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SOUTHERN JEWISH HISTORY

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COVER PICTURE. *This portrait of Esther Kahn Taylor, by Betty Carmell Savenor, hangs in the Virginia Baldwin Orwig Music Library at Brown University in honor of Taylor's lifelong support of music education. Taylor's social activism in Atlanta, especially her founding of the city's chapter of Planned Parenthood, is the subject of the article by Ellen G. Rafshoon on pages 125–154 of this issue. (Courtesy of the Brown University Portrait Collection, Providence, RI.)*

From the Editor . . .

I have studied southern Jewish history for almost forty years. As I frequently comment, this means that I am no longer so young but also that I remain very aware of how little I know and how much remains to be explored concerning the field. The numerous topics in this issue of the journal reflect the latter reality.

In the first article Barry Stiefel brings attention to the role of synagogue boards of trustees in deciding complex issues. Lacking an ordained rabbinate trained to adjudicate Jewish law, particularly through a *beth din*, laymen dealt with Jewish divorces, intermarriage, conversion, Jewish identity, and what they defined as appropriate and inappropriate Jewish practices and other issues. Reading Stiefel's article one becomes aware of similarities and differences across the Atlantic world and between synagogue and civil institutions, the trials and tribulations impacted by acculturation within a relatively unregulated and voluntaristic environment, and interaction and communications across political boundaries.

Although Stiefel concentrates on Charleston, South Carolina, prior to the Civil War, Florence Jumonville takes the reader to New Orleans toward the end of the nineteenth and into the early twentieth centuries. The Touro Infirmary treated both Jewish and non-Jewish patients, some of whom died while in its care. The leaders created a paupers' cemetery and worked with local undertakers to arrange for funerals. Jumonville informs the reader concerning the background of the infirmary's leadership and those under its care—Jewish immigrants from central and eastern Europe and a growing number of American-born Jews, as well as Catholics and Protestants from a variety of countries. The story of this philanthropy largely financed and run by Jews illustrates ecumenical outreach and the fact that not all immigrants or those born in America achieved success.

The next articles, both discussing Jewish women of Atlanta, are revisions of presentations from a session at the Southern Jewish Historical Society's 2015 Nashville conference. Emily Katz delves into the activities

of volunteers of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW), who assisted young women to obtain training and employment and worked with underprivileged elementary school students. The NCJW had been involved with assistance to immigrants virtually since its creation in 1893. That work had stressed “Americanization” to middle-class mores and etiquette, among other things. Working with national and local public and private agencies, the women of the 1960s used a similar approach and ultimately met similar criticism for insensitivity to the culture of the aid recipients: Orthodox Jews from eastern Europe in the first instance and African Americans during the more recent era. Nonetheless the commitment of these NCJW members was real and their assistance substantial. Whereas the Atlanta section of the NCJW had served as a conduit for Jewish women into the workings of the early Federation of Jewish Charities during the first two decades of the twentieth century, their efforts during the 1960s served as entrée into and preparation for professional leadership positions in Jewish communal institutions in the 1970s and 1980s.

Ellen Rafshoon takes us from Emily Katz’s organizational direction to a personality profile of a person who used her experience with Hadasah and the NCJW to help launch and then lead the Atlanta chapter of Planned Parenthood. Implicit in Esther Taylor’s efforts are transitions from Jewish to secular social service activities and, again, changes in the roles of women. Taylor appears as an exemplar of feminism yet draws back as Planned Parenthood decides to support abortion rights. Somewhat enigmatically, she fails to receive the support from the Atlanta section of NCJW one would expect. Although additional research remains, part of the answer may be provided by Emily Katz: the Atlanta section’s volunteers may have been overwhelmed with their employment and educational assistance endeavors.

Little has been written concerning Zionist efforts in the South and even less concerning direct involvement in the founding of Israel. Jeremy Katz brings together an oral interview and archival sources to trace Jews from Atlanta who illegally siphoned airplanes, military equipment, and personnel to the *Yishuv* and fought for Israeli independence. Here we see the origins of the Israeli Air Force through one family who made aliyah and an individual who ultimately converted to Christianity. Yet the story begins with two elements of Atlanta – and American – Jewry: the world

of the Reform and even intermarried of central European descent in juxtaposition with the eastern European Orthodox contingent.

Besides six book reviews, two exhibit reviews, and a website review, this year the editorial board approved the addition of movie reviews, and the journal's first such review also appears here. These will be occasional items as appropriate films appear and will be under the supervision of exhibit review editor Jeremy Katz. Section editors Jeremy Katz, Scott Langston, Adam Mendelsohn, and Stephen Whitfield make the success of these review sections possible.

With this issue we welcome Karen Franklin, Jeffrey Gurock, Adam Meyer, Lance Sussman, and Daniel Weinfeld to the editorial board. In another sign of the acceptance and vitality of the field, only one (Meyer) lives and works in the South, although all are knowledgeable concerning the subject matter. Besides members of the editorial board, thanks are due to outstanding outside peer reviewers Marni Davis, Eric Goldstein, Michael Hoberman, Catherine Kahn, Gary Laderman, Bobbie Malone, Jonathan Sarna, and Hollace A. Weiner. Rachel Heimovics Braun, Karen Franklin, Bernie Wax, Hollace Weiner, and Dan Weinfeld provided tremendous assistance as proof readers. Working with new computer programs, interacting with authors, formatting articles, reviewing articles for style and citation accuracy, obtaining illustrations, overseeing the printing and mailing process, providing me with thoughtful advice, and doing so much more, Bryan E. Stone is performing exemplary service as managing editor. Last year, founding managing editor Rachel Heimovics Braun instigated a discussion concerning changes in the society website associated with the journal and updated a huge amount of material that has now been incorporated into the journal material available online. After considerable discussion and research developed by Bryan and Rachel, the decision was made to offer the first ten volumes of the journal, rather than just the first three, gratis through the website. Les Bergen, Adam Meyer, Stuart Rockoff, and Ellen Umansky were particularly helpful in undertaking and implementing these changes. We will continue to weigh the benefits of increased accessibility versus the desire for income from sales in determining the free availability of additional volumes. The journal continues to be a community effort.

Mark K. Bauman

In the Board We Trust: Jewish Communal Arbitration Cases in Antebellum Charleston, South Carolina

by

Barry L. Stiefel*

Jews have resided in the American South for much of its history. Wherever Jewish communities reached a critical size, institutions for supporting the practice of Judaism and life cycle events were established. Most commonly first came a cemetery, possibly with a Hebrew benevolent society, then a minyan, followed by a synagogue and school. Another was a Board of Trustees, often called the *adjunta* in the colonial congregations, all of which followed Sephardic tradition. The board occasionally functioned as an informal Jewish court of arbitration managed by lay leaders to resolve internal problems and disputes, in contrast to a *beth din*, a formal court conducted by ordained rabbis. In antebellum southern Jewish communities, board tribunals were usually temporary and formed as needed. The members were often the community's most knowledgeable individuals in matters pertaining to Judaism, who rendered decisions in disputes—not a jury of peers, but a panel of experts.

It is within these boards in the American South that religious legal practices, specifically during the antebellum period, will be examined. Ample reasons exist for concentrating on the South and this era. From about 1800 to 1830, more Jews resided in South Carolina than in New York, the state today with the largest Jewish population.¹ The first permanent resident rabbi to hold a pulpit on the continent did not do so until 1840, when Abraham Rice became the spiritual leader of the Balti-

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more Hebrew Congregation in Maryland.² American Reform began when the Reformed Society of Israelites broke away from Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim (KKBE) in Charleston during the 1820s. The second Reform congregation in the United States to split from the parent body, Har Sinai Verein, was organized in Baltimore in reaction to Rice's strict adherence to tradition. Thus, we are examining a transitional period during which individuals and congregations wrestled with adherence to tradition with little rabbinical oversight, and lay leaders, not ordained rabbis, rendered judgments concerning halacha and communal matters. During this time the nascent Reform movement was still paying some attention to religious law, although adherence to tradition incrementally waned. The early decades of the nineteenth century were pivotal ones for Jews in the American South as elsewhere and were characterized as an era of metamorphosis and conflict over Jewish communal governance and regulation, the changing role of the synagogue community and acculturation, and redefining Jewish identity in respect to modernity and American citizenship.³

Before Rice and for decades after his arrival, most Jewish spiritual leaders in the United States were hazanim, who were trained in Jewish ritual and law but lacked ordination. Typically, in British colonial North America and then the United States, hazanim went by the titles of "Reverend" or "Minister." They lacked legitimate halachic ruling authority since they were not trained at the level of ordination. To clarify, what will largely be studied are congregational rulings, not the formal religious jurisprudence of *battei din* that came later.⁴ To date little research has been undertaken on congregational boards in the American South, let alone South Carolina in particular. Indeed, scholarship has focused primarily on the Northeast.

Historical Context

To better understand the congregation boards of the antebellum American South, it is essential to understand the history of Jewish settlement within the region and how these bodies functioned as tribunals. When eight English lords led by Anthony Ashley Cooper received a charter as lord proprietors for Carolina colony in 1670, they recruited the eminent Enlightenment philosopher John Locke to draft "The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina." Although the document was never

ratified, elements of it reflected the philosophical underpinning of the colony. Article 97 indicated that although the Church of England was the state-sanctioned faith, "Jews, heathens, and other dissenters from the purity of Christian religion" were permitted to settle and form congregations. Carolina was a private colony under the British government, and the investors sought settlers who could produce a profit, including non-conformists such as Huguenots, Jews, and Quakers. By the 1690s, Jews were found in Charleston's public records, establishing their first congregation, KKBE, in 1749. Charleston, known by the nineteenth-century nickname "Holy City," served as a haven for freedom of conscience.⁵

The Jewish community in South Carolina developed alongside that of the neighboring colony of Georgia. Jewish settlement in Georgia dates from 1733, shortly after James Oglethorpe established the colony. During the formative planning years for the colony, Bevis Marks, the Sephardic congregation in London, had made unsuccessful overtures to the colony's Trustees and the Board of Trade for the settlement of Jewish paupers in the vicinity of the Carolinas. The ship *William and Sarah* arrived in Savannah carrying forty-two Jewish colonists while the infant colony was in the midst of a disease epidemic. Among the Jewish newcomers was the physician Samuel Nunes Ribiero, who immediately began work to stop the spread of the malady that was killing the colonists. At the time of their arrival, the colony's trustees barred Jews from settlement. However, Governor Oglethorpe never enforced this restriction and instead permitted the Jews to settle because of the assistance Ribiero provided, among other reasons. The trustees eventually accepted Oglethorpe's decision, and the Jews were allowed to remain. In 1733 they established congregation Kahal Kadosh Mickve Israel.⁶

With the onset of the War of Jenkins' Ear between Great Britain and Spain in 1740, the Sephardic Jews of Georgia fled to South Carolina out of fear that the Spanish might invade from Florida and bring the Inquisition. Only two Ashkenazic families, Sheftall and Minis, remained. Although many of the Sephardim eventually returned and others joined them, for the duration of the colonial period Georgia's Jewish population remained small.⁷ Nonetheless it grew following the American Revolution, eventually leading to the construction of its first synagogue in 1820.⁸ Charleston and Savannah were very closely knit socially, economically, and in terms of Jewish practice.

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*From the Fundamental
Constitutions of Carolina,
July 21, 1669. Undated edition.
(Courtesy of Special Collections,
College of Charleston.)*

Both cities were heavily dependent upon the cash crops of rice, cotton, and indigo produced by slave labor. The elites of Charleston and Savannah also developed an interconnected aristocracy that worked together to protect their common interest in national and international affairs. Although a relatively small number of Jews in Charleston and Savannah were directly involved with plantation ownership, or intermarriage with the upper echelons of gentile society, as merchants and shopkeepers they were tied to the economic fortunes of the region and benefited from their own economic and familial networks. Since both South Carolina and Georgia were open to Jewish settlement during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Jews became very acculturated within the first or second generation.⁹

As in many other Atlantic World Jewish communities, most notably documented by Aviva Ben-Ur in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Suriname, conflicts arose in Charleston involving breaks from tradition and power struggles within the congregation. Within Suriname's communal records, Ben-Ur found an abundance of evidence that congregants frequently resented their leaders. Some congregants regularly challenged the authority of their board, at times causing turmoil within the community. Moreover, the synagogue officers, called the *parnasim*, would often take affronts to rule with extreme seriousness, even when the issue at times could be considered petty.¹⁰ Examples of congregant challenges to board authority will also be discussed in this article.

The earliest mention of a board in the American South dates from 1749, corresponding to the formation of Charleston's KKBE. According to Nathaniel Levin's 1843 article, "The Jewish Congregation of Charleston," Moses Cohen was elected by the founding members to be the "מכה באור תיב ויד" (*hacham v'av beth din*), or the rabbi and head of the *beth din*, but what cases he presided over, if any, have been forgotten.¹¹ James W. Hagy observes that Cohen was not an ordained rabbi but did acquire some instruction in Jewish law while in London earlier in his life. This may have been the qualification the congregants used to select him as religious head of the congregation.¹² During this period, service on the board was by elders of the community who had honor, prestige, and influence. However, board service could also be cumbersome, which is why on occasion some congregants refused to serve and were fined for not doing their duty. The founders of Charleston's KKBE were primarily

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Sephardim, Jews whose ancestors fled antisemitic edicts and policies in the Iberian Peninsula. This is in contrast to the other demographic, the Ashkenazim, who traced their origins to central and eastern Europe. During the mid-eighteenth century, South Carolina's Sephardic Jews identified with their coreligionists in London and Amsterdam, the colonial "mother communities," where *battei din* dated from the seventeenth century.¹³ In Europe, *battei din* settled internal communal disputes ranging from breaches of contract to matters of divorce, as well as oversight of ritual observance.

Traditional Judaism makes no philosophical separation between religious and secular matters; all are addressed within the codifications of the *Tanakh* and Talmud. Throughout the Middle Ages, Christian and Muslim monarchs often delegated judicial matters to Jewish communal leaders—appointed by the government, elected by the Jewish constituency, or both—to preside over their Jewish subjects. Usually the only constraints were cases that entailed capital punishment or legal matters that involved non-Jewish parties. Throughout much of Europe and the Mediterranean, Jews also tended to avoid secular courts due to perceptions that these courts were either corrupt or antisemitic. Judges were selected among Jewish leaders who were often, but not always, knowledgeable in Jewish law and thus were usually ordained rabbis. Jews who appealed for outside, non-Jewish intervention on legal matters were often considered traitors to their people, known as *malshinim*. Thus medieval Jews often resolved disputes among themselves. If a matter was exceptionally complicated, the judges might seek guidance from esteemed colleagues in another Jewish community. For instance, colonial Jews often sought the input of their coreligionists in London and Amsterdam, as well as the more established colonial communities in the Caribbean, such as Curaçao.¹⁴

However, in the smaller colonial Jewish communities—which comprised all of those in North America during the colonial and early national periods—seeking consistent judicial input from Jewish courts, especially concerning minor disputes from far-off places, was impractical. Thus Jewish colonists frequently sought arbitration from secular courts and, when religious issues arose outside of secular court jurisdiction, from local synagogue boards.¹⁵ Common Jewish religious issues that necessitated adjudication by a board included aspects of marriage

and divorce, establishing the Jewish identity (or the lack thereof) of an individual, burial rights, and infractions of ritual observance in the synagogue and public realm.

Therefore, those who went before a synagogue board did so of their own accord for arbitration or for a religious matter that was beyond the jurisdiction of an American court of law, however limited the latter were by the principle of separation of church and state. Nonetheless, gray areas between Jewish religious law and American secular law could result in complicated situations regarding arbitration.

Early Synagogue Board Cases

In 1788 KKBE's board in Charleston addressed one of the earliest recorded cases brought to a congregational board in the American South. This case had significant legal implications for the relationship between Jewish religious law and American secular law, and it involved an instance of divorce, likely the first divorce in South Carolina since the practice was not legalized in the state until 1868. Moreover, although South Carolina law is based on precedents and customs in English common law, the state government did not simply echo English law. In order to obtain a divorce in England between 1670 and 1857, under the Matrimonial Causes Act, one had to appeal to either an Anglican ecclesiastical court—something beyond the pale for a Jew—or petition for an act of Parliament, an incredibly expensive endeavor. Thus, only 317 wealthy non-Jewish individuals divorced in the British Isles prior to 1857.¹⁶ This is in contrast to the 347 Jews who were granted divorces by London's *beth din* between 1700 and 1857, which is significant when we consider what a small percentage of the population Jews constituted in England during this period.¹⁷

In colonial South Carolina, as throughout most of British North America, Anglican ecclesiastical courts existed, but none granted divorces due to what they perceived as the inherent spiritual deficiency of the colonial courts compared to the courts of Great Britain—a similar dynamic to the perceived shortcomings of colonial congregational boards as opposed to the *battei din* of London and Amsterdam. However, not until 1852 did London's *beth din* actually authenticate a divorce case—from New York—demonstrating the independence of North American congregational boards.¹⁸ In contrast to Parliament, the colonial assem-

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blies also did not delve into issues of divorce. However, in Puritan and Congregationalist New England, where marriage was codified as a civil contract, a form of divorce was available and granted on rare occasions. After the American Revolution, with legal and religious ties severed from Great Britain, the states began to enact divorce laws, beginning with New York and Pennsylvania in the 1780s. Of the original thirteen states, South Carolina was the last to legislate the permissibility of divorce in 1868.¹⁹

The divorce case in Charleston involved a Jewish couple, Elizabeth Chapman (her maiden name), and her husband, Mordecai Lyon. The congregational board found the couple to be incompatible—indeed, both desired the marriage to end—and granted Chapman a divorce as well as the written get that comes with it. Local civil authorities permitted this act by the board, even recording it with the Secretary of State the following year. The divorce was considered a “peculiar” practice of an unusual but harmless religious minority group, protected by the free practice of religion. After the divorce, Chapman and Lyon both remarried, and it was, in fact, these second marriages, permitted by the state and not deemed bigamous, that, *ex post facto*, validated the Jewish divorce as permissible within secular law.²⁰ In 1840 another Jewish couple in Charleston, Sarah and George Prince, also divorced, illustrating a continuation of the custom. In 1799 Savannah’s congregation Mickve Israel granted a divorce between Hannah Minis and David Leion prior to its legalization by the state of Georgia in 1802.²¹

KKBE’s records disclose exceptionally bizarre divorce proceedings that link the issue of Jewish and secular law together with international jurisprudence. On June 12, 1839, the board received a letter from Amsterdam’s Jewish community, stating that one of KKBE’s congregants, “Mr. [Isaac] Garretson had a wife in Amsterdam, whom he had left many years ago, & who was now in very distressed circumstances,” thus leaving her an *agunah*.²² This was different from the contemporary case of a recalcitrant husband because a man who willingly left his wife an *agunah* could be punished with excommunication.²³

Furthermore, while Jews in Christian lands no longer practiced polygamy, as had the biblical patriarchs, it is permitted in a technical legal sense because the prohibition is rabbinic rather than biblical, originating from Rabbi Gershom ben Judah during the eleventh century.

Therefore a married Jewish man can be “remarried” without a divorce—although an abandoned Jewish wife cannot because of the biblical prohibition against polyandry. Garretson was summarily notified to report to the board, which he did on June 15. The charges as described in the letter from Amsterdam were read to Garretson, who was asked to respond in his defense. According to the minutes, Garretson claimed:

[In] the year 1821 he left Amsterdam for this Country, his wife refusing to accompany him. That about a Year after his arrival in America he wrote for her, but received a Letter informing him that she had committed Adultery, that he had endeavored to get a divorce, but could not succeed [because] subsequently she had become a Christian & he [lost] by that every chance of a Divorce agreeable to our [Jewish] Law. He, Mr. [Garretson] then Applied to the authorities of the State of Pennsylvania where he then resided, & received a [civil] Divorce from the Court of Common Pleas in the City of Philadelphia, in the year 1835, all of which Mr. Garretson proved by authentic Letters & Documents.²⁴

Considering that within Jewish legal practice the position of attorney-at-law does not exist, Isaac Garretson did well defending himself. Since his wife not only committed adultery but also apostasy to Christianity, which he was able to prove through the letters he had from her as evidence, he was not obligated to deliver a divorce with a Jewish get to her.²⁵ The certificate is relatively meaningless for those outside of Jewish law. However, there is still the question of whether Garretson needed a *heter me'ah rabbanim*, a letter signed by a hundred ordained rabbis nullifying the prohibition against polygamy due to the special circumstances, so that he would not be an “*agun*,” the male equivalent of an *agunah*.²⁶ However, in 1839 when Garretson’s board hearing took place, not a single rabbi resided in the United States; not until the following year did Abraham Rice arrive in Baltimore. One would have to have traveled to either Europe or the Mediterranean to obtain the required signatures for a *heter me'ah rabbanim*, a most impractical undertaking. Nonetheless, by obtaining a secular divorce through Pennsylvania’s Court of Common Pleas, where divorce had been legal since 1785, Garretson removed any civil impediment to remarriage even in South Carolina.²⁷ In the Netherlands, divorce had been legal since the seventeenth century, so he could have returned to his native land without any issue there either, as long as

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he provided documentation.²⁸ However, Garretson did not end his testimony there—and this is where matters get interesting.

Mr. Garretson further stated that the Wife he now lived with [another woman] was born a Christian, that from her 7th or 8th year of age she had lived in his father's house, & lived with them as a Jewess, that she accompanied him to this Country in the capacity as a Servant, that he subsequently married her privately by giving her kidushim [*kiddushin*] in the presence of Three Witnesses, but he admitted that she was never made a Jewess, but in contrary was still a Christian as she was born.

Finally, Mr. Garretson added that some Months ago he waited on the Rev. Mr. Poznanski [the spiritual leader of KKBE], to whom he stated the above circumstances, but had denied to the Rev. gentleman that he was married to his second wife, Altho' he now states that such was the case.²⁹

The page from the Minute Book of KKBE's Board of Trustees regarding the hearing of Isaac Garretson, June 15, 1839. (Photograph by Barry Stiefel, courtesy of Special Collections, College of Charleston.)

*Dr. B. A. Rodrigues at about age twenty-four.
(Courtesy of Special Collections, College of Charleston.)*

In this second portion of the testimony, Garretson incriminated himself on the prohibition of intermarriage in Jewish law. Furthermore KKBE's bylaws permitted only those designated by the congregation to officiate at weddings, so that the congregation could control this aspect of Jewish life. The congregation designated Gustavus Poznanski, a trained hazan, for the task. Indeed, only a month prior, the same board punished Dr. B. A. Rodrigues, another congregant, for officiating at an unsanctioned Jewish wedding. Rodrigues was fined fifty dollars, and his congregational privileges were revoked until the penalty was paid.³⁰ Clandestine marriage was a significant issue in many nineteenth-century Jewish communities because it undermined congregational authority. Jonathan D. Sarna records several instances of unauthorized Jewish weddings in Philadelphia during this period, testifying that these issues were not exclusive to Charleston.³¹

However, what made matters worse for Garretson was that his bride was not Jewish; at least in Rodrigues's transgression, all parties

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involved were Jews. Jewish law forbids intermarriage, although one may marry a convert. The secretary for the testimony underlined the words “privately” and “*kidushim*” (or “*kiddushin*”) for emphasis. *Kiddushin* is traditionally conducted underneath a wedding canopy and is one of the requirements for a Jewish wedding. Under this chuppah, the groom gives the bride a wedding ring with the recitation of seven benedictions, followed by cohabitation. A minimum of two witnesses is required to validate these actions in Jewish law, and Garretson utilized three for his private ceremony. However, any one of the actions just described can cause one to be married even if the others are not fulfilled. The outstanding issue here is that the bride was not Jewish.³²

In South Carolina, common-law marriage was legal, and Isaac Garretson’s second wife, whose name is never mentioned in the congregational minutes, had already become his common-law wife through the length of their cohabitation. According to Garretson’s testimony, she had been a servant in a Jewish home and had lived as a “Jewess,” and thus she would have been familiar with Jewish domestic ritual including kashrut, Sabbath and holiday observance, and possibly even the family ritual purity practices called *taharat ha-mishpachah*. As shall be demonstrated, Garretson’s gentile second wife also attended synagogue regularly, even having an assigned seat. That this woman immigrated with Isaac Garretson as a “Servant” suggests that they may have had a preexisting personal relationship of some form, and possibly his first wife was aware of this, at least to some degree. Assessing Isaac Garretson’s relationship with his first wife based on the extant documentation is impossible. Across much of Europe during this period, arranged marriages were still widely practiced within Jewish communities.

Garretson mentioned that he had approached “Rev. Mr. Poznanski” about the issue “some Months ago.” This may have been in early April 1839. Recorded in the *Southern Patriot* on April 17 is the wedding a week before of Levy Hynaman to Sarah Garretson, Isaac’s daughter, with Poznanski officiating.³³ At this event Garretson would have observed the procedures to conduct a Jewish wedding with his paramour. Additionally, not mentioned in the wedding announcement or other documentation is the identity of the mother of the bride, which would assist further with this investigation. If the second, non-Jewish wife was Sarah’s mother, the daughter would not have been Jewish since

*Announcement of the wedding of Levy Hynaman and Sarah Garretson,
Southern Patriot, April 17, 1839. (Courtesy of Karen Franklin.)*

traditionally religious affiliation is passed through the maternal line. This possibility would have created another problematic marriage from the perspective of Jewish law. The board does not appear to have discussed the matter of Sarah's maternity since it is not mentioned in any of the later recorded minutes.³⁴

It is for these reasons that congregations like KKBE wanted to control who officiated at Jewish weddings, besides the fees normally collected for the wedding service. During the early nineteenth century, the synagogue community, as a socioreligious structure that had guided American Jewish life since the early colonial period, was unraveling.³⁵ Garretson had to be made an example as a consequence of his disobedience in order to deter other congregants from committing the same transgressions, acts that would further erode board authority. Thus the board unanimously decided that Garretson and his second wife would be stripped of congregational membership and would "vacate their Seats in Synagogue." The justification given was that "he [Garretson] admitted that his present Wife, whom he had privately married was born a Christian, & had never been made a Jewess, which is contrary to Mosaical Law."³⁶

The Garretson case of 1839 also contrasts strikingly with the Ann Sarah Irby case of a generation earlier, as cited by Dana E. Kaplan. In 1784, Irby met and later married Abraham Alexander, then hazan of the congregation during the Revolutionary War Siege of Charleston. Irby was a Huguenot by birth and underwent a conversion process to Judaism prior to her marriage to Alexander, and the couple remained

together through the rest of their natural lives. The congregation accepted Ann Sarah Alexander as Abraham's lawful wife since they wedded with the permission of the congregation. However, Abraham was forced to step down from the position of hazan because it was felt by many that the conversion was incomplete due to the lack of ordained rabbis to conduct the conversion, thus disqualifying Abraham from office. This same shortcoming also denied Ann Sarah Alexander burial in the Jewish cemetery despite the testimony that she lived a religiously observant life. It is intriguing to see how, by working within the parameters set by KKBE as the Alexanders did, there was some flexibility in the manner religious law pertaining to marriage was instituted.³⁷

The board addressed other religious issues, but these discussions were relatively brief in comparison to matters of marriage and divorce. The following is a sampling of issues from the late 1830s and early 1840s. On November 26, 1838, the board approved Sally Lopez's idea for a Jewish Sunday school and its curriculum, which had been proposed the previous month. This became the second Jewish Sunday school founded in the United States, following the first in Philadelphia.³⁸ A month later, on December 29, Mr. Levy from New York was approved to be the new *shochet*. Also on December 29, a letter was received from the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation requesting that the belongings of L. Fischer, who died in Charleston from yellow fever, be returned to his widow.³⁹ On August 15, 1841, Rachel Lambert requested that her son be buried in Charleston's Jewish cemetery. Lambert was married to a non-Jew, the boy's father. The request was granted since the boy's mother was Jewish.⁴⁰ Sarna's review of other early American congregational records from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries provides similar proceedings conducted by their boards.⁴¹ As can be observed from the litany of events, the various congregations of the United States were often in communication with one another and aware of each other's actions. Between 1838 and 1841, Charleston's KKBE interacted with the Jewish congregations in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and New York.

The Division of Community and a Call for Unity

Thus far only cases involving South Carolina's first Jewish congregation, KKBE, have been discussed. In the nineteenth century additional congregations were established in Charleston and other cities. The Re-

formed Society of Israelites, the first Reform congregation in the United States, separated from KKBE in 1824. The issues of contention were proposed modifications to “modernize” the mode of worship, as well as changes to ritual practices such as abbreviating worship and using more English instead of the customary Hebrew and Spanish. KKBE’s traditionalists, who controlled the board, rejected these proposals. Unfortunately, few records of the Reformed Society of Israelites survive, so what took place concerning religious issues within that congregation is difficult to ascertain. By the late 1830s the Reformed Society of Israelites stopped functioning following internal discord, outside criticism, and the withdrawal of some central leaders. Many individuals reconciled their differences with KKBE and rejoined, but the concept of reformation did not disappear.⁴²

In 1838 a fire devastated much of Charleston, including the synagogue built in 1794. Work soon began on rebuilding, and the second synagogue was completed in 1841. For many, the new building offered an opportunity to revisit reform. Reforms included innovations as already described, as well as the installation and use of a pipe organ in the sanctuary for use during religious services. Nonvocal musical accompaniment on the Sabbath, such as by a pipe organ, is forbidden in traditional Judaism because of its historical interpretation as work and its association with Christian church practices. Abstinance from musical accompaniment was also an ancient Jewish mourning practice in memory of the Jerusalem Temple destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE. This time, the reformers constituted a slight majority, resulting in the traditionalists leaving to form an Orthodox congregation, Shearit Israel. However, a contentious issue lingered concerning the ownership of KKBE’s building, since members on both sides had contributed to its construction.⁴³

Recognizing the bias of the board, the reformers immediately brought the case before the secular court system. Judge Andrew Butler presided over *State v. Ancker* in South Carolina’s Court of Common Pleas. In a decision that became precedent for limiting government interference in matters of religion, Butler ruled that the government could not intervene in religious or theological problems and that each faith must resolve such issues internally according to the provisions of the First Amendment. However, Butler found against KKBE’s traditionalist board

for violating the congregation's constitution under contract law, since the pipe organ—the physical matter of contention—had been installed after a majority congregational vote. Details of the internal controversy regarding KKBE's pipe organ are well covered in Allan Tarshish's article, "The Charleston Organ Case," but a key element to highlight here is that in 1843, due to the contract law violation by the traditionalists who were following Jewish law and its prohibition of instrumental music on the Sabbath, Butler awarded the synagogue building to the reform faction.⁴⁴ KKBE thus became the first permanent Reform congregation in the United States. Others followed, notably in Baltimore and New York, in the mid 1840s.

Orthodox Shearit Israel's records are lost, so further analysis concerning its board's religious legal rulings is impossible. After significant

losses in membership during the Civil War, in 1866 the remaining members of Shearit Israel negotiated a merger with KKBE. Also in Charleston, in 1854, a third minyan was established, which became Berith Shalome (now Brith Sholom), a congregation that followed the Ashkenazic rite; Shearit Israel and KKBE both followed Sephardic traditions. Rabbi Hirsch Levine, who came to the United States around 1850 and founded this congregation, was the first ordained rabbi to serve in Charleston. Among his personal belongings survives his record book, within which he documented procedures for conducting *halitzah* and for slaughtering kosher meat. Unfortunately, the earliest surviving descriptive documents

*Rabbi Hirsch Levine, the first
ordained rabbi in Charleston.
(Courtesy of Special Collections,
College of Charleston.)*

of the congregation date from the early twentieth century.⁴⁵ Additional communities emerged elsewhere in South Carolina, including another Sephardic congregation, also called Shearit Israel, in Columbia, founded in 1846. Thus, in theory, four boards could have been acting with judicial functions side-by-side in the state during this period—none recognizing the legitimacy of the others.

The resolution of disputes involving religious law by congregational boards is not common in Reform temples, especially after the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885, which rejected ritual Jewish laws that lacked moral basis. However, prior to 1885, such bodies did decide issues of ritual. In 1843, shortly after KKBE's synagogue was awarded to the reformers, for example, the congregation's board ordered the cessation of the use of the pipe organ the moment the Sabbath technically began:

Resolved—That the first Hebrew Hymn known as Mizmor Ledavid and Lecha Dody, which, on & after the consecration of the Synagogue were sung with the Organ, may again be sung with the same, but that, of the Mizmor Shir Leyom Hashabat, which is the proper beginning of the Sabbath, the Organ must cease playing & must not again be used until the following Friday Evening; that these regulations be considered as the proper regulations of the Synagogue, & that the services of Mr. [C. A.] Dacosta will not be required after the two above named Hymns on Friday Evening, nor on the Sabbath day. . . . Unanimously adopted.⁴⁶

American Reform Judaism remained in its infancy even where it was most advanced. Its character-defining abandonment of such traditions as kosher dietary restrictions and segregated gender seating did not come until 1851 with Anshe Emeth of Albany, New York.⁴⁷ Abbreviated worship, prayers in the vernacular, shortened holidays (from two days to one), as well as instrumental accompaniment were very contentious for the time. This can be seen from KKBE's stepping back from the use of the pipe organ on the Sabbath. The congregation still employed a *shochet* to provide congregants kosher meat, and women remained separated in the balcony during worship, a place normally reserved for slaves in antebellum southern churches. As Gary P. Zola argues, southern Jews were very aware that through reforming traditional Jewish rituals and customs, they could claim to their gentile neighbors that they were not foreigners, something quite important to them.⁴⁸ However, the transition

from Old World-style traditional Judaism to a Reform approach evolved gradually over several decades.

KKBE's policy on conversion also changed. Prior to the split between KKBE and Shearit Israel, the board refused to convert proselytes, claiming that it lacked sufficient expertise in this matter of Jewish law. This was a custom that originated with influential founding members including early hazanim Isaac DaCosta and Moses Cohen.⁴⁹ They required those who sought to become Jews to do so elsewhere, such as in London, and then to provide proper documentation upon returning to the congregation for membership. However, in 1847, KKBE was reapproached about conversion following its change to Reform, this time by Ann Buckheister. The board had Poznanski interview Buckheister regarding her motives and interests for converting to Judaism and to inquire about her knowledge of the religion. Following the interview the board accepted her as a new congregant—a complete departure from normative Orthodox conversion procedure considering that neither Poznanski nor anyone on the board was an ordained rabbi.⁵⁰ The conversion entailed few demands (a promise to remain faithful to Judaism), as well as very little ritual or ceremony. There is no mention of a *mikvah* as required in Orthodox conversions. Indeed, Buckheister may have been the first, or at least one of the first, to convert directly from Christianity to Reform Judaism in America, if not the world. Poznanski's successors, such as hazan Maurice Mayer, were also liberal and admired Poznanski's opinions, which perpetuated the innovation that Reform conversions would be different than Orthodox.⁵¹

However, this was by no means the first instance in which conversions to Judaism were attempted in early North American history. An intriguing case took place in late-eighteenth-century Philadelphia involving Elizabeth Whitlock, who changed her name to Esther Mordecai following her conversion and subsequent first marriage to Moses Mordecai. According to Sarna, the person who converted Elizabeth/Esther and the location are unknown, especially if a trip to Europe, the Mediterranean, or the Caribbean was made, where Jewish religious authorities competent in conversion could be found. A South Carolina connection was then established following the widowhood of Esther Mordecai, who remarried Jacob I. Cohen, originally from Charleston. Since Cohen was a descendant of biblical priests—the *kohanim*—Jewish law forbade that he

marry a convert. The unsanctioned marriage occurred anyway in Philadelphia, conducted as a private ceremony without the hazan and without permission of the city's congregation, Mikveh Israel. As far as is known, the married couple and all those involved had no agenda of religious reformation, in contrast to Poznanski and others in 1840s Charleston. Jacob I. Cohen did not leave the fold of traditional Judaism. Subsequently, he helped found Richmond, Virginia's congregation Beth Shalome and later returned to Philadelphia, where he served as president of the congregation that had once barred his marriage.⁵²

A ketubbah prepared in Philadelphia for the 1782 wedding of Jacob I. Cohen, previously of Charleston, and Esther Mordecai, who had been born Elizabeth Whitlock and had converted to Judaism before marrying her first husband. The witnesses, who signed on the lower right, include Mordecai Sheftall and Haym Salomon, both prominent Jewish figures in the colonies and supporters of the American Revolution. (Courtesy of the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives.)

With the divisions within American Jewish communities in Charleston as well as Baltimore, New Orleans, New York, and other cities among Sephardim and Ashkenazim, as well as between Orthodox and Reformers, a demand grew for a national *beth din*—a “Supreme

Court” for all American Jews that would set standards for fundamental religious issues as well as serve as a unifying force. This already existed in other countries, especially where church and state were not separated. The most famous was Poland-Lithuania’s Council of the Four Lands, which functioned as a semi-Sanhedrin, or judicial congress, between 1580 and 1764, with seventy members on the tribunal instead of the usual three. Besides judicial matters, the council’s functions were also legislative and administrative on spiritual and cultural matters. It functioned further as the liaison between the collective Jewish community and the Polish-Lithuanian government. Non-Jews experimented with the idea as well, such as when in 1806 Napoleon Bonaparte convened a Grand Sanhedrin of Jewish leaders from Paris to provide legal sanction to the principles expressed by the French government in its relationship with Jewish citizens.⁵³

*The Grand Sanhedrin, between 1800 and 1827. Engraving by Michel François
Damane-Démartrais. (Wikimedia Commons.)*

In 1847, only two years after his arrival in the country, Rabbi Max Lilienthal organized what he hoped would be a national *beth din* for the United States, but it met only once before dissolving. At the time, Lilienthal was the chief Ashkenazic rabbi of New York, where he presided over three Orthodox congregations: Anshe Chessed, Shaarai Shamayim, and Rodef Shalom. Lilienthal chaired the tribunal as the *av beth din*, inviting Isaac Mayer Wise, then at Beth El of Albany, New York, and the leader of American moderate Reform Judaism, and Herman Kohlmeyer, rabbi of Shaarai Chessed in New Orleans, to join him on the tribunal. Kohlmeyer's Shaarai Chessed was the leading congregation of that city, which was quickly becoming the largest Jewish community in the South.⁵⁴ Unfortunately, Kohlmeyer was unable to attend the one meeting in New York, which took place on April 18, 1847. Herman Felsenheld, a knowledgeable teacher of Hebrew and religion from Anshe Chessed, filled his place. Those at this meeting discussed issues pertaining to conformity in mode of worship, Jewish educational instruction, and questions of policy concerning *agunah* raised in a letter by European rabbis. The issues were similar to those that came before KKBE's board in Charleston, those that were, and continue to be, among the legal questions that plague Orthodox Jewish life in America even today.⁵⁵

Rabbi Max Lilienthal.
(*Wikimedia Commons.*)

According to Lilienthal's biographer, Bruce L. Ruben, the failure of the national *beth din* was likely due to disagreement among the tribunal members. According to Ruben, Wise was in the midst of developing his new liturgy, *Minhag America*, and that what he was proposing was too progressively different from what Lilienthal and Felsenheld could accept, especially since the highly controversial *Hamburg Temple Prayer Book* (1819, 1841) exerted significant influence on Wise's proposed new prayer book for the United States. Since discussion of Wise's liturgy was on the agenda for the next meeting, and Lilienthal desired to avoid dissension and conflict because the national *beth din* was designed to be a unifying force, Lilienthal skirted the issue by simply not convening another meeting.⁵⁶

Unification of all American Jewish congregations, as many religious leaders had hoped for, would not come about. Congregations—and their boards—had grown to treasure their autonomy and wanted to retain independence over religious issues, even with the growing presence of ordained rabbis from Europe. The Jewish communities of American cities and towns remained divided on issues of doctrine and custom, and by 1854, in Charleston this included Sephardic and Ashkenazic orthodoxy, as well as Reform. As witnessed in Charleston, as well as elsewhere in North America, many laypeople preferred a more relaxed observance of religious law. Ordained rabbis from Europe who ventured to the United States to fill pulpits during this era could and did lose their positions or fail to have their contracts renewed because they did not fall into line with the views held by their boards.⁵⁷

Conclusion

For Charleston's antebellum board, incidents related to marriage were the most lengthily discussed cases. This is perhaps due to the gray area that marriage falls into between secular and Jewish religious law, whereby any authorized "minister" is permitted by the government to officiate at the wedding ceremony. This is in contrast to notary public-officiated and common-law marriage, where matrimony can take place in a secular manner without religious involvement. Popular demand for religious weddings, regardless of faith or denomination, is now a cultural practice and not a legal requirement. Since many people volunteer to have an ordained minister officiate at their respective weddings because

they find rituals and traditions meaningful, monitoring who solemnizes nuptials is the enduring influence religious authorities have. In the era of nineteenth-century religious reform, the disobedient actions of Dr. B. A. Rodrigues and Isaac Garretson were problematic for ecclesiastical leaders who sought to stem the tides of defiance, intermarriage, and acculturation.

Synagogue boards in South Carolina had the additional complication of permitting divorce before the state's civil authorities had sanctioned it. Rather than prohibiting it, the government acted benevolently in permitting divorce within the state as a free exercise of religion. The Chapman-Lyon divorce of 1788 is a case in point. Simultaneously, the government refrained from intervening in interreligious disputes, such as the first significant rift between Reform and Orthodox Judaism in *State v. Ancker*. Nonetheless, the state government did arbitrate in matters that crossed into the secular realm, as it did, for example, in awarding the KKBE building to the Reform faction as a result of a contract violation. However, the only other instance of the state interacting with a non-Christian faith during this period was the Moors Sundry Act of 1790, which prohibited free subjects of the Sultanate of Morocco from being enslaved if they came to South Carolina, since they were black Africans. By extension, the act enabled visitors from Morocco to observe Islam in private.⁵⁸

Lastly, officially ordained rabbis in antebellum America were few and far between. Hirsch Levine at Berith Shalome was the first in South Carolina, and, sadly, little is known about the congregation and how it functioned during this period. It is intriguing to think that so many complex cases were adjudicated by un-ordained lay leaders doing the best they could under the circumstances in what was one of North America's most prosperous Jewish congregations, especially in comparison to the Caribbean where larger, more established communities functioned. Nonetheless, the cases encountered were important, incremental steps in a development from the ways the legal aspects of Judaism were practiced formerly in the Old World to how their role would be negotiated and renegotiated for both Reform and Orthodox Jews in America and specifically in the South. The emphasis on marriage issues is also a reflection of the centrality of family life to Jewish heritage and observance.

NOTES

¹ In about 1800 there were approximately four hundred Jews in New York and five hundred in Charleston. In 1820 Charleston had six hundred Jews, and South Carolina as a whole had an estimated one thousand. See Ira Rosenwaike, *On the Edge of Greatness: A Portrait of American Jewry in the Early National Period* (Cincinnati, 1985), 14–16.

² Jacob Rader Marcus, *The Colonial American Jew, 1492–1776* (Detroit, 1970), 542, 927, 1333.

³ See Jonathan D. Sarna, *American Judaism: A History* (New Haven, 2004), which delves into these issues from a national perspective.

⁴ *Battei din*, where permitted, sometimes had legal standing beyond the country in which they occurred.

⁵ Gerard L. Alexander, *Nicknames of American Cities, Towns, and Villages, Past and Present* (New York, 1951), 61. See also, “Notice of Books,” *Dublin Review* 118 (1896): 194.

⁶ Saul Jacob Rubin, *Third to None: The Saga of Savannah Jewry, 1733–1983* (Savannah, 1983); Mark I. Greenberg, “A ‘Haven for Benignity’: Conflict and Cooperation Between Eighteenth-Century Savannah Jews,” in *Dixie Diaspora: An Anthology of Southern Jewish History*, ed. Mark K. Bauman (Tuscaloosa, 2006): 12–32; James W. Hagy, *This Happy Land: The Jews of Colonial and Antebellum Charleston* (Tuscaloosa, 1993); Marcus, *Colonial American Jew*, 469–74 and 349–67; William Pencak, *Jews and Gentiles in Early America, 1654–1800* (Ann Arbor, MI, 2005), 141–44.

⁷ Marcus, *Colonial American Jew*, 533–34.

⁸ Pencak, *Jews and Gentiles in Early America*, 162–65.

⁹ Theodore Rosengarten and Dale Rosengarten, eds., *A Portion of the People: Three Hundred Years of Southern Jewish Life* (Columbia, SC, 2002), 7, 88.

¹⁰ Aviva Ben-Ur, “Jerusalem on the Riverside: Jewish Political Autonomy in the Caribbean” (paper presented at the International Conference on Mapping the Western Sephardic Diaspora in the Caribbean, Hamburg, Germany, November 16–19, 2014). Such conflicts were typical with synagogues in the United States. See Sarna, *American Judaism*; Eli Faber, *A Time for Planting: The First Migration, 1654–1820* (Baltimore, 1992).

¹¹ N. L. [Nathaniel Levin], “The Jewish Congregation of Charleston,” *Occident and American Jewish Advocate* 1 (October 1843): 337.

¹² Hagy, *This Happy Land*, 60.

¹³ Barry Stiefel, *Jewish Sanctuary in the Atlantic World: A Social and Architectural History* (Columbia, SC, 2014), 14.

¹⁴ For a summary explanation on the sociocultural and political reasons that Jews chose to use, see Jerold S. Auerbach, *Justice Without Law?: Resolving Disputes Without Lawyers* (New York, 1983), 76–94. For a detailed description of *battei din*, see Arnold J. Cohen, *An Introduction to Jewish Civil Law* (Jerusalem, 1991).

¹⁵ Pencak, *Jews and Gentiles in Early America*, 169.

¹⁶ A. J. Joyce, *Richard Hooker and Anglican Moral Theology* (Oxford, 2012), 218.

¹⁷ Jeremy I. Pfeffer, "From One End of the Earth to the Other": *The London Bet Din, 1805–1855, and the Jewish Convicts Transported to Australia* (Brighton, UK, 2008), 113.

¹⁸ Pfeffer, "From One End of the Earth to the Other," 113.

¹⁹ Harry M. Ward, *The War for Independence and the Transformation of American Society* (London, 2003), 165–66.

²⁰ James W. Hagy, "Her 'Scandalous Behavior': A Jewish Divorce in Charleston, South Carolina, 1788," *American Jewish Archives Journal* 51 (Fall/Winter 1989): 185–95.

²¹ Malcom H. Stern. "The Sheftall Diaries: Vital Records of Savannah Jewry, 1733–1808," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 54 (March 1965): 268; Kaye Kole, *The Minis Family of Georgia, 1733–1992* (Savannah, 1992), 33–34; Roderick Phillips, *Untying the Knot: A Short History of Divorce* (Cambridge, 1991), 142.

²² Board of Trustee Minutes, June 12, 1839, Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim Congregation Records, Mss. 1047, Special Collections, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC (hereafter cited as KKBE Minutes).

²³ This was the case even if the husband's absence was because he died without issue and a brother refused to give *halitzah*—the Jewish ritual that releases a childless widow, otherwise her brother-in-law must wed her in order to give her a child in his dead brother's name—or because the husband disappeared but it was not known if he was dead, or because, rare in those days, he refused to deliver a *get*, the legal document finalizing the divorce.

²⁴ KKBE Minutes, June 15, 1839.

²⁵ In the postexpulsion period, rabbinical responsa of North Africa disagreed about this issue. Some authorities argued that a husband of an apostate would still need to deliver a *get*.

²⁶ ChaeRan Y. Freeze, *Jewish Marriage and Divorce in Imperial Russia* (Hanover, NH, 2002), 185.

²⁷ This is because of the requirement in Article 4 of the U.S. Constitution that each state must extend "full faith and credit" to the public acts of the other states.

²⁸ Phillips, *Untying the Knot*, 122.

²⁹ KKBE Minutes, June 15, 1839.

³⁰ *Ibid*, May 22, 1839.

³¹ Jonathan D. Sarna, "The Democratization of American Judaism," in *New Essays in American Jewish History*, ed. Pamela S. Nadell, Jonathan D. Sarna and Lance J. Sussman (Cincinnati, 2010), 95–108.

³² Rachel Biale, *Women and Jewish Law: An Exploration of Women's Issues in Halakhic Sources* (New York, 1984): 44–69.

³³ Barnett A. Elzas, *Jewish Marriage Notices from the Newspaper Press of Charleston, S.C., 1775–1906* (New York, 1917), 18.

³⁴ If Sarah's mother was not Jewish, Poznanski should not have conducted her marriage, and the congregation should have rejected it. If this scenario was the case, one might speculate that the liberal Poznanski could have performed the ceremony for the innocent girl

who thought she was Jewish without making an issue of her mother's religion, but then the issue might have become public. Instead of challenging the validity of Sarah and Levy Hynaman's marriage based on halacha, the congregation questioned the status of the parents. Yet this remains speculation since the record fails to disclose additional information.

³⁵ Sarna, *American Judaism*, 12–45.

³⁶ KKBE Minutes, June 15, 1839. See also, Myron Berman, *Richmond's Jewry, 1769–1976* (Richmond, 1979), 6, 10–12, 46–47, 99–101, which includes related cases.

³⁷ Dana E. Kaplan, "The Determination of Jewish Identity below the Mason-Dixon Line: Crossing the Boundary From Gentile to Jew in the Nineteenth-Century American South," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 52 (Spring 2001): 98–121.

³⁸ KKBE Minutes, November 26, 1838; Solomon Breitbart, *Explorations in Charleston's Jewish History* (Charleston, 2005), 82.

³⁹ KKBE Minutes, December 29, 1838.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, August 15, 1841.

⁴¹ Sarna, "The Democratization of American Judaism," 95–108.

⁴² Gary Phillip Zola, *Isaac Harby of Charleston, 1788–1828* (Tuscaloosa, 1994), 146–48, 169–74; Michael A. Meyer, *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism* (Detroit, 1988), 228–42; Sarna, *American Judaism*, 59.

⁴³ Deborah Dash Moore, "Freedom's Fruits: The Americanization of an Old-time Religion," in Rosengarten and Rosengarten, *A Portion of the People*, 10–21; Hagy, *This Happy Land*, 237–73. During the second decade of the nineteenth century, some early Reform congregations in the German states introduced organ music during services. Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, 43, 46, 54.

⁴⁴ Allan Tarshish, "The Charleston Organ Case," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 54 (June 1965): 411–49; Jonathan D. Sarna, "The Question of Music in American Judaism: Reflections at 350 Years," *American Jewish History* 91 (June 2003): 195–203.

⁴⁵ Jeffrey S. Gurock, *Orthodoxy in Charleston: Brith Sholom Beth Israel and American Jewish History* (Charleston, 2004), 2–3.

⁴⁶ KKBE Minutes, July 3, 1843. Unfortunately, the Friday evening order of the service at KKBE in 1843 cannot be provided since prayer books from the congregation are unavailable from this time period, and the minute book fails to offer identifiable information regarding which book was used.

⁴⁷ Jonathan D. Sarna, "The Debate over Mixed Seating in the American Synagogue," in *The American Synagogue: A Sanctuary Transformed*, ed. Jack Wertheimer (New York, 1987), 363–94.

⁴⁸ Gary P. Zola, "The Ascendancy of Reform Judaism in the American South During the Nineteenth Century," in *Jewish Roots in Southern Soil: A New History*, ed. Marcie Cohen Ferris and Mark I. Greenberg (Hanover, NH, 2006), 56–91.

⁴⁹ For DaCosta receiving his training from England and adhering to strict Sephardic Orthodox doctrine see Breitbart, *Explorations in Charleston's Jewish History*, 114. DaCosta likely would have been against the procedure used to convert Ann Buckheister.

⁵⁰ Hagy, *This Happy Land*, 84, 183.

⁵¹ Breibart, *Explorations in Charleston's Jewish History*, 122. See also, Anton Hieke, "Rabbi Maurice Mayer: German Revolutionary, Charleston Reformer, and Anti-Abolitionist," *Southern Jewish History* 17 (2014): 45–89.

⁵² Sarna, "The Democratization of American Judaism," 95–108. See also, Emily Bingham, *Mordecai: An Early American Family* (New York, 2003), 13–16, 25, 31; Berman, *Richmond's Jewry*.

⁵³ Nigel Aston, *Religion and Revolution in France, 1780–1804* (Washington, DC, 2000), 341–42.

⁵⁴ Sefton D. Temkin, "A Beth Din for America," in *Perspective on Jews and Judaism: Essays in Honor of Wolfe Kelman*, ed. Arthur A. Chiel (New York, 1978), 409–20.

⁵⁵ Auerbach, *Justice Without Law?*, 76–94. Also see Hannah Dreyfus, "Leading Rabbi Deals Big Blow To Agunah Court: YU's Schachter dismisses *beit din* solution as battle continues in Centrist/Modern Orthodox community," *Jewish Week*, September 1, 2015, accessed March 2, 2016, <http://www.thejewishweek.com/news/new-york/leading-rabbi-deals-big-blow-agunah-court>.

⁵⁶ Bruce L. Ruben, *Max Lilienthal: The Making of the American Rabbinate* (Detroit, 2011), 89.

⁵⁷ Hasia R. Diner, *A Time for Gathering: The Second Migration, 1820–1880* (Baltimore, 1992), 201–30.

⁵⁸ Peter Freneau, *The South-Carolina Justice of Peace: Containing All the Duties, Powers, and Authorities of that Office, As Regulated by the Laws Now of Force in this State*, 3rd ed. (New York, 1810), 307.

Nameless Graves:
The Touro Infirmary Cemetery in New Orleans,
1888–1908

by

Florence M. Jumonville*

On November 27, 1888, Isaac Weis entered a New Orleans hospital. The thirty-four-year-old peddler, a native of Austria, had been in the city for just two days. His diagnosis: typhoid fever. Exacerbated by poor sanitation and inadequate hygiene, cases of the dreaded bacterial disease arose most frequently among impoverished, malnourished immigrants. Except during the epidemic years of 1847 through 1852, just a handful of cases occurred annually in the Crescent City. In 1888 Touro Infirmary admitted three typhoid sufferers. Two died, one being Isaac Weis, who succumbed on December 20. The next day, the Touro lost another patient, Mrs. B. Levi, who fell victim to chronic albuminuria (albumin in the urine, symptomatic of kidney disease) after two days in the hospital. The forty-seven-year-old housewife had moved to New Orleans from Bavaria at the age of nineteen. Hers was one of two deaths from albuminuria at the Touro that year.¹

During the nineteenth century, hospitals functioned on the periphery of health care. Sick people obtained assistance from relatives or neighbors, consulting a physician only if illness persisted. They viewed hospitals as a last resort, a refuge that privileged Americans provided for the less fortunate— young men such as Isaac Weis, distant from the ministrations of their families and friends, and people who, like Mrs. Levi, fell victim to incapacitating disorders. By midcentury, however, confidence in the beneficial effects of contemporary medicine had begun to build. The Civil War transformed medical treatment and dramatically

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advanced the design and administration of hospitals, demonstrating, for example, the therapeutic properties of cleanliness, orderliness, and ventilation. The war also introduced hospital care to a large proportion of the nation's young men, who fell ill or sustained injuries while in military service. Although destitution, desperation, and agony still impelled the urban poor to accept the charity and the trauma of inpatient treatment, they no longer constituted virtually the entire hospital population.²

In addition to their European nativity, poverty, and avoidance of medical care until their conditions became dire, Isaac Weis and Mrs. Levi shared the coincidence that they passed away at the same hospital within hours of each other. That and their Jewish faith led further to the happenstance that theirs were the first burials in the newly established Touro Infirmary Cemetery on Joseph Street, where their remains were laid to rest in neighboring plots respectively labeled only 1 and 2. Over the next twenty years, additional charitable interments followed in another 153 graves. The occupants of 117 of them are identified in the death records of Touro Infirmary, which are housed at its archives.³

What does information in those records tell us about the nineteenth-century Jewish community in New Orleans and how it addressed the burial of its poor? How did their interments compare with those of indigent gentiles and of Touro Infirmary patients with means? Where did the Touro Infirmary Cemetery fit in the larger mosaic of Jewish philanthropy in New Orleans, and who spearheaded that philanthropy? An investigation of charitable interments between 1888 and 1908 suggests that New Orleanians of all faiths shared a desire to bury the indigent respectfully on ground higher than the city's water table.

