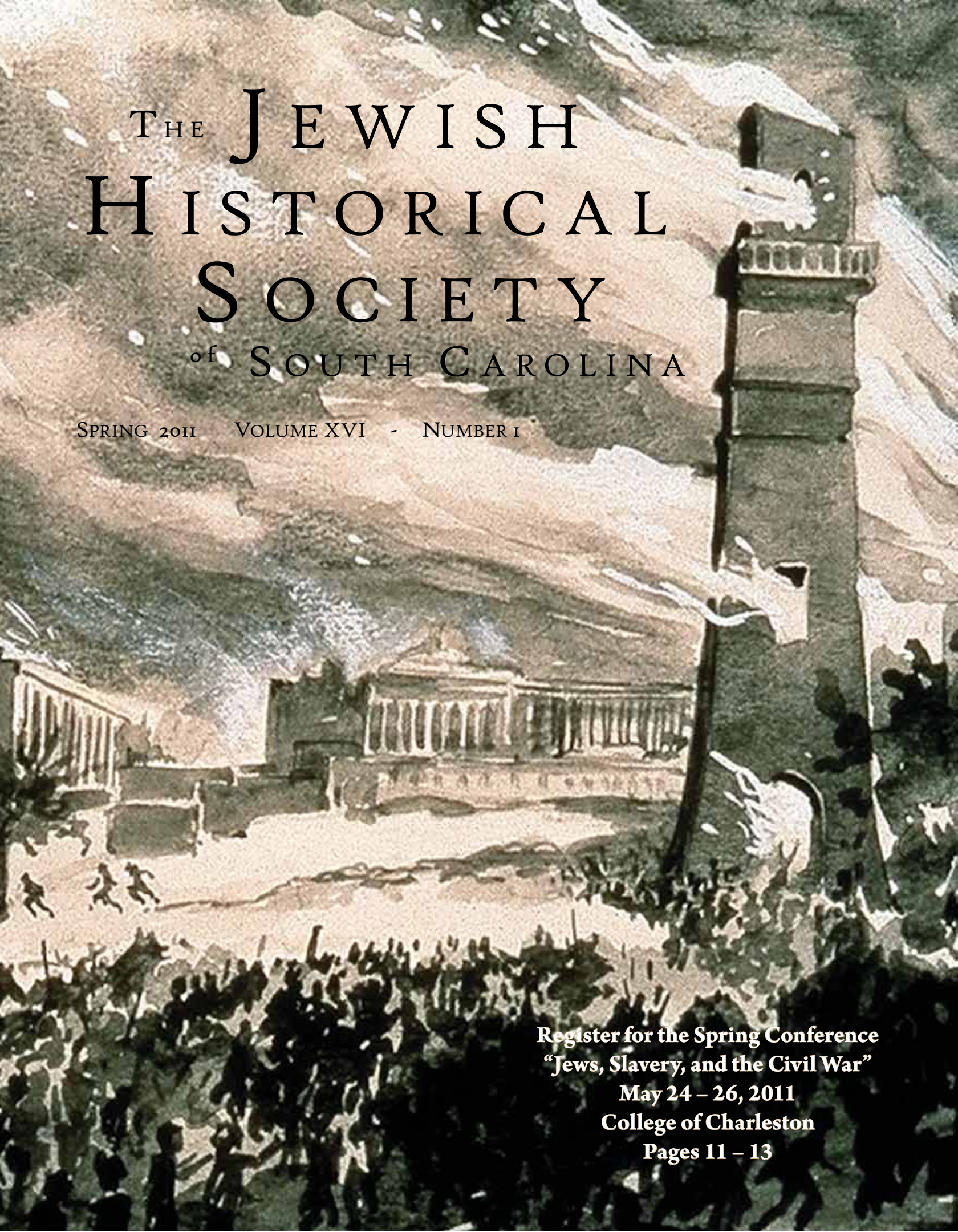


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THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY of SOUTH CAROLINA

SPRING 2011 VOLUME XVI - NUMBER I

**Register for the Spring Conference
“Jews, Slavery, and the Civil War”**

May 24 – 26, 2011

College of Charleston

Pages 11 – 13



Ann Meddin Hellman
President

On the cover:

Columbia, South Carolina, surrenders to General William T. Sherman, February 17, 1865. Early the next morning, a fire breaks out and spreads, engulfing the town. The Burning of Columbia, South Carolina (1865), by William Waud for Harper's Weekly.



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Dale Rosengarten, editor
Alyssa Neely, asst. editor
Joseph Rubin, designer

www.jhssc.org

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From the President of the JHSSC

The sesquicentennial of the Civil War begins in April and Jewish American Heritage month is celebrated in May. What better way to acknowledge both commemorations than by sponsoring a symposium on the theme of "Jews, Slavery, and the Civil War"? From May 24–26, the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina will join the Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program in hosting a conference that features world renowned speakers, exciting field trips, and plenty of time for Q&A.

Activities begin on Tuesday afternoon, May 24, with a boat ride to Fort Sumter, an opening reception, and a screening of the film *Jewish Soldiers in Blue and Grey*. Panel presentations will be held at the College of Charleston on Wednesday and Thursday, May 25 and 26. A keynote address by Jonathan D. Sarna on Wednesday evening at Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim will be open to the public, following a banquet for conference attendees in the temple's social hall. See pages 11–13 for more information and a schedule of events.

Anderson's B'Nai Israel welcomed the JHSSC for our November meeting. The host committee went all out to make the day a success, providing a delicious lunch, a musical interlude by diva Dina Claire, and a printed program booklet including the agenda and images of the synagogue's beautiful stained glass windows. For a copy of the booklet and a history of the synagogue, go to www.jhssc.org and click on SC Synagogues and Cemeteries.

The weekend of March 11 and 12, 2011, Aiken's Congregation Adath Yeshurun celebrated its 90th anniversary. Friday night, curator and historian Dale Rosengarten presented a slide lecture after dinner at the Woodside Plantation Country Club. On Saturday, the celebration continued at the synagogue with group pictures, Shabbat services, lunch, and an afternoon program sharing tales of founding members. A hearty mazel tov to Adath Yeshurun!

Thanks to Board Member Doris Baumgarten, who enlisted the help of Nelson Danish to take pictures of all of

the graves in Aiken's Sons of Israel Cemetery, the Society's web page has been updated with additional burials, linking names to the gravestones. You can check out the site at www.jhssc.org/Aiken_Cemetery.

Joe Wachter is processing the paperwork for the third historical marker sponsored by JHSSC. At our meeting in Anderson, the board voted to erect a marker in front of B'Nai Israel to acknowledge the congregation's century-long history. If you know of other historically significant sites, contact Joe at jhw@48th.com or submit your suggestions at www.jhssc.org on the volunteer page.

Save the dates October 28–30, 2011, for the Southern Jewish Historical Society's annual meeting, to be held at the University of South Carolina in Columbia. JHSSC and USC's Jewish Studies Program are collaborating with

the regional society to put together an exciting program which will be posted on our website events page as plans are finalized. If the SJHS meeting Max and I attended in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, last October is any indication of what Columbia will be like, we are in for a spectacular

Pillars—the Society's main support

David and Andrea Draisen from Anderson, and Lowell and Barbara Epstein of Charleston, recently joined our illustrious list of members who make a commitment of \$5,000, payable over five years. Annual membership is also critical to assure the Society's future. Sign up now or renew your support by filling out the form on the newsletter's back cover. You also can pay your dues online by going to www.jhssc.org and clicking on membership.

treat. To volunteer to help the local host committee, please contact Rachel Gordin Barnett at (803) 783-1666, or via email, rgbarnett@earthlink.net.

Finally, it is with great sadness that I note the passing of Harriet Keyserling of Beaufort, South Carolina. An original board member of the Society and a steady supporter of the College's Jewish Studies Program, Harriet died on Friday, December 10, 2010. She will be sorely missed by everyone who knew her, but remembered far and wide as a political trailblazer and state legislator, and as author of the classic memoir, *Against the Tide: One Woman's Political Struggle*.

Fondly,



Ann Meddin Hellman
hellmana@bellsouth.net

When Grant Expelled the Jews

by Jonathan D. Sarna

On December 17, 1862, as the Civil War entered its second winter, General Ulysses S. Grant issued the most notorious anti-Jewish official order in American history: “The Jews, as a class violating every regulation of trade established by the Treasury Department and also department orders, are hereby expelled from the department within twenty-four hours from the receipt of this order.” Known as General Orders No. 11, the document blamed “Jews, as a class” for the widespread smuggling and cotton speculation that affected the area under Grant’s command. It required them to leave.

Just hours after the order was issued, Grant’s forces at Holly Springs were raided by 3,500 Confederate troops led by Major General Earl Van Dorn. The results proved devastating, and lines of communication were disrupted for weeks. As a consequence, news of Grant’s order expelling the Jews spread slowly and did not reach army headquarters in a timely fashion. This spared many Jews who might otherwise have been banished.

A copy of General Orders No. 11 finally reached Paducah, Kentucky—a city occupied by Grant’s forces—11 days after it was issued. Cesar Kaskel, a staunch Union supporter, as well as all the other known Jews in the city, were handed papers ordering them “to leave the city of Paducah, Kentucky.” As they prepared to abandon their homes, Kaskel and several other

Jews dashed off a telegram to President Abraham Lincoln describing their plight.

In all likelihood, Lincoln never saw that telegram. He was busy preparing to issue the Emancipation Proclamation. The irony of his freeing the slaves while Grant was expelling the Jews was not lost on some contemporaries. Some Jewish leaders feared that Jews would soon replace blacks as the nation’s stigmatized minority.

