

Southern Jewish HISTORY

Volume 29B
2026

JOURNAL *of the* SOUTHERN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SOUTHERN JEWISH HISTORY

Journal of the Southern Jewish Historical Society

Mark K. Bauman, *Editor*
MarkKBauman@aol.com

Bryan Edward Stone, *Managing Editor*
bstone@delmar.edu

Scott M. Langston, *Primary Sources Section Editor*
sclangston@charter.net

Melissa Cohen-Nickels, *Book Review Editor*
mc220@rice.edu

Ashley Walters and Shari Rabin
Public History Review Editors
waltersa1@cofc.edu, srabin@oberlin.edu

Lance J. Sussman and Karen S. Franklin
Memoirs Section Editors
lancejsussman@gmail.com, karenfranklin@gmail.com

Rachel Heimovics Braun, *Founding Managing Editor*

2026
Volume 29B

Southern Jewish History

Editorial Board

Ronald Bayor
Charles L. Chavis, Jr.
Hasia Diner
Mark Goldberg
Michael Hoberman
Amy Milligan
Timothy Riggio Quevillon
Gary P. Zola

Southern Jewish History is a publication of the Southern Jewish Historical Society available by subscription and a benefit of membership in the society. The opinions and statements expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the journal or of the Southern Jewish Historical Society.

Southern Jewish Historical Society OFFICERS: Eric L. Goldstein, *President;* Shari Rabin, *Vice President and President Elect;* Rachel Barnett, *Secretary;* Timothy Quevillon, *Treasurer*; Josh Parshall, *Immediate Past President.* BOARD OF DIRECTORS: David P. Bell, Gemma Birnbaum, Max Daniel, Jillian Hinderliter, Kenneth Hoffman, Sarah Imhoff, Jacob Morrow-Spitzer, Margaret Norman, Anna Tucker, David Weinfeld; Bernie Wax, z"l, *Board Member Emeritus*.

For submission information and author guidelines, see http://www.jewishsouth.org/submission-information-and-guidelines-authors. For queries and all editorial matters: Mark K. Bauman, Editor, *Southern Jewish History*, 6856 Flagstone Way, Flowery Branch, GA 30542, e-mail: MarkKBauman@aol.com. For journal subscriptions and advertising: Bryan Edward Stone, Managing Editor, PO Box 271432, Corpus Christi, TX 78427, e-mail: bstone@delmar.edu. For membership and general information about the Southern Jewish Historical Society, visit www.jewishsouth.org or write to PO Box 71601, Marietta, GA 30007-1601.

Articles appearing in *Southern Jewish History* are abstracted and/or indexed in *Historical Abstracts; America: History and Life; Index to Jewish Periodicals; Journal of American History; Journal of Southern History; RAMBI-National Library of Israel; Immigration and Ethnic History Society Newsletter;* and the *Berman Jewish Policy Archive* (www.bjpa.org).

Full-text content is available to subscribing libraries on EBSCO*host* Academic Search Ultimate and the ATLA Religion Database. Full-text content is also available free on Academia.edu at http://independent.academia.edu/SouthernJewishHistory and on the SJHS website at www.jewishsouth.org.

Copyright © 2026 by the Southern Jewish Historical Society

ISSN 1521-4206

PERMISSION STATEMENT

Consent by the Southern Jewish Historical Society is given for private use of articles and images that have appeared in *Southern Jewish History*. Copying or distributing any journal, article, image, or portion thereof, for any use other than private, is forbidden without the written permission of *Southern Jewish History*. To obtain that permission, please contact the editors at journal@jewishsouth.org.



Southern Jewish History acknowledges with deep appreciation the generous financial support of the following:

Mark K. and Sandy Bauman
Ronald Bayor
Mati and Rachel Heimovics Braun
Leonard Rogoff
Helen Marie Stern Memorial Fund
Betsy Teplis
Ellen Umansky
Steven J. and Lee Whitfield

Table of Contents

FROM THE EDITOR vii–ix

Jews, Reconstruction, and White Supremacy in Louisiana, 1866–1898
Jay Silverberg 1–64

Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf and His 1896 Southern Roadmap
Lynda Barness and Lance J. Sussman 65–95

Unlikely Sites of Holocaust Memory in the American South: The Cases of Charleston and Whitwell
Ashley Valanzola and Chad S. A. Gibbs 97–126

PRIMARY SOURCES: Uncovering History Through Ticket Stubs and Performance Contracts: Temple Israel's Men's Forum of the 1930s
Timothy Riggio Quevillon 127–152

MEMOIR
Shabbat in the Orange Grove: Joseph Wittenstein's Early Orlando History
Deborah Gurt 153–183

BOOK REVIEWS

Samantha Baskind, *Moses Jacob Ezekiel: Jewish, Confederate, Expatriate Sculptor*, reviewed by Joseph M. Weisberg 185–188

Rachel Cockerell, *Melting Point: Family, Memory, and the Search for a Promised Land*, reviewed by Gabrielle Lyle 188–191

Ann Hite, *I Am a Georgia Girl: The Life of Lucille Selig Frank*, reviewed by Steven Lebow 191–194

Benjamin Steiner, *Translating the Ketubah: The Jewish Marriage Contract in America and England*, reviewed by Barry L. Stiefel 194–196

PUBLIC HISTORY REVIEWS

Finding Judaism in the Holy City, reviewed by Lance Sussman 197–200

Holocaust Survivors in a New Land: The New Americans Social Club of New Orleans, reviewed by Sean Scanlon 200–204

Black and Jewish America: An Interwoven History, reviewed by Dale Rosengarten 204–207

GLOSSARY 209–210

NOTE ON AUTHORS 211–213

COVER PICTURE: The Shader sisters and their children, Orlando, Florida, 1917. ADULTS: Esther Shader Wittenstein, Fannie Shader Meitin, Sarah Shader Miller. CHILDREN: Ruth Meitin, Joe W. Wittenstein, Ralph Meitin, Lilli Ann Miller Myers. (State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory, Mosaic Collection.)

From the Editor . . .

As indicated in volume 29A, which appeared early in 2026, this is the first time after almost thirty years that the journal has published two volumes in one year. For this volume 29B, never have we received more submissions—or rejected as many. The numerous submissions over the last two years speaks well for the present and future of the field of Southern Jewish history. The contributors range from gifted amateurs to archivists, historians of the Holocaust, and historians of American Jewry. The articles take us from Louisiana to Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky before ending up in Florida.

Jay Silverberg appears here with his third article in the journal begun with research into his family history. As before, his extensive research discloses Jews on different sides of issues: in this case, violence during Reconstruction in Louisiana. His article breaks substantial new ground in identifying Jews who participated in violence and the pressures they faced. Some accepted Southern racist mores while others rejected them and some were forced into acceptance. Silverberg's research reminds us that there was not one South or one Jewish South but many.

Lynda Barness writes with Lance Sussman about Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf's campaign in the South to raise funds for his National Farm School. The school—part of the back-to-the soil international movement of Jews to become farmers in opposition to antisemitic critics who claimed that Jews were not productive citizens—was situated in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, near the rabbi's Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel. Yet Krauskopf looked to Southern Jewry for assistance denied him in Northern Jewish circles. His speeches on Leo Tolstoy and Russia found a ready audience in the South. The warm reception he received and the substantial financial success of his Southern tour point to links between regions and the cosmopolitan dimensions of Southern Jewry.

After giving separate presentations at the Louisville conference, Ashley Valanzola and Chad S. A. Gibbs joined together to write on Holocaust memorials built in South Carolina and Tennessee. Those developing the memorials differed dramatically in their reasons for doing so, and the

memorials and their meanings changed over time. In both locations the persecution of Jews in Europe obtained recognition whereas persecution of local Black citizens went unrecognized. Thus this becomes a story about the use of history on multiple levels. This and Ashley Walters's article in volume 29A briefly link since the Kalushiner Society appears at the beginning of the Charleston memorial saga.

Timothy Riggio Quevillon offers a very different primary source article. Normally these articles identify a few primary sources and analyze them. Riggio Quevillon starts with the archive from the Temple Israel's Men's Forum in Paducah, Kentucky, and shows how a discerning historian can unearth history by doing background research and placing sparse materials into historical context. He discloses how a small Jewish community became well aware of Nazi persecution of Jews when Hitler launched his policies. The forum's leaders brought nationally and internationally known experts to educate the local Jews, but also their largely non-Jewish audience. The subject matter of the Men's Forum brings the Jews of Paducah into historiographic debates over the role of the American Jewish community and the Holocaust. To some degree, this article serves as an introduction to the Valanzola and Gibbs article on Holocaust memorials and complements Dan J. Puckett's work on Alabama Jewish responses to the Holocaust in volume 16 (2013).

Deborah Gurt edited the memoir of Joseph Wittenstein, which mixes his family history with the history of the Orlando, Florida, Jewish community. Wittenstein depicts small-town life during a different era than the articles on the parishes of Louisiana, Whitwell, Tennessee, and Paducah, Kentucky, but one nonetheless that was still cosmopolitan and linked to the wider Jewish world.

This volume includes the usual array of book and public history reviews, but also reflects two changes. With the approval of the editorial board, the journal will now replace endnotes with footnotes. We hope this change will encourage and assist readers in following authors' sources. The second change involves rotation of a section editorship. Melissa Farah Young has done a marvelous job with the book review section the last few years, but pressures from her career led her to resign. Melissa Cohen-Nickels, curator of the Joan and Stanford Alexander South Texas Jewish Archives at Rice University, graciously agreed to become the book review editor beginning with this volume.

As always, publication of *Southern Jewish History* is a collaborative and collegial effort. It would not be possible without the hard work of the sections editors, editorial board, proofreaders Rachel Heimovics Braun, Karen Franklin, Hollace Weiner, and Daniel Weinfeld, and the phenomenal efforts of managing editor extraordinaire Bryan Edward Stone. They have my sincere thanks.

Mark K. Bauman

Jews, Reconstruction, and White Supremacy in Louisiana, 1866–1898

by

Jay Silverberg *

A full moon illuminated the Greek Revival courthouse in the town square of Clinton, Louisiana, on October 14, 1875. Catherine "Babe" Mathews, an eighteen-year-old Black servant to one of the town's doctors, hung from a thick branch on one of the sprawling oak trees that surrounded the iconic building's two stories. White men had charged into the courthouse about mid-evening with no resistance from the jailers and took her from her cell, hung her, then left her body hanging into the early morning.

The next day, locals went about their daily routines without acknowledging the courthouse scene, including customers to the store that Jewish brothers Henry and Emanuel Meyer owned across the street from the lynching. The brothers' store was open, business as usual for a Friday. Most Blacks were too fearful to approach the courthouse lawn and quickly moved along the main street. Word had passed. Blacks and Whites knew that Mathews's brother-in-law, John Gair, a noted Black Republican state legislator despised by influential White Democrats, also was dead, his body left in a wooded area about ten miles outside of the town. About one hundred well-armed men on horses intercepted a sheriff's posse returning Gair to Clinton, then threatened the lives of the lawmen before allowing them to depart without Gair in their custody. According to official accounts, a fusillade from the horsemen pummeled Gair with more than 150

* The author may be contacted at jbsilverberg@gmail.com.

gunshots that the deputies heard from the woods as they fled on horseback to Clinton. Henry Meyer was one of the gunmen.[1]

The violence that marked the Feliciana Parishes and much of Louisiana in October 1875 had begun years earlier, fouled numerous elections, and prompted nearly a dozen congressional and state investigations. From 1865 to 1876, at least five thousand Blacks and Whites were murdered in Louisiana. Jewish men in families like the Meyers, and from more influential families such as those of Hyams, Jonas, Kursheedt, Kruttschnitt, and Seixas, appear in thousands of pages of congressional testimony, newspaper reports, and other primary and secondary sources. Jews joined paramilitary organizations responsible for the killings or used public podiums to espouse a clear purpose—preservation of White dominance. They took active roles in major white supremacist or insurrectionist incidents in New Orleans in 1866 and 1874, Coushatta and Colfax in 1873 and 1874, East Feliciana Parish in 1875, and West Feliciana Parish in 1876. After much of the day-to-day violence had dissipated, a Jewish man led the final, legal assault on Black rights in Louisiana in 1898 that reverberated for generations.[2]

Historical accounts essentially have restated the same incidents involving only a handful of Jews who were part of the rampant violence that came to define the political, social, and economic landscape of the period. Going beyond these accounts, this examination, focusing on Louisiana,

---

[1] The full moon was confirmed through Moongiant.com, which has historical data about moon phases. Meyer Brothers' Store Records, Mss. 2909, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, Special Collections, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge (hereafter referred to as MBSR and LLMVC); "East Feliciana," *Recent Election in Louisiana*, Forty-Fourth Congress, Mis. Doc. 34 (Washington, D.C., 1877), 3:241–499. A man named Taber is also listed as one of the gunmen. The same name appears on a membership roll for the International Order of B'nai B'rith (IOBB), Feliciana Lodge No. 239, Minute Book, 1877–87, MBSR.

[2] The author is related to the Meyer family through his maternal grandmother. See Jay Silverberg, "Louisiana Letters, 1855–1871: The Story of an Immigrant Jewish Family," *Southern Jewish History* 18 (2018), 101–69. Numerous other incidents involving white supremacist groups are noteworthy and require further research to determine whether Jews were involved. See Allen W. Trelease, *White Terror*: *The Ku Klux Klan Conspiracy and Southern Reconstruction* (Baton Rouge, 1971), xliv. Trelease lists Camilla, Georgia; Laurens and Hamburg, South Carolina; Eutaw, Alabama; Vicksburg, Meridian, and Clinton, Mississippi; and Memphis, Tennessee as scenes of White attacks on returning Black Union soldiers and their homes. See also Stephen J. Whitfield, "American Jews Face the Ku Klux Klan, 1865–2025," *Jewish History* 38 (2024): 156.

demonstrates that Jews willingly participated in white supremacist organizations and supported supremacist doctrine far more frequently than previously known, while also providing additional details into the divisions among individuals and within families who were drawn into the social, economic, and political upheaval during the postbellum period.[3]

Historians may muse about Jews within the panorama of Southern history, but Jews' active and repeated support of white supremacy challenges many generalizations about Jewish Southerners who found safety at times in keeping a low profile and suggests a larger reconsideration of their efforts to assimilate into the broader, more contentious elements of Southern society. During this period, some Jews accepted the construct of the Southern race-based society, the Confederacy, and white supremacy to maintain their "whiteness" and acceptance among their predominantly Christian neighbors. Others acknowledged Southern racism but sought to stay away from the violence associated with Reconstruction, and some publicly resisted in support of Black equality. By illustrating the active

[3] This article focuses solely on Jewish involvement with the Reconstruction-era violence that followed the Civil War. The author acknowledges the numerous scholarly analyses about Jewish ownership of enslaved Blacks and Jewish participation in the Confederate Army. Scholarly works referencing specific Jewish involvement with Reconstruction-era white supremacy include Eric L. Goldstein, "Jewish Merchants and Former Slaves: The Economic Relationship in the Post Civil War South," Sylvia and Irving Margolis Lecture on the Jewish Experience in the American South, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, February 4, 2008, copy provided to the author; Stuart Rockoff, "Carpetbaggers, Jacklegs, and Bolting Republicans: Jews in Reconstruction Politics in Ascension Parish, Louisiana," *American Jewish History* 97 (January 2013), 39–64; Anton Hieke, *Jewish Identity in the Reconstruction South: Ambivalence and Adaptation* (Berlin and Boston, 2013), 111; Jacob Morrow-Spitzer, "Worthy Citizens: Jewish Citizenship Politics in the Age of American State Transformation, 1850–1933," (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 2026). The following articles provide detailed examinations of Jews, Reconstruction politics, and violence between the end of the Civil War and the early twentieth century: Clive Webb, "Jewish Merchants and Black Customers in the Age of Jim Crow," *Southern Jewish History* 2 (1999): 55–80; Daniel R. Weinfeld, "Samuel Fleishman: Tragedy in Reconstruction-Era Florida," *Southern Jewish History* 8 (2005): 31–76; Patrick Q. Mason, "Anti-Jewish Violence in the New South," *Southern Jewish History* 8 (2005): 77–119; Leonard Rogoff, "A Tale of Two Cities: Race, Riots, and Religion in New Bern and Wilmington, North Carolina, 1898," *Southern Jewish History* 14 (2011): 37–75; Jacob Morrow-Spitzer, "'Free from Proscription and Prejudice': Politics and Race in the Election of One Jewish Mayor in Late Reconstruction Louisiana," *Southern Jewish History* 22 (2019): 5–41; and Jay Silverberg, "Houses Divided that Remained Standing: Conflicting Loyalties within an Extended Southern Jewish Family," *Southern Jewish History* 27 (2024): 11–58.

involvement of Jews on both sides of the violent divide, these findings exemplify the dictum that, rather than a unified entity, there were many Jewish Souths.[4]

"Jewel of Liberty"

One year before his assassination in April 1865, Abraham Lincoln offered insight into his hopes for reuniting the fractured republic. He wrote a letter congratulating Michael Hahn, a German immigrant, abolitionist, and supporter of Reconstruction, on his election as Louisiana's first "free-state governor." Lincoln offered his dream of a reunited nation, acknowledging that a tempered embrace of Blacks "would probably help, in some trying time to come, to keep the jewel of liberty within the family of freedom." Until his assassination, Lincoln held to his hopes, culminating in a speech given from a White House window to a modest gathering including John Wilkes Booth on the lawn. He beseeched Congress and the country to acknowledge Louisiana's efforts at reconciliation. A new state constitution granted voting rights to Blacks, and the government had taken steps to punish previous state office holders who supported secession.[5]

Three days later, Lincoln was dead and with him whatever chance Louisiana had for a peaceful postwar reconciliation with the Union. Historian Eric Foner writes that "Lincoln invested the greatest hopes" in

---

[4] Gilles Vandal, *Rethinking Southern Violence: Homicides in Post–Civil War Louisiana, 1866–1884* (Columbus, OH, 2000), 3. In *Jewish Identity in the Reconstruction South* (111), Hieke suggests that White Christians could not turn against slave-owning Jews because that "would have invalidated the entire foundation of the race-based system." See also, Trelease, *White Terror,* xi; Webb, "Jewish Merchants," 55–80.

[5] Abraham Lincoln to Michael Hahn, March 13, 1864, St. Charles Parish Virtual Museum, accessed May 11, 2026, https://scphistory.org/georg-michael-hahn/. The Lincoln speech is known as the "egg and fowl" speech, in which he said, "Concede that the new government of Louisiana is only to what it should be as the egg is to the fowl, we shall sooner have the fowl by hatching the egg than by smashing it." "The President's Last Public Address," The American Presidency Project, accessed May 11, 2026, https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/the-presidents-last-public-address. Erich Laux, *The History of the Jews of Klingenmünster* (Klingenmünster, 2019); Laux email and photo to author, August 28, 2025. Michael Hahn was born in 1830 in Klingenmünster, his home one block from the homes and businesses of the Henry and Emanuel Meyer family. Laux provided his book written in German to the author, who shared his English translation with Laux. Laux told the author that Hahn is the most prominent of Klingenmünster's nineteenth-century immigrants.

