The Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina

Southern Jews and the Atlantic World

JHSSC hosts the 46th annual Southern Jewish Historical Society conference in Charleston

October 21–23, 2022

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THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

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On the cover: A locket containing a miniature portrait of Charity Lushington Forrest née Forbes (ca. 1751–1832) [attributed to James Peale, ca. 1820] with a portrait of her second husband, Richard Lushington (1751–1790) [artist unknown, ca. 1780], on the reverse side of the case. Lushington, a Quaker, led a Revolutionary militia unit that came to be called "The Jews' Company." Gift of Elizabeth Adams to the Charleston Library Society. Photos: George H. McDaniel.

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Looking for Lushington: The Lost Quaker Commander of Charleston's Revolutionary Jewish Militia ~ George H. McDaniel ~ What can historic preservationists do when critical locations in the urban landscape are erased? Applying site-specific research and modern technology, The Charleston Liberty Trail will bring to light the surprising story of a Revolutionary militia unit known as "The Jews' Company." 6

Atlantic Enigma: The Shifting Identities of Francis Salvador ~ Rebecca Shimoni Stoil ~ Known as the first Jew elected to public office in North America and the first Jewish Patriot to die in the Revolution, Francis Salvador is perhaps the most memorialized Jew in South Carolina history, readily adapted to the motives and ideals of the groups that claim him as their own. 8

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Practicing Empire in the American South: What a Historian of North African Jews Can Learn from Studying Jews of the Colonial Atlantic World ~ Sara Jay ~ Deemed economically vital to the survival of the colony, Jews in times and places as disparate as British Suriname and French Algeria were granted civil rights and religious freedom. The author considers how the strategy of offering citizenship to Jews in exchange for allegiance to the ruling power played out in British North America, culminating in the famous exchange of letters in 1790 between George Washington and the Hebrew Congregation of Newport. ... 13

"An Esther at the South": Re-Imagining Southern Womanhood ~ Heather S. Nathans ~ Before the Civil War, the exotic Jewess Esther was held up as a hero of her people by abolitionist Angelina Grimké and numerous 19th-century writers. After the war, Lost Cause memorialist Lee Cohen Harby waxed poetic on the nobility of the plantation mistress, asserting her own status as a genteel southern white woman. 15

Max Heller's Transatlantic Connections and the Palmetto State: 1979–1996 ~ Andrew Baker ~ Spurring the revitalization of downtown Greenville, South Carolina, Austrian-born Max Heller is less well known as the engine of international development he became in Governor Richard Riley's administration. Photographs from this period show Max and his charismatic wife, Trude—who, like him, had fled Nazi-occupied Vienna—on trade missions across Europe and Asia. 17

A Summerton Provincial ~ Rachel Gordin Barnett ~ JHSSC's executive director, who grew up in Summerton, South Carolina, recalls how *The Provincials* by Eli Evans, resonated with her when she read the first edition in the 1970s. Building on Evans's legacy, JHSSC looks forward to hosting the Southern Jewish Historical Society this fall in Charleston, where scholars will shine a bright light on a broad canvas, exploring southern Jews and their relations with the Atlantic world. 19

Letter from the President

And you better start swimmin'
Or you'll sink like a stone
For the times they are a-changin'.

"The Times They Are A-Changin'," 1964 — Bob Dylan

You would think that Bob Dylan was writing those lyrics these past couple of years, not six decades ago. The uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, inflation, supply chain issues causing shortages of goods, the increase in violence, the rise in antisemitism, all add to our everyday stress in this rapidly changing world. The pandemic has changed the way organizations function. Companies and individuals have had to adapt to employees working from home, holding meetings virtually, distributing goods and services in different ways, and in general, not doing business as usual. Many operations that were unable to change have gone out of business and disappeared.

Fortunately for us, JHSSC has found ways to adapt, survive, and even prosper. Since we were unable to meet in person until this spring, we pivoted to online programming, producing monthly Sunday Conversations led by past presidents Richard Gergel and Robert Rosen that have engaged our members and an ever-expanding viewership over the past two years.

We have partnered with other organizations, such as the American Jewish Archives and the Southern Jewish Historical Society, sharing programming with their members as well as ours. JHSSC Executive Director Rachel Gordin Barnett has done a marvelous job coordinating not only our virtual events but keeping other projects moving forward. The Society had a great spring meeting in Beaufort, June 10–12, 2022. Many thanks to Barbara Mark and her committee at Beth Israel Congregation for hosting us and making local arrangements. Hats off to Joe Wachter and Paul Keyserling, who volunteered their professional services as photographer and videographer.

We fully expect to welcome the Southern Jewish Historical Society conference in person in Charleston the weekend of October 21st–23rd. The third try for this meeting is a charm! If you have not yet done so, please go to our website and register today.

In the second year of my presidency, it feels natural to ask, where does the JHSSC go from here? Our mission is to study, preserve, and promote awareness of the history and culture of the Jews of South Carolina. We need to keep our programming fresh and creative, to attract new and younger members, and to continue collaborating with our partners. To ensure our long-term viability we have joined with the Jewish Heritage Collection in the South Carolina Jewish History and Heritage Campaign. To learn more about this endeavor, please contact me or Rachel Barnett at jhssc2020@gmail.com.

L'shalom,
Alexander Cohen, M.D.
JHSSC President

I cannot have a future 'til I embrace my past.
I promise to pursue the challenge, time is going fast.

"And the Youth Shall See Visions," 1981
— Debbie Friedman

Elizabeth Schein-Pearson participates in the "Family Stories" panel discussion, JHSSC meeting, Beth Israel, Beaufort, SC, June 11, 2022. Photo: Paul Keyserling.

Dissent, Providentialism, and Slavery: A New Interpretation of Early Charleston Jewish Life

by Shari Rabin, Oberlin College

The title of my talk for this year's Helen Stern lecture is inspired by *Messianism, Mysticism, and Secrecy: A New Interpretation of Early American Jewish Life,* the masterful 2012 book by Laura Leibman, my immediate predecessor as Stern lecturer. Drawing on studies of material culture and Jewish mysticism, Leibman found a Sephardic religious culture of "quotidian messianism"—the expression, in everyday life, of the fervent hope for the ingathering of the exiles in the world to come—which was shared across "the Jewish Atlantic World." In the index, however, there are just three entries for Charleston, fewer than those for New York and Philadelphia, and a tiny number compared to the dozens of entries for Caribbean centers like Barbados, Suriname, Curaçao, and Jamaica.

To be sure, for much of the 18th century, Charleston had a small Jewish community, which left behind a modest documentary record and included many Jews who had come from the Caribbean.[1] However, my close reading of this material—aided substantially by James Hagy's encyclopedic 1993 *This Happy Land: The Jews of Colonial and Antebellum Charleston*—suggests that Charleston might not fit as easily into the Jewish Atlantic World model as we might otherwise assume. Rather than messianism, mysticism, and secrecy, I would suggest dissent, providentialism, and slavery as key categories for understanding Jewish life in colonial Carolina.

"Dissent" was a category used to describe forms of Protestantism that deviated from the established church, which in the British empire was the Church of England. From 1722, Charleston's skyline was dominated by St. Philip's Church, a monumental structure asserting Anglican power over the city. At the same time, as early as 1700, Anglicans accounted for less than half of the Protestant settlers in the colony. The rest included Presbyterians, Baptists, Huguenots, Lutherans, and Quakers.[2]

It was unclear whether Jews should be considered ordinary "dissenters" or whether their difference belonged in another category altogether. The 1669 Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina promised freedom of worship to "Jews, Heathens, and other Dissenters," implying that Jews exist in an uncertain third category between Black and indigenous "heathens" and the dissenting Protestant groups.[3] When Jews did receive rights in the British empire, it often required labelling them as Protestants, and dissenters occasionally complained about Jews' inclusion in what they thought should remain a Christian community.

While Leibman argues that messianism and mysticism were the key religious influences in the Jewish Atlantic World, in Charleston there is little of the kind of evidence she relies upon. For instance, Leibman describes extravagant gravestone imagery as a sign of kabbalistic commitments. And yet the oldest gravestone in Charleston, that of Moses Cohen, who died in 1762, is relatively sparse and includes several features that point to local influences. The religious sensibility of Charleston Jews might better be explained by providentialism, the belief that God oversees and determines all human activity.