Kaskel decided to appeal to Abraham Lincoln in person. Paul Revere–like, he rode down to Washington, spreading news of General Orders No. 11 wherever he went. With help from a friendly congressman, he obtained an immediate interview with the president, who turned out to have no knowledge whatsoever of the order, for it had not reached Washington. According to an oft-quoted report, he resorted to biblical imagery in his interview with Kaskel, a reminder of how many 19th-century Americans linked Jews to Ancient Israel, and America to the Promised Land:

“And so,” Lincoln is said to have drawled, “the children of Israel were driven from the happy land of Canaan?”

“Yes,” Kaskel responded, “and that is why we have come unto Father Abraham’s bosom, asking protection.”

“And this protection,” Lincoln declared, “they shall have at once.”

General-in-Chief of the Army Henry Halleck, ordered by Lincoln to countermand General Orders No. 11, seems to have had his doubts concerning its authenticity. In writing to Grant, he chose his words carefully. “If such an order has been issued,” his telegram read, “it will be immediately revoked.” Two days later, several urgent telegrams went out from Grant’s headquarters in obedience to that demand: “By direction of the General-in-Chief of the Army at Washington,” they read, “the General Order from these Head Quarters expelling Jews from this Department is hereby revoked.”

In a follow-up meeting with Jewish leaders, Lincoln reaffirmed that he knew “of no distinction between Jew and Gentile.” “To condemn a class,” he emphatically declared, “is, to say the least, to wrong the good with the bad. I do not like to hear a class or nationality condemned on account of a few sinners.”



Cesar Kaskel. Photograph File., PC-2210. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.



General Ulysses S. Grant at his headquarters in Cold Harbor, Virginia. June 1864. Library of Congress.

In retrospect, we know anti-Jewish prejudices were heightened by the prominence of several Jews in the ranks of the Confederacy, notably Jefferson Davis's right-hand man and cabinet secretary, Judah P. Benjamin. But the Jewish Con-



Henry Mack. Photograph File, PC-2778. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

federates were by no means the only cause of prejudice. Smuggling, speculating, price gouging, swindling, and producing "shoddy" merchandise for the military—all were similarly laid upon the doorstep of "the Jews." Indeed, "Jews" came to personify much of wartime capitalism's ills. They bore disproportionate blame for badly produced uniforms, poorly firing weapons, inedible foodstuffs, and other

substandard merchandise that corrupt contractors supplied to the war effort and sutlers marketed to unsuspecting troops. In the eyes of many Americans (including some in the military), all traders, smugglers, sutlers, and wartime profiteers were "sharp-nosed" Jews, whether they were actually Jewish or not. The implication, echoing a perennial antisemitic canard, was that Jews preferred to benefit from war rather than fight in it.

But if that was the cause of Grant's order, it does not explain its timing. That, we now know, was linked to a visit Grant received from his 68-year-old father, Jesse R. Grant, accompanied by members of the prominent Mack family of Cincinnati, significant Jewish clothing manufacturers. The Macks, as part of an ingenious scheme, had formed a secret partnership with the elder Grant. In return for 25 percent of their profits, he agreed to accompany them to his son's Mississippi headquarters and act as their agent to "procure a permit for them to purchase cotton." According to an eyewitness, General Grant waxed indignant at his father's crass attempt to profit from his son's military status, and raged at the Jewish traders who "entrapped his old father into such an unworthy undertaking." In a classic act of displacement, he "expelled the Jews rather than his father."

Subsequently, Ulysses S. Grant never defended General Orders No. 11. In his *Personal Memoirs*, he ignored it. His wife, Julia, proved far less circumspect. In her memoirs, she characterized the order as nothing less than "obnoxious."

General Orders No. 11 came back to haunt Ulysses S. Grant when he ran for president in 1868. Thanks to his Democratic opponents, who used the episode to curry favor with Jews, the order became an important election issue. For the

first time, a Jewish issue stood front and center in a presidential contest. Jews who supported Republican policies faced a difficult conundrum: Should they vote for a party they considered bad for the country just to avoid voting for a man who had been bad to the Jews?

Grant emerged the winner by a healthy 134 electoral votes. With the election behind him, he released an unprecedented letter that told Jews what they wanted to hear: "I have no prejudice against sect or race, but want each individual to be judged by his own merit. Order No. 11 does not sustain this statement, I admit, but then I do not sustain that order."

During his eight-year presidency, Grant went out of his way to prove that his apology was genuine. Indeed, he appointed more Jews to public office than all previous presidents combined, including a governor of Washington State (Edward Salomon) and a superintendent of Indian Affairs (Herman Bendell). He was the first president to have a Jewish advisor (Simon Wolf), the first to attend a synagogue dedication (Adas Israel, D.C.), and the first to actively intervene on behalf of persecuted Jews in Russia and Romania. He actually appointed an unpaid Jewish consul to Romania, Benjamin Franklin Peixotto, whose sole mission was to aid his fellow Jews "laboring under severe oppression."

Following his presidency, Grant on several occasions publicly reinforced his support for Jews. When he died in 1885, the same week as the most highly regarded Jew in the world at that time, Sir Moses Montefiore of England, the two men were linked together in the American Jewish mind as heroes and humanitarians, and they were mourned together in many synagogues.

Subsequently, of course, Grant's reputation sank like a stone. Twentieth-century historians, many of them southerners critical of his benevolent policy toward African Americans, criticized both the way he waged war and the way he forged peace. They ranked him close to the bottom among all American presidents. At one point, only Warren G. Harding ranked lower.

A reexamination of Grant's career makes clear that he deserved better. New biographies set forth many of his political achievements, especially in the area of race. Now we know that he also overcame prejudice against Jews. His transformation from enemy to friend, from a general who expelled "Jews as a class" to a president who embraced Jews as "individuals," reminds us that even great figures in history can learn from their mistakes.

In America, hatred can be overcome.

Jonathan D. Sarna, Joseph H. & Belle R. Braun Professor of American Jewish History at Brandeis University, based this essay on his forthcoming book, *When General Grant Expelled the Jews*, to be published in Spring 2012 by Schocken/Nextbook.

Diplomacy's Cruel Sword: Confederate Agents in Pursuit of Recognition

by Theodore Rosengarten

By the fourth grade, at Brooklyn's P.S. 161, I'd heard about Civil War icons Abraham Lincoln and Ulysses S. Grant; in the obligatory "Great Jews in History" class in Hebrew School, I learned about the heroics of baseball player Hank Greenberg, financier Bernard Baruch, and Confederate Secretary of State Judah P. Benjamin. Even as an adult, I am amused by the thought that a person from a group so unimportant in numbers and from a tribe not universally loved could rise to such dizzying heights.

More recently, I learned that one of the South's chief propagandists, a man with the thankless task of selling Confederate independence to Europe, was a Jew from Columbia, South Carolina, named Edwin De Leon. And though both he and Benjamin were committed



Judah P. Benjamin (1811–1884), oil on canvas by Adolph Rinck (1811–1875), 1853. *The Historic New Orleans Collection.*

Confederates, they became bitter rivals, until Benjamin finally fired De Leon for failing to protect secrets and for his run-ins with the men who held official diplomatic portfolios, Benjamin appointees James Mason of Virginia and John Slidell of Louisiana.

I wondered if there was anything in the way Benjamin and De Leon practiced diplomacy that could be attributed to their being Jewish and growing up in the South. Reading their books and essays and surviving letters, I would say the quick answer is "No." Both men married Catholic women, raised their children outside of the Jewish faith, and had no contact with synagogues or Jewish organizations in their adult lives.

De Leon was the son of Sephardic Jews, Mordecai Hendricks De Leon and Rebecca Lopez. The De Leons originated in Leon, Spain, from which they took their name. Mordecai served several terms as mayor of Columbia, where he was a close friend of educator and philosopher Dr. Thomas Cooper, for whom he named a son, Edwin's brother Thomas Cooper De Leon, a famous post-war memorialist. A third brother, David Camden

De Leon, was the first surgeon general of the Confederacy.

Benjamin had been born in the British West Indies, also the child of Sephardic Jewish parents. He spent his childhood in Charleston, South Carolina, and as a young adult, moved to New Orleans, two of the largest Jewish communities in early 19th-century America. His father was one of the original dissenters in Charleston who founded the Reformed Society of Israelites, the first Jewish Reform movement in the New World. It is likely young Judah was in the first group of boys confirmed in the new congregation, founded when he was 13 years old.

In New Orleans, Benjamin made a fortune practicing law, and eventually he bought a sugar plantation with 140 slaves. In 1852, he became the first Jew elected to the United States Senate, and was

re-elected six years later. He became close friends in Washington with a senator from Mississippi, Jefferson Davis, and through the many posts Benjamin would hold in the Confederate government, his desk was no more than five feet away from President Davis's. As overseer of the Department of State, he had a leading role in formulating Confederate diplomatic policy and telling the diplomats what to say, and what not to say.

As the diplomatic struggle followed the fortunes of the war itself, southern partisans were "burdened" by bad news from the battlefields. "Burden" is the word historian Charles Hubbard uses in *The Burden of Confederate Diplomacy* (University of Tennessee Press, 1998). Southern diplomats were "burdened" by inexperience and committed, Hubbard concludes, "to the traditions of a dying past." The Confederacy was "burdened" as well by a misguided devotion to the strategy of King Cotton.

But Hubbard does not name the biggest burden of all—the South's commitment to slavery. The greatest diplomatic move of the war, the Emancipation Proclamation, initially announced in September 1862, gets relegated to three scattered lines.

Hubbard calls the Proclamation a thorny issue, when in fact it was the whole briar patch. Lincoln insisted the Proclamation would silence the southern cry for recognition. Union Secretary of State Seward called it a double-edged sword. He worried that the new law would antagonize slaveholders in the border states who remained loyal, or encourage the enslaved to rise in insurrection. Most of all, slavery's end might weaken the American economy and delay completion of the American empire, a task that awaited the reunion of the rebellious states.