Louisiana as a guidepost for Reconstruction. Yet, the president's aspirations were misguided. In his examination of failed Republican strategy in Louisiana, historian George Rable observes, "of all the Southern states, Louisiana was the least appropriate for attempting a thorough reformation of political, social, and economic institutions. The state had long been divided along economic, cultural, and racial lines, and its politics had been faction-ridden, corrupt, and occasionally violent."[6]

The summer of 1866 marked the beginning of Louisiana's descent into postwar chaos. Nineteen Louisiana parishes had chafed under federal military control for nearly four years. Weather added to the state's collective dread. The war left the Mississippi River's earthen levee system significantly weakened and unable to contain torrential spring rains. Parishes lining the Mississippi and Red Rivers and their tributaries remained under water for weeks, destroying millions of dollars worth of crops. For many Louisiana farmers, 1866 marked the second consecutive year without a financially viable cotton crop, and for merchants like Henry and Emanuel Meyer, it meant mounting debts from unpaid loans to farmers to plant their crops. The tinderbox mixture of economic and political woes exploded in New Orleans on July 30, 1866, with Jews involved.[7]

The "New Orleans Massacre" began about noon that day. Emotions had been cascading for weeks. President Andrew Johnson, who favored leniency toward most former Confederates, ordered previous political office holders, including the former pro-Confederate mayor, to be restored

---

[6] Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution: 1863–1877* (New York, 2014), 99; George Rable, "Republican Albatross: The Louisiana Question, National Politics, and the Failure of Reconstruction," *Louisiana History* 23 (Spring 1982), 109–30. See also, Roger W. Shugg, *Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana: A Social History of White Farmers and Laborers during Slavery and After, 1840–1875* (Baton Rouge, 1966), 211.

[7] Thomas Conway, assistant commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau who served three years in Louisiana, warned Congress that removal of federal troops would lead to murder and ongoing abuse of Blacks, with Whites believing they could act with impunity. *Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction*, Thirty-Ninth Congress, House Report 30, Part 4 (Washington, DC, 1866), 78; Elliott Ashkenazi, *The Business of Jews in Louisiana, 1840–1875* (Tuscaloosa, 1988), 77. Michael R. Cohen writes that farmers planted a cotton crop in June 1866, but by July, caterpillars had eaten much of the crop. That year, farmers planted more than one million acres but harvested only 131,000 bales of cotton. Floods in 1867 caused similar crop damage. Michael R. Cohen, *Cotton Capitalists: American Jewish Entrepreneurship in the Reconstruction Era* (New York, 2017), 94.

Theodore R. Davis, "The Riot in New Orleans – Murdering Negroes in the Rear of Mechanics' Institute," from "Four Scenes of the Riot in New Orleans," Harper's Weekly, *August 25, 1866. (Courtesy of the Historic New Orleans Collection, 1974.25.9.309 i-iv.)*

to their prewar positions. In response, Republican leaders reconvened the 1864 constitutional convention determined to extend Black suffrage and end efforts to disenfranchise freedmen. On July 30, ninety Black and White constitutional convention delegates gathered inside the Mechanics Institute just off Canal Street as a parade of about two hundred unarmed Black men marched toward the building. Police were waiting, dressed in summer outfits of straw hats, white pantaloons, and blue coats with black ribbons affixed, designed to set them apart from others in the event of street fighting. Armed white supremacists lined the streets, mixing with the police. Chaos reigned as the Black marchers approached the institute. The generally accepted version of events is that armed ex-Confederates

jostled some of the Black marchers, then joined with police shooting at the marchers despite little provocation.[8]

The Mechanics Institute and surrounding streets became a killing zone with police and white supremacists preying upon the marchers and delegates, shooting people inside the building and chasing them through the building and into the streets where the killing continued. In two hours, thirty-four Black marchers were dead and about one hundred wounded; three delegates were dead and seventeen wounded, including Michael Hahn, specifically targeted for his public statements supporting Reconstruction. Hundreds involved in the riot were arrested. Federal troops kept from the rioting—some believed intentionally—finally restored order and declared martial law.

At least four Jewish men were involved, according to congressional testimony. Sokoloski, identified as a "Polish Jew, armed with a pistol," was one of the police officers leading the charge up the main interior staircase to the delegates' meeting room. A father and son named Gullman, the older man identified as a Jew and baker for a synagogue, stood accused of shooting at and being present when a police officer was killed in the streets during the rioting. Bernard Williams, who presented himself to the committee as a Jewish coffeehouse owner, identified these men. He told a rambling tale of being offered six hundred dollars by the older Gullman and another man to leave the city to keep him from testifying, then being jailed three times before "Union" men freed him after each arrest. Williams also accused a man named Lazarus of yelling "You Yankee bastard" before firing a pistol shot into the fallen policeman the Gullmans allegedly murdered.[9]

---

[8] *Report of the Select Committee on the New Orleans Riots*, Thirty-Ninth Congress, House Report 16 (Washington, DC, 1867). Congress used the term "riots" in reference to the attack on the convention delegates and subsequent street killings. Newspaper reports and historical analyses have used the term "massacre" to describe the events in 1866. The committee document is a 668-page report published in February 1867 containing graphic detail from witnesses about the scene along Canal Boulevard and Burgundy, Dryades, and Baronne Streets. The protocol was for the majority and minority committee members to offer separate conclusions. Thus witness testimony is often construed based on the Republican (pro-Reconstruction) or Democratic Party viewpoint.

[9] The men listed as taking part in Reconstruction-era incidents are identified as Jews through various sources including witness testimony during the cited congressional investigations; the Shappell Roster of Jewish Service in the American Civil War, accessed May 11,

Congress also learned about ex-Confederates stepping back into battle in some of the earliest evidence of the soldiers' paramilitary response to Reconstruction. Witnesses told of a secret society, the Southern Cross Association No. 9, part of "the Central Association." The organization's membership opened only to ex-Confederates, who paid dues of

Theodore R. Davis, "The New Orleans Riot – The Military Commission Examining Witnesses," Harper's Weekly, *September 1, 1866. (Courtesy of the Historic New Orleans Collection, 1974.25.9.198.)*

2026, www.shapell.org/roster; newspaper reports; Find-a-Grave, accessed May 11, 2026, https://www.findagrave.com; and *New Orleans Riots*. Records show a Marks Sokolowsky, born in Poland, as New Orleans "city police" in 1868. He is buried in a Jewish cemetery. Generally accessible census records show no Gullman or Gallman in New Orleans during the time of the riot, thus the identification of the two men involved in the police officer's shooting as Jewish is based solely on witness testimony. Williams identified himself as an Orthodox Jew during his testimony in 1879. He refused to be sworn in with the Christian Bible. Instead, he removed his hat, used it to place his hand and to take the oath, then put the hat back on his head. Two Jewish men were in New Orleans during this period named Lazarus, one identified in his obituary as a member of several "secret societies." *New Orleans Times-Democrat,* February 25, 1884.

twenty-five cents a month, swore they would not divulge their business or passwords to the "uninitiated," and would favor other ex-Confederates in matters of employment "or advantage that may be in my control to gift." A membership list of thirty-four men provided to the committee included "Louis Kolski, Jew; Isaac Henriques, Jew." Only Kolski and Henriques were identified by religion, and their names were listed consecutively; others were identified, for example, as "gambler," "thug," "cotton sampler," "conductor," "son of the old man." An Isaac L. Henriques served in a Louisiana infantry unit, was captured, paroled, and returned to New Orleans; and a Louis Kolsky served in the Fourth Louisiana Regiment, European Brigade, composed of immigrants. A few of the men in the association had been wartime officers, but most were privates and corporals serving in the same Confederate units. Within a week after local newspapers published the details and names linked to the Southern Cross Association, the papers published what were called "cards"—advertisements—from seven men denying their involvement. "In addition to the other denials which have appeared in our columns, Mr. Louis Kolski, now comes forward and denies having been a member, or having any knowledge whatsoever of any such society." Thus, whether he was a member is left unclear.[10]

---

[10] *New Orleans Riots*, 524, 599; *New Orleans Times*, February 23, 1877; *Arkansas Democrat*, November 11, 1916; *New Orleans Times-Democrat*, June 7, 1909; "Isaac L. Henriques," Shapell Roster, accessed May 11, 2026, https://www.shapell.org/civil-war-soldier-database/soldier/13966. It is unclear whether the identification is Isaac L. Henriques or Isaac H. Henriques. Both were Jewish but unrelated. The brother of Isaac H. Henriques, Albert, was involved with the White League, and while there is no evidence Isaac H. served during the Civil War, he may have been involved in the incident. Soldier names were frequently incorrect or incomplete, thus with several names, there is not a letter-for-letter match of names in the committee report. A "Louis Kolsky" is buried in New Orleans's Hebrew Rest Cemetery. *Report of the Joint Committee to Inquire into The Condition of Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States*, Forty-Second Congress, House Report 22 (Washington, DC, 1872), 22, 449; The report is the first in-depth congressional investigation into white supremacist activities, with one section titled "Ku Klux Klan." The report states that KKK-styled organizations were prevalent throughout the South beginning in the late 1860s. The groups had the same violent tendencies but different names: the White Brotherhoods, Constitutional Union Guards, Invisible Empires in North Carolina, the Invisible Circle in South Carolina, the Pale Faces in Tennessee, and Knights of the White Camelia in Louisiana.

"We are fighting the Philistines"

After two months of testimony and the subsequent committee report about New Orleans, irate congressmen and senators, stirred to punish the Southern states for their intransigence, approved the Reconstruction Act. This legislation outlined a process for Louisiana and nine other Southern states to rejoin the Union that focused on ensuring formerly enslaved Blacks would gain civil and political rights, including the right to vote. In his review of Louisiana's economy and social structure from 1840 to 1875, Robert W. Shugg writes, "The long struggle was a political contest between White and colored people for the exclusive right to rule . . . but it should not be forgotten that at first neither race was solidly united against the other, nor were the spoils of office their only concern. Political turmoil obscured but did not conceal the deeper social and economic problems of the period." Jews were caught up in the maelstrom.[11]

The Reconstruction Act's framework for states to rejoin the Union catapulted Louisiana into "Radical Reconstruction"—a strategy promoting Black equality that was at the core of the Republican Party, as opposed to the Democrats, who followed a theme of "redemption," or restoring rights they believed the federal government had removed from the states. In July 1867, Black voters in Louisiana outnumbered Whites 82,407 to 44,732. That September, the state, in a vote of 75,038 to 4,906, approved calling for another constitutional convention intending to extend voting rights for all males. In April 1868, Louisiana voters elected a new Republican governor, White northerner Henry C. Warmoth; a Black Republican lieutenant governor, Oscar J. Dunn; approved a new constitution; and ratified the Fourteenth Amendment, ensuring that all people born or naturalized in the United States were citizens entitled to equal treatment

[11] Shugg, "*Origins of Class Struggle*," 197. Most of this article includes Jews from three areas in Louisiana: New Orleans and surrounding parishes, the Feliciana Parishes neighboring Mississippi, and the Red River area of Shreveport and Natchitoches in the northern part of the state. Based on the author's research, Jews were not found to be as publicly identified with Reconstruction-era activity in the Sugar Belt, the parishes in the southern part of the state nearer the Mississippi River delta. In his detailed examination of the region, John C. Rodrigue points out, "The Sugar country did not suffer the ferocity that tore apart other sections of the state, but fear, punctuated by sporadic violence, was rife." John C. Rodrigue, *Reconstruction in the Cane Fields: From Slavery to Free Labor in Louisiana's Sugar Parishes 1862-1880* (Baton Rouge, 2001), 100.

under the law. The election, "held in the presence of the military, [was] the last of fair elections held in Louisiana," wrote a commissioner to the federal court for Louisiana. However, the April 1868 elections were not without issue. A congressional committee estimated that one thousand "murders, maimings and whippings" occurred throughout the state before the election. Republicans counted nearly forty-eight thousand Black Louisianians on their voting rolls in twenty-eight parishes, but only five thousand voted in the election. A Jew in New Orleans, Nathan Schwab, who had been an active constitutional convention delegate the previous year, ran successfully as a Republican for sheriff in New Orleans. Within a year, embroiled in controversy and despised by the Democratic white supremacists, Schwab's party turned on him.[12]

Election Day in 1868 put Schwab prominently in the newspaper headlines. Typical of the era, news reports about him vary depending on the publication's political leanings. Schwab showed up at a New Orleans polling place, where soldiers arrested and held him for his involvement in a skirmish involving Blacks trying to vote and White polling supervisors trying to stop them. In an affidavit provided to a local court, Schwab denied that he was an agitator, but rather had attempted to quell Black voters' anger over their inability to vote and to learn more about the situation from an official inside the polling place. He continued, "Having received this morning under sealed envelope the herein inclosed anonymous threat . . . it contains a kitten's tail, with the word written in red on the top 'beware.'" A year later, Warmoth's henchmen jailed Schwab in what was generally accepted as bogus allegations involving his refusal to arrest a local government official. Warmoth apparently wanted Schwab out of the way in a convoluted money-making deal involving a local slaughterhouse that the governor's hand-picked replacement for sheriff

---

[12] Fanny Lovell Bone, "Louisiana in the Disputed Election of 1876," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 15 (January 1932), 413. Specific provisions of the Reconstruction Act were the formation of five military districts in the ten former Confederate states, each district commanded by a former Union general with federal troops restoring government to the states; requirements for new state constitutions guaranteeing voting rights for all males, regardless of race, excluding ex-Confederates; ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment granting equal protection to anyone born or naturalized in the United States; and prohibitions against ex-Confederates holding office or voting. See *Report and Testimony of the Select Committee of the United States Senate to Investigate the Causes of the Removal of the Negroes from the Southern States to the Northern* States, Forty-Sixth Congress, Senate Report 693 (Washington, DC, 1880), xix.

controlled. The latter arrested Schwab and jailed him overnight. Schwab sued, yet after nearly two years of litigation, including a court ruling that Warmoth had acted illegally, he failed to regain office.

Schwab is noteworthy because he lived through his ordeal and was able to leave New Orleans, unlike numerous other White, Republican officeholders across the state with enemies bent on doing them harm. Louisiana's roll of assassinated Republican officeholders during Reconstruction numbers at least two dozen. Schwab's experiences also reflect divisions during Reconstruction where the lines sometimes overlapped, with some seeking power and profit hoping to maintain the prewar status quo or, like Schwab, seeking alliances to protect or enhance their social, economic, and political standing.[13]

In August 1868, Warmoth hoped for federal intervention to help his administration regain control over the paramilitary organizations—the Ku Klux Klan, Knights of the White Camelia, the Seymour Knights, and Hancock Guards—terrorizing every parish. Fewer than one thousand federal troops patrolled Louisiana, less than half of the prior year's number. "The transfer of power to the Radicals and the contest over the impending November presidential election precipitated a widescale 'Counter Reconstruction' across the state as conservative White Louisianians mobilized against the Radical Republicans," writes historian Michael J. Pfeifer about events in 1868. The white supremacists avowed to dominate from the barrel of a gun and intimidate anyone who dared to vote Republican.[14]

---

[13] *Use of the Army in Certain of the Southern States,* Forty-fourth Congress, House Ex. Doc. 30, 313–14; *New Orleans Crescent*, November 23, 1867 and April 17, 1868; *New Orleans Republican*, April 18, 1868; *New Orleans Times*, July 23, 1869 and July 24, 1869; *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, April 18, 1868, July 24, 1869, July 25, 1869, and February 11, 1870. One news report alleged Schwab either had one gun or several guns, and used a gun to threaten authorities for refusing to allow Black voting. Another report indicated that when soldiers arrested him, Black protesters surged toward the polling place and a man was shot and wounded. Schwab eventually left New Orleans and resettled in Birmingham, where he died in 1893 and was buried in the Knesset Israel cemetery. *Birmingham News*, December 26, 1893.

[14] Michael J. Pfeifer, "The Origins of Postbellum Lynching: Collective Violence in Reconstruction Louisiana," *Louisiana History* 50 (Spring 2009): 197. Gilles Vandal maintains that the military's role changed from protection to policing once Louisiana was readmitted into the Union in 1868, with limited ability to intercede quickly. Thus "Blacks were compelled after 1867 to look out for themselves and were left with no military protection in the rural parishes." Vandal, *Rethinking Southern Violence*, 183.

Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States, *Forty-second Congress, House Report 22. (Library of Congress.)*

In a congressional report about Reconstruction violence throughout the former Confederate states from 1865 to 1876, two-thirds of its 546 pages focus on Louisiana. A parish-by-parish listing of names of the dead, the wounded, those responsible, and occasional details of the attacks required nearly 150 pages. The Caddo Parish sheriff, an ex-Union soldier trying to keep peace in a notoriously violent section of the state, wrote to Warmoth in August 1868, "There is no safety for life and property of any or class of men who claim to disagree politically with the democracy of Caddo. . . . [M]y life is openly threatened on the streets, and one attempt has already been made. . . . I keep a strong guard of colored men at my house each night." He concluded: "we are fighting the 'Philistines.'" Jewish men joined the fight on both sides.[15]

[15] Between 1865 and 1876, Caddo Parish accounted for 16 percent of all murders in Louisiana, with most of the victims Black. Vandal, *Rethinking Southern Violence,* 7; *Use of the Army*, 78, 280, 381–83, 400–546; Pfeifer, "The Origins of Postbellum Lynching," 89–201; *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, August 6, 1868; H. Oscar Lestage Jr., "The White League in Louisiana and its

"Wash his hands in blood"

In the Feliciana Parishes, Jewish men were among the white supremacists who targeted Joseph Parkinson Newsham, a lawyer and Union veteran from Illinois who had moved south and was elected to Congress in July 1868. By August 1868, the state was taut. Republican leaders like Newsham took every opportunity to talk about the new political and social order as he stumped for Ulysses S. Grant's presidential election the following November. Before a July Fourth celebration in St. Francisville, Newsham reminded a partisan crowd of the Democratic Party's opposition to Black progress and a potential return to prewar conditions. A month later, he and his family fell victim to the violence, with two Jewish merchants—one from the Meyer family—directly involved. On a late August day, Republican and Democratic Party adherents turned out for rallies in the late afternoon. A sworn statement from E. L. Weber, Newsham's brother-in-law and sheriff of West Feliciana Parish, alleged that after sunset, a procession of Republicans marched two miles inland from the riverside town of Bayou Sara to St. Francisville to a platform where their leaders waited to make speeches. At 11 P.M., about three hundred Democrats, armed with rifles, pistols, and swords, set out from Bayou Sara after their rally ended and stopped in front of the Republican platform. Weber warned the Democratic Party leader that any violence would be his responsibility, temporarily deferring a confrontation. As the Democrats retreated through St. Francisville, they stopped in front of Newsham's home.[16]

Someone threw a burning oil can onto the gallery, then five men barged onto the porch where Newsham's wife and mother-in-law sat and pointed guns at the women. One of them demanded Newsham, declaring

---

Participation in Reconstruction Riots," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, 18 (July 1935): 619–93. A report to the Senate from the secretary of war focuses solely on the depravity in St. Landry Parish during 1868 when a nineteen-year-old newspaper editor was beaten while teaching his Sunday school class for an article he published about a Republican political meeting that White Democrats disliked. Estimates were that at least two hundred Black residents were hunted and killed in response to the article. *Letter of the Secretary of War, communicating, in compliance with a resolution of the Senate, of December 14, 1868, reports in relation to recent disturbances in Louisiana*, Fortieth Congress, Senate Ex. Doc. 15, (Washington, DC, 1868), 1-8; *New Orleans Republican*, July 14, 1868.

