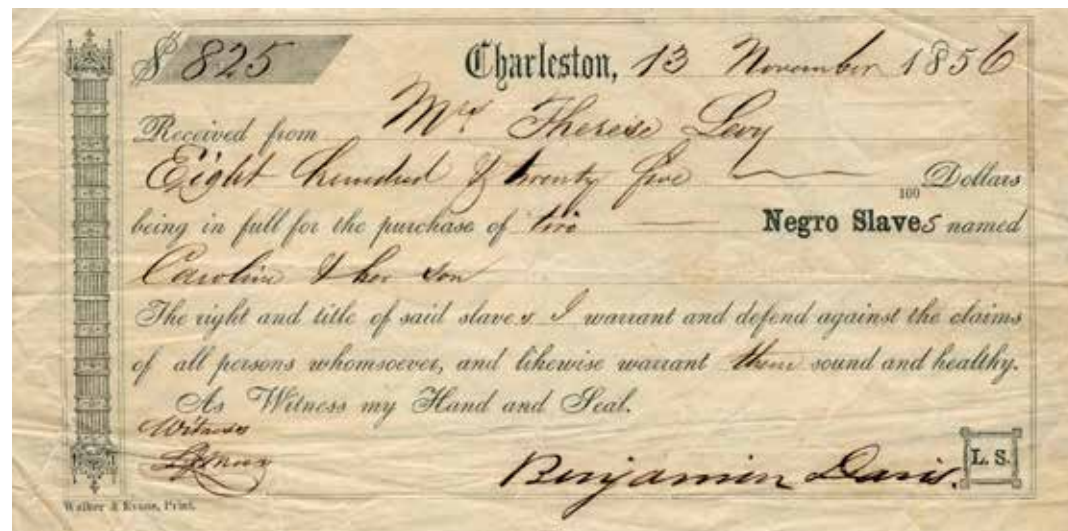
This evaluation comes not from a letter or a newspaper article, but rather, from America’s earliest credit reports. In 1841 the Mercantile



Agency began collecting local opinions of businessmen from correspondents across the country, with an eye toward determining their creditworthiness. These records are a remarkable and largely untapped source for exploring the businesses and reputations of Charleston Jews. Further evidence of their activities can be found in newspapers, census data, city directories, and archival collections, which have been explored anew by historical researcher Sarah Fick as part of *Mapping Jewish Charleston*, an ambitious digital project from the Pearlstine/Lipov Center for Southern Jewish Culture. Philip M. Cohen’s activities are particularly well documented in these sources, which makes his story a useful one for understanding the broader world of Jewish business in antebellum Charleston.

Cohen, who sold wholesale “drugs, chemicals, perfumery, paints, oils, dye stuffs, brushes, surgical instruments, patent medicines, and fancy articles,” was hardworking, but also relatively privileged.² He was a native son with a

Receipt dated November 13, 1856, for the purchase of two slaves, “Caroline and her son,” by Mrs. Therese Levy from Benjamin Davis. Special Collections, College of Charleston.



medical degree and was well connected in the city. His wife was Cordelia Moïse (1810–1869), a member of a prominent local family, and his uncle—also his wife’s step-father—was Hyam Cohen (1788–1850), Charleston’s city assessor.³ Yet, despite his status, by 1855 his business had failed.

Jews were prominent in many aspects of Charleston’s public life, and a number of them were fabulously wealthy. But Jewish merchants were a diverse lot, including men and women, immigrant and native born, well-to-do and of modest means. Their businesses ranged from pharmacies and groceries to hardware shops and dry goods stores. Through these various activities, Jews made their way in the city, although success was neither easy nor guaranteed. No matter their background or line of business, Jewish merchants discovered that what mattered most were relationships and reputations.

According to the credit reports, in the late 1840s Cohen was worth \$20,000, had a good reputation, and owned a home and “several negroes.”⁴ Slave-owning marked Cohen as a typical, if relatively well-off, Charleston Jew. Members of Charleston’s Jewish merchant community regularly owned slaves and several worked with much success as slave traders.⁵ Whatever their “commodity” of choice, however, Jewish merchants’ economic status was not certain to rise. Many Jewish merchants, especially immigrants, floated into town, failed to achieve economic stability, and left soon after.