The British people took Lincoln at his word. There was jubilation in Manchester, Liverpool, London, and all towns, big and small, when he announced the slaves would be freed. Ambassador Charles Francis Adams reported that nothing had produced meetings and crowds like this "since the days of the corn laws"—a reference to the struggle, 20 years earlier, to repeal the tariffs on American grains and bring down the price of food. "The Emancipation Proclamation has done more for us here than all our former victories and all our diplomacy," wrote the ambassador's son, Henry. "It is creating an almost convulsive reaction in our favor all over the country. . . . Public opinion is very deeply stirred here and finds its expression in meetings, addresses to President Lincoln . . . and all the other symptoms of a great popular movement particularly unpleasant to the upper classes here because it rests on the spontaneous action of the laboring classes."

This was their Cairo, their Tahrir Square. British leaders responded with caution and scorn. Chancellor of the Exchequer William Gladstone called for immediate Confederate recognition to save slavery and protect future cotton crops. Dare to intervene, warned Seward, and the conflict would turn into a "war of the world." Apparently, Prime Minister Lord Palmerston agreed. "We must continue to be on-lookers," he declared, "till the war shall take on a more decided turn."

In fact, Lincoln had committed the Union to ending slavery through a war for territory. The Emancipation Proclamation provided a legal framework for freeing more than three million slaves as Union forces advanced. Hundreds, thousands of people would be liberated every day as the armies moved through the South. Emancipation would not be a one-time act

but the ongoing drama of release from captivity.

De Leon believed the only thing the South could do to counteract the Proclamation was to copy it, but he wasn't for doing that, and therefore it might be wise to call the diplomats home and use the money spent on propaganda to wage the war.

Diplomats reported to Richmond that even their friends were hostile to slavery. Benjamin shot back: stand firm. "Decline any negotiation related to slavery."

In September 1863, two months after news of the northern victory at Gettysburg dampened southern hopes, De Leon wrote to Benjamin and Davis, complaining that his advice was not listened to in Richmond and that Commissioner John Slidell would not share information with him. He offered his opinion that the French were "a far more mercenary race than the English." The only way to win French opinion was to buy it, and for better or worse the French were only too willing to sell.

De Leon put the letters in the care of the blockade runner *Ceres* which had the misfortune of getting captured by the U.S. Navy. The letters were found and, two weeks later, published in the *New York Daily*

Tribune. Benjamin fired De Leon, telling him that President Davis's confidence in John Slidell was "undiminished" and that the president was "mortified" over De Leon's behavior. De Leon wrote back, saying he intended to come to Richmond and plead his case to Davis, who would have to choose between Benjamin and himself. But he did not make the trip, not until 1867, when he returned to the United States to campaign to end Reconstruction and to combat Ulysses S. Grant's bid to be president.

The Confederate front against discussing abolition began cracking under the strains of the military situation at home. Benjamin changed his tune. Whereas the South "was only fighting for the vindication of our right of self-government and independence," he instructed James Mason and John Slidell to put the question squarely to the British and the French: "Did Europe wish to recognize the Confederacy but was held back by objections not made known to us?"

"Not made known to us"—in whose voice is Benjamin speaking? Is this the voice of a worldly secretary of state who has



Edwin De Leon (1818–1891). Photograph File, PC-941. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

somehow blocked out the most important news from overseas? Or is it the voice of a southern Jew sensitive to being insulted behind his back? “Judas Iscariot Benjamin,” “Mr. Davis’s pet Jew,” “the Jew Benjamin,” the “Israelite with Egyptian principles”—he’d been called these and worse and reflexively learned to turn the other cheek.

Confederate newspapers began preparing the public for emancipation. “I have been surprised, both at myself and others,” wrote the Swiss-born propagandist Henry Hotze, “how composedly an idea was received which two years or even one year ago would not have entered any sane man’s mind.” It was a “fearful price” but it had to be paid.

The British press mocked the idea as the South’s “last card.” The South was facing defeat, said the prime minister, and

nothing could be done about it. To recognize the Confederacy would not save the day and might bring about an unwanted war with the United States. The diplomatic game was lost.

From a Jewish perspective, the significance of the South’s defeat lay not in the squabbles of two southern Jewish partisans, but in the reunification of the country which turned the United States into an object of desire for millions of people around the world. For our immigrant grandparents, the passage to America was their emancipation from poverty and despotism, a great migration foreshadowed and made possible by the outcome of the Civil War.

Theodore Rosengarten, Zucker/Goldberg Chair in Jewish Studies at the College of Charleston, teaches courses in history at the College of Charleston and the University of South Carolina.

“He Was Like One of Us”: The Judaization of Abraham Lincoln

by Gary Phillip Zola

Like many of their fellow citizens, Jews have long venerated the man often called the greatest of all American presidents.¹ In fact, Abraham Lincoln’s association with American Jews goes back to the 1840s when he was a circuit-riding lawyer in central Illinois, and the relationship has grown and flourished to the present day. Abraham Jonas (1801–1864), a prominent political activist from Quincy, Illinois, appears to have been one of Lincoln’s earliest and closest associates. These two men met in 1838 and became lifelong collaborators. By the time Lincoln ran for president, he referred to Jonas as one of his “most valued friends.”²

During the years in Springfield and when he rode the 8th District Court circuit, Lincoln patronized Jewish businesses and socialized with Jews. Samuel Huttenbauer, an 18-year-old peddler from Cincinnati, told his children and



Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865), February 5, 1865. Photo: Alexander Gardner (1821–1882). Library of Congress.

grandchildren that during his peddling visits to Springfield, Illinois, Abraham Lincoln purchased his suspenders and collar buttons from Huttenbauer’s push cart. Lincoln also frequented Julius Hammerslough’s (1831–1908) Springfield haberdashery, and the two men maintained a cordial friendship. Lincoln shopped at Henry Rice’s general store when he visited Jacksonville, Illinois, and, when in Athens, Illinois, he was known to lodge in the front section of Louis Salzenstein’s clothing store.³

After his election to the presidency in 1860 and throughout the course of his term in office, a growing number of American Jews took note of Lincoln’s sympathetic responsiveness to a series of political controversies that posed genuine threats to Jewish civil equality in the United States. The actions he took in regard to three well publicized political issues convinced many of his contem-

poraries that Lincoln harbored no prejudice against Jews.

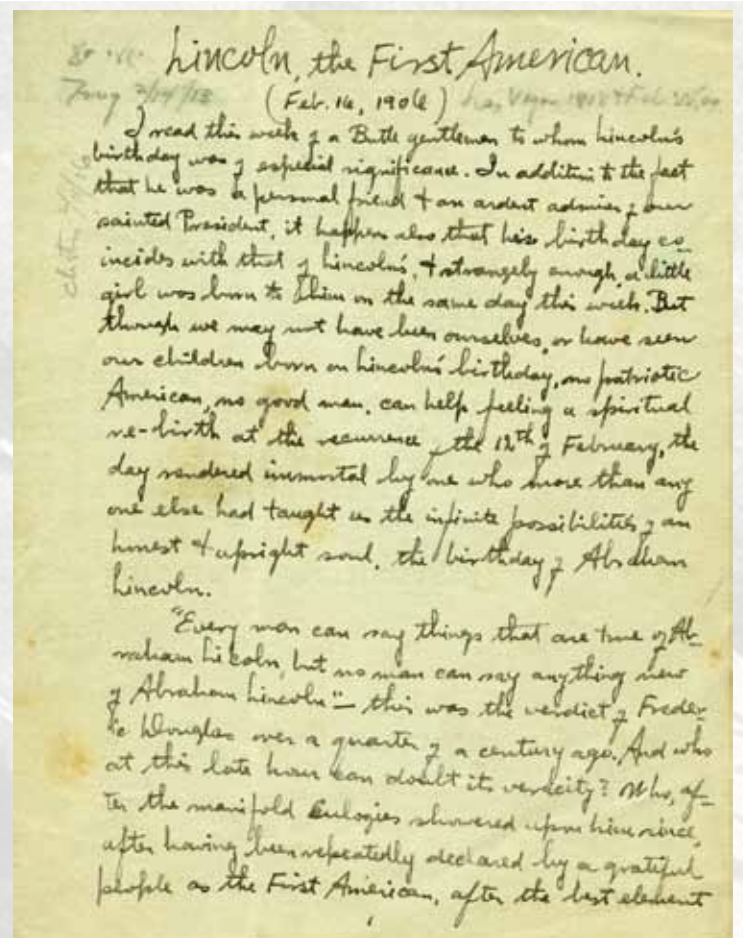
At the onset of the Civil War, congress authorized the U.S. military to appoint chaplains who were “ordained ministers of some Christian denomination.” This restriction seemed unconstitutional to many people, and the organized Jewish community promptly appealed to Lincoln for help in changing the law. The president was responsive, and he made good on his promise to support a legislative revision of the chaplaincy bill. Once Congress passed new legislation in 1862, Lincoln appointed the nation’s first Jewish military chaplain, Rabbi Jacob Frankel (1808–1887) of Philadelphia.⁴

On December 17, 1862, General Ulysses S. Grant promulgated his infamous edict, General Orders No. 11, which expelled all Jewish citizens (men, women, and children) from the Military Department of Tennessee. This order constituted the only time in all of American history when Jews, as a class, were expelled from American soil. As soon as the edict was brought to his attention, Lincoln revoked it. Again, the Jewish press took favorable note of Lincoln’s decisive action.⁵

Eight months after the revocation of Grant’s order, a third controversy came to a head. The newly established National Reform Association (NRA) sought to amend the U.S. Constitution to confirm Christianity as the nation’s dominant religion. In February 1864, a distinguished delegation from the NRA visited Lincoln, read him the text of the proposed amendment, and solicited his political backing. Lincoln promised the delegates he would study the matter carefully, but for the remainder of his administration, he took no action whatsoever. Again, the Anglo-Jewish press delighted in Lincoln’s studious indifference to the NRA’s recommendations.⁶

These political decisions persuaded most Jews that Lincoln was a firm supporter of equal footing under the law. By the time of Lincoln’s murder, an overwhelming majority of Jews who lived in the Union—and even some who lived in the South—had become convinced that Abraham Lincoln was a man who harbored no ill will toward any of his fellow human beings and, in particular, manifested a genuine affinity for the Jewish people.