[16] *New Orleans Republican*, July 14, 1868.

he wanted his heart and to wash his hands in the congressman's blood. Newsham was away at the political rally, and Sheriff Weber quelled the threats. Newsham's family was left unharmed, and the fire was quashed without significant damage or injury. According to an affidavit from Weber's brother, Don, two of the five home invaders were Jewish—a man named Hirsch, likely Alphonse Hirsch, and Leon Adler, a cousin to the Meyer brothers and stepson to the family's patriarch, Abraham Levy. Levy and Adler operated a store in Bayou Sara, one of four stores the family owned in the Feliciana region during this period. The Bayou Sara and Clinton stores barely sustained the family during the Civil War, yet the family persevered. Abraham Levy eventually established himself as one of the wealthiest men in West Feliciana Parish, and the extended family's lifestyle placed it well within the upper tier. The extended family's activities intertwined with the economic and political exigencies of the period.[17]

"The election was simply a sham, a nullity."

The 1868 November presidential election was notable for two reasons: it was the first in which Blacks could vote and the first that paramilitary groups materially affected with their murderous rampage throughout Louisiana. Ulysses S. Grant, the Republican nominee for president, received thirty-three thousand votes, while his Democratic opponent, Horatio Seymour, received eighty thousand votes statewide. In twenty-six of the fifty parishes, "the election was simply a sham, a nullity. No single essential of an election . . . was complied with," concluded state legislators. The state investigators estimated that only 10 percent of registered Blacks actually voted in the twenty-six questionable parishes. State investigators heard from witnesses that a man named Meyer—no first name was given—was an Election Day supervisor in Jackson and Clinton when Black voters were intimidated at polling places in those two communities. A witness said the supervisors decided Black voters did not have proper forms to lawfully register to vote. When the Black men

[17] *Use of the Army*, 331–33; This report includes affidavits and testimony about election intimidation targeting Black Republican voters and other violent incidents involving anti-Reconstruction Democrats and/or the organizations formed to stymie electoral and social progress in the South. IOBB Feliciana Lodge No. 239 records, MBSR, include the most complete listing of Jewish men in the Clinton area during the 1870s and 1880s. Leon Adler and Alphonse Hirsch are listed as members. See also, Silverberg, "Louisiana Letters."

complained, the supervisors told them to "clear off." A state-appointed election overseer arrived at the Clinton courthouse after it opened on Election Day and was soon told that no Republican tally sheets would be distributed and to depart if he wanted to live. A Black man in Clinton was stopped as he tried entering a polling place and was ordered to produce any guns he held. He said he had none but was searched. When he resisted, a White man brandished his revolver and declared, "There is my authority."[18]

James A. Wales, "Everything Points to a Democratic Victory," Harper's Weekly, *October 31, 1874. (Library of Congress.)*

[18] *Report of the Joint Committee of the General Assembly of Louisiana on the Conduct of the Late Elections and the Condition of Peace and Order in the State* (New Orleans, 1869), 79–81. The state report said that 1,150 Republicans in East Feliciana were illegally excluded from voting. Only one family was named "Meyer" in East Feliciana at the time.

Black voter intimidation was but one tactic of the white supremacists. White merchants like the Meyers in East Feliciana and across the state also were directly targeted in efforts to sway the election for the Democratic Party. In October 1868, planters distributed a resolution after a meeting in Clinton proclaiming that local businesses would not employ, rent to, sell to, or help any Black man who voted Republican; that any Black man had to show in writing he voted Democratic; and, importantly for understanding influences on Jewish merchants, businessmen would not patronize or trade with other merchants who refused to comply.[19]

This type of economic coercion is consistent with Foner's observation that merchants, planters, and professionals, although divided on some economic issues, were generally united in their support for white supremacy. The Meyer family offers insights into the conflicts Jewish country merchants faced supporting the Democrats, with or without violence. The family store in downtown Clinton supported the brothers' extended families, a livelihood dependent on relationships with White, anti-Reconstruction planters and Black freedmen. After the war, the Meyers entered into agreements with numerous local cotton growers and a major cotton factor in New Orleans, buying, selling, and trading cotton with pressure to collect on their debts as bills came due, thus adding to their financial risk if they opposed White order. The brothers' juggling of debt was a perennial problem, one that exacerbated already fraught relationships with creditors from whom they borrowed and with freedmen seething over a future of repaying loans to merchants like the Meyers. A letter that Emmanuel Meyer wrote in 1876 to his main financier about delinquent debt payments provides some insight into his mindset during the period: "We have . . . come to the conclusion that you take us for a [set] of Negroes; that's just about the way they have to do; sign their names whenever it is told them to do so."[20]

---

[19] "Intolerance," *New Orleans Republican*, October 20, 1868.

[20] Emanuel Meyer to Abraham Levi, September 12, 1876, vol. 33, 1876–1877, MBSR; Richard Holcombe Kilbourne Jr., *Debt, Investment, Slaves: Credit Relations in East Feliciana Parish, Louisiana 1825–1885* (Tuscaloosa, 2014), 165; Jacob Morrow-Spitzer, "The 'Theoretical Jew' Versus the 'Southern Jew': Black Perceptions of Jewish Whiteness in the Nineteenth-Century American South," *American Jewish History* 106 (January 2022): 31–54; Webb, "Jewish Merchants," 55–80; Eric Goldstein, "'Now is the Time to Show Your True Colors': Southern Jews, Whiteness, and the Rise of Jim Crow," in *Jewish Roots in Southern Soil: A New History*, ed.

"A White Man's Government or No Government!"

In the month preceding the presidential election on November 3, 1868, chaos reigned in New Orleans and in the backwoods of Louisiana parishes. Official reports describe the carnage—paramilitary groups patrolling streets and country roads, killing or intimidating Blacks and Whites supporting the Republicans, threatening elected officials, attacking processions supporting the Republican nominees Ulysses S. Grant and Schuyler Colfax. Much of the violence likely came from the Knights of the White Camelia that two men, an ex-Confederate and a newspaper editor, started a year earlier in central Louisiana. KWC, as it was known to the media and congressional investigators, organized councils in the parishes and required members to follow rituals promoting the dominance of White society. At times, KWC and the Ku Klux Klan were mingled in media reports, although the historical record suggests the KWC's violence dominated Louisiana in 1868, whereas the KKK was more prevalent in Tennessee, where it was founded in 1866, and other Southern states before dominating throughout the South.[21]

Three days before Election Day, fifteen White men armed with guns, spades, and axes chased a twenty-year-old Black male through the streets of Gretna, on the outskirts of New Orleans. They yelled "head him off" and "kill him" before the young man was shot in the back. "[Witnesses] also saw a son of John Linton, a [keeper] of a coffee-house, in Gretna, and a Jew named Albert Lamben, both shoot him in the back." New Orleans newspapers filled columns in the days leading up to the election with charges and countercharges about a flier distributed citywide by an alleged group calling itself the Council of Seven, declaring "A White Man's Government or No Government. . . . [T]he hand of the oppressor bears

---

Marcie Cohen Ferris and Mark I. Greenberg (Waltham, MA, 2006), 138; Cohen, *Cotton Capitalists,* 112.

[21] James G. Dauphine, "The Knights of the White Camelia and the Election of 1868: Louisiana's White Terrorists; a Benighting Legacy," *Louisiana History* 30 (Spring 1989), 173–90. Dauphine provides one of the more detailed analyses of the organization's impact on the 1868 election. See also, Samuel C. Hyde Jr., *Pistols and Politics: Feuds, Factions, and the Struggle for Order in Louisiana's Florida Parishes, 1810–1935*, (Baton Rouge, 2018), 164–66, which examines the Feliciana region and suggests that the White Camelia groups focused more on economic intimidation while the KKK used violence as its primary strategy. *New Orleans Republican*, December 2, 1868; Trelease, *White Terror,* xivi, 127–36.

heavily upon us. . . . [L]et the Caucasian arise in his strength." In Claiborne Parish, as notorious as any for white supremacist violence, a judge who had switched parties from Democratic to Republican described to state investigators how he barely escaped an attack while riding home on his horse after voting for Grant. The judge declared in his written statement that he witnessed another Grant voter attacked: "The poor Jew was pulled from his horse before reaching home, and whipped to death with whips." No identification was given for the Jew who was killed nor did the judge indicate whether the attackers targeted the man because he was Jewish. The Republican press blamed the Democrats for the inflamed language. Democrats described it as a devious scare tactic by Radical Republicans. Rural Blacks and Whites told investigators they were able to vote Republican only by carrying shotguns to the polling place.[22]

The final five years of the 1860s provided only a prelude. During the 1870s, Louisiana proved to be such a cesspool of societal, economic, and political misdeeds that Congress sent investigative committees every year through 1879. The report concluded that the depredation was widespread; Congress could do little to intervene; and, when the federal government tried, matters only worsened. The U.S. House and Senate investigated fifty-six cases of election fraud in the states between 1866 and 1880. Five of those cases were based in Louisiana; no other state had more than two. A contemporary history characterized Louisiana's 1872 election as the most violent in American history. Ongoing atrocities marked the elections in 1874 and 1876 and the intervening periods. Shugg writes that class stood at the center of the violence, whether Black people would ascend the social and economic network toward equality: "Carpetbaggers fought planters and merchants for the possession of rich natural resources and the control of Black and White labor. The carpetbaggers were defeated because they turned from economic to political exploitation, preyed upon Whites more than Blacks, and arrayed all classes of the former race against

[22] *Conduct of the Late Elections,* 14; *Papers in the Case of J. H. Sypher vs. Louis St. Martin, from the First Congressional District of Louisiana*, Forty-First Congress, House Mis. Doc. 13, 47–48; *Use of the Army*, 38. Republican newspapers in Alexandria, Homer, and Opelousas were put out of business between October and December 1868. *Ouachita Telegraph*, May 3, 1868.

the latter." The ruling Whites ultimately prevailed, with violence as their weapon. Jews participated actively in the mayhem.[23]

"Your fate is sealed … nothing but your blood will appease us."

During the 1870s, organizations engaged in murderous incidents as in previous years, but with a different name: the White League. This was a postwar unsanctioned militia with ex-Confederate officers commanding former soldiers to wreak havoc, mostly directed at Black Republicans. These men replaced the battlefields of Shiloh, Gettysburg, and Chattanooga with the streets of New Orleans or the Louisiana countryside to maintain their White status. "The White League of New Orleans itself was and is a menace to the republicans of the whole state . . . [and] doubtless contains many persons of very different character."[24]

Some of the White League's success likely resulted from a failed effort in 1873 directed by a Jewish New Orleanian to broker peace between the Democrats and Republicans. The Unification Movement was one of two notable Jewish-led strategies in Louisiana to blunt the opponents of Reconstruction and demonstrated how Jews stood on both sides of Reconstruction. The plan joined White and Black business and political leaders who wanted to grant Blacks economic and political equality and hoped to end the ongoing statewide economic and political chaos. Isaac M. Marks, born to Jewish parents in Charleston, South Carolina, and a prominent local businessman, provided critical leadership. The plan failed miserably, largely as the result of a disastrous kickoff event followed by an onslaught of negative media that quickly stalled progress toward unification. Historian T. Harry Williams observes that although Marks and his counterparts hoped unification would help restore financial equilibrium, the movement fizzled because of Whites' fear that concessions would lead to racial equality. Always ready to seize any opportunity, the white supremacists in New Orleans used the businessmen's aborted unification attempt as a

---

[23] Fanny Lovell Bone wrote that congressional oversight was "a habit which was to become so fixed a custom . . . that the appointment of a Louisiana Investigation Committee or the report from said committee might also have been included in the regular order of business of either national house." Bone, "Louisiana in the Disputed Election of 1876," 415. See also, Dana Bash with David Fisher, *America's Deadliest Election: The Cautionary Tale of the Most Violent Election in American History* (Toronto, 2024); Shugg, *Origins of Class Struggle*, 197.

[24] *Condition of the South*, Forty-Third Congress, House Report 261 (Washington, D.C., 1875), 18–19.

rallying point to transform the local Democratic Club into one of the state's most active White League units. Although many members were mainstream businessmen, the club was quickly absorbed into the white supremacy manifesto, with Jews as active participants. The same scenario played out in town after town.[25]

Benjamin F. Jonas, New Orleans Times Picayune*, September 15, 1891. (Newspapers.com.)*

In August 1874, a planned Democratic Party convention in Opelousas served as the official beginning of Louisiana's White League. At least five Jewish men—three of them ex-Confederates—participated with about fifty other men at the convention. The four were Leopold Godchaux and Samuel Cerf Haas, Opelousas merchants who would become two of the wealthiest men in the region; Benjamin Franklin Jonas, a New Orleans attorney and eventual statewide political leader; and Julius Levin and Jonas Rosenthal, both leading Alexandria merchants. The platform was simple: white dominance. Whereas secrecy may have prevailed for the White Camelias or the KKK, not so for the White Leaguers. Public meetings espoused white supremacy, but the more violent side of the organization was predominant, with attacks carried out by men in hoods

[25] Joe Gray Taylor, "New Orleans and Reconstruction," *Louisiana History* 9 (Summer 1968): 189–208; T. Harry Williams. "The Louisiana Unification Movement of 1873," *Journal of Southern History* 11 (August 1945): 349–69.

or with faces painted black. "It is impossible to estimate the strength or to exaggerate the importance of an organization like the White League," concludes Shugg. The White League established outposts in every Louisiana parish, with Jewish men as members. Whites, outnumbered in many parishes, were fearful of Black Louisianians voting in overwhelming numbers. Newspaper support statewide and White residents' collective military experiences were used as the cudgel to intimidate Blacks from active economic and political participation. From 1873 to 1876 White League violence, political assassination, and intimidation of Black voters in Louisiana influenced multiple elections such that results could not be relied on and were nullified, ultimately shaping the future of the United States.[26]

Natchitoches, established in 1714 as a trading post, is the oldest permanent settlement within the Louisiana Purchase. After the Civil War, the region known as the Red River Valley became a hotbed of racial violence, including one of the most horrific white supremacist killings in American history. Jewish men participated continually in the sordid events on both sides, none more prominent than lawyer Henry Clay (known as H. C.) Myers. An 1868 news story shows Myers and two other Jews—S. M.

---

[26] *Condition of the South*, House Report 261, 92; Shugg, *Origins of Class Struggle*, 230, nn. 189, 190, 191; Carin Peller-Semmens, "Unreconstructed: Slavery and Emancipation in Louisiana's Red River; 1820–1880," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Sussex, 2016), 151; *The Caucasian*, August 15, 1874, August 29, 1874, and October 24, 1874; "Samuel Cerf Haas," Shapell Roster, accessed May 17, 2026, https://www.shapell.org/civil-war-soldier-database/soldier/3075; "Benjamin Franklin Jonas," Shapell Roster, accessed May 17, 2026, https://www.shapell.org/civil-war-soldier-database/soldier/9144; "Julius Levin," Shapell Roster, accessed May 17, 2026. https://www.shapell.org/civil-war-soldier-database/soldier/13190. James K. Hogue lists twenty parishes with White League organizations that formed between May and August 1874. James K. Hogue, *Uncivil War: Five New Orleans Street Battles and the Rise and Fall of Radical Reconstruction* (Baton Rouge, 1954), Appendix 2. The White League advertised its meetings and officers in newspapers, and the main newspapers in Shreveport and Opelousas were known particularly for their allegiance to the White League. See, for example, *Opelousas Courier*, May 25, 1874 and *New Orleans Bulletin*, October 2, 1874. The August 22, 1874, *Opelousas Courier* had five front-page columns describing the White League and Democratic Party convention held in Opelousas. Julius Levin joined two other Alexandria Jews, Edouard Weil and Marx Heyman, as delegates to the April 1872 Louisiana Democratic Party convention. Martin I. Hinchen, *Fourscore and Eleven: A History of the Jews of Rapides Parish, 1828–1919* (Alexandria, LA, 1984), 16; *Opelousas Journal*, October 16, 1874; Carol Mills-Nichol, *Louisiana's Jewish Immigrants from Bas-Rhin, Alsace, France,* (Santa Maria, CA, 2014), 139, 145.

Hyams and Leopold Caspari—as part of a conservative Democratic Party club. Although Myers professed he was in favor of secession and supported the Confederates while at home during the war, his allegiances and those of his merchant father, Philip, switched by 1870, when Republican Governor Warmoth appointed the younger to a judgeship and the older as mayor of Natchitoches. By mid-decade, H. C. Myers became one of the most despised men in the region. The White League went after him in 1874, with Jewish compatriots and the local newspaper's assistance, in a convoluted series of charges and countercharges of fraud and deceit contrary to lawful office-holding.[27]

According to his nearly twenty pages of testimony, H. C. Myers was empowered to manage various aspects of local government. He told members of Congress that he lawfully dispatched his duties while acknowledging the opposition to some of his decisions. The White League and its mouthpiece, the Natchitoches newspaper *People's Vindicator*, wanted him gone, along with the Republican police jury and state senator. In a particularly nasty attack during the summer of 1874, an anonymous flier depicted Myers thusly: "Our Judge, H. C. Myers, the hawking Jew and a disgrace not only to the judicial bench but to that race who have been kings and rulers from the beginning of time . . . " That missive followed one from a Committee of 70—essentially members of the White League—that proclaimed to Myers and other Republican leaders:

> Your fate is sealed. . . . Nothing but your blood will appease us. The people of Natchitoches, Sabine, Winn, De Soto, Rapides, Red River, Bienville, Claiborne, Jackson and Caddo [Parishes] are ready at a moment's notice, and will exterminate all radicals.

Myers and another Republican officeholder were warned in August 1874 to either leave the region or suffer the consequences. Three members of the Committee of 70 were Jewish, two of whom were founders of B'nai Israel in Natchitoches: Isaac Kahn and Henry Levy. The third was a

---

[27] *Condition of the South*, 279–91. H. C. Myers is buried in the Dispersed of Judah cemetery in New Orleans. His father is shown as treasurer of the Hebrew Benevolent Society in Charleston. The father apparently left South Carolina after his wife died of fever in 1842. *Charleston Daily Courier*, December 5, 1828; *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, May 12, 1870; *New Orleans Times*, May 13, 1870; *Charleston Daily Courier*, July 14, 1827 and September 22, 1842; *Charleston Mercury*, April 14, 1842; *Natchitoches Spectator*, May 14, 1868; Mills-Nichol, *Louisiana's Jewish Immigrants,* 94–95, 152.

member of the Hyams family, who were Democrats beginning with Henry M. Hyams Sr., Louisiana's pre–Civil War lieutenant governor. Philip Myers also is listed as a synagogue founder, illustrating how the ebbs and flows of life continually offered alliances for Jewish men that could change dramatically, perhaps with dire consequences, within days, weeks, months or years.[28]

H. C. Myers and another Republican officeholder took the threat seriously. Myers testified about getting out of his sick bed one late August day and departing about 5 P.M. in a friend's carriage, eventually reaching Memphis and then New Orleans. Myers told committee members that his infant child was sick, as were his wife and aging father. According to Myers, the baby died the day after he left home and his father not long after. Typical of the era, a White League organ in New Orleans told a different tale. The headline read:

Myers, the Martyr.