An Exact Prospect of Charles Town, the Metropolis of the Province of South Carolina, ***June 9, 1739, painted by Bishop Roberts, engraved by William Henri Toms, engraving with watercolor. Collection of Robert N. Rosen.***

The will of Jacob Olivera, which appears in local probate records, includes Psalm 31: "In thy hands I will enlist my spirit. Thou hast rescued me O Lord God of Truth."[4] His was a Jewish God who determined human destinies and whose followers might appeal to him through personal petitions and communal prayers. Olivera asked for forgiveness for his sins, "hoping His infinite mercies will extend to me." These are Jewish prayers, but Olivera invoked them in the aftermath of the Great Awakening, a dramatic Anglo-American revival insisting on a present, personal God who determined individual salvation and required experiences of conversion.


FIVE DOLLARS

Will be paid for the apprehension of my Negro Girl SALLY, about 14 years old. Had on, when she went away, a black cambric frock, checked apron, and woollen tippet. She may perhaps change her dress. She walks a little stooping, and talks country-fied. She has little or no hair, it has fallen out—large white teeth. She was lately purchased from Thomas S. West, who lives four miles from Four Hole Bridge, by me. The above reward will be paid on delivering her to the master of the Work House, or to the subscriber. LEAH MOSES.

Dec 12 3

Leah Moses offered a reward in the* Charleston Mercury,** ***December 16, 1833, for the return of Sally, a 14-year-old enslaved girl she had recently purchased.

James Hagy tells us, "The first Jews [in Carolina] known by name appear together in the same record when Simon Valentine sold a slave to Samuel Mincks." A transcription of the original document accessible on ancestry.com reveals that the individual at the center of this transaction was a man named Dick.[5] While initially it was indigenous peoples who were enslaved in the colony, gradually Africans came to predominate, becoming the majority of the colony's population as planters—influenced by the example of Barbados—threw in their lot with the labor-intensive rice crop.[6]

The Fundamental Constitutions, the initial planning document for the colony, had declared that "Every freeman of Carolina shall have absolute power and authority over his negro slaves, of what opinion or religion soever," and reiterated that religious affiliation would not affect "any man's civil estate or right." Although designed to disenfranchise enslaved people, making religion irrelevant to social status—a change similarly enacted in other English colonies—this measure also facilitated Jewish belonging. Leibman argues that the treatment of enslaved people and their offspring is the one arena in which local variations prevailed among Jewish communities. In Charleston, those enslaved by Jews might have facilitated domestic religious practice, for instance preparing kosher meals. And yet, following the example of their Christian neighbors, who usually resisted the entreaties of their churches' missionaries—and unlike in Suriname, where enslaved people regularly converted to Judaism—it appears Jews in South Carolina did not seek to formally incorporate people of color into the Jewish community.

Charleston Jews were undeniably part of a Jewish Atlantic World—they moved to Carolina from Amsterdam, London, New York, and various places in the Caribbean, as well as from central and eastern Europe—and like others in its orbit they worked to establish Jewish life in violent colonial settings. And yet, as I will discuss further in my Stern lecture, imperial and local configurations of power also shaped the social status, religious worldviews, and everyday lives of Charleston Jews.

Notes

1. Dale Rosengarten, "Port Jews and Plantation Jews: Carolina-Caribbean Connections," in *The Jews in the Caribbean,* ed. Jane S. Gerber (Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2014), 289–307.
2. Charles S. Bolton, *Southern Anglicanism: The Church of England in Colonial South Carolina* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1982).
3. "The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina, March 1, 1669," The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History, and Diplomacy, accessed July 23, 2020, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/nc05.asp.
4. *Georgia, Wills and Probate Records, 1742–1992,* Wills Vol. A, 1754–1772, 246–248, accessed via ancestry.com.
5. *South Carolina, Wills and Probate Records, 1670–1980,* Vol. 54, 1694–1704, p. 323, accessed via ancestry.com. Cited in James William Hagy, *This Happy Land: The Jews of Colonial and Antebellum Charleston* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1993), 57.
6. Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Knopf, 1974).

Looking for Lushington: The Lost Quaker Commander of Charleston's Revolutionary Jewish Militia

by George H. McDaniel, South Carolina Battleground Preservation Trust

"Died Last Monday, after an illness of only three days, the honorable Richard Lushington Esq. Col. of the regiment of militia for Charleston district," June 24, 1790.[1]

Thus, the life of an important figure in Charleston and southern Jewish history prematurely ended at the age of 39. Today, the name Richard Lushington draws little, if any, attention among the general public's awareness of Charleston history. When carriage tours travel along King Street, his name is not among those spoken at the corner of King and Queen, now occupied by a Charleston County parking garage.

In fact, it is likely that many of the men who served under his command and lived and worked along that same stretch of King Street garner no mention—an omission the South Carolina Battleground Preservation Trust (SCBPT) works hard to correct. Our goal is to reimagine preservation in a way that allows the story of "ordinary" people to be told and their world to rise from underneath the extant buildings of today.

The walled city of Charles Town and the outlying Quaker Meeting House are depicted in this detail from a map by Edward Crisp, ca. 1711. Library of Congress Geography and Map Division.

Richard Lushington was born in Charles Town (as it was known before the Revolution) in 1751 and spent his entire life in the bustling colonial city as a merchant and a Quaker. While Quakers were among the first settlers in Charles Town, acceptance into the emerging society of colonial South Carolina dominated by Anglicans came slowly. One of the reasons for this slow acceptance involved Charleston Quakers' complicated relationship with the institution of slavery. Lushington himself enslaved 11 people at the time of his death, but evidence exists to suggest he also exhibited some anti-slavery tendencies.[2]

The Quaker Meeting House appears on a map of Charles Town from 1711—the only church not located within the protective city walls. As historian Benjamin Carp writes, "In South Carolina gentility was a projection of power that depended on refinement but left little room for universalism, and so the province was 'officially tolerant but culturally hostile' to Quakers."[3] Perhaps it was this cultural hostility and a desire for acceptance that shaped Lushington and led him into military service during the Revolutionary War, commanding others who experienced similar cultural challenges: Jewish men.

The reason for this alliance is largely a matter of understanding the geography of Charles Town. During the Revolutionary War, militias mustered by district. This meant militia units generally contained members of similar occupations. As Barnett Elzas explained in his groundbreaking 1905 work, *The Jews of South Carolina,* "Richard Lushington's district extended on King Street, from Broad Street to Charles Town Neck, above the modern Calhoun Street. King Street was then, as now, a principal business district, and most of the Jews had their stores there."[4] As a result, Captain Richard Lushington, a Quaker merchant, commanded a militia of fellow merchants with names such as Solomon Aarons, Moses Cohen, and Ephraim Abrams.

Lushington's militia unit became known as "The Jews' Company" or "The Company of Free Citizens," but while it did include a significant number of Jewish men, they were not a majority nor was Lushington's unit the only one with this demographic profile. James Bentham, another prominent merchant, also commanded a unit with a significant Jewish presence. The difference between Lushington and Bentham illustrates the tensions within the social hierarchy and how those shaped the historical narrative and the challenges presented in telling the story of Lushington and his men.

Bentham was Anglican, the dominant religion of the Carolina colony, and is buried at the historic St. Philip's Cemetery on Church Street. Twice marginalized, Lushington's story provides a stark contrast. He was a member of a small minority in Charles Town, given his Quaker faith, and isolated even further within that faith by taking up arms. This double marginalization, along with many of his men being Jewish, another minority in the colony, lends this unit its unique and complex character.

Further, links between Quakers and Jews date to the early days of Quakerism when George Fox and Margaret Fell, founders of the Religious Society of Friends, played an important role in the return of Jews to England in the 1650s.[5] While evidence is still needed to definitively support such a statement, it is possible Lushington felt a kinship with the Jewish men under his command. As historian Sally Bruyneel writes, "Friends embraced no creed save humility before that of God in the individual conscience. This was something all, including Jews, possessed. Thus, for Quakers, Jews were equal as human beings subject to the same sins and the same potential for divine indwelling of the Light."[6] While motivations are difficult to infer, the idea of equality being a factor not only within the dynamics of this unit but also in the call to service under the Patriot cause for Lushington and Jewish men certainly resonates.