In memorializing Lincoln after his shocking death, American Jewish leaders joined the rest of the nation in praising the fallen leader as the savior of the Union, the Great Emancipator, one of the people, a man of integrity, courage, and kindness. Yet many of these Jewish eulogies contained an element that distinguishes them from all others: Jews eulogized Lincoln by openly projecting Jewish religious values onto him, and thereby transfigured the 16th president into a spiritual kinsman. Or, to borrow



Before becoming spiritual leader of Charleston’s Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim, Rabbi Jacob Raisin served congregations in Port Gibson, Mississippi, and Butte, Montana. On February 16, 1906, the Russian-born rabbi delivered a sermon in Butte comparing Abraham Lincoln to “Abraham our Patriarch.” Breaking “the yoke of slavery,” Raisin argued in his address, made the 16th president “the benefactor not only of the Southern blacks but of the whites as well.” Montana was a territory, not yet a state, when Lincoln, “like most of the great leaders of the people of Israel, like David, like Saul, like Moses himself . . . removed all obstacles and hindrances, conquered all opposition . . . [and] succeeded in inscribing his name and enshrining his fame in the hearts of his countrymen to the remotest generation.” Raisin delivered the same sermon in later years from his various pulpits, always the second week of February.

Rabbi Jacob Salmon Raisin Papers, Mss. 1075 3/9. Gift of Mordenai R. Hirsch and Rachel Raisin. Special Collections, College of Charleston.

the president’s own famous turn of phrase, American Jews made Lincoln into one of the “almost chosen people.”⁷

Toward the end of the 19th century, when Americans experienced a renewed fascination with the Civil War and the

story of Lincoln's life, which had come to epitomize that dramatic chapter in the nation's history, a noteworthy number of American Jews participated in this trend. Some Jews became collectors of Lincolnia and others contributed to the massive surge of interest in Lincoln that began to flourish at the fin-de-siècle and continued throughout the Progressive era. During this period, a few Jews—Lincoln stalwarts—began to reconstruct the history of Lincoln's Jewish associations. As the 1909 centennial anniversary of Lincoln's birth approached, American Jewry discovered anew that the Great Emancipator had been a dear friend of their forebears. As Lincoln's evenhanded treatment of the Jewish community began to resurface, American Jews, like most Americans, enthusiastically and actively participated in what one historian called "the Lincoln enterprise." Once again, Jews vigorously celebrated Lincoln as both an American icon and a true Jewish hero. In centennial addresses and commemorations, Jews made Lincoln one of their own—a spiritual and moral kinsman.⁸

Lincoln's mythic stature grew through the first three quarters of the 20th century, and reached its zenith in 1959, when the nation marked the sesquicentennial commemoration of Lincoln's birth. American Jews remained steadfast in their embrace of Lincoln as the symbolic intersection of Americanism's and Judaism's moral legacies, and the organized Jewish community happily participated in both the 125th and 150th anniversaries of Lincoln's birth. Jews promoted his legacy, venerated his memory and, again, preserved the now well-established assertion that Lincoln was a dear friend of American Israel.

For many American Jews, Lincoln has become much more than a great American president, a heroic cultural figure, or even a kindly friend of the Jews. Over the past century and a half, American Jews have persistently Judaized Father Abraham and honored him as an adoptive parent or fostering patron. Steadily, American Jews transfigured the 16th president into a thoroughgoing American Jewish icon. No non-Jewish American hero—no matter how beloved and revered—can rival Lincoln's enduring legacy among the Jews of America, who remain largely convinced that Abraham Lincoln was, as one rabbi declared in his 1865 eulogy for the martyred president, just "like one of us."⁹

NOTES

1. Polls and surveys frequently name Lincoln as the nation's greatest president. For a summary, see W. Smoot Carter's paper, "Defining a Path to Greatness in the Modern Presidency" on the website of The Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress, <http://www.thepresidency.org/publications/presidential-fellows-works/18/290-text-of-a-dialogue->

[on-presidential-challenges-and-leadership-papers-of-the-2006-2007-center-fellows](#) (February 25, 2011).

2. On Jonas and Lincoln, see Bertram W. Korn, *American Jewry and the Civil War* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1951), 189–94.

3. The best sources for information on Lincoln's Jewish associations are Isaac Markens, *Abraham Lincoln and the Jews* (New York: Isaac Markens, 1909) and Korn, *American Jewry and the Civil War*, which is meticulously documented. On Huttenbauer, see Emilie Jane Levy's "Year Paper" for Vassar College entitled "My Family," Poughkeepsie, New York, GF 411, The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio; and on Salzenstein, see letter from Robert S. Frisch titled "Salzenstein's Store: Abraham Lincoln Shopped Here," *Chicago Jewish History*, 26:1 (Winter 2002): 6–7.

4. For the most complete and detailed history of the "Chaplaincy Controversy," see Korn, *American Jewry and the Civil War*, 56–97, 121–55.

5. For an excellent treatment of Grant's General Orders No. 11, see Stephen V. Ash, "Civil War Exodus: The Jews and Grant's General Order No. 11," *Historian*, 44:4 (August 1982): 505–23.

6. See Steven Keith Green, "The National Reform Association and the Religious Amendments to the Constitution, 1864–1876," master's thesis (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1987). See also, *Proceedings of the National Convention to Secure the Religious Amendment of the Constitution of the United States held in Cincinnati Jan. 31 and Feb. 1, 1872: with an account of the Origin and Progress of the Movement* (Philadelphia: Jas. B. Rodgers Co., 1872), 18–20.

7. In his "Address to the New Jersey State Senate," Trenton, New Jersey, February 21, 1861, Lincoln alluded to the United States of America as the Almighty's "almost chosen people." For the text of Lincoln's address, see <http://showcase.netins.net/web/creative/lincoln/speeches/trenton1> (February 24, 2011).

8. Historian Merrill D. Peterson identified five core elements of the "apotheosis" of Lincoln that occurred at the time of his death: (a) Savior of the Union, (b) Great Emancipator, (c) Man of the People, (d) the First American, and (e) the Self-Made Man. See Peterson, *Lincoln in American Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 26–27.

9. Rabbi Benjamin Szold used this expression, a quote that comes from Genesis 3:22, in a eulogy for Lincoln in German. See Emanuel Hertz, *Abraham Lincoln: The Tribute of the Synagogue* (New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1927), 44.

Gary Phillip Zola, Professor of the American Jewish Experience at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and executive director of The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, based this essay on his forthcoming book on Lincoln.

JEWS, SLAVERY, AND THE CIVIL WAR**MAY 24 – MAY 26, 2011****CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA****REGISTRATION FORM****Registration deadline is May 1, 2011**

Last Name _____ First _____

Spouse/Friend _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Name(s) on name tags _____

You must arrange your own hotel accommodations (see recommendations below)**PLEASE MAKE RESERVATIONS FOR THE FOLLOWING:****(Fees are per person; advance reservations are mandatory)**

Registration for FULL program, except boat and walking tours, \$130 per person \$ _____

Tuesday, May 24, evening reception and film ONLY, \$15 per person \$ _____

Wednesday, May 25, program and meals ONLY, \$85 per person \$ _____

Wednesday, May 25, KKBE Jonathan D. Sarna lecture ONLY, \$5 per person \$ _____

Thursday, May 26, program and meals ONLY, \$50 per person \$ _____

Optional boat trip to Fort Sumter, Tuesday, May 24, 2:30pm, \$16 per person \$ _____

Optional walking tour, Wednesday, May 25, 3:45pm, \$20 per person \$ _____

LATE REGISTRATION FEE (after May 1), \$25 per person \$ _____

TOTAL PAYMENT INCLUDED \$ _____

To register online: go to www.jhssc.org/events**MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO:**

Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program

College of Charleston

Charleston, SC 29424

www.cofc.edu/~jwst**QUESTIONS:**

Enid Idelsohn

phone: 843.953.3918

Email: IdelsohnE@cofc.edu

fax: 843.953.7624

*Only dairy meals will be served. If you prefer
strictly kosher meals, please check here.***Hotel rates do not include taxes and fees. Ask for cancellation cutoff.****Conference Hotel:**

Francis Marion Hotel

387 King Street

877.756.2121 or 843.722.0600

Rate: \$139

Courtyard by Marriott

125 Calhoun Street

843.805.7900

Rate: \$179

King Charles Inn

237 Meeting Street

866.546.4700 or 843.723.7451

Rate: \$149

Marriott Charleston

170 Lockwood Blvd

800.968.3569

Rate: \$159

Courtyard by Marriott

35 Lockwood Drive

800.549.8154 or 843.722.7229

Rate: \$149 – \$159

Phoebe Pember House

301 East Bay Street

843.722.4186

Rate: \$140 – \$250

Jews, Slavery, and Conference Schedule

Unless otherwise noted, all sessions will take place in the College of Charleston.