The Persecuted Magistrate of Natchitoches.

They Wouldn't Let Him Watch his Father's Dying Pillow.

Another Version of the Story.

The first three paragraphs sarcastically outline H. C. Myers's alleged misdeeds, his hoped-for resurgence as a man of virtue, and a brief recap of the events preceding his rapid departure from Natchitoches. The article failed to mention White League threats. The newspaper then published sworn statements from three nurses alleging that Myers barely visited his dying father and left without paying them. Henry Levy's affidavit identified him as a member of B'nai Israel (spelled "Benai"). Levy alleged that the Jewish organization and local Masonic lodges paid all of Philip

[28] Myers provided a list of the seventy White Leaguers in his testimony, published in the *People's Vindicator* on July 25, 1874, the same date he was described as a "hawking Jew." In addition to Henry Levy and Isaac Kahn, Solomon M. Hyams was listed. The *Vindicator* published the list almost weekly into 1875. *Condition of the South*, 290. On July 20, 2871, the *Weekly Louisianian* published a legislative act signed by Governor Warmoth acknowledging B'nai Israel and twenty-one Jewish men. See also, Mills-Nichol, *Louisiana's Jewish Immigrants,* 177.

From the testimony of Henry C. Myers, Condition of the South*, Forty-third Congress, House Report 261, p. 279. (Library of Congress.)*

Myers's medical expenses and those of H. C. Myers's infant. Levy was joined in the statement by the synagogue's secretary, H. Simon.[29]

"Bloodiest single instance of racial carnage …"

Election Day on November 8, 1868, was "terrifying and exhilarating" for many thousands of Black men throughout the South who were allowed to vote for the first time. Most were inclined to cast a ballot for the Civil War general who helped win their freedom, Republican nominee Ulysses S. Grant. The day Grant and his vice president, Schuyler Colfax, took office, March 4, 1869, became noteworthy for another reason. On that day, Grant Parish and its parish seat, Colfax, became legally recognized because a wealthy local Republican plantation owner pushed a law through the Louisiana legislature. His goal was to disenfranchise those he despised, mostly white supremacist, ex-Confederate Democrats. He knew the parish name and parish seat would long be reminders of the man and political party at the root of the ex-Confederates' daily humiliation. This began a bloody three-year-long battle over who would rule Grant Parish—a mirror for the rest of Louisiana. By 1872, the state was in chaos, and Colfax soon became the scene of what is considered the bloodiest massacre

[29] *Daily Picayune*, February 3, 1875. In 1878, Myers was arrested for malfeasance, jailed, and released. The charges never were proven. He returned to Natchitoches, served as a judge, and died in 1886.

during Reconstruction, an event that affected Black civil rights through the 1960s.[30]

President Grant won reelection in 1872, defeating newspaper editor Horace Greeley. Still, as had become the norm, voting in Louisiana was as fraudulent as it was contentious, the result casting Louisiana into a governmental circus with Governor Warmoth as ringmaster. The Meyer family continued its involvement in anti-Reconstruction activity, at least according to the West Feliciana Parish Democratic Party's nemesis, D. A. Weber. He told a congressional committee that Leon Adler and one other man were members of the White League supporting an allegedly corrupt sheriff. That accusation was trifling compared to what transpired elsewhere. Not eager to relinquish power, and with his gubernatorial term ending, Warmoth essentially commandeered the election and tilted the count in favor of his gubernatorial choice, despite a clear victory for the other nominee. Both candidates—Warmoth's choice, John McEnery, and his opponent, William Pitt Kellogg—claimed victory. The state was thrown into dysfunction, the voting results legally contested even as McEnery and Kellogg took separate oaths, along with two separate, politically skewed legislative bodies meeting blocks from each other in downtown New Orleans.[31]

Every parish also seated two separate governing bodies, each supporting its favored governor. The coup de grâce came from President Grant, who detested Warmoth. Grant recognized William Pitt Kellogg and ordered a military presence to help ensure his transition to power.

---

[30] See Charles Lane, *The Day Freedom Died: The Colfax Massacre, the Supreme Court, and the Betrayal of Reconstruction* (New York, 2008), 24; David T. Ballantyne, *Fractured Freedoms: Reconstructing Central Louisiana* (Baton Rouge, 2025). Lane's *The Day Freedom Died* is more detailed about the Colfax massacre; Ballantyne takes a broader view of Reconstruction in the central part of the state, with Colfax as one incident.

[31] *Mississippi in 1875,* Forty-fourth Congress, Senate Report 527 (Washington, D.C., 1875), 1544–45. Although his residence was St. Francisville, Louisiana, D.A. Weber testified about activities that crossed Louisiana and Mississippi state boundaries. He also accused Adler and his cohorts of commandeering the West Feliciana Parish government, raising taxes, and then misspending the money. He provided a list of merchants in arrears on their taxes that included Levy & Adler—a Meyer family store—owing nine dollars. While D. A. Weber's motives can certainly be challenged, his position gave him access to official county records that supported his allegations. Baton Rouge served as the official state capital, but Reconstruction governments met in New Orleans through 1882.

Henry C. Warmoth, 1875.
(Wikimedia Commons.)

William Pitt Kellogg, c. 1850.
(Library of Congress.)

Historians generally concede that Grant faced an intolerable set of circumstances, and his decision was viewed as yet more indignity foisted upon Louisiana. The white supremacists prepared for a fight. "To most White people in Grant Parish, the Republicans' little domain was a confused, sickening place, in which all the most sacred values of the South were being mocked and trampled," concludes historian Charles Lane. Grant's decision came to bear on Colfax. At least one Jewish merchant from Alexandria in neighboring Rapides Parish was prepared to join in the paramilitary chaos descending on the community.[32]

Not long after election day, hundreds of armed Black Louisianians, some with families, encamped in Colfax, surrounding and guarding a makeshift courthouse and the few buildings that made up the town. They were ready to protect what they had voted for and believed was rightfully theirs—a local government with courts and law enforcement based on law, not hate. They knew local White men who had terrorized the region

[32] Lane, *The Day Freedom Died*, 45. See also, Bone, "Louisiana in the Disputed Election of 1876," 408–40. A U.S. Senate committee concluded in February 1873 that "there is no state government at present existing in the state of Louisiana." The voting in 1872 was nullified, and another election held in May 1873.

would come for them, and, with limited military experience and few guns, they prepared for a military-style assault. W. S. Calhoun, the landowner and former state legislator who named Grant Parish and Colfax, departed for New Orleans, but his boat was forced to land. He was arrested, and a letter seeking aid for his Republican comrades was taken from him, ending any hope that state or federal troops would intervene.[33]

On Easter Sunday, April 13, 1873, Colfax became a killing ground. Eric Foner writes that Colfax was "the bloodiest single instance of racial carnage in the Reconstruction Era." The massacre, he observes, "taught many lessons, including the lengths to which some opponents of Reconstruction would go to regain their accustomed authority." Dozens of Blacks and two White people died during the courthouse attack led by dozens of White men, many of them ex-Confederates who employed wartime maneuvers to converge on the building seeking to reclaim the parish and to restore white supremacist rule. Jonas Rosenthal, a Jewish merchant from Alexandria, told an interviewer that although he did not participate in the courthouse rampage, he arrived just after the hour-long attack. Rosenthal estimated that four hundred were killed. He told about W. S. Calhoun's return to Colfax with New Orleans police aboard a boat.[34] Historian Manie White Johnson documented the scene in 1930:

> While anchored at Alexandria some White men, among whom were Dave Paul, Jake Geiger, Henry Luckett and Jonas Rosenthal, went on board with intention of throwing him overboard. Mr. Rosenthal related: "Well, we

[33] Lane, *The Day Freedom Died*, 45. Congressional investigators estimated that between 250 and three hundred Black men in the area were deprived of their voting rights in November 1872. On Election Day, a ballot box in Colfax was surreptitiously taken from the polling place when Republicans complained about its safety. Kept in a private home, it appeared the next morning with a crude hole punched into its side, ballots stuffed inside, and the box "blunderingly repaired."

[34] Foner, *Reconstruction*, 437, 607; *Condition of the South*. Numerous sources describe the carnage. Official reports stated that federal troops counted 372 bodies. Families took an unknown number of the dead and buried them before troops arrived, thus the number killed likely was closer to four hundred. *Condition of the South*. The report focuses much of its 1,144 pages on Louisiana incidents, including Colfax and Coushatta, New Orleans and the White League.

> commenced drinking. . . . He [Calhoun] got the best of us. We got tight and he got sober. Consequently, Calhoun's life was spared."[35]

Rosenthal was part of a vibrant Jewish merchant community typical of numerous such entities across the state. Alexandria, in Rapides Parish (one of the most volatile across the state), elected Edouard Weil, a Jew, as mayor. He served from 1875 to 1876, in support of the dominant White League Democrats. Amid one of the ugliest incidents of the period when the offices of a local Republican newspaper were raided and destroyed, the *Weekly Louisianian* pointed out the dichotomy of Jews on both sides of Reconstruction while also criticizing Weil for his apathetic view of the newspaper raid: "Four-fifths of the business citizens of Alexandria are opposed to these lawless acts," the paper stated. "The Israelites, who are a majority of the business men of the town, although Democrats in politics, abhor such lawlessness, and unhesitatingly condemn it." Historian Joel Sipress suggests the Colfax massacre was less about extremism and more indicative of the choices men such as Rosenthal made to retain their power. He argues that moderates during Reconstruction thought the reemergence of White plantation authority eventually would overtake Black suffrage and enfranchisement.[36]

---

[35] Manie White Johnson, "The Colfax Riot of April, 1873," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 13 (1930): 391–427; Mills-Nichol, *Louisiana's Jewish Merchants,* 317–19. Johnson's citations indicate that Rosenthal was interviewed in 1928 when he was eighty-six years old. Johnson also interviewed several others who are listed as having "actually participated in the riot." She notes that Rosenthal "appeared upon the scene immediately thereafter." Johnson wrote about the Colfax massacre for her master's thesis in 1930. In addition to her *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* article, her master's thesis (Southern Methodist University, April 1929) was published in Alexandria's daily newspaper. Johnson's account offered details not included in the investigations and contemporary depictions of the Colfax massacre. Her account is largely from the White League perspective, including a letter from a participant who said he and others were initiated into the Knights of the White Camelia by a former Confederate officer, then merged into the KKK while engaged in "warfare" against those who were trying to overrule "the White Citizen for Power and Equality." The Committee of 70 that opposed H. C. Myers published a decidedly slanted pamphlet titled, "*History of the Riot at Colfax, with a brief sketch of the trial of the Grant Parish Prisoners*," that portrays the Whites as defending themselves from unrepentant, rapacious Blacks. The author thanks the State Historical Society of Wisconsin for the pamphlet. See also, *Alexandria Daily Town Talk,* May 23, 1930.

[36] "Peculiarity of the Cotton Kingdom," *Weekly Louisianian*, September 25, 1875; Joel M. Sipress, "From the Barrel of a Gun: The Politics of Murder in Grant Parish," *Louisiana History* 42 (Summer 2001), 303-21. In the *New Orleans Times* of September 27, 1865, a story headlined

Notice of the election of Edouard Weil as mayor of Alexandria, LA. The Moses Rosenthal mentioned was the brother of Jonas Rosenthal. Louisiana Democrat, *January 6, 1875. (Newspapers.com.)*

Henry M. Hyams Sr., a Jewish lawyer living in New Orleans, worried about his son's family living near Colfax. The Hyams were among the most prominent Jewish families in Louisiana. Henry had traveled from Charleston to New Orleans with his cousin Judah P. Benjamin in 1828. He had a long history of anti-Black activism including as part of a vigilante committee to stifle antislavery activities and publications in 1835. Hyams invested in plantations and slaveholding, eventually living a life of relative privilege after relocating to New Orleans in 1853. He served as Louisiana's anti-abolitionist lieutenant governor from 1860 to 1864, the first Jew to serve in that office in any state. He became active in Louisiana's Democratic Party beginning in 1855 with his election to the state senate.

"Red River Correspondence" references residents "vainly endeavoring to find some place to do a little trading" because the numerous Jewish businesses in Alexandria are closed for Yom Kippur. See Morrow-Spitzer, "Free from Proscription and Prejudice" for a more detailed discussion of Weil, his politics, and the newspaper raid.

Nine days before the Colfax attack, Hyams wrote to his son, enclosing a pistol and cartridges. Given his stature, Hyams was probably privy to conversation about the evolving discontent in Grant Parish, 240 miles from New Orleans, though likely from partisan news stories. He wrote, using letterhead from a Jewish-owned New Orleans cotton brokerage, Meyer, Weis & Co.: "I am much distressed at the situation of affairs in your parish and I am glad you have resolved to stay at home and attend exclusively to your business. It cannot be expected that you take part isolated as you are and surrounded entirely by a Negro community. It may be different were there a White community." In a second letter, Hyams inquired about his son's safety. He had not heard from his son but was nonetheless hopeful the family was untouched by the events in downtown Colfax. "We naturally feel anxious, notwithstanding our confidence that by a strict attention to your business on the plantation that you have been as little mixed up in this unfortunate business as possible." Faithful to the anti-Republican cause, Hyams concluded: "[T]he testimony clearly preponderates that the conflict was brought about by the lawless violence . . . which preceded the general conflict."[37]

Five months after Colfax, a collapse of financial markets worldwide threw the nation into economic chaos, an event devastating for Louisiana and its businessmen, whose credit lifelines shriveled while their debts increased. In the Feliciana Parishes, where the Meyer family made its living, a poor harvest and low crop prices added to the overall pall cast by the national and worldwide economic malaise. The Colfax uprising, the Supreme Court *Slaughterhouse* rulings, which limited federal protections for

---

[37] Hyams to his son Henry Jr., April 2 and April 4, 1873, Henry M. Hyams Family Papers, Mss. 1392, LLMVC; *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, June 26, 1875. One day after the Colfax massacre, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a ruling known as the *Slaughterhouse Cases*, which challenged the Warmoth administration's attempts to stop butchers from dumping animal detritus into New Orleans waterways. The Louisiana Supreme Court had ruled against the butchers' arguments that their Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendment rights were being impeded. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of Louisiana to regulate the butchers using an overly broad analysis of the two amendments, thus weakening the federal protection Blacks had relied upon from laws Congress enacted at the beginning of Reconstruction. Legal experts suggest that the setback to Black enfranchisement were not addressed until Supreme Court rulings in civil rights cases during the 1950s and 1960s. See also, Joel William Friedman, "The Legal, Political and Religious Legacy of an Extended Jewish Family," *Southern Jewish History* 18 (2015), 63–99.

Black residents, and a poor economy provided the catalysts for additional frenzy among White League leaders blaming the federal government, Warmoth and carpetbaggers, and Black and White Republicans for their woes.[38]

Although many of the violent incidents preceding the Colfax massacre had been largely at the hands of individuals or roving bands of racists with little organization or leadership, the courthouse incident involved ex-Confederates who planned and carried out the attack aimed at political gain. "The battle of Colfax became a blueprint for the future of white supremacy across Louisiana because it pointed the way toward a successful strategy of paramilitary action narrowly aimed at seizing local political power and destroying the Louisiana Republican Party from the bottom up," according to historian James K. Hogue. By mid-1874, one-third of Louisiana parishes housed officially recognized White League organizations. Some estimates place membership at nearly twenty thousand armed, drilled White men, many ex-Confederates following former officers prepared to usurp Republican governance statewide. Red River Parish was one of the first to organize a White League. The parish seat, Coushatta, became, like Colfax, a symbol for white supremacist hate. Again, Jewish men participated in the violence.[39]

"You will have to be a White Leaguer or they will drive you out of the country."

Jewish brothers Julius, Marks, and Sam Lisso were well established as merchants in Coushatta when Marshall Harvey Twitchell arrived in Louisiana in 1865. For eleven years, he and Julius Lisso maintained a strong bond that served their mutual interests until it all unraveled. Their friendship, discussed unsparingly in congressional testimony, provides rare insight into how Jewish merchants accepted a white supremacist path that, for Julius Lisso, contributed to his friend's demise. Twitchell, a Freedmen's Bureau officer after nearly four years as a decorated Union soldier from Vermont, was the quintessential carpetbagger, a White Northern Republican who moved to the South during or after the Civil War seeking opportunities for personal and business success. Born into a life of privilege and with a confident swagger, Twitchell moved comfortably among

[38] Kilbourne, *Debt, Investment, Slaves*, 9.

[39] Hogue, *Uncivil War*.

Black and White residents in the Red River region who strained under the deprivation following the war. His stature rose quickly, attracting notice from the White Camelias, who tried killing him twice in 1868 when he cast the only vote in Bienville Parish for Ulysses S. Grant. He parlayed his access and influence into a seat as constitutional convention delegate, then a state senate seat he used to push through legislation in 1868, with Warmoth in full support, forming Red River Parish, which would be Twitchell's home until 1874. No one in the parish held more influence or wealth than Twitchell, with the help of the Lisso brothers.[40]

The Lissos had settled in the Red River area during the 1840s as part of the early wave of German Jewish immigrants into Louisiana. Like so many other Jewish immigrants, they peddled then opened a store, fought for the Confederacy, returned from the war, and were thriving by the time Twitchell arrived. He turned to the brothers for help with his vision for the community. Historian Ted Tunnell observes that while all of the Coushatta merchants contributed to a fund created when the town incorporated, Marks and Julius Lisso gave Twitchell access to "draw on them" for whatever he needed. Julius Lisso, who became Twitchell's closest confidant for a period, acted as parish treasurer. All of Twitchell's business dealings involved the Lisso brothers, including the construction of the parish courthouse.[41]

By June 1874, with the Colfax massacre still resonating, the sentiment for Twitchell among his neighbors began to tilt. Some of the merchants whom he had relied upon for economic and social support viewed him as a wealthy, opportunistic, Northern Republican while they were faced with ruin after years of poor crops and mounting debt. Yellow fever added to their dread, killing several local businessmen including Marks Lisso. By

---

[40] Ted Tunnell, *Edge of the Sword: The Ordeal of Carpetbagger Marshall H. Twitchell in the Civil War and Reconstruction* (Baton Rouge, 2001). Twitchell served as president of the Red River Parish police jury, and his brother, Homer, was the first parish recorder and tax collector. Their brother-in-law, George Hill, was Coushatta mayor. *New Orleans Republican,* April 18, 1868.