The New Orleans Way of Death

Sometime after 1725, the first formal cemetery in New Orleans was established on St. Peter Street, slightly beyond the city limits of that time. Situated in the square bounded also by Rampart, Burgundy, and Toulouse Streets, it stood just across Rampart Street from one of the several hospitals that existed in the early years. In other parts of what became the United States, settlers built hospitals as swiftly as possible. It is likely that they repeated the procedure in Louisiana as well, for this colony presented an "unhealthy, swampy environment [where they] were

obliged to struggle against more fierce epidemics than those which beset any other American colony, and where medical care was essential if the colonists were to survive the scourges of disease."⁴ Prominent colonials who succumbed to these rigors had been entombed in the parish church of St. Louis or the adjacent churchyard until 1774, when these spaces approached capacity. In 1788 an outbreak of a now-forgotten disease took many lives and filled the St. Peter Street Cemetery, thus necessitating its closure and opening the way for eventual development of the site. In 1800 much of the ground was raised and covered over, and a plan was drawn for its division into twelve building lots. From time to time, well into the twentieth century, excavation on the site unearthed the debris of death—coffins, intact or broken, along with bone fragments and full skeletons.⁵

In 1789 the first St. Louis Cemetery supplanted the St. Peter Street Cemetery. It encompassed a ninety-thousand-square-foot site about forty yards beyond Charity Hospital's garden at the edge of town. Although administered by the wardens of the St. Louis Church, it included a section at the rear for non-Catholics and, behind that, an even larger area for African Americans, whether Catholics or Protestants. The footprint of St. Louis Cemetery I shrank to about a quarter of its original size after the opening of the Girod Street Cemetery for Protestants in 1822 rendered its non-Catholic section superfluous.⁶

Upon entering this graveyard during travels in 1830, writer Joseph Holt Ingraham declared that he was "struck with surprise and admiration" for its "innumerable isolated tombs, of all sizes, shapes, and descriptions, built above ground . . . [like] a Lilliputian city."⁷ Straying from the main avenues, he found himself at the outskirts of the cemetery, where indigents, prisoners, and outsiders were buried. "I came suddenly upon a desolate area," Ingraham wrote,

without a tomb to relieve its dank and muddy surface, dotted with countless mounds, where the bones of the moneyless, friendless stranger lay buried. There was no stone to record their names or country. Fragments of coffins were scattered around, and new-made graves, half filled with water, yawned on every side awaiting their unknown occupants.⁸

Because much of New Orleans lies below sea level, it was not uncommon for a pool of water to collect in a newly dug grave before the

*“Like a Lilliputian city.” The St. Louis I Cemetery, New Orleans.
(Wikimedia Commons.)*

coffin could be lowered. “Such is the nature of the soil here,” Ingraham explained,

that it is impossible to dig two feet below the surface without coming to water. The whole land seems to be only a thin crust of earth, of not more than three feet in thickness, floating upon the surface of the water. Consequently, every grave will have two feet or more of water in it, and when a coffin is placed therein, some of the assistants have to stand upon it, and keep it down till the grave is re-filled with the mud which was originally thrown from it, or it would float. The citizens, therefore, having a very natural repugnance to being drowned, after having died a natural death upon their beds, choose to have their last resting-place a dry one; and hence the great number of tombs, and the peculiar features of this burial-place.⁹

This recurrent spectacle, so shocking to Ingraham and other visitors, stimulated above-ground entombment but did not account entirely for its popularity. Tomb burials were commonplace in Europe, especially in France and Spain, and Louisiana colonists from those nations, intimately

familiar with and loyal to their customs, found it a utilitarian and architecturally superior alternative to burial in the swampy earth of New Orleans.¹⁰

The Jewish Way of Life in New Orleans

Little antisemitism existed in New Orleans, and Jews found themselves accepted into all aspects of the city's life. Death, however, was another matter. The first congregation, Gates of Mercy, followed the customary steps in building a Jewish community, beginning with acquiring land for a burial ground. Previously, Jews had rested together with Protestants, either at the edge of the St. Peter Street or St. Louis Cemeteries or later in the Girod Street Cemetery.¹¹ Until congregations formed and established their own graveyards, relegation to the fringes of cemeteries and the distress of being buried among Christians in watery graves made the Crescent City an inhospitable place for Jews to die.

"The Jewish community of New Orleans," according to historian Harriet K. Stern, "is unique, with a history that is different than [that of] any other Jewish community in America." Its singularity stemmed from the atypical manner of its formation, for Louisiana developed not from English settlement but from French and Spanish occupation. During the colonial period (1717–1803), restrictions imposed successively by those governments kept the Jewish presence small. The Louisiana Purchase brought the territory into the United States in 1803, and the concomitant demise of colonial constraints kindled the prospect of economic opportunity, luring enterprising men of all faiths, Ashkenazim and Sephardim among them. No congregation existed as yet in New Orleans. The ambitious newcomers – mostly single and young – prioritized prosperity over religion and did not miss it. With few women of their conviction residing in the vicinity and probably none within hundreds of miles who were marriageable, many chose Christian – mostly Roman Catholic – wives and reared children in the faith of their mothers. "The free, open atmosphere of New Orleans," Stern concluded, "fostered religious indifference and delayed the development of a separate Jewish communal life."¹²

Eventually a Jew bent on practicing his religion came to town. Jacob Solis, a London-born merchant from New York whose business in New Orleans in 1827 coincided with Passover, was appalled to find no

matzo for sale and had to bake his own. He resolved to organize a congregation, founding Shangarai Chasset (Gates of Mercy) on December 20, 1827. Recognizing the reality of the assimilative lifestyle and the necessity to accommodate it, the congregation distorted Jewish laws to provide in its constitution for burial of the "strange" (gentile) wives of members and their children, and they accepted the latter as members. Although two-thirds of the thirty-three charter members came from the German states or Alsace and followed the Ashkenazic *minhag*, Solis declared that the congregation would adhere to the Sephardic ritual that he observed. (It was changed in 1842 to the Ashkenazic style in response to the growing membership of Germans and Alsatians.) Before the congregation did anything else, it established its cemetery, the first Jewish cemetery in New Orleans, on Jackson Avenue at Saratoga Street. This was the first congregation in New Orleans and one of the first in the United States beyond the thirteen original states.¹³

In 1843 Gates of Mercy moved into an existing building on Rampart Street and established it as the first permanent Jewish house of worship in Louisiana. The structure was so dilapidated, however, that a drive began immediately to raise money to demolish it and erect a replacement. That these fundraising efforts included appeals to New York Jews for a loan suggests that congregation leaders considered it futile to seek financing from the wealthiest and most successful New Orleans Jews, since they took slight interest in Jewish life or charities.¹⁴

The arrival of the devout Gershom Kursheedt around 1839 effected the next step in the evolution of New Orleans Judaism. A native of Richmond, Virginia, and the grandson and son of rabbis, Kursheedt came to New Orleans to work in an uncle's brokerage business and, from 1845 to 1849, also published and coedited a newspaper, the *New Orleans Commercial Times*. Immediately becoming active in the Jewish community, he found that conditions at Gates of Mercy had deteriorated under the dubious guidance of an all-too-assimilated, part-time minister whose primary career was comedic acting. Kursheedt helped organize a new Sephardic congregation in 1845 and became its first president.¹⁵

Kursheedt named this congregation Nefutshoh Yehudah (Dispersed of Judah), in honor of Judah Touro in hopes of motivating him to contribute financial support. Touro was a native of Newport, Rhode Island, and the son of Isaac Touro, Dutch-born hazan of Newport's

LEFT: Gershom Kursheedt, founder of Congregation Dispersed of Judah and advocate of Jewish charitable causes. RIGHT: Judah Touro, founder and benefactor of the infirmary established in his name. Touro portrait by Solomon Nunes Carvalho.
(Courtesy of the Touro Infirmary Archives, New Orleans.)

Congregation Yeshuat Israel. He had resided in New Orleans at least since 1802 and had amassed a fortune as a commission merchant and real estate speculator; he owned much of today's downtown area. Although he participated avidly in the business, civic, and political activity of his adopted city and had served with distinction in the Battle of New Orleans in 1815, he took no part in Jewish life, did not join the first congregation, and donated to it minimally. For many years, however, Touro had generously supported nonsectarian and Christian causes including two Protestant churches in his adopted city. In 1824 he contributed three hundred dollars to build a Philadelphia synagogue. Otherwise, at the point when Congregation Dispersed of Judah was formed, his deep purse had largely remained closed to Jewish appeals. Kursheedt somehow persuaded him to open it.¹⁶

It wasn't easy. To his friend Isaac Leeser of Philadelphia, one of the foremost Jewish leaders of the day, Kursheedt confided the extreme difficulty of what the historian Bertram W. Korn called his "self-imposed task of attempting to extract Touro's money for the [proposed new] syn-

agogue and its appurtenances and other causes.”¹⁷ On December 18, 1847, for example, Kursheedt complained,

Mr. Touro is the very impersonation of a snail, not to say of a crab whose progress (to use a paradox) is usually backward. My patience is well nigh exhausted with him and I am interrogated by so many concerning his intentions that it is not unusual for me to dodge a corner in order to avoid meeting certain parties who seem to think that I am making a mystery of the matter [of when the synagogue will be completed]. . . . The only answer I get [from Touro] is “well we will see” “there is time enough etc. etc.”¹⁸

With Kursheedt’s persistent spiritual guidance and financial advice, Touro returned to Judaism and began to support its charities. Among other benevolences, he financed Congregation Dispersed of Judah’s rabbi, cemetery, and house of worship. After the synagogue dedication in 1850, Touro embraced the faith of his father with heightened fervor, regularly attending services and rigorously observing the Sabbath. His newfound zeal probably made it easier for Kursheedt to influence Touro to bequeath the substantial part of his wealth to Jewish groups. His bequests focused largely on assistance for the needy and aid for struggling congregations. Although he omitted some of the causes for which Kursheedt had advocated, Korn stated that, prior to Touro’s death in 1854, “we do not know of any previous American will, written by Christian let alone by Jew, which ever before had spread such largesse among so many institutions” —nearly every Jewish organization then existing in the United States, as well as an almshouse in Jerusalem.¹⁹

While Touro dallied despite Kursheedt’s prodding, cajoling, and humoring, in 1850 Congregation Shaarei Tefilah (Gates of Prayer) formed in Lafayette (today’s Garden District), an uptown suburb absorbed by New Orleans two years later. Lafayette City’s convenience to the riverfront gave rise to landings for steamboats and flatboats and to such industries as meatpacking and tanning, all of which generated jobs for working-class immigrants. Among them came, during the 1840s, an influx of Jews from the German states. Less educated and of more modest means than their predecessors who had settled further downriver, they found work on the riverfront and made their homes nearby. What they lacked, however, was proximity to the existing synagogues two

miles away, a manageable distance via the New Orleans and Carrollton Railroad but too far to walk on the Sabbath when vehicular transportation was forbidden.²⁰ Many of the members of Gates of Prayer sought treatment at nearby Touro Infirmary when they fell ill.

Charity for the Poor

In 1852 Judah Touro founded the New Orleans infirmary that bears his name. At the time, establishing a hospital differed little from opening an efficient boardinghouse in that it required neither a large financial investment nor sophisticated equipment. For forty thousand dollars, Touro acquired a square block of land facing the Mississippi River on Levee Street (now South Peters) and the structures that occupied it: an imposing mansion, formerly the residence of investor Cornelius Paulding; an adjacent building heated by fifteen fireplaces; and a service wing enhanced by a deep garden. On August 26, 1852, Touro Infirmary opened with a capacity of twenty-four beds, as many as half of which might be occupied at any given time. It operated under the direction of house physician Dr. Joseph Bensadon, who leased the hospital for seventy-five dollars per year until late 1861, when his contract expired, and he accepted appointment as surgeon general of the Confederate army. To negate the possibility that federal troops occupying New Orleans—as they did on May 1, 1862—would conscript the facility as a hospital for Union soldiers, the infirmary closed during the Civil War, and the building functioned as an almshouse for Jews from 1862 until the end of the war. The hospital reopened on January 3, 1869, almost four years after peace resumed.²¹

The hospital, by intention, stood conveniently near the wharf, and consequently most of the early patients were immigrants, slaves, or seamen from ships docked in the port city. Charges ranged from one dollar to five dollars per day, with extra for surgical operations; treating slaves cost one dollar per day. This fee schedule paralleled, and probably was based on, that of another local hospital, the Circus Street Infirmary.²² In the 1852 New Orleans city directory, that facility advertised first- and second-class private rooms at five dollars and three dollars per day, respectively, and “wards for white persons” at two dollars. “A separate part of the [Circus Street] Hospital is appropriated for Slaves,” the advertisement asserted, “and is furnished in the most comfortable manner . . .

*Advertisement for the Touro Infirmary, 1852.
(Courtesy of the Touro Infirmary Archives, New Orleans.)*

Owners will find it very much to their advantages to place their slaves in the Hospital as they will receive every attention. The entire expense will be covered by one dollar per day."²³ While the Touro emphasized its adjacency to shipping and steamboat landings and the efficacy of its ventilation, its competitor specialized in surgery, with particular attention "to the treatment of club-foot and deformities of a like character, as well as to the diseases of the eye."²⁴ Approximately six additional hospitals including the Charity functioned in New Orleans during the 1850s, besides the United States Marine Hospital across the river.

According to Touro Infirmary's earliest admission book (1855-1861), the Hebrew Benevolent Association offset medical expenses for some of the immigrants. This relief organization, founded in 1845, covered the charges for 37 of the 1,580 patients registered between 1855 and 1861. At least thirty-five of the former had emigrated from six different countries: twenty-five from the German states, six from Poland, and one each from Austria, England, France, and Hungary. One came

Admission Book of the Touro Infirmary, March–April 1858.
(Courtesy of the Touro Infirmary Archives, New Orleans.)

from New York, and the nativity of another was not recorded. Twenty-two had been in New Orleans for less than one year, six of those for no more than a day. Among them were clerks, peddlers, tailors, a deck hand, and an artist. Nineteen suffered from yellow fever, one from phthisis pulmonaris (tuberculosis), and another from “indisposition”; the others’ ailments were not recorded. Four of the fever victims, the phthisis patient, and one other died. For their care, the Hebrew Benevolent Association would have paid the minimum rate. In 1874 that group merged with the Touro Infirmary Association to become the Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association, an umbrella organization comprised of a number of smaller charities. Like its predecessors, it focused its welfare programs on the hospital to assist the sick, poor, aged, and the widows and orphans who were so numerous in fever-prone New Orleans.²⁵

In 1854, Judah Touro mentioned the hospital in his will, stipulating that it “be organized according to law as a Charitable Institute for the

relief of the Indigent Sick," and its board of managers strove to follow that directive.²⁶ Because Touro bequeathed to the hospital the land it occupied but provided no support for its operation, during the same period before the benevolent groups merged, the Hebrew Benevolent Association financed thirty-seven patients, while board members sponsored thirty more including twenty-eight immigrants from six countries (German states, seventeen; Poland, three; France, Holland, and Hungary, two each; Russia, one) and Americans from two states (Maryland and North Carolina). Twenty-three aid recipients had been in New Orleans for less than a year. One died from cancer, another of phthisis, and a third from pneumonia.²⁷

For Touro Infirmary, the first not-for-profit private hospital in Louisiana, practicing philanthropy was routine. Attorney Benjamin Franklin Jonas, a founder of the New Orleans Home for Jewish Widows and Orphans and later a member of the Louisiana legislature and the United States Senate, observed at the ceremony dedicating the home in 1856, "It has ever been the boast of the Jewish people, that they support their own poor Their reasons are partly founded in religious necessity, and partly in that pride of race and character which has supported them through so many ages of trial and vicissitude," forming what historian Caroline E. Light calls "the core of a uniquely Jewish charitable tradition." Indeed, the infirmary's earliest advertisements announced the daily hours during which "those who may require it" could obtain "gratuitous advice." The hospital admitted the sick and frail regardless of religion or status.²⁸ Providing its own cemetery for indigent burials, however, added another dimension to the hospital's beneficence.

From the postbellum reopening of the infirmary in 1869 until Isaac Weis's interment became the first in the Touro Cemetery twenty years later, 340 patients died at the infirmary. Frequently the deceased were laid to rest in the burial ground of a congregation united not only by its Jewish faith but also by its ethnic origins: German Congregation Shanarai Chasset (Gates of Mercy) provided seventy interments, Polish Congregation Tememe Derech thirty, and Portuguese Congregation Ne-fuzoth Yehudah (Dispersed of Judah) fifteen. An additional fourteen Jewish burials occurred under the auspices of several smaller congregations or in an unspecified Hebrew cemetery. Over the course of twenty years, 129 Jewish burials took place, an average of one almost every two

months—a number that hardly seems great enough to impel the board of managers to institute an independent cemetery. Yet that's what it did in 1888, although thirty cemeteries already existed in New Orleans, including five that were Jewish and two that were charitable.²⁹

Seventy-two persons of other faiths who died at Touro Infirmary between 1869 and 1888 were interred locally in Roman Catholic, Protestant, or nonsectarian cemeteries, and nine were transported out of New Orleans. One of the active nonsectarian cemeteries was that of the Charity Hospital of Louisiana. Many similarities existed between it and Touro Infirmary, the most obvious being their provision of health care to indigent patients, where, as the Charity's annual report for 1877 put it, "to be sick is to be admitted."³⁰ Both maintained cemeteries in which to inter deceased patients who lacked financial means. Friends and relatives sometimes stepped up, but many bodies remained unclaimed.³¹

The chief difference between the hospitals was one of quantity, for admissions, deaths, and burials under the Charity's auspices far exceeded those of the Touro's. In 1888, for example, the year in which Touro Infirmary initiated its cemetery, the Charity admitted 5,794 patients, of whom 920 died—a mortality rate of nearly 16 percent. House surgeons consistently argued that the numerous patients who were "moribund when admitted" and died within twenty-four hours, as did 197, unfairly inflated their mortality rates. Omitting those patients from the statistics lowered the mortality rate to 11 percent, considerably higher than the Touro's 7.5 percent, based on 335 patients and 25 deaths. Six of the latter expired within three days of admission, and most of the others succumbed to diseases then considered incurable.³²

Charity for the Deceased

Burials in the earth—a requisite of Jewish tradition as noted above—prevailed in Hebrew cemeteries, usually in raised plots demarcated by frame-like copings of marble or granite. The copings afforded ongoing protection from shallow levels of rising floodwater and circumvented the predicament of waterborne coffins while preserving the practice of burial in the earth. But graveyards for the poor, who lacked the means for even the least expensive vaults or copings, required elevated, in-ground locations. Relatively high sites sometimes proved to be insufficiently raised. A spring flood in 1847, caused by a crevasse in the

*A row of graves with copings in the Joseph Street Cemetery, New Orleans.
(Courtesy of Florence M. Jumonville.)*

Mississippi River levee, submerged the Charity Hospital Cemetery and rendered it unusable. The hospital purchased a tract on the higher ground of Metairie Ridge specifically for use as a graveyard, finalizing the transaction in 1849.³³

In earlier times, churches nationwide had borne the responsibility of interring the impoverished, but as the nineteenth century progressed, burial became increasingly privatized and costly. The government assumed a larger role, providing publicly owned burial grounds. In New Orleans, Charity Hospital Cemetery fulfilled that need, functioning as the designated potter's field for people of all religions, races, and homelands, and initially accepting all unclaimed corpses in the city. Other unknowns and indigents, including non-Jewish Touro Infirmary deceased, lay in Locust Grove Cemetery I and II and, after 1879, in Holt Cemetery. During various periods, these also served as potter's fields.³⁴

Like those buried in Touro Infirmary Cemetery, these indigent dead lay in numbered plots, a common practice of the era in pauper graveyards and in those maintained by prisons, schools for the developmentally disabled, public health hospitals, and especially mental institutions. The Central Islip State Hospital Cemetery in New York, for example, coincidentally located adjacent to the Touro Law Center, handled over five thousand burials between 1889 and 1996. More than ten thousand nameless graves exist across Massachusetts at former mental hospitals and other institutions, as well as some two thousand in Ohio. Most of the plots lack names, which may be to protect the identities of the patients and their families, presumably because of the stigma often associated with mental illness; in the case of prisons, it may have implied that the deceased were unworthy of respect. Numbering the graves differentiated among them and facilitated record keeping. Another theory is that the numbered markers could be obtained quickly, expediently, and inexpensively. Historically, however, unmarked graves usually meant that survivors could not afford a headstone.³⁵

During the twenty years before Touro Infirmary established its graveyard, city charity buried six Touro patients, most if not all of them gentiles. The first of these burials was that of Mrs. Mein Grunewald, also

*Grave No. 85 at the Touro
Infirmary Cemetery, New Orleans.
The numbered stone marks the burial
place of an indigent infirmary patient.
(Courtesy of Florence M. Jumonville.)*

known as Annie or Anna Stein. Her death late on the night of December 17, 1869, "was occasioned by [arsenic] poison administered by her own hands." A native of Hungary who claimed New York as her permanent residence, the forty-year-old Grunewald and her husband, Renzo Grunewald, had performed at the French Opera House in 1865 in Lachner's operetta *Last Rendezvous*, and a national tour brought her back to the city. The *New Orleans Times* described her as a "celebrated prima donna" and the *Daily Picayune* as "a German actress of some repute." During the 1865 engagement she may have shared "intimate relations with a gentleman in this city, and returned . . . with the intention of renewing the intimacy." Rebuffed by her erstwhile lover, she considered suicide her only recourse. This circumstance presented Touro Infirmary with a problem beyond mere poverty when she died there six hours after being admitted. Although public attitudes were softening toward those who had taken their own lives, traditionally they had been barred from sanctified graveyards of all faiths, their remains relegated to potter's fields. Mein Grunewald received burial in either Locust Grove Cemetery I or in the Charity Hospital Cemetery.³⁶

The others' stories exemplify more typical circumstances of those who died in Touro and required city charity. Eight-year-old Corinne York, a New Orleans schoolgirl, succumbed to cancer of the jawbone. Neither her place of burial nor that of H. W. Boehm, a fifty-year-old widowed watchmaker from Germany who died of diarrhea, was noted, but they would have been interred in Charity or Locust Grove. Three other deceased came from Ireland, two of them sailors claimed by yellow fever and the third a fireman named John O'Brien who suffered a concussion. The British Consul arranged for the Irishmen to be laid to rest in Locust Grove Cemetery. O'Brien's burial in 1875 was the first of twelve during the period from 1869 to 1888 that occurred under consular auspices, ten of them British and two German; the other nine consular burials did not require charity.³⁷ Dr. Frederick Loeber, who took charge of Touro Infirmary in 1869 shortly after it reopened, recalled that as the years passed, the Touro "obtained something of a [favorable] reputation, and its first benefit therefrom was, that the English Consul entrusted us with the sick sailors of all English vessels coming into the harbor. The German and other Consuls followed; our receipts from all these contracts swelled our treasury, somewhat relieving us from a great [financial] anxiety."³⁸

When Loeber first visited Touro Infirmary, he had found “an old plantation house surrounded by factories and boiler shops on one of the noisiest streets in the city.” He soon recognized that the hospital should rebuild at a greater distance from the commotion of the waterfront, but persuading the board of managers to expand the struggling facility proved to be as challenging as Kursheedt’s task of extracting funds from Judah Touro’s pocket. Then came the yellow fever epidemic of 1878, during which Touro Infirmary assisted more than eleven hundred victims and families, and board members became convinced of the wisdom of relocating to more tranquil environs. Board president Julius Weis spearheaded fundraising efforts, and in 1882 the Touro moved into a new, larger hospital building on Prytania between Aline and Foucher Streets, where it remains today. Purchased at a cost of five thousand dollars, the land then stood in the middle of a cow pasture. The additional space enabled the Touro to serve a broader community of patients, notably by expanding its outpatient clinics.³⁹

The Jewish Way of Death in New Orleans

Joseph Magner, a founder and acting secretary of the Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association and a founder of the Jewish Widows and Orphans’ Home, explained in 1889:

Owing to the difficulties we experienced for many years in the burying of our dead at the several cemeteries, the Board thought it expedient to procure a proper place for that purpose, and through the efforts of our president we obtained a large space of ground in the cemetery of the Gates of Prayer Congregation, which has been properly laid out at an expense of \$652.96 to the society, and the evil under which we have been suffering on that score is now remedied.⁴⁰

Magner gave no hint as to the nature of those “difficulties.” Discussing past financial problems two years later, Loeber stated, “The greatest obstacle, however, we encountered was the apathy of your constituents [other Jewish institutions] towards the Touro Infirmary; it was, to use the expression, the step-child in the family of Hebrew institutions.”⁴¹

The decision to establish the cemetery rested with the five officers and twenty managers of the Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association, seven of the latter representing the association and the remaining thirteen serving on behalf of B’nai B’rith.⁴² Michael Frank, who

LEFT: Dr. Frederick Loeber, director of the Touro Infirmary from 1869 to 1901.

RIGHT: Joseph Magner, a founder and acting secretary of the Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association. (Courtesy of the Touro Infirmary Archives, New Orleans.)

served as president of the group in 1888, was a native of France who arrived in Louisiana at the age of seventeen in about 1842. He started out as a clerk in a mercantile store and, through "high character and lofty zeal," established his own business in New Orleans and founded the Metropolitan Bank. In addition to his business enterprises, Frank served as president of Temple Sinai and took an active interest in the Jewish Orphans' Home and other charities.⁴³ His descendants have remained involved with Touro Infirmary down to the present day.

Other officers instrumental in founding the cemetery also were immigrants who exemplified philanthropy at its highest level. Aside from Rabbi Isaac Leucht of Touro Synagogue, a German native who served as first vice-president, they all operated businesses. Second vice-president Charles Simon, for example, arrived in Louisiana from Bavaria in 1839 when he was nineteen and, like Michael Frank, saved enough

money to start a modest mercantile venture that soon prospered into a substantial business. Simon became acquainted with Judah Touro and assisted with the founding of Touro Infirmary, even superintending the contractors who outfitted the building. During the severe epidemic of yellow fever in 1853, Simon organized and participated in relief efforts, personally nursing the sick without regard to their religion. He served as a vice-president of the Touro for twenty years and worked tirelessly as a fundraiser for charitable causes. Henry Stern, treasurer of the association for a quarter century, also came from Bavaria as a nineteen-year-old. He worked first in the lumber business and later became proprietor of a wholesale shoe firm while participating ardently in numerous Jewish causes and personally assisting needy supplicants whom organized charities had denied. Only Simon Cohn, the association's secretary, was born in the United States. He, too, was a merchant, selling clothing for men and boys, and he actively supported Jewish charities.⁴⁴ With backgrounds not unlike the patients of Touro Infirmary and the decedents who would be buried in its cemetery, these philanthropists must have recognized the need to extend Jewish charity not only to the grave but into it.

Specifically, Touro Infirmary carved out a section of an existing graveyard, in the southeast quadrant of the burial ground established by the Congregation Gates of Prayer in 1853. Known as Gates of Prayer Cemetery II or, more commonly, the Joseph Street Cemetery and occasionally the Arabella Street Cemetery, it is located at 1428 Joseph Street, occupying the square bounded also by Pitt, Arabella, and Garfield Streets. Edging the city of Lafayette, the land had once been part of Pierre Foucher's sugar plantation. After the plantation had been subdivided and sold several times, Cornelius Hurst acquired a little less than seven arpents, nearly six acres, from which he created a faubourg (suburb) known as Hurstville.⁴⁵ He named Arabella Street and Joseph Street for his daughter and son. Slightly more than a mile and a half from the hospital and just a two-block walk from the streetcar on St. Charles Avenue, the graveyard occupied high ground. When a record-setting fourteen-inch downpour drenched New Orleans in 1927, "the Jewish cemetery at Joseph and Pitt streets stood out like an island."⁴⁶

Today a predominantly residential neighborhood surrounds the Joseph Street Cemetery. Touro Infirmary's section, a strip of the quadrant

Entrance to the Joseph Street Cemetery, formally known as Gates of Prayer II. The Touro Infirmiry Cemetery comprises a portion of this facility. (Courtesy of Florence M. Jumonville.)

now known as Section C, along Pitt Street at the corner of Arabella, stands in the rear, at the side most distant from the streetcar line. According to a sketchy map in the files of Congregation Gates of Prayer, victims of yellow fever had been buried previously in Section C, perhaps as recently as the devastating epidemic that befell New Orleans in 1878. Presumably the fever victims' graves were covered over prior to the Touro burials.⁴⁷

Mention of charitable interments under the Touro's auspices appeared for the first time in its annual report in the wake of the 1878 epidemic, a decade before the infirmiry acquired its cemetery (*see* Table 1). In that year, the Touro Infirmiry and Hebrew Benevolent Association expended \$1,679.10 for burials, \$50 for carriages, and \$44.25 for shrouds, for a sum of \$1,773.35—about 4.5 percent of its total benevolent disbursements of \$39,732.49. The report failed to identify the deceased or to specify whether yellow jack or some other malady ended their lives. That the epidemic may have been a factor is suggested by the absence of a parallel expenditure the following year, when the only interment-related action—"funeral to three children"—cost \$55.⁴⁸

TABLE 1. Charitable expenditures for burials by the Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association, 1878-1914.⁴⁹

Fiscal year	Costs
1878-1879	\$1,828.35
1879-1880	no data provided
1880-1881	no data provided
1881-1882	\$6.00
1882-1883	\$211.00
1883-1884	\$553.00 (includes treatment of insane)
1884-1885	\$696.65 (includes treatment of insane and smallpox)
1885-1886	\$280.00
1886-1887	\$206.50
1887-1888	\$155.00
1888-1889	\$152.00
1889-1890	\$71.50
1890-1891	\$71.75
1891-1892	\$109.50
1892-1893	\$254.10 (includes \$186.60 for "Cemetery")
1893-1894	\$85.00
1894-1895	\$156.80
1895-1896	\$53.50
1896-1897	\$39.50
1897-1898	\$58.50
1898-1899	\$140.50
1899-1900	\$74.00
1900-1901	\$72.00
1901-1902	\$72.00
1902-1903	\$144.75
1903-1904	\$95.50
1904-1905	\$153.50
1905-1906	\$89.50
1906-1907	\$78.00
1907-1908	\$65.00
1908-1909	\$112.50
1909-1910	\$75.50
1910-1911	\$214.25 (includes \$176.25 for ambulance service)

TABLE 1, continued.

Fiscal year	Costs
1911-1912	\$214.30
1912-1913	\$306.50 (includes \$189.50 for ambulance service)
1913-1914	\$158.50 (includes \$40.50 for ambulance service)

NOTE: Dates in bold are the active dates of the Touro Infirmary Cemetery.

Expenditures for funerals continued through the 1880s and 1890s. Inconsistencies in recording data make the comparison of annual figures problematic. In some years, associated costs such as digging graves were itemized; in other years, unrelated expenses—"treatment of insane and small-pox" and, later, ambulance service for the poor—were combined with those of funerals. The only practicable means of comparison is to total all related figures in each year, noting atypical expenditures. Data from 1878-1879 through 1913-1914, the fiscal years of their first and last occurrence, disclose that during five of the seven years prior to the establishment of the Touro Infirmary Cemetery in 1888 (omitting periods in which death expenses were combined with the costs of treating victims of insanity and smallpox), the average death-related expenditure added up to \$410.48. Annual expenses during the twenty years that burials in the Touro Infirmary Cemetery occurred actively (from 1888 through 1908) averaged \$103.88. Thus the hospital saved an average of \$306.60 per year, and the cemetery paid for itself in a little over two years. Financial benefits to the infirmary continued. Data from four of the next five years reveal typical costs of \$96.20, chiefly for the cemetery sexton's fees.

The identified deceased—eighty-nine males, twenty-five females, and one adult and two infants whose gender was not noted—ranged in age from one day to eighty-six years, with an average of fifty-one and a median of sixty. Fifty-two different causes of death are noted among 109 patients for whom it was stated. Phthisis, which occurred most frequently, ended nineteen lives. Bright's disease (nephritis) took twelve more. Other ailments that remain all too familiar today included apoplexy (cerebrovascular accident, or stroke), diabetes, cirrhosis of the liver, influenza, aneurysms, and cancer (two cases, both involving the stomach). Although many of the deceased claimed New Orleans as their home at the time they entered the hospital, few of them—just ten, includ-

ing six babies and schoolchildren—were born in Louisiana. Ten more hailed from other parts of the United States, but the large majority—83 percent—came from eleven foreign countries. Represented most prominently were Germany, with thirty-six, and Russia with twenty-five. Three had resided in New Orleans for fifty years or more, but several had arrived within hours of their demise, perhaps in a final, desperate effort to receive medical help.⁵⁰

During the years when the Touro Infirmary Cemetery was active, the largest segments of the hospital's patient population came, in varying proportion, from Germany, Russia, and the United States. In its first five years (1888–1893), Russians comprised 13 percent of the patient population; Germans 21 percent; and Americans 44 percent. Meanwhile, the cemetery accepted twelve decedents from Russia (24 percent) and nine each from Germany and the United States (18 percent). From 1894 through 1898, German immigrants accounted for 19 percent of admissions but 29 percent of burials. Thirty-five percent of in-patients and 9 percent of those buried were Russians. Conversely, Americans comprised 58 percent of admissions but less than 13 percent of interments. During the next five-year period (1899–1903), Germans accounted for 12 percent of inpatients but a whopping 51 percent of decedents, while admissions and deaths of Russians dropped dramatically to 7 percent and 8 percent respectively. Admission of Americans soared to 70 percent, while their burials fell to 10 percent. In the last five years of the cemetery's active life (1904–1908), Germans and Russians each accounted for about 7 percent of admissions, while 50 percent of burials were of Germans and 29 percent Russians. Although the percentage of American patients climbed further to 77, none were interred in the Touro Infirmary Cemetery. Other nationalities seldom accounted for more than 10 percent in any five-year period.⁵¹

The disproportionately large number of Germans and Russians who required charitable Jewish burials can be explained by the high proportion of them who were Jews and by their immigrant condition. Among Americans, increasingly well-represented among Touro admissions, Jews remained fewer when compared with the total population. No longer new to the United States, they probably grew less likely to need charity because their families had more time to establish themselves and to prosper.⁵²

Records of these deaths often, but not always, reveal who shouldered responsibility for the burials. Twenty-two times, “a friend” or “friends” of the deceased fulfilled this sad duty, and in fifteen instances, “his [or her] family,” “relatives,” or a specific member of the family (usually male) did so. For eighty-two burials, Touro Infirmary took responsibility, as it had for ten or eleven in 1887 and 1888 prior to its establishment of the Joseph Street cemetery. On three occasions, beneficent men apparently unrelated to the departed stepped forward, and one victim was interred at his employer’s expense. Four seamen were buried by their shipmates or captain, one by the Italian consul, two by the German consul, and eight by the British consul, who handled arrangements not only for mariners and other immigrants from his country but also those from Norway and perhaps additional nations that did not maintain consulates in New Orleans.⁵³

Death records and other sources hint at the sort of burial the Touro’s deceased received. Lace-trimmed burial shrouds donated by the Ladies’ Aid and Sewing Society, an auxiliary organization established in 1876, dressed their bodies. Their funerals likely would have taken place from the infirmary, in almost all instances, without the expense of printed notices posted around the neighborhood or published in the newspaper. In 1896 Rabbi Morris Sessler of Gates of Prayer officiated at four services, and Rabbi Isaac Leucht of Touro Synagogue at another.⁵⁴ Although death records fail to name any other clergy, annual reports later expressed “sincere thanks to Rev. Moïse Bergman [who succeeded Leucht at Gates of Prayer] for his willingness to respond to every demand on his time in case of death among our patients,” including their interments.⁵⁵ All of the burials were likely religious, for the point of the cemetery was to ensure that poverty did not impede Jews who died at the Touro from being buried as Jews. A laudable wish to spare them—and their survivors—from the disagreeable conditions in the city’s potter’s fields may have strengthened the impetus to ensure respectful interments that would remain undisturbed.

Undertaking and Associated Services

As early as 1880, the *Daily Picayune* commented on what it called “the Undertakers’ boom.” Quoting a passage from the pages of a competing paper, the *New Orleans Times*, the *Picayune* described local

undertakers as “a respectable and worthy class of tradesmen. Their hearses are beautiful, also their horses; and they bury a corpse with such dignity and solemnity as makes one almost fall in love with a brick oven [vault].”⁵⁶ Undertakers furnished more than half of the burials at the Touro Cemetery, beginning with that of seventy-seven-year-old Marx Morrison, a merchant who died on June 3, 1890, from a carbuncle (an infected inflammation under the skin) on the right side of his face. Born in Russia, he had arrived in New Orleans from San Antonio, Texas, four years earlier. Morrison had never married, and, considering his apparent mobility, it is not surprising that he had no local relatives to attend to his remains. He was interred out of chronological sequence in grave no. 62 (the date of Morrison’s death should have given him grave no. 11), under the authority of undertaker Isaac Sontheimer.⁵⁷

From June 1890 through June 1895, funeral directors attended to few of Touro Infirmary’s fatalities—just 10 of 182 (5.5 percent). Beginning in July 1895, they arranged almost every interment—890 of 925 (96 percent). That nearly all burials from mid-1895 on occurred under the auspices of undertakers suggests that this may have become required by law, but no relevant legislation could be located either in acts of the Louisiana legislature or in newspapers. Not until 1914 did Louisiana regulate the business through the State Board of Embalming and Undertaking.⁵⁸

Prior to the emergence of undertaking as a profession in the mid-nineteenth century, the family, friends, and neighbors of the deceased—the same supporters who cared for the sick and dying before the rise of hospital care—took responsibility for burial. Often they engaged carpenters to construct coffins and liverymen to transport casketed bodies to the cemetery. For many who fulfilled these needs, a lucrative sideline in undertaking developed.⁵⁹ The earliest advertisement of a New Orleans undertaker found to date is that of Michael C. Quirk, who proclaimed himself a “cabinet maker and undertaker” as early as 1842. Two years later, William Schmidt offered those services, plus “carriages to hire.” Thus he provided the convenience of picking up the body in a wagon, selling a coffin, and renting horses, carriages for mourners, and a hearse for the trip to the cemetery, all from one location; the three occupations complemented one another perfectly. In 1849, James J. Cload became the first to advertise exclusively as an undertaker, “inform[ing] the people of

New Orleans that he is prepared to offer . . . coffins and hearses, and all funeral requisites."⁶⁰

Just as the Civil War separated sick or wounded servicemen from their customary caregivers and boosted their need for hospitalization, so did the war spark opportunity in the undertaking business—not only because numerous young men met untimely ends but because they did so far from home. Families of Union casualties who wanted to reinter their loved ones nearby and could afford the cost (usually seventy-five dollars) frequently engaged a local undertaker to locate the grave and exhume the body, embalm it, and ship it north in a hermetically sealed coffin. Thus many Americans became familiar with undertakers' services, and after the war, the business evolved into a profession.⁶¹

Approximately sixty undertakers are named in the Record of Deaths with up to twenty-eight active in any given year. The precise number is difficult to determine because of variations in how the data were recorded. Isaac Sontheimer, who entered the business in 1881, provided 391 of the 890 burials of Touro patients (44 percent). In every year, he took charge of significantly more of them than any of the other funeral parlors that operated in New Orleans for all or part of the period, often supplying more than all of them combined. His chief competitors were F. Johnson & Sons, who oversaw 123 (14 percent), and P. J. McMahon, 83 (9 percent). No other firm contributed as many as forty. Among Touro Cemetery burials, Sontheimer held almost a monopoly, and he likely contracted with the hospital to provide this service. In 1891 and 1892, McMahon handled the next seven funerals after Marx Morrison's. Of the remaining sixty-six mortician-attended burials among all interments in the Touro Cemetery from March 1896 through 1908, Sontheimer delivered sixty-four (97 percent); Thomas E. Lynch in 1901 and A. F. Bultman in 1902 each saw to one.⁶²

For the many Touro families who were Jewish, Sontheimer may have been the mortician of choice because he shared their faith and was familiar with its burial practices.⁶³ Another factor may have been his location, convenient to the hospital and to the uptown cemeteries. The interments by Lynch and Bultman suggest that engaging Sontheimer as funeral director was not required if the deceased's family or friends requested another, but he undoubtedly received all of the commissions issued by Touro Infirmary. His conformance to Jewish ritual was enough

*Burial place of Isaac Sontheimer
at the Joseph Street Cemetery.
Sontheimer was the Jewish mortician
responsible for most of the Touro
Infirmery Cemetery interments.
(Courtesy of Florence M. Jumonville.)*

to make his the funeral parlor of choice, and he may have benevolently offered a discount.⁶⁴

A study of newspaper obituaries and death notices reveals the probable religions of twenty-four of the undertakers who handled Touro patients' funerals, based on the houses of worship from which each was buried, the affiliation of the officiant, interment in a sectarian cemetery, and/or membership in a faith-based organization (*see* Table 2). Only Sontheimer could be confirmed as Jewish, but Louis Levand, who buried three Touro patients, also may have been. In 1900 he advertised as a "funeral director and embalmer" who offered funerals at half the price of his competitors. Nine years later, Levand opened a taxi service, and he closed his undertaking business in 1912. When he died, a mortuary descended from that of former competitor Isaac Sontheimer handled his funeral.⁶⁵ Of the other undertakers who buried the Touro's deceased, eighteen received Catholic services. Among the Protestants, two were Lutheran; one was probably Methodist; and the specific membership of another could not be identified. Death notices of more than a dozen

others stated that the deceased would be buried from his or her home, giving no hint of religious affiliation.

TABLE 2. Death notices for New Orleans funeral directors, 1890–1954.⁶⁶

Name	Date of published death notice
JEWISH UNDERTAKERS	
Isaac Sontheimer	November 13, 1923
Louis Levand	January 30, 1934
CATHOLIC UNDERTAKERS	
John Bonnot	September 12, 1890
Jacob Schoen	November 18, 1903
Edward Duffy	February 20, 1905
Jacob Leitz, Sr.	January 3, 1910
Peter Lamana	March 25, 1910
Raoul Bonnot	October 30, 1912
Mary Bernius Leitz (Mrs. Ambrose, Jr.)	November 23, 1912
John F. Markey	August 4, 1915
Peter Betz, Sr.	August 16, 1924
Joseph Laughlin	April 22, 1925
Salvadore Valenti	October 12, 1929
Patrick J. Donegan	February 5, 1930
Fernand L. Laudumiey	May 21, 1934
Edward J. Ranson	August 28, 1935
D. W. Rhodes	July 7, 1938
Bertrand Ader	January 26, 1941
Peter J. McMahon, Sr.	October 2, 1941
James Bonnot	July 24, 1954
PROTESTANT UNDERTAKERS	
L. A. Muhleisen (probably Methodist)	September 30, 1909
George A. Schopp	January 20, 1911
Henry L. Frantz (Lutheran)	December 17, 1924
Anthony F. Bultman (Lutheran)	September 17, 1934
Henry Tharp (Episcopalian)	October 2, 1934

NOTE: Notices prior to 1914 are from the *New Orleans Daily Picayune*; those after 1914 are from the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*.

Aside from the strong connection between Touro Infirmary Cemetery burials and Isaac Sontheimer, no evidence suggests that survivors based their selection of undertakers entirely on religion. Regardless of their own affiliations, the active undertakers—those who handled more than twenty burials—interred decedents of the Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish faiths. Because of differences in Jewish rituals and the propensity within the Jewish community for supporting its own, Jews overwhelmingly selected Sontheimer, but some few chose the Methodist L. A. Muhleisen, the Lutheran A. F. Bultman, or one of the Catholic morticians, among whom were Francis Johnson, Joseph McMahon, P. J. McMahon, John G. Roche, and Jacob Schoen. Conversely, Sontheimer provided burials in Catholic and nonsectarian cemeteries, the latter accommodating many of the Protestants. These nondenominational graveyards, including city-owned cemeteries and large private cemeteries at the west end of Canal Street, housed the remains of Protestants as well as Catholics and, in designated sections, Jews.⁶⁷

Proximity to the decedent's (and his family's) home and to the cemetery of their choice appears to have been often as important as religious affiliation in terms of choice of undertaker. A. F. Bultman, for example, entered the business in 1883 in a building at 809 Magazine Street that had housed an earlier funeral home. In 1920, Bultman moved to 3338 St. Charles Avenue. The two establishments were known for having "served the territory above Canal Street since long before the War Between the States."⁶⁸ The St. Charles Avenue address stood little more than three blocks from Touro Infirmary and 1.7 miles from the Joseph Street Cemetery. Isaac Sontheimer's business was almost as convenient—six blocks from the hospital and 2.2 miles from the graveyard. The other undertakers who conducted at least thirty funerals for Touro Infirmary decedents—Francis Johnson, Joseph McMahon, and P. J. McMahon—all operated within several miles of the hospital.⁶⁹

Among the less active undertakers, three members of the Betz family—Peter, Charles, and William—maintained separate funeral homes in the suburb of Carrollton, about three miles from the hospital. Taken together, they handled fifteen Touro Infirmary burials, nine of which were in the nearby Carrollton Cemetery. Five of the other undertakers oversaw a total of six interments there. That the Betzes provided half again as

many Carrollton Cemetery burials as all the other mortuaries combined again suggests an affinity for undertakers based in the neighborhood.⁷⁰

Although undertaking was largely a family business that supported multiple branches and generations, some of its practitioners joined in partnership. Some of the partners also shared a religion, as did the Catholics Bertrand Ader and George J. Mothe, but others evidenced the ecumenical spirit of New Orleans by crossing religious lines to combine businesses. The Catholic Jacob Schoen and the Lutheran Henry L. Frantz, for example, remained partners for twenty years. In a tripartite merger, Lutheran A. F. Bultman's firm joined first with the Episcopalian Henry Tharp, who had managed the Catholic Francis Johnson's establishment for many years, and then added the Jewish Isaac Sontheimer's business in 1913.⁷¹ Bultman's heirs eventually left the group, but the firm continues today as Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp under the leadership of Isaac's great-grandson, Stephen Sontheimer, who also serves as secretary-treasurer of Touro Infirmary's governing board. Thus the Sontheimer family's relationship with the Touro carries into the fourth generation.

Surviving records of these funeral homes are not quite early enough to provide details of the Touro Cemetery burials. Nevertheless, case files of paupers' funerals arranged by F. Laudumiey & Co. that exist from as early as 1897 suggest that the Touro's expenditures matched the rates of the day. Death certificates cost fifty cents, seven or eight dollars bought a plain coffin, and for four dollars, a carriage drove mourners to the cemetery. Two interments that occurred in March 1898 exemplify charitable burials at Holt Cemetery, the city-owned burial ground for the indigent. The costs of laying to rest sixty-five-year-old Louise Finley and nine-year-old Jessy Johnson totaled, respectively, fifteen dollars and twenty-two dollars. A "transfer wagon" for \$4.50 transported Finley's body, and a ten-dollar "funeral car" carried little Jessy Johnson's. By contrast, a funeral the same month for an affluent and prominent citizen, forty-six-year-old Edward Soniat du Fossat, featured washing and dressing his body at a cost of five dollars, a seventy-five-dollar casket, a "1st class" funeral car at fifteen dollars, two dollars' worth of embellishments such as black crepe and ten candles, and three hundred funeral notices, printed in French and posted around the neighborhood, at an additional \$7.50. Opening the Soniat du Fossat tomb in St. Louis Cemetery I cost

An 1899 invoice from F. Laudumiey & Co. for the funeral of Didier Digues. Expenses for Digues, a poor laborer, were to be paid by the coroner's office, and he was to be buried at Holt Cemetery, where the city interred indigent dead. (Courtesy of the Earl K. Long Library, University of New Orleans.)

five dollars, more than triple the \$1.50 required to prepare Louise Finley's grave in Holt Cemetery. Digging Jessy Johnson's smaller grave cost just fifty cents.⁷²

Identifying the Deceased and the Demise of Touro Infirmary Cemetery

Purchased in three batches in 1893–1894, 1897–1898, and 1903–1904 at a total cost of eighty-three dollars, markers designated the pauper graves in the Touro Infirmary Cemetery. Most of them disappeared under a long-established carpet of grass, but two small marble stones, labeled only 84 and 85, remain visible although easily overlooked. Two large, vertical headstones, very different from the small markers, read “No. 102” and “No. 103,” above lengthy inscriptions in Hebrew. Hospital death records place Fannie Stern, an eighty-one-year-

old widow who died of Bright's disease, in grave no. 103. No name is associated with grave no. 102.⁷³

The last references to interments in the cemetery were entered in the death records in 1908, concluding with a burial in grave no. 155. During the preceding two decades, 1,129 patients died at the Touro Infirmary. At least 116 of the deceased—10 percent—are known to repose in its cemetery. An additional thirty-nine unidentified persons may rest among them, likely individuals listed in the death records as having been buried by the infirmary during the relevant period of time but with no cemetery named. Touro Cemetery graves were assigned to the deceased mostly in chronological order with intermittent gaps. For example, no burials are noted in that cemetery between November 3, 1896, and October 22, 1897. No names are associated with graves numbered 84 through 87, which would have been assigned during that period. It seems logical that interments occurring under the Touro's auspices could be balanced with unassigned grave numbers during the corresponding period, but efforts to identify these unknowns have succeeded only with Martha Oppenheimer Stabinsky, who died on May 7, 1900. One of the few headstones and copings in the Touro Infirmary section surrounds her resting place. When she passed away, the most recent burial had placed Rebecca Rosenberg, who succumbed the previous February 21, in grave no. 113. The next one, on August 18, laid Louis H. Shaenfield to rest in grave no. 115. Stabinsky's date of death, falling as it did between these two others, makes her a likely candidate for no. 114. Some plots may have been allotted to needy Jews for whom the Touro provided charitable burials even though they did not die there, thus eluding entry in the hospital's register of deaths, or the graves may simply lie vacant.⁷⁴

Marble headstones that survive today mark the resting places of ten more persons who were buried in Touro Infirmary Cemetery and whose grave numbers appear in the death records (*see* Table 3). These stones bear the names of the deceased and, in most instances, dates of birth and death, places of birth, and brief inscriptions in Hebrew. Of various design, they range from Louis Shaenfield's simple marker to a multipart memorial to "Mother," Julia Goodman. Why were these ten persons singled out from among more than one hundred? It seems improbable that so many others had substantial headstones that have vanished. More

likely, these ten had relatives or friends with the means to provide markers, if not entire funerals, either at the time of interment or after family fortunes improved.

TABLE 3. Marked graves at Touro Infirmary Cemetery.⁷⁵

Grave #	Name	Date of death
4	Levy (or Levi) Hirsch	April 27, 1889
21	Rebecca Levy Franklin	March 27, 1891
23	Meyer Erenstein	May 5, 1891
38	Julia Goodman	September 26, 1892
81	Levi Ehrenfeld	October 10, 1896
93	Fanny Mertz Marx	February 2, 1898
99	Lena Mane	February 10, 1899
114	Martha Oppenheimer Stabinsky*	May 7, 1900
116	Louis H. Shaenfield	October 8, 1900
117	Caroline Frank	December 2, 1900
142	Benjamin Aaron Jessel	December 12, 1905

* Believed to lie in grave number 114 but not listed in Touro death records.

This apparently was the circumstance of Caroline Frank. Among those interred in marked graves, she was one of five “inmates” – persons who did not need medical attention but stayed in the hospital, sometimes for years, because they were too elderly or frail to care for themselves; after the Julius Weis Home for the Aged and Infirm opened in 1898, the elderly resided there instead. A newspaper tribute to Frank the day after her death on December 2, 1900, reported that she was

at one time a mother in Israel whose goodness was proverbial. Husband and children departed one by one, and nine years ago, at the age of 75 years, she found herself alone. She was not friendless, however, for there were a number of hearths where she could have sought welcome shelter. But she preferred the abode which Jewish charity provided for such as she, and her wish was gratified. There she remained until the call to join her loved ones gone before, and many are left to pay tribute to her gentleness and noble worth.⁷⁶

Those referred to may have paid tribute financially and figuratively by providing the headstone.