Tuesday afternoon, May 24

- 1:50** Optional tour of Fort Sumter – Meet at Liberty Square
- 2:30** Boat departs to Fort Sumter
- 6:15** Welcome reception and registration. Join us for light appetizers, beer, and wine
- 7:30** Film screening: *Jewish Soldiers in Blue and Gray*

Wednesday morning, May 25

8:00 Breakfast and registration

9:00 Politics and Diplomacy before the War

- Paul Finkelman (Albany Law School) – Judah P. Benjamin and the Swiss Treaty
- Geoffrey D. Cunningham (Louisiana State University) – “A Bond of Distrust”: Judah Benjamin and the Secession Crisis
- Benjamin Ginsberg (Johns Hopkins University) – Jewish Marginality in the Antebellum South

10:30 Break

11:00 Borderlands

- William Pencak (Penn State University) – Another Civil War: Orthodox and Reform Jews Debate a Statue of Judah Touro (1860)
- Andrea Mehrländer (Checkpoint Charlie Foundation, Berlin) – Stigmatized as New Orleans’s “German Jew”:
John Kruttschnitt (1812–1892), German Consul and Confederate Patriot
- Lee Shai Weissbach (University of Louisville) – Kentucky Jewry during the Civil War: A Local History Perspective

Wednesday afternoon, May 25

12:30 Lunch

1:30 Concurrent sessions

Judaism at War

- Leonard Greenspoon (Creighton University) – The Bible Says It’s So . . . But, It Ain’t Necessarily So
- David M. Cobin (Hamline University School of Law) – Made in the Image of God: Rabbinic Decisions and the Jewish Law of Slavery
- Leonard Rogoff (Jewish Heritage Foundation of North Carolina) – Who Is True Israel? Yankees, Confederates, Jews, and African Americans
- Kent A. McConnell (Phillips Exeter Academy) – “The Spirit of Our Forefathers”: Death and Religious Life among Jews of the Civil War Era

Confederates and Unionists

- Daniel Kotzin (Medaille College) – Constructing an American Jewish Identity during the Civil War: The Letters of Marcus M. Spiegel
- Gary P. Zola (American Jewish Archives) – “The Patriotic Corn Doctor”: The Enigmatic Career of Dr. Isachar Zacharie
- Barry Stiefel (College of Charleston) – David Lopez, Jr. (1809–1884): Builder *for* History
- Theodore Rosengarten (College of Charleston) – Diplomacy’s Cruel Sword: Confederate Agents in Pursuit of Recognition

3:30 Optional walking tours of downtown Charleston

6:00 Dinner reception at Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim

7:30 Keynote by Jonathan D. Sarna, Sanctuary of Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim – “That Obnoxious Order”: Ulysses S. Grant and the Jews

and the Civil War

odule, May 24–26, 2011

Charleston's Jewish Studies Center, corner of Wentworth and Glebe Streets

Thursday morning, May 26

8:00 Breakfast

8:30 Slavery and Abolition

Edward Sanders (independent scholar) – The Levys: The Story of a Jewish Slave Owner in America, His Heirs and Former Slaves

David Markus (University of Arkansas) – The Block Family of Old Washington: Faith, Slavery, and Assimilation on the Arkansas Frontier

Sarah Casteel (Carleton University) – The Port Jew in Neoslave Narratives of the Americas: Lawrence Hill's *The Book of Negroes*

Howard N. Lupovitch (University of Western Ontario) – From Emancipation to Abolition: The Transatlantic Activism of Jewish Emigrés

10:30 Break

10:45 Concurrent sessions

Local Studies

Tobias Brinkmann (Penn State University) – Defending Emancipation: Chicago's Jews and the Civil War

Mathew Semler (Hebrew Union College) – Cincinnati Jewry during the Civil War

Howard Rock (Florida International University) – "A Watershed Moment": The Jews of New York City and the Civil War

Jewish Wartime Experiences

Rachel Grossman (Florida State University) – American Civil Judaism: Dissension, Inclusion, and the Chaplaincy Controversy

Jennifer Stollman (Fort Lewis College) – "An Ardent Attachment to My Birth": Antebellum Southern Jewish Women as Confederate Ambassadors

Richard Mendelsohn (University of Cape Town) – Comparing Jewish Soldiering in the South African War (1899–1902) and the American Civil War (1861–1865)

Thursday afternoon, May 26

12:15 Lunch

1:15 Reconstruction

Anton Hieke (Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg) – Going South: The Migration of Jewish Yankees to the South after Appomattox

Michael Cohen (Tulane University) – Jewish Merchants, Northern Capital, and Southern Reconstruction

Stuart Rockoff (Institute of Southern Jewish Life) – The Mysterious Death of Marx Schoenberg: Jews and the Politics of Reconstruction in Ascension Parish, Louisiana

Seth Epstein (University of Minnesota) – "No American has ever paid finer tribute to the great Jewish race": Tolerance, Jews, and American Nationalism in Lost Cause Ceremonies in Asheville, North Carolina, 1926–1945

3:15 Adjourn



This program was made possible by the Legacy Heritage Jewish Studies Project, directed by the Association for Jewish Studies. Support for the Legacy Heritage Jewish Studies Project is generously provided by Legacy Heritage Fund Limited.



A Yiddisher Yankee in King Cotton's Court

by Billy Keyserling

In 1998, when my mother, Harriet Keyserling, was completing her book, *Against the Tide: One Woman's Political Struggle*, my father and I jokingly promoted "A Yiddisher Yankee in King Cotton's Court" for the title. Obviously we did not get our way and that was a good thing.

As I think about the person who was my closest ally and friend, and I hers, I am grateful for the long, healthy, and productive life of this Yiddisher Yankee and her remarkable achievements in King Cotton's court.

Like her father, Isadore Hirschfeld, the youngest of 18 children brought by his widowed mother to a three-room apartment on New York's Lower East Side, who is said to have studied under the family piano using a candle for light, Harriet had a passion for learning, for questioning, for understanding complex issues, and for seeking "truth."

Like her father-in-law, William Keyserling, who at age 18 came alone to this country escaping tsarist Russia, Harriet believed in standing up and doing the right thing. While concerned with what others would think, she never let this hold her back.

A bright, enthusiastic, and intellectually thirsty 22-year-old moved to South Carolina to marry my dad. Their initial plan for when dad returned home after World War II was to move back to New York City, where Dr. K would do a surgical residency and mother would harness her intellect and love of art and put them to work in the big city.

Circumstances changed and mother spent 66 years in a world that was at first foreign to her. As time passed, she achieved incredible influence on the people with whom she worked and on many who did not know her but watched and were inspired from afar.

From the time she came to little Beaufort, Harriet worked for the betterment of the community, often—especially in the early days—in ways that were not understood or appreciated. She brought world-class cultural events to our small town



Harriet Hirschfeld Keyserling (1922–2010). All photos: Keyserling family papers, Mss. 1049. Special Collections, College of Charleston.

and hosted them on the military bases because other event venues were segregated and she did not believe that culture belonged to just one group. She championed public art and won the battle to erect, at public expense, a bust of Civil War legend Robert Smalls—the first and only such sculpture in Beaufort today.

At age 54, after raising four children and getting us off to school, Harriet ran for public office. She was the first woman elected to Beaufort County Council, previously the domain of the good old boys, thanks in large part to the legions of northerners transplanted on Hilton Head Island and my father's loyal, mainly African-American clientele.

Realizing that the issues of greatest concern to her—the natural environment, public education, cultural activities and the arts—were "handled"

in Columbia, she took a deep breath and was the first woman to run for the South Carolina House from Beaufort. Again, notwithstanding the local political establishment's opposition to electing women who "would not understand" and would likely not be a friend to business-as-usual in Columbia, she was elected. After a tough race, the election was challenged by the loser, but Harriet ultimately won and served Beaufort and South Carolina proudly for 16 years.

She led the fight to end wasteful filibusters. She became one of the nation's most knowledgeable legislators on nuclear waste. She helped engineer a state loan to the Spoleto Festival, at a moment when financial challenges were about to shut it down. She worked hard for educational reform. She crafted the state's first energy policy. She broke several glass ceilings and set an example for other women. In sum, this Yiddisher Yankee left indelible marks on King Cotton's court.

I have no doubt that the legacy of Harriet Hirschfeld Keyserling will live on in those she touched through her work, her writings, and her courage and determination to raise the bar in Beaufort and South Carolina.

Honoring Harriet Keyserling

Selected remarks from a celebration of her life, USC Beaufort, March 5, 2011

Against the Tide

by Martin Perlmutter

I am honored to be given the opportunity to publicly thank Harriet Keyserling for the life she led and for the inspiration and hope that she provided for ordinary people like me. Harriet had incredible courage, steely determination, and an unrivaled seriousness of purpose. She has made the world a better place, often at significant cost to herself and her family.

In Hebrew, we say of the departed, *zichronah livrocha*, that their memory should be a blessing.

Against the Tide is Harriet's memoir. The book contains serious reflections of a serious woman, and discusses in some detail her struggle for social justice—for women and for African Americans—her unrelenting pursuit of environmental conservation, and her unflagging view that the arts are a vehicle for elevating human striving and human dignity.

Against the Tide is a Jewish woman's story. My connection with Harriet has to do with the Jewish part of her life. She was a founding member of the advisory board of Jewish Studies at the College of Charleston and of the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina, a society established by Isadore Lourie with the help of Alex Sanders, both friends of Harriet. At the time of her passing, Harriet was still an active member of the board of both organizations. She was also a big supporter of Jewish Studies and helped us build the Jewish Studies Center. Beth Israel congregation, too, was a big part of her life, as it was for many Keyserlings before her. Her father-in-law, William Keyserling, was an anchor of that congregation.

But Harriet's story is more Jewish than Jewish Studies, the Jewish Historical Society, or Beth Israel Congregation. She recounts growing up on the West Side of Manhattan, "where about ninety percent of the people were Jewish," including all her neighborhood friends, schoolmates, and some teachers. Her life in Beaufort after she and Herbert married reversed the ratios. Reflecting particularly on race, Harriet remarks that, "It was hard to be a Jew in the South during these times, especially a Northern Jew. Religious differences intensified my feeling of being in a land of strangers and were another barrier to opening myself up."

Ever since I was asked to speak today, I kept thinking of an extended passage in Isaiah—the haftorah passage for Yom Kippur. The passage describes Harriet's Judaism and the central part it had in her life. As many of you know, Yom

Kippur is the holiest and most solemn day on the Jewish calendar—a day of fasting and reflection. Isaiah hones in on the hypocrisy of those people who fast to atone for their sins while continuing to subjugate others: "Behold, in the day of your fast you pursue your own business, and oppress all your workers." And the prophet goes on, "Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; and when you see the naked, to cover him?"