Even for a native Charlestonian like Cohen, business was not easy. Mounting debts, robust competition, and disasters all could trouble economic life. By 1853 Cohen was working with a Jewish partner named Philip Wineman and was falling behind on payments to their creditors.⁶ Next, a fire broke out at his place of business and though they had insurance, it did not cover their costs. Popular opinion held that “even if he [should] recover the insurance money (wh[ich] is somewhat

doubtful) he will be worth, when ‘boiled down to cash’ about one dollar.” This turned out to be a self-fulfilling prophecy.

By February 1855 the store had failed.⁷ The following year, with backing from friends, Cohen opened a more modest drugstore and operated it under his wife’s name to avoid association with his previous failure.⁸ While it is unclear how active Cordelia was in this new business, other women did enjoy an independent status as “feme sole” or “sole trader.” These were single women, widows, and wives whose husbands gave permission for them to conduct business and own property.⁹

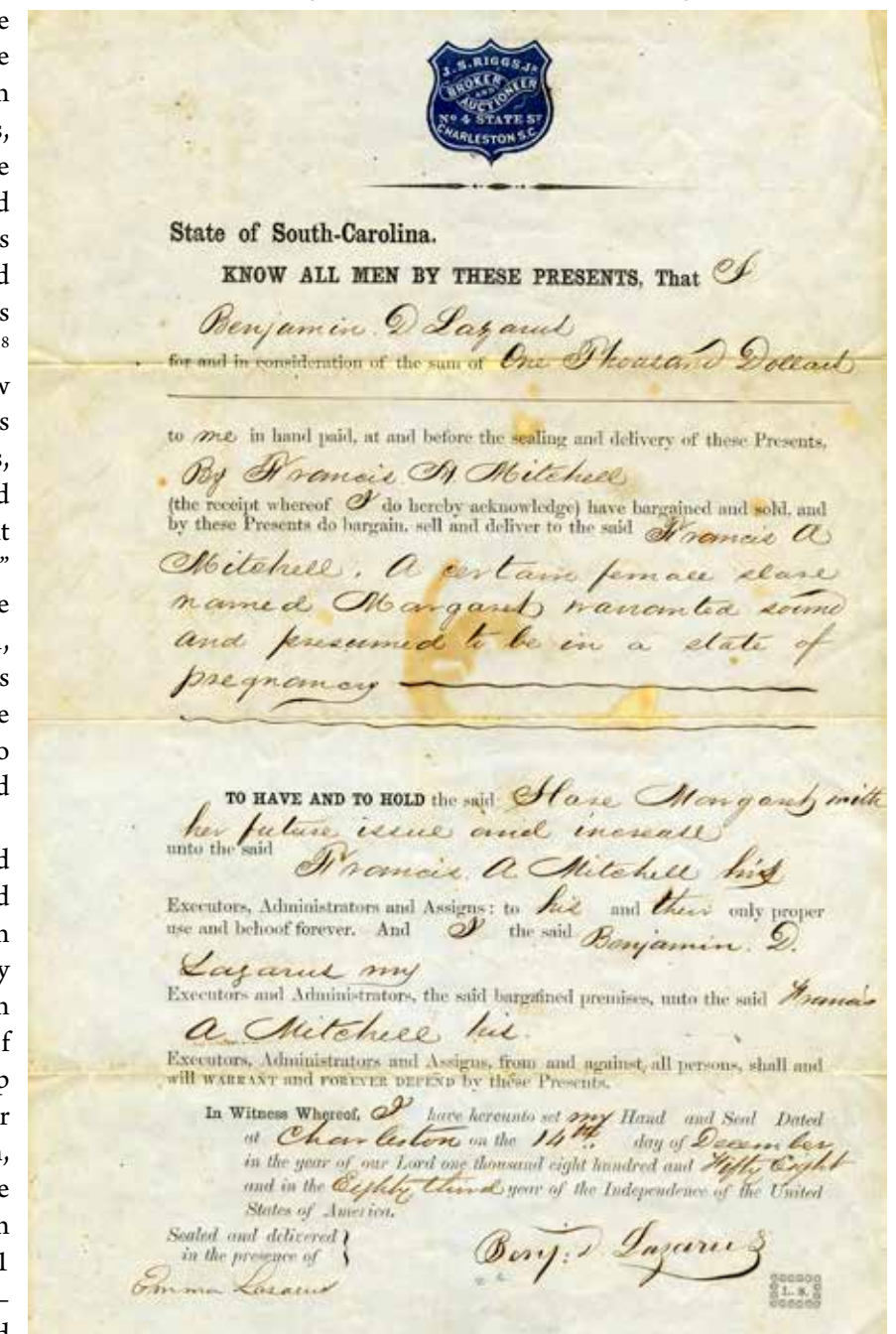
Jewish men and women alike entered into business with non-Jews, though they often worked with co-religionists, if not relatives. Philip M. Cohen’s brother Lawrence L. Cohen, also a Medical College graduate, joined him in the business; by 1841 their uncle Hyam—with whom Philip and Cordelia lived, first on Broad Street and later on Tradd—moved his office to their building at 63 Broad.¹⁰ They later moved to 29 Hayne Street, where among Cohen’s customers was one of his wife’s Moïse cousins, Philip Augustus. He operated a drug store at 221 King Street with two gentiles, John J. Ward, who eventually left the firm, and John J. Grierson.¹¹ Another Moïse