The News and Courier
Sat., Feb. 1, 1969

Crews Finish Relocating Quaker Cemetery Graves

19 Are Found In 45-Foot Area

One of the most delicate details involved in the clearance of the site for Charleston County's $1 million multi-level parking garage has been completed.

Work was begun and finished this week on the relocation of graves within the historic Quaker Cemetery at King and Queen Streets.

County Manager Richard L. Black said the contractor had supplied him with a report on the project, which involved months of negotiation and a trip to Philadelphia by county officials to meet with the Society of Friends.

Unfortunately, the erasure of the historic landscape at the critical location where the Quaker Meeting House and cemetery stood presents its own challenges. Once situated at the corner of King and Queen streets, a tremendous fire in 1837 necessitated the razing of the meeting house, although it had long before fallen into a state of disrepair as the Quaker Meeting of Charleston greatly weakened in the early 19th century. While the cemetery survived, it too disappeared from the landscape in 1969 when the remains were relocated behind the Charleston County Courthouse to make room for a parking garage.[7] Such erasure means that while the Jewish presence became entrenched in both the physical landscape and historical memory of Charleston, Lushington and other Quakers vanished.

Further complicating the quest to locate Lushington is the matter of Quaker burial rites. In his last will and testament, Richard Lushington specified, "after my Decease, in a proper time, my Executrix hereafter named, do cause me to be buried without any Ceremony."[8] That last instruction, "without any Ceremony," helps explain why he receded from historical memory for so long. While the location of Lushington's burial remains a mystery, circumstantial evidence suggests that he was laid to rest in the Quaker cemetery.[9]

SCBPT faces these challenges by seizing upon them as opportunities for creative new forms of interpretation. At the forefront of this effort is the development of The Liberty Trail. This partnership between SCBPT and the American Battlefield Trust guides visitors to a network of battlefields and important sites across the state of South Carolina. A key component of this partnership is the development of The Charleston Liberty Trail app. Undergirded by historical research and enhanced by the latest technology—such as augmented reality—visitors will be able to see Charleston in the way Lushington and his men saw it. Research is underway to identify where the shops of these Jewish men were located and provide interpretation at those specific sites.

Creating such a network of sites in Charleston takes visitors beyond the battlefields and into the daily lives of these historical figures through deep research keyed to identifiable locations. The Liberty Trail allows us to rethink and reimagine preservation in an ever-changing and constantly developing landscape, such as 21st-century Charleston. In doing so, SCBPT is stepping outside of the traditional box and forging new partnerships with retailers and others who occupy spaces once frequented by people like Lushington and the militia men who served under his command. Site-specific interpretation enriches the historical narrative by bringing to the fore minority groups, such as Quakers and Jews, and introducing outsiders' perspectives to the mainstream point of view.

Notes

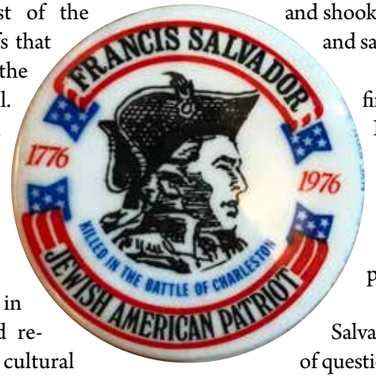
1. *State Gazette of South Carolina,* June 24, 1790.
2. A full discussion of Charleston Quakers and their complex views on slavery is beyond the purview of this piece. For an insightful look at these views of Quakers and Lushington, see Claire Bellerjeau and Tiffany Yecke Brooks' *Espionage and Enslavement in the Revolution* (Guilford: Lyons Press, 2021).
3. Benjamin Carp, "'Fix'd almost amongst Strangers': Charleston's Quaker Merchants and the Limits of Cosmopolitanism," *William and Mary Quarterly* 74, no. 1 (January 2017): 77–108.
4. Barnett A. Elzas, *The Jews of South Carolina: From The Earliest Times To The Present Day* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1905), 87.
5. Tony Stoller, "Frontpiece," *Friends Quarterly* 43, no. 4 (November 2015): 2.
6. Sally Bruyneel, "Early Quaker beliefs and the nation of the Jews," *Friends Quarterly* 43, no. 4 (November 2015): 25.
7. "Crews Finish Relocating Quaker Cemetery Graves," *Charleston News and Courier,* February 1, 1969.
8. Richard Lushington, "Last Will and Testament," *South Carolina Wills and Related Probate Matters, 1692–1868,* Charleston County Probate Court, Charleston, SC, 434–435.
9. The evidence consists of Lushington having spent his entire life in Charleston and the fact that his brother-in-law, Daniel Latham, who was married to Charity Lushington's sister, was buried there. Latham's tombstone is the only one preserved and currently marks the location of the remains.

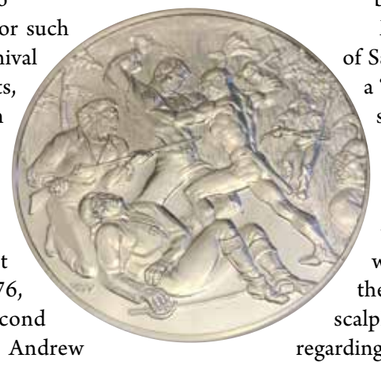
Atlantic Enigma: The Shifting Identities of Francis Salvador

by Rebecca Shimoni Stoil, Clemson University

Francis Salvador, a would-be planter, new American, Jew, and revolutionary, is one of the most memorialized Jewish figures in South Carolina history. His name appears on markers across the state from Clemson to Charleston, and his dramatic death in an early skirmish of the Revolutionary War is the subject of a diorama once displayed at B'nai B'rith headquarters in Washington DC. Most of the narratives of Salvador's life and the beliefs that led him to his death on the banks of the Seneca River lack definitive historical detail. Famous by reputation but scant in archival evidence, Salvador is in some ways the easiest of historical figures to memorialize, a pliable hero for changing eras, one who can be reframed to fit a myriad of identities and commitments.

"Atlantic Enigma" examines ways in which Salvador has been imagined and re-imagined as a reflection of shifting cultural values. Salvador lived in an Atlantic world bridging London, Lisbon, Charleston, the Upstate frontier, and the enslavement economies of Africa and the Caribbean. The many identities that he occupied across time and space combine with spotty contemporary documentation to create the ambiguity that makes Salvador such a malleable figure. Drawing upon archival records, historical newspaper accounts, and the early work of the American Jewish Historical Society, my conference paper brings to light the discrepancies and questions surrounding an oft-referenced but little-understood personality.





Francis Salvador commemorative memorabilia. Above: Bicentennial (1976) pin, "Killed in the Battle of Charleston." Below: 1972 Franklin Mint sterling silver coin, "History of Jews of America" series. Special Collections, College of Charleston Libraries.

The narrative of Salvador's life is most detailed at its very end. On July 31, 1776, he left Ninety-Six—South Carolina's second most populous district—with Major Andrew Williamson's militia. Though he arrived in the colony only in December 1773, Salvador was already a prominent citizen, having served in both of the South Carolina Provincial Congresses.[1] Williamson's force was ambushed as it approached the outskirts of the Cherokee town of Esseneca, near modern-day Clemson. Salvador was shot in the initial volley.

According to Williamson, Salvador was mounted close to the commander, who dispatched a lieutenant to find the wounded man in the darkness.[2] Before Salvador was found, however, "the enemy unfortunately got his scalp: which, was the only one taken," Williamson recounted.[3] After the skirmish ended, less than an hour later, Williamson discovered his compatriot lying in the brush, with just enough life left in him to ask Williamson whether the skirmish had been won. "He said he was glad of it, and shook me by the hand—and bade me farewell—and said, he would die in a few minutes."[4]

In those minutes, Salvador, already the first Jew elected to public office in British North America, also became the first Jewish person killed in the American Revolution.[5] His death in battle would be embraced by successive generations of Jewish Americans eager to prove their co-religionists were present at America's moment of inception.[6]

The narrative upon which much of Salvador's hagiography is based raises a number of questions regarding its construction. Williamson's entire account of the skirmish is the story of Salvador's death; he does not report to his commander any details of the fight itself, the orders given, or even the immediate outcome of the battle. While the story seems detailed, there is no mention of Salvador's burial arrangements.