Active burials ceased at the Touro Infirmary Cemetery in 1908, twenty years after they began, with Benjamin Henry's interment in grave no. 155. Henry, seventy-seven years old, died from cancer of the stomach on October 1, 1908. At that point, did the graveyard fill up? Were arrangements made with another congregation? The cemetery, listed in New Orleans city directories beginning in 1896, vanished from their pages after 1929. Interments ended abruptly, with no explanation or comment in the hospital's annual reports. Also in 1908, Congregation Gates of Prayer embarked upon efforts to improve the Joseph Street Cemetery, which had been neglected by some of the surviving families and by an inattentive, part-time sexton. To raise funds to employ a full-time sexton, the congregation levied an annual charge on each grave. The new fee probably did not apply to the Touro Infirmary section, because the Touro employed its own sexton. In the absence of another explanation, the changes at the cemetery likely influenced the cessation of burials.⁷⁷

Interments stopped, but deaths, of course, did not. During approximately nine months between Benjamin Henry's burial and the last consecutive entry in the death records (June 24, 1909), eighty-five patients succumbed. The remains of thirty-five of these were shipped out of New Orleans for burial, mostly to small towns in Louisiana and Mississippi, although a few traveled as far as Illinois and New York. Forty-three were scattered among seventeen local cemeteries: Greenwood Cemetery, with eight interments, was the most popular, followed by Valence Street and Metairie with five each. Four Jewish cemeteries accommodated seven burials, and seven resting-places remain unknown. Few of these deceased received charity, except that the Austrian consul saw to a sailor's interment in Holt Cemetery on January 2, 1909, and Karitch Herman, who died on May 19, was interred in an unnamed city cemetery, probably Holt.⁷⁸

One last burial transpired in the Touro Infirmary Cemetery, in 1948. At the time of her death on June 18 of that year, Rosa Jacob, widow of James J. McDonald, resided at the Touro Shakspeare Home, a New Orleans almshouse established in 1855 with a bequest of eighty thousand dollars from Judah Touro. According to the death notice that the *Times-Picayune* published the next day, she was a native of Natchitoches who

had lived in New Orleans for many years. Her funeral, from the parlors of Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp, had occurred the day she died, and already she lay in Touro Infirmary Cemetery. Records from the mortuary reveal that the sixty-seven-year-old died of arteriosclerotic heart disease. Her modest funeral cost one hundred dollars, paid by a nephew named Lawrence Mack. Initial plans apparently called for interment in Hebrew Rest Cemetery at a charge of seven hundred dollars, far exceeding Mrs. McDonald's means and presumably those of her nephew. Someone—perhaps from the funeral home, which had a long relationship with the Touro—may have interceded to ensure a charitable Jewish burial.⁷⁹

*The free ward for male patients at Touro Infirmary, 1910.
(Courtesy of the Touro Infirmary Archives, New Orleans.)*

A Case Study of Touro Infirmary Philanthropy: The Stabinsky Family

Assistance to one family, the Stabinskys, illustrates the panoply of aid given by Touro Infirmary. Jacob Stabinsky, a native of Poland, and his Russian-born wife, Julia, arrived in New Orleans about 1871, emigrating probably from Russia (although Germany appears in some records), with their ten-year-old son, also named Jacob. A daughter, Annie, was born in Louisiana around 1873, according to the 1880 U.S. Census, or 1876, based on information in the Touro records. From 1873 to 1875, New Orleans city directories listed Jacob, the father, as a peddler

who resided at 151 Toulouse Street. In 1875, the year in which directory canvassers finally registered his first name accurately, he died on September 12 and was buried in Gates of Prayer Cemetery. That Touro Infirmary death records omit him suggests that he died elsewhere, probably at home. Jacob, the son, had joined his father in the peddling trade by the time he was fourteen. Annie, either twelve or fifteen in 1888, already held a job as a "housegirl."⁸⁰

When the Stabinskys needed medical assistance, they turned to the Touro. Son Jacob's first hospitalization occurred in February 1876 for bronchitis. Two bouts of "dementia" totaling thirty days in the hospital, "malingering," and an unspecified illness resulting in an eighteen-day stay required attention in 1887 and 1888. On May 17, 1888, the infirmary admitted forty-seven-year-old "Mrs. Stabinsky," who was afflicted with cancer of the inguinal glands. This was most likely Julia, since from July 24 until November 7, Annie received "shelter"—a term applied to admissions dictated not by medical necessity but by compassion—at the Touro as a caregiver. Mrs. Stabinsky's condition presumably deteriorated until she died on November 6. Touro Infirmary provided for her burial, among the last prior to the establishment of the cemetery about six weeks later.⁸¹

Discharged on November 7, the day after Mrs. Stabinsky died, Annie returned five days later with her brother, and both of them found shelter at the hospital. The siblings accounted for three of the six such stays that year. They remained for less than two weeks, presumably long enough to arrange their lives after the loss of their mother, but in December, another attack of bronchitis sent Jacob back. In 1890, he battled an abscess of the ear and his first recorded bout of phthisis, the disease that caused his death on August 31, 1891. Meanwhile, Annie entered the Touro twice in 1890 to obtain medical services, once for malaria and the second, for two days, for "nihil" (nothing was wrong). The admissions book ends in 1891, and what became of Annie is unknown. Jacob lies in grave no. 27 in the Touro Infirmary Cemetery.⁸²

Members of the extended Stabinsky family also received aid. How Martha Oppenheimer Stabinsky fit in is uncertain, but probably Abraham Stabinsky, whom she married early in 1884 at the age of sixteen, was Jacob père's younger brother or nephew, who arrived in New Orleans after the 1880 census was taken. No other Stabinsky family fre-

quented the Touro, and no other explanation for Martha's relationship is extant. Her parents, William and Henrietta Steinburg Oppenheimer, came to New Orleans from Germany in about 1874 with six- or seven-year-old Martha. On September 17, 1878, Henrietta died of yellow fever at the age of fifty-seven. The Oppenheimers' first appearance in Touro Infirmary records dates from May 29, 1899, when William, then a seventy-six-year-old widower who had been employed as a laborer, entered the hospital suffering from chronic nephritis and hypertrophy of the prostate. He died on June 16 and was "buried by his daughter, Mrs. M. Stabinsky," in grave no. 104 in the Touro Infirmary Cemetery. Less than a year later on May 7, 1900, Martha, a few days shy of her thirty-third birthday, also was laid to rest there, in what is probably grave no. 114, although she did not die at the Touro.⁸³

Martha Stabinsky's grave, among the cemetery's few that are marked, is incised "Mother" — appropriately, for in addition to her husband, Abraham, she left behind five children: Henrietta ("Hattie," born in 1885 or 1886), Jeannette (born in 1887 or 1888), Julius (born May 30, 1889), Myer (born October 31, 1895), and Uriah (born July 13, 1898). Aside from the death notices of his sons and daughters in the mid-twentieth century, the only mentions of Abraham are found in the pages of city directories, wherein his occupation as a peddler initially appeared in 1888 and intermittently thereafter. In 1900 and for several more years, he represented the Life Insurance Company of Virginia as an agent. He had returned to peddling by 1906, the year of his last directory entry. At that time, at least the two youngest children resided at the New Orleans Jewish Orphans' Home. That Myer played cornet in the home's band in 1905 indicates that the children may have been enrolled in the orphanage while their father was still alive. He probably found it impossible to eke out a living while caring for two children under five years old when their mother died.⁸⁴

The Stabinskys, apparently a hard-working but impoverished family, availed themselves of most of Touro Infirmary's beneficences. First, several members of the family obtained recurring medical care, sometimes for several months at a time. Second, following their mother Julia's demise, Annie and Jacob were "sheltered" at the hospital. Third, Jacob, presumed in-law William Oppenheimer, and possibly Martha received charitable Jewish burials in the Touro Infirmary Cemetery. Fourth, after

*Grave of Martha Oppenheimer
Stabinsky, Touro Infirmary Cemetery.
(Courtesy of Florence M. Jumonville.)*

their mother Martha's death, two or more third-generation Stabinskys resided at the Jewish Orphans' Home. At least one member of this extended family received each of the services offered by Touro Infirmary except one, residence in the Julius Weis Home for the Aged and Infirm—they did not live long enough.

Conclusion

For twenty years, the Touro Infirmary Cemetery constituted what Caroline E. Light describes as "an active and ongoing investment in charity [that] has long constituted a vital component of Jewish citizenship" and, in a small way, exemplifies how charity contributed to maintaining Jewish culture in New Orleans, as it did for the beleaguered Stabinskys.⁸⁵ Many questions remain, especially regarding the unassigned grave numbers and the reason for the cemetery's retirement from active use. From scant available evidence, however, a picture emerges of needy persons in failing health, many of them elderly by the standards of their day, some far from home in a city of strangers, and of their interments in accordance with Jewish tradition.

 NOTES

Thanks to the following friends and colleagues (listed alphabetically) who read versions of this manuscript and made valuable suggestions: Shon Baker, director of development, Touro Infirmary; Mary Louise Christovich, editor of *New Orleans Architecture, Volume 3: The Cemeteries*; Catherine C. Kahn, founding archivist, Touro Infirmary; and Jessica Travis, volunteer, Touro Infirmary.

¹ Touro Infirmary, Record of Deaths, 1869–1916, Touro Infirmary Archives, New Orleans (hereafter cited as Record of Deaths); Touro Infirmary, Admission Book of Touro Infirmary, 1869–1891, Touro Infirmary Archives, New Orleans; Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association, *Fifteenth Annual Report of the Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association of New Orleans* (New Orleans, 1889), 60, 61, 65; E. Harold Hinman, “History of Typhus Fever in Louisiana,” *American Journal of Public Health* 26 (November 1936): 1117–21.

² Charles E. Rosenberg, *The Care of Strangers: The Rise of America’s Hospital System* (Baltimore, 1987), 18–20, 25, 97–98, 122.

³ Record of Deaths. Some data, such as gender and cause of death, are missing from some entries, therefore some statistics discussed herein total less than 117.

⁴ Stella O’Connor, “The Charity Hospital of Louisiana at New Orleans: An Administrative and Financial History, 1736–1941,” *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 31 (January 1948): 7.

⁵ For an excellent overview of New Orleans cemeteries, see Mary Louise Christovich, ed., *New Orleans Architecture, Volume 3: The Cemeteries* (New Orleans, 1974), especially Leonard V. Huber, “New Orleans Cemeteries: A Brief History,” 3–6. Some authors, including Sally Asher, attribute the spate of deaths in 1788 to the Good Friday fire on March 21 caused by unattended votive candles that ignited the home of a devout Catholic. An authoritative account of colonial New Orleans, however, states that despite enormous loss of property, just one person died in the conflagration. Sally Asher, *Stories from the St. Louis Cemeteries of New Orleans* (Charleston, SC, 2015), 30; Lawrence N. Powell, *The Accidental City: Improvising New Orleans* (Cambridge, MA, 2012), 198–99.

⁶ Nationally, such disruption mainly affected the corpses of those whom society regarded as insignificant, such as African Americans and paupers. In this aberrant instance, the displaced also included non-Catholics of Euro-American descent. Ironically, from 1897 to 1917 a legalized red-light district known as Storyville occupied part of the site, accommodating another class generally considered undesirable: prostitutes. Huber, “New Orleans Cemeteries,” 4; Sherene Baugher and Richard F. Veit, *The Archaeology of American Cemeteries and Gravemarkers* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2014), 60. For a layman’s discussion of relevant Louisiana cemetery legislation, see Ryan M. Seidemann, “Do Not Disturb: A Practical Guide for What Not to Do Around Cemeteries and Human Remains for the Louisiana Energy and Land Use Practitioner,” *LSU Journal of Energy Law and Resources* 2 (Spring 2014): 246–55.

⁷ [Joseph Holt Ingraham], *The South-West, by a Yankee* (New York, 1835), 1:154.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 156.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 156-57.

¹⁰ Emily Anne Ford, "The Stonecutters and Tomb Builders of Lafayette Cemetery No. 1, New Orleans, Louisiana" (master's thesis, Clemson University, 2013), 22-23.

¹¹ Bobbie Malone, "New Orleans Uptown Jewish Immigrants: The Community of Congregation Gates of Prayer, 1850-1860," *Louisiana History* 32 (Summer 1991): 244; Bertram Wallace Korn, *The Early Jews of New Orleans* (Waltham, MA, 1969), 136, 162, 196, 216. Korn provides examples of burials in the Girod Street Cemetery.

¹² Harriet K. Stern, *A Brief History of the New Orleans Jewish Community* (pamphlet, c. 2009), 3; Irwin Lachoff and Catherine C. Kahn, *The Jewish Community of New Orleans* (Charleston, SC, 2005), 7; Malone, "New Orleans Uptown Jewish Immigrants," 242; Korn, *Early Jews of New Orleans*, 192-95.

¹³ Korn, *Early Jews of New Orleans*, 200, 214; Lachoff and Kahn, *Jewish Community of New Orleans*, 7; Huber, "New Orleans Cemeteries," 21; Touro Synagogue, "Our History," accessed April 6, 2016, <https://touro synagogue.com/about-us/ourhistory/>; International Jewish Cemetery Project, "New Orleans: (Orleans Parish)," accessed April 8, 2016, <http://www.iajgsjewishcemeteryproject.org/louisiana-la/new-orleans-orleans-parish.html>.

¹⁴ Korn, *Early Jews of New Orleans*, 209; Lachoff and Kahn, *Jewish Community of New Orleans*, 17.

¹⁵ Lachoff and Kahn, *Jewish Community of New Orleans*, 7; Korn, *Early Jews of New Orleans*, 240-44, 247-49; Bertram W. Korn, "A Reappraisal of Judah Touro," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 45 (April 1955): 575.

¹⁶ Korn, *Early Jews of New Orleans*, 74-75; Korn, "Reappraisal of Judah Touro," 570-72, 574-75.

¹⁷ Korn, "Reappraisal of Judah Touro," 576.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 577 (brackets in original).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 579; Korn, *Early Jews of New Orleans*, 251-53, 256; Lachoff and Kahn, *Jewish Community of New Orleans*, 11. A photocopy of Touro's holograph will is on file at the Touro Infirmary Archives, New Orleans.

²⁰ Malone, "New Orleans Uptown Jewish Immigrants," 243-45.

²¹ Lachoff and Kahn, *Jewish Community of New Orleans*, 25; Rosenberg, *Care of Strangers*, 119; Mary Louise Mossy Christovich and Roulhac Bunkley Toledano, *Garden Legacy* (New Orleans, 2016), 201; Jennifer Matz, "Past as Prologue," *Tourovues* 14 (Spring 1979): 3.

²² Circus Street is now South Rampart Street. The Circus Street Infirmary, which opened in 1841 and operated at least until 1878, stood near Carondelet Street about two miles from Touro Infirmary. "Circus Street Infirmary," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, August 21, 1841; "Dr. F. Formento," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, April 2, 1878.

²³ *Cohen's New Orleans and Lafayette Directory* (New Orleans, 1852-1853).

²⁴ *Gardner's New Orleans Directory, for the Year 1859* (New Orleans, 1858): 332.

²⁵ Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association, *Fifth Annual Report of the Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association, of New Orleans* (New Orleans, 1879), 14-15;

Touro Infirmary, Admission Book of Touro Infirmary, 1855–1861, Touro Infirmary Archives, New Orleans (hereafter cited as Admission Book, 1855–1861).

²⁶ James A. Renshaw, "Judah Touro and His Will," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 11 (January 1928): 79–80.

²⁷ Admission Book, 1855–1861.

²⁸ Caroline E. Light, *That Pride of Race and Character: The Roots of Jewish Benevolence in the Jim Crow South* (New York, 2014), 8 (first and second quotations); "Touro Infirmary," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, August 21, 1852 (subsequent quotations); Korn, *Early Jews of New Orleans*, 333–34.

²⁹ John Duffy, ed., *The Rudolph Matas History of Medicine in Louisiana* (Baton Rouge, 1962), 1:232–33; Record of Deaths; Huber, "New Orleans Cemeteries," 21–24. The figures total less than 340 because data are absent from some entries. Mary LaCoste lists the Jewish cemeteries in New Orleans as Gates of Mercy (Shanarai Chasset), founded 1827, demolished 1957 and its remains relocated to Hebrew Rest I, also cited in the Record of Deaths as Rampart Street Synagogue; Dispersed of Judah (Nefutshoh Yehudah, 1847); Gates of Prayer (Shaare Tefillah, 1853), also known as the Joseph Street Cemetery, including burials in the cemetery of Rabbi Joshua, which was a section of Gates of Prayer, and Mikvah Israel; Tememe Derech, also cited as Carondelet Synagogue and Canal Street Cemetery (1858); and Hebrew Rest I (1860), which included a strip of pauper graves. In addition, Metairie Cemetery established a section for Jewish burials in 1885. Mary LaCoste, *Death Embraced: New Orleans Tombs and Burial Customs* (Raleigh, NC, 2015), 91–103. When variant spellings of Hebrew names have been found, preference has been given to that used by Lachoff and Kahn, *Jewish Community of New Orleans*.

³⁰ Charity Hospital of Louisiana, *Report of the Board of Administrators of the Charity Hospital, to the General Assembly of the State of Louisiana, 1877* (New Orleans, 1878), 8.

³¹ An example of a decedent who escaped a pauper's grave is Louis Dreyfus, whose body "was found in potters' field, and will be given a proper burial in the Jewish cemetery to-day [August 16, 1887]." Musician Charles Patterson, who died in 1898, narrowly avoided a charitable burial when the Segoula Social Club paid his funeral bill of \$59.50 to the undertaker, Widow A. P. Boyer. "Found," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, August 16, 1887; "Charles Patterson Buried by Friends," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, April 20, 1898.

³² Charity Hospital of Louisiana, *Report of the Board of Administrators of the Charity Hospital, to the General Assembly of the State of Louisiana, 1888* (New Orleans, 1889), 27; Touro Infirmary, *Fifteenth Annual Report*, 21.

³³ Marilyn Yalom, *The American Resting Place: Four Hundred Years of History Through Our Cemeteries and Burial Grounds* (Boston, 2008), 140; Robert Florence, *New Orleans Cemeteries: Life in the Cities of the Dead* (New Orleans, 1997), 96; Charity Hospital of Louisiana, *Report of the Board of Administrators of the Charity Hospital, for the Years 1848 and 1849* (New Orleans, [1850]), 1; Richard C. Beavers, Teresia R. Lamb, and John R. Greene, *Burial Archaeology and Osteology of Charity Hospital/Cypress Grove II Cemetery, New Orleans, Louisiana* (New Orleans, 1993), 1:4, 76, 78. The modern address of the Charity Hospital Cemetery is 5050 Canal Street.

³⁴ David Charles Sloane, *The Last Great Necessity: Cemeteries in American History* (Baltimore, MD, 1991), 200; John Salvaggio, *New Orleans' Charity Hospital: A Story of Physicians, Politics, and Poverty* (Baton Rouge, 1992), 50.

³⁵ Community Alliance for Jewish-Affiliated Cemeteries, "Jewish Cemetery of Central Islip," accessed May 27, 2016, <http://www.cajac.us/jewish-cemetery-of-central-islip/>; Kirsten Anderberg, "American 'Insane Asylum' History: Giving Names to Numbered Graves," accessed May 27, 2016, <http://portland.indymedia.org/en/2004/08/294697.shtml>.

³⁶ Record of Deaths; "The City," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, December 19, 1869 (first and third quotations); *New Orleans Times*, March 27, 1865 (second quotation); "Suicide of a German Actress in New Orleans," *Flake's Bulletin* (Galveston, TX), December 25, 1869; Sloane, *Last Great Necessity*, 27. Renzo Grunewald's given name, which appears only in the *New Orleans Times* article, is uncertain because unclear printing makes it difficult to read.

³⁷ Record of Deaths.

³⁸ Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association, *Seventeenth Annual Report of the Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association, of New Orleans* (New Orleans, 1891), 50.

³⁹ Matz, "Past as Prologue," 3 (quotation), 4.

⁴⁰ Touro Infirmary, *Fifteenth Annual Report*, 18. When Magner died, the *Daily Picayune* eulogized him as a "venerable and esteemed citizen whom the whole community regarded as an exemplar of philanthropy and goodness. . . . [He was] the friend of the young and of the poor and afflicted, a man in whom shone all the excellent qualities of the truly kind citizen." "Joseph Magner, One of the Founders of Magnificent Jewish Charities Here, and Knightly in War and Peace, Dies as Result of Recent Accident," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, November 22, 1908.

⁴¹ Touro Infirmary, *Seventeenth Annual Report*, 50.

⁴² Lachoff and Kahn, *Jewish Community of New Orleans*, 45. For a list of officers and managers, see Touro Infirmary, *Fifteenth Annual Report*, 3.

⁴³ "Michael Frank, Death of a Leading Citizen and Prominent Capitalist," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, October 5, 1896.

⁴⁴ "Rabbi Leucht Passes to Death; Mourned by Many," *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, June 5, 1914; "Charles Simon, One of the Heroes of the City's Stirring Story," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, June 17, 1909; "Patriarch of City, Henry Stern Dies Greatly Beloved," *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, December 26, 1916; "Simon Cohn, Well-Known Citizen, Called to His Last Reward," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, October 5, 1910; Simon Cohn to his mother, August 1, 1888, Cohn Family Papers, Touro Infirmary Archives, New Orleans.

⁴⁵ An arpent is a unit of French measure equal to about 192 feet (58.5 meters) that remained in common use in Louisiana during the nineteenth century. A square arpent (also called an arpent) measured 0.84 acres.

⁴⁶ Huber, "New Orleans Cemeteries," 23; Samuel Wilson, Jr., "The Uptown Faubourgs," in *New Orleans Architecture, Volume 8: The University Section*, ed. Robert J. Cangelosi, Jr., and Dorothy G. Schlesinger (New Orleans, 1997), 11; "Water Still Deep in Many Sections Long After Rain," *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, April 17, 1927.

⁴⁷ Cemetery records, Congregation Gates of Prayer, Metairie, LA (hereafter cited as Gates of Prayer Records). The records do not include the names of persons interred in the Touro Infirmary section. Thanks to Rabbi Robert Loewy of Congregation Gates of Prayer for permission to examine the records and to congregation administrator Suzanne Stone for her gracious welcome and splendid assistance.

⁴⁸ Touro Infirmary, *Fifth Annual Report*, 18; Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association, *Sixth Annual Report of the Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association, of New Orleans* (New Orleans, 1880), 8.

⁴⁹ Data for the table are compiled from Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association, annual reports, 1879–1915.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* Other native lands were Austria, eight people; Poland, six; France, five; Hungary, four; Alsace, three; England and Rumania, two each; and Holland and Prussia, one each.

⁵¹ Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association, annual reports, 1879–1915; Record of Deaths.

⁵² Record of Deaths; Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association, annual reports, 1888–1909.

⁵³ Record of Deaths; Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association, annual reports, 1888–1909. Ten people are identified as being buried “by Touro” or “by Infirmary.” An eleventh person, seventy-six-year-old Clarissa Samuel, was an “inmate” of the hospital, which meant that it was her home, but no details of her burial were noted. An immigrant from Jamaica who had never married, likely had no family in New Orleans, and suffered from “senility,” Samuel had resided for nearly two years at the Touro, which probably extended to her this last charity.

⁵⁴ See, for example, Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association, *Thirty-Fourth Annual Report of the Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association of New Orleans, La.* (New Orleans, 1908), 49; Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association, *Thirty-Fifth Annual Report of the Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association of New Orleans, La.* (New Orleans, 1909), 41. The death notice of Caroline Frank in the *New Orleans Daily Picayune* of December 3, 1900, exemplifies a funeral “from the Touro.” No additional death notices involving Touro Cemetery burials could be found.

⁵⁵ Touro Infirmary, *Thirty-Fourth Annual Report*, 39.

⁵⁶ “Another Boom,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, April 7, 1880.

⁵⁷ Record of Deaths.

⁵⁸ Record of Deaths; Michael L. Taylor, “The Civil War Experiences of a New Orleans Undertaker,” *Louisiana History* 55 (Summer 2014): 277.

⁵⁹ Gary Laderman, *The Sacred Remains: American Attitudes toward Death, 1799–1883* (New Haven, 1996), 9, 45; Taylor, “Civil War Experiences of a New Orleans Undertaker,” 264.

⁶⁰ *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, December 16, 1842 (first quotation); *New Orleans Jeffersonian Republican*, December 30, 1844 (second quotation); *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, June 30, 1849 (third quotation).

⁶¹ Taylor, "Civil War Experiences of a New Orleans Undertaker," 265–68; Laderman, *Sacred Remains*, 9, 157. The federal government did not affirm the policy of returning soldiers' remains to their survivors until the Korean War.

⁶² Record of Deaths. Executing a contract between a health-care institution and a funeral director was an accepted practice, as in the example of the Soldiers' Home contracting with Fernand Laudumiey in 1915 to bury deceased residents. Ledgers from the funeral home confirm that Laudumiey had held this commission before. "Bids Are Opened for Supplying Soldiers' Home," *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, February 7, 1915; see, for example, day books, April 2, 1895, Laudumiey Funeral Home Collection (Mss 413), Earl K. Long Library, University of New Orleans.

⁶³ Although one may have existed, the author was unable to locate evidence of a Jewish burial society in New Orleans that had dealings with the Touro Infirmary Cemetery.

⁶⁴ Record of Deaths.

⁶⁵ *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, July 19, 1900; "New Taxicab Service," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, September 12, 1909; Louis Levand death notice, *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, January 30, 1934.

⁶⁶ Locating these notices and obituaries was facilitated by the *Louisiana Biography and Obituary Index*, compiled by the New Orleans Public Library and made available online by The Historic New Orleans Collection, accessed May 25, 2016, <http://www.nutrias.org/~nopl/obits/obits.htm>.

⁶⁷ Record of Deaths.

⁶⁸ "Dean of Funeral Directors Dead," *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, September 17, 1934.

⁶⁹ Taylor, "Civil War Experiences of a New Orleans Undertaker," 278; Record of Deaths.

⁷⁰ Record of Deaths. The Betzes also provided one burial each in Greenwood, Metairie, St. Joseph, and Valance Street Cemeteries and shipped one body to Zachary, Louisiana, for interment. Records do not specify the resting place of a stillborn infant, but the baby's mother eventually was entombed in the Carrollton Cemetery. The other undertakers who provided Carrollton Cemetery burials were Bultman (two) and Lynch, Mothe, and Sontheimer (one each). Clearly residents of Carrollton patronized their neighbors, the Betzes.

⁷¹ "Undertakers' Big Business Deal," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, December 24, 1913.

⁷² F. Laudumiey & Co., "Price List for Funeral of [Louis Finley, died February 28, 1898; Jessy Johnson, died February 26, 1898; Edward J. Soniat du Fossat, died March 21, 1898]," Sharp-Sontheimer-Laudumiey Collection, Addendum 1 (Mss 448), Earl K. Long Library, University of New Orleans; see, for example, Soldiers' Home burial, April 2, 1895. Grave digging fees may have been below the prevailing rate in the city-owned cemeteries, which were \$1.75 for charity adults and a dollar less for charity children in 1901. "One Saloon License Fails of Favor," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, May 11, 1901.

⁷³ These headstones have been removed from their original locations and, along with others, line the cemetery's Arabella Street fence. According to the website "Find a Grave," "With approval of the Rabbinic Council, grave sites recently were scanned and tombstones removed from those that were determined to be empty." Therefore, it is uncertain whether

these headstones came from the Touro Infirmary section, but the presence of the numbers makes this likely. Cemetery visits, February 12 and February 18, 2016; Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association, *Twentieth Annual Report of the Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association, of New Orleans* (New Orleans, 1894), 27; Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association, *Twenty-Ninth Annual Report of the Touro Infirmary and Hebrew Benevolent Association, of New Orleans* (New Orleans, 1903), 26; Record of Deaths; "Find a Grave: Gates of Prayer Cemetery #2," accessed May 26, 2016, <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=cr&CRid=67898>.

⁷⁴ Record of Deaths.

⁷⁵ "Find a Grave," accessed May 26, 2016, <http://www.findagrave.com>.

⁷⁶ *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, December 3, 1900.

⁷⁷ Record of Deaths; *Soards' New Orleans City Directory* (New Orleans, 1874–1935); Congregation Gates of Prayer, *Centennial Volume, Congregation Gates of Prayer, January 13–15, 1950* (New Orleans, 1950). Thanks to Suzanne Stone at Congregation Gates of Prayer for the discovery that charges were instituted in 1908.

⁷⁸ Record of Deaths.

⁷⁹ "Deaths," *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, June 19, 1948 (containing an incorrect date of death); Rosa McDonald case file, June 18, 1948, Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Collection, Addendum 1 (Mss 447), Earl K. Long Library, University of New Orleans.

⁸⁰ Admission Book, 1855–1861; Record of Deaths; *Soards' New Orleans City Directory*; Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, Orleans Parish, Louisiana; "Find a Grave," accessed May 2, 2016, <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GSln=Stabinsky&GSfn=Jacob&GSbyrel=all&GSdyrel=all&GSst=20&GSctry=4&GSob=n&GRid=64700134&df=all&>. Contradictory data occur frequently and have been reconciled on the basis of logic and what versions appear most consistently. Credit for discovering the Stabinsky family in the death records goes to Linda Epstein, former assistant archivist at the Touro Infirmary Archives.

⁸¹ Julia Stabinsky vanishes after a city directory entry in 1884. Nonetheless, in that era of casual chronology, this person's birth in about 1841 is reasonably close to Julia's, around 1845. Oddly, other details of the entry appear to describe a man rather than a woman: a widower whose occupation was "labour." Admission Book, 1855–1861; Record of Deaths; Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, Orleans Parish, Louisiana.

⁸² Admission Book, 1855–1861; Record of Deaths; Touro Infirmary, *Fifteenth Annual Report*, 65.

⁸³ Record of Deaths; My Heritage, "Martha Oppenheimer," accessed May 4, 2016, https://www.myheritage.com/names/martha_oppenheimer; New Orleans Board of Health, *Official Report of the Deaths from Yellow Fever* (New Orleans, [1878]), 62.

⁸⁴ "Find a Grave," accessed May 26, 2016, <http://www.findagrave.com>; "Jewish Home Band," *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, May 1, 1905; "Confirmants at Jewish Altars," *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, June 12, 1913.

⁸⁵ Light, *That Pride of Race and Character*, 5.

“NCJW Joins the War on Poverty”: The National Council of Jewish Women and the Quest for Opportunity in 1960s Atlanta

by

Emily Alice Katz*

In April 1968, Marilyn Shubin, president of the Atlanta section of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW), put a blunt question to the section’s membership. “What should be the role of the ‘middle class volunteer’ in helping to meet the Urban Crisis? That’s the real sixty-four dollar question,” she wrote in the section’s monthly *Bulletin*, warning that “there are certainly no pat answers.”¹ Shubin paused to ask this question at a heady and perplexing moment in American history, a time of unprecedented opportunity and increasing unrest both locally and nationally. President Lyndon Baines Johnson—an adroit power broker with a bedrock faith in the federal government as an engine of social progress—had translated John F. Kennedy’s New Frontier optimism into a series of liberal legislative victories in the mid-1960s after Kennedy’s assassination. Troubled by the specter of entrenched poverty despite a booming postwar economy, Johnson and his many liberal allies in the Democratic-held Congress launched a so-called “War on Poverty” in 1964. The landmark legislation of 1964 and 1965 included the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act, which aimed to expand equality of opportunity to all Americans, an extension of the legal and moral demands of the civil rights movement that arose as a powerful force in American life in the preceding decade. Yet by April 1968, the liberal promise of racial and economic progress was being challenged by powerful critiques from the left and the right. Liberal coalitions frayed as public violence intensified among and between black nationalists, the

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urban poor, radical student activists, white supremacists, and the police. The month that Shubin posed her “sixty-four dollar question” to the council’s members, Atlanta’s own Martin Luther King, Jr., now working to build a poor people’s movement in the United States, was assassinated in Memphis. News of his murder sparked widespread rioting in decaying city centers across the country.²

This paper examines two community services initiatives organized, staffed, and supported by the Atlanta section of the NCJW during this period of momentous change in American life: Women in Community Service (WICS) and the council’s Youth Project. Both served as local iterations of the national push to redress the educational and vocational disadvantages wrought by poverty: WICS was a Job Corps program targeting low-income young women, whereas the Youth Project was conceived as a response to the vast inequities in the city’s public school system that had come to light in the era of desegregation. In the case of WICS, a joint project of the federal government and several prominent women’s organizations, Atlanta’s council women helped organize and implement the program in its earliest stages, recruiting and interviewing candidates from Atlanta and the state more broadly for Job Corps training centers across the country. Meanwhile, the council’s Youth Project, also known as Council in the Schools, brought members as volunteers into several underserved schools in urban Atlanta neighborhoods.

The Atlanta Milieu

Atlanta, a growing southern city with complex racial politics, faced its own crises in the 1960s. The city’s leadership and citizens, black and white, reckoned publicly and sometimes violently with the entrenched, racialized power imbalances still underlying the city “too busy to hate” (as its boosters claimed). As radicalized activists of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) jostled with King’s Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and Atlanta’s established black leadership for influence, small-scale riots erupted in the Atlanta communities of Summerhill, Vine City, and Dixie Hills over issues of police brutality and the city’s longstanding, blatant, and deliberate neglect of low-income black neighborhoods.³

On the other hand, Atlanta avoided the major explosions of unrest that characterized several northern cities in the course of the sixties. Un-

der the leadership of Mayor Ivan Allen, Jr., and in consultation with the city's moderate black elite, Atlanta embarked on urban reform and human relations initiatives designed to equalize access to city services and to foster interracial harmony. Such good-faith efforts to address the grievances of black citizens, historian Ronald H. Bayor notes, were largely unprecedented in the urban South.⁴ And while the 1958 bombing of Atlanta's Reform synagogue, The Temple, by white supremacists exemplified the rise of violent antisemitism in the civil rights-era South, the act of terrorism had elicited the outrage and sympathy of the moderate gentile majority. The outpouring of support and goodwill toward Atlanta's Jews in the wake of the bombing suggested a widespread, tacit acceptance of the liberal activism of Jewish leaders such as Rabbi Jacob Rothschild and hastened the further integration of Jews into the fabric of Atlanta life.⁵

Indeed, council materials from the 1960s and early 1970s exude optimism that the Atlanta section and its home city were equal to the demands of this historic moment. In April 1967, the local section had hosted the NCJW's annual meeting in Atlanta for the first time. The theme was "One Woman Can Make A Difference." NCJW national president Pearl Willen noted that "rarely has the American Jewish woman been so sharply challenged to create a better society."⁶ Hosting the convention was an opportunity the local section viewed as consonant with Atlanta's status as an ascendant city: not only the state capital, but a hub of transportation and business, home to two professional sports teams and more than a million residents, bearing an "impressive skyline" and suffused with "Southern Hospitality," as the *Bulletin* boasted.⁷ So, too, was Atlanta a magnet for ever-growing numbers of young Jewish families and an incubator for Jewish organizational leadership at the local and national levels.⁸

The NCJW Atlanta Section

From the time of its founding in the last decade of the nineteenth century, the Atlanta section had occupied a unique status as a Jewish women's organization in the city. Its members assumed leadership positions at the state level and shaped a politically progressive agenda in tandem with the national organization and local allies.⁹ As the U.S. government, civic bodies, and grassroots organizations worked

*Vice President Hubert Humphrey,
event speaker, with NCJW president
Pearl Willen at the group's national
meeting in Atlanta, April 13, 1967.*

*(Courtesy of the Cuba Family
Archives for Southern Jewish
History at the Breman Museum,
Atlanta.)*

actively to engineer a more equitable civil society during the course of the 1960s, the Atlanta section continued its crucial and often pathbreaking work in the spheres of legislative advocacy and community services. On the eve of the 1967 convention, council volunteers ran a multitude of projects intended to buttress the social welfare of the local community, encompassing the absorption of Jewish immigrants, recreational opportunities and job referral services for older citizens, a new partnership with the Georgia Mental Health Institute, and education and employment initiatives for young people, among other things. The council's work with WICS and its Youth Project in the schools thus coexisted within a wide-ranging portfolio of communal services initiatives in keeping with the organization's longstanding record, locally and nationally, of activism for the public good. Both initiatives examined in this paper reflect the NCJW's liberal political platform and its practice of "civic feminism," in which members—still largely unpaid volunteers rather than salaried professionals—worked closely with government institutions and other civic organizations throughout the country to safeguard

*From the NCJW Atlanta section Bulletin, January 1970.
(Courtesy of the Cuba Family Archives for Southern
Jewish History at the Breman Museum, Atlanta.)*

civil liberties and pursue social justice and human rights at home and abroad.¹⁰

In a broader sense, the council's work with WICS and its Youth Project sheds new light on American liberalism at the crossroads. In philosophy and practice, President Johnson's War on Poverty aimed to remove the barriers that, according to the liberal diagnosis of inequality, kept some Americans from finding a place in the American economy. Through the creation of job training programs such as Job Corps and by securing increased federal funding for schools, the president and Congress focused particular attention on creating educational and vocational opportunities for disadvantaged youth. Essentially optimistic in conception, the War on Poverty was intended to open individual paths, en masse, to the American dream. To the extent that they grasped the complex structural causes of inequality then coming to light, neither the president nor the American public supported the radical economic and social measures that might have fostered the equitable sharing of power and resources among all sectors of the American population. In its conceptualization and implementation of WICS and the Youth Project, the Atlanta council section serves as a microcosm of forces at work in public life at this pivotal moment in American history. As its leaders and volunteers made clear, the council exemplified the ambitious optimism of midcentury liberalism that envisioned the gradual, orderly expansion of opportunity for the disadvantaged as a joint government-civic project. The particular failings of WICS and the Youth Project, however, also point to the limits of midcentury liberalism in solving the entrenched inequalities that characterize American society.

Specifically, in focusing on these two community services initiatives in their prime years of operation between 1964 and 1973, this paper attempts to enrich our understanding of how Jewish women in the postwar urban South attempted to remake the South as a more equitable society. While several scholars have made notable contributions to the historical literature on southern Jewish women as public advocates for social change in the first postwar decades, we still know relatively little about the roles these women played "in the field," how they framed and understood their motives, and how they were perceived by the subjects of their interventions.¹¹ This essay contributes further to this literature. In uncovering one aspect of the largely untold story of the Atlanta section

of council, it pays particular attention to the tensions and contradictions that characterized its on-the-ground approach to expanding opportunities for low-income youth, in and out of school, during the 1960s and early 1970s.

The council women involved in these projects embraced and enacted serious efforts to open equal opportunities to disadvantaged youth. Yet, simultaneously, they were often blind to the paternalism that marked and sometimes stymied their efforts. As was true of participants in liberal organizations generally in the first postwar decades—Jewish and non-Jewish, black and white— council members did not “fully recognize the structural underpinnings to racism” and class discrimination, as Cheryl Lynn Greenberg has shown. As religious bigotry and social discrimination against Jews receded from public and private life, liberal Jewish groups were slower to “question the efficacy of the liberal vision” than, for example, black activists.¹² In their work with disadvantaged populations, however, at least some council volunteers began to grasp the enormity of the problem at hand and broaden their perspectives on poverty and privilege. The Atlanta section’s involvement in WICS and in its Youth Project serve, in this light, as a powerful lens for focusing the sometimes fraught, often poignant interactions between middle- and upper-middle-class Jewish women and those underserved Atlantans they attempted to help.

Atlanta Jewish women had a long-standing involvement with the NCJW. In 1895—a mere two years after the birth of the council at the Chicago World’s Fair as the first national organization of Jewish women in the United States—a group of women affiliated with Atlanta’s Hebrew Benevolent Congregation (The Temple) formed a local chapter of the NCJW with Rebecca Solomons Alexander as president. The Atlanta chapter reflected the shared spiritual and social agenda of Atlanta’s Reform community and the national organization. Indeed, the Atlanta section served until 1912 as the women’s auxiliary of The Temple, cultivating fellowship and encouraging the study of Judaism among local Reform women as well as raising funds for the congregation. From its earliest years, however, the Atlanta council also served as a civic organization, providing an array of social services for immigrant Jews and campaigning for hallmark Progressive Era initiatives such as free kindergartens and fair labor laws.¹³ With its paired focus on strengthening

the Jewish community and reforming broader society, the Atlanta council bore the influence of both Rabbi David Marx of The Temple, whose active support for the Atlanta section of the council was crucial to its founding, and NCJW founder Hannah G. Solomon, both of whom propounded American Judaism as an enlightened partner of liberal Protestantism and a force for the progressive restructuring of modern urban society.¹⁴ For Solomon and the members of council sections across the country, acculturated Jewish women had a particularly important role to play in this endeavor as educators in the private domain and as advocates and protectors of the masses of immigrant Jewish women in the public realm.

The Atlanta section did not simply reflect the values of its founding ideologues; it helped spur reform in the urban New South. As historian Beth Wenger has shown, leaders of the Atlanta section played an outsized role in local civic life through the 1920s (1930 is the endpoint of her study), establishing sustained, working relationships with non-Jewish women's clubs to a greater degree than their northern counterparts. In the first decades of the twentieth century, for example, council members assumed significant positions in the Georgia Federation of Women's Clubs and the League of Women Voters. In the interwar period, the Atlanta council spearheaded public health initiatives for local schools and the mentally disabled and lobbied on behalf of children and immigrants, even as members continued to devote their energies to the cause of Jewish "uplift" in partnership with the Jewish Educational Alliance and the Federation of Jewish Charities.¹⁵

The post-World War II council bore the legacy of these early years of activism and organizational prowess in service to the local Jewish community and Atlanta's and Georgia's populations more broadly. In the course of the 1940s and 1950s, council committees worked to organize and staff a children's day care at Grady Memorial Hospital; to provide recent immigrants with English and citizenship classes; and to sponsor social and educational activities for seniors, among other things, initiatives that continued through the sixties. The council defended civil liberties at the height of McCarthyism, endorsing a resolution put forward by the League of Women Voters against political intolerance and supporting the Georgia Educators' Association in rejecting a loyalty test for teachers.¹⁶ And in anticipation of *Brown v. the Board of Education*, the

council began to concern itself with the issue of desegregation, sometimes directly and sometimes obliquely. In December 1953, for example, the Public Affairs Committee hosted a lecture by local entrepreneur and white political progressive Philip Hammer, whose research on the deleterious effects of “separate but equal” schools helped influence the Supreme Court’s decision in favor of desegregation.¹⁷ Later in the decade, the council section spoke out against the state’s efforts to privatize public education and thus forestall integration.

True to its roots, the Atlanta section of the council remained integral to the public life of the city in the postwar period; so, too, did the section maintain its high status in, and centrality to, Atlanta’s Jewish community. Council materials from the first decade following World War II not only disclose the content of the organization’s commitments to the welfare of Jews—locally, nationally, and globally—but also reveal the extensive network of local Jewish organizations with which council members fraternized. The council joined other local Jewish organizations for conferences and special events, and members made it their business to keep current on doings in the Jewish community.¹⁸ Marilyn Shubin, council president from 1967 to 1969, serves as an exemplar of the interconnected quality of organized Jewish life in the city. By October 1970, she had served not only as council president but also as director of The Temple Sisterhood, recording secretary of Hadassah, and speaker of the General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federation and Welfare Funds in Atlanta.¹⁹

Mark K. Bauman and Solomon Sutker have both shown that, in the postwar period, Atlanta’s growing Jewish community established an increasingly sophisticated organizational structure and employed a new professional cohort to direct its communal and philanthropic efforts.²⁰ In his sociological analysis undertaken in the immediate postwar years, Sutker described the transference of power within the local Jewish community from a native, high-status “lay elite” to a nonnative cohort of “professional community workers.” Members of this new “professional elite” stemmed largely from northern cities or Europe; were college graduates who had received professional training in Judaism and/or the social sciences; and espoused liberal political commitments.²¹

As a women’s voluntary association with deep roots in Atlanta’s Jewish ecosystem as well as a magnet for new arrivals to the city, the

council represents an interesting hybrid of the old and new leadership. A look at the membership and especially the leadership of the council in the first postwar decades indicates an Atlanta Jewish community in flux.

The council section of the fifties and sixties was deeply entwined with the established lay elite, whether of "German" or eastern European origin. Many prominent members were relatives and descendants of the founding elites of the council and Atlanta's Jewish community at large, including the Alexander, Eiseman, Gershon, Gross, Guthman, Harris, Heyman, Hirsch, Marx, Oberdorfer, and Oppenheimer clans.²² The occupational positions of the spouses of board members illustrate the high socioeconomic status of this group within and beyond the Jewish community. For example, Arthur L. Harris, husband of board member Helen Eiseman Harris (later Helen Alexander), served as president of his family's Atlanta Paper Company and later occupied an upper-level position at the Mead Corporation. Edward Elson, husband of council president Suzanne (Susie) Elson, built a career as an airport retail magnate and served as vice president and then president of the Atlanta News Agency in the years under consideration. Local arts patron Reuben Crimm, who along with his wife and council board member Janet Crimm was among the victims of the Paris-to-Atlanta flight that crashed at Orly Field in 1962, was senior partner in the law firm Crimm and Postell. Walter Bunzl, husband of council president Frances Bunzl, served as consul to Vienna. The spouses of council presidents Vicki Pressman, Fanny Jacobson, and Marilyn Shubin were employed in high-level retail positions with local department stores.

Although a full occupational and socioeconomic portrait of this cohort is beyond the scope of this paper, these examples provide a glimpse of the status of council-affiliated families who comfortably inhabited the entrepreneurial, managerial, and professional niches common among acculturated and highly successful American Jews. The council, in this light, maintained its profile as a voluntary outlet for a middle- and upper-middle-class lay elite, and the largely married, female cohort of this stratum in particular.

On the other hand, similar to the new male professional elites studied by Sutker, many leaders of the Atlanta section of the council during the fifties, sixties, and seventies were migrants to Atlanta educated else-

where. Many had accrued experience in the labor market before assuming leadership positions with the council. Fanny Jacobson, president in the late 1950s and founder of the council's Golden Age Employment Service, was a New Orleans native who attended Barnard College and worked as a social worker in Chicago and New Orleans before moving to Atlanta for her husband's work.²³ Frances Bunzl, president in the mid-1960s, arrived in Georgia in 1940 as a refugee from Nazi Germany. Although she did not work again until 1968, when she opened a travel agency, Bunzl had been employed at a Jewish hospital in Frankfurt and as an au pair in London before immigrating to America.²⁴ Philadelphia-born Marilyn Shubin graduated from Drexel University, where she studied business. She met her husband as a fellow trainee in a junior executive training program. Her positive experience as a volunteer for the council while living in Cleveland prompted her to contact the organization when her husband's job brought them to Atlanta in 1962. Barbara Asher, president in the early 1970s, was a Wisconsin native. After graduating from Sophie Newcomb College in New Orleans, she moved to New York, where she took a position as a student center adviser at New York University and then worked for several years at Bloomingdale's. Asher worked at Rich's Department Store after moving to Atlanta but, after the birth of her first child, she resigned the job to make time to volunteer with the council. Sherry Frank, president in the mid-1970s and a native Atlantan who attended Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri, joined the council as a young mother in Plainfield, New Jersey, before returning to Atlanta with her husband in 1968.²⁵

Certainly, as the biographical information above attests, the majority of the council's leaders in the sixties and early seventies had accrued education and experience outside of the postwar South. So, too, several of these leaders recalled having had firsthand, nuanced encounters with African Americans in the years before taking up their Atlanta council work. In her youth, Sherry Frank sometimes worked at her uncle's downtown clothing store, which catered to a black clientele, and she has described having had "a real comfort level" with local African Americans. Martin Luther King, Sr., delivered the eulogy at her uncle's funeral. Shubin attended an integrated high school in Philadelphia, where she befriended African American fellow students. As a student at integrated Barnard, Fanny Jacobson studied with African American classmates, and

she worked under a black supervisor as a social worker in Chicago and supervised black social workers in New Orleans.²⁶

This combined background, as Sutker's earlier findings suggest, may have influenced the liberal activist spirit that propelled and buttressed the council's community services initiatives examined in this paper. Yet such activism followed in the paths of Rhoda Kaufman, Josephine Heyman, Rebecca Gershon, and Hannah Shulhafer, most of whom were Georgia natives who worked actively and publicly for progressive causes in Atlanta beginning before the 1960s.²⁷ The collective educational and life experiences of these presidents suggest the cosmopolitan, liberal orientation of much of the council's leadership. They brought their experiences, skills, and interests to the council, an organization with a longstanding record as a progressive force in Atlanta's civic life, and shaped its community services agenda accordingly.

*From the Atlanta section
Bulletin, April 1965.
(Courtesy of the Cuba
Family Archives for
Southern Jewish History
at the Breman Museum,
Atlanta.)*

WICS: Mission, Implementation, and Challenges at the Local Level

"NCJW Joins the War on Poverty," trumpeted the Atlanta section *Bulletin* in April 1965, announcing the incorporation of WICS and its first local volunteer training session at the Atlanta section's Council House. In a full-page article, the unnamed author explained that the initiative, like the newly instituted Job Corps program, would "give poor youths a chance to help themselves" by targeting "young women . . . who are now largely unemployable because they lack the education and job skills to move ahead." Selected recruits from the WICS office in Atlanta and twenty-four other screening centers across the country would attend Job Corps training centers "from 10 months to two years," the article explained, depending on the vocational curriculum required, and would receive "room and board, clothing, [and] a new cultural and environmental experience" — as well as payment — during the training period. The article proclaimed that WICS offered potential volunteers, "women of all faiths and races," the chance to "combine their resources, programs, and contacts" in the campaign to eradicate poverty.²⁸ In Atlanta, as at the national level, a coalition of four women's organizations — the NCJW, the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW), United Church Women, and the National Council of Catholic Women — would implement this subsidiary of the federal Job Corps program for young women.

From the beginning, the implementation of WICS at the local level required an intricate delegation of duties among players with varying degrees of expertise, power, and rootedness in the Atlanta community. These included the longstanding local chapters of the middle-class women's organizations tasked with many of the practical details of its rollout; the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), established in 1964 as a linchpin of Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty, and its local offshoot, Economic Opportunity Atlanta (EOA); the neighborhood centers and their largely female staff, which, according to the "maximum feasible participation" mandate for the OEO, were charged with much of the local oversight and staffing of programs for its disadvantaged constituencies; and the young women recruit-trainees.²⁹ Recruitment efforts, for example, required NCJW and its sister organizations to reach out to local schools, Fulton County's Department of Family and Children

President Lyndon B. Johnson signing the Economic Opportunity Act, a cornerstone of the War on Poverty, at the White House, August 20, 1964. (Photograph by Cecil Stoughton, Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library.)

Services (among other social service agencies), and neighborhood centers to find potential candidates, as well as to “sell” the worth of the program to underserved young women. In these years, too, the Atlanta Urban League (AUL) worked to bring wider economic opportunities to the local African American population, conducting research and implementing vocational training programs, employment recruitment efforts, and information services in partnership with the federal government as well as with the Atlanta Negro Voters League and the SCLC. The AUL, however, apparently did not focus particular attention on women per se, leaving the field open for WICS coalition members.³⁰ In any case, the NCJW was one of a patchwork of civic organizations in 1960s Atlanta seeking to redress economic inequality. In staffing, oversight, and budgetary matters, as discussed below, NCJW Atlanta both cooperated with and was constrained by its local and federal partners.

Hannah Stein, executive director of the NCJW, wrote to Atlanta section president Frances Bunzl in February 1965 that WICS was to be the Atlanta section's "top priority for the next six weeks," with a goal of mobilizing "the womanpower in your Section and the Jewish community to get the job done."³¹ Volunteers in the WICS office in Atlanta—then located downtown at 41 Exchange Place—were to solicit and process the applications of young women between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one living in poverty and to forward completed applications to the national office in Washington, D.C. Young women deemed by the national office to be suitable for the program were then invited to enter vocational programs at one of the training centers across the country. In April 1970 Atlanta became the site of one such training center. Council volunteers organized recruitment efforts, screened candidates, assisted with related office work, provided transportation, and participated in home visits to the candidates' households. They also helped organize and sponsor special events such as public forums and social get-togethers.³²

By fall 1965, the WICS pilot program in Atlanta was fully underway. A statistical report from early in the program's tenure demonstrates that Atlanta WICS was making small but notable strides. Twenty-four young women processed by the Atlanta office had been accepted by the federal Job Corps and assigned to training centers; of those, seventeen were already undergoing training.³³ The minutes from WICS board meetings tell of notable achievements by young women screened by the Atlanta office, such as winning full college scholarships and providing assistance in opening new training centers.³⁴

Yet problems surfaced early and remained seemingly intractable. Some were bureaucratic in nature, in part a function of the top-down relationship between the federal government and its local partners. In particular, Atlanta WICS was stymied by constantly shifting directives from the national WICS office, as set out by the OEO and the Community Action Agency bureaucracy. As early as summer 1965, only months after the program's launch, national headquarters alerted local project managers of delays in the opening of training centers and announced a moratorium on recruiting and interviewing young women due to budgetary wrangling with the OEO. Ten months into the program, the Atlanta office had only fully processed 68 of the 569 applications received.³⁵ These numbers pointed to a hunger for oppor-

tunity among impoverished young Georgians and the dire effects of the moratorium.

In this scenario, the president and executive director of national WICS suggested community-based interim measures, from offering remedial reading and physical fitness programs and providing field trips for underserved young women to coordinating with local employment services to find work for graduates of the training centers.³⁶ Indeed, under the OEO, the government now earmarked funding specifically for locally based Community Action Programs and, along these lines, requested that WICS coordinate its screening and referral service with the neighborhood centers.³⁷ In a letter to the council's national WICS liaison in 1966, Bunzl described efforts to fulfill the directive to provide pre- and postplacement services to young women in Atlanta—providing field trips and lectures, for example, and overseeing weekly individual meetings. She expressed disappointment, however, that such services were not more successful. "I cannot say we are doing a wonderful job with the girls returning," she wrote, "but we are getting a little better every week in our placements and follow ups."³⁸

Staffing proved to be another serious problem. In part, this was intrinsic to the sphere of women's voluntary work and the seasonal nature of its members' family obligations. At the end of WICS's trial year, leaders of the Atlanta council section worried with good reason about losing volunteers once school let out for the summer and women were obliged to stay home with their children.³⁹ Add to that the constantly shifting demands of WICS work for the individual volunteer in terms of both skills and time needed, as well as the lack of pay and the program's uncertain future, and one begins to understand why staffing was a perennial issue for the council and its partner organizations. Bunzl wrote to NCJW's field representative of her work for WICS that she had "never done anything so fascinating in [her] life." She also described, however, working by necessity in the WICS office nearly full-time, a situation best suited to a trained professional in her view.⁴⁰ A later council report on WICS described the clerical work and management of the Atlanta WICS office as an "overwhelming" task.⁴¹

Moreover, according to some sources, volunteer efforts on the part of the various women's organizations were not always evenly distributed. Both Bunzl and fellow section leader Marilyn Shubin described an

*Frances Bunzl, former president of
the Atlanta section of the NCJW,
accepting an award from Martin
Luther King, III, in Atlanta, 1970.
(Courtesy of the Cuba Family
Archives for Southern Jewish
History at the Breman Museum,
Atlanta.)*

unequal shouldering of responsibility among the women's organizations and expressed frustration concerning the disparity.⁴² Bunzl suggested in retrospect that, in practice, members of the white Christian organizations balked at volunteering with the black members of the coalition, and that the bulk of the work for Atlanta WICS was therefore carried out by members of the NCNW and the NCJW.⁴³ While racial animus or discomfort with integration may certainly have hampered full cooperation on the ground among the four women's organizations, documents in the Atlanta section records do not address this specifically or explicitly as an issue. Indeed, a seeming discrepancy existed between the NCJW and the NCNW in each organization's presentation of WICS to members. In the NCNW's *Progress Report* of 1966, leaders billed the initiative as "an independent, interracial women's undertaking."⁴⁴ In contrast, WICS-related news in NCJW's *Bulletin* often cited the NCNW prominently as a coalition member, but the word "interracial" never appears in the council's reports on the program. This fact suggests that, from the outset, volunteers framed their understanding and expectations differently depending on the angle from which each organization approached issues of social justice, poverty, and race.

