

My name is Shoshana Rosenbaum and I am thirteen years old. I've lived in Charleston, South Carolina for most of my life. My family moved here from New Jersey the day after I turned three, and we've lived here ever since. My family moved here because my father had become the rabbi of Synagogue Emanu-El.

As the oldest child of the rabbi, ever since I stepped foot inside the synagogue at my first Shabbat service, it was like I was a princess. My little brother and sister and I were usually the center of attention. I can't say I've always liked it throughout the years, but I'll always be proud of my dad for his accomplishments. I've made lots of friends and I've gotten to know so many people at synagogue, not to mention religious school and my teachers. The day of my bat mitzvah, the synagogue was packed, and I received so many gifts and cards. It made me feel grateful to have so much support, even though it was a little annoying to have to write all those thank-you notes!

The Holocaust has always fascinated me. I think that is because one of my great-grandfathers, Zayde Jack, who is now 94 years old and living in Winnipeg, Ontario, survived the Russian labor camps in Siberia. The scale of it's cruelty is baffling to me, so I feel the need to study and learn more about it. I have to admit, I was horrified when I visited the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum for the first time.

South Carolina is my home state now, and it became my home because of my Jewish family. My parents moved us here because they saw a great opportunity to raise their children as they served the growing Jewish community of Charleston. I got to go to

Addlestone Hebrew Academy for 10 years, including to its beautiful, brand new building. And I am a proud member of Synagogue Emanu-El, where I sometimes lead services with my dad.

So much has happened in the decade since my family moved to Charleston. A big change in my life happened when my parents got divorced. Another change was when I transferred out of Addlestone to Charis Academy in Summerville. Both of these changes affected how I relate to being Jewish. For example, my parents have different rules about keeping kosher, but both of my homes are Jewish. Also, since I am now the only Jewish student at my school, it makes me feel special to be able to teach students my age and older about my religion. But it also means that I don't have that much time to focus on learning Hebrew anymore.

Right now is a time of uncertainty in my life. My father will leave Charleston to become the rabbi of a synagogue in Buffalo, NY, this July, but I will still live with my mom and siblings in Charleston. We will still go to Synagogue Emanu-El, and my brother will soon be preparing for his Bar Mitzvah there. I hope I can go back to school at Charis soon, but for now, we are learning with our teachers at home because of COVID-19. However, Judaism is not something that will leave me. This religion dates back centuries in my family, and it makes me proud of who I am.

Shoshana *Simhat Bat*, with father, mother, and Zayde Jack, July 7, 2006  
Temple Beth Shalom, Livingston, NJ

Shoshana Bat Mitzvah, May 3, 2019  
Synagogue Emanu-El, Charleston, SC