cousin, Edwin, was an auctioneer and grocer who rented space at 28 Vendue Range, an address with a history of occupation by Jewish merchants.¹² He had entered into business as a clerk for a Jewish firm and in 1853 went into business on his own.¹³

Whether between Jews and non-Jews or among Jews, business relationships were not always harmonious. When his business failed, Cohen’s stock was purchased by Benjamin Mordecai, a fellow Jew who later became a prominent supporter of the Confederate cause.¹⁴ Mordecai was a wealthy slave trader, and the credit reporters estimated that he purchased the store’s stock at half of its actual value.¹⁵ He turned the store over to J. H. Ashurst, the former bookkeeper, and kept Wineman on as clerk, pushing Cohen out.¹⁶

While these relationships determined access to capital, reputation shaped access to credit, which was becoming increasingly important in the mid-19th century.¹⁷ Moïse and Grierson were deemed “steady and

temperate” although Moïse’s “style of living”—considering that he owned no property—seemed to the credit reporter “unsuit[able].” Potential creditors, he determined, should thus be “very cautious.”¹⁸ Of Edwin Moïse, in 1853 one credit reporter could “see 0/0 [nothing] to prevent him from getting



Bill of sale for the slave “Margaret with her future issue and increase,” dated December 14, 1858, purchased for \$1,000 by Francis A. Mitchell from Benjamin D. Lazarus. Courtesy Avery Research Center, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC.

his share of ‘plunder’ out of this wide world.” By March 1856, however, he had quit business and was described as “character below par.”¹⁹

Besides noting financial and personal attributes, credit reporters often mentioned the Jewish identity of the merchant and considered it in evaluating creditworthiness.²⁰ Descriptions of Philip Cohen regularly mentioned he was a “Jew,” sometimes differentiating him as a (presumably more trustworthy) “Native Jew.” After his failure, however, he was described as “an Israelite indeed but not without guile.”²¹ Within six weeks of Benjamin Mordecai’s takeover of Cohen’s business, it had “acquired a very smutty reputation.” The new owner was described as “possess[ing] of a large share of the qualities so generally attributed to Israelites” and the new firm as a “Jew Concern” and “JEWS from A to Z.” The report elaborated, “If paying is profitable + politic they will pay.”²²

Jewish identity could be a liability, then, but it could also be an asset. When Moïse and Grierson opened for business, the credit reporter noted that competition was fierce, but predicted they “will get the patronage of the ‘Kingdom of Israel’ in this town, a large Kingdom.”²³ In the first half of the 19th century, even as religious reform and sectionalist politics were on the rise, Charleston Jews were working to put food on their tables. Many of them did so by buying and selling commodities, work in which their Jewishness shaped their business relationships, their financial identities, and their economic trajectories.