In any case, it was clear within the program's first year that, whatever its philosophical goals, in practical terms WICS was struggling to retain recruits. Many trainees dropped out of Job Corps before graduating, a fact that no doubt weighed heavily on the minds of volunteers, not to mention the recruits themselves. By January 1966, partway through the first year of training, two of the thirty-three young women in the first cohort that had been sent from Atlanta WICS had dropped out of the program. Single mothers apparently comprised a quarter of all recruits, and at least one of the young women was unable to reconcile child care obligations back home with training at a distant center.⁴⁵ Meanwhile, according to another estimate presented at an Atlanta WICS board meeting in 1966, "80 percent of the white girls at centers do not stay to completion."⁴⁶ By fall 1967, half of the 208 young women sent from Atlanta to Job Corps training centers had dropped out, an unsurprising fact given the tremendous obstacles they faced.⁴⁷ (Several years later, data showed that, at the national level, only 20 percent of recruits had completed courses at Job Corps training centers to date.⁴⁸) Nor was employment guaranteed at the end of training, a reality that in 1968 led to the opening of an EOA-funded Graduate Aid to Employment (GATE) office in Atlanta, one of sixteen in the country.⁴⁹

These issues did not disappear over time. Board minutes and annual reports indicate low morale among participating council women and show that the section had continuing trouble recruiting and keeping volunteers. Indeed, Atlanta WICS was bedeviled by problems in staffing and administrative oversight as well as mission clarity into the early 1970s. Council's relationship with the Labor Department was "very strained," in the words of an internal report by the Atlanta NCJW conducted from 1970 to 1971, with "no understanding or cooperation between the two groups." Atlanta WICS in general, according to the same report, was "terribly disorganized."⁵⁰ A separate internal report called it "unstructured and floundering."⁵¹ The Atlanta section's leadership described being "unsure of the validity of the Center's program; . . . disappointed with the quality of the WICS national leadership and unable to find a solution to the paucity of volunteers."⁵² At the national level, the fate of WICS remained uncertain, especially as the Nixon administration reshuffled and downgraded the public welfare bureaucracy. Atlanta WICS was not alone in its dysfunction. Other federal-local jobs

initiatives in Atlanta, particularly those that targeted black unemployment, failed to rectify widespread inequities in education, vocational training, and job placement.⁵³

In light of these ongoing difficulties and apparently as part of an attempt by each of the women's organization coalition members to target one discrete area for service provision, the Atlanta section refocused its responsibilities by overseeing publicity and public relations, an initiative that met with some success.⁵⁴ Council volunteers were also given some responsibility for recruitment and screening at a newly established Job Corps training center in Atlanta. Yet the council section still struggled to find its footing. By the early 1970s, Bunzl had resigned her position as assistant project director for WICS. The Atlanta WICS office, failing to make its quotas in placements for recruits, had its full-time secretary removed.⁵⁵ Despite the Sisyphean nature of its efforts, the Atlanta section leadership continued to make the case that WICS provided uniquely compelling opportunities to know and improve Atlanta as a diverse, burgeoning urban center. For those section members who "really want to get out and work in the community, . . . directly with the people," as one report suggested, WICS served as an unparalleled conduit to on-the-ground engagement.⁵⁶

Between Paternalism and Empathy: WICS as Zone of Contact

What did that on-the-ground engagement look like as members of the Atlanta section of the council intervened in the lives of underserved women? Extant documents lend at least a partial picture of these encounters. Indeed, one may view WICS's institutional and social spaces as rare zones of contact among disparate sectors of the Atlanta populace, including the middle- and upper-middle-class Jewish women who made up the council's membership and the young, low-income Georgia women, black and white, whom they attempted to help.

While WICS primarily served as an effort to extend opportunity to disadvantaged youth, in practice it was also a laboratory for racial integration. In Atlanta, its role as an engine of integration provoked some anxiety, especially, it seems, among the families of potential white recruits. Racial animus proved a stumbling block in this regard. According to a report dating from spring 1965, during the first months of the program's existence, the Atlanta WICS office had trouble recruiting white

candidates because the parents of these young women objected to sending their daughters to integrated training centers.⁵⁷

Several years later, the NCJW's national liaison to WICS, Eudyce Gordon, encouraged the Atlanta section to address issues of race and integration publicly in a special presentation on WICS, a sign of the significance of this problem for the local community. A program was planned for April 1968 at The Temple, the home congregation of many council members. Several graduates of WICS training centers—Rosa Shivers, Julia Bailey, Patricia Knott, and Christine Merrit, all of whom had found employment since graduating—were invited to speak.⁵⁸ In a letter to Bunzl, Gordon emphasized the importance of broaching difficult subject matter, including the topic of integration, at the public event. She suggested several prompts to relay to the young WICS graduates to help them prepare for the event. "If you have a Caucasian girl" speaking at the event, Gordon wrote to Bunzl, "ask her to tell the women [in the audience] what her family had to say about her going into an integrated training program. Ask her . . . what her first feelings were when she saw so many 'black faces.' How did she adjust to this new exposure to interracial living and learning?"⁵⁹

Alternately, the liaison suggested that each of the black participants in the event "tell if she or her family were suspicious of those white (home visitors) 'do-gooders' who seemed to want to help them, and if they tried to figure out . . . what 'they' were going to get out of it." Gordon advised that the young women be encouraged to talk about "the attitude of the people, shopkeepers, and police" in the surrounding community and to discuss any behavioral "trouble" they might have gotten into at the centers and how that trouble was resolved.⁶⁰ She concluded:

Bring up the things that you know the girls and your volunteers are concerned about; help them understand that you *want* a 'no holds barred' . . . approach to problems and their possible solutions. They'll carry on from there if you just point the way by introducing the subject of black and white, and behavior. . . . Remind them that one of the rewards the volunteer gets is the knowledge that she may have helped them develop hope, and to dream of a better future.⁶¹

As these comments suggest, the Job Corps training centers to which local recruits were sent presented various opportunities for contact and

NCJW Atlanta section Bulletin describing an upcoming program featuring successful WICS graduates, April 1968. (Courtesy of the Cuba Family Archives for Southern Jewish History at the Breman Museum, Atlanta.)

conflict, not only among peers but also among recruits, staff, and local populations. Accounts of the opening of the first Job Corps training center, located in Saint Petersburg, Florida, detailed tensions between the center and members of the business community, the local school board, and the city government. Conflict occurred amid reports of delinquency and “immoral” behavior among trainees, staff, and graduates of the center, which was forced to close under mounting pressure in 1966. Others associated with the center—including staff, students, graduates, and some community members—argued that behavioral lapses were minimal and suspected that locals had balked, in fact, at the facility’s integrated status.⁶² Reports of violent fights and allegations of prostitution put the training center in Charleston, West Virginia, in the spotlight.⁶³ Several years later, a report on the Jersey City, New Jersey, center described “petty larceny . . . homosexual acts and the use of drugs and alcoholic beverages,” as well as pregnancy and the spread of venereal diseases, among the issues with which program staff grappled. Recruits and graduates described being stigmatized in the wider community as “bad girls.”⁶⁴

In the very first issue of the WICS national newsletter, published in July 1966, the organization’s president, Rosemary Kilch of the National Council of Catholic Women, alluded to similar difficulties. “Some of you may become discouraged by adverse reports by one or the other Job Corps centers for women,” she wrote, admitting that, “[no] doubt centers have many problems and . . . make some mistakes in dealing with youngsters.” She concluded this vague admission by noting that she felt the reports, which she also neglected to specify, were “somewhat exaggerated,” and she encouraged volunteers to keep at their work, knowing that, however messy the process may be in the short term, “we are doing the right thing over the long run.”⁶⁵ Reports in the mainstream press on the organization’s struggles also highlighted the fervent belief among the young women interviewed that WICS presented an unprecedented opportunity for personal growth, interracial harmony, and economic success.⁶⁶

Extant materials provide a poignant glimpse of the lives of the disadvantaged young women targeted by WICS. As the comments and exhortations of council and other women volunteers make clear, the young women faced significant hurdles at every turn. Raised in poverty

in the urban and rural South, many of these young women lacked adequate educational opportunities and access to medical and dental care. Some, according to reports, had never slept in beds. They required the most basic material goods needed for travel to and life in training centers in faraway places including Iowa, Nebraska, and Ohio. The Atlanta council section called on its members throughout this period to donate coats and suitcases. The council's thrift store downtown served as an important staging ground in this regard. Newsletters and meeting minutes reveal consistent efforts among volunteers to correspond with young Georgia women in the training centers and send them care packages to ease homesickness and build morale.⁶⁷

Unfortunately, little of the recruits' voices survives in the NCJW records. Testimonials by trainees culled from correspondence with WICS screening centers and published in bulletins and newsletters portray their experiences in a positive light. A representative newsletter, circulated by Atlanta WICS in spring 1967, brims with cheerful news:

We have wonderful reports from POLAND SPRINGS, MAINE. ROSE MANAGAN, SARAH STERLING, BEULAH SMITH—have written several letters telling how very happy they are . . . that their experience is interesting and satisfying and the Job Corps means a great deal to them. Their training includes retail salesclerking, clerk typist. Attention is also being given to their physical conditions and dental work is being done. Rose writes that she is also learning to skate and ride a horse! . . .

ST. LOUIS JOB CORPS CENTER may be "snowed in" from time to time but our trainees write that they enjoy everything there. GLENDA SMITH has two roommates who make her "feel like home." ANNIE ALBRIGHT is in child care and [nurse] training and writes "May God bless and keep you all" for your kindness. DOROTHY JEAN WILLIAMS is studying very hard and enjoys going to school every day.⁶⁸

Yet even the brief, vetted statements that appear in newsletters evoke a subterranean reality as these young women made painful adjustments to their new lives. As one recruit wrote to the WICS national newsletter, "My schedule is crowded but it keeps my mind off of my home."⁶⁹ One of the first Georgia recruits, sent to a training center in Albuquerque, wrote to the Atlanta WICS office to "try and send a fellow Atlantan out here. I'm lonesome."⁷⁰ A young African American woman from Atlanta, Rosa Shivers, recalled her "fear of the unknown" upon

embarking for the training center in Charleston, West Virginia, to which she was assigned. Her sister told her not to go, and Shivers nearly decided against leaving home. "It was scary," she told a reporter in regard to her transition to life at the Job Corps center. "I'd never been that far from home, and I didn't know anybody." Her story, at least, ended happily. She made friends and studied with "nice teachers," and she ultimately obtained employment on the clerical staff of the Atlanta WICS office after completing her Job Corps training.⁷¹

While race mattered, class was perhaps the central dividing line, as the experiences and worldviews of recruits from poor families rubbed up against the sensibilities and expectations of the middle-class professionals and volunteers to whom they were entrusted. Documents from the time illuminate a degree of cultural disconnect between providers and recruits and suggest at least some inability on the part of some volunteers to comprehend the economic and psychological needs of impoverished young people. In a story about WICS published in the *Atlanta Constitution*, for example, Atlanta WICS project director Helen Oppenlander lauded the changed comportment of Georgia women undergoing Job Corps training—an improvement in "poise, dress, and attitude," as she put it—as the chief example of their progress.⁷² Similarly, a newsletter sent by WICS to recruits and volunteers encouraged and patronized its target audience in equal measure. The author of the newsletter article admonished those who skipped classes at the training centers and wrote in response to one young woman's legitimate concern about posttraining employment that the young woman was sure to get a job back home if she "works hard to become a *GOOD* draftsman."⁷³

From one angle, these comments convey faith in individual agency and personal merit for overcoming barriers to socioeconomic survival, a message that young women in WICS training programs may have found encouraging. Yet in emphasizing—and perhaps overemphasizing—the role of personal effort, individual perseverance, and decorous comportment, WICS staff and volunteers ran the risk of downplaying the systemic obstacles, such as widespread employment discrimination against African Americans, that young recruits faced.⁷⁴ Indeed, this focus on the individual was intrinsic to the conceptualization of WICS and to the War on Poverty as a whole. War on Poverty initiatives such as Job Corps operated according to the liberal assumption that the expansion of

opportunity for individuals—a “hand up, not a hand out” as OEO head Sargent Shriver often put it—would level the playing field. Yet a growing body of research at the time and after suggested that deeply rooted systems of racial and class inequality, including endemic job and housing discrimination against African Americans in particular, called for more comprehensive, structural reforms.⁷⁵ Those who implemented WICS as a War on Poverty initiative—including the women of the Atlanta council—understood Job Corps training as providing the necessary equality of opportunity. What a young woman did with that opportunity afterward, the reasoning went, was up to the individual.

Economic philosophy aside, however, paternalism certainly played a role in the relations between providers and recipients. WICS staff and volunteers, including those of the council, assumed that underserved young women were better off far from home, under the guidance of middle-class volunteers and social welfare professionals, not only during Job Corps training but also after. That middle-class club women, by modeling appropriate comportment and by serving as a conduit to formal vocational training, were uniquely equipped to usher young women out of poverty was not a new notion. In an earlier era, the NCJW had targeted young eastern European Jewish immigrants for such acculturating efforts alongside their advocacy work on behalf of immigrant women. This effort resembled those of other middle-class women’s organizations that had applied themselves to reshaping members of a vast, urban immigrant underclass into middle-class citizens. The NCJW applied this policy of integration into middle-class life and values to continuing waves of Jewish immigrants, from German refugees and Holocaust survivors to Russian refuseniks and refugees from Cuba and Iraq. This tension between progressive reform and paternalism had characterized the women’s organizational sphere—voluntary and professional, black and white—since earlier in the twentieth century.⁷⁶

Council women, like their coalition partners, apparently viewed WICS training as a means of inculcating middle-class mores and work habits as much as imparting concrete vocational skills. For example, a 1972 issue of the *Bulletin* reported that Atlanta section member Dudley Stevens, in addition to bringing young WICS recruits to the symphony and theater, taught courses in grooming and interior design at the Atlanta WICS training center. The anonymous author of the report insisted

*Job Corps brochure distributed by the NCJW Atlanta section.
(Courtesy of the Cuba Family Archives for Southern Jewish
History at the Breman Museum, Atlanta.)*

that anyone “who has visited the center has been impressed by the obvious care most of the girls take in their appearance” and noted that “the first step ‘up’ is feeling good about the way you look.”⁷⁷ While middle-class comportment may have played some role in the success of young female Job Corps recruits, particularly in the context of the conservative workplace culture of the 1960s, the singular focus in the report on personal appearance is striking.

A failed social event designed for potential WICS recruits described in the Atlanta section’s 1970–71 annual report provides a telling example

of this sensibility and its limits. For the event, council volunteers organized a "'Coke' party" at Rich's department store in downtown Atlanta.⁷⁸ Members sent out successive waves of flyers and made phone calls to reach the targeted audience of potential recruits ("drop-outs," in the words of the report), as well as their friends and relatives. Puzzling over low turnout to the event, the committee chairs concluded that the fault lay mostly with the potential recruits: "drop-outs lack motivation," they wrote, "even to get themselves to Rich's on a Saturday afternoon."⁷⁹ Yet a number of alternate explanations for the low turnout among potential recruits are possible, including a lack of transportation to the event; conflicting work schedules of family members and other competing family obligations; and, perhaps, reluctance to spend the afternoon sipping sodas with a roomful of potentially disapproving, middle- and upper-middle-class women. That the report's authors could not imagine these other scenarios speaks to a lack of familiarity with the everyday lives of impoverished Atlantans and suggests a failure of empathy, at least in this case.

Occasionally, however, documents show that at least some volunteers were mindful of the structural gap between club women and Job Corps recruits and were sensitive to the perils of paternalism. A recommendation from a WICS meeting in spring 1966, for example, drew attention to the profound dislocation that such interventions signified for impoverished young women and highlighted the sometimes dehumanizing effects of social welfare bureaucracy. The author pointed out that, unlike young men leaving home to join the army, little precedent existed for young women to set off for opportunities away from home and family. Furthermore, while low-income families were "familiar with professional social workers . . . talking to them," it was "unusual for a volunteer to take her own time and at her own expense come out to the home and take a personal interest in the girl and her family. This makes quite an impact. It shows that we feel the child and her family are important to us and this alone is a big help."⁸⁰ This exhortation is notable for its empathic imagining of the point of view of the potential WICS recruit. It also illuminates the sincere impulse to help on the part of council members and other women volunteers.

As of 1971, more than 6,400 women had received training through WICS, representing between one-third and one-fourth of all Job Corps

trainees.⁸¹ The numbers of young women interviewed by WICS volunteers was much higher: 51,000 applicants had been screened as potential recruits by 1973.⁸² Atlanta, as an early screening center for WICS, was a significant site for this endeavor, and the Atlanta office ultimately sent more than five hundred recruits to training centers throughout the country.⁸³ Although they expressed frustration with the administration of WICS and disappointment with the slow pace of change, members of the Atlanta council were integral actors in this ambitious attempt to expand opportunity for all Americans. Many statements in the minutes, annual reports, and bulletins suggest that council women involved in WICS were essentially optimistic about the suitability of their talents and “womanpower” to create much-needed change. Through a proposed combination of organizational skill and “maternal” warmth—not only interviewing applicants and filing papers, but also providing recruits with coats and suitcases, writing them letters, and sending them care packages—volunteers attempted to learn about poverty and to set disadvantaged young women on the path to economic success. As council committee members insisted in a program evaluation, “The work is *very* interesting and gratifying even if one gets discouraged at times. The volunteer gets a first-hand exposure to poverty with all its problems and is learning how to handle it.”⁸⁴

At the local level, council women remained confident that their intervention into the lives of underserved Atlantans was sound and necessary. This spirit of hopefulness, too, infused the efforts of these women in Atlanta’s public schools. Yet, as discussed below, gaps in expectations and goals also arose among council volunteers and their client populations in the schools.

The Council in the Schools: Roles and Rationales

Although it had distinguished itself as a major nerve center for the civil rights movement and was known for the moderate progressivism of its white leadership, Atlanta lagged far behind even other southern cities in addressing the striking inequities that characterized the public schools.⁸⁵ Beginning in 1961, under the leadership of superintendent John Letson, the Atlanta school board adopted a modified school choice plan, a gradualist approach to desegregation in which students could apply to transfer to public schools which, historically, had served either

black or white populations. In practice, however, as Ronald Bayor has written, the plan translated into “difficult transfer policies for blacks but not for whites, and the underutilization of white schools.”⁸⁶ The policy resulted in overcrowded, underfunded black schools, even as majority-white schools sometimes in the very same neighborhoods remained well below capacity.

In the decade before Atlanta’s first widespread effort to end segregation, council women took a stand against the state’s resistance to the court-mandated integration of the public schools. The Public Affairs Committee of the Atlanta council section rejected the state of Georgia’s efforts in the 1950s to effectively privatize the public schools, an attempt by governors Herman Talmadge and Marvin Griffin to override federal demands for desegregation. In 1954, for example, the committee actively opposed Talmadge’s proposed Amendment 4 that would have allowed the state to disburse funds to cover private school tuition for white families pulling their children out of public school. In concert with the Atlanta Jewish Community Council, the committee argued that “nothing is more vital in a Democracy than the preservation of the Public School System.”⁸⁷

The council’s community services arm turned to the public schools as a site of sustained attention when Atlanta began to address desegregation in earnest. Council women first broached the idea of a “local youth project” in summer 1959. The board agreed at the time that “if the need exists among Jewish Youth, that should come first.”⁸⁸ It appears, however, that local disadvantaged, largely African American youth—the products of impoverished center-city neighborhoods—were understood thereafter to be the target beneficiaries. Early ideas for interventions included youth employment or teacher training for children with special needs.

The council conceived of a concrete youth-related program in 1964 when it organized a “summer reading club” and tutoring services at a majority-black elementary school in partnership with a local church.⁸⁹ In spring 1965, the city of Atlanta solicited the council’s aid in implementing Head Start at the same school, Charles L. Gideons Elementary, in the Pittsburgh neighborhood southwest of downtown Atlanta.⁹⁰ In fall 1965, the council’s Youth Project took definitive shape. With funds from the Ford Foundation, the Atlanta Board of Education established a volunteer

Mrs. Dean Coleman, volunteer for the Youth Project, assisting a student. From the NCJW Atlanta section Bulletin, May 1968. (Courtesy of the Cuba Family Archives for Southern Jewish History at the Breman Museum, Atlanta.)

training center and selected two city schools to serve as initial sites of volunteer intervention. Council members began volunteering at E. A. Ware Elementary School, serving the black, low-income neighborhood of Vine City, and Grant Park Elementary School, whose students included low-income whites in Grant Park and Cabbagetown.⁹¹

Approximately fifty council women regularly volunteered in the partner schools into the early 1970s. From the beginning, council members trained and volunteered to administer hearing tests to young students. Volunteers in this case were sent specifically to African American schools, apparently because there were no active PTAs from which to draw parent volunteers to administer the tests. Volunteer duties expanded beyond tutoring to include general aid in the classroom, working with special needs children (“emotionally disturbed” and/or “retarded but educable” in the parlance of the day). Council volunteers were the first in Georgia and apparently among the first in the entire United States to serve as aides to developmentally disabled children in the classroom. They also took children to dental appointments among other ad hoc responsibilities. In a more “educational” vein, Youth Project volunteers developed and implemented a “cultural enrichment” program for students.⁹²

The Youth Project was clearly a beloved initiative among council members. Whatever tasks they were called on to fulfill, volunteers seemed to treasure the sustained, personal contact they had with young

students. "I was a kind of friend," explained one volunteer, "a playmate, a teller of stories, a patient listener, and a teacher without portfolio." This was a volunteer job, another participant wrote, "in which I really felt needed." Echoing such personal testimonies, the *Bulletin* insisted to potential volunteers that with "very little effort you can do so much and gain from your efforts so much satisfaction." An annual report on the council's community services projects in the year 1965-66 described the Youth Project as a "most attractive project for new members." Such was the excitement generated by the initiative that, several years later, some of the older children of the most engaged council participants began volunteering alongside their mothers in the schools.⁹³

Council women also credited the Youth Project with opening their eyes to the realities of urban poverty and empowering them, as middle-class women, to create change.⁹⁴ "Working with children in a poverty area also makes you see the world as it really is," explained Claire Gettinger, a volunteer at Ware Elementary School, who, as a classroom aide, organized field trips and invited students to her home. "You learn that there are no quick solutions and no miracles," she continued, but "you are no longer satisfied to sit passively by, bemoaning the ills of your society. You want to at least try to change things."⁹⁵ Sherry Frank, council president in the mid-1970s, described her experience with the Youth Project as instrumental in building close ties with the African American community, including with civil rights activist and future Atlanta mayor Andrew Young, on whose campaign she later worked.⁹⁶

The records indicate that the Atlanta council section had to work continually to solicit adequate numbers of volunteers. Working with "emotionally disturbed" children, in particular, demanded skill and long-term commitment, and retention became a problem.⁹⁷ Still, especially in comparison to the continuing trials that WICS faced in these years, the Youth Project appears in contemporaneous documents as a source of pride and accomplishment. Just as council women reported finding satisfaction with their volunteer work in the schools, so, too, did officials at the municipal and school levels express appreciation for the time and energy that the volunteers expended on behalf of underserved schools.⁹⁸ The Atlanta Board of Education, for example, singled out Atlanta NCJW for praise, pointing to the important role of council volunteers as part

of a “differentiated team” that ideally included lead teachers in the classroom as well as “paraprofessional[s], parent[s], or volunteer worker[s].”⁹⁹

However, some school officials and community leaders began to voice caveats about the participation of council women in the struggle to change the status quo. These actors increasingly sounded warnings that white, liberal interventions did not and perhaps could not by nature fix Atlanta’s unjust and unequal educational system. As it turned out, through the Youth Project at least some volunteers encountered the new style of black, grassroots activism at close range and began to reflect more deeply on the power and privilege that accrued to them as middle- and upper-middle-class white women.

The Council’s Youth Project as Community Flash Point

By the mid-1960s, the civil rights movement had seen real gains in the enfranchisement of African Americans and in turning the conscience of many white Americans against the blatant racism of the Jim Crow South. Yet King’s and the SCLC’s nonviolent approach began to seem impotent to some black activists in the face of the formidable forces blocking the liberation of black people: the seemingly inviolable political power of white opponents of civil rights in the rural South, on the one hand, and, on the other, the astonishing violence perpetrated against black protesters and their allies as King undertook a campaign against housing discrimination in the urban North. The creation of the Lowndes County Freedom Organization in Alabama (the genesis of the Black Panther Party) in the spring of 1966 following the election of Julian Bond to the Georgia legislature made black political power a tantalizing possibility.¹⁰⁰ While Stokely Carmichael’s unabashed call for “black power” during the March Against Fear in Mississippi in June made national headlines, SNCC in Atlanta, with less fanfare, undertook community organizing among low-income blacks as a new frontier of radical activism and as a conduit to real political power. During the year of its “Atlanta Project” in 1966, SNCC leaders framed important and contentious ideological questions about the goals of black organizing and insurgency and the possible limits of white support for such activism. Against this backdrop, several black neighborhoods in Atlanta rose up in violent protest against police brutality and the political status quo during

the summers of 1966 and 1967.¹⁰¹ Also within this context, African American community activists began to formulate a new framework for educating local black citizens that abandoned the rhetoric of equal access for that of Black Power.¹⁰²

While the national resolutions of the NCJW in the late 1960s included a statement in support of government intervention to “wipe out racial imbalance in the public schools insofar as possible,” – a statement reprinted in the Atlanta section’s *Bulletin* in 1967 – extant community services materials reveal no significant discussions of desegregation efforts in the courts by black Atlantans or, for that matter, of the Atlanta School Board’s inadequate responses to these challenges.¹⁰³ Annual reports, board minutes, and bulletins in these years reflect the council members’ preference for discussing poverty over race. For example, the Atlanta section *Bulletin* published statistics about illiteracy and hunger among public school students and lamented the poor state of local school facilities, witnessed firsthand, all without mentioning that black students suffered disproportionately in the educational sphere.¹⁰⁴ On the record, at least, the Atlanta council section also appeared to have little to say about SNCC or the Black Panthers in regard to education or any other local matters. This remained true even as council members continued to serve as school volunteers in Vine City, the neighborhood at the center of post-civil rights black activism in the city.¹⁰⁵

Faith in public education was a hallmark of Jewish liberalism, stemming from the positive correlation between educational opportunity and the social and economic advancement of Jews in the course of the twentieth century. Public school, in this light, served as an ameliorating and inherently democratic institution. This notion, however, ran counter to critiques of systemic racism in American society emanating from the new generation of black activists. The diverging views of African Americans and Jews on this fundamental institution in American life – the public school – cohered with broader disagreements on the nature of power and privilege in American society. The Black Power movement rejected “the assumption that the basic institutions of this [American] society must be preserved. The goal of black people,” as Stokely Carmichael and academic activist Charles Hamilton asserted, was to “not be . . . assimilated into middle-class America.”¹⁰⁶ In contrast, the council premised its Youth Project on the notion that enhancing educational

opportunity and thus a path to the middle class for low-income children, black and white, was an absolute good.

Similarly, liberals and radicals disagreed about the extent to which African American families and communities bore responsibility for the failure of low-income blacks to integrate into broader society. At least some council members subscribed to the idea that African Americans inhabited and fostered an ostensible “culture of poverty.” The concept, prominent in the contemporaneous public discourse including in the local press, held that poor African American communities were fundamentally defective, even if slavery and Jim Crow discrimination were the root causes of this dysfunction.¹⁰⁷ “Culture of poverty” rhetoric is visible in the remarks of volunteers who worked in the schools. In reflecting on volunteer work in the *Bulletin*, for example, council members drew sharp distinctions between the benefits of the public school and the detrimental influence of the home and its surrounding community.¹⁰⁸ So, too, did volunteers repeatedly use the term “culturally disadvantaged” in discussing the schoolchildren they encountered. In the context of the council’s “cultural enrichment” initiatives at the Ware and Grant Park schools and beyond, this language suggests an indictment of poverty as a barrier to the presumed edifying value of high culture such as classical music and mainstream theater. One can speculate, however, that such judgment was premised at least implicitly on volunteers’ ignorance, lack of interest, and/or disparagement of the cultural resources and artistic heritage of African Americans and Atlanta’s African American community in particular.

As discussed above, this tension between paternalism and liberal altruism had characterized the council’s work at the national and local levels from its inception. The women of the council were not alone in this regard. A strained empathy between middle-class providers and low-income recipients of aid was also noted in the African American community at the time. In 1968, for example, The Links, Incorporated, a national organization of African American women, took the issue seriously enough to sponsor a regional panel addressing the gap “between affluent and influential Negro leadership and the unorganized poor.” Locally, community activists Ethel Mae Matthews and Dorothy Bolden criticized Atlanta’s black elite for disdaining the lives and needs of impoverished African Americans.¹⁰⁹

*From the NCJW Atlanta section Bulletin,
May 1968. (Courtesy of the Cuba Family
Archives for Southern Jewish History at
the Breman Museum, Atlanta.)*

Yet volunteers in the council's Youth Project did come to appreciate some of the complexities of American schooling in the era of desegregation. The work of the Urban Laboratory in Education appears particularly noteworthy in this regard.¹¹⁰ Headed by Dr. Warren Bachelis, the laboratory received funding from the Ford Foundation and ran in partnership with Atlanta University, Emory University, and the Atlanta Board of Education. It hosted workshops to sensitize volunteers to the demographics, learning styles, and linguistic particularities of the student populations of the targeted elementary schools. The goal of such workshops, as articulated in the *Bulletin*, was to glean "a better understanding of the areas and problems involved and also what the teachers and principals expect" from volunteers.¹¹¹ Council members reported a "very close rapport" with the Urban Laboratory and appeared to cooperate with "sensitivity training" requirements with enthusiasm.¹¹² Beginning in 1974, Atlanta NCJW's school volunteers also participated in training sessions for the new Green Circle Program, a national inter-group relations initiative founded in the late 1950s by African American social worker Gladys Rawlins.¹¹³ That some council women were en-

countering black perspectives on institutional racism is also illustrated anecdotally by the remarks of one prominent member of the Atlanta section then active as a volunteer with the Youth Project. Fanny Jacobson recalled her experience in one of the predominantly African American schools, which she does not name but was probably Ware: "I was greeted there by the Principal, who said to me, 'Mrs. Jacobson, you have to realize that to these children there's only two kinds of white people: one is a social worker or the welfare worker, and the other is the police. . . . [They're] not used to a white teacher.'" ¹¹⁴

As this comment suggests, middle- and upper-middle-class Jewish volunteers and low-income students could be said to inhabit different worlds, and aligning the perspectives and expectations of both groups remained difficult. In December 1968, the Atlanta council section hosted a panel discussion, "Where Do We Go From Here?" in which participants were slated to address "the times and . . . the issues in the inner city—with special attention . . . to the problems of the children being served" by the Youth Project. ¹¹⁵ Scheduled speakers included the associate director of the Urban Laboratory in Education, the principals of the three participating elementary schools, and the executive director of Big Brothers Association of Atlanta. The report in the Atlanta section's *Bulletin* on the December meeting conveys a civil but charged encounter between council members and community and school representatives. Encouraged by Dr. Bachelis of the Urban Laboratory and by the panelists to "express any and all views and to air any and all questions"—a directive that calls to mind the WICS presentation at The Temple earlier that spring—attendees engaged in a "stimulating, far-reaching, and often heated discussion that covered a full range from education to community involvement to slum landlords to attitudes of both blacks and whites to poverty," the *Bulletin* reported. ¹¹⁶

The apparently overarching issues at stake in the panel discussion were those of cultural sensitivity and black agency. While school administrators expressed appreciation for a "good beginning," they made clear that council volunteers needed to "accept and appreciate other cultures and other values rather than trying to impose [their] own" on the children, as the *Bulletin* reported. Vine City Association member Bob Waymer, also in attendance, was more pointed in his critique, espousing, according to the council report, the "pride of black people in their own

humanity and heritage” and arguing that if council members “really wish to help, [they] must now support rather than lead.” Members of the Atlanta section in attendance were thus given a memorable, firsthand lesson in the tenets of Black Power. Although council members in attendance voiced both “dissent and assent” to these suppositions, the *Bulletin* noted, “all agreed that much remains to be done.”¹¹⁷

This contest between white liberalism and black radicalism, while pointed, was mild in comparison to the contemporaneous struggle in the Ocean Hill-Brownsville district of New York City, where blacks and Jews clashed rancorously over community control of schools. Even as tensions flared, the council continued to report success in the schools and enthusiasm among volunteers and continued to solicit volunteer participation in the Youth Project to combat understaffing.¹¹⁸ Reports on the program at Ware Elementary School described the atmosphere as “friendly and cooperative” and conveyed the school principal’s appreciation to council volunteers for “providing a service that is unique and valuable to the ‘opening up of new horizons’ for the children.”¹¹⁹ Yet according to the recollections of Marilyn Shubin, president of the Atlanta section in the late 1960s, a sense of resentment existed within the African American community at the time about “white, genteel . . . do-gooders” in the schools. While she notes that there was also some reciprocal bitterness among council members, Shubin recalls that “we . . . understood the dynamics, and why there were these feelings” among African American educators and community leaders.¹²⁰ Clearly the presence of council women in the schools elicited complex responses from the local black community that encompassed both appreciation and resentment.

Conclusion

To its leaders and those volunteers active in its community services projects initiated in the 1960s, the council stood undoubtedly on the right side of history—engaged in “the right work, at the right time, at the right place,” as Frances Bunzl put it at the time.¹²¹ “The most politically [savvy], activist people” joined the Atlanta section of NCJW, another president, Sherry Frank, recalled. There was an “openness” in Atlanta, she insisted, “a progressiveness in part because the Civil Rights movement started here.”¹²² Yet the historical record reveals limits to the council’s efficacy, largely thanks to entrenched racial disparities in ser-

vice provision and employment opportunities, locally and nationally. Extant materials also reveal council members' blind spots and assumptions about the poor generally and low-income African Americans in particular.

However, there were signs that Atlanta NCJW was becoming sensitive, under the leadership of a series of effective and politically attuned presidents, to the ways in which the socioeconomic status of its members obscured the realities of the urban poverty and racial inequality that they sought to mitigate.¹²³ In a monthly message in the *Bulletin* in November 1970, for example, council president Susie Elson made explicit the painful awakenings that the council's work demanded of the organization's members:

The right of every person to a decent living with dignity is inherent in our Jewish heritage and certainly is embodied, as well, in the American Dream. . . . We have addressed ourselves as an organization to the intellectual problem at hand, but have we, as individuals, attempted to truly empathize with the poor? Do we understand the feelings of hopelessness, the sense of false expectations and disappointment that permeate the life of people in poverty? As innately sensitive, aware, and intelligent women, we have a special quality for compassion. We are sensitized, too, by our Jewish heritage which embodies centuries of suffering.¹²⁴

In this particular case, the council's leadership planned an open meeting, to take place over the course of two days, intended to explore the emotional impact of poverty. As Elson's comments indicate, the council in these years framed its progressive, intellectual, and emotional commitments as inherent to its members' identities as women and as Jews. The council remained a bastion of Jewish liberalism, committed to expanding opportunities for all, optimistic in its embrace of empathy, altruism, and civic-mindedness as Jewish virtues.

And the Atlanta section of council did continue to serve on the ground in community services initiatives—from day care to juvenile justice to the welfare of older citizens—that benefited all sectors of Atlanta's population. Yet the records also indicate that, in spirit and deed, the council of the early 1970s was turning from civil rights concerns to focus increasing attention on the needs of the Jewish community, from Israel to Soviet Jewry to Jewish day care in Atlanta.¹²⁵ The national body of NCJW had called explicitly for its membership to grapple with and buttress the

organization's Jewish identity, and the Atlanta section appears to have taken up the call.¹²⁶ This move was characteristic of the American Jewish organizational world in general in the wake of the Six-Day War of 1967 and the Yom Kippur War of 1973 and in light of the diverging political worldviews of African Americans and Jews in these years.¹²⁷

In its work with WICS and in the schools, the members of Atlanta NCJW sought to widen educational and economic opportunities for low-income Atlantans and attempted to understand the day-to-day realities of the urban poor in their midst. As was true of the liberal administration that launched the War on Poverty, the council viewed expansion of opportunity as the key to progress; redressing structural inequalities in education and employment remained beyond the imagining, desire, and capacities of the council and its ilk. It does not diminish the council's record of service to its home city to simultaneously acknowledge the organization's limited reach at a time of urban ferment and widening socioeconomic and racial strife. One is left with a sense of the enormity of the task taken up by these Atlanta Jewish women in the 1960s and an appreciation for the expertly organized, serious efforts of the council section members, in concert with community partners, to expand opportunity by means of the tools at hand. Although these efforts met with mixed success, they provided a unique mechanism for contact and exchange between a portion of Atlanta's middle- and upper-middle-class Jewish women and young, disadvantaged residents of the city.

NOTES

The author thanks Jeremy Katz, Maureen MacLaughlin, and Mickey Harvey of the Cuba Family Archives at the Breman Museum, Atlanta, for their expert assistance and warm collegiality; and Janice Rothschild Blumberg, Marilyn Shubin, and Frances Buzzl, exemplary interview subjects, for sharing their memories with me.

¹ Marilyn Shubin, "President's Message," *Bulletin* 22 (April 1968), National Council of Jewish Women, Atlanta Section Records, Cuba Family Archives for Southern Jewish History, William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum, Atlanta (hereafter cited as *Bulletin*; NCJW Atlanta Section Records; and Cuba Family Archives). *Bulletin* issues were not paginated throughout the period under consideration, therefore pages are not provided in the citations below.

² For a succinct overview of the year 1968 and an analysis of its centrality to postwar American history, see James T. Patterson, *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945–1974* (New York, 1996), 678–709.

³ Winston A. Grady-Willis, *Challenging U.S. Apartheid: Atlanta and Black Struggles for Human Rights, 1960–1977* (Durham, NC, 2006), 114–40; Alton Hornsby, Jr., *Black Power in Dixie: A Political History of African Americans in Atlanta* (Gainesville, FL, 2009), 122–24; Taylor Branch, *At Canaan's Edge: America in the King Years, 1965–68* (New York, 2006), 524–26.

⁴ Ronald H. Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth-Century Atlanta* (Chapel Hill, 1996), 141.

⁵ For the definitive account of the bombing, the trial that followed, and the effect of these events on Atlanta's Jewish community, see Melissa Fay Greene, *The Temple Bombing* (Boston, 1996). See also Janice Rothschild Blumberg, "The Bomb That Healed: A Personal Memoir of the Bombing of the Temple in Atlanta, 1958," *American Jewish History* 73 (1983): 20–38.

⁶ Quoted in "Convention Highlights," *Bulletin* 21 (April 1967).

⁷ "A Convention Comes to Us: Welcome to Dynamic Atlanta," *Bulletin* 21 (April 1967).

⁸ According to annual demographic reports in the *American Jewish Year Book*, the Jewish population of Atlanta increased nearly 20 percent between 1959 and 1965, from 13,000 to 15,500; by 1970, Atlanta's Jewish population stood at 16,500. "Jewish Population in the United States, 1959," *American Jewish Year Book* 61 (1960), 4; "Jewish Population in the United States, 1965," *American Jewish Year Book* 67 (1966), 87; "Jewish Population in the United States, 1969," *American Jewish Year Book* 71 (1970), 349. As Mark K. Bauman has demonstrated, the Jewish community in Atlanta had developed an increasingly sophisticated and diverse organizational structure by midcentury, encompassing both locally generated groups and the outposts of national organizations such as the Anti-Defamation League and the American Jewish Committee. "Atlanta's Jews," Bauman writes, "were incorrigible joiners." Mark K. Bauman, "The Transformation of Jewish Social Services in Atlanta, 1928–1948," *American Jewish Archives Journal* 53 (2001): 94.

⁹ Beth Wenger, "Jewish Women of the Club: The Changing Public Role of Atlanta's Jewish Women (1870–1930)," *American Jewish History* 76 (March 1987): 311–33; Steven Hertzberg, *Strangers Within the Gate City: The Jews of Atlanta, 1845–1915* (Philadelphia, 1978), 119, 165–66.

¹⁰ See Kathleen A. Laughlin, "'Our Defense Against Despair': The Progressive Politics of the National Council of Jewish Women After World War II," in *A Jewish Feminine Mystique?: Jewish Women in Postwar America*, ed. Hasia R. Diner, Shira M. Kohn, and Rachel Kranson (New Brunswick, NJ, 2010), 48–64.

¹¹ See, for example, Clive Webb, *Fight Against Fear: Southern Jews and Black Civil Rights* (Athens, GA, 2003), 147–68; Hollace Ava Weiner, *Jewish "Junior League": The Rise and Demise of the Fort Worth Council of Jewish Women* (College Station, TX, 2008), 62–88; Mark K. Bauman, "Southern Jewish Women and their Social Service Organizations," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 22 (Spring 2003): 34–78.

¹² Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *Troubling the Waters: Black-Jewish Relations in the American Century* (Princeton, 2006), 165.

¹³ Hertzberg, *Strangers Within the Gate City*, 119; Wenger, "Jewish Women of the Club," 315-16.

¹⁴ Hertzberg, *Strangers Within the Gate City*, 69-72; Janice O. Rothschild, *As But a Day: The First Hundred Years, 1867-1967* (Atlanta, 1967), 44-61; Faith Rogow, *Gone to Another Meeting: The National Council of Jewish Women, 1893-1993* (Tuscaloosa, 1993), 36-85.

¹⁵ Wenger, "Jewish Women of the Club," 319-30, 331.

¹⁶ Minutes of board meeting, May 18, 1953, file 4, box 10, series I; J. Harold Saxon (secretary of Georgia Educators' Association) to Mimi Van Stavoren, June 2, 1954, file 8, box 23, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

¹⁷ Minutes of board meeting, December 21, 1953, file 4, box 10, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records; J. Y. Smith, "Philip Gibbon Hammer, 85, Dies," *Washington Post*, January 23, 2000, accessed May 25, 2016, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/2000/01/23/philip-gibbon-hammer-85-dies/e21bf1ae-5e50-47bb-93a5-ceabdfda8fd0/>.

The following month, the committee organized a panel discussion on the value of public schools with the superintendents of Atlanta, Fulton County, and Dekalb County. "What Do Public Schools of the Community Offer Children," *Bulletin 7* (January 1954).

¹⁸ See, for example, minutes of board meeting, February 16, 1953, file 4, box 10, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

¹⁹ Curriculum Vita of Marilyn Shubin, October 22, 1970, file 8, box 13, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records. Bauman has written of the significant cross-pollination in Atlanta among Jewish women's organizations in particular, a phenomenon that is also reflected in the council's records. As indicated in the minutes by the receipt of New Years greetings over the course of the 1950s, the council maintained cordial relations with Hadassah, Pioneer Women, Mizrahi Women, B'nai B'rith Women, the Ladies Auxiliary of Jewish War Veterans, the Atlanta chapter of the Women's Committee of Brandeis University, and the sisterhoods of The Temple, Or VeShalom, Shearith Israel, Ahavath Achim, and Beth Jacob. The council sometimes arranged joint meetings with Hadassah, and there is occasional evidence that the council took care to schedule events so that meetings did not conflict with Hadassah's, presumably to accommodate women with memberships in both organizations. See Bauman, "The Transformation of Jewish Social Services in Atlanta," 98; minutes of board meetings, September 21, 1953, October 18, 1954, and September 12, 1956, file 4, box 10, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

²⁰ Bauman, "The Transformation of Jewish Social Services in Atlanta"; Solomon Sutker, "The Jewish Organizational Elite of Atlanta, Georgia," in Marshall Sklare, *The Jews: Social Patterns of an American Group* (Glencoe, IL, 1958), 249-61.

²¹ Sutker, "Jewish Organizational Elite of Atlanta," 249, 253-55. Although he doesn't say so explicitly, Sutker's analysis is premised on a male leadership structure. Thus the council, as a voluntary women's organization with a quasiprofessional status in both Jewish and civic life, lay outside the purview of his analysis.

²² See, for example, list of members of the board of the Atlanta section of NCJW, May 1957, file 4, box 10, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records. In a different study focusing on the social affinities of the so-called "German" and eastern European Jewish cohorts in Atlanta in the mid-1940s, Sutker wrote that "in time [the council] broadened its membership basis" to include both eastern European and German Jewish socioeconomic elites. Solomon Sutker, "Role of Social Clubs in the Atlanta Jewish Community," in Sklare, *The Jews*, 262-70.

²³ Fanny Jacobson interview, February 10, 1986, Esther and Herbert Taylor Oral History Collection of the Cuba Family Archives (hereafter cited as Taylor Collection). According to the interview, NCJW founder Hannah Solomon, whom Jacobson befriended while in Chicago, encouraged Jacobson to complete professional training in social work at the University of Chicago and was dismayed that Jacobson failed to finish. Jacobson cited pregnancy-related fatigue as the reason for not completing the program.

²⁴ Frances Bunzl interview, October 28, 1985, Taylor Collection. Bunzl served as president from 1964 to 1967. The following served as presidents of the Atlanta section after Bunzl in the specific years under consideration in this paper: Marilyn Shubin (1967-69), Susie Elson (1969-71), Barbara Asher (1971-73), and Sherry Frank (1973-75).

²⁵ Marilyn Shubin interview, November 16, 1998; Barbara Asher interview, November 20, 1985; Sherry Frank interview, April 21, 1993, Taylor Collection. Council leaders went on to positions of increasing power and prestige in Atlanta after the events discussed in this essay. Shubin, for example, later worked as an executive of the Atlanta Jewish Federation; Asher served on Atlanta's city council; Susie Elson served as the director of Volunteer Atlanta and chair of Atlanta Regional Commission's Mental Health Task Force; and Frank headed the southeast regional office of the American Jewish Committee. In the latter capacity, Frank spearheaded the creation of the Black-Jewish Coalition in 1982.

²⁶ Sherry Frank interview, June 16, 1993; Marilyn Shubin interview, November 16, 1998; Sherry Frank interviews, July 28, 1985, and February 10, 1986, Taylor Collection.

²⁷ See Patricia E. Smith, "Rhoda Kaufman: A Southern Progressive's Career, 1913-1956," *Atlanta Historical Bulletin* (Spring-Summer 1973): 43-50; Mark K. Bauman, "The Youthful Musings of a Jewish Community Activist: Josephine Joel Heyman," *Atlanta History* 39 (Summer 1995): 46-59; interviews with Rebecca Gershon and Josephine Joel Heyman, Taylor Collection. Materials relating to Hannah Shulhafer and Rebecca Gershon can be found in the Helen Shulhafer Whitehall Papers, Cuba Family Archives.

²⁸ *Bulletin* 19 (April 1965).

²⁹ Atlanta was an early recipient of federal money under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. In the conception of Economic Opportunity Atlanta (EOA), the neighborhood centers were primarily sites for "employment counseling, social services, community development, and numerous self-help programs." Economic Opportunity Atlanta, *Economic Opportunity Atlanta, Inc.: A Brief History, 1964-1971* (Atlanta, 1971), 1. For a discussion of the role of women as volunteer aides at the neighborhood centers, see Robert Dare, "Involvement of the Poor in Atlanta," *Phylon* 31 (1970): 121-22. "The EOA," Dare writes, "was predominantly an organization administered by white men but carried out by Negro

women" (128). Recent research on the War on Poverty sheds new light on the significant role of low-income women as antipoverty activists and service providers. See Annelise Orleck and Lisa Gayle Hazirjian, eds., *The War on Poverty: A New Grassroots History, 1964–1980* (Athens, GA, 2011).

³⁰ Alton Hornsby, Jr., and Alexa Benson Anderson, *The Atlanta Urban League, 1920–2000* (Lewiston, NY, 2005), 72–77. The unemployed population of Atlanta was disproportionately black. In 1961, for example, African Americans comprised 41 percent of the jobless population while comprising approximately 38.3 percent of the city's population. Few African Americans served on staff at EOA initially, and local black leaders criticized the EOA for discrimination and neglect of black concerns at least until the late 1960s, when a new executive administrator came on board. Slightly earlier jobs initiatives implemented under the Manpower Development and Training Act of 1962 and the Vocational Education Act of 1963 had disproportionately aided white young men and neglected the entrenched inequalities that kept unemployed African Americans from accessing new programs. Hornsby and Anderson, *Atlanta Urban League*, 70; Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth-Century Atlanta*, 7, 118–20.

³¹ Hannah Stein to Frances Bunzl, February 24, 1965, series II, box 22, file 8, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

³² For an initial overview of volunteer tasks, see minutes of the Atlanta WICS board meeting, March 10, 1965, file 7, box 10, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records. See also the minutes of the Atlanta WICS board meeting, May 15, 1966, file 9, box 22, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

³³ Helen S. Oppenlander, memorandum to Frances Bunzl, October 22, 1965, file 8, box 22, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

³⁴ See, for example, minutes of Atlanta WICS board meetings, October 27, 1966, April 25, 1967, and May 20, 1966, file 9, box 22, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records. Similar examples are peppered throughout the minutes during the period under consideration.

³⁵ Oppenlander to Bunzl, October 22, 1965.

³⁶ Joan M. Cooper and Mary [A.] Hallaren, memorandum to all project directors and field personnel, August 13, 1965, file 8, box 22, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records. For information on the compromise budget reached with the OEO, see Joan M. Cooper and Mary A. Hallaren, memorandum to board of directors, members of corporation, project directors, liaison personnel, and regional coordinators, December 16, 1965, file 8, box 22, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

³⁷ Mary A. Hallaren, memorandum to all project directors, February 17, 1966, file 8, box 22, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

³⁸ She continued, "At least we have contacted all the girls and we are keeping in continuous contact with them. We have a regular program for the girls who are waiting to be assigned which is quite well attended. We meet with the girls once a week. They are [taken] on field trips and have lectures." Frances Bunzl to Eudyce Gordon, November 18, 1967, file 8, box 22, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

³⁹ Minutes of Atlanta WICS board meeting, May 12, 1965, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

⁴⁰ Frances Bunzl to Lorraine Sulkin, July 12, 1968, file 8, box 22, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

⁴¹ "Annual Report—WICS," 2, file "Annual Reports, 1970-71," box 1, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

⁴² Frances Bunzl, telephone interview conducted by author, May 1, 2015; Lorraine Sulkin, memorandum to Marilyn Shubin, November 29, 1972, file 8, box 13, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records. At the close of the program's first year, the project director of Atlanta WICS noted that women volunteers wishing to work within local communities had channels other than WICS for doing so, including, prominently, through local churches. This may have drawn volunteers away from WICS. Helen S. Oppenlander, memorandum regarding WICS questionnaire of December 30, 1965, to Mary A. Hallaren, 1966, file 8, box 22, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

⁴³ The NCNW took up WICS as an extension of its activism in voter registration drives and freedom schools in the South in the early- to mid-1960s. See Tracey A. Fitzgerald, *The National Council of Negro Women and the Feminist Movement, 1935-1975* (Washington, DC, 1985), 29-32.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁴⁵ Maxine A. Rock, untitled and undated clipping, file 9, box 22, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records; Doris Lockerman, "Worthy Project for Young Women Needs Funds," *Atlanta Constitution*, January 10, 1966. Initially, in coordination with Fulton County Family and Children's Services, recruits with children were required to apportion twenty-five dollars of their thirty-dollar monthly allotment to childcare, an amount augmented by twenty-five dollars from the federal government. By the early 1970s childcare was provided on site at Job Corps centers. Lockerman, "Worthy Project for Young Women Needs Funds"; Jean Tyson, "Volunteers Break Poverty," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 14, 1972.

⁴⁶ It is unclear how board members arrived at this number, or what the corresponding statistic was for African American recruits. Minutes of Atlanta WICS board meeting, October 27, 1966, file 9, box 22, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

⁴⁷ Minutes of Atlanta WICS board meeting, October 25, 1967, file 9, box 22, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records. The existence of local programs in vocational training and placement for young people, developed by the AUL and funded, in part, by the federal government, may have provided a more appealing path to the workforce for those reluctant to leave home for Job Corps training. This situation was ameliorated somewhat by the opening of a Job Corps training center in Atlanta in 1970.

⁴⁸ Judy Klemesrud, "Women in Job Corps—Problems and Benefits," *New York Times*, May 22, 1971.

⁴⁹ Jean Thwaite, "Job Corps Centers Train 2,666 From Atlanta Area," *Atlanta Constitution*, September 13, 1968. The board of Atlanta WICS was aware well before the opening of the GATE office that the shortfall in employment opportunities was a major problem. They placed graduates in the Atlanta WICS office when possible as an interim measure and sup-

ported plans to start a Grad Club at the local YWCA. Minutes of executive board meeting, March 1, 1967, 1, file 9, box 22, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

⁵⁰ "Annual Report, Community Services, 1970-1971," 7, file "Annual Reports, 1970-71," box 1, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

⁵¹ "Annual Report—WICS," 1, file "Annual Reports, 1970-71," box 1, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records. The report also notes with dismay that, until that year, school counselors at local high schools had not been aware of the existence of WICS. This is illustrative of the communicative and bureaucratic gaps that characterized the program.

⁵² "Annual Report—WICS," 2, file "Annual Reports, 1970-71," box 1, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

⁵³ Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth-Century Atlanta*, 118-21.

⁵⁴ "Annual Report—WICS," 1-2, file "Annual Reports, 1970-71," box 1, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

⁵⁵ "Community Services Annual Report, 1968-69," 11, file "Annual Reports 1966-1969," box 1, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

⁵⁶ "Community Services Report, 1969-70," 3, file "Annual Reports 1969-70," box 1, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

⁵⁷ Minutes of Atlanta WICS board meeting, May 12, 1965, file 7, box 10, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

⁵⁸ "Job Corps Grad Panel at Temple," *Atlanta Constitution*, April 16, 1968.

⁵⁹ Eudyce Gordon to Frances Bunzl, February 15, 1968, file 8, box 22, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Gene Roberts, "First Women's Job Corps Center Finds Path Difficult in St. Petersburg," *New York Times*, July 11, 1965; Martin Waldron, "Hostility in St. Petersburg Shuts First Women's Job Corps Unit," *New York Times*, July 29, 1966.

⁶³ Nan Robertson, "Girls at Job Corps Center in West Virginia Are Struggling to Make a Success of Themselves and the Corps," *New York Times*, January 10, 1966.

⁶⁴ Klemesrud, "Women in Job Corps"; "Women's Job Center Ordered Shut by U.S.," *New York Times*, March 26, 1974.

⁶⁵ Mrs. Marcus [Rosemary] Kilch, "The President's Column," *This Is WICS* 1 (July 1966), 2, file 9, box 22, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records. A local African American newspaper reported that officials in Jefferson County, Georgia, had refused to send recruits to training centers while investigations continued of alleged "beatings, extortion, and sexual indecencies" of young men at various Job Corps centers. "Job Corps Officials Probe Alleged Abuses," *Atlanta Daily World*, January 2, 1968.

⁶⁶ Robertson, "Girls at Job Corps Center in West Virginia"; Klemesrud, "Women in Job Corps."

⁶⁷ At a meeting of the WICS coalition in summer 1966, for example, attendees were asked to encourage circles within their communities to "adopt" recruits at the various training centers, sending them regular mail and holiday and birthday greetings. Board

meeting minutes contain similar exhortations. See, for example, minutes of Atlanta WICS board meeting, July 28, 1966, file 9, box 22, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

⁶⁸ Jean Weaver, "Happy Easter! Happy Easter! Happy Easter!," untitled newsletter (Spring 1967), file 9, box 22, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

⁶⁹ Excerpt of letter from Lois Sellars, *This Is WICS* 1 (July 1966), 4, file 9, box 22, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

⁷⁰ Sandra Alley, "11 Georgia Girls Fly to Job Corps Centers," *Atlanta Constitution*, August 24, 1966.

⁷¹ Maxine A. Rock, untitled and undated clipping, file 9, box 22, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

⁷² Lockerman, "Worthy Project for Young Women Needs Funds."

⁷³ Atlanta WICS, "January Newsletter," [1967], file 9, box 22, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

⁷⁴ This emphasis on individual agency rather than structural barriers appears, too, in an article about local WICS, also published in 1967, in which the reporter followed a young applicant through her interview with Atlanta NCJW's Frances Bunzl. Bunzl warned the young woman of behavioral expectations and potential pitfalls and suggested that the ultimate onus for the transition to the Job Corps center rested on the young recruit. Jean Tyson, "Life Rests in Limbo After Baby," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 30, 1968.