More broadly, the sole eyewitness account of Salvador's death is formulaic, epitomizing a "good death" in general and martial valor specifically. It bears striking similarity to the well-documented accounts of British Brigadier-General James Wolfe's death some 15 years earlier in Quebec.[7] The tale of Wolfe's death would have been well known to every Anglo-American at the time, and the obvious parallels (sans the scalping) and the lack of any additional detail regarding the battle itself raise questions about Williamson's account.[8]

The uncertainty surrounding Salvador's death pales in comparison to other questions about his life. Born to a wealthy Sephardic family in London, he sailed to South Carolina ostensibly to recover the family's wealth by setting up a plantation worked by enslaved laborers on the Upstate frontier. Salvador bounds into the historical record shortly after his arrival, emerging as a passionate adherent to the Patriot cause. His surviving correspondence is businesslike, offering prescient insights into the state of the Upcountry on the brink of independence.[9] But much of his life, his decisions, personality, and motivations, remain at best speculative, as few of Salvador's letters survived.

The innumerable images portraying the revolutionary are products of their artists' imaginations, as there is no extant portrait or even physical description of Salvador. Instead, the very basic markers of his identity—titles like "patriot," "aristocrat," "Jewish-American," and uniquely "the Southern Paul Revere"—were quickly applied by those who wished to use his historical persona for their own purposes. From the 19th century through the 21st, Salvador was valorized in popular histories aimed at Jewish Americans, from Yiddish theater to edgy comics to antiquarian biographic sketches.[10]

His utility is particularly evidenced in public commemorative efforts by the Jewish communities of Charleston and Greenwood, who laid claim to Salvador as one of their own.[11] Salvador serves as a mirror for ensuing generations, reflecting their own desired image more than any actual portrait of Salvador himself. Francis Salvador remains an enigma—a prominent Jew who left no trace of personal religious affiliation, a revolutionary who, at the cusp of a war for independence, sought to enslave people of African descent, a martyr with no grave.

Notes

1. Salvador's work in the Provincial Congresses of 1776 is described in detail in *Journal of the Provincial Congress of South Carolina* (London: J. Almon, 1776), 10, 23–24, 42, 55–56, 64–65, 88–89, 106.
2. Andrew Williamson to Henry Drayton in *John Drayton, Memoirs of the American Revolution* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1821), 347.
3. Drayton, 347.
4. Drayton, 348.
5. This, too, is a matter of interpretation. Jewish-born Georgian Joseph Ottolenghi has been ascribed the title of first Jewish officeholder, but he seems to have been a practicing Christian during his time in the colony. While there is no record documenting Salvador as practicing any other religion, there is also no sign of his affiliation with Judaism or with the sizeable Jewish community in Charleston after his arrival in South Carolina. In his *History of Edgefield County* (1897), John Abney Chapney describes Salvador as "of Hebrew parents and a Hebrew in religion," but cites no sources and makes numerous factual errors in his brief sketch of Salvador's life.
6. See, for example, the Revolutionary Bicentennial-era advertisement including an image and biographical sketch of Salvador: "Maxwell House Coffee Honors Famous Jewish-American Patriots," *Philadelphia Jewish Exponent,* Philadelphia, PA, October 10, 1975, 55.
7. Francis Parkman, *Montcalm and Wolfe: The French and Indian War,* ed. C. Vann Woodward (New York: Da Capo Press, 1995), p. 495.
8. For one example of contemporary descriptions of the event published in British North America see John Pringle's *The life of General James Wolfe, the conqueror of Canada, or, The eulogium of that renowned hero, attempted according to the rules of eloquence: with a monumental inscription, Latin and English, to perpetuate his memory.* (Boston: Fowle and Draper, 1760), http://online.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.39385.

See note number 6.

9. See, for instance, the correspondence with William Henry Drayton included in Robert W. Gibbes, *Documentary history of the American revolution: consisting of letters and papers relating to the contest for liberty, chiefly in South Carolina, from originals in the possession of the editor, and other sources* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1853), http://digital.library.pitt.edu/cgi-bin/t/text/text-idx?c=darltext;view=toc;idno=31735054858679, 24–26, 28–30.
10. Notable examples include: Leon Huhner, "Francis Salvador, A Prominent Patriot of the Revolutionary War," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society,* no. 9 (1901): 107–22; "Salvador, Francis," in *The Jewish Encyclopedia,* Cyrus Adler and L. Huhner, eds., 10 (1906), 661–662; Helen Kohn Hennig, *Francis Salvador,* (Cincinnati: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1935); Lionel Koppman, *Francis Salvador, patriot* [script] (New York: National Jewish Welfare Board, 1952); Allan Tarshish, *Francis Salvador: A Revolutionary hero;* and Tama Levitan's Yiddish-language *Francis Salvador* (New York, 1949). His ambush was the subject of a 1970 historical diorama vandalized by terrorists while on display in B'nai B'rith's headquarters in Washington DC, re-configured for a 2002 exhibition, and now installed under plexiglass in Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim's museum in Charleston, SC. In a more modern context, his story has been featured by the Library of Congress's *In Custodia Legis* blog in honor of Jewish-American Heritage Month (2020) and on the Department of Veterans' Affairs website.
11. "Salvador Marker Unveiled," *Index-Journal,* Greenwood, SC, Saturday, July 16, 1960, 1; Jeannette Felsenthal Pearlstine, ed. *The Souvenir Book of the Bi-Centennial, 1750–1950. The Story of the Celebration of the Bicentennial of the Charleston Jewish Community,* November 19 through November 26, 1950 (Bicentennial Committee, 1951).

Southern Jews and the Atlantic World

JHSSC hosts the Southern Jewish Historical Society's 46th annual meeting ~ October 21–23, 2022 ~ Charleston, SC

Friday, October 21

8:30 A.M. Registration, **Sylvia Vlosky Yaschik Jewish Studies Center, College of Charleston, 96 Wentworth Street**

9:30 Welcome remarks: Jay Silverberg, president, SJHS, and Rachel Gordin Barnett, executive director, JHSSC

10:00 Jews, Modernism, and the Cosmopolitan South
Chair: Marian Mazzone

- Samuel D. Gruber, "The International Style Comes South"
- Leonard Rogoff, "Matisse and his 'Baltimore Ladies': The Cone Sisters Collect Modernist Art"
- Cheyenne McClain, "Dr. Abram Kanof: Collecting International Judaica and the Development of Southern Jewish Identity"

11:15 Lunch (on your own)

12:30–1:45 P.M. Concurrent panels
Colonial Jews and the Atlantic World
Chair: Sandy Slater

- Sara Jay, "Practicing Empire in the American South: What a Historian of North African Jews Can Learn from Studying Jews of the Colonial Atlantic World"
- José Alberto Tavim, "Aaron Lopez's Business Networks and the South"
- Rivi Feinsilber, "Jews and Anti-Jewish Prejudice: Trans-Atlantic Transfer to the New World"

Performance and Memory in the American South
Chair: Catherine Eskin

- Heather S. Nathans, "'An Esther at the South': Re-Imagining Southern Womanhood"
- Michael Hoberman, "Housebound Specters: The Mordecai House Dynasty's Fall from Grace"
- Gabrielle Berlinger, "Everyday Things, Singular Stories: Preserving and Presenting Jewish Material Culture in Greensboro, NC"

2:00–3:15 Concurrent panels
Encounters with the State
Chair: Lance Sussman

- Seth Barrett Tillman, "New Thinking on Jacob Henry"
- Eric Eisner, "Jewish Rights on Middle Ground: Race and the Religious Test in Antebellum Maryland"
- John Williams, "The Jewish Problem: Jewish Merchants in the American South during the Civil War"

Politics of Preservation
Chair: Grant Gilmore

- George H. McDaniel, "Looking for Lushington: The Lost Quaker Commander of Charleston's Revolutionary Jewish Militia"
- Barry Stiefel, "Jews, National Identity, and Historic Preservation: Trans-Atlantic Experiences from the Mount Vernon Ladies Association and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings"
- Hannah Lebovitz, "Where Did the Shtetl Go? Investigating Jewish Self-Erasure in Dallas, Texas"

3:30–4:30 SJHS board meeting

5:00 Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim, 90 Hasell Street

Dinner and Dr. Lawrence J. Kanter Lecture: Michael R. Cohen, "The Economics of Southern Jewish History"

Shabbat service

(Shabbat begins 6:21 P.M.)