Shari Rabin is assistant professor of Jewish Studies and acting director of the Pearlstine/Lipov Center for Southern Jewish Culture, <http://jewishsouth.cofc.edu/>



NOTES

1. South Carolina, Vol. 6, p. 28, R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Report Volumes, Baker Library, Harvard Business School.
2. *Charleston Courier*, January 13, 1845, 3.
3. Sarah Fick, 1833 Research for *Mapping Jewish Charleston*, Special Collections, College of Charleston, 2016.
4. South Carolina, Vol. 6, p. 28, R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Report Volumes.
5. James William Hagy, *This Happy Land: The Jews of Colonial and Antebellum Charleston* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press), 91–106.
6. *Ibid.*, appendix p. 411.
7. South Carolina, Vol. 6, p. 187, R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Report Volumes.
8. South Carolina, Vol. 6, p. 238. Ads described him as “P. Melvin Cohen of ‘Cohen’s Medical Depot,’” *Charleston Mercury*, February 12, 1857, 2.
9. Fick, 1833 Research for *Mapping Jewish Charleston*.
10. *Ibid.*
11. South Carolina, Vol. 6, p. 218, R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Report Volumes; Ads, *Charleston Courier*, October 28, 1854, 3.
12. Fick, 1833 Research for *Mapping Jewish Charleston*.
13. South Carolina, Vol. 6, p. 189, R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Report Volumes.

14. South Carolina, Vol. 6, p. 187; Robert N. Rosen, *The Jewish Confederates* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press), 41.
15. South Carolina, Vol. 7, p. 457, R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Report Volumes.
16. South Carolina, Vol. 6, p. 259.
17. Josh Lauer, “From Rumor to Written Record: Credit Reporting and the Invention of Financial Identity in Nineteenth-Century America,” *Technology and Culture* (April 2008), 301–324.
18. South Carolina, Vol. 6, p. 218, R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Report Volumes.
19. South Carolina, Vol. 6, p. 189.
20. Rowena Olegario, “‘The Mysterious People’: Jewish Merchants, Transparency, and Community in Mid-Nineteenth Century America,” *The Business History Review* (Summer 1999), 161–189; Gerald Tulchinsky, “‘Said to be a very honest Jew:’ The R. G. Dun Credit Reports and Jewish Business Activity in Mid-19th Century Montreal,” *Urban History Review* (February 1990), 200–209.
21. South Carolina, Vol. 6, pp. 28, 238, R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Report Volumes.
22. South Carolina, Vol. 6, p. 187, 259.
23. South Carolina, Vol. 6, p. 218.

“The ‘Kingdom of Israel’ in this town”: Jewish Merchants of Charleston and Summerville

May 20–21, 2017 ~ Charleston and Summerville, South Carolina

Saturday, May 20 ~ Charleston Sat. events take place in the Sylvia Vlosky Yaschik Jewish Studies Center, 96 Wentworth St.

10:00 A.M.	King Street Walking Tour – meet at 96 Wentworth Street
11:30	Registration
11:45 – 12:30 P.M.	Lunch
12:30 – 1:30	The Transformation of King Street: The Price of Success – Steve Litvin, Professor, Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management, College of Charleston
1:30 – 1:45	Break
1:45 – 2:45	Panel discussion – Kings and Queens of King Street Moderator: Dale Rosengarten Panelists: Steve Berlin, Nicky Bluestein, Benjamin Chase, Rosemary “Binky” Read Cohen, Leonard Goldberg, Barry Kalinsky, Sam Kirshtein, Allan Livingston
2:45 – 3:45	Mapping Jewish Charleston – presentation by Harlan Greene, Shari Rabin, and Dale Rosengarten
3:45 – 4:00	Break
4:00 – 5:15	Panel discussion – The New Royalty Moderator: Randi Weinstein Panelists: Ben D’Alessandro, Joe Fischbein, Eli Hyman, Joseph Jacobson, Jerry Scheer
5:15 – 6:30	Reception – Norman’s Patio, behind Marty’s Place, 96 Wentworth Street