⁷⁵ See Patterson, *Grand Expectations*, 533–39. Highly influential in domestic policy circles, Michael Harrington's *The Other America* (1962), for example, helped spur the war on poverty. As Patterson points out, however, Harrington was "far to the left of administration liberals" in his analysis of the structural causes of poverty (533).

⁷⁶ As Tracey A. Fitzgerald has shown, the staunchly middle-class NCNW stumbled briefly in its initial efforts to make common cause with low-income black women during the voter registration drives in the rural South. Responding to critiques of their bourgeois orientation, the NCNW's representatives quickly moved from "talking about flowers and beautification programs and all this other kind of stuff," as activist Unita Blackwell recalled, to focusing on the more urgent needs of poor, disenfranchised blacks. Fitzgerald, *National Council of Negro Women*, 33–34. See also Anne Firor Scott, *Natural Allies: Women's Associations in American History* (Urbana, IL, 1991); Rogow, *Gone to Another Meeting*; Stephanie J. Shaw, *What a Woman Ought to Be and to Do: Black Professional Women Workers During the Jim Crow Era* (Chicago, 1996).

⁷⁷ "[Women] in Community Service," *Bulletin* 26 (May 1972).

⁷⁸ Before 1964, Rich's had segregated eating and lavatory facilities, and African American women were barred from sitting down to eat there. I'm grateful to Mark Bauman for making this point.

⁷⁹ "Annual Report—WICS," 1, file "Annual Reports, 1970–71," box 1, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

⁸⁰ Minutes of Atlanta WICS board meeting, May 20, 1966, 2, file 9, box 22, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

⁸¹ Klemesrud, "Women in Job Corps."

⁸² "Women at Work," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 20, 1973.

⁸³ Thwaite, "Job Corps Centers Train 2,666 From Atlanta Area."

⁸⁴ WICS annual report [triplicate form], [1969–70], file "Annual and Committee Reports, 1969–70," box 1, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

⁸⁵ Atlanta's public schools ranked as the most segregated in the urban South well into the 1980s. Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth-Century Atlanta*, 251.

⁸⁶ Bayor describes the modified school choice plan as similar to the strategies of many northern cities in these years. Letson publicly proclaimed his support for gradualist methods in the interest, he claimed, of slowing white flight. Yet, Bayor shows, when interracial community groups presented him with opportunities for real integration at several school sites, he deliberately undermined those efforts and actually speeded white abandonment of those schools. *Ibid.*, 221–51. See also Hornsby, *Black Power in Dixie*, 210–38.

⁸⁷ "Save Our Schools" form letter to members, November 1953, file 8, box 23, series II; Rhoda Kaufman, memorandum to the [NCJW] Georgia State Committee on Legislation, September 29, 1954, file 8, box 23, series II; minutes of Atlanta section board meeting, October 18, 1954, file 4, box 9, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records. For the Atlanta section's unequivocal rejection of the later attempt by the state to close the public schools, see "Statement by Atlanta Section National Council of Jewish Women on Bills Pertaining to School Opening or Closing," c. 1958, file 8, box 23, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records. On Amendment 4—also known as the "Private School Amendment"—see Robert Mickey, *Paths Out of Dixie: The Democratization of Authoritarian Enclaves in America's Deep South, 1944–1972* (Princeton, 2015), 246.

⁸⁸ Minutes of Atlanta section board meeting, June 10, 1959, file 6, box 9, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

⁸⁹ Minutes of Atlanta section board meeting, January 13, 1960, file 6, box 9, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records. See also minutes of Atlanta section board meeting, September 9, 1964, file 7, box 10, series I; Community Services annual report, 1964–65, file "Annual Reports, 1960–66," box 1, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

⁹⁰ Minutes of Atlanta section board meeting, May 12, 1965, file 7, box 10, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

⁹¹ Minutes of Atlanta section board meeting, September 1, 1965, file 7, box 10, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records. The program later expanded to include M. Agnes Jones Elementary School, a majority black school. In 1964 the AUL, in concert with the newly formed Education Committee of the NASH Corporation, a neighborhood body, also implemented a tutoring program for Ware students. Volunteer tutors assisted in one-on-one reading practice after school and brought children on field trips to the public library and art museum. It is unclear how long this program continued. NCJW Youth Project volunteers did not seem to know of it. "Tactical Engagement in War on Poverty," *Atlanta Daily World*, May 17, 1964.

⁹² Vicki Pressman, "Youth Project (Testing of Hearing)," file "Annual Reports 1960–66," box 1, series I; "President's Message," *Bulletin* 22 (January 1968).

⁹³ "Headstart—A Bold Experiment," *Bulletin* 20 (September 1965); Mrs. Milton Deitch, "Youth Project: My Experience," *Bulletin* 20 (November 1965); "Youth Project: Volunteers Needed," *Bulletin* 20 (November 1965); "1965-66 Community Services Report to the President," file "Annual Reports 1960-66," box 1, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records; "Ware School Volunteers Having a Ball," *Bulletin* 25 (March 1971).

⁹⁴ See, for example, Deitch, "Youth Project: My Experience"; "A Volunteer Speaks Her Mind and Heart," *Bulletin* 23 (October 1968); "Youth Project to Expand," *Bulletin* 22 (April 1968).

⁹⁵ "Youth Project to Expand."

⁹⁶ Sherry Frank interview, June 16, 1993, 25, Taylor Collection.

⁹⁷ See, for example, "Council in the Schools Annual Report, 1969-1970: Ware School Reading Tutors" evaluation form, file "Annual Reports 1969-1970," box 1, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

⁹⁸ Letters of appreciation from the director of volunteer services for Head Start, Lila McDill, are quoted in "Youth Project Needs Volunteers," *Bulletin* 21 (September 1966). See also the report of thanks conveyed by the principals of Ware and Grant Park schools, "Youth Project Expresses Thanks," *Bulletin* 21 (May 1967).

⁹⁹ Jarvis Barnes, "The Use of Volunteers Can Promote the Instructional Program," *Research and Development News*, January 12, 1970, file 1, box 11, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records. This was the newsletter for the Atlanta public schools. Dr. Barnes served as assistant superintendent for research and development.

¹⁰⁰ Branch, *At Canaan's Edge*, 455-79, 500-22.

¹⁰¹ For more on the Atlanta Project, as the Vine City Project was generally known, and the neighborhood uprisings, see Grady-Willis, *Challenging U.S. Apartheid*, 133-45.

¹⁰² The Black Panthers were pioneers in this regard, and, in Atlanta, women activists in the movement created a free breakfast initiative for children, a service not provided by the public schools, and implemented after-school programs meant to boost literacy through Afrocentric symbols and themes and to inculcate pride in black achievements. See Grady-Willis, *Challenging U.S. Apartheid*, 176-86. In his work on black political power in Atlanta, however, Alton Hornsby, Jr., describes a more pragmatic, system-wide approach to educational issues among Atlanta's black leadership. As Atlanta's population became increasingly black in the late 1960s and early 1970s, African American power elites turned their attention to political control of the Atlanta school system as the means of redressing unequal access to resources. Hornsby, *Black Power in Dixie*, 226-31.

¹⁰³ "National Council Takes a Stand," *Bulletin* 21 (May 1967). One rare explicit reference to the struggle for integration appears in the council's annual report from 1970. As teaching staff were being integrated in the Atlanta public schools, the council in partnership with Volunteer Atlanta coordinated substitute teachers for instructors undergoing "'sensitivity' training." "Community Services Annual Report, 1969-70," file "Annual and Committee Reports, 1969-70," box 1, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

¹⁰⁴ Statistical facts listed in *Bulletin* 24 (February 1970); Deitch, "Youth Project: My Experience."

¹⁰⁵ See Kathryn L. Nasstrom, "Women, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Politics of Historical Memory in Atlanta, 1946–1973," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill, 1993), 210–87.

¹⁰⁶ Greenberg, *Troubling the Waters*, 220. Greenberg provides a comprehensive discussion and analysis of black-Jewish relations during the Black Power years (205–55). For arguments for and against Jewish liberalism that took place within the postwar Jewish community—including struggles to define the ideal role of Jews within the civil rights movement—see Michael E. Staub, *Torn at the Roots: The Crisis of Jewish Liberalism in Postwar America* (New York, 2004), 45–75.

¹⁰⁷ The "culture of poverty" hypothesis, popularized by Daniel Patrick Moynihan's March 1965 report on the status of the black family in America, viewed patterns of departure from white, middle-class family norms (and particularly the high number of poor black families headed by single women) as perpetuating cultural and socioeconomic dysfunction among a vast black underclass. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action* (Washington, DC, 1965); Patterson, *Grand Expectations*, 586–87; Branch, *At Canaan's Edge*, 371, 399. The *Atlanta Journal* and *Atlanta Constitution* both published pieces on the black family in the wake of the Moynihan report. Nasstrom discusses this press coverage in "Women, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Politics of Historical Memory" 247, 282–83.

¹⁰⁸ "A Volunteer Speaks Her Mind and Heart," *Bulletin* 23 (October 1968); "Youth Project to Expand," *Bulletin* 22 (April 1968).

¹⁰⁹ "Negro Women's Group Set to 'Talk To' Poor Here," *Atlanta Daily World*, March 22, 1968; Hornsby, *Black Power in Dixie*, 123–24.

¹¹⁰ Although established in 1965, the Urban Laboratory in Education is first mentioned as the council's community partner in *Bulletin* 21 (April 1967).

¹¹¹ "Council Youth Project," *Bulletin* 23 (December 1968).

¹¹² "Annual Report from Community Services, 1967–68," file "Annual Reports 1966–68," box 1, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records. Sensitivity training was not viewed as a panacea, however, for preparing volunteers. In an evaluation of the tutoring program at Ware, for example, committee chairs found sensitivity training to be valuable and effective, but also argued that, for pragmatic reasons, training in reading tutoring precede any "community sensitivity training" among volunteers. See "Council in the Schools Annual Report, 1969–1970: Ware School Reading Tutors" evaluation form, file "Annual Reports 1969–1970," box 1, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

¹¹³ *Bulletin* 28 (January 1974); Stephen A. Schafer, "An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Green Circle Program in Stimulating and Reinforcing Positive Racial Attitudes in Children" (Ph.D. dissertation, Lehigh University, 1971); One America—Green Circle Program, accessed May 27, 2016, http://clinton4.nara.gov/Initiatives/OneAmerica/Practices/pp_19980806.9190.html/.

¹¹⁴ Fanny Jacobson interview, July 28, 1985, Taylor Collection.

¹¹⁵ Announcement of "Discovery Day" panel discussion, *Bulletin* 23 (December 1968).

¹¹⁶ "Recap of December Meeting," *Bulletin* 23 (January 1969).

¹¹⁷ Ibid. The *Bulletin* the following month noted that the meeting “left an indelible impression” on the council members in attendance and expressed regret that more members had not attended. “An Open Letter from the Public Affairs Department,” *Bulletin* 23 (February 1969).

¹¹⁸ For a particularly forceful call for more volunteers, see “Council in the Schools Annual Report, 1969–1970: Ware School Reading Tutors,” file “Annual Reports 1969–1970,” box 1, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.; “Ware School Volunteers Having a Ball,” *Bulletin* 25 (March 1971).

¹²⁰ Marilyn Shubin interview conducted by author, April 22, 2015. The organized fight for de facto desegregation essentially came to a close with the Atlanta Compromise of 1973 and the city-wide integration of school staffs although not student bodies. The council’s Youth Project continued at least through Sherry Frank’s presidency from 1973 to 1975.

¹²¹ Frances Bunzl, “Annual Report Atlanta Section NCJW, 1964–65,” file “Annual Reports 1960–66,” box 1, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

¹²² Sherry Frank interviews, April 21, 1993, 23, and April 27, 1994, 128, Taylor Collection.

¹²³ In addition to statements by Bunzl, Frank, Jacobson, and Shubin, quoted above, see, Marilyn Shubin, “President’s Message,” *Bulletin* 22 (May 1968) and Julie Cohn, “Let’s Take a Second Look,” *Bulletin* 25 (May 1971).

¹²⁴ Susie Elson, “President’s Message,” *Bulletin* 25 (November 1970).

¹²⁵ While, for example, Israel appears as an object of some attention in the *Bulletin* of the 1960s, it surfaces with increasing frequency among the presidents’ columns after 1967, especially in terms of the council’s educational initiatives. For a glimpse of the new orientation toward explicitly Jewish matters, see “Forging Our Jewish Future,” an announcement of an upcoming speakers program. In its accompanying graphic on the cover of the March 1972 issue, relevant topics appeared in the six points of a Star of David: “Soviet Jewry,” “State of Israel,” “Jewish Ethics,” “Jewish Mother? Princess?,” “Jewish Tradition,” and “Jewish Education.” “Where Do We Go From Here?” *Bulletin* 26 (March 1972).

¹²⁶ In response to the NCJW’s new Task Force on Jewish Affairs, the Atlanta section held a meeting in spring 1971 at which participants discussed Jewish history, values, and identity and recommended means of strengthening the Jewish character of the local community. In an unprecedented incidence of direct action by the group, the council organized a public protest in favor of Soviet Jews in 1973. In an interview, Frank recalled that the protest, by nature of its assertive tone and public visibility, made some longtime members uncomfortable. *Bulletin* 26 (May 1972); “The Soviet Union: It’s a Tough Place to Live, It’s a Tougher Place to Leave,” *Bulletin* 28 (November–December 1973); “‘Frank’ly Speaking,” *Bulletin* 28 (May 1974); Sherry Frank interview, April 21, 1993, Taylor Collection.

¹²⁷ For a comprehensive account of the shifting nature of and arguments about Jewish communal priorities during the 1960s, see Staub, *Torn at the Roots*.

PERSONALITY PROFILE

Esther Kahn Taylor: Hadassah Lady
Turned Birth Control Advocate

by

Ellen G. Rafshoon*

When Betty Friedan was writing *The Feminine Mystique*, she had in mind the plight of women like Esther Kahn Taylor. Described in a 1965 *Atlanta Constitution* article as “an attractive woman with steel gray hair and a flashing smile,” Taylor had yearned to go to college yet married at eighteen to take up homemaking.¹ While raising her son, she channeled her intellectual gifts into music and Jewish philanthropy. At fifty-five, however, Taylor “was at a crossroads in her life” and was not one to fill the void playing mah-jongg.² In 1960, she traveled to New York to visit an old friend, someone Taylor called an “ardent feminist.”³ Their lunchtime conversation transformed Taylor’s life and improved the well-being of southern women for generations to come.

Her friend explained that she was involved in the Planned Parenthood Foundation of America (PPFA). Founded in 1942 as one of the iterations of the birth control movement launched by renegade obstetrical nurse Margaret Sanger, the organization oversaw 350 clinics by 1960.⁴ Restrictive laws, chauvinism, and the challenge of dispensing medical treatment in a country where health care delivery was haphazard stymied its growth, but Esther would learn that a renaissance in family planning was at hand.⁵ The Food and Drug Administration had recently approved a “magic pill” – the first safe and effective oral contraceptive, which was unlike any other in freeing couples to engage in spontaneous sexual activity.⁶

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Taylor's New York friend "was very disappointed that a large city like Atlanta didn't have a Planned Parenthood affiliate," and, while unloading a pile of literature into Taylor's arms, she "encouraged [her] over and over again . . . to initiate one."⁷ Among major American cities, the Sunbelt metropolis was the only one without an outpost of the organization. Reading through the brochures on her flight home, Taylor was intrigued but hesitant. She was personally drawn to the poverty-fighting potential of family planning but wondered: could such a risqué cause take root in Dixie? The answer to that question, as this essay explains, was a resounding yes, largely because of Taylor's involvement.

In 1964, this former "Hadassah Lady" initiated the founding of PPFA's first affiliate in the Southeast. Building on her success in Atlanta, the organization went on to expand its services throughout the region. Taylor's activism necessarily extended to the political arena. Although Georgia was among a minority of states which had never passed a "Comstock" law banning the advertising, sale, or distribution of contraceptives, only married women could legally obtain doctor-prescribed birth control.⁸ Moreover, the stigma associated with anything of a sexual nature hindered many from seeking assistance. "Birth control is taboo as a subject for public or polite discussion even more in the South than in the North," observed Nobel Prize-winning sociologist Gunnar Myrdal.⁹ In any event, most of Georgia's women were too poor to afford to see a doctor for any reason. On Taylor's watch as president of the Planned Parenthood Association of Atlanta (PPAA), all of the legal barriers to accessing birth control fell away, as well as some of the economic and cultural hurdles.¹⁰

The outcome of Taylor's engagement in the birth control movement was quite radical. After all, her actions fostered unprecedented sexual and reproductive freedom among southern women. Moreover, her efforts significantly improved public health, as maternal mortality declined as a result.¹¹ But this article will demonstrate that Taylor's advocacy was far from revolutionary, and she was, in fact, reluctant to challenge existing gender relations. As such, her activism provides a compelling case study supporting historical interpretations of the American birth control movement as "liberal reform" that has "served conservative ends."¹² In advancing contraceptive use in the tradition-bound South, Taylor adopted Planned Parenthood's most conservative

goals. Termed the “population control strategy” by historian Linda Gordon, this campaign touted smaller families as the answer to vexing social problems such as crime, juvenile delinquency, poverty, mental illness, rising welfare costs, and dwindling natural resources.¹³ Absent from this approach were references to how preventing and planning childbearing might enhance a woman’s autonomy or sexual pleasure beyond her role in pleasing her husband. Although in hindsight Taylor acknowledged sharing feminist aspirations, she did not attempt to link the birth control cause with the struggle for women’s rights that emerged in the late 1960s.¹⁴ Indeed, when local feminists and public health physicians spearheaded an abortion rights campaign that would have national repercussions, the Atlanta chapter remained on the sidelines. Had Taylor and her cohorts strayed from their seemingly unthreatening positions, they would not have been as successful in attaining their core goal of expanding access to contraceptives to needy women.¹⁵

Esther Kahn Taylor

Born in 1905, Esther was the only American-born child of Polish-Jewish immigrants Marcus and Jennie Kahn. Marcus was typical in leaving his young wife and two sons behind in Europe for an extended period of time while he secured the means to make a living in America.¹⁶ After four years selling clothes door-to-door from a horse-drawn buggy, he resettled the family in downtown Atlanta. Esther’s childhood home was on a corner lot, surrounded by hospitable Christian neighbors.¹⁷ A devout man, Marcus was among the founders of the city’s second Orthodox congregation, Shearith Israel, which met in a Methodist church until funds were raised for a structure after World War II.¹⁸ Esther stressed the patriarchal structure of the Kahn family when recounting her childhood to an interviewer. “Father made the rules in the house,” she said, adding that Marcus’s pastimes ranged from Zionism to Italian opera. Jennie, however, “worked . . . harder than anybody I have ever seen or known,” despite suffering from chronic tuberculosis.¹⁹ Quiet observance of the Sabbath was her singular respite. Largely bedridden by middle age, her mother died shortly after Esther’s wedding; her father passed away four years later.

Although Esther’s parents insisted that their children observe Jewish rituals, they were encouraged to acculturate. A photo taken when

Esther was a toddler shows the family wearing typical American clothes. Marcus's beard is neatly trimmed, and neither he nor his sons wear any sort of head covering.²⁰ Like other middle-class city girls, Esther took piano lessons, played in her girlfriends' homes, and attended public schools. A girl named Norma Rae taught her to read before she entered kindergarten, and Esther entertained her brothers' friends by playing popular ragtime songs she heard on the radio. A precocious student, Esther skipped two grades, so she was only twelve when she entered Girls High School, known for its rigorous academic curriculum.²¹ In her senior year, she was caught by surprise when her peers elected her class president. As far as Esther knew, a Jewish girl had never before received this honor, which included acting as the commencement speaker. She rose to the occasion, delivering her address before an audience of five thousand.²²

Kahn family portrait, c. 1910.

LEFT TO RIGHT: Meyer, Marcus, Esther, Samuel, and Jennie.

(Courtesy of Judith Taylor.)

One of Esther's older brothers attended Emory University, and she expected to follow after him to prepare for teaching, then considered one of the few suitable professions for educated women. But her father refused to send her despite conceding that she was "smart enough."²³ This decision was the most traumatic event of Taylor's youth, one that perhaps explains why she later became enamored with a cause that enhanced a woman's control over her own destiny. Because Marcus Kahn knew of his daughter's career aspirations, he arranged for her to take a job teaching Hebrew, making her Shearith Israel's first female employee.²⁴ Marcus also intended to pair Esther with a rabbi, and, to improve her marriage prospects, he amassed a dowry by collecting a portion of her weekly paycheck. Overhearing her father discuss his matchmaking plans for her, Esther vowed she would never accede. After all, young women in the Roaring Twenties were choosing their own mates and having fun doing so.²⁵ To circumvent her father's intentions, the vivacious teenager began dating furiously. Esther's suitors, buddies of her older brothers, took her to dance halls and fraternity parties, although they were subject to questioning from her father before they drove away.²⁶

Around her eighteenth birthday, Esther Kahn secured a marriage proposal from Herbert Taylor, a pharmacist a decade older than she, who had treated the Kahns to ice cream from the drugstore he owned with his brother. When Marcus reluctantly approved the union, he told his future son-in-law: "Esther is too young to get married but her mother is sick, and she really should be out of this house. . . . If you'll raise her . . . and take good care of her, I think I can let her marry." It was jarring for Esther Kahn to hear herself discussed in such demeaning terms. Nevertheless, she was elated because she understood that Herbert Taylor would not be overbearing. "[The] wonderful part was that my husband permitted me to do almost anything I wanted to do. I didn't ask for the world, but I could feel the liberty of being my own person and doing whatever I chose to do for the first time."²⁷

During the early years of her marriage, Taylor continued teaching Hebrew and helped out in a drugstore that she encouraged her husband to open separately from his brother. She stopped working when she gave birth to her first and only child, Mark, in 1928. It is not clear why Esther did not have more children. In her oral history, she mentions having suf-

ferred from gynecological problems that culminated in a hysterectomy. But family members speculate that the onset of the Great Depression and the prospect of financial hardship prompted her and Herbert to refrain from having more children like so many of their peers.²⁸ In all likelihood, both factors were germane.

When she became a mother, Taylor largely conformed to societal norms holding that one put aside youthful exuberances as well as paid employment to assume domestic duties. But for some time, it had been acceptable for middle-class women to expand the bounds of domesticity by volunteering in the nonprofit sector. For Jewish women, philanthropic activity was in keeping with the tradition of *tzedekah* but also served as an “invisible career” when paid work was out of reach.²⁹ In Taylor’s case, these ventures offered vital training in speechmaking, fundraising, and logistics, which would give her the confidence to initiate the Planned Parenthood chapter. In the South as elsewhere, Jewish women gravitated toward certain societies based on their ancestry and synagogue affiliation. For example, the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) was initially composed of upper-class Reform Jews of central European origin, but Hadassah, the Zionist organization, was dominated by Orthodox Jewish women whose parents had fled the shtetls of eastern Europe.³⁰

Taylor bridged the divide by participating in both groups, reflecting the need for united action to combat Nazi persecution and the diminution of ethnic, class, and religious divisions within the American and Atlanta Jewish communities. Taylor served as president of Atlanta Hadassah in the 1930s when the group worked to secure the immigration of victims of Nazism to Palestine. Hadassah put heavy pressure on its local chapters to meet quotas for memberships and fundraising. “My phone was busy every hour of the day,” Taylor recalled, adding that the experience warned her against accepting future leadership positions prior to fully understanding the attendant responsibilities.³¹ After the United States entered World War II, she acted as an NCJW lobbyist. In 1942, Taylor was part of an NCJW delegation that met with First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt in the White House regarding refugee resettlement in Palestine. After the war, she and her husband made their first “ocean crossing,” taking a trip to the fledgling state of Israel. The tour included visits to refugee camps inhabited by families from North

Herbert Taylor (far left) and Esther Taylor (far right) at a PPAA public affairs event, c. 1970. (Courtesy of Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University Library, Atlanta, used with permission of Planned Parenthood Southeast.)

Africa, and Esther was shocked by their dire circumstances; some of the children were visibly malnourished. But the families were not neglected: the Jewish charity World-ORT was establishing schools and looking to provide job training. Upon her return home, Taylor was inspired to start an ORT chapter in Atlanta, a harbinger of her subsequent immersion in the birth control movement, which also made fighting poverty the centerpiece of its advocacy.³²

In midlife, Taylor aggressively pursued involvement in civic groups including those that had a history of excluding Jewish women. She participated in the League of Women Voters and the Atlanta Music Club, and she rose to become a vice-president of the Atlanta Woman's Club, a position she held for two decades.³³ Such undertakings brought her into contact with local movers and shakers among mainstream elites, a network she tapped into when she embarked on her Planned Parenthood quest. By this time, Taylor was a wealthy woman. Her hus-

band had opened more drugstores around the city and ventured into real estate development. The couple lived in posh Brookhaven, the first planned “country club” community in Georgia, and the Taylors entertained guests frequently.³⁴ An accomplished pianist, she set up pianos side-by-side in the living room so she could hold duet recitals. No matter what the occasion, Taylor evoked the disciplined elegance later epitomized by First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy. “She was a grande dame,” said her daughter-in-law Judith Taylor.³⁵ No doubt Taylor was more energetic than many of her peers. But what truly set her apart was her independence. Most notably, she delved into a variety of pursuits that took her away from Atlanta and her husband for prolonged periods. Herbert Taylor, enmeshed in running his business, had scant interest in foreign travel, so Esther Taylor saw the world on her own. Besides taking in the sites, she made up for her lack of higher education, enrolling in university courses in Paris, Montreal, and New York. For eight summers, she was a music student at the famed Juilliard School in Manhattan.³⁶

Planned Parenthood

Taylor’s initial qualms about proselytizing for birth control after being approached by her New York friend stemmed from its “hush hush” nature.³⁷ It was still a crime in some states to prescribe contraceptives, and “the word ‘sex’ was not used in polite conversation.”³⁸ As Taylor mused getting involved in family planning, she worried that doctors would be unreceptive out of fear that free clinics would compete for patients. She believed that physicians failed to realize “that there were thousands of people out there who never went to a doctor, who didn’t have the money to go to a doctor.”³⁹ On the other hand, many favorable circumstances prompted her to accept the challenge. By 1964 millions of women were already on the pill, making it the most popular contraceptive in America.⁴⁰ And for good reason. “I simply take a pill every evening and my God, it’s wonderful not to worry,” a suburban mother exulted in the pages of the *Saturday Evening Post*.⁴¹ This breakthrough in reproductive medicine was heralded despite alarming reports of side effects.

However, as Taylor pointed out, if one did not have a private physician, the only place in Georgia to get a prescription for this miracle drug was at Atlanta’s public hospital, Grady Memorial. In 1963 Emory

University physicians had established a family planning clinic at Grady, dispensing the pill and intrauterine devices (IUDs), that served about five thousand mostly African American women each year.⁴² But the program had built-in limitations. Only indigent and married mothers from two metropolitan counties were offered contraceptive services. Single women, teenagers, and women who had never given birth were turned away. Consequently, researchers with the federal Centers for Disease Control (CDC), based in Atlanta, estimated that the contraceptive needs of at least ten times as many of the city's women were unmet.⁴³ Statewide, the situation looked even grimmer. Georgia's Board of Public Health declined to distribute the pill and IUDs at its clinics and instead dispensed contraceptive foams while teaching couples the precarious "rhythm" method—timing sexual intercourse to avoid fertile periods. In 1964, these meager services only reached seven thousand women in the entire state.⁴⁴

Coinciding with the advent of medically sound contraceptives was a revised view that the purpose of sex within marriage was wider than procreation. Although a woman might finish bearing children by the age of thirty, how would the marriage last if the couple became celibate afterwards?⁴⁵ In addition, family planning came to be viewed as crucial to reducing poverty and overpopulation. This "neo-Malthusian" perspective figured heavily in postwar U.S. foreign and domestic policy and captured the imagination of most major religious groups including evangelical Protestants. Only Catholics expressed qualms.⁴⁶ Methodists were the first major denomination to sanction the use of artificial aids to plan parenthood, and in 1961 the representative body for thousands of mainline Protestant denominations followed suit.⁴⁷ Among people of faith, Jewish couples were exceptional in their vigilant use of contraception even when access and methods were limited. One of the few scientific studies of fertility patterns among Jews concluded that in the absence of strong religious dictates encouraging large families, socioeconomic factors such as educational attainment and income that were determinants of white Protestant family size also had the greatest influence on Jewish childbearing.⁴⁸

In 1963 Congress began allocating foreign aid for population reduction measures where poverty was endemic.⁴⁹ But the most noteworthy official development regarding family planning was the 1965 Supreme

Court ruling in *Griswold v. Connecticut* involving the Planned Parenthood affiliate in New Haven. This landmark decision struck down all remaining laws preventing married couples from obtaining a doctor's prescription for contraceptives and prompted Senator Ernest Gruening of Alaska to hold hearings on a bill that would ensure that every American had access to birth control.⁵⁰ Consequently, the Lyndon B. Johnson administration took the unprecedented step of devoting federal monies that had been allocated for the War on Poverty to local programs interested in distributing the pill. Rural Pennsylvania women were the first beneficiaries, but in part because of Esther Taylor's activism, poor Atlanta women would be early recipients as well.

Critical to her decision to move forward was Herbert Taylor's promise that he would provide his wife with five thousand dollars in seed money. Her next step was to request that New York PPFA officials hire a southeast representative to assist. Field director Naomi Gray must have sensed Esther Taylor's determination, because in a few months she relocated the organization's executive director, Russell "Russ" Richardson, to Atlanta to assume the new position. Richardson, a social worker and zealot for the cause of family planning, worked in tandem with Taylor and leveraged her experiences as a model for other southerners seeking to do the same in their cities.

Taylor's web of acquaintances proved essential to rooting Planned Parenthood in Atlanta. One can imagine her rifling through her Rolodex searching for names of prominent women she surmised would be receptive to the organization's innocuous slogan: "every child a wanted child."⁵¹ Jewish women were identified, but she aimed for a broad cross section of civic-minded matrons: Junior Leaguers, PTA presidents, and service-oriented club officers. About forty of these "outstanding women leaders" visited her home on October 20, 1964, to have coffee and hear a pitch from Richardson advancing Planned Parenthood's population control strategy. As Richardson explained, when parents had children who were "not wanted," the children risked growing up with "emotional problems." Rapid action was necessary as "rising population" threatened to outstrip national and global resources.⁵² Richardson closed his talk by asking the women if they supported bringing the birth control organization to Atlanta. All hands went up, Taylor fondly remembered. It was an auspicious start.⁵³

Esther Taylor's handwritten invitation to a gathering at her home that led to the establishment of the Planned Parenthood chapter in Atlanta. (Planned Parenthood Southeast scrapbook 5, courtesy of Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University Library, Atlanta.)

After this gathering, Taylor employed techniques she had learned from her prior voluntarism. Every other week for months on end, housewives with time to spare gathered around her dining room table stuffing envelopes and licking stamps. The first mass mailing of fifty thousand letters sought donations and volunteers. Meanwhile, Taylor met with representatives of the local power structure including county commissioners, the editors of Atlanta's daily newspapers, and the director of the state board of health. "All they did was to be very courteous," she said. "They didn't promise anything."⁵⁴ She also supervised a volunteer army that dispersed seventeen thousand brochures titled "The Children of the World Deserve to be Planned." These documents, adorned with photos of adorable white toddlers, attributed "problems in housing, employment, education and taxes and the amount of social welfare" to population growth.⁵⁵ Taylor reported receiving a deluge of queries subsequent to their dissemination. "There isn't a single day that I don't get a call from someone asking about the group and wanting to join," she told a reporter.⁵⁶ By the following year, the nascent chapter had gleaned 177 dues-paying members plus a twenty-person board of directors.⁵⁷

*Planned Parenthood
Foundation of America
brochure, c. 1965.
(Courtesy of the Sophia
Smith Collection, Smith
College, Northampton, MA.)*

The Atlanta chapter's leadership included more than the ladies who lunch. The maiden governing board, evenly divided between men and women, was composed of businessmen, academics, public health officials, philanthropic homemakers like Taylor, liberal Jewish and Protestant clergy, and obstetricians affiliated with the Grady-Emory family planning program.⁵⁸ If a surname can be relied on to hint at the bearer's ethnicity, then it is clear that Jews did not dominate the board, although they may have been disproportionately represented given that less than 2 percent of Atlanta's population in 1964 was Jewish.⁵⁹ Taylor recognized that the most important figure associated with the affiliate during its formative period was Emory's Dr. Luella Klein, chair of the medical advisory committee and later chief of Maternal Health at Grady.

One of six women to graduate the University of Iowa Medical School in 1949, Klein was one of the few female gynecologists licensed to perform surgery in the United States.⁶⁰ Besides her medical acumen, Klein brought a "demanding personality" to her work for Planned Parenthood, which she used to make inroads with the predominantly male public health community as well as the state legislature.⁶¹ When Taylor called on Governor Lester Maddox, Klein did the talking.⁶² Based on her work at Grady, Klein keenly understood the needs of poor women; it was she who raised the idea of providing free transportation to birth control clinics.⁶³

At a time when blacks and whites lived parallel lives and white resistance to integration was fierce, PPAA was noteworthy in including black participants. Dr. William Mason, a Yale-educated physician with the Georgia Department of Public Health who had been forbidden from caring for white patients earlier in his career, served on the maiden board. In 1972 he became the chapter president.⁶⁴ Dr. Walter Chivers, chair of the sociology department at Morehouse College, was a board member until his death in 1969 and functioned as the chapter's emissary to the black community. He recruited many of the African American volunteers and employees to work in the clinics. Chivers possibly secured office space at the Atlanta University Center's Interdenominational Theological Center (associated with Morehouse College) to house the chapter's first clinic. Chivers and his wife had been members of Planned Parenthood since the 1940s, when the organization set up a National Negro Advisory Council to raise the organization's profile among black health professionals and to educate black southerners about contraception. Although African Americans were as receptive to using birth control as whites, some were wary that Planned Parenthood was advocating eugenics, or racially selective childbearing.⁶⁵ A beloved professor of Martin Luther King, Jr., Chivers attained the civil rights leader's endorsement of the birth control struggle, assuring King that Planned Parenthood operated with "integrity, honesty, and complete lack of racial prejudice."⁶⁶

Establishing credibility among the black community was imperative for the PPAA because more than 80 percent of its clients during Taylor's tenure as chapter president were African American. The rationale given by Sylvia Freedman, the chapter's executive director from

1965 to 1978, was that “they live in areas where most of the poverty is.” Freedman observed that predominantly African American neighborhoods had the city’s highest birth rates as well as the highest rates of maternal death.⁶⁷ In keeping with this rationale, the first PPAA clinics were located in black neighborhoods, most where local activists had organized “community action centers” authorized to receive federal anti-poverty funding.

In several northern cities, male Black Power activists, claiming birth control was part of a white conspiracy to reduce black political influence, sought to drive Planned Parenthood out of business.⁶⁸ There is scant evidence that black militants impeded operations in Atlanta, but occasionally questions arose in the press about whether African American women were being singled out. When board member Mason was asked if birth control was “black genocide,” he responded: “I’m black and I know that’s not true. Genocide is the concept of people who have fears. . . . I would rather see quality people than to have a teeming mass of sick, unwanted, uneducated children.”⁶⁹

*Planned Parenthood Association
of Atlanta certificate for Esther
Taylor, January 20, 1967.
(Planned Parenthood Southeast
scrapbook 8, courtesy of Special
Collections and Archives,
Georgia State University
Library, Atlanta.)*

Russ Richardson, Planned Parenthood's southeast director, was similarly defensive after the *Atlanta Constitution* published a letter castigating the organization for targeting black families. His rejoinder contended that the provision of reduced-fee birth control distribution represented the "removal of one more element of discrimination." He emphasized that Planned Parenthood's clients were not subject to coercion. "We have fought to make voluntary birth control services available to all women as a basic human right. Surely we cannot deny children the right to be born into a home where they will be wanted, loved and cared for," he wrote.⁷⁰ Planned Parenthood would "get black folks to trust us," said Helen Howard, a black community organizer in Vine City, as long as it was not perceived as a "movement operated by white persons."⁷¹

Taylor frequently held board meetings at the downtown offices of the Trust Company Bank, Atlanta's leading financial institution closely associated with the Coca-Cola Company.⁷² A review of the organization's paperwork reveals that these were no-nonsense sessions that accomplished important business. Under Taylor's management, the

Planned Parenthood Foundation of America certificate of appreciation for Esther Taylor, March 18, 1972. The certificate marks the first day of issue of a U.S. commemorative stamp honoring family planning. (Planned Parenthood Southeast scrapbook 8, courtesy of Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University Library, Atlanta.)

chapter aimed to create favorable public opinion toward “birth control for all who desire it” and to “alert the citizens of Atlanta to the gravity of the population crisis.”⁷³ Rhetoric, in printed or oral forms, touted the cost savings accrued to taxpayers through reduced welfare payments. Preventing “illegitimacy” and abortion were additional selling points. “Why should we have over one million abortions a year reported,” Taylor asked members of the Northside Kiwanis Club in a 1965 luncheon speech delivered at the Biltmore Hotel.⁷⁴

The chapter’s publicity campaign included contracting with the city to affix posters to buses and canvassing well-trafficked spaces like Lenox Square Mall.⁷⁵ In addition, Taylor and her cohorts assiduously cultivated positive media coverage. For help with media relations, Taylor turned to successful Atlanta freelance writer Nan Pendergrast, who was concurrently involved in public school desegregation.⁷⁶ Although Planned Parenthood was rarely front page news in Atlanta’s daily newspapers, the stories reported were overwhelmingly sympathetic to widening access to birth control. The newspapers’ reporters faithfully transmitted the organization’s warnings about “bringing unwanted babies into a society that cannot take care of them.”⁷⁷ The papers’ coverage enhanced the respectability of the enterprise, which was one of Taylor’s fundamental objectives. For example, a multipage feature on the clinics, published in 1967, included photos depicting black and white female volunteers attired in crisply ironed blouses and skirts conducting educational sessions and meeting one-on-one with patients as if they were in private doctors’ offices.⁷⁸ Copies of every article ever written about the chapter were clipped and preserved in scrapbooks currently held in Georgia State University’s archives.⁷⁹

Taylor’s forays to venues across the city to sell Planned Parenthood’s mission to Rotarians, church groups, and politicians were integral to erasing stigmas about birth control. On these occasions, Taylor donned a skirt suit and blouse set off with a string of pearls. She often chose to wear white, as that color conveyed dignity, she told her granddaughter Elaine Taylor-Klaus, who worked for Planned Parenthood during the 1980s.⁸⁰ Esther Taylor had no qualms about standing in front of dark-suited businessmen displaying the Lippes Loop, a snakelike IUD, or the iconic pink compact containing a month’s supply of the pill. When she was not delivering speeches, Taylor introduced an array of

nationally recognized family planning boosters to Atlanta's civic elite, such as Planned Parenthood president Dr. Alan Guttmacher.⁸¹ In 1966, PPAA hosted an appearance by Eleanor Burrows Pillsbury, the first wife of food products mogul Charles A. Pillsbury and a noteworthy birth control philanthropist. Pillsbury delivered an address titled "The Businessman's Stake in the Population Explosion" to a group of small-business owners Taylor had assembled. Later in the day, Pillsbury advocated for the Atlanta chapter on an interview program broadcast on local television station WAGA.⁸²

The most important function of the PPAA was the direct provision of reproductive health services to patients too poor to see a gynecologist yet not poor enough to qualify for services at Grady Memorial. By 1969 PPAA operated nine clinics including one in suburban Roswell.⁸³ These employed a small staff of doctors and nurses while relying heavily on the voluntary services of retired black professionals, especially school teachers, and students from historically black colleges.⁸⁴ The clinics had night hours to accommodate working women's schedules and survived on new federal family planning funding as well as discounted supplies from pharmaceutical companies.⁸⁵ Herbert Taylor donated a major portion of the operating funds; the rest was left to Esther Taylor to raise.⁸⁶ When asked later in life if she specifically lobbied Jewish organizations given her background, she indicated that she had been discouraged by their lack of enthusiasm. For example, the Atlanta section of the National Council of Jewish Women once gave her only five minutes to make her pitch. "I said, 'Thank you, but no thank you.' I couldn't possibly tell the story I had to tell in five minutes." She reached the conclusion that Jewish organizations "needed as many volunteers [as they could get] and they had a specific mission. This really didn't belong in that kind of an organization."⁸⁷

Taylor had Richardson, the southeast director, take the lead on crucial legal matters. In 1966 the group scored a major victory when state representative George Busbee, a Democrat from rural Albany who later served as governor, sponsored the Georgia Family Planning Services Act, which passed by a nearly unanimous vote.⁸⁸ The law called on public health clinics to begin offering the pill and IUDs to their married clients. Two years later, greater progress was achieved when the law was amended to cover "any woman requesting such services," and the PPAA

as well as other private and public birth control providers interpreted this as a green light to serve women regardless of age or marital status.⁸⁹ Serving single women was seen as crucial to Taylor and the chapter's other leaders, as they had repeatedly stressed the need to reduce the number of children born "out of wedlock" as a way of uplifting the poor. "With four or six children, and usually one parent, a working mother," Taylor had warned in a 1968 speech, "how many of these children will go to a mental hospital? How many will fill our criminal institutions?"⁹⁰

Moving On

In 1968 Georgia became the fourth state to repeal criminal penalties against doctors performing abortions.⁹¹ The procedure was permitted when there was a "grave" risk to the mother's physical or mental health, the fetus might be born deformed, or if the pregnancy was the result of rape. The patient was required to be a Georgia resident, and each request was scrutinized by at least two hospital administrators before a doctor could proceed. These standards were applied rigorously so that from 1968 to 1970, fewer than five hundred abortions were performed statewide.⁹² Under Taylor's leadership, PPAA took no official position on this law, nor did the board members discuss it at their meetings. From what can be discerned from a review of newspaper articles about PPAA, it appears that Taylor and the chapter's chief medical adviser, Luella Klein, preferred that the chapter concentrate on its core mission of disseminating contraceptives as a means to avert recourse to abortion rather than promoting abortion per se.

Mere months after Georgia liberalized its abortion law, national Planned Parenthood called on states to forgo all restrictions on abortion as long as the pregnant woman and her physician were willing. This stance was in keeping with the demands of the nascent feminist movement and also represented the preference of many doctors who wanted ultimate discretion over the practice of medicine.⁹³ It signaled an end to the population control strategy, which had emphasized the organization's commitment to societal goals. On the other hand, the radicalism inherent in promoting abortion with respect to women's rights was not new for Planned Parenthood. Margaret Sanger's activism in the early twentieth century had been motivated by her desire to protect women from the heinous effects of "back alley" abortions, and she and her com-

patriots understood fertility control to be central in overcoming patriarchy.

Atlanta newspaper accounts reveal that the abortion issue was divisive within the chapter. Klein was content with letting the current abortion restrictions stand. She contended that free access to abortion would deter women from diligently using contraceptives. Moreover, she maintained that women who were “very hostile early in pregnancy” moved towards acceptance once they realized “there is nothing they can do about it.” In contrast, Dr. Newton Long, Emory’s chief obstetrician and a founding member of PPAA, argued that the current law unduly hampered the professional discretion typically awarded physicians. “I am philosophically opposed to having any law. The legislature has never felt it had to pass laws on tonsillectomies. I think it would be best to leave medical decisions to the medical profession,” he contended.⁹⁴ Taylor did not take part in this debate, as she resigned the presidency of the chapter at this juncture, leaving in charge Dr. Raphael “Ray” Levine, a Lockheed Corporation engineer.⁹⁵ The PPAA board subsequently followed the dictates of its parent body in New York and passed a resolution demanding that abortion be “governed by the same rules as apply to other medical procedures.” The affiliate promised it would refer patients seeking an abortion to Grady Memorial, Emory’s Crawford Long Hospital, or a private physician.⁹⁶

Given Taylor’s ambivalence about abortion, it makes sense that she chose to exit the chapter as controversy developed around this issue. Always politically savvy, she likely understood that her time had come and gone. The original justifications for launching Planned Parenthood in Atlanta, rooted in her personal social justice concerns, were being supplanted with discourse that held that women’s advancement was contingent on abortion rights. She likely presumed she would not have been the right person to deliver this message.

In the immediate years after Taylor’s retirement from the chapter, some of PPAA’s public health professionals emerged as central figures in the abortion rights struggle. They collaborated with local feminists, liberal clergy, and civil libertarians to seek passage of a Georgia law aligned with Planned Parenthood’s proposal invalidating all restrictions on abortion within the first twelve weeks of pregnancy.⁹⁷ When that effort proved futile, they sought recourse in the federal courts, a move that had

national repercussions.⁹⁸ In 1970 the activists sued Grady Hospital for refusing an abortion to a twenty-two-year-old mother who had been incapable of parenting her three children. The Supreme Court heard the case, *Doe v. Bolton*, as a companion to the Texas-based *Roe v. Wade*.⁹⁹ The landmark 1973 ruling held that “all factors—physical, emotional, psychological, familial, and the woman’s age—relevant to the well-being of the patient” were grounds for terminating a pregnancy without state interference.¹⁰⁰ This legal victory, to which PPAA served as an original plaintiff, fundamentally altered Planned Parenthood’s operations to include abortion referral and services. Consequently, Planned Parenthood’s work turned more contentious in light of the right-wing backlash that followed.

In subsequent decades, Taylor remained a quiet but vital devotee of the chapter she birthed. She and her husband acted as generous patrons, as did her son, Mark, who entered his father’s real-estate business, and his wife, Judith, who, like her mother-in-law, was a leader in Jewish and Atlanta philanthropic organizations.¹⁰¹ The family made it possible for the organization to expand its footprint to serve thousands of black and white women in Atlanta and surrounding suburbs. Without the PPAA clinics, many would have missed regular gynecological exams diagnosing breast cancer and sexually transmitted diseases as well as prescriptions for birth control. Esther Taylor’s family also worked to defend Planned Parenthood as political antagonisms grew at the state and national level. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Supreme Court issued rulings giving states greater leeway to restrict abortion, and clinics were targeted by “right-to-life” protesters taunting clients with gruesome photos of fetal tissue.¹⁰²

Esther Taylor was troubled by these developments, saying that the “anti-abortion crusade [was] one of the tragedies of our time.”¹⁰³ The campaign to sustain abortion rights was taken up by the next Taylor generation, born in the early 1960s while Esther Taylor was touting the pill to Rotarians as a cure-all for poverty. Elaine Taylor-Klaus, who had embarked on a career as a lobbyist for women’s health organizations, was hired in 1991 to be the chief spokesperson for Planned Parenthood Southeast, which had grown to include forty-three chapters since her grandmother founded PPAA. In explaining her affinity for the organization, Elaine Taylor-Klaus evidenced the ideological shift that had

*"A Family of Feminists," Atlanta Jewish Times, September 13, 1991.
 Esther Taylor (seated) with her daughter-in-law, Judith Taylor, and granddaughter, Elaine Taylor-Klaus.
 (Courtesy of the Cuba Family Archives for Southern Jewish History at the Breman Museum, Atlanta. Used with permission.)*

occurred since her grandmother's retirement. "This is about controlling population but more importantly for me, it's about women's ability to control their bodies to plan their families in such a way that you can space your children more than nine or 10 months apart, to decide when and if you want to have children and how many."¹⁰⁴ Esther Taylor, of course, was delighted to see Taylor-Klaus take up where she left off. She professed admiration for feminists like her granddaughter and their focus on women's reproductive rights. "I'm certainly a great believer in choice, or I wouldn't have been interested in Planned Parenthood. I believe each person has a right to make a choice for herself."¹⁰⁵ That Taylor never voiced those sentiments a half-century earlier turned out to be of great benefit to the cause of family planning in Georgia, where acceptance of birth control was to be understood as social control and not women's autonomy.¹⁰⁶

*Esther Taylor at the
Mobilization for Women's
Lives, November 12, 1989, at
Woodruff Park in Atlanta,
Atlanta Jewish Times,
September 13, 1991.
(Courtesy of Judith Taylor,
used with permission.)*

NOTES

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¹ "Atlantans Form Birth Control Committee," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 16, 1964.

² Judith Taylor, interview conducted by author, July 8, 2015.

³ Esther Kahn Taylor, interview conducted by Margery Diamond, July 9, 1986, 28, Esther and Herbert Taylor Oral History Collection at the Breman Museum, Atlanta (hereafter cited as Esther Kahn Taylor oral history). Taylor was eighty-two years old at the time of this interview. She did not name her influential friend in this interview or any other.

⁴ Carole R. McCann, "Planned Parenthood," in *The Readers Companion to U.S. Women's History*, ed. Wilma Mankiller, et al. (Boston, 1998), 450.

⁵ For an overview of the evolution of Planned Parenthood and the challenges it faces, see Jill Lepore, "Birthright: What's Next for Planned Parenthood?," *New Yorker*, November 14, 2011, 44-45.

⁶ Margaret Sanger referred to an oral contraceptive as a "magic pill" in a 1939 letter to Clarence Gamble, an heir to the Proctor and Gamble Corporation fortune, who shared her fanaticism about birth control. The letter is cited in Lara Marks, *Sexual Chemistry: A History of the Contraceptive Pill* (New Haven, 2001), 51. Sanger and philanthropist Katherine McCormick enlisted reproductive biologist Dr. Gregory Pincus and fertility expert Dr. John

Rock to develop the drug in 1951. Searle Pharmaceutical attained FDA approval after successful clinical trials in Massachusetts and Puerto Rico. The pill quickly became the primary method of birth control distributed by Planned Parenthood, supplanting the diaphragm. For a detailed accounting of the pill's development, see Andrea Tone, *Devices and Desires: A History of Contraceptives in America* (New York, 2001), 203–31.

⁷ Esther Kahn Taylor oral history, 28.

⁸ The 1873 law prevented interstate trade in any material preventing pregnancy, but Georgia was one of thirteen states, mostly southern, that refrained from passing a state version of the law. In 1937 a federal district court ruling, *United States of America v. One Package of Japanese Pessaries*, made it possible for doctors to legally prescribe contraceptives. The legal history is outlined in Jack H. Hudson, "Birth Control Legislation," *Cleveland-Marshall Law Review* 9 (May 1960): 245–257.

⁹ Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (New York, 1944), 176.

¹⁰ Georgia's 1966 Family Planning Services Act provided for state-sponsored birth control services, and its 1968 amendments specified that the law applied to "anyone requesting such services," irrespective of age or marital status. An analysis of states' varying birth control laws is contained in Martha J. Bailey et al., "Early Legal Access: Laws and Policies Governing Contraceptive Access, 1960–1980," 5, accessed July 15, 2015, http://www-personal.umich.edu/~baileymj/ELA_laws.pdf.

¹¹ Starting in 1965, when federal funding became available to PPAA clinics and the Emory-Grady Family Planning Program vastly expanded its client base, fertility rates among white and black women in Atlanta declined for the first time in the latter half of the twentieth century. The reductions in childbearing were sharpest among black women, who comprised most of the patient population at Atlanta's free clinics. See Carl W. Tyler, Jr., et al., "Assessment of a Family Planning Program: Contraceptive Services and Fertility in Atlanta, Georgia," *Family Planning Perspectives* 2 (March 1970): 25–29. Another study noted a significant drop in maternal mortality among Atlanta women from 1965 to 1969. This was before a state law went into effect permitting hospital abortions under limited circumstances but during the period when contraceptive distribution increased. See Roger Rochat, Carl Tyler, and Alan Shoenbucher, "An Epidemiological Analysis of Abortion in Georgia," *American Journal of Public Health* 61 (March 1971): 544.

¹² This thesis was initially offered by David Kennedy, *Birth Control in America: The Career of Margaret Sanger* (New Haven, 1970), 272. Other works that echo Kennedy's conclusions include Linda Gordon, *The Moral Property of Women: A History of Birth Control Politics in America* (Chicago, 2002); and Donald T. Critchlow, *Intended Consequences: Birth Control, Abortion, and the Federal Government in Modern America* (New York, 1999).

¹³ The population control strategy is detailed in Gordon, *Moral Property of Women*, 278–86; and Critchlow, *Intended Consequences*, 5. Melanie K. Welch shows how population control was the motivation for Arkansas to provide contraceptives to poor women in "Not

Women's Rights: Birth Control as Poverty Control in Arkansas," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 69 (Autumn 2010): 220–44.

¹⁴ Taylor described herself as "a feminist to the core." Esther Kahn Taylor oral history, 52.

¹⁵ Georgia, for example, was one of fifteen states that declined to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) approved by Congress in 1970. The constitutional amendment, which the feminist movement considered vital to securing women's economic, political, and social equality, failed to pass either body of the Georgia legislature. Support from Georgia governors Jimmy Carter and George Busbee was lukewarm. STOP ERA, founded by Eagle Forum chair Phyllis Schlafly, had a strong presence in the state.

¹⁶ Marcus Kahn left Poland in 1900, and Jennie Kahn and the boys arrived in 1904. Esther was born a year later. The immigrants became citizens in 1910. Jennie's name is given as *Janice* in the oral history transcript, but *Jennie* is correct according to the family and the 1920 U.S. Census.

¹⁷ Esther Kahn Taylor oral history, 1–2.

¹⁸ Marcus was responsible for bringing Rabbi Tobias Geffen to the synagogue, where he remained for sixty years. Geffen, renowned for working with Coca-Cola to make its popular beverage kosher, persuaded Methodist-affiliated Emory University to accommodate Jewish students by ending the practice of giving exams on Saturdays. See Joel Ziff, ed., *Lev Tuoviah: On the Life and Work of Rabbi Tobias Geffen* (Newton, MA, 1988); David Geffen, "The Literary Legacy of Rabbi Tobias Geffen in Atlanta, 1910–1970," *Atlanta Historical Journal* 23 (Fall 1979): 85–90; Nathan Kaganoff, "An Orthodox Rabbinate in the South: Tobias Geffen, 1870–1970," *American Jewish History* 73 (September 1983): 56–70.

¹⁹ Esther Kahn Taylor oral history, 10, 6.

²⁰ Family portrait, Karen Kahn private collection.

²¹ Girls High, founded in 1872 as one of seven schools making up the original Atlanta Public Schools system, housed science labs, a library, and sewing rooms. Graduates were prepared for college, unlike students at Commercial High School, which provided vocational training. Jewish girls of eastern European origin tended to go to Commercial High.

²² Esther Kahn Taylor oral history, 9.

²³ *Ibid.*, 10.

²⁴ Elaine Taylor-Klaus, interview conducted by author, February 17, 2016.

²⁵ John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (Chicago, 1988), 241.

²⁶ Esther Kahn Taylor oral history, 7.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 11, 10.

²⁸ From the stock market crash of 1929 through the war years, the U.S. fertility rate dropped drastically from a norm of 3.5 to 2.5 children per woman. Couples were able to restrict childbearing somewhat effectively as laws regulating contraception were relaxed during the 1930s. These changes are detailed in D'Emilio and Freedman, *Intimate Matters*, 245–46.