[41] Tunnell, *Edge of the Sword*, 131–55; *Federal Offices in Louisiana*, Forty-Fourth Congress, House Report 816, (Washington, D.C., 1876), 672. Marks and Julius Lisso served with the First Louisiana Infantry. Each was wounded, and Julius was taken as a prisoner of war. "Julius Lisso," Shapell Roster, accessed May 18, 2026, https://www.org/civil-war-soldier-database/soldier/8824; "Marks Lisso," Shapell Roster, accessed May 18, 2026, https://www.shapell.org/civil-war-soldier-database/soldier/8825.

summer, the once-vibrant Lisso Bros. store closed, as did a store operated by their nephews. Other merchants in downtown Coushatta closed their shops as well. The White League became a haven for some of the merchants. In June, Twitchell and Lisso concluded that people who joined the White League to close ranks on the "basis of race and color did not meet with the approval of the better disposed classes of White people." The following month, they spoke again when Lisso was in New Orleans to make final arrangements for his marriage to a Crescent City Jewish woman. "They are getting to be very hot up there," Twitchell told his friend. "You will have to come out and be a White-Leaguer right straight through or they will drive you out of the country." Unmoved, Lisso replied, "I am my own man, and I intend to be independent." Nonetheless, by August, Julius and Sam Lisso had joined the White League.[42]

The first-person accounts in congressional testimony from Julius Lisso and Marshall Twitchell about their decade-long friendship and its abrupt end provide a unique, personal glimpse into the external pressures pushing Jewish men to adapt to beliefs contrary to their own. Like other White men in parishes throughout the state, Coushatta's business leaders seamlessly made the transition from the Democratic Party to the White League, and no doubt brought with them family and longtime associates who may have required a nudge. Historians Allan Trelease, Ted Tunnell, and Stuart Rockoff converge in their assessments about the businessmen's acceptance of White supremacist dogma, their fear of retaliation and of being accused of treason to the South and the White race. Rockoff specifically points out the "sometimes ambiguous position of southern Jews during Reconstruction," concluding that political alliances and not religion provided the locus of their troubles.[43]

Julius Lisso's testimony draws from each of those themes, guiding his choice to abandon Twitchell and become a White Leaguer just as his friend had predicted. Twitchell described Lisso to the committee as having been one of his "warm personal friends." Lisso told the committee when asked if he had financial confidence in his one-time friend, "I have the utmost." About his confidence in Twitchell as a politician, he replied,

---

[42] Tunnell, *Edge of the Sword*, 192–93; *Federal Offices in Louisiana*, 654.

[43] Rockoff, "Carpetbaggers," 1; Tunnell, *Edge of the Sword*, 192; Trelease, *White Terror,* xi. See also, Leonard Rogoff, "Is the Jew White: The Racial Place of the Southern Jew," *American Jewish History* 85 (September 1997): 195–230.

"Not at all." Newspapers added to the pressure on the Lisso brothers and others. The *People's Vindicator* in Natchitoches suggested publishing a "black list" of those who supported Republicans so that retribution could be exacted. Those who joined organizations like the White League certainly were aware of the nefarious nature of their activities, regardless of whether the individual chose to participate in the violence. While no record shows Julius Lisso's involvement in White League violence, clearly his hope to support his friend crumbled under the severe pressure of being cast as an outsider against a network of merchants determined to stand for white superiority.[44]

By late August 1874, the White League throughout the Red River area—Coushatta, Natchitoches, Alexandria, and Shreveport—wanted Twitchell and his associates out of the way. Well-armed supremacists from the region and neighboring states looked for a fight. Downtown Coushatta was abuzz with rumors of a Black revolt, a common theme to churn sentiment before a violent incident, followed by reports that a Black man shot and wounded a White Leaguer on patrol. That incident gave White League leaders the impetus to seize Twitchell's brother, Homer, the sheriff, a deputy sheriff, and twenty-seven Black and four White men, including Twitchell's two brothers-in-law. The prisoners were put in the basement of a downtown store, then forced into a sham trial with White Leaguers presiding before they signed a statement surrendering their public offices, asking for safe passage out of the state, and acknowledging that the "leading citizens of the political organization of the white people" was attempting to protect them.[45]

The White League followed with a statement, which contended, in part: "Some of the bad White men have been for years inculcating vicious ideas into the minds of the colored people of Red River, and arraying them against the true interest of the country, the White people and their own." Julius Lisso, J. P. Hyams, grandson of Henry H. Hyams Sr., twenty other White Leaguers, and "five hundred more" released the statement printed in the *People's Vindicator*. The next day, Homer Twitchell, two of his brothers-in-law, and five of his Coushatta neighbors were put on horses with a cadre of guards. Before he departed, one of the men wrote to his wife,

---

[44] The comments from Twitchell and Lisso are taken from their testimony in 1876. *Federal Offices in Louisiana*, 654, 721–22. See also, *People's Vindicator*, September 12, 1874.

[45] *People's Vindicator*, September 5, 1874.

instructing her to give money he had left to support their family to Julius Lisso. In Tunnell's detailed analysis of the Coushatta violence, he noted that Lisso and his White League cohorts hoped to depose the Twitchell machine and exile its leaders nonviolently. White League marauders ended those hopes. The Republican hostages were attacked and killed as they rode toward Texas within hours of their departure from Coushatta. The White League chose twenty-five men to guard the hostages on their exile outside of Louisiana; one guard was J. P. Hyams. During the attack, White Leaguers on horseback told young Hyams and other guards to move aside or be killed. Jewish involvement in the volatility of the Red River region during fall 1874 stretched to Shreveport, as well. Nearly one hundred merchants, of which approximately twelve were Jewish, twice printed statements in the *Shreveport Times*, a newspaper sympathetic to the White League, threatening to withhold business from anyone voting Republican. They agreed to implore employees to vote Democrat and to deny employment or conduct business with Republicans.[46]

Like Colfax, the Coushatta massacre prompted a congressional investigation that provided insight into the helplessness the federal legislators felt in parsing over the details of cold-blooded political murders in Louisiana. The White League had successfully wiped out the dreams of two leaders of neighboring parishes: W. C. Calhoun in Grant Parish and Marshall H. Twitchell in Red River Parish. The former sought revenge on his detractors; the latter wanted prestige and legacy. Calhoun eventually was forced to sell his land, some to his enemies, to pay debts and died quietly years later. Twitchell tried unsuccessfully to use legal means to exact retribution for the deaths of his relatives and friends and retain what remained of his investments in Red River Parish. He remained in New Orleans during and after the violence, not daring to return for the funeral of a sister who died in 1875 of yellow fever. He was chosen as the Republican legislative leader in 1876, when only Louisiana, South Carolina, and Florida tried to maintain some semblance of Reconstruction government.[47]

---

[46] *People's Vindicator*, September 5, 1874; Tunnell, *Edge of the Sword*, 203; *Shreveport Times,* October 16, 1874. The names listed were Dreyfus, Florsheim, Hirsch, Kahn, Kaufmann, Levy, Roos, Sour, Utz, and Weil.

[47] After a sarcastic review of White League testimony of events leading to the killings (Black people were unruly, the Republicans unable to rule, and the White Leaguers were not

When attempts were made to impeach Governor Kellogg, Twitchell played a critical role in defending him and ending the Senate trial, efforts that hardened the hatred against him. He returned to his plantation, Starlight, in late April 1876 for a few days of business before planning a return to Vermont. A gunman ambushed him and his brother-in-law, George Hill, who was the sheriff, as they rode in a skiff crossing the Red River. Hill was killed and Twitchell wounded in both arms, which were amputated. He left Louisiana on a stretcher, never to return. No one was charged with crimes relating to the murders of the men exiled from Coushatta or for Twitchell's attempted assassination. Ted Tunnell doubts a popular theme of the period that Twitchell was targeted as part of a larger political conspiracy, instead concluding the men were murdered by a White League-associated gang.[48]

A Jewish man, Ben Wolfson, witnessed the Twitchell shootings from the river bank. Wolfson belonged to one of the first Jewish families in the region. The Wolfson and Lisso families were connected through marriage. Wolfson testified about fortuitously arriving in downtown Coushatta on the day of the assassination attempt, walking into the post office to get his mail, hearing the shots, then commandeering the mailman's horse to make the ride toward the shooter. Twitchell had Wolfson arrested in 1874 after the White League murders. He told the U.S. Marshal to detain him after Wolfson loudly protested the presence of the military in the town. When Wolfson's sister asked him about her brother's arrest, Twitchell reportedly said, "He talks too much." In his congressional testimony, Twitchell mentions Wolfson's answer to a question about whether he thought the assassination attempt was politically motivated. "I have been told that Mr. Wolfson in town, for one, and quite a number of others said, 'Well, if they

culpable in the resignations, imprisonment, and deaths), the report notes: "There was certainly no evidence . . . where the responsibility of this great crime rests. . . . [I]t was a most dastardly murder condemned by the entire people of Louisiana, as it must always be in the civilized world." *Condition of the South*, 10.

[48] Tunnell, *Edge of the Sword,* 259. A congressional committee was skeptical of the entire investigation, and town leaders, particularly Thoms Abney, whom they suspected of involving White Leaguers in the planned attack and warning a friend to remain in Coushatta rather than join the guards assigned to protect the men who were murdered. *Condition of the South*, 17–18.

ask us that question, we will have to tell them, of course, it was. The only objection to the man was his politics."[49]

Parish insurrection would be insufficient for the White Leaguers. By the end of summer 1874, their focus turned to full-scale war against the state with New Orleans as their battleground. Jewish men yet again participated in the violence.

"The White League of New Orleans . . . is a constant menace."

The Crescent City White League was the largest and most menacing in the region, boasting as many armed men as regiments in the Confederate and Union forces. Some accounts place the number at between 2,500 and three thousand, led by ex-Confederates who utilized their military leadership, training, and wartime expertise to prepare to take by force what they could not take by the ballot. At least nine were Jewish. "The White League of New Orleans itself was and is a constant menace to the republicans of the whole state," wrote congressional investigators in a one-thousand-page report published in February 1875. Five months prior, the congressmen and rest of the country had learned about the Battle of Liberty Place on September 14, 1874, the apex of white supremacist mayhem that temporarily overthrew Louisiana's state government.[50]

Just as Generals Lee and Grant had prepared for battle, so did the leaders of the New Orleans White League and its enemy, Louisiana's militia, both representing about 2,500 men with the same hardened wartime experience. New Orleans businessmen including Jews entered the fray, sending Grant an appeal to stand down. "Perfect confidence restored . . .

---

[49] *Condition of the South*, 17–18; Tunnell, *Edge of the Sword*, 238–42. Twitchell became a special U.S. ambassador in Canada, a position he held for twenty-seven years before his death. The Twitchell family's dominance was matched in neighboring Lincoln Parish, created in 1873 and controlled for about a decade by the Greene family, whose influence gradually waned. White League activity was as prevalent in Lincoln Parish, but without a visible Jewish presence. David Rabb Cargill, "Reconstruction and the White League Movement in Lincoln Parish," (Ph.D. dissertation, Louisiana State University, 1993).

[50] *Condition of the South,* 18. James Hogue points out that at least 10 percent of the Confederates who served in Louisiana's Washington Artillery were White Leaguers who took part in the Liberty Place battle, suggesting that their willingness to take part "supports the unsurprising but nevertheless telling conclusion that Confederate soldiers tended to follow the lead of their officers in joining the violent campaign against Reconstruction." Hogue, *Uncivil War*.

not a single case of lawlessness," read the overly optimistic message. For days before the coup, White Leaguers brazenly drilled unarmed in the New Orleans streets while their leaders tried to secure additional weaponry, their actions prompting the less-well-armed local police to scour the city for guns and ammunition before the White Leaguers could find them. Word passed quickly on Saturday, September 12 that a ship bearing weapons had arrived and was waiting to be unloaded at the New Orleans docks, prompting the police chief to guard access to the levee and ship's cargo. The White Leaguers knew they had to move with urgency lest they be outgunned and outmaneuvered. They selected Monday, September 14 as the day for their coup d'etat and the end to Republican rule. At noon, the Democrats declared themselves in charge, called upon Louisianians to arm in support of their new government and told Black people that the White League had no intention of harming them. League headquarters was set up in the downtown hardware store owned by Edwin I. Kursheedt, one of the city's most prominent Jewish leaders and a veteran of the renowned Confederate Washington Artillery.[51]

A crowd estimated at between 2,500 to five thousand mostly White men had gathered on Canal Street. R. H. Marr, a New Orleans defense attorney, led a committee of four in an unsuccessful attempt to meet with Governor Kellogg to pressure him into recognizing Democrats who claimed victory in recent elections. Among the members of Marr's committee was James Madison Seixas, an ex-Confederate and member of one of the most prominent Jewish families in America. Marriage also linked the Seixas and Kursheedt families. When police tried dispersing the crowd, they were fired upon and the Battle of Liberty Place ensued. Not since the Civil War had more men faced off in battle, with at least seven Jewish men engaged in the street fighting. Two sets of brothers were part of the battle, Albert M. and Alex Binel Levy and Washington and Marion H. Marks, all ex-Confederates in Louisiana units. Richard K. Hyams, son of former Lieutenant Governor Henry M. Hyams Sr., participated, as did future law partners Benjamin Franklin Jonas and Ernest Benjamin

[51] *New Orleans Times-Democrat*, February 22, 1906. The Jewish businessmen and/or businesses who signed the appeal to Grant were from Janney & Hyams, Isaacson, Seixas & Co., Isaac N. Marks and George Jonas. *Condition of the South,* 835; "Edwin Kursheedt," Shapell Roster, accessed May 18, 2026, https://www.shapell.org/civil-war-soldier-database/soldier/8800.

Kruttschnitt. Jonas's political fortunes eventually took him to the U.S. Senate, where he represented Louisiana from 1879 to 1885 as the third Jew to serve in that body, while Kruttschnitt oversaw the dismantling of Black equality in Louisiana.

The Jonas family provides additional context for the conflicting behavior evident among the Jews of this period. Of six Jonas brothers, four fought for the Confederacy and two for the Union. Benjamin, an ex-Confederate, and brother George, an ex-Union soldier and New Orleans banker, were solidly opposed to Reconstruction and part of the overt efforts to stop President Grant from interceding in state politics. A third brother, Edward, also an ex-Union soldier, testified in 1874 that he was on the opposing side from his brothers. He worked for the Jewish-owned cotton factorage firm Meyer, Weis & Co., voted twice for Grant, and

Aaron B. Thompson, "The Metropolitan Police Attacking Citizens On The Levee Near the Custom House," from "Revolution in New Orleans – Overthrow of the Kellogg State Government of Louisiana," Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, *October 3, 1874. (Courtesy of the Historic New Orleans Collection, gift of Mr. George Denègre, 2002.32.6 i-viii.)*

believed the 1874 election was fairly contested. He said that he lived without any fear of repercussions.[52]

As the insurrection unfolded, the White Leaguers let out a screeching rebel yell. The fighting through downtown New Orleans lasted about an hour before the White Leaguers triumphed. By nightfall, the leaguers controlled the city streets. A deft bit of White League strategy had kept federal troops from arriving to help police and the state militia. While the White League knew that their hold on the city was tentative because of the anticipated federal intervention, on September 15 their four leaders, including Seixas, nonetheless issued a statement urging residents to welcome their new state officers.[53]

President Grant responded swiftly and overwhelmingly. He dispatched troops and Navy ships to New Orleans, which functioned once more as an occupied city, while the Kellogg government sought to regain authority. Liberty Place was "possibly the largest military insurrection that has ever occurred against the government of a state of the United States," argues historian Joe Gray Taylor. The Crescent City White

---

[52] "Albert M. Levy," Shapell Roster, accessed May 18, 2026, https://www.shapell.org/civil-war-soldier-database/soldier/8842; "Jacob Washington Marks," Shapell Roster, accessed May 18, 2026, https://www.shapell.org/civil-war-soldier-database/soldier/8873; "James Madison Seixas," Shapell Roster, accessed May 18, 2026, https://www.shapell.org/civil-war-soldier-database/soldier/8902; "Benjamin Franklin Jonas," Shapell Roster, accessed May 18, 2026, https://www.shapell.org/civil-war-soldier-database/soldier/9144. The Shapell Roster provides detailed information about the Jonas brothers' Confederate and Union Civil War service.

[53] *New Orleans Times-Picayune,* November 9, 1896; *New Orleans Times*, September 15, 1874. Next to the White League statement appeared a news story datelined St. Louis, reporting that a mass meeting of Missouri residents had cheered the assault on Radical Republican governance in Louisiana, indicative of the growing disenchantment in the North with Reconstruction. Several lists of New Orleans White League members are included in the historiography of Liberty Place and in media, which in later years celebrated those who fought the battle. Stuart Omer Landry, *The Battle of Liberty Place: The Overthrow of Carpet-bag Rule in New Orleans: September 14th, 1874* (Baton Rouge, 1999), 234–40; Hogue, *Uncivil War*, Table 2.2. The list of names in the Hogue and Landry books are essentially the same, while Hogue's examination is a more historical account than Landry's pro–White League description of events. Albert Levy and Alex Levy are members of the author's maternal grandfather's family—the Rieses who settled in New Orleans and Mayers who settled in Natchez. Silverberg, "Houses Divided that Remained Standing," 11–58.

League's boldness stood as a beacon of violence that terrorized Louisiana for several more years, with ongoing Jewish involvement.[54]

The Saga of John Gair

John Gair was a Black leader who seized the opportunity for social and economic prosperity, only to be struck down by the evil of white supremacy. Like the H. C. Myer story, the life and death of John Gair demonstrate how Jewish men stood on both sides of Reconstruction. Some Jews supported Gair politically, while others were present when he was murdered in a pine forest a few miles from Clinton in East Feliciana Parish. Historian William Horne asserts that Gair's success emerged from his ability to capitalize on his followers' desire, if not desperation, to "alter the social and political landscape of the plantation region." A carpenter by trade, contemporary accounts describe Gair as educated and as charismatic as he was polarizing. He could captivate his Black Republican brethren with political stump speeches, challenge legislative leadership with his intimate knowledge of procedure and adeptness at floor debate, and infuriate White Democrats with his intransigence, such as when he refused to abide by a yellow fever quarantine requiring him to temporarily refrain from entering Clinton.[55]

---

[54] Taylor, "New Orleans and Reconstruction," 203.