Harriet found her voice with the Jewish prophets; she spoke with the prophetic voice of Judaism. Ancient Israel had kings and priests who represented the establishment, but it also had prophets—Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, Micah, and many others. All of their voices railed against the tide, against establishment's values and establishment's complacency. That is always an uphill battle, often a thankless one.

At the end of her book, Harriet reflects on autobiographies she read in preparation for writing her own. She talks about reading of Helen Suzman's valiant battle against apartheid, how as a Jewish liberal Suzman endured antisemitic slurs for her unpopular political views. Harriet says, "Swimming against the tide is a relative challenge, in time and place, and my political life in South Carolina in the recent past was a piece of cake compared to hers in South Africa in those bitter years."

Like Helen Suzman, Harriet swam against the tide, with confidence and with humility. Like Suzman and the many Jewish prophets before her, she represented justice, decency, and compassion. The prophetic battle is always against the tide. Harriet's vision was like that of Micah, whose voice is well known. "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God." That prophetic calling was Harriet Keyserling's Jewish voice.

Zichronah livrocha. Harriet's memory is indeed a blessing.

A Seat at the Table

by Pat Conroy

I never made Harriet Keyserling laugh, not once in a 50-year friendship. It was not for lack of trying. I made funny faces at her, mugged outrageously, told witty stories, stockpiled jokes, and in desperation I told her lascivious and revolting stories about our friend, Bernie Schein. Nothing.



Harriet Keyserling with author Pat Conroy.

Never a smile, a giggle, not even a wry grin. Ten years ago I figured out why. Mayor David and Pam Taub had ridden with the Keyserlings to Hilton Head from Beaufort to go to dinner, and Pam took one of these mechanical counters with her.

Every time Herbert told a joke, Pam would record it with a movement of her thumb. Herbert told 128 jokes on the way to the restaurant that night. That's when I realized the last thing Harriet needed from me was to try to make her laugh.

But Harriet's role in my life was essential and necessary. In my young manhood, she spotted me as bright, opinionated, brash, a lover of politics, and more importantly, a lover of liberal politics. When Harriet and I went out for a kayak ride on Battery Creek, we made up the entire liberal white caucus in this part of the world. Back then we were outnumbered by conservatives a hundred to one. Today, we'd be outgunned by conservatives a thousand to one. Ah! South Carolina, Harriet, South Carolina. It still astonishes me that Harriet Keyserling was a distinguished politician from this storied and brawling state. The politicians seemed finer back then, more serious, and none of them seemed to let visits to Argentina interfere with the business of this state.

Harriet was the worst cook who ever served a meal in a Beaufort kitchen. The only thing I rejoiced in when I heard of her death was I would never have to eat moussaka again in my natural life. I would estimate that I ate dinner at Harriet's house a total of a hundred times and she served moussaka at all meals—limp, tasteless, flavorless moussaka. But at these dinners, Harriet made up for the lack of savoriness in her food by the wit and spontaneity of the conversation around the table. In the nearest thing I've ever had to a salon in my life, Harriet collected the most exciting people in Beaufort on any given day to eat her terrible portion of moussaka. I ate moussaka with Robert Duvall, Blythe Danner, former ambassadors, the present-day senator from Connecticut, editors of *The New York Times*, world famous musicians, novelists, writers, and every CO of Parris Island. Twice I was taken by ambulance to Beaufort Memorial Hospital for treatment for advanced moussaka poisoning. But the conversation was always scintillating, inspiring, and you tried to hold your own among a lifetime of movers and shakers who

were drawn to Harriet's table.

No one was more supportive of my writing career. She was greatly disturbed when I was fired from my teaching job on Daufuskie Island, and she gave me a room in her house to write and edit *The Water Is Wide*. Because my daughter Megan was born a month after I was fired, Harriet gave me a hundred bucks on the first of each month for the next year—and so did Gene Norris, Bill Dufford, The Boo, and Ellen Harper. People like Harriet Keyserling made me keep falling in love with the town of Beaufort over and over again.

She took enormous pride in the success of *The Water Is Wide* and she wanted to introduce me into New York literary society. She arranged for her brother Lenny and his dazzling wife Phyllis to give me a dinner party with a cast of big shot dignitaries and ball-turret gunners. Phyllis became my model for Susan Lowenstein in *The Prince of Tides*. She told me to “dress casually, dear Pat, casually.”

I arrived at Lenny and Phyllis's elegant Upper East Side apartment in khaki pants, a tee-shirt that said Gay Brothers Shrimp on the front, and Docksidiers without socks. Phyllis greeted me at the door wearing the most beautiful dress on earth. Casual to Phyllis and Lenny meant don't wear a tux. I looked like a stowaway on the Titanic. Phyllis served an elegant dinner which included the first octopus I'd ever seen. A tentacle ran the length of my plate and it made me miss Harriet's moussaka.

Lots of writers and two editors of *The New York Times* were there. At the end of the meal one of the editors sitting beside me said to the editor sitting across the table, “Isn't it amazing that the South is actually turning out people who can write books?” The other guy said, “Meeting this guy, I'm amazed that anybody down there can even read them.” Briefly I thought of overturning the dining room table and beating these two guys to a bloody pulp and leaving them for dead beneath the octopus. But I knew Harriet would be furious with me. I called Harriet down in Beaufort to tell her what happened. Harriet was exceptionally kind that night. She told me I could never be a real writer until I learned to play with the big boys and girls in the big city. I had to play in Yankee Stadium and learn how to take the hard knocks that the city has to offer. I had to toughen myself up and this was just the beginning of the process. I was off to a great start, Harriet Keyserling said, but it was far more important that I made sure I had a great finish.

Here is a story I've never told before that involves Harriet, the magic of synchronicity, revenge, Hollywood, Barbra Streisand, and Beaufort. I brooded over that insult from those nasty editors of *The New York Times* for many, many years. As many in this audience know, whenever I'm refused a date by a pretty young girl from Beaufort High, she appears

in one of my novels as a nose-picking, mustachioed hag who is murdered by a chainsaw. Let us return to that dinner party. There is the radiant Phyllis greeting me at her Upper East Side penthouse. Now her name is Susan Lowenstein and I am Tom Wingo and I'm writing *The Prince of Tides*. The world famous violinist, Herbert Woodruff, is married to Lowenstein and he insults the southern boy with the same vicious contempt of the men who attacked me those many long years before. Tom Wingo threatens to hurl Woodruff's Stradivarius off a 20-story building. Conroy is avenged and he is a supremely happy man.

In 1986, I am touring with *The Prince of Tides* when I receive a phone call from Harriet Keyserling. She begins bawling me out for not returning phone calls to Barbra Streisand, then tells me that Brother Lenny is Barbra Streisand's dentist. "Why haven't you returned my friend Barbra's phone calls?" Harriet demanded.

"Because it's not Barbra Streisand, it's that idiot Bernie Schein, Harriet. He does this to me every time I've got a book out. He wrote me a letter from Jimmy Carter—another from Robert Redford. He does it all the time."

"Call her right now and then call me right back. I think we can get this film done in Beaufort."

Here's the magic part: I fly out to Los Angeles to see one of the early screenings of *The Prince of Tides*. Barbra Streisand takes a seat directly behind me, staring at the back of my head for the whole movie. I come to the long-ago dinner party scene that Harriet Keyserling set up at Lenny and Phyllis Hirschfeld's apartment. In my disguise as Tom Wingo, I show up at Susan Lowenstein's, now disguised as Barbra Streisand. But I laughed out loud when the camera panned around the table and my fabulous friend, Harriet Keyserling, is a guest at the table, serene and well-coifed and because she appeared in a movie, now immortal.

Immortal. I like the sound of it. She was one of the greatest women in South Carolina's history. Her book *Against the Tide* is a seminal, landmark work. If Harriet is looking at all this today, I hope she notices that I'm still trying to make her laugh.

The Lady from Beaufort (excerpt of tribute) by Richard W. Riley

I was elected governor in 1978—a time of shifting emphasis from the power of "good ole boy" political control of state government to the power of ideas. . . . South Carolina was fortunate that Harriet Keyserling, a new kind of leader, came along during that era. She was willing to work hard to accomplish goals in which she believed. She was more given to quiet research, serious conversation, and careful



Harriet Keyserling in the South Carolina legislative chamber. She represented Beaufort in the House of Representatives from 1977 to 1993.

organization—and less to the smoke-filled-room politics of much big talk, little listening, and even less action.

It seems implausible that Harriet was elected—especially at that time, in the 1970s—to represent this small, traditional town of Beaufort in the South Carolina legislature. In addition to being a woman, she was, by her own description, "a New York Jewish liberal." So you can imagine the shock of those "good ole boys" when Representative Keyserling walked onto the floor of the House to take her seat as the "lady from Beaufort." . . .

Harriet Keyserling entered the political arena to improve education and protect the environment—which she did. But she went on to do so much more, and none of it was easy. She overcame personal and political obstacles placed by the power structure then in place. Unlike many of her colleagues, she did not oversimplify issues or appeal to emotions or engage in cronyism or political horse trading.

She was passionate about serving the public interest; she relied on rigorous research to determine the long-term public interest in any given issue; she was tireless in educating her colleagues and the citizenry about those long-term public interests. Harriet was steadfast in her principled, moral, and ethical beliefs and actions. She worked diligently behind the scenes and never sought the limelight. And she was always effective.

Her "Crazy Caucus" colleague, Bob Sheheen, put it this way. Rather than power gained from position, Bob

said, Harriet Keyserling derived power from knowledge. And, in my view—Dick Riley's view—there is nothing more powerful than that.