²⁹ Susan M. Chambré, "Parallel Power Structures, Invisible Careers and the Changing Nature of American Jewish Women's Philanthropy," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service* 76 (Spring 2000): 2.

³⁰ Taylor refers in her oral history to the class conflict within the Atlanta Jewish community. Esther Kahn Taylor oral history, 15.

³¹ Esther Kahn Taylor, unpublished handwritten memoir, 1986, created in preparation for her oral history, Judith Taylor private collection.

³² Esther Kahn Taylor oral history, 17-18.

³³ According to Judith Taylor, her mother-in-law never advanced to the top leadership spot because she was Jewish. The Music Club was a booster for the city's orchestra and a purveyor of music education. Taylor initiated a regular radio program for the club and secured scholarships for young music students. A full account of her activities can be found in Esther Kahn Taylor oral history, 19-30.

³⁴ The neighborhood, developed between 1910 and 1942, surrounds the Capital City Country Club and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. There is an abbreviated description at National Park Service: Atlanta, accessed May 21, 2016, <https://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/atlanta/bhd.htm>.

³⁵ Judith Taylor, interview conducted by author, July 19, 2015.

³⁶ Taylor, unpublished memoir, 1986.

³⁷ Esther Kahn Taylor, undated speech [1970], Planned Parenthood Association of Atlanta Papers, Planned Parenthood Southeast Records, series 2, Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University, Atlanta (hereafter cited as PPAA Papers).

³⁸ Taylor unpublished memoir, 1986.

³⁹ Esther Kahn Taylor oral history, 31.

⁴⁰ Nancy Gibbs, Deirdre Van Dyk, and Kathleen Adams, "Love, Sex, Freedom and the Paradox of the Pill," *Time*, April 3, 2010, accessed October 23, 2015, EBSCO Academic Search Complete (49741947).

⁴¹ Steven Spencer, "The Birth Control Revolution," *Saturday Evening Post*, January 15, 1966, 24.

⁴² Since the 1930s, when medical distribution of diaphragms was sanctioned, a "small proportion" of mothers visiting Grady Memorial for postpartum checkups were prescribed the devices. The majority received guidance in the use of less efficacious contraceptive foams. The Emory-Grady program significantly expanded these services to include distribution of the pill and the IUD after it received a \$130,000 grant from Joseph Sunnen, a self-taught chemist from St. Louis who invented Emko, a spermicidal foam that was known for its pleasant odor and packaged in individual doses. Tyler, et al., "Assessment of a Family Planning Program," 25-29.

⁴³ Nicholas H. Wright, "Vital Statistics and Census Tract Data Used to Evaluate Family Planning," *Public Health Reports* 85 (1970): 383-89.

⁴⁴ The minutes are embedded within a Senate subcommittee report at p. 2052. Minutes of the Advisory Committee on Family Planning, Georgia Department of Public Health,

November 2, 1964, accessed September 18, 2015, https://archive.org/stream/populationcrisis04unit/populationcrisis04unit_djvu.txt. For information about the minimal birth control services Georgia provided in the early 1960s, see Russell Richardson to state senator George Busbee, October 12, 1965, Planned Parenthood Federation of America Records (PPFA II), Series V, Affiliates (Part I): Atlanta, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, Mass. (hereafter cited as PPFA Records).

⁴⁵ D'Emilio and Freedman, *Intimate Matters*, 252.

⁴⁶ Steven W. Sinding, "Population, Poverty and Economic Development," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* 364 (October 2009): 3024; Critchlow, *Intended Consequences*, 13–49. Although a majority of American Catholics wanted the church to relax its policies banning the use of contraceptives and nearly one third of Catholic women (in 1970) reported having used the pill, the 1968 papal encyclical *Humanae Vitae* condemned all birth control drugs except when taken for reproductive health purposes. Tone, *Devices and Desires*, 237. For evangelical attitudes towards sexuality in the 1960s, see Scott Flipse, "Below-the-Belt Politics," in *The Conservative Sixties*, ed. David Farber and Jeff Roche (New York, 2003), 131–33.

⁴⁷ The churches approved any "non-injurious" forms of birth control, defined as any method except forced sterilization or abortion, according to William L. Davis, "Family Planning Services: A History of U.S. Federal Legislation," *Journal of Family History* 16 (October 1991): 385.

⁴⁸ Calvin Goldscheider, "Fertility of the Jews," *Demography* 4 (March 1967): 196–209.

⁴⁹ Davis, "Family Planning Services," 386.

⁵⁰ Critchlow, *Intended Consequences*, 74–75.

⁵¹ Nancy Aries, "Fragmentation and Reproductive Freedom: Federally Subsidized Family Planning Services, 1960–80," *American Journal of Public Health* 77 (November 1987): 1466.

⁵² Mary Fortson, "40 Leaders Here Support Planned Parenthood Drive," *Atlanta Constitution*, October 21, 1964. The belief that overcrowding would deplete the planet permeated American popular culture in the postwar period. For example, the cover of the New Year's issue of *Time* on January 11, 1960, depicted a crowded multicultural tableau of mothers and babies titled the "Population Explosion." In his best-selling manifesto, demographer Paul R. Ehrlich called this catastrophe *The Population Bomb* (New York, 1968).

⁵³ Esther Kahn Taylor oral history, 30.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁵⁵ "The Children of the World Deserve to be Planned," PPFA Records.

⁵⁶ Walker Lundy, "Planned Parenthood Tries to Meet Population Crisis," *Atlanta Journal*, March 21, 1965.

⁵⁷ PPAA earned provisional status in 1965 and became an official affiliate in 1966 based on Richardson's recommendation. Russell Richardson, memorandum to Naomi Gray, December 29, 1966, PPFA Records.

⁵⁸ Dues were three dollars per year initially. By 1967, the chapter boasted nearly four hundred members. Meeting Minutes, May 8, 1965, and August 15, 1967, PPAA Papers.

⁵⁹ *American Jewish Year Book* 66 (1965), 150.

⁶⁰ For a biography of Klein, see the Emory School of Medicine newsletter, August 27, 2015, accessed Sept. 15, 2015, <http://www.emorydailypulse.com/2015/08/27/legacy-emory-grady-luella-klein-md/>. In 1984 Klein became the first female president of the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology. Before she retired after five decades of medical practice, she was the Charles Howard Candler Professor of Gynecology and Obstetrics at Emory University School of Medicine and director of the Maternal and Infant Care Project at Grady Memorial Hospital in Atlanta.

⁶¹ Quotation from Esther Kahn Taylor, speech at the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the chapter, [1989], PPAA Papers.

⁶² Esther Kahn Taylor oral history, 31–32.

⁶³ Meeting Minutes, May 15, 1965, PPAA Papers.

⁶⁴ “Dr. William Mason Heads Planned Parenthood,” *Atlanta Constitution*, January 7, 1972. In 1978, when Mason retired from the state public health service, he assumed the position of PPAA’s medical director. Emma Edmunds, “Dr. William Mason: Looking Back at a Lifetime of Service,” *Atlanta Constitution*, September 19, 1978.

⁶⁵ In the early twentieth century, the birth control movement included eugenicists, those who saw birth control as a way to limit reproduction of mentally or physically deficient people and those considered racially inferior. However, by the 1950s, eugenics no longer played a role in Planned Parenthood’s ideology and strategy, although people associated with the pseudoscience were still involved. In *Moral Property of Women*, Linda Gordon delves extensively into the links between birth control activism and eugenics from the nineteenth century to the present. For racial issues and Planned Parenthood in the 1960s, using Pittsburgh as a case study, see Simone M. Caron, “Birth Control and the Black Community in the 1960s: Genocide or Power Politics?,” *Journal of Social History* 31 (Spring 1998): 545–69.

⁶⁶ Walter Chivers to Martin Luther King, Jr., October 4, 1960; Martin Luther King, Jr., to Walter Chivers, November 5, 1960, Martin Luther King, Jr., Research and Education Institute, accessed July 25, 2015, https://swap.stanford.edu/20141218225601/http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/primarydocuments/Vol5/5Nov1960_ToWalterR.Chivers.pdf.

⁶⁷ Sam Hopkins, “Many Wives Wonder How to Limit Parenthood,” *Atlanta Journal*, August 19, 1967. The birth rate for Atlanta’s white residents in 1964 (the last year of the baby boom) was 21.1 per thousand people and for black residents 29.1. At this time, the national fertility rate was 25 births per thousand. Because black women died during childbirth at nearly three times the rate of their white counterparts, Georgia’s maternal mortality rate in 1965 was 20 percent higher than the national average according to Rochat, Tyler, and Schoenbucher, “An Epidemiological Analysis of Abortion in Georgia,” 544. There is scant biographical information available about Freedman, although Taylor referred to her in a speech on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the chapter as having been invaluable for writing the grant proposals that won the chapter thousands of dollars in federal funding. Taylor, twenty-fifth anniversary speech, [1989], PPAA Papers.

⁶⁸ For Black Power attacks on clinics in New Jersey, Maryland, and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, see Caron, "Birth Control and the Black Community," 545–49.

⁶⁹ Maxine A. Rock, "Planned Parenthood Clinics Seek Betterment for All," *Atlanta Journal*, February 18, 1970.

⁷⁰ Russell H. Richardson, "Birth Control a Basic Right?," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 10, 1967.

⁷¹ Alex Coffin, "Vine City to Get Parenthood Clinic," *Atlanta Constitution*, April 26, 1968.

⁷² Herbert Taylor used this bank for his business dealings, according to his granddaughter, Elaine Taylor-Klaus. Elaine Taylor-Klaus, interview conducted by author, February 17, 2016.

⁷³ Minutes from January 16, 1965, board meeting, PPAA Papers. In attendance at the meeting at Taylor's home were Ralph Dickey, William Henry, Mrs. A. J. Brumbaugh, Mrs. James Selvage, Mr. Hugh Gilbert, Dr. Luella Klein, Dr. Candler Budd, Mr. Edgar Grider, Sara Mitchell, Rev. Eugene Pickett, Mrs. Lyons B. Joel, Jr., and Caroline Enloe.

⁷⁴ Frank White, "Mrs. Taylor Hits Too Many Births," *Atlanta Journal*, August 29, 1965.

⁷⁵ Wording on the pamphlets sought "to show tax payers and public officials how millions of dollars could be saved by preventing crime, poverty, delinquency and disease." Planned Parenthood Association of Atlanta Meeting Minutes, November 17, 1964, PPAA Papers.

⁷⁶ Pendergrast, a Quaker, founded Help Our Public Education (HOPE), an organization that opposed closing the public schools to avoid integration and massive resistance to the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954. The report that she had begun consulting for the chapter is contained in Planned Parenthood Association of Atlanta Meeting Minutes, February 20, 1968, PPAA Papers. The *Atlanta Journal* published at least one feature story under Pendergrast's byline on the benefits of birth control in alleviating poverty and preventing the "population explosion," even though she also volunteered her services to Planned Parenthood. See Nan Pendergrast, "Battling the Population Explosion," *Atlanta Journal*, April 19, 1969.

⁷⁷ Quoted in Betty Carrollton, "Planned Parenthood—What it Means and Doesn't Mean," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 13, 1967. A review of *Atlanta Journal* and *Atlanta Constitution* articles about the chapter from 1965 to 1969 failed to turn up any stories quoting people or organizations that opposed either Planned Parenthood's reasoning or its goals.

⁷⁸ "Clinics Give Birth Control Instruction," *Atlanta Journal*, August 9, 1967.

⁷⁹ These scrapbooks can be viewed online at Georgia State University Digital Collections, accessed August 1, 2016, <http://digitalcollections.library.gsu.edu/>.

⁸⁰ Elaine Taylor-Klaus, interview conducted by author, February 17, 2016.

⁸¹ The *Atlanta Constitution* reported that the Taylors held a reception for Guttmacher at their Club Drive home on December 1, 1964. The guest list included about thirty-five white and black public health doctors, gynecologists in private practice, and clergy. Kathryn Grayburn, "Taylors Hold Reception for Dr., Mrs. Guttmacher," *Atlanta Constitution*, December 2, 1964. Guttmacher returned to Atlanta a year later to speak to a southeast regional

Planned Parenthood conference. *Atlanta Journal*, February 22, 1965. The *Constitution* later reported that Guttmacher was scheduled to deliver a speech to members of the Jewish Progressive Club and the Atlanta branch of the Association of American University Women on January 20, 1967. "Birth Control Unit to Hear Leader," *Atlanta Constitution*, January 16, 1967.

⁸² Diane Thomas, "Smaller Families Urged Despite U.S. Affluence," *Atlanta Journal*, January 19, 1966; Russell Richardson, memorandum to Dr. Alan Guttmacher, February 22, 1966, PPFA Records.

⁸³ These were listed as Bethlehem Center, Perry Homes, West End, Wheat Street Baptist Church, Georgia Avenue, Marietta Street, East Lake, Parkway Drive, and Roswell. Esther Kahn Taylor oral history, 31; PPAA Board Minutes, March 19, 1968, PPAA Papers.

⁸⁴ Most of the clinic staff were volunteers, primarily African American women either from the neighborhoods, VISTA workers, or students from local black colleges such as Spelman College and Clark University.

⁸⁵ The 1964 Economic Opportunity Act (EOA), a centerpiece of President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty, did not specifically earmark money for family planning, but the Office of Equal Opportunity supported the allocation of funds for birth control clinics. Martha J. Bailey, "Fifty Years of Family Planning: New Evidence on the Long-Run Effects of Increasing Access to Contraception," *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity* (Spring 2013), 341–409, accessed Sept. 12, 2015, <http://doi.org/10.1353/eca.2013.0001>.

⁸⁶ Russell Richardson, memorandum to Mrs. Henry Clifford (chair, affiliation committee) and Naomi Gray (field director), December 29, 1966, PPFA Records.

⁸⁷ Esther Kahn Taylor oral history, 36. No records among the PPAA Papers include the identities of its dues-paying members.

⁸⁸ According to the *Atlanta Constitution*, Busbee was given the Planned Parenthood "World Federation Margaret Sanger Human Rights award" in 1967 to recognize his contributions to the birth control movement. Achsah Nesmith, "Family Planning Law Keys Award to Busbee," *Atlanta Constitution*, January 21, 1967. Busbee served as Georgia's governor from 1975 to 1983.

⁸⁹ See Bailey, et al., "Early Legal Access," 11–12. A CDC study conducted by David A. Grimes and Fredric J. Romm, "Fertility and Family Planning among White Teenagers in Metropolitan Atlanta," *American Journal of Public Health* 65 (July 1975), attributed about a 20 percent decline in births to contraceptive distribution at Planned Parenthood's clinics in the city along with those at Grady and Fulton County clinics.

⁹⁰ The speech is undated but was marked as 1968 and was most likely delivered to a business gathering. Esther Taylor expressed similar sentiments in a 1965 speech to members of the Christian Council of Churches. PPAA Papers.

⁹¹ The state legislature passed a bill in 1968 that became law without the signature of Governor Lester Maddox.

⁹² Rochat, Tyler, and Schoenbucher, "An Epidemiological Analysis of Abortion in Georgia," 548. At present, about thirty thousand abortions are carried out in Georgia per year.

Karen Pazol et al., "Abortion Surveillance—United States, 2011," *Surveillance Summaries* 63 (November 28, 2014), accessed June 8, 2016, <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/ss6311a1.htm>.

⁹³ The 1967 Bill of Rights of the National Organization for Women (NOW) included the "right of women to control their own reproductive lives by removing from penal codes the laws limiting access to contraceptive information and devices and laws governing abortion." In 1969 NOW founder Betty Friedan delivered a speech in Chicago delineating the right to an abortion as essential in securing the "full human dignity and personhood" of women. Linda Greenhouse and Reva B. Siegel, *Before Roe v. Wade: Voices That Shaped the Abortion Debate Before the Supreme Court Ruling* (New York, 2010), 38–39.

⁹⁴ Achsah Nesmith, "Abortion Shouldn't Become Alternative to Contraceptive," *Atlanta Constitution*, December 22, 1969.

⁹⁵ Taylor briefly served as the southeast representative for Planned Parenthood when Richard departed the organization to pursue a master's degree in public health. Levine served as chapter president from 1969 to 1971. Little documentary evidence exists regarding his work or life. One of the few articles that refers to him shows that he was alarmed by the potential for reduced federal spending on birth control. See "Family Planning Called Top Problem," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 2, 1969. Taylor remembered Levine as having secured grants to PPAA from the United Way, Atlanta's largest charity. Taylor, twenty-fifth anniversary speech, [1989], PPAA Papers.

⁹⁶ The undated 1969 document ratifying the national policy can be found in the PPAA Papers.

⁹⁷ "Six Lib Groups Unite in Effort to Broaden State Abortion Law," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 1, 1971.

⁹⁸ David J. Garrow, *Liberty and Sexuality: The Right to Privacy and the Making of Roe v. Wade* (New York, 1984), 444–50.

⁹⁹ The plaintiff, Sandra Bensing Cano, was married to an abusive man, and two of her children had been put in foster care while the youngest had been given up for adoption. Two decades later, she claimed that abortion-rights activists had forced her to seek an abortion. Mark Curriden, "Doe vs. Bolton," *ABA Journal* (July 1989): 26.

¹⁰⁰ *Doe v. Bolton*, 410 U.S. 179 (1973).

¹⁰¹ Judith Taylor was the first female to be tasked with distributing funds to charities on behalf of Atlanta United Way and has taken leadership roles in the local Jewish Federation, American Jewish Committee, and Breman Museum. See Richard Bono, "A Family of Feminists," *Atlanta Jewish Times*, September 13, 1991.

¹⁰² The two most inimical rulings were *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services*, 492 U.S. 490 (1989), and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, 505 U.S. 833 (1992).

¹⁰³ Bono, "A Family of Feminists."

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ Esther Kahn Taylor oral history, 53.

¹⁰⁶ A similar interpretation is put forth in Welch, "Not Women's Rights," 220–44.

PRIMARY SOURCES

Both Sides of the Same Coin: Two Atlantans
in Israel's War of Independence

by

Jeremy Katz*

William Garey, interview conducted by Mark K. Bauman,
December 22, 2015

David Macarov, "Atlanta Adolescence," c. 1980¹

The "Greatest Generation" undoubtedly sacrificed much to preserve the free world, but for thousands of members of this generation, their labors did not end after the guns fell silent in World War II.² Living peaceful lives back home after the bloodiest war of the modern era, approximately 3,500 individuals from 43 countries again soon found themselves in a war zone.³ On May 14, 1948, Israel declared its independence and was promptly invaded on all sides by a coalition of Arab armies from Egypt, Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, and Transjordan (present-day Jordan). Despite the slim odds for Israel's survival, thousands of volunteers from around the world flocked together to defend the burgeoning state from armies far superior in forces and supplies.⁴ These volunteers formed what was known as the Machal, a Hebrew acronym for *Mitnadvei Hutz La'aretz*, meaning "volunteers from outside the land of Israel."⁵ Although only a small minority of the ground forces compared to their Israeli counterparts, they accounted for roughly 70 percent of the Israeli Air Force (IAF).⁶ More than one hundred Americans, including Jews and non-Jews from throughout the country, served in the IAF; only a small percent-

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age of these, however, came from the American South.⁷ Two, William Garey and David Macarov, were from Atlanta, Georgia. Despite being from the same city, they grew up on opposite ends of a very diverse Jewish community. What motivated these two individuals—Garey, from an interfaith household on the central European Jewish Reform north side of Atlanta, and Macarov from the eastern European Orthodox south side—to help secure the skies over Israel and start one of the most experienced and respected air forces in the world today? Comparing an oral history of Garey to Macarov’s unpublished autobiography, the diversity as well as commonalities of Jewish life in Atlanta become apparent. Relatively little has been written concerning Zionism in the South.⁸ This article will expand on that literature and is intended to encourage further research.

William Garey’s interview was conducted in December 2015 on behalf of the Taylor Oral History Project at the Breman Jewish Heritage Museum in Atlanta by Mark K. Bauman, a retired professor of history at Atlanta Metropolitan College and current editor of *Southern Jewish History*. The David Macarov Papers, which include his unpublished autobiography, “Atlanta Adolescence,” chronicling his youth, were gifted to the Cuba Family Archives for Southern Jewish History at the Breman Museum in 2003. Additional sources were used to chronicle Macarov’s adult years.

William Garey

William Garey was born on August 20, 1924, to a Jewish father, Harry Gottheimer, and a Roman Catholic mother, Emily Sanchez. Garey’s mother left the Catholic Church upon marrying his father but remained a Christian, eventually joining the Church of Christ, Scientist.⁹ Garey’s father kept his Jewish faith and attended Atlanta’s Hebrew Benevolent Congregation, known as The Temple, mostly on the High Holidays. He worked as a traveling salesman for Montag Brothers Paper Company, a Jewish-owned business in Atlanta, and was also a member of the Standard Club, the city’s Jewish social club serving descendants of central Europeans. As Garey stated about his father, “He was a kind, good man. You couldn’t have asked for a better father at all. He didn’t really care [whether] we went to [church or temple].”¹⁰ Despite their mixed heritage, the Garey family was subjected

William Garey, December 22, 2015.

(Courtesy of the Esther and Herbert Taylor Oral History Collection at the Breman Museum, Atlanta.)

to antisemitism, which shaped his worldview and was a motivating factor to fight for Israel. When Garey's older sister, Mavis, was preparing to apply to Radcliffe College, the family decided to change their name from the German, Jewish-sounding Gottheimer to Garey in order to hide their Jewish ancestry. Mavis excelled in classes and wanted to apply to Ivy League schools, but at the time a quota system existed at many institutions of higher education that limited the number of Jews admitted each year. Garey recalls:

The name "Gottheimer" was big in stationery, and he [his father] really did not like [changing the name]. He did it to please my [sister], I guess. She went on to [Radcliffe], and then she got a scholarship to the University of California at Berkeley. . . . In the name change, I got a lot of questions in school. "What happened? Did your old man leave your old lady?" I said, "No." You know how kids are. Your name [is] suddenly not "Gottheimer" but "Garey."¹¹

The name change was a traumatic event for Garey, an adolescent seeking his identity. This episode was not the only instance of antisemitism that Garey and his family faced. Garey reminisced about his

days in prep school at the Pennington School in Pennington, New Jersey, which he attended for the latter half of his high school career after spending his first half at Boys High School in Atlanta:

The kids up there found out. . . . [They] asked me, and I told them I was half Jewish. They weren't so bad with me, but a couple of other kids that were there . . . called us "halfies," "Hey, halfy!" but they were generally nice. [The faculty and administration] were not particularly . . . prejudiced. I never got called any names up there, I will say that, which was unusual. Down here, [in] high school, the minute they heard the name 'Gottheimer' . . . [In] New York, a particularly bad name was "*mocky*." I don't know if you have ever heard that name. Most people have never heard it.¹²

In Atlanta, Garey recalls that the eastern European Jews were known as "kikes" and the German Jews as "sheenys."¹³ The name change, along with the persistent antisemitic slurs uttered toward him in both the North and South, likely played a role in Garey's motivation to fight for Israel's independence. Many other volunteers also wanted to defy stereotypes and provide a place where Jews were no longer a persecuted minority.

Garey graduated from the Pennington School in 1940 and attended the Georgia Institute of Technology the following year, majoring in electrical engineering. Nonetheless, he soon realized that he "didn't really like the work. I didn't seem to have a head for it."¹⁴ When America entered World War II, Garey left Georgia Tech and joined the United States Army Air Force because he wanted to be an aircraft gunner and shoot down Nazi planes over Europe. After basic training in New Mexico, Garey served as a radio operator in a transport crew on DC-3s, B-29s, C-130s, and C-46s based in Marrakech and later Egypt. As part of the Air Transport Command, he flew cargo and passengers to the American and British forces that were pushing the Axis powers out of North Africa, Sicily, and eventually the Italian peninsula. When Garey was stationed in Egypt, he often used his leave to visit neighboring Palestine to relax:

[When] we got time off and we were on base, you could go up there [Palestine]. We had a rest camp, Tel Litvinsky [renamed Tel HaShomer in 1948], up there, and you could go on all the tours. The contrast between Israel and the Arab countries . . . [the Arabs] were

extremely poor. You go down the Nile River, and if you get to be 40 years old you [are considered] a ripe old age. It was very bad. . . . That's where I got familiar with Israel. I ran into . . . one guide we had I found out was in the Haganah, and I talked to him. I was very impressed by what they were doing. I really was. We even had pilots who would fake engine trouble to land up there at Lod. Tel Aviv Airport was "Lod." . . . [They] had little nightclubs all along the beach with making your own beer in the basement. Just like Europe.¹⁵

Garey's experience in Arab countries and British-mandated Palestine was a second major factor in his decision to join the early IAF. He cites "comparing [the Israelis'] civilization and the Arab countries" as one of the major reasons he decided to fight with the Israelis.¹⁶ Garey felt a connection to Palestine and the work Jews were doing to build it into a modern, westernized state.

Air Transport Command C-47 flying over the Egyptian Pyramids, 1944.
(*Wikimedia Commons.*)

After World War II, Garey returned home and continued his studies at Georgia Tech. Once again, he disliked school and did not think he had the motivation for a higher education. He contacted a former pilot he flew with during World War II, Lieutenant Joseph Greenbaum, who told him about the fighting between Jews, Arabs,

and British in Palestine, as well as the arms embargo placed on the region by the United States government aimed at stopping efforts to send war matériel to the unstable region. Although the Truman administration was in favor of a Jewish state, the State Department believed Israel would be overrun by the Arab nations and made it clear that any American citizens who took up arms for Israel would lose their U.S. citizenship.¹⁷ Greenbaum asked Garey, "'Would you like [to meet] some guys in New York trying to do something? The government is screwing us. They are locating all of our good equipment we had stashed.' Fighter planes. They had three B-17s stashed."¹⁸

Garey became involved and eventually received an airline ticket to New York where he worked with Al Schwimmer and Hyman Schechtman (Shamir), two of the main figures and master organizers of the early IAF.¹⁹ Garey commented: "Shamir was running it. I don't believe they would have had an air force without him. He was a very able guy. He was a pilot, too, but he did mostly organizing."²⁰ They quickly put Garey to work for the cause:

They put me in a phone booth with a hat full of coins. "Every name you can see that's Jewish in the New York phone book, call them and try to recruit them." I said, "How do I know? I know some names [are] Jewish, but I don't know. . . . New York has a lot of Jewish people." He said, "When they first pick up the phone say . . . 'Bist a Yid?'"²¹

To his amazement, Garey successfully recruited several volunteers including Harry Axelrod, who served as Chief Technical Officer of the 101 Squadron, also known as the First Fighter Squadron, and credited by fellow IAF personnel for keeping the planes flying during the war for independence.²²

In fall 1947 Garey was sent to Palestine by way of Europe. While in Europe, Garey worked with Xiel Federman to acquire leftover military supplies from World War II. Federman owned several hotels in Palestine, including Jerusalem's renowned King David, and credits himself as being the "Santa Claus of the Haganah" for "acquiring hundreds of binoculars, field telephones, tents, generators, thousands of rounds of ammunition; first-aid kits; flashlights; [and] tens of thousands of shoes, socks, underpants, and uniforms."²³ Garey recalls one example of how they acquired equipment:

They [British soldiers] were told to destroy everything, radios, [ammunition], and all. Instead they had a sergeant who was British intelligence, but he had been in the army 40 years. He said, "That's too good to throw [away]," so he was making a fortune. He set up a deal to peddle it to us. The Israelis had a big roll of British pounds that were wrinkled up like they had been under water. . . . I remember this British guy wanted an officer in on it, probably for cover. He brought this young British lieutenant in. We were a little nervous about it. We didn't know whether it was a trap or what, but it wasn't. . . . [He] told [us that] any negotiations we do are in French. He didn't want the officer to know how much money he was getting. He was cutting him in, but he didn't want him to know he wasn't cutting him in good. He did us a big favor regardless. We were buying radio equipment. Somebody else was doing the ammunition. They would bury it, and they would tell them where it's buried. I had to inspect it and the stuff we could use. . . . I made the mistake . . . these were all British we were dealing with, speaking English. Scared the hell out of [Shlomo Monastersky, Garey's supervisor]. "When they hear that cracker talking, they are going to know you shouldn't be here." We did a good day of buying that equipment.²⁴

*William Garey, right, with
Xiel Federman in Geneva,
Switzerland, c. 1947.
(Courtesy of the Cuba Family
Archives for Southern Jewish
History at the Breman
Museum, Atlanta.)*

Although the war did not officially start until May 1948, it was clear that the Arab states would not allow a Jewish state to exist—if it was up to them. The efforts of Federman and his agents like Garey helped secure the materials the emerging Israeli army and air force needed to defend the burgeoning state from imminent attack by its Arab neighbors.

Garey arrived in Palestine in April 1948 by way of Rhodes via a sixteen-hour flight, since their illegal, clandestine trip had to evade British radar on Cyprus. Once in Israel and stationed mostly in Tel Aviv, Garey established radio bases for the impending war. He was in Jerusalem when Israel declared independence on May 14, 1948, and endured Egyptian bombing raids. Garey went on some harrowing missions to retrieve equipment from grounded planes in the south of Israel:

They wanted us to get the equipment off of it, because they figured the Egyptian air force would destroy it. We were out there, and I got the Collins [radio] off. I'm holding it, and here comes a Spitfire . . . [that] wasn't a very good shot. I remember I jumped off. It was a very high door. I'm holding the weight, and I sunk in the hot melted tar up to my shoes. I managed to get out of that. We all carried Sten guns, the little [British] machine gun. We all start shooting at this guy [as he] came down. Somebody hit his wing tip, and a piece flew off. It scared him so bad he went back to wherever he was from. He didn't hurt the C-46. Something happened to it where it couldn't fly. They hadn't had a chance to fix it, so at least we would get the radio and equipment off of it. I think they did finally manage to get it out. One night with a C-47, they had to get it out of the hot spot they were going to lose. We went down there, and I had used the radio. When . . . the pilot tried to start it, the batteries weren't strong enough. . . . We had a battery cart there, but the plug on it didn't mesh with the plug on the wing. . . . I told them to try. . . . I held it up there, and he got the airplane cranked We got that out of there.²⁵

In addition to scouring downed airplanes for equipment, Garey was stationed in the radio command bunkers near Tel Aviv during several battles. By the time Garey received his honorable discharge from the Israeli Air Force in November 1948, Israel had gained the advantage in the war and was advancing in the Golan Heights and the Negev. The official armistice did not come until the following year, but many volunteers felt comfortable leaving once Israel's victory was

Al Schwimmer in 1955.
(*Wikimedia Commons.*)

assured and reinforcements arrived in the form of other volunteers and newly trained Israelis.

Some of the volunteers stayed in Israel indefinitely after the war. These included Al Schwimmer, who created Israel Aerospace Industries, and Garey's recruit, Harry Axelrod, who worked for that company. Garey returned to the United States, even sharing a plane with Menachem Begin along the way.²⁶ Garey would have stayed in Israel had Israel Aerospace Industries formed while he was still there and had there not been so much work to do in Israel to build a modern state. Getting home proved to be difficult. He recalls about his not-so-quiet return to America:

I thought I was being cute coming on the boat. They sent a little boat out after me with Treasury agents on it, not FBI. . . . [The] *SS America*. The reason I did that . . . I thought [in] my stupidity, I know they are looking for me on an airplane. [The FBI was actively looking for American citizens who had fought in foreign militaries.] I figured they won't know I'm on this boat. They not only knew, they came and got me, and they went through my luggage. That was good, because I had some watches strapped around my legs, way more than the \$200 you were allowed. I had a disassembled [Walther] P38 German army pistol on my person. You know the Sullivan [Act] in New York?²⁷ . . . [They] started asking me questions. They had a list

of names. I knew most of them, but I knew which ones got killed. Anybody who got killed, [I said] "Yes. I knew him." Any that were still alive, I said, "No, I never heard of him." Then they asked me, "What was on the C-46s when you flew in them? What were you bringing?" I said, "I don't know. They were wrapped up and boxed. I believe it might have been wine glasses." They said, "Why?" I said, "They had a picture of a wine glass. Isn't that the international symbol for fragile?" . . . They looked at each other like could this guy be this stupid?²⁸

The federal agents let Garey go but kept his passport because he could not explain having entry but no exit stamps. He eventually acquired a new passport through Congressman James C. Davis of Georgia. Garey had not only risked his life fighting for Israeli

*Garey's honorable discharge from the Israeli Air Force,
November 11, 1948. (Courtesy of the Cuba Family Archives
for Southern Jewish History at the Breman Museum, Atlanta.)*

independence but his citizenship as well. Not as fortunate as Garey, Al Schwimmer only regained his citizenship in 2001 after intense lobbying by the son of another convicted smuggler for Israel, Hank Greenspun, resulted in a pardon from President Bill Clinton.²⁹

Garey visited his sister in New York but soon returned to Atlanta where he worked as a TV repairman for Rich's, a Jewish-owned department store that grew into the largest in the Southeast. He later worked at Lockheed as a flight electronic engineer for twenty-six years, working on B-29s, B-47s, and C-130s. He never finished his degree at Georgia Tech because he simply "did not like school."³⁰ He married Myrtle Walker in 1950 and had three children. Ironically, Garey became a Christian after the war because of the "miracles" he saw in Israel that he knew "had to be the hand of G-d."³¹ Garey's short-lived involvement in the Jewish community essentially ended when he left Israel.

David Macarov

While Garey was growing up in an interfaith Reform household on the north side of Atlanta, David Macarov grew up in an Orthodox home on the south side of the city. Macarov describes this division in his unpublished autobiography:

The North Side/South Side division of Atlanta was very clear. The German Jews lived on the North Side. They went to the Temple, on Peachtree Street. Their rabbi, Rabbi Marx, was known as an anti-Zionist, or—at best—a non-Zionist. They didn't wear yarmulkes, even when dovening, nor tallesim, and the rabbi dressed like a priest (we had never seen this, but everyone knew it). They drove to [shul] on Shabbos, or else they celebrated Shabbos on Sunday, like the goyim—we weren't too clear about this. The women sat together with the men at services, and at their parties they (whisper this) *ate treife!*

The Standard Club, which was German, was on Ponce de Leon Avenue, which later became the physical dividing line between North Side and South Side (which may be one of the reasons why the Standard Club later moved further north). The German Jews, we all knew, were rich. They were also, we all knew, snobs. Their girls wouldn't date us, and who would want to date such rich snobs (except each one of us, in our secret hearts)? The German Jewish kids went out only with each other, and who knew what unspeakable

non-religious and outright forbidden things they did, in their wealth and Reform philosophy?

We, of course, lived on the South Side. We were Orthodox. At least, we thought of ourselves that way. We weren't poor, but we certainly weren't rich, like the Germans. We were friendly, not snobs. We belonged to Young Judaea, and—later—AZA and BBG,³² not places like the Standard Club. When one of us got old enough, and courageous enough, to ask a North Side girl out, and found to our surprise we were accepted, our mothers would invariably sniff and say, "A Deutschisha!"

During my early teens, which started about 1930, the division between North Side and South Side, German Jews and Russian Jews, was clear, accepted, and respected.³³

Perhaps the best-known characterization of this division is Alfred Uhry's Broadway play *The Last Night of Ballyhoo*, which is set in Atlanta in 1939 and chronicles Sunny Freitag, a young German Jew, who falls in love with Joe Farkas, an eastern European Jew who works in her uncle's factory. Her relationship with Joe forces her and her family to question their intraethnic prejudices.³⁴ Steven Hertzberg, a historian of Atlanta Jewry, notes these community divisions originating decades earlier: "The demographic, economic, and residential differences between the Germans and Russians reflected and were partially responsible for an almost absence of social interaction. Separated by a wide cultural and temperamental gulf, the two groups were generations apart."³⁵

Unlike Garey, Macarov was deeply involved in Jewish social and religious life. His family belonged to and regularly attended Atlanta's second oldest congregation, Ahavath Achim. Hertzberg observes:

The condescending Germans made the Russians uneasy, and while the immigrants initially worshiped at the Temple, its moderate Reform service struck them as shockingly impious. By 1886 they were numerous enough to rent Concordia Hall for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services. . . . One year later, Congregation Ahavath Achim (Brotherly Love) was incorporated.³⁶

Macarov went to the Jewish Educational Alliance and became an active member of Jewish Zionist youth organizations including AZA, Masada, and Young Judaea, which led to his becoming a Zionist at a very young age, as he explains in his autobiography.³⁷

Members of Atlanta's Young Judaea and Daughters of Zion, c. 1937. David Macarov is on the far left. (Courtesy of the Cuba Family Archives for Southern Jewish History at the Breman Museum, Atlanta.)

At that time in Atlanta and the rest of the country, most Reform Jews were anti- or non-Zionist, while Orthodox Jews tended to adhere to Zionism. This generalization helps explain why Macarov was exposed to Zionist ideas at a young age, while Garey was not. As early as 1934, the *Southern Israelite* mentioned Macarov's involvement in Atlanta's Jewish social life.³⁸ He served as president of Young Judaea from 1937 to 1940 and vice president of Masada in 1941. During this era Atlanta served as a regional center for Zionist organizations, and Macarov's rabbi, Harry H. Epstein, who had lost a brother in the 1929 Hebron massacre, was one of several leaders.³⁹

Macarov attended Commercial High School, "because Boys High was basically college-preparatory, with a high component of liberal arts, and I had not the faintest possibility of affording college."⁴⁰ While there, Macarov experienced his first instances of antisemitism:

There was little overt discrimination, although remarks about Jews were not unusual. In fact, a kind of accepted good-natured hostility

grew up, as evidenced by the terms “Hebes” (for Hebrews) and “Yokes” (for yokels), which [were] generally used. . . .

I became the Commercial High candidate for a free trip to the National Junior Red Cross convention in Washington offered by the Atlanta Chapter of the (Senior) Red Cross, and this became my first experience with organized anti-Semitism. (I had overheard anti-Jewish jokes and been called a Jew pejoratively at various times, but this was accepted as par for the course). . . .

However, when I was called into the office of Mr. Floyd, the principal, a few days later, I was informed that I was not being sent, the Atlanta Red Cross organization having decided that I was “not representative” of Atlanta youth. I assumed that I was not representative since I had been so much better than the others in my speech, and even when Mr. Floyd said, “We’re not going to let them get away with that!” I didn’t understand. Only when adults explained to me that it was anti-Semitism did I understand, and even then didn’t want to believe it.

The principal, who wasn’t Jewish, called a noted Atlanta Jewish philanthropist, Julian Boehm, and told him what had happened, and funds for my trip to Washington were found—whether from him personally or from some organization I never knew.⁴¹

When Macarov graduated from Commercial High School in 1937, the economy was still struggling through the Great Depression, and he took whatever work he could find, such as selling white linen caps, magazines, newspapers, socks, college football paraphernalia, and even fireworks.

Upon American entry into World War II, Macarov joined the U.S. Army Weather Service and served in Burma, India, and China. Similar to Garey, a profound moment occurred to Macarov while in the service. “While stationed in Calcutta, with its desperate poverty, I realized that working in a store or being a bookkeeper as I had done up until then, was not sufficient. I wanted to do more with my life.”⁴²

Furthermore, he discovered the diversity of Jews that stretched far beyond the divisions of his native Atlanta community. Deborah Dash Moore notes this epiphany in *GI Jews: How World War II Changed a Generation*:

As Macarov learned about Jews in this remote section of the world, he probed his self-understanding. His encounter with Indian Jews

changed his "attitudes and feelings towards life." Rather than affirming his own Americanness, his contacts generated a Jewish solidarity that gradually dominated his Jewish American identity. . . . While stationed in Calcutta, Macarov planned a Zionist meeting for servicemen and local activists. The cross-section of soldiers represented a taste of the diversity of Jews fighting the war for the Allies. . . . [He] wished "that such a situation could exist permanently." Jewish experience covered a vast range, but political commitments usually drew Jews together. Zionists, especially, made Jewish nationhood a concern that overrode other differences.⁴³

After his discharge from the army, Macarov briefly returned to Atlanta before moving to New York in early 1946 where he joined the Aliyah Bet illegal immigration efforts to Palestine through the Zionist organization Masada. He worked with Ze'ev "Danny" Schind, the head of Aliyah Bet operations in the United States, to launder money, sign checks to buy ships that were used to bring refugees to Palestine, and buy munitions that were smuggled to the Haganah.⁴⁴ He also served as a liaison between Aliyah Bet and the Waterman Steamship Company hand-delivering checks and unmarked envelopes filled with cash to reluctant officials as "incentives" to comply with their requests.⁴⁵ The best known ship he signed a check for was the *President Warfield*, which became the famous *Exodus 1947*, the vessel that the British infamously seized and whose passengers, mostly Holocaust survivors, they deported back to Europe.⁴⁶

That summer, David met Frieda Rabinowitz at Brandeis Camp Institute in Hancock, New York, which Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis had founded in 1941 out of his concern that American Jews were abandoning their religion and culture.⁴⁷ The couple became two of the first Atlantans to make aliyah.⁴⁸ He wrote, "Living in Palestine . . . was always my goal. After Frieda and I were married in December 1946, and after her mother told her that a girl goes where her husband goes, it was only a few months later that, as part of the Masada *garin*, we made aliyah, settling at Kibbutz Ginegar."⁴⁹

The Macarovs stayed on the kibbutz a short while before moving to Jerusalem and enrolling at Hebrew University. Then, on November 29, 1947, the United Nations approved the Partition Plan for Palestine, which recommended the creation of separate Jewish and Palestinian states. Macarov explained his expertise in codes, ciphers, and signal

The Exodus 1947 after its seizure by the British Navy.
(Wikimedia Commons.)

security to Avraham Harman, a Jewish Agency leader and later Israel's ambassador to the United States and president of Hebrew University. Promptly and secretly sworn into the Haganah, Macarov was stationed in the besieged Jerusalem and did guard duty at Neve Ya'acov, a suburb of the historic city. Frieda helped smuggle in weapons and served as a lookout at Putt Bakery on the corner of Rav Hook and Hanevi'im Streets.⁵⁰ The Macarovs shared a Passover seder in Jerusalem with Jerry and Bae Renov in April 1948.⁵¹ Like Macarov, Bae was from Atlanta and active in numerous Zionist organizations, while Jerry was from Shreveport, Louisiana, and earned the nickname the "Flying Kippah" because he wore a skullcap during his missions, which mostly consisted of flying supplies into the beleaguered city.⁵²

In June 1948, Macarov decided to transfer from the Haganah to the IAF because he was not fluent in Hebrew. Unlike the Haganah, the air force mainly operated in English because much of the personnel consisted of English-speaking volunteers. He flew to Tel Aviv and became a lieutenant colonel based at the air force camp in Jaffa.⁵³ He also established and directed the Department of Communication Security

for the IAF.⁵⁴ Possibly Macarov and Garey met during the several months they were both stationed near Tel Aviv, but neither mentions such a meeting in their respective primary sources. The IAF was disorganized in the early years of its formation, so it is possible they only met in passing or their paths never crossed. Members of the IAF had the responsibility of controlling the air space over the country, and members had little time to fraternize. Cease-fires were continually violated, and the IAF constantly scrambled to maintain its limited resources and acquire new equipment and personnel.

*The Macarov family at an Israeli
Air Force camp in Jaffa, 1948.
LEFT TO RIGHT, Frieda, Varda,
and David. (Courtesy of the
Cuba Family Archives for
Southern Jewish History at the
Bremen Museum, Atlanta.)*

Soon after the war, the Macarovs returned to the United States to care for Frieda's mother, who had become ill. What was supposed to be a short stay of six months ended up lasting eight years. David received degrees in social work from Western Reserve University in Cleveland and a Ph.D. from Brandeis. The couple also had three children before returning to Israel in 1958. David worked for the Jewish Agency and in 1960 began teaching at Hebrew University until his retirement in 1988. During his tenure, he wrote numerous books on social work. David Macarov passed away in Israel in January 2016.⁵⁵

Two Sides of the Same Coin

Garey and Macarov had very different upbringings despite living in the same city. Yet, regardless of the stark differences within the Jewish community Macarov details in his autobiography, he, Garey, and numerous others from around the country shared similar motivations for volunteering in Israel's War of Independence.

The first major factor—their Jewish heritage—is obvious. Both Garey and Macarov felt an attachment to the Jewish people, as did other volunteers from regions outside of the American South. For example, Harold Livingston from Havervill, Massachusetts, who flew with a U.S. Army Air Force transport squadron during World War II and later on missions for the Israel Air Transport Command during Israel's War of Independence, stated, "the idea that Jews were going to fight I found exciting. It's about time."⁵⁶ Gideon Lichtman of Newark, New Jersey, who was a U.S. Army Air Force pilot during World War II, shot down an Egyptian Spitfire on June 8, 1948, during one of the IAF's first missions. He later said, "I was risking my citizenship and also jail time. I didn't give a shit. I was gonna help the Jews out. I was gonna help my people out."⁵⁷ The connection the volunteers felt towards their fellow Jews, regardless of subcultural differences, highlights shared concerns among Jews around the world.

The antisemitism experienced by Garey and Macarov also motivated their decision to fight for Israel as it did other volunteers. Leon Frankel from St. Paul, Minnesota, who became one of the first fighter pilots in the IAF, recalls: "I grew up in an age of very virulent anti-Semitism—people like Father Coughlin. When I was walking home from school, we used to get it up, down, and sideways—Christ killer, sheeny, dirty Jew, and the whole bit. We tried to ignore it but you just couldn't. It's part of your psyche."⁵⁸ As his obituary in the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* states:

During childhood, he faced a relentless stream of anti-Semitism in his neighborhood, which largely shaped his motivation to fight for Israel later in life, relatives said.

"You didn't have to be religious or identify as a Jew, because other people identified you as a Jew—and [you] were targeted by non-Jewish kids," said his son, Mark Frankel.⁵⁹

Fighting for a Jewish state was a way volunteers could confront the antisemitism they faced growing up as a minority in the United States.

Similarly, antisemitism abroad, particularly the Holocaust and the threat of a second Holocaust in Israel at the hands of the Arabs, motivated the volunteers. By 1947, the truth about the concentration camps in Europe was well known. Many people, including numerous non-Jewish volunteers, believed that Jews needed a state of their own. When asked if the Holocaust influenced his decision to fight for Israel, Garey responded, "Yes, yes. I knew all about that. I was following that naturally."⁶⁰ Macarov observed: "The activities of Hitler, and later Mussolini, regarding the Jews, reinforced my rather hazy Zionism. A place where Jews could not be persecuted became an additional reason for the necessity of a Jewish state."⁶¹ News of the Holocaust traumatized the volunteers, especially those who lost family in the camps. As Lou Lenart from Los Angeles stated, "Part of my family wound up in Auschwitz—my grandmother and my cousins. I felt that the remnants had a right to life and some chance of happiness."⁶² Lenart led the Israeli Air Force's first combat mission on May 29, 1948, which stopped the Egyptians forces less than thirty miles from Tel Aviv. George Lichter from New York added: "The alternative is too hard for me to envision—the possibility of what the Arabs could have done. And they talked about the fact that what Hitler did would be nothing compared to what we're going to do."⁶³

Lichter, who flew eighty-eight Army Air Force missions over Europe during World War II, later received substantial satisfaction training the first wave of Israeli pilots as chief flight instructor for the IAF Pilot Training Program, which he established.⁶⁴ This sense of responsibility to protect and provide a safe haven for the remaining Jews of Europe was of the utmost importance and weighed on the consciousness of the volunteers.

Clearly, Garey and Macarov shared motivations with other Jews around the country, which further highlights the commonalities that transcended the country's regions. Other motivations transcended religion. Volunteers like Leonard Fitchett, a devout Christian from Canada, rallied around the prophesied return of the Jewish people to the Holy Land that would usher in the second coming of Jesus. Obviously, this is a different kind of Zionism from the ideas that influenced

Garey's and Macarov's actions. The volunteers also believed Israel's War of Independence to be a just and "good" war, similar to World War II, as they fought to establish a democracy in the midst of the Cold War, as well as a homeland for the beleaguered Jewish people.⁶⁵ Following the Holocaust, sympathy for the Jewish cause was at a high point, and many Christians believed Jews deserved a country of their own. Because "salaries for a pilot with combat experience were as high as \$600 per month," many others joined simply for the money or because they were bored with postwar life and again wanted to see action.⁶⁶

Community celebration of the founding of the State of Israel at the Jewish Progressive Club, Atlanta, 1948. (Courtesy of the Cuba Family Archives for Southern Jewish History at the Breman Museum, Atlanta.)

The establishment of the State of Israel helped break down the earlier divisions. Jews from across the Atlanta community and the country, as well as non-Jews, found a cause they could rally behind: a homeland for all Jews regardless of differences in religiosity, class, or heritage. Historian Eric L. Goldstein notes of these uniting forces:

The trauma of the Holocaust and the birth of the State of Israel had created a sense of shared destiny and responsibility among Jews of differing backgrounds, drawing Central Europeans, Eastern Europeans, and Sephardim together in ways that had seemed impossible before the war. Social mingling and even marriages between members of these groups became more common. Zionism, once a highly divisive issue, became a rallying point for Jews.”⁶⁷

The same held true for Jews elsewhere, many of whom rallied behind organizations like the secretive Sonnenborn Institute, which raised funds to secure ships in Charleston and Baltimore for Israel’s war effort.⁶⁸ Growing up in a divided Atlanta Jewish community, Garey and Macarov represent two sides of the same coin. Their up-bringsings illustrate the diversity of Jewish life in Atlanta, while their shared motivation to fight in Israel’s War of Independence illustrates the community’s common interests and collective heritage. As this article demonstrates, studying primary sources, such as interviews and unpublished autobiographies, can expand on and open new lines of historical inquiry.

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**William Garey interview, conducted by Mark K. Bauman,
December 22, 2015⁶⁹**

Family Background

GAREY: My father’s name was Harry Gottheimer. . . . He wasn’t all that religious. He was a Reform Jew. I always kidded him [saying] that’s like Unitarian Judaism, after I came back from over there. . . . [He] didn’t care whether we went to very much shul or not.

BAUMAN: Where did he come from? Where was his family from?

GAREY: Athens, Georgia. He was born [there], but his parents came from, I was told, a town called ‘Aschaffenburg,’ which is in Bavaria not far from Frankfurt am Main maybe. That is all I ever heard. He never told me much. When I came along, the last of the children, his parents . . . I have very little memory of them. I remember the heavy German accent.

BAUMAN: Do you know roughly when they came over from Germany?

GAREY: It would have to have been after the Civil War, sometime between after the Civil War and whenever.

BAUMAN: Why did they settle in Athens?

GAREY: I really don't [know], but there was quite a community of Germans for foreign Jews in Athens. . . . They had a Jewish cemetery in Athens, but we never could find any of my grandmother's or grandfather's graves. I suspect when everybody left town they used them over again. Some cemeteries have been known to do that. I don't know. It was the Athens cemetery.

BAUMAN: What type of work did your grandfather do?

GAREY: I am telling you what he told me. They had bad weather there, and his father was running a little store which was always a post office in a town that then was called Rayle, Georgia. . . . No, wait a minute. Back up. It was first called 'Helena.' He had the post office in his general store. His wife's name was 'Helen,' so they called the town 'Helena,' Georgia. Later it became 'Rayle.' Now it's [near] Athens. It was taken in by Athens. It was right near that river. The storm they had tore things up in his store, and him trying to save the goods out of the store he caught something and died.

My father never got to go to high school. He dropped out of high school, because he had a sister and a brother. I think there were three of them. He would be the only support, so they went to Atlanta. Somewhere, if they haven't been thrown out, [I have] the letters where he got the job carrying the bags for . . . Montag Brothers, who were also German Jews [and] had a stationery place.⁷⁰ You [may] know something about them. They were pretty big at one time. He went to work [as] a Montag salesman, and he . . . was with them 60 years, I believe. . . . [He] worked his way up to executive vice-president and had stock in the company when they incorporated, with very little education. He did know how to play a concert flute, and his father did, too. He used to play the flute. I think maybe in Germany they had some activity like that.

. . .

BAUMAN: [Your father] is working at Montag Brothers.

GAREY: Right. He travelled extensively. [He was] in sales, but he also did design. . . . \$25 boxes of fancy stationery that we don't use anymore. He was good at stealing designs, we kidded him, from other

products and adapting them. . . . He went to New York all the time. I went up there with him a couple of times. I went to Chicago with one of the other salesmen. I worked for Montag. My big problem [was that] about the only ones I could sell were the ones they couldn't ship to because of Dun & Bradstreet.⁷¹ . . .

BAUMAN: What about your father and Judaism?

GAREY: He was very, very . . . in fact it disturbs me now. He said, "I don't know about all that Red Sea crossing and all that." I think he went on Yom Kippur and Rosh Ha-Shanah, things like that, like the Christians who go on Christmas and Easter.

BAUMAN: Was he a member of the Temple?⁷²

GAREY: Yes. In fact, he helped. . . . [There] were some temple bonds, I remember, I guess when they built it or improved it. I remember he said he didn't want them cashed anymore. He didn't want any money back from them in his estate. He did go there when he went, but he didn't care. . . . My mother was Roman Catholic. . . .

BAUMAN: Was he a member of the Standard Club?⁷³

GAREY: He certainly was, and the Progressive Club, too.⁷⁴ I don't know if you knew this, but there was sort of a divide between the German-Jewish people and the Eastern European [Jews]. They were 'kikes.' We were just 'mockies' or whatever other name you want to think of. Sheeny . . . that's another one. When my mother would get mad at him, she would say, "Quit acting like a sheeny." He was a kind, good man. You couldn't have asked for a better father at all. He didn't really care what we went to.

Israeli Air Force

GAREY: I started at Georgia Tech, and I didn't really like the work. I didn't seem to have a head for it, so when we got into World War II I quit there and joined the Army. . . . I wanted to shoot the machine guns and knock down those lousy Germans . . . Nazis.

I had assignments over here, and then they sent us all to Marrakesh, French Morocco. We had a base there. We were running cargo and passengers and so forth. Then, after not very long there, they transferred us. They built a new airfield at Cairo, Egypt. It's Cairo International now. In those days, it was Payne Field.⁷⁵ . . . [Egypt] was right next door to [Palestine], and when we got time off and we were on base, you could go

*From the transcript of Garey's interview on December 22, 2015.
(Courtesy of the Esther and Herbert Taylor Oral History Collection
at the Breman Museum, Atlanta.)*

up there. We had a rest camp, Tel Litvinsky [renamed Tel HaShomer in 1948], up there, and you could go on all the tours. The contrast between Israel and the Arab countries . . . [the Arabs] were extremely poor. You go down the Nile River, and if you get to be 40 years old you [are considered] a ripe old age. It was very bad. There were only 40,000,000 Egyptians then. Now there are over 80,000,000. Lord knows what they are doing now. That's where I got familiar with Israel. I ran into . . . one guide we had I found out was in the Haganah, and I talked to him.⁷⁶ I was very impressed by what they were doing. I really was. We even had pilots who would fake engine trouble to land up there at Lod. Tel Aviv Airport was 'Lod.' . . . [They] had little nightclubs all along the beach with making your own beer in the basement. Just like Europe.

BAUMAN: Let's come backward for a second. Your father was Reform. He was a member of the Temple. David Marx [the rabbi at the Temple] was anti-Zionist, even into World War II.