Michael R. Cohen is the Stuart and Suzanne Grant Professor of the American Jewish Experience at Tulane University. He is chair and Sizeler Professor of the Department of Jewish Studies, and director of the Stuart and Suzanne Grant Center for the American Jewish Experience. Cohen's *Cotton Capitalists: American Jewish Entrepreneurship in the Reconstruction Era* (NYU Press, 2017) was a finalist for the American Jewish Historical Society's Saul Viener Book Prize. Author of *The Birth of Conservative Judaism: Solomon Schechter's Disciples and the Creation of an American Religious Movement* (Columbia University Press, 2012), he is co-editor of the forthcoming *Oxford Handbook of American Jewish History* (Oxford University Press). His third book-length monograph, *American Jews: An Economic History,* is under contract with NYU Press.

Saturday, October 22

8:00 A.M. Shabbat service (location TBD)

9:00–11:00 Walking Tours (choose one)

- Upper King Street
- Coming Street Cemetery
- Old Slave Mart Museum

11:00–12:15 P.M. Rising Stars of Southern Jewish History
Chair: Marni Davis

- Michael Jacobs, "A New Home in the Old South: Southern Jewish Women's Role in Identity Formation, 1800–1865"
- Jacob Morrow-Spitzer, "Keep the State Far From Us: Jewish Politics and the End of Reconstruction"
- Mimi Brown Wooten, *"La Djusticia Amerikana:* Leo Frank in the Ladino Press"

12:15 Box lunch

12:30 Beeber Family Lecture sponsored by the Helen Stern Fund: Shari Rabin, "Dissent, Providentialism, and Slavery: A New Interpretation of Early Charleston Jewish Life"

2:15–3:30 Pride and Prejudice: Race and Jewish Identity in the South
Chair: Phyllis Leffler

- Jeremy Popkin, "Benjamin Gratz and Lexington: A Southern City and Its First Jewish Resident"
- Evan Howard Ashford, "Abraham's Choice: Race Loyalty Versus Civil Rights During the 1865 Freedom Summer"
- Andrew Baker, "Max Heller's Transatlantic Connections and the Palmetto State: 1979–1996"

3:45–5:15 Concurrent panels
Agents of Change
Chair: Josh Parshall

- Anne Blankenship, "Varied Approaches to Immigrant Care: The Jewish Women of Charleston, Philadelphia, and Cincinnati"
- Anne Gessler, "Ida Weis Friend: A Model for Southern Progressive Activism in 20th-Century New Orleans"
- Amy K. Milligan, "'The Dark-Eyed Jew' of Alabama"
- Rebecca Shimoni Stoil, "Atlantic Enigma: The Shifting Identities of Francis Salvador"

Program information continues on next page

Roundtable on Material Culture
Chair: Joshua Furman

- Gabrielle Berlinger, Dale Rosengarten, Hilit Surowitz-Israel, Anna Tucker

5:30–7:00 Jewish Heritage Collection reception,
Addlestone Library: SJHS awards ~ *Synagogues of the South* exhibit on display

Dinner (on your own)

(Shabbat ends 7:16 P.M.)

Shari Rabin is associate professor of Jewish studies and religion and chair of Jewish studies at Oberlin College. A scholar of modern Judaism and American religions, she is the author of *Jews on the Frontier: Religion and Mobility in Nineteenth-century America* (NYU Press, 2017), which won a National Jewish Book Award in American Jewish Studies and was a finalist for the Sami Rohr Prize for Jewish Literature. She is currently at work on a history of Jews, religion, and race in the American South, from the 17th century to the present day.

Sunday, October 23

9:00–10:00 A.M. JHSSC and SJHS member meetings

9:00–12:00 P.M. Book signing ~ coffee and bagels

10:30–11:45 Social Justice
Chair: Stephen Whitfield

- Ashley Walters, "Reading the Civil War through the Russian Revolution"
- Eli Rosenblatt, "Bishop Charles L. Russell and the African-American Reception of the Talmud, 1920–1964"
- Margaret Norman and Melissa Young, "A Case Study of the Holocaust and Human Rights: Fred and Anny Kraus in Birmingham, Alabama, 1954–1970"
- Leah Cannon Burnham, "Atlanta Jews and the Pursuit of Due Process for Cuban Detainees, 1980–1987"

11:45 Closing remarks

Meeting registration

Online at: *https://jhssc.org/events/conference/*
with Visa, MasterCard, Discover, or American Express

Or by check, payable to:
JHSSC, c/o Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program
96 Wentworth Street, Charleston, SC 29424

Meeting fee (per person):
Full weekend ~ $195
Friday, conference only ~ $50
Saturday only ~ $75
Sunday only ~ $25

Questions:
Enid Idelsohn
idelsohne@cofc.edu
Phone: 843.953.3918
Fax: 843.953.7624

Accommodations ~ availability is limited. For details, go to: *https://jhssc.org/events/conference/*

A Tribute to Eli N. Evans (1936–2022)

by Robert N. Rosen

Eli N. Evans, of blessed memory, died on July 26, 2022, at the age of 85. Born and raised in Durham, North Carolina, he was the son of Emanuel J. (Mutt) Evans and Sarah Nachamson Evans. His paternal grandfather, Isaac Evans, was a peddler in North Carolina before opening a small store in Fayetteville. Eli's father served six terms as mayor of Durham, from 1951 until 1963. His maternal grandmother, Jennie Nachamson, founded the South's first chapter of the national women's organization Hadassah; his mother carried on the commitment as a regional and national organizer. Eli called her "Hadassah's Southern accent."

Eli N. Evans (l) with his wife, Judith London Evans, and their son, Joshua Evans, in the family's New York City apartment, winter 2007. Photo by Jill Krementz, courtesy of Joshua Evans.

In 1958, Evans graduated from the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill and, in 1963, earned a law degree at Yale University. Evans became president of the philanthropic Charles H. Revson Foundation in 1977. Although Eli never returned to live in the South, his southern roots remained central to his identity and fostered his lifelong passion: the history and culture of Jews in the South.

When Evan's first book, *The Provincials,* was published in 1973, there was no field known as Southern Jewish History. Of course, historians, lay people, and rabbis (like our own Dr. Barnett Elzas) had written local histories, but Eli expanded the field to the whole South and made it a scholarly discipline. I read *The Provincials* soon after it came out and was thrilled to see our history in print.

Eli's second big book, *Judah P. Benjamin* (1988), inspired me to borrow Eli's subtitle and write an opus of my own, *The Jewish Confederates* (2000). The phrase had a nice ring to it! Eli had done more than publish a book. He popularized a whole field of study and interest in southern Jewish history and culture. "Eli really showed the way," Ron Hoffman, a novelist who lives in Mobile, Alabama, said in an interview. Marcie Cohen Ferris, Professor Emeritus of American Studies, UNC-CH and Evans's close friend and colleague, recalls, "I am one of those people who, when they read *The Provincials,* they felt for the first time a recognition."

Over the years, I became friendly with Eli, having had the good fortune to meet and chat with him at conferences. He was instrumental in launching the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina. A prolific speaker and writer, he caused several generations of Jews to be captivated by—and take seriously—the history of southern Jews. Eli was generous with his time and his praise. He encouraged me and other historians and reached out through a wide range of media to anyone and everyone interested in the subject.

Professors Marcie Ferris and Mark Greenberg speak for all of us when they credit Eli Evans's seminal works on the southern Jewish experience in their landmark anthology, *Jewish Roots in Southern Soil:* "Every scholar of the Jewish South has been touched by his writing." Many of us have followed in Eli's footsteps, and we remember him today, to quote Professor Shari Rabin of Oberlin College, as "the patron saint of Southern Jewish History."