[55] William Horne, "Landscapes of Emancipation: Plantations and African American Liberation," in *Charting the Plantation Landscape from Natchez to New Orleans*, ed. Laura Kilser VanHuss (Baton Rouge, 2021), 139. Newspapers and scholarly publications have described Gair as an ex-slave. In an email to the author, a descendant wrote that the Gair family genealogy preceding 1860 includes free people of color. They have no clear evidence Gair was enslaved or lived his entire life in East Feliciana Parish. Donald F. Jones, email to author, November 18, 2025. The 1870 U.S. Census for Clinton, LA, shows John Gair, twenty-five, born about 1845, with his wife, Josephine, twenty-one, and daughter Anna, two. He is described as "mulatto" and listed as a carpenter. In testimony after Gair was killed, a prominent Clinton attorney said he knew Gair well, had employed him as a carpenter, and that Gair learned to read in 1867, thus the possibility that Gair had moved from Jefferson to East Feliciana Parish when he was in his twenties. "East Feliciana," 457–58. The 1850 U.S. Census for Jefferson Parish shows a Gair couple, the husband a carpenter, with a son named John, born about 1841. A James Gair, carpenter, is enumerated in Clinton in 1850 with an unidentified eighteen-year-old male slave, thus leaving an age discrepancy between the 1850 and 1870 census records. Gair represented East Feliciana Parish at the 1867 constitutional convention then won election to the state House of Representatives the next year. Ninth Census of the

By August 1874, Gair began campaigning for a state senate seat. Some of his support came from a Jewish merchant in Clinton, Joseph Israel, who worked locally and statewide supporting the Republican Party. He was one of only two Whites at a political event for Gair. Israel also was the founding president of the Clinton lodge of the International Order of B'nai B'rith and served the organization for years, exchanging leadership roles with other local Jews including brothers Henry and Emanuel Meyer. Israel had been appointed Clinton's postmaster in 1871, a visible and lucrative patronage position within the community still attempting to recover from the war, floods, and bad crops. By this point in the arc of Reconstruction-era politics, Israel stood outside the Jewish mainstream, as several historians point out. In his detailed examination of North Carolina communities, Leonard Rogoff states that Jews were largely dismissive of what they termed "radical Republicanism" as they embraced the White-dominated Democratic Party.[56]

The Senate nominating process pitted Gair against E. L. Weber's candidate, continuing a long-running feud. No man in the Feliciana Parishes, White or Black, was as reviled as Weber. He and his brother, D. A., were contentious opportunists who provided duplicitous cooperation with congressional investigative committees for years. Senators and representatives called on them for their insights into regional mayhem about which the brothers seemed well-versed—except for their own involvement, about which they feigned innocence. In September 1874, E. L. Weber and Gair exchanged accusations concerning a vote bribery scheme. One month before the November election, an assassin failed in an attempt to kill Gair. E. L. Weber was in the middle of the plot that left Gair slightly wounded.[57]

United States, 1870, East Feliciana Parish, Louisiana; Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, Jefferson Parish, Louisiana.

[56] Rogoff, "Tale of Two Cities," 42.

[57] *Louisiana in 1876: Report of the Sub-Committee of the Committee on Privileges and Elections*, Forty-Fourth Congress, Senate Report 701 (Washington, DC, 1877), cxxx, cxxxi, cxxxvii; *New Orleans Republican*, February 22, 1874 and May 15, 1874; *The Semi-Weekly Republican,* October 8, 1872. Feliciana Lodge #239, IOBB, was founded in June 1875. The founding officers included Israel, D. T. Weil, T. L. Heyman, B. A. Meyer, Emanuel Meyer, Albert Mayer, Solomon Adler, Henry Meyer, T. Sachs, and Charles Wolf. Emanuel, Henry Meyer and Solomon Adler are members of the author's extended family, as was the master of ceremonies for the inaugural meeting, Louis Michaelis of New Orleans. *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, June 14, 1875; *Daily Picayune*, October 5, 1874. Between 1867 and 1870, Louisiana was ranked eighth in

By summer 1875, the Weber faction forced Gair and Black political officeholders to leave East Feliciana Parish. The threats came primarily from Dr. James W. Sanders and J. A. Norwood, identified in congressional testimony as White Leaguers. They factored critically in ongoing events. According to congressional committee testimony, a Jewish man, Max Lehman, was one of several White men riding throughout the parish organizing other White men to gather in downtown Clinton as protection against reported Black uprisings and to intimidate Black voters, an activity the supremacists referred to as "bulldozing." Gair and a compatriot met late summer in New Orleans with the acting governor in a public meeting to quell the heightened unease rippling through the community. Abe Mayer, a Jewish businessman from Clinton, part of the panel with the acting governor, surmised that the citizenry lacked respect for the deposed Black sheriff, a Gair friend. Not long after, Gair's adversaries began plotting his downfall.[58]

In early October planters and merchants felt hope about the initial cotton harvest. The Meyers prospered. Younger brother Henry had returned from New Orleans to manage the downtown Clinton store while

---

value of its farm products when compared to ten other Southern states. *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, October 20, 1874, October 23, 1874, and October 24, 1874. Gair angered his supporters and enemies when he reportedly threatened to burn Clinton rather than accede to White authority. He lost the tightly contested race against Weber's candidate, and their antagonism lingered into 1875, paralleling the general political disorder in the parish. Henry Marston, prominent Clinton attorney, landowner and diarist, noted the Gair assassination attempt in his diary and mentioned the same name of a young Clinton man who said E. L. Weber paid to kill Gair. Henry Marston and Family Papers, 1818–1938, Mss. 624, LLMVC. A news report summarizing congressional testimony noted that E. L. Weber orchestrated John Gair's killing. *Weekly Times-Picayune,* December 30, 1876; *The New Orleans Bulletin,* October 24, 1874.

[58] *New Orleans Bulletin*, August 13, 1875. The report of the meeting with acting governor Antoine uses the name "Abe Meyer," but it was likely Abe Mayer, a member of a Clinton family with business interests in New Orleans. *New Orleans Bulletin*, October 21, 1874 and October 22, 1874; *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, October 19, 1874, October 20, 1874, and October 22, 1874; *New Orleans Republican*, October 16, 1875. Lehman served as an officer in Bayou Sara's B'nai B'rith Lodge. *Feliciana Sentinel,* July 20, 1878 and January 11, 1879. A report published in 1901 by noted activist Ida B. Wells said Sanders was an officer in the first of East Feliciana Parish's White Leagues. Ida B. Wells, *Reconstruction Review: The Voice of the Carpetbagger* (Chicago, 1901), 23. See also, Philip H. Jones, "Reminiscences of days before and after the Civil War", 1951, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

older brother Emanuel ventured to the countryside where he began peddling for his uncle's Bayou Sara store after emigrating in 1859. He resumed selling and meeting with those who owed the brothers money. At this point, the Meyer Brothers store was one of the most stable in the Feliciana Parishes. Then came the rains. One account estimated that more than half of the parish's cotton crop was wiped out in less than a day of rain during October's first weekend, exacerbating tensions over reports of unrest among Blacks and Whites. With Gair and the top elected Black leaders from East Feliciana Parish living in either Baton Rouge or New Orleans for their safety, the White Leaguers struck. Although the body count was only two people, the resulting influence on local Black voting in East Feliciana and in the following presidential election year was profound.[59]

The Clinton courthouse on October 7 witnessed the first in a sequence of violent events over two weeks in a twisted plot to kill Gair. Most scholarly accounts of Reconstruction violence barely mention Gair's death, but it was investigated in such detail and engendered a level of debate and hatred in the partisan media unlike any other single death in the state during this era. Henry and Emmanuel Meyer—indeed most of Clinton—witnessed it all. In the courthouse across the street from the Meyers' store, dozens of men "who were persons not to be trifled with" gathered when the sheriff and district court judge opened proceedings at 10 A.M. on the seventh. Chaos quickly ensued. The Black sheriff, who had returned despite threats to his life, was accosted, fled outside, and returned to New Orleans. Shots were heard, and the judge saw the sheriff limping. The

[59] *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, October 5, 1875; Kilbourne, *Debt, Investment and Slaves*, 9, 150. The sale of cottonseed was at the root of much of the White League violence. The poorest farmers in the region, after a day of picking, would haul small bags of cottonseed to country stores for sale or trade. The planters viewed this as thievery, and the White Leaguers used it as another reason to harm those involved by burning out merchants suspected of buying seed. Gair had tried addressing the problem of illicit cottonseed sales for nearly a year, yet his legislation to tax and limit its distribution never gained traction in the legislature. His nemesis, E. L. Weber, repeatedly opposed his efforts to regulate cottonseed sales. Black farmers also were upset, believing Gair's legislation would unfairly compensate White planters for the loss of their seed. At least one news report suggests that Weber's involvement in cottonseed sales was for his own benefit, that he and his cohort, Frank Powers, were involved in its theft, storage and black-market sales for at least a decade through the mid-1870s, using whatever means necessary to keep others from gaining access to the seed. *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, August 24, 1876.

East Feliciana Parish Court House in Clinton, LA.
(Andrew D. Lytle Collection, Mss. 893, 1254, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, LA.)

judge, his life in danger, adjourned proceedings, left for his hotel, and departed the next day. The White Leaguers took control, an ex-Confederate and Weber supporter named Frank Powers in charge of the town. The weekend passed without further incident, while East Feliciana simmered under White League dominance.[60]

Six days after the courthouse incident, Sanders returned to his home following a morning of work and paused at his back door to drink from a ladle resting atop a water pail. Within minutes, the doctor later testified, he was stricken with cramps, vomiting, and sweats. Three doctors who were summoned to care for him concluded Sanders was poisoned, possibly from arsenic. Sanders's Black maid, Catherine "Babe" Mathews, left the home just after the doctor was sickened, but within hours was arrested and jailed. A sheriff's posse of six men departed about midnight for Baton Rouge to arrest Gair and an accomplice. They caught Gair on October 13 and began the thirty-two-mile ride to Clinton. After sundown, when the riders crossed from East Baton Rouge into East Feliciana Parish, they were

[60] *New Orleans Republican*, October 16, 1875.

John Gair in 1867, as a member of the Louisiana Constitutional Convention, from "Delegates and Officers of the Louisiana constitutional convention, 1867–1868." (Courtesy of the Historic New Orleans Collection, 2023.0002.)

met by an estimated one hundred armed men. Minutes later, the mob executed Gair, who was on his knees in prayer. Mathews hung from a tree at the Clinton courthouse into the early morning, when a Black man took her down and buried her.[61]

[61] Details about John Gair, Babe Mathews, and the events before, during, and after the incident involving Sanders are taken from congressional testimony and news media reports. The deputy in charge refused to surrender his weapons to the horsemen until a man he identified as J. A. Norwood threatened to blow his head off. The lawmen heard the shooting from a quarter mile away as they returned to Clinton. A Black man who was a committee witness testified that he saw and heard the posse after it passed his home on the parish border, then followed it from a distance until it was hijacked. He watched the deputies depart, then heard two of the horsemen he could not identify say they would not fire on Gair. Another horseman fired and missed, prompting Norwood to shoot, followed by the volley. The man left after the shooters rode back to Clinton. He returned the next morning and found Gair's body

Gair was either guilty of masterminding a convoluted plan to kill one of the men who ordered his removal from East Feliciana Parish, or he and his sister-in-law were framed by vengeful White Leaguers. A congressional committee, noting Gair's support among local White voters, dispelled any thought that politics were the impetus to the murderous plot. Life in Clinton carried on as usual. Emanuel Mayer wrote to a vendor that he had been delayed in paying bills because of "negro riots," a reference to Gair and likely the White League burning Black-owned stores. *The Louisianian*, a pro-Republican newspaper, wrote that the White League wanted Gair removed permanently from governance and that Mathews was hanged as part of the cover-up. In January 1877, when congressional investigators returned a second time to probe Louisiana atrocities, including the Gair murder, thirty-one men were subpoenaed to appear in Clinton. Henry Meyer was the only person on the list of thirty-one who also was one of the horsemen accused of killing Gair. None of those implicated testified, nor was anyone ever charged in Gair or Mathew's deaths. Horne points out that by 1875, white supremacy had been so overwhelming, "the negro stood no chance." The end to Reconstruction neared, but not without additional violence with Jews involved.[62]

"Let's go up and kill this damned Jew."

In the aftermath of the Gair and Mathews murders, attempts were made to seek justice on one side and power on the other. The governor

---

alongside the road. He and several other Black men made a wooden coffin and buried Gair under a pine tree, where the witness said he carved "John Gair." Gair's alleged accomplice, reportedly a nineteen-year-old Black man, never was apprehended. *New Orleans Times-Picayune,* October 15, 1875, October 19, 1875, and January 29, 1876; *New Orleans Republican,* October 15, 1875 and January 3 and 23, 1877; *New Orleans Bulletin,* October 15, 1875; "East Feliciana," 240–497.

[62] "Clinton's Culture of Violence," Trueheart Feliciana Clinton Collection, folder 17, Center for Southeast Louisiana Studies, Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA; Horne, "Landscapes of Emancipation,'' 149. Some witnesses told congressional investigators that Sanders's symptoms were inconsistent with poisoning, especially arsenic, and committee members were skeptical of his tale. Mathews's written confession given to a White Leaguer curiously included the pronoun "her" instead of "I," as though the scribe wrote it as he wished rather than as she dictated. No witnesses testified about hearing her alleged confession, and people testified that she vacillated between recanting and confessing. Meyer to a St. Louis company, October 16, 1875, Letter Book 1873-1875, box 32, MBSR; "East Feliciana," 132–497.

offered a reward with statements of outrage. E. L. Weber sought the governor's support for his henchman Frank Powers to become sheriff. Chaos ensued for more than a month with Powers and other White Leaguers intimidating public officials unfriendly to their cause. A story in the *New Orleans Republican* headlined, "The Flagitious Felicianas. . . . Reign of Terror, Armed and Mounted Ruffians," reported more White League murders of Blacks and store burnings. White Leaguers were accused of murdering one of the men who helped to bury Gair because he had "walked in the shoes of John Gair." In December 1875, congressional investigating committees met in Clinton and Bayou Sara in another attempt to gather evidence of Reconstruction atrocities, resulting in a one-thousand-plus page report with witnesses who generally fell into two camps: those who provided details of the depredation with names of those responsible and those who obfuscated the facts. In growing frustration, a group of prominent businessmen organized the Property Holders Protective Union, their target E. L. Weber and his cohorts in the Feliciana Parishes. Their efforts were the second time—the first being the failed Unification Movement in New Orleans in 1873—that businessmen publicly sought to restore some semblance of law and order. A key organizer was Jewish businessman Julius Freyhan, who owned a mercantile business that dominated downtown St. Francisville. White Leaguers had robbed him even though his benevolence was known throughout the region. The businessmen tried forcing Weber out of office for months. Nonetheless, Weber continued to hold sway with the White League when a German Jew, Max Aronson, sought his counsel about whether he should befriend the White leaguers.[63]

---

[63] *New Orleans Republican*, December 14, 1875; *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, October 19, 1875; *Mississippi in 1875*, 1535–1647. Powers's knack for wrongdoing dated to the Civil War, when he and his raiders assaulted and brutalized Union troops carrying cotton and other goods and massacred about two dozen Black Union soldiers they had captured. The night after the Gair and Mathews killings, Powers showed up at a local plantation to quell a disturbance. Drunks had accosted some Black men, shot one of them, and tried hanging a "Hebrew clerk" named Teutsch before Powers's men interceded. The Teutsch family was prominent in the region during the period. A news report days after a congressional committee investigating the Gair/Mathews deaths states that one of the members upset Sanders sufficiently during testimony that afterward, the physician threatened the congressman's life. Two other committee members were made aware of the threat and ensured their colleague's safe passage

About the time of the Clinton mayhem, eight German immigrants including Aronson settled along the Louisiana-Mississippi border separating West Feliciana Parish from Wilkinson County, Mississippi. Aronson purchased a few acres of land and a store about twenty miles from Clinton, investments that brought the White League to his door and motivated his outreach to E. L. Weber. Aronson's story demonstrates how Jews sought to live freely and conduct business among white supremacists and Black customers. Like others, Aronson made choices that directly led to his death and prompted one of the last military-styled, White League killing sprees in Louisiana and Mississippi aimed at restoring White dominance.[64]

By most accounts, Aronson was proud, defiant, and naïve. E. L. and D. A. Weber told congressmen that Aronson ignored their warnings to be careful defying the White Leaguers and their accusations of the merchant's alleged cottonseed sales. His story, however, turned in spring 1876 when he embraced White League violence. Aronson took part in mock trials of Black people hauled before White Leaguers imposing punishments for made-up crimes. In one incident, Aronson and a White League cohort captured a Black man, took him across the state line into Wilkinson County, pronounced him guilty of stealing a cow, returned the man to a plantation across the line in Louisiana, and nearly beat him to death. They murdered another Black man who failed to tip his hat and defer to Aronson and his fellow White Leaguer.[65]

---

out of New Orleans. *New Orleans Republican*, January 24, 1877; *New Orleans Times-Democrat*, January 18, 1876; *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, January 2, 1876.

[64] Eli Phillips Weiss, "Redeeming Wilkinson: The End of Reconstruction in a Mississippi River County" (senior essay, Yale College, 2002); Nicholas Lemann, *Redemption: The Last Battle of the Civil War* (New York, 2006). Lemann's book is a comprehensive review of the Reconstruction years in Mississippi. The state was the focus of one of the many Reconstruction-era congressional hearings that collected volumes of testimony, with little result. *Mississippi in 1875,* known as the the Boutwell Report.

[65] *Louisiana in 1876,* 2585-86. Aronson was murdered on May 13, 1876. D. A. Weber knew the precariousness of publicly confronting the White League. He was shot and killed in March 1877 near the St. Francisville courthouse walking home for lunch. Weber had written to a U.S. senator three days before he was killed that he would not depart St. Francisville even if it cost him his life. *New Orleans Republican,* March 16, 1877. Charles Barrow, writing to a historian in 1927, offered rare insight into supremacist thought from someone who took an active role with the Feliciana White League: "Occasionally there were a few necks broken and straps used among the worst." He referenced the 1876 election, a sweeping victory for

Days later, Aronson was shot dead when he opened the door to his store during the early evening. In the forty-eight hours that followed, Frank Powers and his Louisiana White Leaguers joined with White Leaguers in Mississippi and killed more than sixty Blacks, according to testimony and media reports. The White Leaguers may have used Aronson's death as the impetus for their killing spree, but more likely they relied on rumors that Blacks on both sides of the Louisiana-Mississippi state line were arming for a fight against expected White League raids in retaliation for the Jewish merchant's death.

Who killed Aronson? Some witnesses told a congressional committee they were certain it was a posse of Blacks seeking vengeance for Aronson's actions. A coroner's report concluded that forty Blacks comprised the mob that killed him. A Black witness's testimony to congressional investigators reads:

> "Did you kill him?" "I reckon so; we shot at him; I reckon he is dead." "I thought you were going to kill Howell." "We did . . . but we got on the road and [a friend] said 'Let's go up and kill this damned Jew.'"[66]

Other witnesses including E. L. Weber said that marauding bands of White Leaguers, some dressed in capes with their faces blacked, killed Aronson for his spitefulness toward efforts to control his cottonseed sales and business. Aronson's actions and demise and the conflicting stories concerning his murder illustrate divergent pressures on Jewish merchants to conform to racist mores while also challenging other mores for economic gain.[67]

The publicly recorded comments about Aronson also touch on the dismissive if not antisemitic attitudes evident throughout volumes of congressional testimony. Congressmen, senators, and witnesses used the word "Jew" indiscriminately, either as an ethnic slur or as a descriptor of someone they were referencing. No other group of people is mentioned as

---

the Democratic Party in West Feliciana. "The White Republicans moved elsewhere," he wrote, then added a few paragraphs later, "One of the White Republican leaders, failing to get away in time, one day while walking up the streets in St. Francisville, must have stepped on a torpedo, judging from the holes in his body, but no one knows to this day how they got there." The reference is likely to D. A. Weber's death. Bone, "Louisiana in the Disputed Election of 1876," 415.

[66] *Mississippi in 1875*, 1604–05.

[67] Ibid.

Testimony of W.H. Noble concerning the murder of Max Aronson, Louisiana in 1876*, Forty-fourth Congress, Senate Report 701, p. 1604. (Library of Congress.)*

much in the pejorative. Aronson is described as "a German," "a Jew," or a "Jew storekeeper," and in one instance, a witness said, "I believe he was considered White, a Jew, a German." Ethnic descriptions such as "German," "Irish," or "Italian" are evident but without the same frequency. Witnesses were routinely asked if Jewish men were trustworthy.