GAREY: My father was anti-Zionist, too, because I went over there. That's the reason. I didn't tell my parents where I was. . . . I won't say he was anti-Zionist. He was too busy working to wonder what's going on [in] the Middle East. He just was disinterested, I guess. I really have been tempted to tell people I went over there because I was patriotic and wanted to help the Jews. No, I wasn't doing too well on my calculus test, and I didn't like school. That's why I went over there. I wanted to see a little excitement maybe.

. . .

GAREY: We had warehouses with stuff hidden in it. Most of it was not guns, because you don't want to get caught in New York [with guns]. It was war equipment that the United Nations said we couldn't send. It was always the United Nations. . . . The United States agreed to do what England, who was supplying and training Egypt, Jordan . . . Transjordan [then] . . . but Egypt and all the rest of them . . . said, "We have treaties. We are not going to obey the United Nations' order." The United States . . . we can't send our ally . . . favorable to Israel.⁷⁷ . . .

The FBI sent prostitutes among the pilots. One of them fell in love with one of the pilots and spilled the whole deal to [him] of what the [FBI] were doing, which was a good thing. It was pretty wild. We were

at the Fisk Building, 250 West 57th Street, and they had formed an airline called 'Service Airways.' Then they formed an airline in Panama called 'Lineas Aereas de Panama.' It was all a sham. . . . [They] bought C-46s, transports, the big fat one.

BAUMAN: Where did they buy them from?

GAREY: Surplus. The war ended, and we had hundreds of them. They only paid \$5,000 apiece, and they bought two Constellations, the triple tail . . . C-69s. They paid \$25,000 for those. They were getting them out of the country. They dreamed up this thing of two airlines, and they fly them in service for a while. Then they go to Panama. Next stop, over there in [Israel]. . . . The base they had over there, the secret base was on . . . Corsica, I believe that is. They were operating out of Corsica. This was all Americans and Israelis involved in that. . . . Germany had set up a factory in Czechoslovakia to build the [Messerschmitt Bf] 109, but you couldn't get the good engine. I believe it was a BMW engine. I'm not sure. They got the engine that went in the Stuka . . . which is underpowered. That was part of the problem, but the main problem was the little narrow landing gear, which affected the German pilots, as well as ours. That was all they could get, so they started dismantling them and smuggling them in.

I remember, when I was with this group, they had a Messerschmitt covered in tarp inside . . . disassembled . . . a C-46, and the Italian base inspector caught onto it. They told him, "This cargo . . ." and this and that. He said, "It may look like that to you, but it looks like the Messerschmitt like I used to fly in the German Air Force." They bribed their way out of that some way. I have forgotten. They were always doing things like they would send the Panamanian Ambassador cases of pineapple. . . . They got the Messerschmitts in, and they brought some questionable Czech mechanics with them. . . . Did you ever hear of Mordechai Alon? He was the head of our first fighter squadron. . . . [He was a] very nice guy, a good pilot. He was in the Royal Air Force during World War II. He was the squadron commander. . . .

BAUMAN: Very specifically, how did you get over there? Did you fly to Panama, then Cyprus?

GAREY: They gave us a lot of false stuff and bought us tickets on Air France. . . . [We] got deluxe transportation to Paris. I did something, me and the . . . guys I was with, that I'm ashamed of now. When they were

calling us to go from Paris to Italy . . . we were supposed to be going to Singapore, I think. [We had] phony papers if anybody asked us. We hid in the bathroom when they were calling us for the flight, and we missed the flight. It was all my idea. I cooked it up to spend the night in Paris. We came running out there raising hell like 'ugly Americans.' "Why didn't you tell us? Our airplane has left." The poor French. They booked us on the next day on an Italian airplane. We stayed in the old Palais Royale [Hotel] on the river there on the island. So we got to walk around Paris and see a few things. That wasn't really the right thing to do. It didn't cost the Israelis. It cost the French. . . .

[We] went to Italy. . . . [Do] you know what a Noorduyn Norseman airplane is? It's a big single-engine huge airplane. . . . It can carry a hell of a lot. They are Canadian made, I believe. . . . They bought a bunch of them, and they had to get them into Israel. They are very useful there. . . . [To] go, they had to fly way south of Cyprus, because the British radar was always looking. We had to put inside tanks in the cabin. The tanks were out of the DC-3, I believe, and then one of my jobs . . . we had a wobble pump . . . when the outside tanks, [which] had tubes going up into them, you would pump gas from inside to the outside tanks. Our flight ended up taking 16 hours, by the way. One of the hairiest things I have ever been on. . . . [We] had developed a relationship at the Italian Air Force at Brindisi down on the heel of the boot [of Italy]. They were actually helping us, and I guess a little of this [makes hand gesture indicating bribing] went on, too.

We had some Avro Ansons, which was the twin-engine ancient British bomber. We had some of those to get over there, too. These were disarmed. . . . [Guns] and everything [were] taken off of them, so they were innocent. We had invoices for Singapore, too. The next thing they put me on was one of the Ansons. They had two [pilots], . . . an American pilot and the co-pilot's name was Barry Riley, I think, and me. A three-man crew. They were supposed to have the fix in at the Isle of Rhodes to refuel. We come sailing into Rhodes, and the Greeks are in the middle of . . . the Communists were trying to take over Greece, and they had agents in Rhodes. Here we come in, and the guys who were supposed to put the fix in slipped up. Here come the good little Greeks out with submachine guns, "Who the hell is this coming in?" . . . and they locked us up and impounded the airplane.

I still remember this little Greek, a little short guy. Harry knew languages. He kept calling him '*mikro pragma*.' I said, "What does that mean, Harry." He said, "Little thing." I said, "That guy is going to shoot you." He would stick the machine gun, the little machine pistol, into Harry's gut, and Harry would stick a screwdriver in his gut. . . . That's just the way Harry was. He bought a big, probably prosciutto, a big ham, and had it in a parachute bag. The little Greek pointed at that. "Open it. Let me see what's in there." "Atom bomb. Atom bomb in there." Things like [that]. He was a clown, I am telling you. I was a little worried.

They locked us up, and then finally . . . we could go out where the hotel [was], but we couldn't leave the [Isle of Rhodes]. They seized the airplane. Meanwhile, all the *shmeering* was going on. Finally, they got us out one day. We said, "We're going to take the Greek airline up to Athens. I believe we are going to get out of here." We couldn't get the airplanes out yet. Harry . . . one of the Greek pilots we had gotten friendly with . . . Harry had disabled . . . done things to the engine. He said, "They may take them but they ain't going to fly them." He felt sorry about it [and] he told this [Greek] pilot, "Listen. Don't let them talk you into flying one of those airplanes. You won't come back." This little guy's eyes got big. He was friendly with the pilots in the air crew. We went to Athens. . . .

It was before the [Israeli] war started. It must have been 1947. It has to be. They got us out, and we went back to Italy. We were sort of based in Italy then. . . . We took off. I will never forget. Coleman [Collie] Goldstein and I think Lou Lenart [were] on that one.⁷⁸ They plotted to try to scare the hell out of me, which wasn't hard to do. We were going down the runway, and there was a lot of discussion. We didn't know whether we have the right weight and balance. We didn't know whether this thing is going to get off the ground. . . .

As soon as they were going down the runway, both of them turned around and one of them starts, "*Yisgadal v'yisgadash*," reciting the Kad-dish, trying to terrify me. I was already scared enough, because I knew . . . we had a third guy on there. What had happened, the Arabs had bought a load of brand new rifles and machine guns in Czechoslovakia. They had them on a boat. . . . [They] didn't call it Mossad then, but they found out about it.⁷⁹ They brought an Israeli frogman over. The boat was in the harbor, and he put a limpet on the boat and down it went.⁸⁰ That

was in all the papers. We had to get him out of Israel. If I was him, I wouldn't have gone on that flight, but he didn't care. He was a very stoic guy. A young guy. . . . [He] had a big Smith & Wesson revolver, and [the whole flight he was] polishing it and singing a little song. He was probably a Palmach guy.⁸¹ They were the toughest. [They] don't give a crap.

He is sweating out a 16-hour flight with us. We get to the coast, and we can't see any sign. They said they would fix the airfield for us. We were asking him, and he [said], "I don't know anything." He was looking out the window. It was pitch black dark. By the way, there were two of us. The guy's name almost came to my mind, flying the other one. They made a mistake and landed in Egypt. They stayed in the can [jail]. . . . The Egyptians didn't mistreat them, but they put them in jail. That was the other Anson, I mean the other Norseman, the Egyptians got. Finally, we see some flares. We had set out two flares. Coleman Goldstein was flying it, I believe. He said, "That must be the airstrip."

We came down, and just as we're coming on final [descent] they flash us red lights from a handgun. We pulled up and went around, thank goodness. They did that two or three times. "What in the hell? What are they trying to tell us?" He said, "Maybe there's an impediment in line with the runway." That's what it was. A big tree. Why they didn't cut it down, I don't know. The next time he came in high and made that type of approach. We got on the ground, and I remember . . . Ezer Weizman was one of the ones who came out to meet us.⁸² I remember him saying, "These planes will save Galilee." I didn't really know exactly what he meant. . . . I worked for a guy named Shlomo Monastersky, . . . who was Latvian. He spoke every language spoken in Europe. He was sort of my boss. He was running the communications and stuff like that. He was in a big battle with the Army over some radios we had gotten over there.

We got them, and it was my idea. I said, "Listen. We need to have this stuff near where we're going to use them. Let's put them on the edge of the airfield." We put them in huts on the edge of the airfield. The first night, when the State [of Israel] was born and they had that broadcast, I'm sitting on a bench in Tel Aviv. The Egyptians decided to bomb us with DC-3s. They pushed them . . . they didn't really have any heavy bombers . . . they just pushed bombs out the door. Here they come, and

of all the bad luck they hit the huts that had our radios in them. I was the one that thought it was a good idea to put them there. That's how much I helped Israel on that deal. . . . We ended up carving a little fighter airfield up north of there. Herzliya, maybe. I've forgotten where it was. They brought the Messerschmitts in. That was all we had. . . .

The guy that was head of the fighter squadron. Mordechai Alon. . . . He was a decent guy. A squadron commander. I am out there one day. [The Israelis] shot down two Egyptian Spitfires. The British had given Egypt Spitfire IX's, which were a good model, and they painted a moon and star over the British thing.⁸³ They got shot down, and the pilots got them down in recoverable state. They built one good one out of it. A guy named Boris Senior, who was from South Africa, a South African Jew, flew Spitfires, so he was the pilot on those.⁸⁴ I remember when we were test flying it, little Harry was running out to us. "It's good to be behind a Merlin again." The Merlin engine. He was a real warrior.

. . .

BAUMAN: You had an Israeli citizenship, an Israeli passport and name. Tell us about that.

GAREY: It's that *laissez-passer*,⁸⁵ and then I had papers, which one of [my] kids has, both in Hebrew and in English, that I was a signal technical officer of the Israeli Air Force. I forget how it was worded. I had a lot of stuff like that. . . .

BAUMAN: What was your name?

GAREY: 'Ziv Gal' on the Israeli. 'Bernard Carp' on the Italian. That was only good until I was on the boat for use there. The Gal was all I had. They got my other passports. That's what I wanted. I wanted to stay over. I didn't want to go back. I could have just stamped it "Return only United States of America" and go back. I finally did go back after, supposedly, all the wars were over . . . ha ha. After the final truce.

BAUMAN: This was 1949? 1950?

GAREY: Whenever that first war ended, within a month or two after that. That's when I came back to Italy, to the embassy. I said, "I want . . ." "Where the hell have you been?" He thought they had me several months before. He said, "Where the hell have you been without a passport?"

BAUMAN: Why did you decide to leave?

Statement dated September 6, 1948, from the Organization for Hebrew Refugees in Italy confirming that "Bernard Carp," aka William Garey, was a German-born Jew who had taken refuge in Italy. It states that he is "registered in our records" and was released from a German concentration camp.

(Courtesy of the Cuba Family Archives for Southern Jewish History at the Breman Museum, Atlanta.)

GAREY: I didn't want to live [there]. . . . I saw how hard it was and how hard they had to work, compared to my idea of work. I said, "I don't think this lifestyle . . ." They thought all the truces had been signed, [with] Egypt, and they thought it was all over with. They have

had four more wars since then, of course, as we know . . . but not for a while. They were able to do a lot of things. The Burma Road, you know about that, I guess.⁸⁶ I watched that. They were [just] about starving in Jerusalem. It was really sad. I did get to go to Jerusalem again and talk to the people that went through all that before the supplies did. . . . I guess with war not going on [there was] no cause for me to be over there.

. . .

BAUMAN: Were you involved in the creation of the Israeli Air Force after independence?

GAREY: No, I wasn't. I was in it. . . . The headquarters of the Air Force was in the Yarkon [Hayarkon] Hotel [in Tel Aviv]. We used to come up there when I was in the army. That's where we stayed. It was a mad house. People going and . . . very disorganized. . . . I remember Mordechai Alon. . . . [There] were two planes, and Mordi was in one of them, the squadron commander. They made one pass down the road, and Mordi's guns screwed up. Typical of that airplane. It shook the Egyptians so bad. It probably killed a few. They turned around and went back down south to El Arish [Egypt], I think, or somewhere down that way. . . . That saved Tel Aviv.

. . .

BAUMAN: Did you meet Ben-Gurion in Israel?

GAREY: I saw Ben-Gurion, but I never met him. I didn't get that close to him. I saw him a couple of times. Ezer Weizman I knew real well. In fact, I used to reach around and wake him up in the morning and reach around and grab this gal's shoulder. He'd say, "What are you trying to do?" I said, "Get out of bed, Ezer. I'll take care of it." He was quite a character. He became [president] later. . . .

BAUMAN: What type of interaction did you have with him?

GAREY: He had a high position there, and he was over at the fighter squad. He was a pilot, too, and he was over at the fighter squadron a lot. We all knew he was Dr. [Chaim] Weizmann's nephew and who he was.⁸⁷ He was friendly with everybody though if you started griping, he would chew you out. "It doesn't do any good," he said. He was a nice guy, really a nice guy.

Return to the United States

BAUMAN: Let's come forward. You are coming back to the United States. What do you do back in the United States? . . .

GAREY: [U.S. Treasury officials] illegally would not give my passport back. There was no law involved. They just said, "Screw you." I wanted it back because . . . you know how they stamp your passport? . . . I had a lot more entries than I had exits. . . . We were leaving illegally, but we were coming in legally. . . . If they would have asked me, I would have had to BS my way out of that. They let me go, but I never got that passport back. I guess they destroyed it. I thought it would make a good souvenir. Someone told me later, Congressman [James C.] Davis, a long time ago here, could get your passport back. . . . He was a Democrat back right after the War. He was nice. He got me a new passport. I wasn't going anywhere. I wanted my old one back, but he couldn't do that. He said he didn't know any mechanism.

BAUMAN: You come into New York, and then you fly to Atlanta?

GAREY: My sister lived up at Mamaroneck [New York]. I went to visit her a little bit, and then I flew back to Atlanta. That was it. Like I say, I'm sure it cost them some expense getting me over there. I don't know whether it was a profitable enterprise or not.

. . .

BAUMAN: What were the influences leading you to go to Israel and help the Israeli War for Independence?

GAREY: Just because I had a feeling that they were going to get wiped out or something, balanced by the fact that I really didn't want to do what I was doing. I think that might have been a factor. It wasn't any great surge of patriotism though I might have told some people at the time. . . .

BAUMAN: Did you identify at all? . . .

GAREY: Yes, and I talked to a lot of particularly Orthodox over there. I doubt if I would have ever become a Christian if it hadn't been [that] I saw a miracles over there. I knew it had to be the hand of G-d in it.

BAUMAN: The miracles you saw in the Israeli War of Independence led you to become a Christian?

GAREY: It had a lot . . . probably had a lot of . . . I wasn't really a Jew. I was a 'halfy.' I was not . . . I was interested, but I finally got a great respect for the Bible. Both halves, as you would say. . . .

BAUMAN: You become very Christian and very religious after your experience in Israel.

GAREY: Even some time after that. I started looking at the noted televangelists. Not the ones that were pulling stuff, but the straight ones. I learned the Bible, because I could sit at home. [I was] too lazy to read. I could have read it. I did read some. I got interested in that, so I started going to a couple of small churches. I saw what they were doing, particularly the ones that concentrated on helping the poor. . . . I got deeper and deeper into it. . . . [My] wife, Myrtle, was a Christian. Her whole family. They weren't pushy-type Christians. . . . Her father was one of the most Christian men I ever met, and he couldn't even read or write. He never said anything, but you hang around him a while and saw what he did. . . .

BAUMAN: You are now in Atlanta. You have come back from Israel. What do you do at that stage?

GAREY: I went to work for Rich's as a TV repair man.⁸⁸ I had to tell them that I had worked on them in New York, and I had never even seen one hardly. I did as good as any of them did. . . . Then Lockheed Martin took over the old Bell plant [in Marietta], and they wanted people doing just what I do. I knew all the equipment, so I got a job real easy. Me and my buddy both got jobs at Lockheed. I stayed there 26 years. . . . The only reason I left [was that] the C-5 program ended, and we went from 37,000 down to 7,000 [employees]. . . .

BAUMAN: When you returned to Atlanta, what was your parents' reaction to you working for Israeli independence?

GAREY: They were glad I was back. I don't think my daddy knew much about Zionism. He was all business, all work. . . .

BAUMAN: Did they oppose what you were doing in any way?

GAREY: He just opposed me getting killed or hurt and not going to school. He was a believer in education.

BAUMAN: Did you ever finish your degree?

GAREY: [I] never did. I got maybe two years. I never saw any reason for it, and I did not like school. I probably didn't like any kind of discipline.

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David Macarov, "Atlanta Adolescence," c. 1980⁸⁹*Young Judaea*

The backbone of the [activities of the Jewish Educational Alliance] were Young Judaeans clubs. Young Judaea in those days had no upper age limit, and people remained members—and officers—past middle age. The perennial Treasurer of National Young Judaea in my day was a Wall Street stock broker, Louis P. Rocker, whose primary duty consisted of picking up the tab of the deficit.⁹⁰ The paid executive director was—at least to my eyes—an old lady, Mrs. Rachel Vixman.⁹¹ At another time, the President was Rabbi Israel Goldstein, even then the not-so-young spiritual leader of one of New York's largest synagogues.⁹²

Another factor which contributed to the strength of Young Judaea was the fact that Jewish kids stayed in town—they did not go off to college. Hence, they remained in Young Judaea from the age of twelve—the minimum age for membership—through adulthood. In Atlanta, the president of Young Judaea was a CPA, head of a large firm, and member of the City Council. Young Judaea was thus a large and powerful organization, and any youngster who did not belong was beyond the pale (this refers to the Russian Jewish crowd, of course. The Germans had nothing to do with such nationalistic and Zionist affairs).

Our bunch—a group of friends—automatically formed a Young Judaeans club as soon as we became twelve. Eddie Vajda was assigned as our club leader. I remember exactly when I became a Zionist: After we had met a few times, I heard someone say something about Young Judaea being a Zionist organization. I was shocked. When I got to the Alliance for the next meeting, Eddie was standing with one hand on the door jamb and the other on his hip. I charged up to him. "Is Young Judaea a Zionist organization?"

"Of course it is."

"Do *you* want to go live in Palestine?"

"If all my friends and relatives are there, then that's where I would want to be."

That made sense to me. I decided that I was a Zionist. I've never regretted the decision, although I sometimes smile when I realize that I

live in Jerusalem, where I have relatives and even some old friends from those days. Eddie lives in Florida, where he has neither.

Young Judaeen clubs met every Sunday, and they all had names related to Zionism or Jewish history. We were the Herzlites, and there were the Aaroneans, the Szoldeans, the Nordaus, the Samsons, and the SIJ, which was a [shul]-sponsored group called Shearith Israel Juniors, among others. The girls' groups were called the DOJ (Daughters of Judaea), DOZ (Daughters of Zion), the Deborans and similar names. The club that one belonged to identified one as to age, and perhaps as to sophistication and social graces.

Speaking of names, most of the people I knew and remembered in Atlanta in those days had nicknames. Some were routine, but others now seem outrageous. Among others, I remember Stone Mountain Hirsch; Pony Minsk; Happy Ginsberg; Scotty Gadlin; Sugarfoot Glustrom; Pinkie Wolfe; Snookie Sugarman; Itchy Goldstein; Sister Sugarman; Kootchie Goldberg; Skeets Kahanow; Wolfie Bromberg; Jabbo Balser; Wheeza Asman; Attu Moldaw; Apple Sugarman; Nudge Mogul; Shemi Blass; A. D. Srochi and A. D. Fine; Mealie Davis; K. C. Berman; Big Max Kuni-ansky and Little Max Kuni-ansky; Dottie Zimmerman; Big Ben and Little Ben Lichtenstein; Bebe Shamos; Beedie Siroka; J. D. Werbin; Goo-goo Zimmerman; Bungalow Kaufman; Stinky Davis and (from Birmingham) Gash Kimmerling and (from Chattanooga) High Compression Pearlman. Do adolescents today carry such aliases?

Getting back to the club meetings, they followed an invariable formula: Call to order; reading the minutes; committee reports; old business; new business; good and welfare; and then—The Program. The program had to be cultural, poetic, or artistic. It usually consisted of a talk given by a member, or an invited guest; or a debate; or reading a poem, speech, or play script. It was attended to with growing restlessness as the members realized that both the ball game, and the girls watching (and sometimes playing), were nearby and waiting. However, a meeting without a Program was sacriligious, so the moment it was over there was a stampede for the gym.

Clubs not only met—that would have been certain death for them. They had hayrides and picnics, barbecues and house parties, swimming parties and watermelon cuttings. Boys' and girls' clubs held joint affairs, and girls' clubs sometimes invited entire boys' clubs to their affairs.

*From David Macarov's unpublished autobiography, "Atlanta Adolescence."
(Courtesy of the Cuba Family Archives for Southern Jewish History
at the Breman Museum, Atlanta.)*

Incidentally, there were no mixed clubs—not for religious reasons, but on the assumption that adolescent boys were different from adolescent girls, and that a mixed club would be rife with feuds, jealousies, gossip, and other varieties of interpersonal relations that would preclude proper club functioning.

Young Judaea itself sponsored intra-city contests and events—the annual amateur night, the debating and oratorical contests, the basketball league, essay contests, and others. There were also citywide social events, such as the Valentine’s Day dance. Once, in order to raise money, Atlanta Young Judaea put on a musical comedy, “Good News.” It was directed by the drama teacher from Commercial High School, one Gwyn Burrows, and his assistant (today we would say, “his lover,” but homosexuality wasn’t part of our repertoire of knowledge).

The rehearsals were great fun, except for one day when Sarah Cohen and Dave Alterman were inexplicably late. Then, in the scene where Sarah was to kiss Harry Berchenko, Burrows couldn’t get Sarah to meet Harry’s lips—she twisted her face, turned her cheek, and tried everything to avoid the kiss. Burrows was furious, and it wasn’t until after the performance that we learned that Sarah and David had eloped to South Carolina that morning, and were late for rehearsal because the wedding took longer than they had anticipated. Sarah just couldn’t bring herself to kiss someone else on the day that she married Dave.

Eloping was quite widespread in those days, possibly because of the economics involved in formal weddings. For example, Elliot Rubin called his uncle, Dr. Rubin, in Macon, and told him to have a rabbi at the house on Sunday, because he and Bertha were coming down to get married. Selma and Hyman went to the rabbi’s house. Even bar-mitzvahs were very different from today’s extravaganzas. After I had read my portion in schule, people came over [to] the house for a snack, and that was it. (We didn’t have to worry about people riding to schule on Shabbos—practically no one in our circle had cars).

Getting back to Young Judaea, the Atlanta groups were part of the Southern Young Judaeian Region, and an important element in being part of a geographical grouping were the intercity meetings which took place. There were two-city meetings, when Birmingham Young Judaea, for example, would come for a weekend to Atlanta, or vice versa; there were intercity conclaves, in which several cities would get together; and there

was the annual convention, with representatives from all over the South. The region stretched from the Mississippi to the Atlantic, and from Tennessee and North Carolina through Florida.

Conventions were held in a different city each year, with over a hundred out-of-town delegates attending each time. At first, convention sessions were held in the local Jewish community center, whatever it was called, and the delegates were housed with the families of local Judaeans—except for some of the older and more sophisticated members, who stayed in hotels. In this way parents were reassured that their young members would be staying with other Jewish families who also had children in Young Judaea. At a later date, the sessions were held in hotels, but the younger members were still housed with families. It wasn't until much later, when membership substantially ended at age eighteen, that camps became the loci of Young Judaeans conventions.

In addition to the business sessions, there were the intercity contests—essay, oratorical, debating and athletic; there were social events, including the ever-present dances; and there were guided tours to near-by places of Jewish interest. The dances at intercity meets presented certain problems: Although picnics and hayrides could be as a crowd, without dates, dances required dates, and dances to which girls from another city were invited meant that dates had to be arranged for them. The Social Committee's main task was matching the boys who were coming in with local girls—relatively easy, since the boys' permission wasn't asked—and the incoming girls with local boys. This brought problems, because the boys wanted to go with girls they knew, or had met before, or had heard about; and because there were always some girls who were not popular for various reasons, which meant that finding a date for them involved persuasion, coercion, and even dishonesty.

The usual approach included the following exchange:

"Is she pretty?"

"Yes, kind of."

"What do you mean, 'kind of'?"

"Well, she isn't exactly pretty, but she's real cute and has a darling personality."

"You mean she's as ugly as homemade sin on a dark night in a back alley."

“How can you say such a thing—she’s a nice girl. Besides, if you don’t take her nobody in our club will ever go out with you again.”

Thus salesmanship also got a boost from Young Judaea.

Through Young Judaeian intercity meetings a close network of relationships throughout the region was woven, and friendships lasting lifetimes were made, not to mention the romances which blossomed into marriages. As I return to the South from time to time and visit Miami or Atlanta, Savannah or Charleston, New Orleans or Memphis, the friends that I remember and visit are those who were in Young Judaea with me then.

All of this was done on a volunteer basis. Nobody got a salary from Young Judaea. The officers performed their duties as a civic responsibility. The secretary ran the mimeograph machine and addressed the envelopes in her spare time. Convention chairmen wheedled halls, pressured politicians, and sought contributions ranging from name tags to refreshments as part of their voluntary effort.

The Southern Young Judaea Region was not always that, however. Convinced that National Young Judaea was discriminating against the south by never electing a southerner to national office, and never holding the national convention in the south, the Region simply seceded at one point, thereby upholding an old southern tradition. For eight years the Southern Young Judaea *Association* ran its own affairs, took no part in national events, and—as I remember it—felt no loss from the move. At the end of the period National Young Judaea capitulated. Being a “national” movement with no representation in the South, and with threats from other regions to do the same, New Orleans was designated as the site of a national convention, and the Southern Young Judaea Association again became a region.

I stayed in Young Judaea through high school, and became the president of the Southern Region after graduation. World War II destroyed the Young Judaea which I knew (as it did many other things), not only because the men all left for the army, but when the war was over, the economic situation had changed completely, and all Jewish youngsters went off to university at eighteen, severing their ties with almost everything not university connected.

For me, however, Young Judaea was more than a social organization. Through the programs at meetings, oratorical contests, debates, and

participation in a congeries of events, I began to see the need for a Jewish homeland—and not just any kind of homeland, but a state based on the teachings of the Prophets. I listened to all the arguments on both sides, read avidly about Zionism, and as a result became a “ferbrente” Zionist. I came to believe that starting without any previous commitments or structure, we could build a model state, of the kind envisioned by Herzl; that only Jews, imbued with a certain historical tradition could do so; and that such a state could be viable for Jews only in the ancestral homeland, Palestine.⁹³

All of this took place for me in Young Judaea; in the Jewish Educational Alliance; and on the South Side of Atlanta.

NOTES

¹ William Garey, interview conducted by Mark K. Bauman, December 22, 2015, Esther and Herbert Taylor Oral History Collection at the Breman Museum, Atlanta; David Macarov, “Atlanta Adolescence,” David Macarov Papers, Cuba Family Archives for Southern Jewish History at the Breman Museum, Atlanta.

² Tom Brokaw coined the term “The Greatest Generation.” Tom Brokaw, *The Greatest Generation* (New York, 1998).

³ Yaacov Markovitzky, *Machal: Overseas Volunteers in Israel’s War of Independence* (Tel Aviv, 2007), 7, accessed January 2, 2016, <http://www.mahal-idf-volunteers.org/about/Machal.pdf>.

⁴ “Arab invasion forces totaled about thirty thousand men with limited armor, artillery, and air support. These forces had significant advantages over Israel in both manpower and equipment, and they could attack the new nation from several directions simultaneously. . . . The Jews could field a force of nearly forty thousand but had weapons for less than half that number and no tanks, fighter aircraft, artillery, or heavy ordinance.” Lon Nordeen, *Fighters Over Israel* (New York, 1990), 7.

⁵ Markovitzky, *Machal*, 5.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁷ Ralph Lowenstein at the University of Florida compiled an online database listing the Americans who volunteered in Israel’s War of Independence. However, this database is far from complete, listing 540 volunteers, or just over half of the estimated 1,000 volunteers. Of the 540, 292 list their hometown and state. This makes the sample that includes hometowns roughly one-third of the total, which is arguably a large enough size to draw conclusions concerning the home locations of all volunteers. Jews from the South comprised 8.4 percent of those volunteers who listed their home towns. For these purposes, the South is defined as Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi,

North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. "Names of Volunteers," Aliyah Bet and Machal Virtual Museum: North American Volunteers in Israel's War of Independence, accessed January 5, 2016, http://www.israelvets.com/indx_names_of_volunteers.html.

⁸ Some works directly devoted to the subject are Stuart Rockoff, "Deep in the Heart of Palestine: Zionism in Early Texas," in *Lone Stars of Texas: The Jews of Texas*, ed. Hollace Ava Weiner and Kenneth D. Roseman (Waltham, MA, 2007), 93-107; David Geffen, "Sentimental Journey: Early Zionist Activities in the South—Diary of Jacob de Haas' Trip in 1904," *Forum on the Jewish People, Zionism and Israel* 34 (Winter 1979): 161-171. A few rabbinic biographies also discuss it. See, for example, Janice Rothschild Blumberg, *Prophet in a Time of Priests: Rabbi "Alphabet" Browne, 1845-1929* (Baltimore, 2012); Joel Ziff, ed., *Lev Tuvi-ah: On the Life and Work of Rabbi Tobias Geffen* (Newton, MA, 1988); Henry A. Green, *Gesher Vakesher: Bridges and Bonds, The Life of Leon Kronish* (Atlanta, 1995); Bobbie Malone, *Rabbi Max Heller: Reformer, Zionist, Southerner, 1860-1929* (Tuscaloosa, 1997).

⁹ Unbaptized non-Christians are unable to receive the sacrament of matrimony from a Roman Catholic priest. Therefore, Harry Gottheimer and Emily Sanchez would not have been able to be married without Emily leaving the Catholic Church. They were instead married by a justice of the peace. See "If a Catholic Marries a Non-Christian, How is it a Sacrament?," Canon Law Made Easy, accessed March 16, 2016, <http://canonlawmadeeasy.com/2013/01/17/cath-marry-non-christian/>.

¹⁰ Garey interview, 7.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹² *Ibid.*, 3-4.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁷ *A Wing and a Prayer*, directed by Boaz Dvir (2015), 15:15.

¹⁸ Garey interview, 18-19.

¹⁹ Al Schwimmer and Hyman Schechtman (Shamir) were in charge of the Haganah branch in North America. They recruited volunteers and smuggled surplus military equipment out of the country by creating a fictitious Panamanian airline called Lineas Aereas de Panama. Schwimmer served as second in command of the IAF. He directed the purchase of all the heavy aircraft that provided the air bridge to bring arms from Czechoslovakia to Israel. Without that air bridge to bring in huge amounts of rifles, machine guns, ammunition and fighter planes, Israel might not have won the war. Schwimmer later founded and led Israel Aircraft Industries, Israel's largest employer with twenty thousand employees. Ralph Lowenstein, "Why the Experiences of North American Volunteers are Largely Unknown," Aliyah Bet and Machal Virtual Museum: North American Volunteers in Israel's War of Independence, accessed January 3, 2016, <http://www.israelvets.com/essay.html>.

²⁰ Garey interview, 19-20.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 19.

²² Vic Shayne, *Ups and Downs with No Regrets: The Story of George Lichter* (Bloomington, IN, 2012), 403. Modi Alon named the fighter group the 101 Squadron because he wanted the Arabs to think they had one hundred squadrons.

²³ Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, *O Jerusalem* (1972, rev. ed., New York, 2000), xxiii.

²⁴ Garey interview, 35–36.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 34.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 37–38.

²⁷ The Sullivan Act of 1911 is a gun control law for New York state that requires a license to possess firearms small enough to be concealed.

²⁸ Garey interview., 42.

²⁹ *A Wing and a Prayer*, 56:45.

³⁰ Garey interview, 49.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 46.

³² Aleph Zadik Aleph (AZA) and B'nai B'rith Girls (BBG) are international, youth-led organizations for Jewish boys and girls, respectively, under the auspices of the International Order of B'nai B'rith.

³³ Macarov, "Atlanta Adolescence," 14–15.

³⁴ Alfred Uhry, *The Last Night of Ballyhoo* (New York, 1997).

³⁵ Steven Hertzberg, *Strangers Within the Gate City* (Philadelphia, 1978), 116.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 86.

³⁷ Macarov, "Atlanta Adolescence," 10.

³⁸ "Social and Personal," *Southern Israelite*, August 31, 1934, accessed March 7, 2016, <http://israelite.galileo.usg.edu/israelite/view?docId=bookreader/asi/asi1934/asi1934-0183.mets.xml;query=macarov;brand=israelite-brand#page/n0/mode/1up>.

³⁹ See Mark K. Bauman, *Harry H. Epstein and the Rabbinite as Conduit for Change* (Rutherford, NJ, 1994); Bauman, "The Transformation of Jewish Social Services in Atlanta, 1928–1948," *American Jewish Archives Journal* 53 (2001): 83–111.

⁴⁰ Macarov, "Atlanta Adolescence," 21.

⁴¹ Macarov, "Atlanta Adolescence," 21–22.

⁴² "David and Frieda Macarov," World Machal: Volunteers from overseas in the Israel Defense Forces, accessed March 7, 2016, http://www.machal.org.il/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=614&Itemid=983&lang=en.

⁴³ Deborah Dash Moore, *GI Jews: How World War II Changed a Generation* (Cambridge, MA, 2004), 114.

⁴⁴ Murray Greenfield and Joseph Hochstein, *The Jews' Secret Fleet* (Jerusalem, 1987), 45; "David and Frieda Macarov."

⁴⁵ J. Wandres, *The Ablest Navigator: Lieutenant Paul N. Shulman, USN, Israel's Volunteer Admiral* (Annapolis, MD, 2010), chapter 7, n.4.

⁴⁶ David Geffen, "A 1948 Jerusalem Seder," *Jerusalem Post*, April 2, 2015, accessed March 31, 2016, <http://www.jpost.com/In-Jerusalem/A-1948-Jerusalem-Seder-395971>.

⁴⁷ Carlos V. Lozano, "Jewish Institute Busy Planning for Its 50th Anniversary," *Los Angeles Times*, August 17, 1991, accessed March 14, 2016, http://articles.latimes.com/1991-08-17/local/me-631_1_santa-susana.

⁴⁸ See Jan Jaben, "Israel is where heart is for former Atlanta families," *Southern Israelite*, September 12, 1986, 22, accessed March 10, 2015, <http://israelite.galileo.usg.edu/israelite/view?docId=bookreader/asi/asi1986/asi19861016.mets.xml#page/n0/mode/1up>.

⁴⁹ "David and Frieda Macarov." Kibbutz Ginegar was founded in 1922 in the Lower Galilee of northern Israel.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Geffen, "A 1948 Jerusalem Seder."

⁵² Jeffrey Weiss and Craig Weiss, *I am My Brother's Keeper: American Volunteers in Israel's War for Independence, 1947-1949* (Atglen, PA, 1998), 158.

⁵³ Gail Lichtman, "Three Mahal veterans who now live in Jerusalem share their tales of the War of Independence," *Jerusalem Post*, May 1, 2008, accessed March 10, 2016, <http://www.jpost.com/Local-Israel/In-Jerusalem/The-volunteers>.

⁵⁴ "David Macarov to Direct Camp," *Southern Israelite*, March 26, 1954, 5, accessed March 10, 2016, <http://israelite.galileo.usg.edu/israelite/view?docId=bookreader/asi/asi1954/asi1954-0145.mets.xml;query=;brand=israelite-brand#page/n0/mode/1up>.

⁵⁵ David Macarov donated his body to science and did not want an obituary. According to David Geffen, his many books will stand as his obituary. David Geffen, email to Jeremy Katz, March 15, 2016.

⁵⁶ *Above and Beyond: The Untold True Story*, directed by Roberta Grossman (2014), 23:22.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 22:45.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 6:00. Father Charles Coughlin was a populist Roman Catholic priest whose weekly radio show during the 1930s reached an audience of thirty million at the height of his popularity. First supportive of Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal, he soon criticized the president's attitude toward bankers with antisemitic rhetoric. Coughlin was forced off the air in 1939 after making comments in support of Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini's policies. Alan Brinkley, *Voices of Protest: Huey Long, Father Coughlin, and the Great Depression* (New York, 1982); Donald Warren, *Radio Priest: Charles Coughlin, The Father of Hate Radio* (New York, 1996); Ronald Carpenter, *Father Charles E. Coughlin: Surrogate Spokesman for the Disaffected* (Westport, CN, 1998).

⁵⁹ Liz Sawyer, "Obituary: Leon Frankel was a decorated WWII and Israeli Air Force veteran," *Minneapolis StarTribune*, October 31, 2015, accessed April 3, 2016, <http://www.startribune.com/obituary-leon-frankel-was-a-decorated-wwii-and-israeli-air-force-veteran/339136931/>.

⁶⁰ Garey interview, 45.

⁶¹ Macarov, "Atlanta Adolescence," 23.

⁶² *Above and Beyond*, 24:30.

⁶³ Ibid., 24:45.

⁶⁴ Weiss and Weiss, *I am My Brother's Keeper*, 21.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Nordeen, *Fighters Over Israel*, 14.

⁶⁷ Eric L. Goldstein, *To Life: A History of Jews in Atlanta* (Atlanta, 2006), 87.

⁶⁸ Barbara Goldstein Bonfield, *Hallowed Ground: A History of the Knesseth Israel/Beth-El Cemetery, Birmingham, Alabama* (Birmingham, 2009), 25.

⁶⁹ The passages excerpted here come from pp. 1–4, 5–7, 14–16, 20–28, 32–33, 35, 39, 42–43, and 45–49 of the original document.

⁷⁰ Established in 1889, Atlanta's Montag Brothers' Paper Company later found its niche with the younger crowd by launching a clever awards marketing promotion. The company's school supply products came wrapped in packaging stamped with the company's famous Blue Horse logo, which could be collected and redeemed for prizes. By 1950, Montag was one of the largest companies in the industry, and in 1954 a state-of-the-art, 280,000-square-foot plant was built on a twenty-one-acre site on North Highland Avenue. In 1960, Montag and Champion Paper joined forces. The company merged again with Westab and was purchased by Mead Paper Company in the 1970s.

⁷¹ Dun & Bradstreet, Inc., an American company with offices around the world, provides data to businesses on credit history among other information. Garey could not sell the items he preferred because they had been pirated and would have affected the business's rating negatively because of that.

⁷² The Hebrew Benevolent Congregation, known as The Temple, is Atlanta's oldest synagogue. Begun as traditional, the congregation moved between Orthodox and Reform until David Marx became spiritual leader in 1895, when it joined the ranks of Classical Reform. It gradually left Classical Reform behind with the arrival of Rabbi Jacob Rothschild in 1946. The congregation now totals approximately 1,500 families.

⁷³ Begun in 1867 as the Concordia Association, this Jewish social club was reorganized in 1905 as the Standard Club. While Garey's father was a member, its membership still tended to be dominated by Reform Jews of central European descent.

⁷⁴ The Jewish Progressive Club was established in 1913 by eastern European Jews who felt unwelcome at the Standard Club.

⁷⁵ During World War II, the United States Army Air Forces built Payne Airfield to serve the Allied forces rather than take over the existing Alzada Airport located five kilometers away. Payne Field was a major Air Transport Command cargo and passenger hub. When American forces left the base at the end of the war, the Civil Aviation Authority took over the facility and began using it for international civil aviation.

⁷⁶ The Haganah was a Jewish paramilitary organization that operated in the British Mandate of Palestine from 1920 to 1948. After the 1920 and 1921 Arab riots, the Jewish leadership in Palestine believed that the British had no desire to confront the Arabs who were attacking Jews. The Haganah was originally created to protect Jewish farms and *kibbutzim*. In the wake of the 1929 Arab riots, the group grew and got more organized, acquiring military equipment and skills that turned it into a capable underground army. After World War II, the Haganah carried out anti-British operations in Palestine such as the liberation of interned immigrants from the Atlit detainee camp and attacking British installations. They also organized underground immigration into Palestine. Two weeks

after Israel became a state, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) were created to succeed the Haganah, with former Haganah members becoming the core of the IDF. All other paramilitary organizations were outlawed.

⁷⁷ These references are somewhat unclear. The western nations, led by Britain and the United States, had placed a universal blockade on arms for Israel. The British were flying patrols to interdict all shipments. The FBI arrested and imprisoned any American caught "serving under a foreign flag." The only countries that could work with the Jews were those of the Soviet bloc, specifically Czechoslovakia, which was desperate for American dollars.

⁷⁸ Coleman Goldstein was an American B-17 pilot during World War II who was shot down over France in fall 1943 but managed to land the plane safely. Goldstein survived the winter, aided by the French Resistance, before crossing the Pyrenees on foot to safety. Lou Lenart served in the Marines during World War II and led the Israeli Air Force's first combat mission on May 29, 1948, which stopped the Egyptians less than thirty miles from Tel Aviv.

⁷⁹ The Mossad is the national intelligence agency of Israel responsible for intelligence collection, covert operations, and counterterrorism.

⁸⁰ A limpet mine is a type of naval mine attached to a target by magnets, so named because of its superficial similarity to the limpet, a type of sea snail that clings tightly to rocks or other hard surfaces. A swimmer or diver usually attaches the mine to a vessel.

⁸¹ The Palmach ("Strike Force") was the elite fighting force of the Haganah. Established in 1941, by the time it was forcibly disbanded it consisted of over two thousand men and women. Its members formed the backbone of the IDF and were prominent in Israeli politics, literature, and culture.

⁸² Ezer Weizman served as the seventh president of Israel. He was a nephew of Israel's first president, Chaim Weizmann. Weizman was a combat pilot and received his training in the British Army. Between 1944 and 1946, Weizman was a member of the Irgun underground in Mandatory Palestine, and between 1946 and 1947, he studied aeronautics in England. Weizman was a pilot for the Haganah during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. Weizman joined the IDF and served as the commander of the Israeli Air Force between 1958 and 1966, then as Deputy Chief of the General Staff. In 1977, he became Defense Minister under Prime Minister Menachem Begin. Weizman developed a close friendship with Anwar Sadat in 1977 after the Egyptian president's visit to Jerusalem. These relations were a crucial factor in the talks that culminated in the 1978 Camp David Accords, followed by a peace treaty with Egypt the next year. Weizman won election as president in 1993 and reelection in 1998.

⁸³ The insignia for the Egyptian Air Force from 1937 to 1958 was a wide green circle with a white circle inside it. In the center of the white circle was a crescent moon and three stars in green and white.

⁸⁴ Boris Senior was a pivotal figure in the dramatic story of the Machal in the history of the Israeli Air Force and War of Independence. The son of an ardent South African Zionist family, Senior was a fighter pilot in the South African Air Force during World War II. In

1947, while studying economics at London University, Senior became friends with fellow student Ezer Weizman, and both became involved in the activities of the radical Irgun Zvai Leumi underground.

⁸⁵ A French term meaning “allow to pass” is used to refer to a document allowing its holder to come and go freely, especially in lieu of a passport.

⁸⁶ The Israeli “Burma Road” was a makeshift bypass between the general vicinity of Kibbutz Hilda and Jerusalem built by Israeli forces headed by General Mickey Marcus during the 1948 siege of Jerusalem. The name was inspired by the Burma Road into China.

⁸⁷ Chaim Weizmann, president of the World Zionist Organization, was elected as the first president of Israel on February 1, 1949, and served until his death in 1952.

⁸⁸ Rich’s was a department store chain headquartered in Atlanta that operated in the southern United States from 1867 until 2005. The retailer began in Atlanta as M. Rich & Co. dry goods store and was run by Mauritius Reich (anglicized to Morris Rich), a Hungarian Jewish immigrant. It was renamed M. Rich & Bro. in 1877 when his brother Emanuel was admitted into the partnership and was renamed M. Rich & Bros. in 1884 when the third brother, Daniel, joined the partnership. In 1929, the company was reorganized and the retail portion of the business became simply Rich’s.

⁸⁹ The passage excerpted here comes from pp. 10–17 of the original document.

⁹⁰ Long time Zionist leader Louis P. Rucker served as president of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency and Young Judaea, vice president of the Jewish National Fund, and treasurer of the Rasco Israel Corporation, the Zionist Organization of America, and the Rasco Financial Corporation. He paid for the vessel that later became the refugee ship *Exodus 1947*. “Louis P. Rucker, Zionist leader, President of JTA, Dead at 78,” Jewish Telegraphic Agency, December 18, 1972, accessed April 4, 2016, <http://www.jta.org/1972/12/18/archive/louis-p-rocker-zionist-leader-president-of-jta-dead-at-78>.

⁹¹ Rachel Vixman served as executive director of Young Judaea from 1931 to 1936. National Council of Jewish Women, “Vixman, Rachel,” *Pittsburgh and Beyond: The Experience of the Jewish Community*, accessed April 4, 2016, <http://images.library.pitt.edu/cgi-bin/i/image/image-idx?view=entry;cc=ncjw;entryid=x-ais196440.477>.

⁹² Rabbi Israel Goldstein presided over Young Judaea from 1926 to 1928, headed New York’s B’nai Jeshurun, the second oldest synagogue in America, and helped found Brandeis University. He also led dozens of other Jewish organizations including the World Jewish Congress, the United Jewish Appeal, and the Zionist Organization of America. “Rabbi Israel Goldstein, A Founder of Brandeis,” *New York Times*, April 13, 1986, accessed April 4, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/1986/04/13/obituaries/rabbi-israel-goldstein-a-founder-of-brandeis.html>.

⁹³ Theodor Herzl was the father of modern political Zionism. In 1896 he published *The Jewish State*, in which he advocated the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.

Book Reviews

Roads Taken: The Great Jewish Migrations to the New World and the Peddlers Who Forged the Way. By Hasia Diner. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015. 247 pages.

A number of recently published works have capaciously contributed to the understanding of American Jewish life by placing it into its global context. In this recent phase of historiography, scholars rightfully transgress the confinement of single-nation horizons to draw conclusions from findings elsewhere. Thus they consider the essence of the American Jewish experience: they explore in their work what is genuinely American and what may be expressions or results of transnational crosscurrents. This trend pays tribute to the fact that history, and thus by implication historiography as well, has to be relieved of national confinement by considering the foreign perspective. Few myths feature as prominently in the overlapping American popular and historiographical perception as the iconic Jewish peddler. Peddlers' stories and the conceptions evolving from them have marked our discussion of the American Jewish experience.

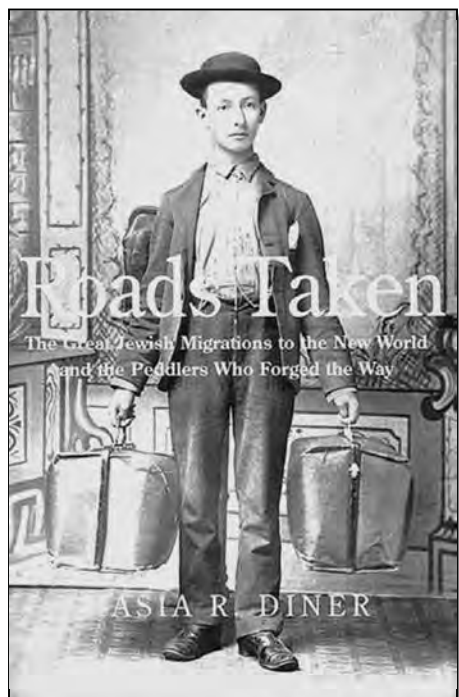
With *Roads Taken: The Great Jewish Migrations to the New World and the Peddlers Who Forged the Way*, Hasia Diner places this particular historical contact between merchant and customer within the global context of "this very long nineteenth century, from the 1780s through the 1920s" (13). Her title is programmatic. The "roads" are to be taken in Robert Frost's poetic sense, but more so in the literal sense of channels of mobility. It is to Diner's credit that she moves the discussion away from this as an American concept during this crucial period of business history. The monograph is structured in five chapters (plus introduction and conclusion), which follow the careers and challenges of a peddler's generic

biography: migration, taking to the road in the adopted land, interaction with customers, the lurking dangers, and life after peddling.

Diner intends her book to be an introduction to a fascinating topic—"the small tip of a veritable mountain range of what could be mined" (xiii). This "small tip" (an undeserved diminution of the approach) suggests that the opportunities of peddling pulled migrants to new territory; they were not just pushed there by horrible conditions at home (ix). The migration of peddlers was grounded in "Jewish population growth, urbanization and industrialization [in their old homes]," coupled with new homes offering the "Jews' long-standing economic niche in petty trade" (25, 30). Such themes have been discussed in the historiography of several societies. The author brings together these stories and thus creates a comprehensive narrative. She sees petty trade at the story's root (the old home), the stem (migration and acculturation), and the crown (the new life). In this reading, peddling remains the one stable constant for migrants as it "stretched across national borders, oceans, and continents" (50). Diner follows the emigrants from Europe, the Ottoman Empire, and Northern Africa across the waters.

The challenge of looking beyond one's own nation is the essence of the global perspective, as "each place had its own history, and its history marked the Jewish peddlers" (49). For Diner's approach, those local histories are to be found especially in the New World: the Dominions and other parts of the British Empire, but also Britain itself, as well as the Americas. Her "bird's eye view," however, centers on the United States, as "more than 80 percent [of Jewish immigrants worldwide] came to America" (xi). The peddling profession offered stability in times of the migrants' personal upheaval. For them, it seems, only the landscape, language, and customs changed. The business remained the same.

Some assertions of *Roads Taken* are thought-provoking. "Peddling does not . . . provide the only way to understand Jewish modernity," as Diner explains, "but it surely contributed to it" through experiences, contacts, and interactions, but also the necessary adaptations based on the profession (3). "To sell their wares, the peddlers had no choice but to acquire literally and figuratively new languages, to learn the details of the cultural systems in which they found themselves" (4). It was indeed their willingness to be mobile in every sense that shaped the business.



The constant supply of immigrants brought with them such mobility and therefore made the business in the first place. Producers and wholesalers in the cities of production recruited immigrants from the ships in order to peddle in the hinterland, whether the green counties of Ireland, the Amazon region of Brazil, or the American South. In the United States, the main port of entry, New York, handily offered products either made in or shipped to the city as it supplied the immigrants carrying them away. The peddler was just one participant “in a single integrated economy” (47, 48).

Roads Taken places the American South neatly into the broad context of a global comparison by implicitly emphasizing the lack of southern distinctiveness in this chapter of Jewish history. Many immigrants chose the same occupation, the same business, through the same strategy of cultural adaptation as elsewhere. Not even the interaction with slaves differed markedly. In the antebellum South “peddlers who came onto plantations sold to both planters and slaves” (102). Peddlers did not foster abolitionism, as the planters feared, but, as Diner convincingly claims, fostered the slaves’ individualism and personal agency as conscious customers—as they did in Cuba and likely also in Brazil. Peddlers did not contribute to bringing down slavery by connecting slaves to the world in any of the few regions where slavery had survived past the 1830s. They did, however, individualize black customers after abolition in the American South.

Immigrants in the South, such as the Wallaces in North Carolina and the Pearlstines in South Carolina, did indeed climb the social and business ladders with peddling as the first rung. Others eventually ran

stores in “Brazil . . . Mexico, Cuba, Jamaica, Rhodesia, Pennsylvania, Georgia, Dublin . . . Australia” (172-74). The stories were comparable all over the world. Yet a region left a mark when, for instance, a former peddler opened a “combined optical and jewelry store in Glasgow” (176), became a cotton broker in South Carolina, or ran a movie theater in Dublin (181). Diner makes clear that peddling was not the last resort for immigrants but rather a well-calculated choice offering the greatest prospects. Peddlers were doing it willingly and skillfully. Moreover, the demands and means of taking the same occupation call into question historians’ familiar emphasis on the conflicts that divided Ashkenazic and Sephardic Jews, German and east European. Peddling was the great equalizer among Jews wherever they went.

Roads Taken argues equally convincingly that this occupation did not constitute a Jewish monopoly. Peddling also attracted Irish, Arabs, and Germans, as well as Yankees in the American South and Chinese in Cuba. It might be asked, then, why Jewish history especially is so crucial for the development of those countries, as Diner claims? Peddlers belonged to a “mass of ordinary people who in their ordinariness made history,” according to the author, and “transformed the Jewish people and the countries to which they immigrated” (ix). For a time, peddlers undoubtedly filled a gap between industrial production and lagging infrastructure in an essential way. In remote places they fed a hunger for glimpses of the wider world, as they “educated farmers and miners in the lifestyles of the better-off class” (4). Peddlers thus enhanced the demand for goods. In that way, they did indeed transform societies and accelerated the process of modernization.

Diner’s fifth chapter, “Road Rage: Jewish Peddlers and the Perils of the Road,” demonstrates persuasively that resentment against peddlers for their rootlessness heightened hostility to Jews. She mentions the most prominent incidents, such as General Ulysses S. Grant’s Order No. 11, which expelled Jews from parts of the Upper South in 1862, and the eviction resolution passed in Thomasville, Georgia, the same year. The United States is nevertheless generally presented as a haven amid tides of resentment. She may well be right, but the case that Diner makes is not airtight. *Roads Taken* also claims that “much anti-Jewish peddler talk and action took place in Catholic countries” (120), but it does not convincingly explain why peddlers fared decisively better in the United

States. Diner repeatedly emphasizes that Jewish peddlers often adopted the patriotism of their new land. In this fashion, the United States served as the focus of longing throughout the period that this book covers. But Diner's argument can be overstated. Forming "robust Jewish communities" in South America apparently made them "attractive enough to stay in rather than going north to the United States" (34). Were such peddlers not making a home there just as much as their coreligionists were doing in the United States? Had they really simply failed to reach America?