*A Farewell to Harriet Keyserling (remarks at the funeral service, December 13, 2010)
by Charles T. (Bud) Ferillo*

Down, down, down into the
darkness of the grave
gently they go, the beautiful,
the tender, the kind;
Quietly they go, the intelligent,
the witty, the brave
I know. But I do not approve
And I am not resigned.
— Edna St. Vincent Millay

She was ours, and we loved her more than any telling of it. Harriet Keyserling was supposed to live forever, as irrational as it is. None of us ever considered a time when she would not be here: prodding, pushing, encouraging, caring, organizing, giving, working, frowning, laughing, then back to frowning. A “force of nature” does not even begin to tell the tale. Yes, she was shy, private, insecure, and modest but she never permitted these traits to keep her from embracing uphill battles, facing impossible odds, taking on long-term struggles, all the hard things that others avoided or just dropped out of sheer frustration. Against the tide, indeed. Every day, every week, every year. She detested stupid people, prejudice of any kind, violence wherever it occurred, and cruelty in any form.

In one of the most unlikely moments of our long friendship, we attended a rodeo in an enormous cattle arena in Denver, Colorado, replete with every kind of calf, cattle, and steer roping imaginable. It was the opening hospitality event

at a national conference of state legislators. We had seats on the front row, a Jewish woman from New York’s West Side and a city boy from Charleston trapped in a temple of genuine western Americana; we escaped in five minutes.

Nonetheless, that small, almost frail woman was the very embodiment of courage. Indefatigable courage. What kind of courage is that? Any southerner replies: Stonewall Jackson’s kind of courage. What else could have powered her to go so far in public life so completely ill-equipped with the traditional skills of politicians? What else could have enabled her to achieve what she achieved in 18 years in local and state government?

What, but courage, could have moved an 88-year-old woman to risk her life for the relief of pain so that she might fight on a little longer for her heart’s true causes: public education, conservation, the arts, nuclear waste, and women’s issues? In the recent election, Harriet sent emails to organize 100 women to join her in a statement called “Agenda Over Gender.” She worked at it day and night and inspired not 100, 200, or 500 women, but over 1,000 women in this state to join her. When the election was over, and that cause lost, she wrote these words to the army she had raised: “Remember that the journey is as important as the destination. By staying involved we can model the kind of leadership we want to see. Each time we come together we will be that much stronger.”

There you have it, the essence of this good, strong, decent, smart, cultured woman, teaching the highest ideals of this nation among her last messages on earth: “Remember that the journey is as important as the destination.”

Emily Dickinson wrote “the poet lights the light and fades away. But the light goes on and on.” And so, as she takes her place for eternity beside the man she loved so much who enticed her from the streets of New York to this magical, graceful place amidst Spanish moss and tideland creeks, let me give each of you this final charge from her: “Do not go gentle into that good night. Old age should rave and burn at the close of day. Rage, rage against the dying of the light. . . . Rage, rage against the dying of the light.”



Herbert and Harriet Keyserling after Herbert was awarded the Silver Star for his valor at Guadalcanal, 1944.



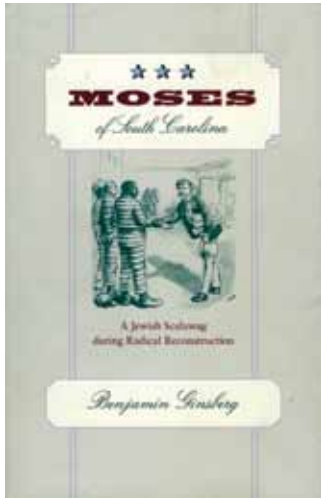
Harriet at the beach on Hunting Island with her children Paul, Beth, Judy, and Billy, ca. 1954.

Books of Interest

Moses of South Carolina: A Jewish Scalawag during Radical Reconstruction

by Benjamin Ginsberg

Review by Harlan Greene



Johns Hopkins University 2010.
219 pages, 6 illustrations, www.press.jhu.edu.

With the sesquicentennial of the Civil War upon us, it is only natural that books on the era begin appearing. Among the early arrivals is Benjamin Ginsberg's *Moses of South Carolina: A Jewish Scalawag during Radical Reconstruction*. Despite all the chicanery of politicians, past and present, Franklin J. Moses, Jr., according to the author, may be our state's most hated political figure of all time. Of Jewish descent, an early defender of the Confederacy (Moses helped raise the flag on Fort Sumter after its capture), he became a Republican following the war, embraced emancipation, and was elected governor in 1872. Before dying in obscurity, he was lambasted by the press for his corrupt practices and satirized by political cartoonists like Thomas Nast. Moses was so despised that family members changed their name to avoid the taint of relationship. Ginsberg, a professor of political science at Johns Hopkins University, takes on Moses with the simple question, "Why?" Why did he inspire such unmitigated contempt?

In this, the strongest part of the book, Ginsberg analyzes Moses' radical shift and compares his policies to those of other Republican Reconstruction politicians in South Carolina. Moses may have stolen, Ginsberg frankly admits, but so did most; at least he didn't murder, or cause deaths by instigating violence, as others did. Ginsberg makes a convincing case that Moses was vilified not because of his corruption, but because of his convictions. When he supported African Americans, he really meant it—unlike others, who courted African Americans only for their votes. Moses was hated because he believed in social equality and lived it. For this, he could never be forgiven.

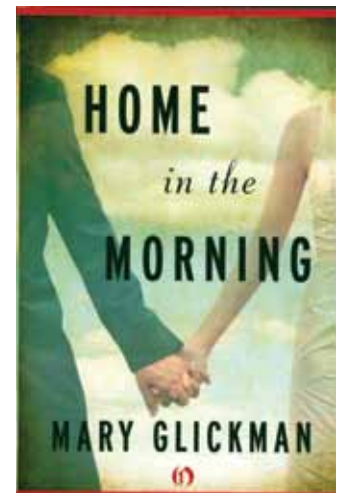
The second element Ginsberg explores, not as successfully, is the impact of what he describes as Moses' Jewishness. Though of Jewish descent, Moses was raised as a Methodist and married an Episcopalian. Ginsberg subtly deconstructs antisemitic cartoons aimed at Moses, but falls into an anachronistic view of what it meant to be Jewish in South Carolina before the Civil War. He does not seem to realize how comfortable southern Jewish families were, and how deeply, if not totally, Jews were accepted. As a challenger of stereotypes and assumptions in one part of his work, he unfortunately falls victim to them in another. Still, the book is a valuable step in the right direction, moving toward a full portrait of Franklin Moses, Jr., and the role he played in South Carolina's racial politics.

Home in the Morning

by Mary Glickman

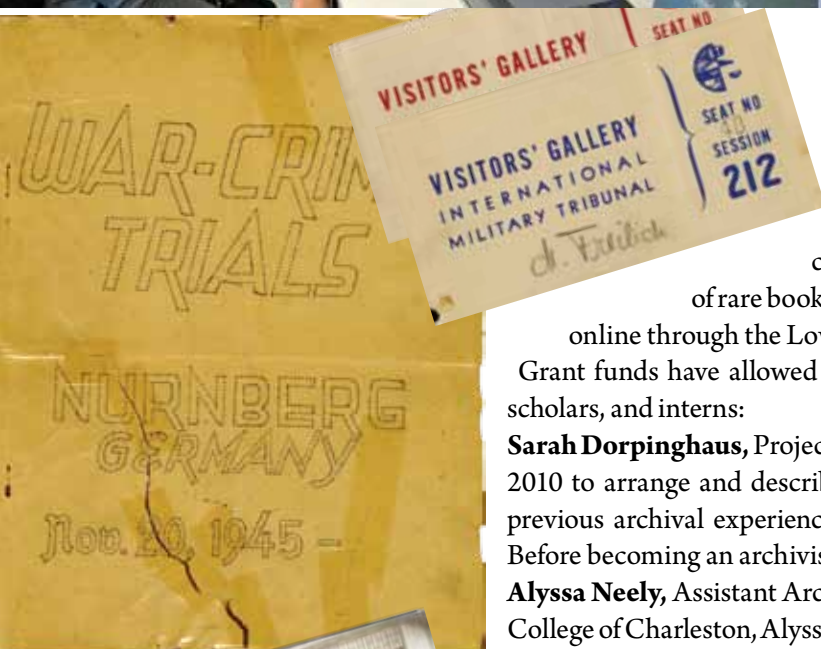
Review by Andrea Mendelsohn

Home in the Morning traces the life of Jackson Sassaport as he struggles to find his place growing up as an awkward child in a racially segregated and charged Mississippi on the cusp of the civil rights struggle. Born into a prosperous Reform Jewish family, Jackson is socialized by his parents to fit into middle class white society, respecting the social and racial boundaries of the day and not drawing attention to the Sassaports' religious distinctiveness. Yet from an early age, his pivotal relationships with particular African Americans draw him across the boundaries of racial segregation and reinforce his own marginalization in mainstream society. Jumping between Jackson's childhood and present adulthood, Glickman has written a historical melodrama that traces the religious and racial tensions of the Deep South through a protagonist who is both an insider and outsider to white society. The narrative highlights moments of crisis in the Mississippi Jewish community during Freedom Summer as tensions with local Citizens Councils and the Ku Klux Klan erupt into violence. As a student at Yale during the turmoil of the Black Power Movement and the Vietnam War, Jackson is coached in northern liberalism by his future wife, Stella Godwin. This generational saga covers a vast historical territory, but too often relies on clichéd plot devices intended to highlight the full array of conflicts of the age rather than focus on individual character development. Ultimately Glickman's work feels like a chain of stereotyped characters and historical events rather than an authentic portrayal of complex individuals.



Open Road, 2010, 234 pages,
www.openroadmedia.com.

Memoirs, Sermons, Judaica: Jewish Heritage



Mazel tov is in order for the Jewish Heritage Collection! Thanks to a generous grant from the Council on Library and Information Resources, the College of Charleston's Jewish Heritage Collection (JHC) has taken giant steps toward processing its "Hidden Collections" and making them accessible to the public. Over the next two years, JHC expects to catalogue over 160 manuscript collections totaling approximately 410 linear feet, as well as 26 linear feet of rare books. Approximately 340 oral history interviews will also be made available online through the Lowcountry Digital Library (<http://lowcountrydigital.library.cofc.edu>).