Practicing Empire in the American South: What a Historian of North African Jews Can Learn from Studying Jews of the Colonial Atlantic World

by Sara Jay, John Burroughs School and Washington University in St. Louis

In 1870, 40 years after the French invasion of Algeria, the colonial government issued the Crémieux Decree granting citizenship to all Algerian Jews. The decree extended legal and civil rights to the nearly 140,000 Jews residing in Algeria, most of whom were Arabic speaking and had never set foot in France. Some 200 years earlier, in 1662, the British took over the Dutch colony of Suriname, home to a large Jewish community. One of their first directives was to issue a "grant of privileges," which declared that Suriname's Jews, none of them British, held full equality and religious freedom. Typical of many contradictory colonial policies, the freedoms afforded in Suriname were not extended to the Jewish population residing in the United Kingdom. It was not until parliament enacted a series of laws in the 19th century that Jews residing in the UK achieved legal equality.

Above: Hand-colored engraving depicting a Jewish woman and a Jewish merchant from Algiers, by Andreas Geiger, 1850. Below: Photographic postcard (1976) of the ruins of Congregation Beracha ve Shalom in Jodensavanne, Suriname. William A. Rosenthall Judaica collection, Special Collections, College of Charleston Libraries.

In both British Suriname and French Algeria, Jews were deemed economically vital to the survival of the colony. In Algeria, Jews were the gateway to lucrative resources and trade networks that spanned the Sahara and Mediterranean. In the Western Hemisphere, Jews participated in the plantation economy as slave owners, slave traders, and merchants with connections throughout the Americas from New England to Brazil.

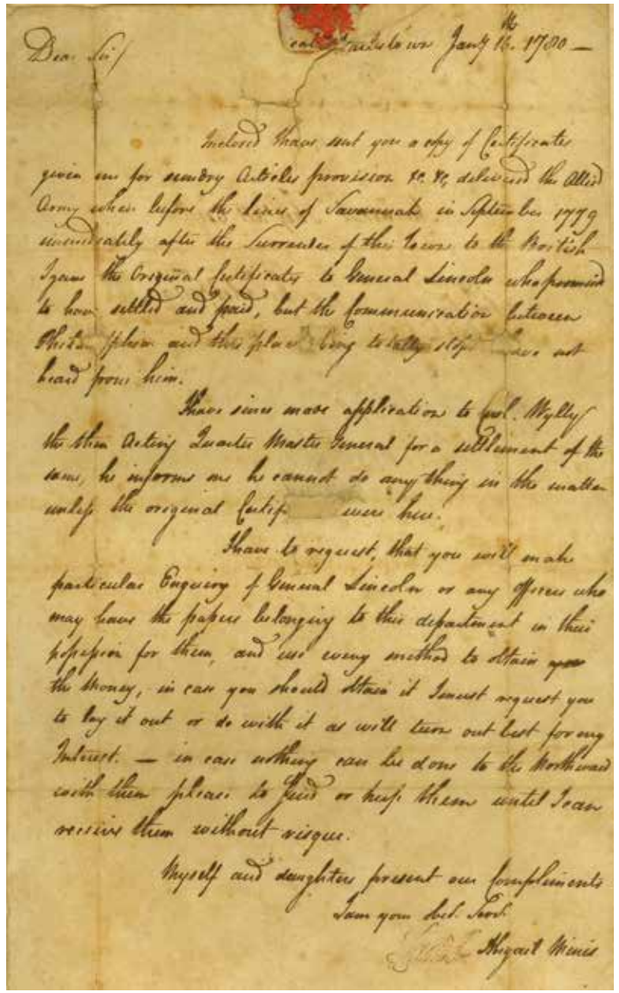
There is a fracture in Jewish scholarship between those who study the 19th century's Age of Imperialism and those who study the 15th–18th centuries' Age of Mercantilism. What would happen if we stopped treating these colonial projects as separate, and considered them one continuous, nearly 500-year experiment? The robust economic exchanges and markets created and maintained by Jews in both hemispheres, particularly in cosmopolitan cities like Charleston, South Carolina, Paramaribo, Suriname, and Algiers, Algeria, were targeted by European colonizers as prime entry points for economic extraction and the establishment of monopolies over trade.

Once we stop considering Europe's colonization of Africa and the Middle East as separate from New World empires, we begin to understand the centrality of Jewish economic endeavors in shaping colonial policies for half a millennium. Rulers recognized that Jews could be useful in consolidating their political and economic power over these new territories. As a result, they took advantage of the Jewish community's desire for social and political acceptance without conversion to transform them into sometimes willing participants, often passive bystanders, and occasional victims of imperial policies in both the Americas and the Middle East/North African territories.

In the Americas, Jews took advantage of the racialized hierarchy that did not emphasize religious affiliation and found opportunities for upward mobility, particularly through participation in the plantation economy as slave owners and traders. The imperial powers and, later, state and local governments in

the United States, recognized the usefulness of cultivating Jewish denizens who were mostly loyal to their imperial (and later national) goals, as opposed to Jewish aliens who would or could lead resistance. It is in this context that we can analyze Newport's Jewish community leader Moses Seixas's famous correspondence with George Washington in 1790, in which both leaders agreed that the new United States should be built on universal religious toleration.

The British colonists turned American founding fathers realized the importance of guaranteeing religious freedom and, in exchange, they found in elite Jews trusted partners in building a society in which a small minority of landowners and wealthy traders controlled political power. Francis Salvador, arguably the best-known Jewish character in Charleston's colonial history, was in the process of establishing an indigo plantation in the Upcountry, worked by slave labor, when he became the first Jew in the 13 colonies elected to a government position and, shortly thereafter, died a war hero as the first Jewish casualty of the Revolution. Like the Seixas family, Salvador counted influential figures like Charles Cotesworth Pinckney and Henry Laurens as friends, cementing his status in Charleston's exclusive social circles.



Letter to Mordecai Sheftall from Abigail Minis in Charlestown, dated January 14, 1780, requesting help in obtaining reimbursement for her financial support of the Continental Army during the Siege of Savannah. Courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society. [GHS 0568, Jacob Minis colonial papers].

Abigail Minis, a Charleston-born Jew who spent much of her life in Savannah as a successful businesswoman and plantation owner, returned to Charleston after Savannah fell to the British in 1778 and remained in the city until 1783. While in Charleston, she was harassed by British sympathizers who attempted to confiscate her property. She found allies in the revolutionaries and offered to provide financial support for their cause in gratitude for the help they gave her in protecting her assets against the loyalists. So long as affluent Jews like the Seixases, Salvadors, and Minises were accepted without the expectation of conversion, they embraced the social mores and practices of their peers and behaved accordingly by continuing their economic and political work on behalf of the colony. After the Revolution, Jewish merchants maintained their trade with co-religionists throughout the Americas, to the benefit of the new nation trying to establish its economic independence from the British.

When the French found themselves outnumbered and embattled in the colony of Algeria in 1870, it made sense that they would turn to the indigenous Arab Jewish population, offer them equal rights, and expect in return partners on the ground to build and maintain the colony. The Crémieux Decree is often deemed a peculiar policy by scholars who limit their study of Jews and empire to the 19th century because no other legislation like it was promulgated in the region. It is only when we consider the imperial policies from the earlier age that we can see in Algeria the French employed a tried and true strategy of granting legal equality and religious freedom to secure the allegiance and partnership of Jewish traders and landowners in the colonial project.

"An Esther at the South": Re-Imagining Southern Womanhood

by Heather S. Nathans, Tufts University

In this brief overview of my upcoming presentation for the annual Southern Jewish Historical Society conference, I juxtapose the plantation reminiscences of Lee Cohen Harby with the writings of abolitionist Angelina Grimké, contrasting their visions of antebellum Southern womanhood. (Note that this short essay incorporates quotations from a 19th-century primary source that makes derogatory references to enslaved people.)