Peddling in developing regions of the world was also alluring, because opportunities beckoned where middlemen were needed to close the gap between producers and remote customers. The United States could boast of "the world's most dynamic economy," which "made the road to integration smoother and swifter for immigrant Jewish peddlers than elsewhere" (205). But the transcontinental republic also probably had the weakest infrastructure among the large and advanced economies of the second half of the nineteenth century. As a consequence of the vast distances between communities, the United States presented itself as the most attractive region for an outdated business model of peddling that western Europe was already rendering obsolete. The second most dynamic economy in the world was Germany's. A thorough consideration of peddling and its aftermath in Germany or in any non-English-speaking industrialized country in Europe, might have perfected Diner's study. Yet a striking feature of *Roads Taken*, which addresses a global phenomenon, is the limited number of foreign language sources. Delving further into available nonanglophone material would have completed this scholarly endeavor. Despite its frequent references to other territories, *Roads Taken* is primarily the story of peddling in the United States and the British Empire.

Hasia Diner's extensive analysis offers a mesmerizing glimpse of the complexity and common patterns of an immigrant's occupation in new worlds. The author manages to share her fascination with a seemingly familiar subject and endows it with a fresh perspective. Her emphasis on American exceptionalism is debatable, as the book itself refutes the notion completely. Because *Roads Taken* offers a global perspective beyond artificial boundaries of historiography, this study is much needed and will undoubtedly spark debate. In the end, readers whom *Road Taken* has enlightened will likely agree wholeheartedly with

Diner: "A description from South Africa could just as easily be applied to South Carolina" (48).

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Wednesdays in Mississippi: Proper Ladies Working for Radical Change, Freedom Summer 1964. By Debbie Z. Harwell. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2014. 257 pages.

On November 24, 2014, President Barack Obama conferred the Presidential Medal of Freedom posthumously upon James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner. In 1964 this martyred trio were working on the Mississippi Freedom Summer Project, which was organized under the auspices of the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO). They were slain by members of the Ku Klux Klan as they helped African Americans register to vote. For the dedication of their lives to the cause of freedom and justice, these rank-and-file workers of the civil rights movement, neither charismatic leaders nor members of high-profile organizations, received the nation's highest honor after half a century.

Recently, the idea that the civil rights movement was a movement by Martin Luther King, Jr., or of blacks for blacks, has felt the pressure of revision. Much attention has been dedicated to unsung, unknown, and ordinary people involved in the movement. In academic circles, along with works that specifically describe local people who were committed to civil rights causes, women's roles are among the most studied. Relevant texts include Lynn Olson's *Freedom's Daughters: The Unsung Heroines of the Civil Rights Movement from 1830 to 1970* (2002), Debra L. Schultz's *Going South: Jewish Women in the Civil Rights Movement* (2001), and Gail S. Murray's edited *Throwing Off the Cloak of Privilege: White Southern Women Activists in the Civil Rights Era* (2004).

In *Wednesdays in Mississippi: Proper Ladies Working for Radical Change, Freedom Summer 1964*, Debbie A. Harwell presents another, lesser-known group of unsung heroines of the civil rights movement in Mississippi's summer of 1964 and shortly thereafter. The effort called

Wednesdays in Mississippi (WIMS) may have constituted the only civil rights program that was created by women for women. WIMS was founded under the auspices of the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) and became the only program dedicated to helping black women in Mississippi during Freedom Summer. WIMS functioned entirely outside the power structures of male-led civil rights organizations.

Dorothy I. Height, the president of NCNW, and her Jewish friend and a NCNW volunteer, Polly Spiegel Cowan, conceived and started the program, which consisted of sending teams of women to Mississippi weekly. On Tuesdays (despite the name of the program), teams of women known as "Wednesdays women" arrived in Jackson, Mississippi, from various northern cities for a total of seven weeks in July and August 1964. On Wednesdays, they brought supplies and much needed support to small rural communities such as Hattiesburg, Meridian, and Canton. Meetings were conducted often in secret with local civil rights activists and with African American professional women. The WIMS women also visited Freedom Schools established by the Mississippi Freedom Summer Project for the purpose of providing free education to local African American children deprived of adequate schooling opportunities. COFO community centers were also included on the itinerary of these visitors, who returned home on Thursdays.

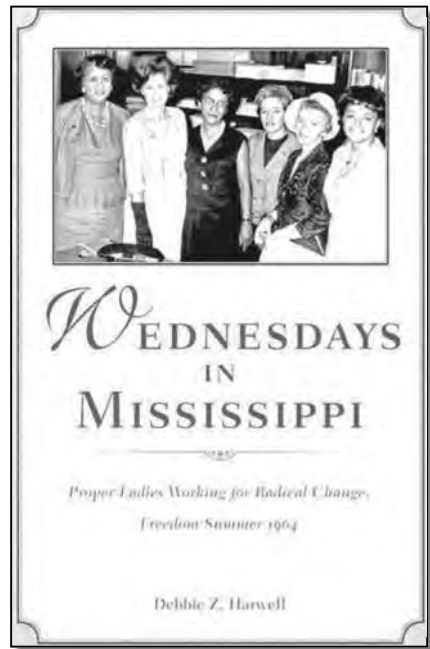
Forty-eight women comprised these seven interracial, interfaith, and middle-aged teams. They ranged from middle class to upper class. Of them, thirty-two were white and sixteen black; thirty-two were Protestant, eight Jewish, six Catholic, and two undesignated. Each team included at least two African Americans and a Jew (63). Most came from Chicago, Boston, Minneapolis, New York, and other northern cities. One woman came from as far away as California and joined Team 3, most of whose members were from the Washington, D.C., area (61). WIMS women's backgrounds varied, but many were experienced at community work and had sought to improve education and housing in the North. Some had already been active in the civil rights struggle. Four were mothers of Freedom Summer volunteers (63).

The approach that WIMS adopted to the racism of Mississippi was unique—quiet and "ladylike." No one would have guessed that the WIMS women were civil rights activists because they arrived in Jackson on commercial airline flights wearing pearls and white gloves and carry-

ing purses. Instead of testing the Civil Rights Act that came into effect on July 2, 1964 (five days before the first team arrived), they adhered to the state's racial customs and seemed to separate themselves by race. The young student radicals of Freedom Summer behaved quite differently. Instead the WIMS teams sought to open lines of communication with local people and presented themselves as proper ladies and by conversation over coffee. They did not adopt this policy, however, because they were lukewarm or insufficiently enthusiastic about racial equality. Rather they acted cautiously to avoid offending southern mores, and thus acknowledged the fear that then engulfed Mississippi.

In 1966, after dispatching seven teams in 1964 and eight teams in 1965, WIMS became Workshops in Mississippi, an organization that more specifically addressed the needs of southern black women. While WIMS promoted the specific goal of opening lines of communication among women to challenge white supremacy, Workshops aided the women who were the primary victims of racism by addressing basic human needs such as housing, food, clothing, and employment. Projects that grew from these efforts continue to operate.

The Jewish component of the civil rights era deserves to be noted. Jewish activists represented a disproportionate number of whites involved in the struggle against Jim Crow. Freedom Summer attracted about eight hundred white volunteers, of whom Jews constituted about half. Most southern Jews, however, were insufficiently brave to take a forthrightly favorable position toward civil rights because of their minority status and their fear of repercussions, although the region's Jews were generally sympathetic to blacks. Their "frightened friends" might have constituted as many as 75 percent of southern Jews, according to the



estimate of P. Allen Krause in "Rabbis and Negro Rights in the South, 1954-1967," *American Jewish Archives* 21 (1969): 23. Only forty Jewish families lived in Jackson in the early 1960s, a number that nevertheless constituted half of the Jewish population in the state. For their economic and social survival, their tiny number and marginalized status drove them to accept local white hegemony.

To account for the disproportionate Jewish participation in WIMS, Harwell uses the phrase "Prophetic Judaism," to which, she believes, women like Cowan subscribed. "Prophetic Judaism" was exemplified in the teachings of Isaiah: "Learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow" (34). Yet Harwell notes that the Jewish WIMS women and their families did not practice their faith actively. They were members of their local Jewish communities, but they were not pious. Rather than deciding to join WIMS after listening to rabbinical sermons, they participated in the struggle for racial justice because of their own experiences of discrimination as Jews. Jews like Schwerner, Goodman, and others engaged in Freedom Summer tended to be secular, and they seldom attended synagogue, yet upon reflection they often claimed *tikun olam* to explain their commitment to political transformation.

Harwell's book complements the history of the civil rights movement by adding this story of unsung heroines. Using rare primary sources and oral interviews, she challenges the conventional view of Freedom Summer activists as predominantly young student radicals. Instead she demonstrates the effectiveness of the quiet approach that middle-aged women took by presenting themselves as proper ladies. By sending these women into the Deep South, WIMS served as a catalyst for change by opening lines of communication across race, region, and religion. The publication of *Wednesdays in Mississippi* thus reinforces the gratitude that the Presidential Medal of Freedom expressed when President Obama honored the three murdered Freedom Summer workers. Harwell's book can be read as another fiftieth anniversary present to the WIMS women, whose vision and selfless determination have made the world a better place to live.

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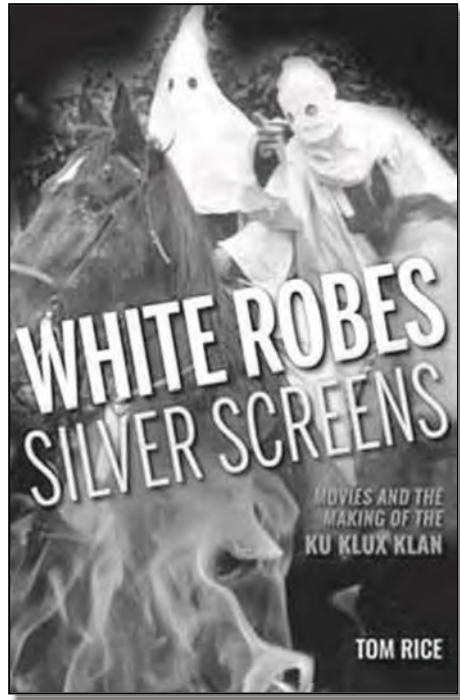
White Robes, Silver Screens: Movies and the Making of the Ku Klux Klan. By Tom Rice. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2015. 302 pages.

Most historians of the American South know of the two “births” in Atlanta, Georgia, in December 1915—the premiere of D. W. Griffith’s *The Birth of a Nation* and the inauguration of the twentieth-century Ku Klux Klan (KKK) just weeks before. In this instance, and throughout its existence, the Klan used the film as a recruiting tool. In this clearly and smartly written volume, Tom Rice gives us an exhaustive account of these 1915 events but much, much more.

White Robes, Silver Screens is a revelation. As the author notes, the Atlanta premiere of *The Birth of a Nation* was just the beginning of the Klan’s engagement with the movies. To prove his point, he has pored through major and local newspapers, white and black, from the *Altoona Mirror* in Pennsylvania to the *Youngstown Citizen* in Ohio, and Hollywood trade papers such as *Variety*, *Moving Picture World*, and *Screen Daily* as well as fan magazines. Rice has also, by my count, examined more than one hundred Klan newspapers and newsletters to chart in exhaustive detail the surprisingly extensive and complex ways in which various chapters and members of the Invisible Empire engaged with the movies to promote their cause.

Each chapter of this monograph explores a different facet of this phenomenon. The first explores Griffith’s *Birth*, the rebirth of the Klan on Stone Mountain, and the ways in which the organization continued to “exploit” and “appropriate” that film, as well as a few more obscure titles, well into the 1930s. Chapter 2 looks at the ways in which the Klan talked to itself and the public about Hollywood, joining in censorship movements and posing as a group dedicated to a kind of social reform. (After all, the Klan supported prohibition.) According to Rice, the KKK even had a surprisingly unabashed presence within the below-the-line ranks of a major studio, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Chapter 3 explores the Klan’s unsuccessful but fascinating efforts at filmmaking (both feature films and newsreels) and film exhibition (renting theaters and meeting halls and, in a few isolated cases, owning such venues). Rice’s

final chapter explores Hollywood's treatment of the KKK. For example, Mary Pickford, America's sweetheart, donned the emblematic white robe in 1919 for *Heart o' the Hills*. Studio films through the 1920s depicted the Klan neutrally or at times heroically as a story element in genre films such as the western. On a few occasions, studio advertising and publicity press books encouraged local theaters to stage exploitation stunts featuring people dressed in regalia indelibly associated with the KKK. Yet by the late 1930s, social-problem films that the studios released, such as and most



famously *Black Legion* (1937) starring Humphrey Bogart, condemned this vigilante organization in no uncertain terms. In each chapter, Rice brings his authoritative understanding of the social history of American film to bear on this dazzling array of evidence.

Predictably, a key animating motive for the Klan's attacks on Hollywood was the prevalence of Jewish studio executives and foreign stars, whose presence in popular culture clashed with the Klan's constant espousal of "all-American" (i.e., Protestant) values. Chapter 2 explores the Klan's hostility in the most depth. The KKK took enormous offense at Charlie Chaplin's tramp comically impersonating a Protestant minister in *The Pilgrim* (1923), an animus also based on the widespread but mistaken view that the comedian was Jewish. Also in 1923, the Klan protested against a now-forgotten Paramount film, *Bella Donna*, in which the surprisingly independent British title character, played by Polish actress Pola Negri, falls in love with—and nearly kills her husband for—an Egyptian. In one of the more telling, if less vitriolic, quotations that Rice finds in Klan publications, the *Chicago Dawn*

complained that the Jewish producers lacked “that inborn feeling of supremacy toward the black races that is peculiar to the better born Americans” (71).

In denouncing an industry that Jews seemed to dominate, the Klan tapped into national discourses that censors and reformers were also generating. They, too, mounted attacks on the studios for producing decadent, corrupt, and corrupting films. Antisemitism thus joined with anti-Catholicism, even before the advent of the Catholic-inspired Production Code and the ways that Joseph Breen administered it. Because the Klan championed the prohibitionist Eighteenth Amendment so fervently, it could burnish its claims to advance social reform, and it could thus align itself with patriotic organizations like the American Legion. Yet the Klan’s invocation of “all-American values” constituted a decisively more virulent, unrestrained version of Protestant efforts to reform the movies. Moreover, Rice is alive to the irony of the Klan’s simultaneous antimodernist response to film and the embrace of this influential new medium when it suited the organization—either making its own movies or promoting studio films seen as favorable to the cause. The Klan even praised a title or two from Adolph Zukor’s much-condemned Paramount during the 1930s.

Rice’s volume is a masterful, definitive account of this underexplored phenomenon, and it is written with a confident grasp of the complex and often contradictory forces that shape films and their place in American social history. His chronicle ends in 1944, when the Ku Klux Klan experienced a very brief demise, only to revive itself in 1946, just in time for the emerging struggle over civil rights that would shape the next decade in the South in particular. Some day in the future, I hope to read a history of the Klan’s rebirth and its relationship to the movies in the postwar period. If we are fortunate, Tom Rice will write that history as well.

Matthew H. Bernstein, Emory University

Fair Labor Lawyer: The Remarkable Life of New Deal Attorney and Supreme Court Advocate Bessie Margolin. By Marlene Trestman. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2016. 242 pages.

This intriguing book is primarily a “thank you, and I love you” note from the author to Bessie Margolin. Both women came out of difficult family situations, resided at the New Orleans Jewish Orphans Home, and attended the Isidore Newman School. Margolin never forgot where she came from, and, whenever possible, helped young women like herself, encouraging them to aim high, and, in Trestman’s case, to become a lawyer. Trestman never forgot the kindness or the encouragement, and this book is in many ways a repayment of that kindness.

Bessie Margolin had an amazingly interesting life. She entered the law profession at a time when few women dared to follow that path, but it also proved a time when the New Deal needed as many lawyers as it could get, and she was fortunate to have bosses who recognized that a supersmart legal mind lay behind her pretty face. She successfully defended the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) in the courts, and after the passage of the Fair Labor Standards Act in 1938, she became the chief lawyer at the Labor Department defending its provisions.

She met and knew just about everybody worth knowing in Washington, D.C., from 1933 until her retirement in 1972. (Trestman includes a partial guest list of those who attended Margolin’s retirement dinner in 1972, and it is literally a Who’s Who of Washington.) When Robert H. Jackson went to Germany to lead the American team at the Nazi war crimes trial in Nuremberg, Margolin wangled a position on the American staff. She described the eight months she spent there, and in touring around Europe, as an “interesting adventure.”

Margolin understood that being pretty by itself would get her nowhere, but, at the same time, she took great care in her hair, makeup, and clothes to be attractive. As Trestman notes, Margolin early on decided not to marry and that her vocation would be her lifelong love. This made a great deal of sense, for in middle-class America at the time, married women did not work. They stayed home, had babies, and cooked dinner for their husbands.

But Margolin always had enjoyed the opposite sex, and over her life had several intense and semisecret affairs. In 1981 Margolin and Robert Ginnane, the general counsel of the Interstate Commerce Commission from 1955 to 1970, surprised their friends by announcing they would wed. The two had been having a clandestine romance for more than two decades and now felt free to go out in public as a couple. Unfortunately, Ginnane died before the two could marry.

Margolin argued twenty-four cases before the U.S. Supreme Court, winning twenty-one of them, making her one of the most successful practitioners before that tribunal, male or female. She also argued and won dozens of cases in lower courts, first representing the TVA and later the Labor Department. Her record should have entitled her not only to a supervisory position but to be head of the Labor Department's solicitor's office, and the fact that she did not get the job convinced her that she would have to fight sexism. She presented evidence to Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins of what Margolin called "unconscious discrimination" against her as a woman that prevented her promotion. Perkins agreed, and in 1942 she named Margolin Assistant Solicitor of Labor. Margolin later received the Department's Distinguished Service Award, and Chief Justice Earl Warren praised her for developing "the flesh and sinews" around the "bare bones" of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

As one might have expected, in the postwar Red Scare someone as obviously prolabor as Margolin would be investigated by the FBI, and although the Bureau found no traces of communism, it did uncover her romantic involvements. She would be investigated and her loyalty questioned again later in the 1950s.

It is very probable that the FBI reports kept Margolin from achieving the one goal that eluded her—an appointment as a federal judge. She apparently was considered for the position several times during the Kennedy and Johnson years, but although as well qualified—better qualified, in fact—than some of the men chosen, the presidents decided not to name her and never really explained why. In 1966, during the Johnson years, Margolin, who described herself as a "reluctant feminist," joined the National Organization for Women as a founding member.

In her last years in the Labor Department, Margolin did not slow down, and in 1969 she argued the first Equal Pay Act appeal, *Shultz v. Wheaton Glass Co.* The law required that men and women be paid the

same for “substantially equal” work, which the employer argued meant identical work. If not identical, the company claimed, it did not have to pay women as much. Margolin convinced the Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit that the phrase “substantially equal” meant just that, and not “identical,” a decision the Supreme Court declined to review.

Although Margolin came from a Jewish family, and certainly benefited from the care she received at the Jewish Orphans Home and her education at the Isidore Newman School, Judaism apparently played a very minor role in her life. A nonobservant Jew as an adult, she always considered herself Jewish, and as Trestman points out “she was identified as a Jew by others, and not always to her advantage” (9). She certainly opposed antisemitism, which led her to want to take part in the Nuremberg trials and to travel to Israel in 1962. Trestman believes that Reform Judaism’s emphasis on social justice, regularly invoked at the Jewish Orphans Home in speech and practice, played an important role in shaping her professional life.

Bessie Margolin certainly deserves a biography, and Marlene Trestman has covered her career quite well. She skirts around some of



the private relations she had, and there is little that one might call “critical” here. Margolin had an amazing life, especially for a woman of her era, and perhaps there was little to be critical of. Margolin did not preserve all of her papers with the sort of care that would help a biographer, and much of what Trestman found related to her professional life. She left practically nothing about her private life except a few bundles of photographs and some private letters, for most of which the recipient could not be identified. Margolin’s remaining family

members helped out with reminiscences, pictures, and stories, and, given the paucity of information, Trestman did yeoman work filling in the gaps of her professional life, and even a good part of her private one as well. It is doubtful anyone else will tackle Margolin as a subject, and we should be grateful for what Trestman has achieved. It is an absorbing story told well.

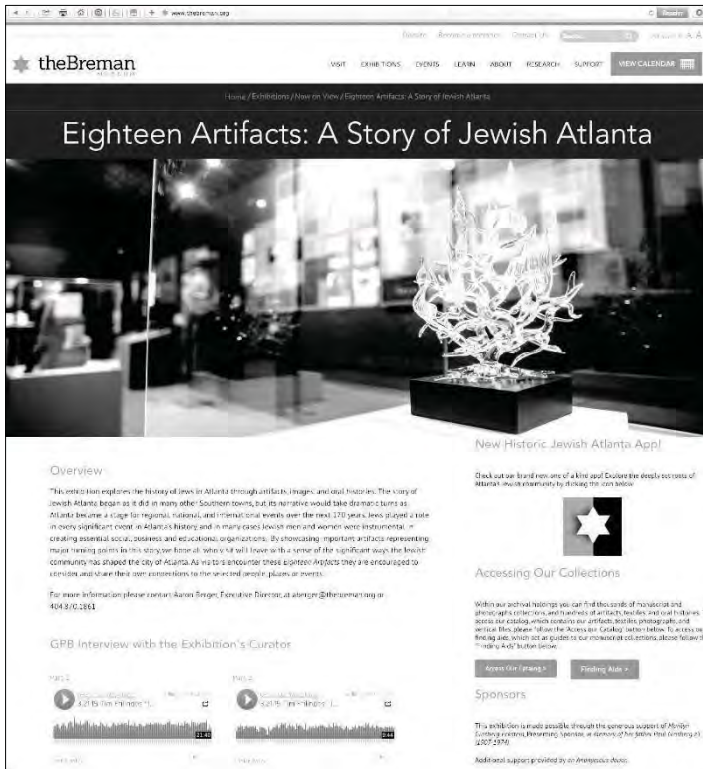
Melvin I. Urofsky, Virginia Commonwealth University

Website Review

The William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum, <http://www.thebreman.org>. Reviewed March 2016.

Cecil Alexander left his mark on Atlanta: Georgia Institute of Technology student, dive-bomber pilot during World War II, architect, civil rights activist, president of the American Jewish Committee Atlanta chapter. His wide-ranging influence presents the opportunity for an intersectional approach to exploring the history of Atlanta, and, with his passing in 2013, the William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum's archives became an essential link to this Georgia native. Previously, a research project on Cecil Alexander likely meant a physical trip to the Breman Museum in midtown Atlanta. But now, thanks to the Breman Museum's updated website, this digitized collection—along with approximately 20 percent of the Breman Museum's entire archival holdings—is available to anyone with Internet access.

The William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum, a fixture of the Atlanta cultural scene since its move to the Selig Center in 1996, houses several thousand collections in the Cuba Family Archives for Southern Jewish History. In 2015, the Breman Museum rolled out its first large-scale website update in nearly a decade. The new site features expanded content in a visually driven structure and a responsive framework that allows easy navigation on all mobile and desktop devices. Click, for instance, onto the webpage for Eighteen Artifacts: A Story of Jewish Atlanta, and you will access an exhibition overview, photo tour, radio interview with the curator, and a link to download Historic Jewish Atlanta, a map-based app of historically relevant sites. According to Jeremy Katz and David Schendowich of the Breman Museum, who spoke with the reviewer in March 2016, the website received national recognition



<http://www.thebreman.org/Exhibitions/Now-on-View/Eighteen-Artifacts-A-Story-of-Jewish-Atlanta>

in its first year, and they are currently working with the Google Cultural Institute to expand the audience of the new site.

The changes are of significant interest for scholars of Jewish history because the Breman Museum also included many of its archival collections in the website update. For the main website, the Breman Museum chose to implement an open-source Content Management System (CMS), which supports fast and easy updates and emphasizes usability. The Breman Museum’s archival management adapted the presentation of their newly digitized collections to fit this system, capitalizing on features of cross-reference (allowing for easy searches across the archives) and contextualization.

The updated home page for the Breman archives offers visitors the option of exploring the collections through finding aids or by directly accessing the separate online catalog, which includes several keyword options for searching manuscripts and objects included in the Breman's comprehensive holdings on the Jewish experience in Georgia and Alabama. Modeled on the website of the American Jewish Archives, each collection listing on the Breman Museum's new site includes searchable accession references that provide smooth transitions between collection summaries, finding aids, and the catalog. Of special note is the extensive work invested in updating the finding aids. The previous website's aids were in PDF form, preventing keyword searches of the contents; now approximately 350 collections with fully searchable finding aids and inventory lists are available online.

In addition to its expanded cross-reference capabilities, a notable feature of the website is its emphasis on contextualization. Each featured collection, including those still awaiting full digitization, is hosted on its own separate page. Alongside the standard archival notes of source, date, copyright, and summary, the Breman archives include useful links to other related collections. Many objects in the online catalog also include a summary of their relationship to other topics, opening opportunities for connections that otherwise might be overlooked. For instance, a catalog search for the *Jewish Progressive Club (J.P.C.)* yields a series of photographs, including a 1930 print of the JPC basketball team. The individual photograph listing includes a searchable roster and a link to a number of related subjects, including individuals, archival collections, and broader topics such as Jewish basketball players. These search results create potential avenues for additional research, increasing the connections between collections and aiding the discovery of new material and diverse applications by researchers.

The accessibility and utility of the Breman Museum's new website reveal not only the significant digitization efforts of the archival staff, but also the strength of the Cuba Family Archives. Over nine thousand objects and manuscripts have been catalogued for online reference, including textiles, newspapers, paintings, institutional correspondence, and oral histories. And the Breman Museum is steadily expanding its holdings as well. The July 2015 acquisition of the Savannah Jewish Archives, which includes records from synagogues, cemeteries, institutions,

and the family papers of some of the earliest Jewish settlers in Georgia, makes the Breman a top destination for research on southern Jewish history. Two significant collections are already fully digitized and available online, including the papers of Cecil Alexander, with plans to increase the digital holdings as copyright and server space become available over the next few years.

As the Breman Museum pushes the usability of its archives for researchers, it also fosters a connection between general audiences and the archival collections. Planners note that the Breman Museum's new website will feature online exhibitions that pull directly from their archives, with an eventual goal of twenty small, interactive online exhibitions produced per year. *Harold Arlen: The Man Behind the Curtain*, one of the first of these online exhibitions, is already on view. It features the Timeline JS model, an accessible and easy-to-use tool that some historians and educators are beginning to adopt to visually present their multimedia data to expanded audiences.

As with any large-scale website redesign, some housekeeping remains to be done. A few objects in the catalog are missing live links to their finding aids or the broader collection, and the emphasis on a strong visual template often prioritizes images over text, causing users to scroll down to find the text content on some devices. These are minor notes, especially given the relative newness of this iteration of the website and the staff's ongoing effort to expand server space to make room for additional content. As a whole, the William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum's update emphasizes accessibility and contextualization to provide a more useful interface for its expanding archival collection. The website evidences the power of a digital resource crafted with the researcher in mind.

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Exhibit Reviews

Seeking Justice: The Leo Frank Case Revisited. Organized by the William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum, on display at the Southern Museum of Civil War and Locomotive History, Kennesaw, Georgia, August 2015 through November 2015. Curated by Sandra Berman and Jane Leavey.

A few miles from where an angry mob lynched Jewish businessman Leo Frank a century ago, a Georgia museum recently hosted an exhibition probing the events leading to his murder. Inside the Southern Museum of Civil War and Locomotive History in Kennesaw, one could see a life-size facsimile of the hanging tree as well as Frank's delicate, white baby shoes. With such compelling displays, *Seeking Justice: The Leo Frank Case Revisited*, organized by the William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum in Atlanta, transported the viewer back to a dark time when Frank's killers knew they would not be held accountable for their crime.

The exhibit was one of several events commemorating the passing of one hundred years since the only known lynching of a Jewish person in twentieth-century America. On the exact date, August 16, 2015, in Marietta, the town where the hanging took place, Rabbi Steven Lebow of Kol Emeth synagogue paid tribute to Frank by planting an oak sapling he termed a "tree of life." Some 350 people, including local politicians, lawyers, and judges, attended the prayer service that followed. At a historic theater nearby, the Georgia Historical Society sponsored a talk by Steve Oney, author of *And the Dead Shall Rise: The Murder of Mary Phagan and the Lynching of Leo Frank* (2003). Oney's interpretation of the case served as inspiration for the Breman exhibit. In downtown Atlanta, meanwhile, docents gave Jewish-themed tours at Oakland Cemetery, where Frank's widow, Lucille Selig Frank, is buried.

*Leo M. Frank. (Courtesy of the Cuba
Family Archives for Southern
Jewish History at the Breman
Museum, Atlanta.)*

From this reviewer's perspective, the curators magnificently met the challenge of not only conveying the complexity of the Frank affair, but also suggesting its continued relevance. Breman archivist Sandra Berman, the museum's former executive director Jane Leavey, and historian Andrew Ambrose, former deputy director of the Atlanta History Center, included the word "revisited" in the title to emphasize the latest findings regarding this perplexing episode. To do so, they assembled an impressive array of primary sources that are viscerally and intellectually stimulating. These items range from the benign—a sweet portrait of thirteen-year-old "Little Mary" Phagan, whom Frank was found guilty of murdering—to the macabre—a souvenir toothpick carved from the notorious oak tree. During the 1960s, this ancient specimen was chopped down to make way for a highway lined with fast food joints, and today no one would know that something awful happened there. It is more famous for being the home of the fifty-six-foot-tall "Big Chicken," which beckons drivers to pull over to eat the South's most iconic dish.

The most interesting pieces in *Seeking Justice* demonstrate the enormous efforts deployed to prosecute and defend the stoic, thirty-year-old engineer charged with strangling Mary Phagan, one of the many child laborers at Atlanta's National Pencil Factory. Prosecutors had an architectural model of the factory built to recreate the scene for jurors. Frank's

lawyers tried to pin the girl's murder on Jim Conley, a janitor at the factory, and their version of the story can be traced in a gruesome photographic reenactment that depicts a black-faced man eerily hovering over Phagan's corpse. After deliberating for two hours, Frank was convicted and sentenced to die on the gallows. Outside the court, hollers and shouts in praise of the finding emerged from a large crowd that had gathered in sympathy for Phagan. By this point, she had been elevated to martyr status. Subsequent to the verdict, a famous folk singer, "Fiddlin" John Carson, even penned a song about Phagan's plight, with lyrics stating, "Little Mary was in heaven," and the judge "sent Leo Frank to hell."

Frank sought a new trial, contending that the courtroom atmosphere undermined justice. When he lost this plea, prominent Jewish leaders from outside the South were prompted to assist him in appealing the verdict. Top-notch lawyers paid by *New York Times* publisher Adolf Ochs and advertising mogul Albert D. Lasker invested thousands of dollars to pursue multiple legal avenues for Frank, the former president of Atlanta's B'nai B'rith chapter. Excerpts from the legal briefs trace their strategy, and accompanying newspaper articles show a growing awareness among opinion leaders that Frank had not gotten a fair shake.

In keeping with the theme of new revelations, the exhibit also included evidence unearthed by contemporary historians and even individuals involved in the 1913 case that suggests that Conley was the culprit in Phagan's murder. First, there is a note written thirty-five years too late by Conley's lawyer, William Smith, explaining why he had come to believe that his client and not Frank had killed the child laborer. Second, one could view a handwritten deathbed confession by Alonzo Mann, a coworker of Conley's, who said he saw the janitor carry Phagan's dead body to the basement of the pencil factory. Mann recounted in a video on display in the show that he never came forth to spare Frank because Conley threatened to kill him.

In the introductory section, visitors could learn that the Leo Frank affair was part and parcel of a specific historical context: the early-twentieth-century drive to transfer New York values to Atlanta. The transition of the former Confederacy from a rural agrarian past to an urban, industrial New South generated sharp racial, class, and ethnic tensions.

Scenes from Seeking Justice: The Leo Frank Case Reconsidered.
At top, Frank's office at the National Pencil Factory. Below,
news reports chronicling the aftermath of Frank's murder.
(Courtesy of the Cuba Family Archives for Southern Jewish
History at the Breman Museum.)

Demagogues like Populist politician Tom Watson and other scandal-mongering editors exacerbated conflict, as seen in the inflammatory headlines of sepia-toned newspapers. "Police have the Strangler," read the banner atop the *Georgian*, an Atlanta daily owned by William Randolph Hearst, on the day after Frank's arrest. Newspapers sold the idea that the

transplanted New Yorker could not keep his hands off comely southern girls; Phagan was “innocence defiled.”

Later in the exhibit, there were surprising disclosures on the backgrounds of the men who kidnapped Frank from his jail cell in Milledgeville so they could prevent the “Jew pervert” from preying on other women should he be set free. For decades, this mob was seen the same way it was described in a 1915 *Chicago Tribune* cover story: representing a “half educated [South]” . . . “a region of illiteracy, blatant self-righteousness, cruelty and violence.” But, following the work of Oney, the exhibit has revealed that the ringleaders were upstanding members of their community: lawyers, a doctor, a sheriff, a judge.

For those looking for something positive to glean from Frank’s ordeal, the exhibit has highlighted the principled action of Georgia governor John Slaton. His decision to commute Frank’s death sentence to life imprisonment, despite risking political suicide and his own lynching, is recounted by his great-niece in a videotaped interview that was viewable in the exhibit.

Listening to the interviews with the families of Frank and Phagan in the show’s final room made clear that this will not be the last word on this subject. Frank’s great-niece, sixty-nine-year-old Catherine Smithline from New Jersey, and her counterpart, sixty-one-year-old Mary Phagan Kean, who lives in northern Georgia, both grew up ignorant of how their families’ histories were intertwined. However, while Smithline views her uncle as a scapegoat, Kean conducted her own investigation and published a book, *The Murder of Little Mary Phagan* (1989), concluding that Frank was indeed the killer. Although not mentioned in the exhibit, Kean has become a darling of white supremacists who share the distorted ideology of the lynch mob.

While touring the exhibit over the Thanksgiving holiday at the Southern Museum, a docent warned our group about the adult nature of the display. My take as a historian and a mother is that what is shown is no more disturbing than the way television depicts crime, with the added benefit that all perspectives are relayed empathetically. Jewish visitors, exposed to the Holocaust at an early age, would find what they saw tame in comparison. Like the most sophisticated Holocaust exhibits, this one pointed to causes and consequences as well as the horrors that unfolded.

The most significant consequences have to do with issues that unfortunately remain germane in the twenty-first century. The case gave rise to a rebirth of America's premier racist and nativist group, the Ku Klux Klan. The group chose the top of Stone Mountain, an ancient granite outcropping that overlooks Atlanta, to engage in cross burnings for the next half century. In 1924, the United Daughters of the Confederacy sponsored the construction of an enormous carving on the side of the mountain, similar to Mount Rushmore, depicting their heroes, Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, and Stonewall Jackson. One could see a commemorative Klan postcard depicting this marvel in *Seeking Justice*. Whether this white supremacist monument should still be displayed is an ongoing debate in today's multiethnic Georgia.

To combat the antisemitism dredged up by the Frank case, national Jewish leaders of B'nai B'rith founded the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), which successfully attained a 1986 ruling by the Georgia Board of Pardons and Paroles recognizing the state's failure to protect Frank from being murdered. The ADL would have preferred that Georgia issue a posthumous pardon exonerating Frank.

Given the scope of *Seeking Justice*, more than an hour would have been needed to appreciate the entire exhibit, especially if one wanted to listen to the absorbing video oral histories. After leaving Georgia, the exhibit traveled to the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York, the state where Frank was raised, educated, and buried. It was in New York until the end of August 2016.

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Congregation Mickve Israel Museum. Congregation Mickve Israel, Savannah, Georgia. Curated by the Mickve Israel Museum Committee. Permanent exhibition.

Every Jew living in Savannah wears the community's history as a badge of honor, but perhaps proudest of all are the members of Kahal Kadosh Mickve Israel (KKMI). Formed in 1735 by the original forty-one

Jewish settlers who arrived on the banks of the Savannah River in July 1733, Mickve Israel is the third oldest Jewish congregation in the United States. In fact, some of the current members trace their lineage back to the original settlers. Their current building was constructed in 1876 and is the last known neo-Gothic synagogue in the country. Located within Savannah's beautiful historic district on Monterey Square (which it shares with its more notorious neighbor, the Mercer-Williams House of *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* fame), in addition to being an active synagogue, KKMI is a popular destination that serves more than ten thousand visitors a year for tours of its sanctuary and museum.

Visits to KKMI begin in the sanctuary. Groups are seated in the pews to hear the story of how the original settlers came to arrive on the shores of Savannah. It is a tale of Jewish hardship that begins in the time of the Inquisition, since nearly all of the original settlers were from Iberia.

The focus then shifts to the magnificent but most unusual – for a synagogue – architecture. The docent uses a recorded audio presentation narrated by the late Alan Gaynor, a local attorney and lifelong congregant who died in 2010. In his smooth voice with a charming southern accent, Gaynor describes the features of the historic building.

While the sanctuary, with its nave and transept, bears a remarkable resemblance to churches and cathedrals constructed in the Gothic style that was all the rage of the Victorian era, the narrator assures us it was built as a synagogue. Although the choice of architecture was intentional, we learn that the long and narrow “trust lot” on which the synagogue is built also influenced the design of the building. All around are sights to behold – magnificent stained glass windows, original Gothic furniture, the distinctive Holy Ark.

Along with the narration is background music that includes liturgical selections sung by KKMI's professional choir and the famed tenor Mandy Patinkin, who sang at the congregation's 275th anniversary celebration in 2008. Their singing is accompanied by KKMI's pipe organ, another of the synagogue's unique features. The strains of the organ on the recording are at once soothing and unexpected. Popular only in a limited number of Reform Jewish congregations in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the pipe organ has virtually disappeared from the American synagogue. Even churches are turning to other forms of music that appeal to younger generations.

*Mickve Israel, Savannah. (Library of Congress, left.
Courtesy of Lynn Levine, right.)*

KKMI was the first Jewish congregation in America to play instrumental music in worship services when, in 1820, it used a borrowed organ during the dedication of its original synagogue, the first in the South. The year prior, Sheftall Sheftall, a descendant of a founding member, attended the dedication of the new sanctuary at the nearby Independent Presbyterian Church, where he heard organ music played. This experience inspired him to have the same for KKMI. The visitor sees that the current organ fills the center of a choir loft. While some are tempted to surmise that the loft once served as seating for the congregation's women, we learn that KKMI was on a path of religious liberalization even before occupying this building, having mixed seating in the pews since 1868. The congregation officially affiliated with the Reform movement in 1904.

The tour moves upstairs to the Nancy and Lawrence Gutstein Museum, which underwent a major one-million-dollar renovation completed in 2015. The compact space, approximately six hundred square feet, now uses museum-quality lighting and display casing to exhibit the congregation's treasures collected for almost three hundred years. The docent points out a panel noting that of six colonial Jewish congregations, only

KKMI has complete primary records from its founding up until the present. Beneath it is a case with the journal of the Minis family, one of the founding families. The journal was discovered with some items gifted to the University of Georgia in the 1950s and then returned to the congregation. A timeline with the congregation's history stands in front of a rail where visitors can look down at a model of the *William and Sarah*, the ship that carried the first settlers from London to Savannah in 1733.

Seven descriptive panels and five large exhibit cases cover the other three walls of the room. The panels are used as much to supply context for the congregation's place in the history of the United States and Savannah as to provide a detailed history of the congregation. In addition to the story of KKMI's founding, there are examples of accomplishments of members and their descendants, such as Herman Myers, the first Jewish mayor of Savannah, or the great-great-grandson of a congregation founder, the distinguished naval commodore Uriah Levy, who purchased Monticello and saved it from ruin after Thomas Jefferson's death. The exhibit cases contain artifacts as varied as a *hanukiya* and circumcision kit that belonged to the original settlers and a *Playbill* for *Driving Miss Daisy*, written by Alfred Uhry, a congregant's cousin.

Also in the exhibit cases are replicas of some of the congregation's presidential letters. KKMI has letters written to the congregation by every president of the United States since George Washington. The originals are safely archived at the Georgia Historical Society.

The center of the room is dominated by two cases containing KKMI's prized possessions: two *sifrei Torah*, written on deerskins, that have been deemed the oldest in existence in the United States. One was carried by the original settlers and another by a group soon after. Both were produced in Italy during the fifteenth century.

Mickve Israel is Savannah's second most popular site on the Trip Advisor tourism application, and it is easy to understand why. Although it is difficult to compress almost three hundred years of any history into a single room, Mickve Israel has done so admirably. A stop at this historic site, along with a tour conducted by one of its well-trained docents, leaves visitors with a good perspective of the long history of Jews in the South, particularly of this storied congregation in Savannah.

Tours of the sanctuary and museum take place Monday through Friday (excluding Jewish and federal holidays), from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M., closed 1–2 P.M. for lunch. The last tour begins at 3:30 P.M. There is a requested donation of seven dollars per person.

Lynn Levine, Savannah Jewish News

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Film Review

Carvalho's Journey. Directed, produced, and written by Steve Rivo. Down Low Pictures, 2015. 85 minutes

Solomon Nunes Carvalho was born in 1815 and raised in the thriving Jewish community of nineteenth-century Charleston, South Carolina, but the most thrilling experience of his life occurred during his crossing of the Rocky Mountains with John C. Frémont in the winter of 1853–1854. Born to comfort and status, Carvalho decided to leave his portrait business behind, not to mention his wife and children, to explore the western frontier, barely surviving the expedition. While *Carvalho's Journey* pays proper attention to its hero's South Carolina origins, its highest achievement is its consistent, sometimes visually stunning homage to the western wilderness, which in the 1850s had yet to be fully mapped into the American political consciousness. As it recounts Carvalho's role in Frémont's transcontinental expedition, the film reminds us that while Jews were part of the fabric of nineteenth-century America, they also viewed and experienced it from a distance. They might, like Carvalho, have been looking down at the country from the crest of its greatest mountain range.

Despite his family's history in Charleston (his father, David Carvalho, was among the founders of the city's Reform movement and enjoyed a prosperous career as a merchant), Carvalho strayed from the traditional mercantile path and pursued his interests in painting and portraiture. When his family moved to Philadelphia in the early 1840s, he began a course of study with the famed American portrait painter Thomas Sully. Before long, he gained artistic recognition, particularly after one of his still lifes found its way onto several issues of paper currency in the United States and Canada during the 1850s and 1860s. In

one of the film's most poignant sequences, we are told about how the news of the 1838 burning of Charleston's Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim (KKBE) synagogue deeply affected Carvalho. Based solely on the memories he retained of the building's interior from the countless hours he had spent there as a child and as a young man, he created a lovingly detailed, evocative portrait of its interior. The painting was as much a conveyance of his fondness for the place as it was an accounting of its physical contours.

*Solomon Nunes Carvalho,
daguerreotype self-portrait,
c. 1850. (Library of
Congress.)*

The daguerreotype was invented while Carvalho was trying to find his way in the portrait field, which was floundering because most Americans could not afford a painting of their likeness. Beginning in 1849 he established daguerreotype studios in New York, Charleston, Baltimore, and Philadelphia. In 1853, on the basis of his growing reputation as a purveyor of the new photographic technology, Carvalho quickly embraced the opportunity of a lifetime. John C. Frémont, "The Great Pathfinder" of American legend, wanted Carvalho to serve as an officer in his expeditionary corps. The group was seeking a route by which a transcontinental railroad might cross the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevada. In order to select a viable and permanent route, they would

have to complete their traverse in the middle of winter, since the railroad would need to operate year-round. Carvalho was to be the expedition's chief documentarian, and his participation would be integral to its success both as a scouting mission for the railroad venture and as a public image boost for Frémont, who was building on major political ambitions. Sadly, despite the extraordinary lengths to which Carvalho and the other members of Frémont's crew went to protect and carry several chests full of daguerreotyping equipment through blizzards, across raging rivers, and up mountainsides, only a single one of the hundreds of images he produced on the journey survived. (The collection of glass plates was lost in a New York fire in the 1880s.) The primary record upon which the film's director, Steve Rivo, had to rely, therefore, is Carvalho's written recollection of the journey, *Incidents of Travel and Adventure in the Far West* (1857). In addition to Carvalho's verbal descriptions of the various features that he recorded by daguerreotype, the book also included a handful of artists' etchings that had been drawn from those daguerreotypes.

If there is anything lacking in Rivo's film, it is attention to the wider political context that made Frémont's career such a momentous one in historical terms. Frémont was not just any western explorer, after all—he was a notorious Free Soiler, and in 1856 he became the first Republican to run for the presidency of the United States. When this Georgia-born (and Charleston-educated) staunch opponent of the southern slaveocracy decided to recruit a Charlestonian Jew as his expedition's official daguerreotypist, he was declaring the sectional divide null and void. When Carvalho chose to accept Frémont's invitation, he was not only consigning himself to an extremely dangerous physical undertaking; he also was implicitly relinquishing whatever sectional ties he may once have had to the culture of slaveholding that had helped to set the terms for his family's prosperity. Rivo's thematic and visual focus on the far western landscapes that Carvalho saw and attempted to record by daguerreotype is infused with a powerful though unnamed subtext: the Civil War. Perhaps this is why *Carvalho's Journey* poses these terrible and beautiful landscapes as its central motif. For Carvalho and Frémont alike, the beauty and possibility of the Far West ought to have transcended sectional rivalry. As the film suggests, the makeup of Frémont's crew reflected its leader's continental predilections. Besides its Jewish

*Solomon Nunes Carvalho, "View of a Cheyenne Village at Big Timbers, Colorado," 1853. Despite the damage to the plate, it is possible to see a group of tepees, hides hanging to the right, and the figures of two people to the left of center.
(Library of Congress.)*

daguerreotypist, it employed a cross-section of America's multiracial frontier society, including participants of Mexican, Native American, and European origin.

At its heart, *Carvalho's Journey* is not only an attempt to retell an old, mostly forgotten story of frontier travel, but also an attempt to re-see an experience that had been instigated by Frémont's determination to create a substantial visual record of his journey. While the film assigns significant speaking parts to several prominent historians (including Martha Sandweiss and Jonathan Sarna), its most frequent contemporary presence is that of Robert Schlaer, a present-day daguerreotype artist (perhaps the only one in the world) who has devoted himself to recon-

structuring and recreating Carvalho's journey by visiting each of the sites where the artist is known to have set up his camera and producing modern-day daguerreotype images of the same landscape features. Schlaer's form of historical reenactment is unique because it produces verisimilitude in a documentary, as opposed to an experiential form. The artist does not pretend to be a modern-day Carvalho, although his romantic love for the landscapes of the West appears to mirror that of his predecessor. He drives across the Utah desert in a van, stores his equipment in large plastic tubs, and employs electricity when he needs it to develop his images. The daguerreotypes he makes, on the other hand, offer a window into Carvalho's world. On the basis of their subtlety and splendor, we can see why, despite his having nearly perished from malnourishment, extreme cold, and fatigue, Carvalho looked back upon his experience as a member of Frémont's party with such fondness. While his western adventures set him apart from most other Jews (not to mention gentiles) of his time period, he seems to have been uniquely poised, as a Jew, to appreciate the grandeur of a land that he felt he could call his own.

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*Glossary**

Agunah ~ an abandoned woman; a woman whose husband has disappeared or deserted her or who has refused to grant her a *get*, which would allow her to remarry

Aliyah (*variant: aliya*) ~ literally, *going up*; moving from the Diaspora to Israel; also the act of going up to the *bimah* for an honor, such as reading from the Torah during religious services

Ashkenazic ~ having to do with **Ashkenazim**, Jews associated with central and eastern Europe, and their practices

Bar mitzvah ~ traditional coming-of-age ritual for Jewish males reaching the age of thirteen

Beth din (*plural: battei din*) ~ rabbinical court

“Bist a Yid?” ~ Yiddish for “Are you a Jew?”

Chuppah (*variants: chippe, huppah*) ~ wedding canopy

Deutschisha ~ Yiddish for a woman of German descent

Doven (*variant: daven*) ~ pray; **dovening** (or **davening**) ~ praying

Ferbrente (*variant: farbrente*) ~ Yiddish for passionate, zealous

Garin ~ core, or seed

Get ~ Jewish divorce decree

Goy (*plural: goyim*) ~ Hebrew for gentiles, people who are not Jewish

Halacha ~ Jewish law; **Halachic** ~ pertaining to Jewish law

Halitzah ~ Jewish ritual that releases a childless widow from her obligation to marry her brother-in-law

* A complete glossary of Hebrew, Yiddish, and Sephardic terms used in this and previous issues of *Southern Jewish History* is available online at <http://www.jewishsouth.org/glossary>.

Hanukiya ~ special candelabra, or menorah, designed with nine candle holders for the Hanukkah candle-lighting ceremony

Hanukkah ~ Feast of Lights, eight-day holiday commemorating victory of the Maccabees over Syrian rulers, 167 BCE

Hazan (*plural: hazanim*) ~ cantor; religious leader leading prayers/chants during religious services

Kashrut ~ Jewish laws governing food; the system of Jewish dietary laws; *see kosher*

Ketubbah ~ Jewish marriage contract

Kibbutz (*plural: kibbutzim*) ~ a collective farm in Israel, often originally based on socialist principles

Kiddushin ~ sanctification, holiness; also a ceremony of betrothal preceding marriage

Kippah ~ yarmulke, skull cap

Kosher ~ conforming to Jewish law, especially dietary law

Malshinim ~ informers; term used to describe medieval European Jews who informed on fellow Jews to the non-Jewish authorities

Matzo ~ unleavened bread eaten primarily during Passover

Mikvah ~ ritual bath

Minhag ~ Jewish practice

Minyan ~ quorum of ten adult males traditionally required for public worship; some congregations now count adult women

Refuseniks ~ Russian Jews who were prohibited from emigrating out of the Soviet Union

Rosh Hashanah (literally, *head of the year*) ~ the new year on the Hebrew calendar; one of holiest days of the Jewish year

Seder ~ ceremonial meal, usually held on the first and second evenings of Passover, commemorating the exodus from Egypt

Sefer Torah (*plural: sifrei Torah*) ~ a Torah scroll, first five books of the bible

Sephardic ~ having to do with **Sephardim**, Jews and Judaism originating in the Mediterranean region, especially Spain and Portugal

Shabbos ~ Jewish Sabbath; Friday night to Saturday night at the appearance of the first stars

Shmeering ~ bribery; a **shmeer** (in Yiddish) is a bit of something spread on a bagel, so **shmeering** is spreading a bit of money on someone, greasing a palm

Shochet ~ ritual slaughterer, kosher butcher

Shtetl (*plural: shtetlach or shtetls*) ~ small town or village in eastern Europe associated with Jewish residence

Shul ~ congregation or synagogue

Tallesim ~ plural of **Tallit**, a prayer shawl

Talmud ~ collection of post-biblical ancient teachings justifying and explaining Jewish law

Tanakh ~ the acronym for the three divisions of the Hebrew Bible: Torah, Nevi'im, and Ketuvi'im—the Torah, Prophets, and Writings; twenty-four books of the Bible

Tikun Olam (literally, *repairing the world*) ~ the Jewish ideal that each individual acts in partnership with God in behalf of social justice to improve the world

Treife (*variant: trefe*) ~ nonkosher food

Tzedekah ~ righteous giving; charity

Yarmulke ~ skull cap

Yishuv ~ a dwelling place or a settlement; refers especially to the Jewish population of Palestine from the 1880s until Israeli statehood in 1948

Yom Kippur ~ Day of Atonement; holiest day of the Jewish year

Note on Authors

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Errata for Volume 18 (2015)

The following are corrections for errors found in *Southern Jewish History*, volume 18:

Page 83: The merger between the New Orleans congregations occurred in 1881, not in 1870.

Page 88: "David Labatt's sister Caroline" *should read* "David Labatt's daughter Caroline."

Page 99n67: "Louise Lloyd" *should read* "Louisa Lloyd."

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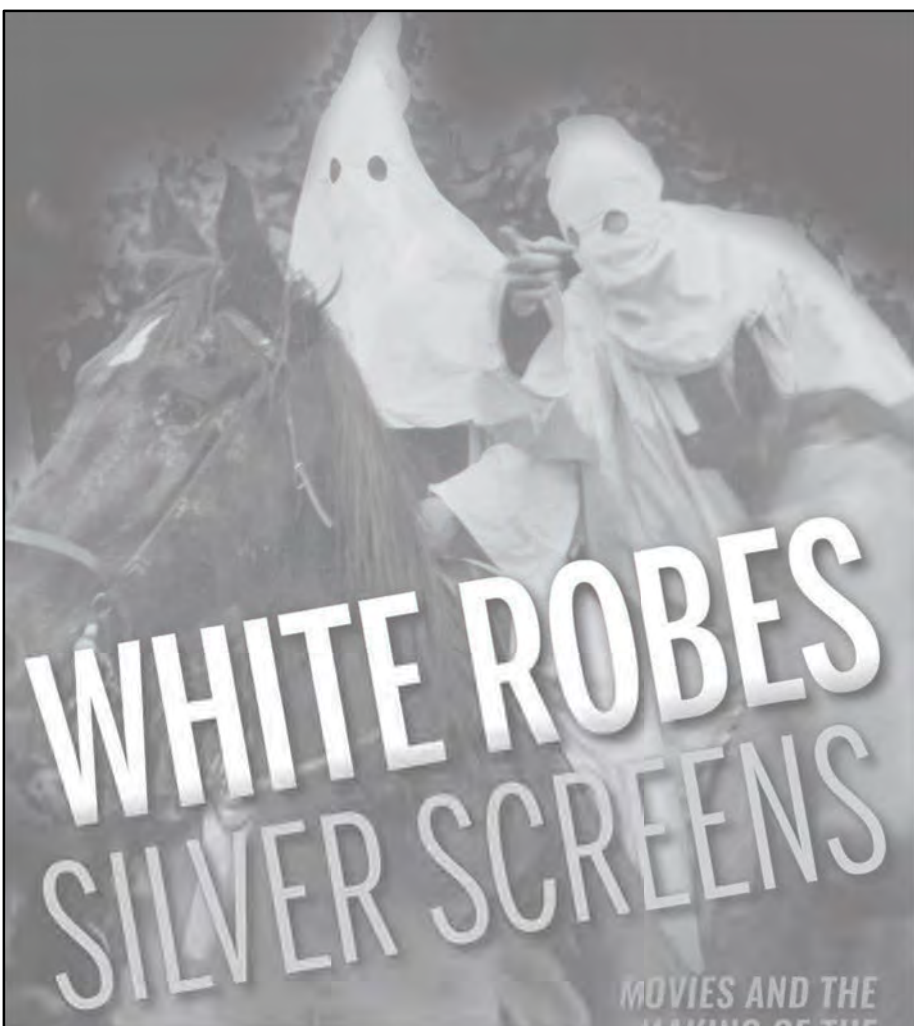
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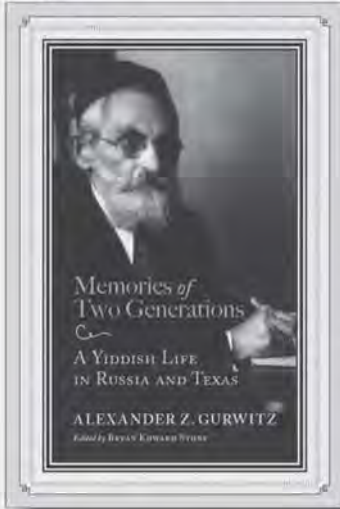
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