When questioning a witness about December 1874 riots in Vicksburg, a witness answered when asked about men assigned to count ballots, "He is a Jew, but a man of good character." A congressman replied, "Do not you suppose a Jew can be honest as well as any other man?" The witness said, "They ain't always considered so, and I was going to say that he was one of the exceptions." When discussing the Aronson murder, a senator commented: "They said that some men up there killed a storekeeper, a peddler, or something of that kind—a Jew." One witness responded when asked if someone was related to a Black man: "No sir, he was a white man, a Jew." This differs little from the volumes of merchant credit reports from throughout the South in which agents continually noted whether a storeowner was Jewish, focusing on Jews as "others" rather than mainstream. This helps explain Jews' desire to assimilate into broader society even if it meant choices as abhorrent as white supremacy.[68]

[68] Rockoff, "Carpetbaggers," 26. Morrow-Spitzer, "Free from Proscription and Prejudice," (7-8) details the largely negative portrayals of Jews in Louisiana media. Hieke, *Jewish identity in the Reconstruction South,* 2, 108, 155; *New Orleans Riots,* 186, 211, 366, 492; *Letter of the Secretary*

"By God, we will carry it or s--t all over the parish."

Election Day, November 7, 1876, began the end of Reconstruction. Federal troops helped maintain relative peace at most polling places, but the familiar White League pattern prevailed. Economic pressure remained a tactic to suppress Republican voters: Support the Democrats or risk business prospects. A Democratic Party vote ensured a man's safety, and violence was a cudgel. The White League would burn a store, a home, or chase a man out of the parish if he voted Republican. Bayou Sara in West Feliciana Parish typified the White League strategy.[69]

One of the parish's election commissioners told congressional investigators that his concern about the safety of the Bayou Sara courthouse convinced him to seek federal troop protection. The Weber brothers had told him that polling places throughout the parish were unsafe. He withdrew his request when a White Leaguer suggested troops were unnecessary, that protection for the town and polling location was nearby. He testified that when commissioners arrived the night before to prepare for voting, a group of loitering men was asked to leave. He identified the men, including Ben Ellinger, a twenty-six-year-old Jewish grocery store clerk. The election commissioner recounted a discussion with Ellinger before the election: "I was coming down the street, and he met me, and entered into conversation with me, and asked me my opinion as to the election. I told him I thought the Republicans would carry the election. Said he, 'By God, we will either carry it or s--t all over the parish.'" On Election Day, Ellinger and a half-dozen men were present, according to testimony. Despite being told to leave voters alone, the men continually

---

of War, 20; *Mississippi in 1875,* 527, 1452, 1535, 1539, 1540, 1541, 1604, 2445, 2448. The detail about Vicksburg is in the same investigative report as Aronson, *Mississippi in 1875*, 1604–05; *Louisiana in 1876*, 368, 2383, R.G. Dun & Co., Credit Reports, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard University; Stephen G. Mostov, "Dun and Bradstreet Reports as a Source of Jewish Economic History: Cincinnati, 1840–1875," *American Jewish History* 72 (March 1983): 333–53.

[69] *Report on the Removal of the Negroes*, xix. The White League was emboldened by the U.S. Supreme Court ruling on March 27, 1876, in *U.S. v Cruikshank* that determined the Colfax massacre was not racially motivated and Reconstruction laws meant to protect Blacks were unconstitutional if not unenforceable, leaving Blacks essentially unprotected from White League violence. Peller-Semmens, "Unreconstructed," 170–71.

reminded Blacks and some Whites that if they voted Republican, "we'll call to see you in a few nights."[70]

Joe Gray Taylor notes that Black voter intimidation focused on five parishes in 1876: East Feliciana, West Feliciana, East Baton Rouge, Morehouse, and Ouachita. The White League obtained its intended result. Election fraud during the November presidential election nullified the twenty combined electoral votes from Louisiana, South Carolina, Florida, and Oregon, leading to a congressional compromise that gave Republican Rutherford B. Hayes the presidency and ex-Confederate colonel Francis Tillou Nicholls the Louisiana governorship. The Republicans got the presidency whereas the Democrats regained control of state and local governments. On April 24, 1877, the withdrawal of the last federal troops symbolized the unofficial end to Reconstruction in Louisiana.[71]

The collapse of Louisiana's electoral process after the 1876 election left the state with unfinished business. Departing governor William Pitt Kellogg schemed as much as his predecessor, Henry C. Warmoth, and sought to further his political career by bribing, cajoling, and maneuvering into the U.S. Senate. Two of his henchmen were Jews: Bernie Williams, who first appeared on the scene in 1866, and Morris Marks, a Kellogg-appointed state revenue collector. Marks confirmed congressional testimony implicating him in Kellogg's schemes: "I cannot take care of any of my friends now while this fight is going on about Kellogg. I have to appoint a set of G-d d--d curs and hounds to keep them from squealing on Kellogg." Numerous witnesses told congressional investigators about meetings with Kellogg, Marks, and others to hatch the plan denying Democrats their seats, certifying Republicans who had not been elected, and plotting how to force the state legislature to give Kellogg a U.S. Senate seat. Williams described a clandestine trip to Washington, D.C., with

---

[70] *Louisiana in 1876*, 2383-84.

[71] Joe Gray Taylor, *Louisiana Reconstructed, 1863–1877* (Baton Rouge, 1974), 486–88, 531. In fifteen Louisiana parishes where 17,726 Republicans were registered in 1876 only 5,758 votes were cast for the Republican nominees, Rutherford B. Hayes and William A. Wheeler. East Feliciana had 2,127 registered Republican voters, yet only one Republican vote was recorded. So fraudulent was the voting that congressional reports simply printed a dotted line through East Feliciana voting results. The Returning Board, Louisiana's equivalent to the Electoral College, refused to count the votes from East Feliciana and Grant parishes. *Report on the Removal of the Negroes*, xix; *Report: The Committee on Privileges and Elections, to whom was referred the memorial of Henry M. Spofford*, Forty-Sixth Congress, Senate Report 388, March 22, 1880, v.

A.J. Bennett, "Louisiana – The Withdrawal of the Federal Troops from the State House in New Orleans, at noon, on April 24th," Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, *May 19, 1877. (Library of Congress.)*

orders to pay bribes to ensure Kellogg's ascent to Congress and of similar meetings in New Orleans, including one with Marks. Marks denied the meeting took place or even seeing Williams. Other Jews from New Orleans testified about Williams's character, which they said was about as bad as any man they had ever encountered. The U.S. Senate refused to seat Henry M. Spofford, Democratic nominee against Kellogg, because of voting irregularities. The controversy eventually led to Democrat and former Confederate Benjamin F. Jonas's election as Louisiana's second Jewish U.S. senator, the first being Judah P. Benjamin.[72]

[72] *Report: The Committee on Privileges and Elections*, vii, viii, 726, 746. The committee identified Marks as of the "Iraelitish faith." The *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, August 24, 1897, references Marks's political career as a long-time Republican and his association with various Jewish organizations. Stuart Rockoff identifies three Jewish political leaders in Ascension Parish, including Marks. Rockoff, "Carpetbaggers," 41.

"A Reign of Terror"

Eric Foner concludes, "No single generalization can fully describe the social origins or political purposes of the South's Redeemers. . . . [T]hey shared, however, a commitment to dismantling the Reconstruction state, reducing the political power of Blacks, and reshaping the South's legal system in the interests of labor control and racial subordination." In 1878, the redeemers took full advantage, with Democratic governor Nicholls surrounded by sycophants doing his bidding and the Black-dominated Republicans reeling from the virtual absence of federal support. When Congress returned in January 1879 seeking to unravel Louisiana's 1878 election, the members focused on six parishes, lacking the time to investigate others. The committee's summation reads: "In brief, a literal reign of terror existed, and in fact, still exists, over a considerable portion of Louisiana, as the result of the policy adopted by the [Democrats] for perpetuating its rule in that State." Jewish men, again, factored prominently in two events.[73]

In Natchitoches, election intimidation prompted outrage among Black Republicans as the Redeemer Democrats forced a church leader to flee the parish. Sam Lisso led a group of White men who responded to a tense gathering of Blacks and Whites with the church leader at the center. As noted in the local White League newspaper: "The people of Red River Parish have indeed acted nobly in our behalf, and we should be more than grateful to them for their gallant, heroic conduct. Messrs. Lisso & Scheen gave us the use of their telegraph-line free of charge. Mr. Sam Lisso and Captain James Pearson came in with the first party." Weeks later Democrats controlled the election.[74]

Politics in New Orleans that year focused on the city election and a fracture in the Democratic Party for control. Or as U.S. senators described it: "A large and respectable association of citizens, chiefly merchants, endeavored to overthrow the controlling Democratic faction, which they regarded as 'a ring of men who were not honest in their political opinions and actions.' These Democrats organized as the Citizens' Conservative Association." Jewish lawyer Lionel C. Levy, an ex-Confederate, served as

---

[73] Foner, *Reconstruction*, 801; *Louisiana in 1878,* Forty-fifth Congress, Senate Report 855 (Washington, DC, 1879), xxiv.

[74] *People's Vindicator,* September 28, 1878.

chairman with several other notable Jews among the 650 listed as supporting the organization. Levy's group was unable to overcome the misdeeds of other Democrats controlling city politics. Senators mused that while both groups avoided using guns, whips, and other methods of election intimidation, "there was the same conspicuous absence of honest and manly dealings, the same unscrupulous adoption of fraudulent methods of evading the laws and corrupting the ballot-box. The Citizens' Conservative Association was denied adequate representation."[75]

Post-Reconstruction Jewish Lives and Memorializing White Supremacy

While Louisiana continued to stumble to the end of the 1870s, the Jewish men who were part of the chaos on both sides moved into post-Reconstruction life. Historians Stuart Rockoff and Jacob Morrow-Spitzer point out that by this point, with hopes for an interracial democracy all but gone, the Democratic Party—the "Redeemers"—was the only choice for upwardly mobile Jews. The lives of several of them exemplify how they stepped from one decade to the next, seamlessly setting aside any conflict with their involvements in Reconstruction-era Black disenfranchisement.[76]

Emanuel and Henry Meyer kept their store on the main Clinton street into the 1880s before selling to their first cousin. A boll weevil infestation ravaged the regional cotton crop beginning in 1908, with the resultant economic downtown bankrupting the store, the last one the family held in the Feliciana Parishes. The descendants settled in Baton Rouge,

---

[75] *Louisiana in 1878*, xxiv; "Lionel C. Levy," Shapell Roster, accessed May 19, 2026, https://www.shapell.org/civil-war-soldier-database/soldier/8821. The list of nearly 650 names published in a New Orleans newspaper includes James M. Seixas, Edwin Kursheedt, and Leon Godchaux. In his biography of Leon Godchaux, Peter Wolf writes, "[D]uring Reconstruction he exempted himself from the insidious strains of white supremacy sentiment and from the violent fury in memory of the Lost Cause." Other signers had the same last names as Jewish families in New Orleans at the time. Peter M. Wolf, *The Sugar King: Leon Godchaux, A New Orleans Legend, His Creole Slave, and his Jewish Roots* (New York, 2022), 17; *New Orleans Times-Democrat*, August 18, 1878 and October 7, 1897.

[76] Rockoff, "Carpetbaggers," 64; Morrow-Spitzer, "Worthy Citizens," 196–281. Spitzer examines Jewish Redeemer politics in detail, establishing how efforts that had begun in the decade of the 1860s were part of broader initiatives at Black disenfranchisement into the later decades of the nineteenth century.

helped organize its Jewish community, and began what is now the fifth generation living in the capital city. Emanuel Meyer's family, however, composed one more chapter in the family's conflicted history with civil rights.[77]

Jonas Rosenthal of Alexandria moved past his experiences in Colfax and assumed the nickname of "Uncle Jonas" while serving on the local school board for thirty-three years. During his tenure, he served with a cousin of William J. Cruikshank, the named defendant in the landmark U.S. Supreme Court case that essentially stripped Blacks of federal civil rights protection for almost ninety years. A school was named after Rosenthal, and when he died in 1930, a Confederate flag draped his coffin.[78]

Jewish Alexandrian Julius Levin, a prominent lumber yard owner, served on the executive committee of the "White Man's Party" in Rapides Parish in 1874. His post-Reconstruction life included donations to the African American Shiloh Baptist Church, among other benefactions to the local Black community. When he died in 1910, local Black leaders published resolutions in the local newspaper honoring him. In a church publication, Levin was called "a true friend of our race as well as to humanity."[79]

Julius Lisso, continuing as a Democratic party leader, wrote in the *People's Vindicator* that a Democratic victory in 1878 would "take the Rads off the knee, and strikes a blow for Democracy from which the Radicals will never recover." The *Vindicator*, which years before described H. C. Myers as a "hawking Jew," printed a letter about the same time under the headline "A Slander." The letter was from an unidentified Jew responding to someone who claimed local Jews supported Republicans. It read: "[T]here exists no truer class, to the interest of this section than the Jews. When our race, of which they are ancient and honored members, was at its darkest hour the 'Jews of Natchitoches' to a man stood to their colors

---

[77] Henry and Emanuel Meyer sold their store to Jonie Levy, the son of Abraham Levy, the family patriarch who essentially guided the family's affairs throughout the region before his death in 1899. Jonie Levy became Clinton's mayor in 1909 before the bankruptcy. He is one of four Southern Jewish mayors in the extended family. *New Orleans Times-Democrat*, June 22, 1909; Silverberg, "Louisiana Letters."

[78] "Funeral of Jonas Rosenthal," *Weekly Town Talk* (Alexandria, LA), January 25, 1930.

[79] *Louisiana Democrat*, September 15, 1880; *St. Francisville Democrat*, November 13, 1909; *Weekly Town Talk*, April 30, 1921; *Colfax Patriot*, January 24, 1930; *Louisiana Caucasian*, August 15, 1874; Hinchen, *Fourscore and Eleven*, A-108.

and fought the good fight." Julius Lisso moved to Natchez in 1882, joined his brother-in-law's business, and drowned after falling from a skiff in 1891. His nephew Sam continued managing the mercantile business in Coushatta while nephew Paul moved to Alexandria, where he served as a bank president and community leader.[80]

Edwin Kursheedt led a distinguished life as Jewish leader in New Orleans. He served as an officer of the Jewish Home for Widows and Orphans for sixteen years including five years as president, as treasurer for Touro Infirmary, and as officiant for a year at Temple Sinai after Rabbi James Gutheim died. Kursheedt also served as the city's postmaster and lobbied for passage of an order allowing mail carriers to travel on street cars without charge to the government. He remained active in his Civil War unit's activities until his death in 1906. James Madison Seixas, and brothers Albert and Alex Levy, each attaining success in business, lived prosperously after Reconstruction.[81]

By the late 1870s, Reconstruction had crumbled. "[T]he whole South—every state in the South—had got into the hands of the very men that held us slaves," stated Black Louisianian Henry Adams. And if the memory of murder, intimidation, and disenfranchisement was not a sufficient burden, Louisianians would be reminded in their community squares about those who forged the terror.[82]

Louisiana was one of the first Southern states to memorialize its Civil War dead and remember the white supremacists, with Jewish men and women in leadership roles. By 1870, the Ladies Benevolent Association raised money and moved ex-Confederates buried around New Orleans to

---

[80] *People's Vindicator*, July 25, 1874, September 28, 1878, October 26, 1878 and November 16, 1878; *Town Talk*, May 19, 1898 and August 25, 1902; "Julius Lisso," Findagrave, accessed May 19, 2026, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/103119522/julius-lisso.

[81] *New Orleans Times-Democrat*, February 22, 1906; *New Orleans States Item*, June 27, 1889 and June 28, 1889; *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, November 9, 1896 and August 19, 1889. Edwin Kursheedt's tenure at the Jewish Home for Widows and Orphans is documented in Marlene Trestman, *Most Fortunate Unfortunates: The Jewish Orphans' Home of New Orleans* (Baton Rouge, 2023), 76–80. James Walker Sanders continued his medical practice in Clinton and lived until 1886. E. L. Weber left the Feliciana Parishes after his brother's murder, settling in Donaldsonville. He died in 1915.

[82] Adams is quoted in a section titled, "Negro Exodus from Southern States," detailing failed efforts to relocate Blacks from Southern states to Kansas. *Report on the Removal of the Negroes*, xi.

a six-thousand-dollar war memorial in Greenwood Cemetery dedicated in 1874. The first board of directors included Mrs. Edwin Kursheedt, Mrs. J. K. Gutheim, wife of the renowned anti-Unionist Rabbi James Gutheim, and Mrs. Carl Kohn, wife of a prominent Jewish businessman. West Feliciana began planning its monument to its Confederate dead in 1874, completing the project in 1903 with a grand celebration that included several Jewish men and women on the planning committee. By 1900, Louisiana boasted ten United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) chapters, with five hundred members one year after the statewide organization was founded. Florence Klotz Bodenheimer, Jewish daughter of an ex-Confederate, prominent landowner, and namesake of a Louisiana town, served as a Louisiana UDC leader, as did Leon Godchaux's sister, Mrs. Paul Israel.[83]

Caroline Janney explores Jewish women's lives postbellum in relation to the postwar memorial societies throughout the South. "Southern white women were equally, if not more, complicit in Confederate nationalism as the men of their race and class. This loyalty to an independent Confederate nation came from a variety of sources, including military service of a loved one, the experience of war on the homefront, a desire for revenge, powerful symbols such as flags, and a deep-seated belief that White Southerners shared little in the way of cultural values with northerners," Janney writes. The men stood beside their wives who were focused on the organizational aspects of memorialization, including white supremacist events after the war. In New Orleans, that included the insurrection. The Jonases and Kursheedts attended the 1891 dedication of an obelisk honoring White Leaguers who fought and died during the 1874 uprising to unseat Louisiana's state leaders. The front-page news story recognized the White League and the military units marching in memory of events seventeen years earlier. Ex-Confederate Jonas, the next Jew to serve in the U.S. Senate, was "orator of the day," his remarks occupying four columns in the local newspaper, his message a foretelling of the Lost Cause narrative. He said the

[83] *New Orleans Republican*, May 5, 1872; *New Orleans Times*, April 5, 1874; *New Orleans Times-Democrat*, October 9, 1903; *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, March 2, 1900 and November 13, 1900; *Assumption Pioneer*, August 5, 1893. Louisiana has approximately 130 dedicated public spaces to the Confederacy, with the New Orleans monument the first.

Ernest B. Kruttschnitt, president of the Louisiana constitutional convention of 1898. (Courtesy of the State Library of Louisiana.)