In 1836, Charleston-born abolitionist Angelina Grimké called for an "Esther at the South" to rise up against the evils of slavery. Her *Appeal to the Christian Women of the South* opens with Mordecai's exhortation to Esther to defend her people: "Think not within thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house more than all the Jews." Implicitly linking the fates of Black, white, Jewish, and Christian women, Grimké invokes Esther as a role model for Christian southern women, imploring, "Is there no Esther among you, who will plead for the poor devoted slave?"

Victorian-era print published by R. Lloyd's Wholesale Theatrical Print Warehouse in London, England, showcasing actors in the play King Ahasuerus. *The costumes are typical of what would have been seen in the various productions featuring Esther (here, upper left). Courtesy of Pollock's Toy Museum, London, England.*

While Grimké calls up the familiar Biblical figure as a political activist, other, more sensationalized representations of Esther circulated in the United States during this same era as the exotic Jewess gained popularity on American and European stages. Indeed, stories of Esther's heroism surfaced in plays including *The Origin of the Feast of Purim, The Royal Jewess; Or the Death of Haman!,* and *Esther*. Dramatists, novelists, and actors began to endow the figure with both moral righteousness as well as irresistible allure, as the lavish costume and stage descriptions in the plays suggest.

The exotic stage Jewess emerged as an ethnically ambiguous figure in early 19th-century melodrama. Indeed, some scholars have argued that she prefigures the tragic mulatto heroine who would come to dominate popular culture by the 1850s, exemplified in figures such as Eliza from *Uncle Tom's Cabin* or Zoe in *The Octoroon.** By calling upon white southern Christian women to acknowledge spiritual kinship with the Jewish Esther and moral kinship with enslaved Black women, is Grimké proposing to conflate gender, racial, ethnic, and religious identities?

In contrast to Grimké's effort to create a shared sense of southern womanhood, Lee Cohen Harby, granddaughter of the Charleston religious reformer Isaac Harby and daughter of plantation owner Marx E. Cohen, looked back on her girlhood three decades after the Civil War, casting events and relationships in a nostalgic light that positioned white southern women (herself included) at the top of the social ladder.

* Among the best known of these figures was the character of Rebecca in Sir Walter Scott's popular novel *Ivanhoe.* Scott's book inspired numerous professional theatrical adaptations as well as amateur performances eagerly consumed by southern audiences—including the daughters of future Confederate General Robert E. Lee, one of whom described a tableaux vivant presented at the Virginia Female Institute in Staunton in 1856. It featured her cousin May Carter in the role of Rebecca, and Miss Lee noted that, "She made a fine Jewess with her black hair and handsome Jewish face." (Letter dated November 28, 1856, held in the Lee Archives, Washington & Lee University).

Harby framed her gentility and refinement as explicitly enabled by the slave system. In a series of essays published in the *Jewish Messenger* in the 1880s, she described the joys of plantation life and characterized it as a "notable school for wives and mothers," that is, for white southern women. Even as she observed, "Slavery is dead and not one of us would resurrect the corpse if we could," she sighed for, "the style of life that passed away with the institution."

Yet while her writings draw a sharp distinction between plantation mistresses and the Black women they enslave, Harby equivocates on the subjects of religion and social power. Although in other writings she speaks movingly on the need to place Jewish working girls in good Jewish homes, here she envelops herself in Christian ritual and Confederate mythology to signal her allegiance to the southern power structures of the past.

In a postwar essay for the *Weekly Magazine,* for example, Harby portrays the lavish preparations of her fellow plantation dwellers for the 1859–1860 Christmas holidays. She chronicles an era of plenty for white planters on the eve of the Civil War, applauding the intricate decorations crafted by "deft white hands" and the gloriously bedecked tables groaning with "ham and sausages." She recalls that her own family festivities of 1859 took place under the benign eye of a marble bust of John C. Calhoun, whose head was "crowned with a fresh wreath of laurel—a crown as fresh and green as his memory will ever be in the loving hearts of his countrymen."

Harby prided herself on her Jewish heritage, so what should contemporary scholars make of her effusive recollections of this last Christmas of plenty? How did her self-awareness as a Jewish woman coexist with this embrace of the birth of Jesus Christ? The complex mixture of symbols in her essay—the Christmas decorations combined with the "shrine" to the bust of John C. Calhoun—suggest the ways she signaled her inclusion in the white Christian Confederate social hierarchy.

She further established her status as a white southern woman by describing performances staged by enslaved people for "massa's" entertainment, when white holiday visitors would be invited to the "servants' quarters" to "be lookers-on at their dancing." In these recollections she refers to herself as the "young miss" and suggests that the visits were returned in kind, that the "servants" enjoyed watching their owners enjoy themselves: "They listened to the laughter and merry voices of their owners, taking an inexpressible delight in the scene."

Lee Cohen Harby, age 45 (left rear), with her daughter, Lily Lee Harby Isaacs (r), and Lily's sons, Arthur Sydney Isaacs and Cyril A. Isaacs, 1895. Pasted in is Lee's mother, Armida Harby Cohen, wife of Marx E. Cohen and daughter of Isaac Harby. Armida had died, at the age of 75, some months before this photograph was taken. Special Collections, College of Charleston Libraries.

Harby's essays conjure the racist clichés that would become the hallmark of post–Civil War southern nostalgia in melodramas, minstrel shows, and early 20th-century films such as "Birth of a Nation," as well as various silent-film versions of *Uncle Tom's Cabin.* Other essays in her *Jewish Messenger* series also highlight the nobility of plantation mistresses, who "ruled well and graciously" over the "large dependent class [of] negroes relying upon their owners for everything."

The writings I describe here present an obvious irony: a Christian woman invoking the Jewish Esther as a champion of racial justice versus a Jewish woman claiming Christmas as a signifier of her whiteness. As I look towards the Southern Jewish Historical Society conference, I will continue to explore how scholars of American Jewish history might use works like Grimké's and Harby's to examine how race "performs" in American Jewish history, and how texts of racial performance might help untangle what scholar Robin Bernstein calls "historically located meanings." How do Grimké's and Harby's starkly different writings—those of a passionate abolitionist and those of a southern apologist—illuminate ways in which 19th-century southern women staged these complicated struggles for authority?

Sources

- Lee Cohen Harby papers, Mss. 1019, Special Collections, College of Charleston Libraries.
- *Angelina Emily Grimké, Appeal to Christian Women of the South* (New York: American Anti-Slavery Society, 1836).

Max Heller's Transatlantic Connections and the Palmetto State: 1979–1996

by Andrew Baker, Clemson University

When Max Moses Heller, a Vienna-born Jew, arrived in Greenville, South Carolina, in 1938, fewer than 5,000 South Carolinians were foreign-born. According to the 1940 census, that was the least of any American state.[1] In an area with a limited number of immigrants and a relatively small Jewish community, Heller's Austrian birth and his religion stood out far more than in a major northeastern or midwestern city.

During Heller's lifetime, however, European corporations became a prominent part of the Palmetto State's economy, and migration into South Carolina from other parts of the country and world made its populace more cosmopolitan. Heller helped lead first the city of Greenville—a city built on a narrative of openness to new people that growth-minded locals wished to promote—and then the state as a whole into the realm of international business.

His European background and track record as a successful manufacturer and civic leader in South Carolina made Max Heller uniquely suited for the task of recruiting European companies to the Upstate and South Carolina. He brought Europe to South Carolina in more ways than one. Serving on city council and then as mayor of Greenville from 1971 through 1979, his redevelopment of the downtown drew on his Viennese background and love of the arts through flourishes such as plazas for outdoor dining and tree-lined boulevards. In short, Heller's European identity is at the heart of his story in South Carolina, not only in his efforts to remake Greenville's downtown in a European image, but later, in his work with Governor Richard Riley's administration on international economic development.

Above: Max Heller (wearing hat) and his wife, Trude (behind him, on steps):"Leaving for the Orient on the Daniel [International Corp.] Jet Plane, Chicago – November 1979." Below: Trude and Max Heller visit the Great Wall of China. Photos courtesy of Special Collections and Archives, Furman University.