Sunday, May 21 ~ Charleston and Summerville

9:00 – 10:30 A.M.	Open JHSSC board meeting, 96 Wentworth Street, Charleston—everyone is invited!
11:30	Lunch at Eclectic Chef , 125 Central Avenue (Short Central), Summerville – parking available on W. Richardson Avenue or in the town parking deck (free) on Short Central, off of W. Richardson
12:30 – 1:00 P.M.	Dedication of marker – Central Avenue, across from Eclectic Chef
1:15 – 2:30	Panel discussion – Jewish Life in Flowertown – Summerville Downtown YMCA, 208 W. Doty Avenue Moderator: Spencer Lynch Panelists: Sallie Wolper Boyles, Jane Barshay Burns, Marjorie Levy Lynch, Paul Lynch, Rosalyn Kramer Monat-Haller, Vivian Rose
2:30	Walking tour of downtown Summerville Jewish heritage sites or driving tour of historic Jewish homes Immediately following the tour, attendees are cordially invited to tea at the Saul Alexander home, 409 Central Avenue, Summerville, now the residence of Vivian and Mike Rose.

Hotel reservations
Francis Marion Hotel
387 King Street, Charleston, SC 29403
(843) 722-0600 or (877) 756-2121
Special rate: \$269 per night + tax
To get the special rate, make your reservation by midnight on April 19 and mention “Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina.”

Meeting registration
Online at: jhssc.org/events/upcoming
with Visa, MasterCard, OR Discover, or American Express
By check, payable to **JHSSC c/o Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program** – 96 Wentworth Street, Charleston, SC 29424
Meeting fee: \$50 per person
Questions: Enid Idelsohn, idelsohne@cofc.edu
Phone: (843) 953-3918 ~ fax: (843) 953-7624

From Pineland to Flowertown: Jewish Merchants of Summerville

by Spencer Lynch

Orleans to Charleston, where he met and married Pauline Wolper, who had emigrated, also from Poland, to South Carolina as a child. In the 1930s Samuel purchased several buildings on a stretch of Central Avenue (now a pedestrian-only segment popularly referred to as Short Central) in downtown Summerville and commuted from Charleston. He started a dry-goods business called Summerville Bargain Store, selling work boots and pants to the men building the Santee Cooper hydroelectric plant during the New Deal. After Prohibition ended in 1933, he also opened a liquor store.

When Samuel died, my father, Seymour Lynch, inherited both businesses.

My grandfather was one of the first individuals in Summerville to lease buildings to African Americans, specifically to two barbers, Mr. Bryant and Mr. Pinckney. As a child during segregation, I remember that Mr. Bryant's barber shop catered to whites and Mr. Pinkney served a black clientele. Ironically, one of the buildings my family owned was next door to where the Ku Klux Klan met in the 1930s.

The first settlement of Summerville, known as Pineland Village, began after the American Revolution, its development fueled by Lowcountry planters eager to escape the heat, biting insects, and disease environment of the coast. Officially, Summerville became a town in 1847. By 1899 it was considered one of the world's two best places for the treatment of lung and throat disorders because of its dry, sandy soil and the prevalence of pine trees. Even today, the town's official seal reads "Sacra Pinus Esto (The Pine is Sacred)."

My grandfather Samuel Lynch came from Poland through New

Top, left to right: Cecile Wolper (Lazarus), Pauline Wolper (Lynch), the author's grandmother, Cecile Barr Wolper, Louis Edwin Wolper, Jacob Wolper, and Max Wolper, Charleston, SC, 1915. Special Collections, College of Charleston.