Grant funds have allowed JHC to hire, or to continue to employ, a talented crew of archivists, scholars, and interns:

Sarah Dorpinghaus, Project Archivist, M.L.I.S. (University of Iowa). Sarah was hired in September 2010 to arrange and describe unprocessed JHC collections and supervise support staff. She has previous archival experience at the Chicago History Museum and the Iowa Women's Archives. Before becoming an archivist, Sarah was a high school history teacher.

Alyssa Neely, Assistant Archivist, B.A. History (College of Charleston). In her last semester at the College of Charleston, Alyssa took Dale Rosengarten's course on Charleston's ethnic neighborhoods and became an archives maven. After graduation, she composed histories of South Carolina's Jewish communities for the Institute of Southern Jewish Life's online encyclopedia, using JHC's research files as her chief source. In 2008, she began working officially for JHC, assuming primary responsibility for editing, describing, and digitizing hundreds of oral history interviews.

Melissa Bronheim, Assistant Archivist, M.L.I.S. (University of South Carolina). Melissa processes manuscript collections for JHC as well as the College of Charleston's Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture, where she has worked since 2009. She also volunteers at the Historic Charleston Foundation. Melissa's fluency in Hebrew and knowledge of Jewish culture have been great assets to the project.

Rebecca McClure, Assistant Archivist, M.L.I.S. (University of South Carolina). Rebecca is processing JHC's Holocaust Archives—archival collections that document the experiences of Holocaust survivors and liberators. She also is expanding the Holocaust Quilt website (<http://holocaustarchives.cofc.edu>), which recounts the stories of Charleston-area survivors. Rebecca previously worked as a research coordinator at the Medical University of South Carolina, an assistant

e Collection Is in Full Swing

by Sarah Dorpinghaus



archivist at the Charleston Museum, and a library assistant for the Charleston County Public Library's special collections.

Barry Stiefel, Visiting Assistant Professor, Ph.D. in Historic Preservation (Tulane University). Since coming to Charleston in 2008, Barry has served as a consulting scholar on the Rabbi William A. Rosenthal Judaica collection. An expert in the architectural history of synagogues, he has helped identify and describe images in the collection, and has recruited and supervised students from the historic preservation program to assist.

Student interns and volunteers are digitizing, describing, and rehousing images from the Rabbi Rosenthal Judaica collection. Student workers have come from the University of South Carolina's library science program, the College of Charleston's English, history, and historic preservation departments, and Columbia University in New York City.

Several collections have already been arranged and catalogued under the project: Solomon Breibart's professional papers, including his extensive research files on the history of the Jewish community in Charleston and South Carolina; records of the Southern Jewish Historical Society; the sermons of Rabbi Burton Padoll, civil rights activist and rabbi at Charleston's Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim (KKBE); photographs of Spartanburg's Price's Store for Men; photographs, memoirs, and other papers of Benjamin and Anna Berendt; and the papers of Rabbi William A. Rosenthal, which include his sermons, topical files on Jewish culture and history, and documents regarding his work with the Latin America Committee of the World Union for Progressive Judaism and as rabbi of KKBE.

We have also begun processing collections that are part of JHC's Holocaust Archives, such as the papers of Katherine Prevost, a survivor of Dachau; material donated by Max Freilich, who left Germany via the Kindertransport in 1939, was held in an English internment camp, attended the Nuremberg Trials, and eventually settled in Greenville, South Carolina; and the papers of Devorah "Dorothy" Urgeshevitz Radin, a native of Lithuania who fled to the United States in 1939.

This winter we began the task of rehousing and digitizing postcards, photographs, fine art prints, and other visual material from Rabbi Rosenthal's Judaica collection. So far, over 600 images of synagogues, individuals, and cemeteries have been scanned, catalogued, and made available on the Lowcountry Digital Library. For more information about the collection, please visit the Rabbi William A. Rosenthal website (<http://rosenthal.library.cofc.edu>).

Next in the queue to be processed are the records of the National Council of Jewish Women and the Charleston Chapter of Hadassah, photographs of Glenn Springs, and family papers and congregational records from Anderson, Beaufort, Camden, Charleston, Florence, Georgetown, Orangeburg, St. Matthews, and Sumter. For more information, contact Dale Rosengarten, curator (rosengartend@cofc.edu) or Sarah Dorpinghaus, project archivist (dorpinghaussm@cofc.edu).



Oral History Archives Goes Digital

by Alyssa Neely

The Jewish Heritage Collection's (JHC) Oral History Archives in Special Collections at the College of Charleston is going digital! Soon, not only will interview transcripts be available online, but the voices of interviewees as well.

In 1995, a cadre of volunteers under the supervision of project director Dale Rosengarten began recording life histories of members of Jewish families across the state of South Carolina, focusing first on capturing the memories of the oldest generation. Of particular concern was documenting stories of Jews who grew up in small towns, a rapidly disappearing demographic. The Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina (JHSSC), founded in 1994, helped build a statewide network, putting out the call for volunteers and interviewees. As the idea of recording family histories caught on, the oral history project snowballed. Special Collections now houses more than 300 interviews, as well as hundreds of archival collections that document Jewish life in the American South.

The majority of JHC interviewees—like the majority of all American Jews—are descendants of immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe. Also featured are interviews with rabbis who have served in South Carolina pulpits, as well as panel discussions recorded during congregational celebrations and JHSSC meetings. The interviews chronicle the lives of urban and rural shopkeepers and their families, entrepreneurs in textiles and other businesses, professionals, politicians, refugees from Hitler's regime, and survivors and witnesses of the Holocaust. Audio segments from selected interviews were included in the exhibition *A Portion of the People: Three Hundred Years of Southern Jewish Life*, which opened at the University of South Carolina's McKissick Museum in 2002, then toured nationally for two years. These segments are currently accessible via an online version of the exhibit at <http://www.lib.unc.edu/apop/>.



Mindelle Seltzer and Dale Rosengarten interviewing Raymond Stern, Andrews, SC, March 1995. Photo: Norton Seltzer.

Most of the interviews were recorded on 94-minute digital audio tape, the rest on analog formats. All were dubbed onto analog tapes for back-up purposes and to provide use copies for transcribers and researchers. Despite limited funding, nearly all the interviews have been transcribed and a number of the transcripts are currently available through the College of Charleston's online catalog, <http://libcat.cofc.edu>.

With the inception last year of the College's Lowcountry Digital Library, however, JHC is entering a new era. The oral history project's top priority has become digitizing and providing online access to the audio recordings. With funding from the Council on Library and Information Resources, we are moving full steam ahead so that the primary source, the audio version, is available to the public. In the near future, researchers will be able to listen to the voices of the JHC's interviewees while scrolling through the transcripts from the comfort of their homes and offices. For a look at what is in store, go to <http://lowcountrydigital.library.cofc.edu>.



"Growing up Jewish in the Pee Dee" in Florence's Beth Israel Synagogue on March 6, 1999. Left to right: moderator Richard Gergel, and panelists Sam Rogol, Rick Cagan, Robin Shuler, and Alexander Cohen. Recording engineer: Dale Rosengarten. Photo: Kenneth S. Kammer

Captions for pages 20 and 21

Project staff: (top left to right) Heidi Wilson (intern), Melissa Bronheim (assistant archivist), Jocelyn Leving (intern), Josh Minor (intern).

Archival materials Page 20: (top to bottom) Nuremberg Trials tickets and program – Max Freilich papers; New York City synagogue and Spartanburg, SC, synagogue – Rosenthal Judaica collection.

Archival materials Page 21: (top to bottom): Leon, Max, and Anna Gelson – Benjamin and Anna Berendt papers; Jewish peddler in Vilnius, Lithuania, and synagogue in Mainz, Germany (this postcard was the first item Rabbi Rosenthal collected) – Rosenthal Judaica collection.

Spring Has Sprung

by Martin Perlmutter

Spring has descended upon the Palmetto State. In Charleston we are bidding farewell to the camellias, knowing that soon enough our city will be aflame in



Azalea blossom and bumblebee, Magnolia Gardens in the spring. Photo: Joseph Rubin.

the azaleas' magenta and fuchsia hues. It is the perfect time to go for a walk, to discover and remember, to appreciate the beauty of our cities and towns, and to stand in awe of our history and how it has shaped the community today.

When I reflect on the good work that the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina has done and continues to do, my mind comes up with its own version of a quote from Admiral George Anderson: "Jewish life in South Carolina has both a tradition and a future; at JHSSC we look with pride and confidence in both directions."

The Society has done a magnificent job of preserving and showcasing our history. When you go for that springtime stroll or scenic drive, keep an eye out for the historical markers we've sponsored, the burial grounds we've documented, and come have a look at the archives we've curated. Whether you see these sights on your own, on a guided walking tour, or while you're in Charleston for the conference in May, you will not be able to escape the profound impact Jews have had on our city and state.

Together with the Jewish Studies faculty and the library's Jewish Heritage Collection, JHSSC is promoting both South Carolina's Jewish history and its academic resources. Through the Center for Southern Jewish Culture, we are bringing eminent scholars from across the country to present their research on southern Jewish life. Thanks to the Society's efforts, South Carolina's Jewish influence stands out in the greater community—a community that takes to heart the significance of its past.

JHSSC is the largest statewide Jewish membership organization in South Carolina, and it is lifted up by its Pillars. Gifts and membership dues keep our operations running, but it is the generosity of our Pillars that will help us reach our goals. Become a Pillar today by pledging to contribute \$1,000 a year for five years. Help us continue to showcase South Carolina's Jewish history as a living legacy.

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Register now for the May 24 – 26 meeting, College of Charleston.

PLEASE REGISTER EARLY.

See page 11 for more information.

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