Max Heller was born in 1919 and raised in a devout Jewish household with his parents and sister, Paula. Growing up, Max was a talented wrestler and an admirer of American culture, particularly films. His interest also lay in business instead of medicine, which his parents wanted him to pursue. Max worked as an apprentice following his high school graduation and attended business school after work.

In 1937, Heller met his future wife, Trude Schönthal, while their families stayed at the same resort. When Max accompanied his father back to Vienna during the trip, he happened to encounter a group of girls from Greenville, South Carolina, on a European tour. He danced and conversed with one of them, a young woman named Mary Mills; wanting to write to someone in America, he asked for her address.

Heller wrote Mills following the Anschluss, Nazi Germany's annexation of Austria, in hopes of finding a way to emigrate. An employment guarantee from Shephard Saltzman, a Jewish apparel manufacturer in Greenville, facilitated Max and Paula Heller's escape. Trude and her family followed later. Max's strong work ethic, business experience, and intelligence helped him to quickly ascend the ranks of Saltzman's Piedmont Shirt Co. before leaving to form his own firm, Maxon Shirts.

Business success allowed Heller to retire at a relatively early age and focus on serving the Greenville community. His talents drew the attention of civic leaders

interested in improving the efficiency of local government, making Greenville a more attractive place to live, and recruiting new companies and residents. Outside publications often noted Heller's status as a Jewish immigrant serving as mayor in a city known for its large number of evangelical and fundamentalist Christians. In an August 1974 profile, *Money Magazine* advised readers who could be transferred to Greenville that "religious life leans toward the fervid" because of its location in the Bible Belt, but added residents displayed "no overt prejudice towards Catholics or others who belong to a religious minority. . . . [I]n fact, Greenville's mayor, Max Heller is an Austrian-born Jew."

Above: Max (r) and Trude Heller with J. Raoul Schoumaker, Belgian Ambassador to the United States, 1981. Written on the photo is "1981 COLA FN," most likely a reference to the FN firearms manufacturing plant in Columbia, SC, a subsidiary of FN Herstal of Herstal, Belgium. Below: Trude and Max Heller in Kyoto, Japan. Photos courtesy of Special Collections and Archives, Furman University.

Following his defeat in a controversial 1978 congressional race, Heller was immediately appointed chairman of the State Development Board by incoming governor Dick Riley. Reflecting the importance of economic development to South Carolina, Riley later described the role as "probably the most important appointment that I had," noting Heller's reputation for working well with the business community, and his fair-mindedness and personality. Heller and Riley traveled throughout Europe and Asia to cultivate business prospects.[2]

Heller's business acumen and his international background made him particularly adept at attracting foreign investment at a critical moment when an aging textile industry was poised to give way to automotive manufacturing. While mayor, for example, Heller played a role in Michelin's decision to locate facilities in Upstate South Carolina. Trade missions took Max—and Trude Heller, who always accompanied him—to western Europe and Asia, including China, which at the time had only recently welcomed western investment.

Although development board chairmen had customarily kept part-time hours, Heller rented an apartment in Columbia and treated the position as a full-time job. As chairman, he helped to attract eight billion dollars in investment to South Carolina and create over 65,000 jobs, while also laying the groundwork for investments in the state by companies such as BMW, Hitachi, and Fuji.[3] As Riley recalled, "we had enormous success in economic development with Max Heller's leadership. That was statewide."[4]

Heller stepped down from his position as chairman in July 1983 and returned to Greenville, where he continued to be involved in civic causes and economic development. Following the lead of larger southern cities, Greenville boosters began to promote the city as "international" as the number of foreign-owned firms operating in the area grew. The selection of Heller as the final torchbearer during the Olympic torch's passage through the city in 1996 testified to his importance to its revitalization and his status as a symbol of its global credentials. As the *Greenville News* opined on the occasion, "Heller helped Greenville become an international business community."[5]

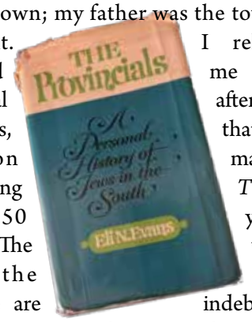
Notes

1. Walter Edgar, *South Carolina: A History* (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1998), 513.
2. Author interview with Richard W. Riley, January 25, 2019.
3. Diane Vecchio, "Max Moses Heller: Patron Saint of Greenville's Renaissance," in *Doing Business in America: A Jewish History,* ed. Hasia R. Diner (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2018), 201–203.
4. Author interview with Richard W. Riley.
5. Ron Barnett, "Torch Sparks Celebration in State," *Greenville News,* June 26, 1996.

A Summerton Provincial

by Rachel Gordin Barnett, JHSSC Executive Director

I was saddened to hear about the passing of Eli Evans. Much has been written and said about his important contributions to southern Jewish history. But, to a kid who grew up in a small town in South Carolina in the '60s and '70s, the words he published in 1973 in *The Provincials* spoke to me. My siblings and I were the only Jewish kids in town; my father was the town's pharmacist and a merchant. I related to Eli's story—it told me my experiences weren't unusual after all. I suppose in today's terms, that's why we say, "representation matters."



I am rereading *The Provincials* now, almost 50 years after I read it the first time. The work is a terrific history of the southern Jewish experience. We are indebted to Eli Evans not only for blazing a trail into southern Jewish history as an academic area, but also for providing southern Jews like myself the opportunity to understand ourselves.

JHSSC is looking forward to welcoming members of the Southern Jewish Historical Society in Charleston on October 21–23, 2022. Kudos to Ashley Walters, Dale Rosengarten, and the planninmg committee for a program that will be both enlightening and enjoyable. Walking tours, Shabbat dinner at KKBE, and a reception celebrating the Jewish Heritage Collection will round out the weekend.

Please join us in October in Charleston!

Of Blessed Memory

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Harold and Carolee Rosen Fox
Harvey and Mimi Gleberman
Bennie Goldberg
Ruth Brody Greenberg
Ronald and Anne Oxler Krancer
Isadore Lourie
Mark Mandel
Raymond Rosenblum
Raymond and Florence Stern
Raphael and Lois Wolpert
Jerry Zucker

Pillars

Susan and Charles Altman, Charleston, SC
Anonymous
Ellen Arnovitz, Atlanta, GA
Baker & Baker Foundation, Columbia, SC
Rachel and Henry Barnett, Columbia, SC
Jane and Les Bergen, Arlington, VA
Harold Brody, Atlanta, GA
Alex and Dyan Cohen, Darlington, SC
Rosemary "Binky" Cohen, Charleston, SC
Joan Cutler, Columbia, SC
Neil and Carolyn Draisin, Charleston, SC
Meyer Drucker, Conway, SC
Lowell and Barbara Epstein, Charleston, SC
Rebekah and Howard Farber, Los Angeles, CA
Lilly and Bruce Filler, Columbia, SC
Richard and Belinda Gergel, Charleston, SC
Steven J. Gold, Greenville, SC
Claire Goldberg, 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
Charles and Eva Lipman, Atlanta, GA
Jan and Larry Lipov, Charleston, SC
Susan R. Lourie, Columbia, SC
Audrey Mandel, Mt. Pleasant, SC
Albert and Robin Mercer, Athens, GA
Susan Pearlstine, Charleston, SC
Edward and Sandra Poliakoff, Columbia, SC
Alan and Anne Reyner, Columbia, SC
Deborah Ritter, Columbia, SC
Dick and Brenda Rosen, Myrtle Beach, SC
Robert and Susan Rosen, Charleston, SC
Jeffrey and Mickey Rosenblum, Charleston, SC
Sandra Lee Rosenblum, Charleston, SC
Joseph and Edie Rubin, Charleston, SC
Stephen and Jennifer Savitz, Columbia, SC
Fred and Ellen Seidenberg, Columbia, SC
Mark and Gayle Sloan, Myrtle Beach, SC
Gail (Altman) and Ronald Spahn, Baltimore, MD
Richard Stern, Boston, MA
Haskell and Dale Toporek, Augusta, GA
Anita Zucker, Charleston, SC

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Send us their information and we will inform them of your gift.

Make checks payable to JHSSC and mail to address above.

Register now for the October 21–23 meeting at *jhssc.org/events/upcoming*.
See pages 10–12 of this publication for program information.