Middle, left to right: Izzy Wolper, Seymour Lynch, and Mosey Wolper. Seymour and Mosey, born four days apart, were best friends.

Bottom: Wolper's Shoe Co., 217 Meeting Street, Charleston, SC, a wholesale business owned by Louis E. Wolper and his wife, Sylvia Geldbart Wolper, was adjacent to Hyman's Southern Wholesale Co. Special Collections, College of Charleston.



My mother, Marjorie Levy Lynch, a native New Yorker, married my father in 1959 and they decided to live in Summerville. By 1964 my parents expanded their businesses and opened a department store called Seymour's, while continuing to operate the liquor store. The businesses were located across the street from each other. My father would be working in the clothing shop, and when a customer walked into the liquor store, an employee would yell, "Seymour, you have a customer in the liquor store," and he would run across the street.

Since our residence was only one block from the stores, our lives revolved around the businesses. On Saturdays, while my parents worked, my brother, Paul, and I would ride our bicycles to the stores and hang out with our friends. Periodically, our neighbors invited us to attend Baptist Bible study. When we started singing Christian hymns, my parents decided it was time to send us to Charleston Hebrew Institute, later called Addlestone Hebrew Academy, under the auspices of the Orthodox synagogue Brith Sholom Beth Israel.

During our teenage years we continued to commute to Charleston to attend high school at Porter Gaud. However, it was important that we always stop by the stores on Friday afternoons to help our parents. My fondest memories were those Fridays. My father would cash hundreds of paychecks for the blue-



Above: Marjorie Levy and her mother, Goldie Shapiro Levy, visit Summerville, SC, late 1950s, before Marjorie's marriage to Seymour Lynch in April 1959. A New Yorker, Marjorie found the "country town" likable because "everyone was friendly and nice."

Below: Seymour Lynch, 1950s, enjoyed sitting in the sun outside his liquor store at 120 Central Avenue, Summerville, SC, while waiting for customers. He was in the habit of stacking boxes on the sidewalk to show he was open for business.



collar workers, many of whom could not write or did not have a bank account.

The Alcohol Blue Laws created a mini-industry of bootlegging; retail liquor stores were closed after sunset and on Sundays. My father capitalized on this market and became one of the largest distributors of liquor to the bootleggers in Dorchester County. My brother and I would load hundreds of cases of half pints into the cars and trucks of the bootleggers for their weekend sales.

Summerville was a very tolerant community and welcomed many Jewish families. Marcus Barshay, an immigrant from Riga, Latvia, got his start in America running a dry-goods business in Orangeburg in 1897. In 1905 he relocated to Summerville and opened a men's clothing store on the town square. Five years later he moved his business a couple of doors down into a

building previously occupied by another Jewish merchant, Solomon Mirmow, who owned a considerable amount of property in town. Marcus and his wife, Lena Banov Barshay, had three sons and two daughters. Aaron and Sammy took over the business, called Barshay's, when their father died in 1950.

Around 1900 an immigrant named Saul Alexander from Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine, Russia, moved to Summerville and worked at Mirmow Dry Goods Store. In 1914 he opened his own business, also selling dry goods. During the hard times

of the late 1920s and '30s, Saul Alexander and Marcus Barshay were private bankers, providing loans for people to buy homes. When Alexander died in 1952, most of his estate went into the Saul Alexander Foundation, which continues to provide annual grants to charitable organizations in Summerville and the greater Charleston community.

My father's uncle Isadore Wolper moved to Summerville with his wife, Janette Jacobs Wolper, in 1946. Newly married, they had the idea of opening Dorchester Jewelers as the first jewelry retailers in town. Their shop was on Short Central in a space they rented from my father and grandfather until 1961, when they moved into their own building at 138 South Main Street.

Retiring in 1989, Izzy, as he was fondly called, and Janette were highly regarded and active in the community. They became longtime members of the Lions Club and Summerville Chamber of Commerce. Serving as president of both organizations, Izzy was recognized posthumously for his dedication to the Lions. Janette volunteered as a board member of the Dorchester County Library and accepted numerous invitations over the years from church groups to share her insights about Jewish holidays and rituals. Before we were old enough for our parents to put us to work in their stores, my brother and I spent many Saturdays playing with our cousins. Our families would also celebrate many of the Jewish holidays together.



Above: the author (1) and his brother, Paul Lynch, on a visit to Santa at the Summerville Town Hall, late 1960s.

Below: Marjorie Levy Lynch in Seymour's, 117 Central Avenue, Summerville, SC, late 1980s. In 1997 the family closed the store and began renting the space to other retailers.

All photos, unless otherwise stated, courtesy of the Lynch family.



Around 1900 Etta and Moses Kramer came to America from Prussia and opened a produce market in Summerville on the site where their son Isadore Kramer later built his drug store. Kramer's Pharmacy was a town landmark noted for its ice cream counter. Many Jewish families from Charleston would take a day trip to Summerville on Sundays and enjoy a sundae from Kramer's.

Other Jewish families in Summerville included the Lazaruses, Bernsteins, Bornsteins, Epsteins, Meyers, and Friedbergs.

Like the rest of the Lowcountry, the Jewish population of Summerville is expanding at a significant pace, attracted by industries such as Volvo and Mercedes, as well as the Del Webb retirement community

Cane Bay Plantation. As of December 2016, more than 50 Jewish families reside at Del Webb. More than 30 young Jewish families in metro Summerville are receiving free Jewish children's books from PJ Library, a Harold Grinspoon Foundation program that partners with local philanthropists and the Charleston Jewish Federation to encourage reading in the home. My family and I, though we all now live in Charleston, are still active in our hometown through our association with Summerville DREAM, a non-profit organization dedicated to the revitalization of the downtown area. As property owners, we also consult with several economic development committees.

A New Project and a New Endowment

by Martin Perlmutter

A connection to the past is an integral part of Jewish values, practice, and education. JHSSC is living proof that Jewish history encompasses not just biblical history, Talmudic studies, mass immigration, the Holocaust, or the founding of the modern state of Israel. The formative past is also local. Our history takes place in Summerton, Aiken, Greenville, Charleston; BBYO, Camp Blue Star, Temple Sinai in Sumter; Edwards' "five and dime" on King Street, Ben Arnold Distributors in Columbia, and Poliakoff's Department Store in Abbeville. It also includes civil rights marches and one's own genealogy.

JHSSC's mission charges us to study, preserve, and promote awareness of the history and culture of the Jews of South Carolina. The Society has recently proposed a new initiative to do just that. At our Spring 2017 meeting, we will launch a project to document the life and times of Jewish merchants—peddlers, shopkeepers, and owners of chains of stores—who made South Carolina their home. I am confident this undertaking, like other efforts spearheaded by the Society, will produce a valuable historical resource, available to future generations.

Central to JHSSC's success is the generosity of our Pillars, donors who contribute to the Society at the rate of \$1,000 per year for five years. Pillars are our lifeblood; they have helped us put South Carolina's Jewish history on the map and create a cohesive and welcoming community. As our organization and our ambitions grow, we need to find additional sources of income beyond membership dues. The time has come to seek endowment gifts to supplement our Pillar program. JHSSC's endowment fund will be housed in the College of Charleston Foundation and will provide support in perpetuity. If you are interested in becoming a Pillar, or in helping to build our endowment, including legacy giving, please let me know. I am very good at protecting confidences.

On a personal note, I was fortunate to know Mimi and Harvey Gleberman (obm), co-founders of J. H. Harvey, a retail furniture chain in the Northeast, who retired to Spring Island, South Carolina, from their home outside New York City. Mimi and Harvey were wonderful people—gracious, benevolent, gentle, and warm. Wanting to engage with their adopted community, they were among JHSSC's first Pillars. Harvey and Mimi both passed away in 2003. Their son Joseph recently surprised us with a substantial gift in their memory to begin JHSSC's endowment. Generosity runs in the family. Many thanks!

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Register now for the **May 20-21 meeting in Charleston and Summerville.** See page 11 for more information.