South did not regret its past, criticized Congress for meddling in Louisiana's government, and accused the Republican Party of stealing the presidency.[84]

Before the decade ended, Louisiana became the third Southern state to wipe away much of the Reconstruction-era progress Blacks had achieved, with a Jewish attorney, Ernest Benjamin Kruttschnitt, in charge. He presided over the 1898 state constitutional convention, telling his fellow delegates they were entrusted with "the purification of the electorate." Kruttschnitt, Jonas's law partner and also a participant in the Liberty Place riot, said in his opening that Blacks "first entered upon the unequal contest for supremacy, and which has been reddened with his blood, now witness the evolution of an organic law which will establish the relations between the races upon an everlasting foundation of right and justice." Poll taxes and a literacy test became part of Louisiana governance under the new constitution with the anticipated results. In two

[84] Caroline E. Janney, *Burying the Dead but Not the Past: Ladies Memorial Associations and the Lost Cause* (Chapel Hill, 2008), 29; *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, September 15, 1891. Colfax dedicated a monument in 1921 to honor those who fought and died in the 1873 massacre; Jonas Rosenthal was not listed among the attendees. *Colfax Chronicle*, April 16, 1921.

years, registered voters among the 650,000 Blacks in Louisiana declined from 130,000 to about five thousand. Part of a front-page headline on Kruttschnitt's obituary in 1906 read: "Was President of Constitutional Convention Which Secured White Supremacy in the State."[85]

An Echo of Reconstruction

Leonard Dinnerstein noted in 1970, "A better understanding of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Jewish experiences in the South will come only after scholars critically examine contemporary manuscripts and periodicals and make some attempt to generalize on the basis of well-documented fact. Such an undertaking would enhance our understanding of the Jew's role and position in southern society in the past as well as suggest the basis for southern Jewish attitudes in contemporary society." His assessment of published Southern Jewish history up to 1970 showed him "no villains, no traitors, no dissenters, no abolitionists, and no scalawags. This, of course, may have been true; Jews might have been too frightened to consider engaging in deviant activities." Since Dinnerstein's urging, additional scholarship has shown otherwise.[86]

Whereas previous academic studies disclosed a handful of Jewish men on either side of Reconstruction turmoil, this article adds at least fifty additional names solely in Louisiana, a significant number even if it represents a very small percentage of adult Jewish men in the state, the majority of whom did not get involved on either side. Some acted in the pursuit of White dominance, others opposed White supremacy. Numerous historians have delved into the conflicts of Southern Jewish struggle for acceptance through challenging personal and professional alliances. Clive Webb writes of Jews accepting secession and supporting the Lost

---

[85] *Times-Picayune,* February 9, 1898 and April 17, 1906; Landry, *The Battle of Liberty Place,* 237; Friedman, "The Legal, Political and Religious Legacy," 79–80. Mississippi and South Carolina preceded Louisiana in making constitutional changes to Black rights achieved during Reconstruction. Black registered voter numbers come from the Equal Justice Institute, "Louisiana Officially Disenfranchises Black Voters and Jurors," accessed May 31, 2026, https://calendar.eji.org/racial-injustice/may/12.

[86] Leonard Dinnerstein, "A Note on Southern Attitudes toward Jews," *Jewish Social Studies* 32 (January 1970): 49, 48. Dinnerstein commented six years before the reorganization of the Southern Jewish Historical Society (SJHS), now into its fiftieth year. See Mark Bauman, "Genesis: The Origins of the Modern Southern Jewish Historical Society," *Southern Jewish History* 29A (2026), 1–28.

Cause despite both being morally wrong. By the 1950s, Jews knew that acceptance from White gentiles could only be guaranteed by their acceptance of the Southern caste system. "Although most southern Jews sympathized with the incipient civil rights movement, political realities compelled their silence," Webb concludes, despite the paradox in which recognizing segregation was tantamount to "upholding the same caste system that led to their own marginalization."[87]

Two generations after Henry Meyer's involvement in the white supremacist murder of John Gair, Meyer's descendants pushed well past Webb's conundrum of interracial conflict to leave a decidedly different family legacy. Melvin Meyer, Henry Meyer's great-great nephew, was editor of the *Crimson White*, the University of Alabama student newspaper, in 1962 when it published an editorial titled "A Bell Rang," recognizing the U.S. Supreme Court's decision allowing James Meredith to enroll as the University of Mississippi's first Black student. The editorial chastised segregationist Mississippi governor Ross Barnett for "standing in the schoolhouse door" to block Meredith's entry—a veiled comment about Governor George Wallace's promise to do likewise to prevent integration in Alabama. Response from the university, the local community, and nationally was swift and damning. Meyer's life was threatened; antisemitic comments were published about him; and he required guards to protect him while he attended school. The university trustees wanted to suspend him.[88]

Meyer's father, Henry, published a newspaper in Starkville, Mississippi, in Oktibbeha County. He refused county commissioner demands to disown his son, and consequently lost sizable government advertising contracts to the dismay of his brother, the newspaper's advertising manager, who never forgave his brother for refusing to concede. The Meyers'

---

[87] Clive Webb, *Fight Against Fear: Southern Jews and Black Civil Rights* (Athens, GA, 2003), 44; See also, Mark K. Bauman and Berkeley Kalin, eds., *The Quiet Voices: Southern Rabbis and Black Civil Rights, 1880s to 1990s* (Tuscaloosa, 1997) for insights into how Jewish leaders in the South navigated racial conflicts; Nikole Hannah-Jones, "What It Means to Be a White 'Race Traitor,'" *New York Times*, February 13, 2026, offers a more contemporary discussion of white supremacy and activism spanning decades of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

[88] Dina Weinstein, "Melvin Wali Ali Feiler Meyer: A Student's Struggle with Insider/Outsider Status in Civil Rights-Era Alabama," *Southern Jewish History* 16 (2013): 5–33; Wendy Ferguson Soltz, "Unheard Voices and Unseen Fights: Jews, Segregation, and Higher Education in the South, 1910-1964" (Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 2016), 160–79.

home was vandalized. The synagogue board refused Meyer's offer to resign as president. In an oral interview thirty years later, Henry Meyer said that his father died when he was eight years old. He grew up with his mother's Mississippi family, and memories of her ancestors, but none about the Meyers of Louisiana. As she ended an oral interview about her family's experience, Mildred Meyer said about that period in their lives, "Henry can talk about it. I get too wrapped up in it because I still resent it." For a time, Melvin Meyer spoke to various groups about his experiences, which affected him deeply, such that he decided to move away from journalism and into theological studies. Neither Melvin, his parents nor his sister Marjorie were aware of their Meyer relatives who two generations prior were in the middle of Reconstruction-era white supremacy.[89]

Throughout Southern history, Jews spoke out on behalf of controversial issues. In the same fashion that there was no one South, neither was there one Jewish South. This complicates the issue of attempting to fit in to gain acceptance. During Reconstruction and into the civil rights era of the last half of the twentieth century, Jews actually fit in by joining the diverse sides of issues. Yet, as this study explicates, they typically espoused one side or another because of self-interest and beliefs rather than a conscious effort for acceptance.

[89] Meyer's parents, Henry and Mildred, were interviewed separately in their Starkville home on September 1 and September 2, 1999. The forty-five-minute-long interviews were part of an oral history project with the Institute for Southern Jewish Life (ISJL). The tapes have been transferred to the Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience and digitized. Meyer sold his publishing interests three years after the turmoil and joined the journalism department at Mississippi State University, where he worked for twenty-seven years. The author spoke with Melvin Meyer's daughter and sister in 2015. Oral interviews, Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience, New Orleans.

Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf and His 1896 Southern Road Map

by

Lynda Barness and Lance J. Sussman *

At the end of the nineteenth century, Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf was one of the most visible Jewish leaders in the United States. In addition to his leadership at Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, one of the largest synagogues in the country, he also founded the National Farm School, which, some 130 years later, is now Delaware Valley University. To develop his school, he needed funding, and in 1896 he turned to the South for help. Krauskopf understood that Southern Jews had developed a network of institutions and organizations, an integral part of a national framework. In 1896 Krauskopf embarked on a fundraising tour of the South that not only confirmed the existence of such a network but strengthened it by reinforcing ties among local communities throughout the region. As the primary purpose of his trip was fundraising, he did not engage in controversial topics of the day, like race relations, but years later he forcefully addressed these issues. Instead, he relied on the cult of personality—both his and Leo Tolstoy's, which will be explained below—and his oratorical skills.

Current secondary literature about Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf does not focus on and hardly mentions his relationship with Southern Jews.[1] A

* The authors may be contacted at lynda@idoplan.com and lancejsussman@gmail.com.

The authors thank Mark K. Bauman and Bryan Stone for their careful reading, meticulous editing, and support for this article.

[1] See William W. Blood, *Apostle of Reason: A Biography of Joseph Krauskopf* (Philadelphia, 1973); John F. Sutherland, "Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf of Philadelphia: The Urban Reformer Returns to the Land," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 67 (June 1978): 342–62; Abraham J. Feldman, "Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf: A Biographical Sketch, *American Jewish Year Book* 26 (1924–1925):

forthcoming comprehensive book based on primary materials about this sometimes-overlooked rabbi provides the genesis of this article.[2] The authors found several letters inviting Krauskopf to visit the South.[3] In 1895, Adolph Ochs wrote to Krauskopf, "The success of your lectures in any locality in the South would be altogether dependent upon the interest taken by those who encouraged you to come, and the manner and direction of their efforts. Whenever you come to make your southern tour, I will arrange so that you can have a date at Chattanooga, and I am quite sure that I will have an audience respectable in size at least."[4] The newspapers of the day further document Krauskopf's campaign to raise money for his National Farm School throughout the South in 1896.

Several themes emerge in this study. First, the Progressive Era witnessed a move towards urbanization. New opportunities arose in the cities, and immigrants and young people alike were drawn there. Krauskopf, on the other hand, saw the ills of the ghettoes that were being created, particularly among Jews who were new to America. A moment of intense Jewish immigration created in its wake a growing challenge of Jewish poverty in America's cities. Conditions in Russia and Europe, including uprisings, pogroms, and virulent antisemitism, made life for Jews

---

420–47; Joshua Feldstein, *Evolution of a Unique Institution: Delaware Valley College of Science and Agriculture* (Boiling Springs, SC, 2000); Herbert D. Allman, *A Unique Institution: The Story of the National Farm School* (Philadelphia, 1935).

[2] Lynda Barness and Lance J. Sussman, *Busy Beyond Belief: Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf and the Remaking of American Judaism* (forthcoming).

[3] The authors thank the following archives. For correspondence from, to, or concerning Joseph Krauskopf and the South, see Krauskopf Files: Series A, Correspondence (A/1, A/2); Series B, Russia and Europe Trip, 1887 (1893–1894); and Series C, Lectures and Publishing, 1889–1922, especially sermons on his visit to Tolstoy, Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel (hereafter cited as Krauskopf Files, KI). There are forty-three boxes of Krauskopf material, primarily letters, in the Joseph Krauskopf Papers, Accession No. 98: Series 1, Outgoing Letters, 1884–1907; Series 2, Incoming Letters, 1858–1920s, Temple University Libraries, Special Collections Research Center, Philadelphia (hereafter cited as Krauskopf Papers, Temple University). See also, Joseph Krauskopf Papers, Manuscript Collection No. 183, box 1, folders 1–5, Series A, Correspondence, 1883–1922, Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati (hereafter cited as Krauskopf Papers, AJA); Annual Reports and Catalogs, Correspondence Files (by year, primarily twentieth century), Delaware Valley University Archives, Doylestown, PA (hereafter cited as DVU Archives).

[4] Adolph Ochs to Joseph Krauskopf, March 22, 1895, Krauskopf Papers, Temple University, box 23.

extremely difficult. Krauskopf wanted to do something to ameliorate the difficulties abroad and also those occurring at home.[5] Initially he attempted to tackle the issues of the Jews in Russia by developing an extraordinary dream and plan. Then he instituted another dream and plan by starting a nondenominational and nonsectarian national school an hour north of Philadelphia, which focused on farming. Both of these "bold plans and grand schemes" impacted issues of the day.[6] Another theme was personal. Krauskopf was apparently an exceptional orator, and he realized that he could monetize his skills by traveling and speaking in an effort to raise funds for his emerging school. Sometimes controversial, he was always engaging and in demand throughout the United States. Community-building provides a third theme. Krauskopf's tour demonstrated to Southern Jews that they had an identity of their own.

Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf's story begins in Ostrowo, Prussia (now Ostrow Wielkopolski, Poland), where he was born in 1858, and his family's chain migration to the United States landed him in Fall River, Massachusetts, in 1872. From there, through serendipity and an insightful mentor, he enrolled in the first class of American ordained Reform rabbis, of which there were four, at Hebrew Union College in 1875. Next, Krauskopf went to a pulpit in Kansas City, Missouri, and then on to Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel in Philadelphia, where he remained senior rabbi for the rest of his life.

This young rabbi's efforts in 1894 were remarkable. As absurd as it may sound, through a series of machinations he tried to arrange to go to Russia to see the czar to petition for farmland for Jews in Siberia. He thought that by finding a workable home for the Jews, where they could be productive farmers, their situation could improve and they could remain in Russia rather than coming to the United States to live in squalor. This plan hit several snags. Russia denied entry visas to all Jews, and it was impossible for Krauskopf to enter the country without one—or so it seemed. Krauskopf had friends all the way up to President Grover Cleveland, and serious attempts ensued to cajole Russia to permit Krauskopf to enter the country. However, these efforts did not come to fruition.

---

[5] On Joseph Krauskopf and antisemitism, see Robert D. Priest, "A Rabbi's Impressions of the Oberammergau Passion Play: Joseph Krauskopf, Antisemitism, and the Limits of the Transnational Jewish Public Sphere," *Jewish Social Studies* 24 (Fall 2018): 100–26.

[6] Phrase often used by Isaac Mayer Wise, Krauskopf's friend and mentor.

Keneseth Israel, Broad Street and Columbia, Philadelphia, PA.
(Courtesy of Keneseth Israel Philadelphia Archives and History.)

Krauskopf decided to go to Russia anyway. With so much publicity on his behalf throughout the United States, Krauskopf believed he would be "unmolested" (the word he and the press used), so he began his Russia journey.[7]

Of course Krauskopf never met with the czar. However, the efforts of Andrew D. White, United States ambassador to Russia and a cofounder of Cornell University, led him to a fortuitous meeting with renowned author Leo Tolstoy at Tolstoy's estate, Yasnaya Polyana, in Russia. Travel to and in Russia proved difficult; part of the rabbi's journey was by horse and wagon. Krauskopf and Tolstoy met late one afternoon and, although Krauskopf later reported they met under the Poverty Tree, the diaries of Krauskopf and Leo Bramson, who accompanied Krauskopf on the visit, showed no mention of this meeting place. The diaries indicate that the men spoke about the condition of the Jews in Russia. Allegedly, Tolstoy

Count Leo Tolstoy, c. 1884.
(Wikimedia Commons.)

[7] See, for example, *American Israelite*, July 22, 1894: "Rev. Dr. Krauskopf arrived safely and unmolested in St. Petersburg."

Joseph Krauskopf, handwritten letter
from Kiev describing his Russian trip, July 1894.
(Courtesy of Keneseth Israel Philadelphia Archives and History.)

advised Krauskopf that Russia would never do anything to help the Jews and urged him to help his fellow Jews in the United States.[8]

Krauskopf next traveled through South Russia, probably on Tolstoy's advice, visiting Jewish farm communities before returning home. Most germane to Krauskopf's future endeavors was a stop at a model farm in Odessa of about one hundred acres that had been in existence for three years as a result of the efforts of the Jewish men and women who toiled there. Less than two years later, Joseph Krauskopf purchased 122 acres of land and created a school for disadvantaged boys to learn to farm in rural Doylestown, Pennsylvania.[9]

When Krauskopf returned home in early fall 1894, he quickly started to investigate and create the beginnings of a farm school. An admiring press in America publicized his efforts. Tolstoy's name did not appear in the press until 1896, when Krauskopf started advertising for the school, nevertheless a narrative developed that gave him credit for Krauskopf's decision to open the school. That presumed cause-and-effect, an idealized version of the tenous link to Tolstoy that actually existed, served as an effective public relations angle for the school.

The story of the National Farm School illustrates the exploits of its founder and his attempt to rescue Jewish immigrant boys trapped in urban poverty. Krauskopf envisioned training youth to become self-sufficient and productive. Although lacking a full model for this agricultural adventure besides what he glimpsed in a short visit to Odessa, Krauskopf had experienced the opening of a school for boys when he enrolled as a student in the first class at the new Hebrew Union College. Krauskopf could relate to the experiences of a young man in a new environment. He came to this country without speaking English, learned it rapidly, and went on to enroll in a new school, the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. The rabbi shared the souls of these young men.

Obviously he needed money for his project. For his proposed venture in 1894 he did not own property, lacked independent wealth, and possessed no roadmap for the practicalities of creating a school from nothing. Nonetheless, Krauskopf possessed one important ingredient: determination. Shortly after his return from Russia, he began developing

---

[8] The diaries are located in the archives of Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

[9] See Feldstein, *Evolution of a Unique Institution.*

a fundraising plan. "Krauskopf applauded the capitalist as mankind's benefactor, placed on earth so 'that the more favored mortals: those spared from wealth and its laborious pursuits, may reap the benefits thereof.'"[10] For the next two years, Krauskopf worked frenetically. He raised twenty thousand dollars to purchase the land and buildings of an abandoned farm and dealt with the tasks associated with a boarding school for boys—dormitories, staff, furnishings, machinery, crops, instructors, curricula, and the list goes on. Everything required money, and raising money took tremendous stamina, planning, and good cheer. He donated his savings, some $3,500, and then went on the road to raise money from his speeches. The rabbi was a captivating orator who, as newspapers repeatedly reported, could speak for an hour and a half without notes. He regularly packed the house with Jews and non-Jews. Krauskopf received fees for his presentations and also received proceeds from ticket sales (a reserved seat often cost fifty cents). These funds, perhaps minus some travel expenses, went to his burgeoning school.

In May, June, and July 1895, he embarked on a tour of the western United States and along the Pacific coast, courtesy of his friends in the railroad business.[11] Krauskopf possessed wanderlust at a point in history that did not make travel easy or pleasurable.[12] Like Isaac Leeser and Isaac Mayer Wise, Jewish religious leaders before him, he traveled across the United States by train.[13] He became skilled at planning and traveling, creating routes and itineraries that made sense, and continued to do so for over a quarter century.

In practice, Krauskopf developed what could be called in political terms "stump speeches." He primarily spoke about his experience in Russia with Tolstoy, titling one speech "Tolstoi: Apostle of Russia" and

---

[10] Sutherland, "Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf," 353.

[11] *American Israelite*, May 30, 1895, listed the itinerary: Champaign, IL; Des Moines, IA; Davenport, IA; Omaha, NE; Denver, CO; Salt Lake City, UT; Portland, OR; Seattle, WA; San Francisco, CA; Sacramento, CA; Los Angeles, CA; Albuquerque, NM, Santa Fe, NM, Trinidad, CO, and Pueblo, CO.

[12] After the turn of the twentieth century, Krauskopf traveled to Germany to evaluate the Oberammergau play and later took a year-long trip around the world with his wife, Sybil, and their daughter, Madeleine, as a gift from his congregation.

[13] Lance J. Sussman, *Isaac Leeser and the Making of American Judaism* (Detroit, 1995); Sefton D. Temkin, *Creating American Reform Judaism: The Life and Times of Isaac Mayer Wise* (Liverpool, UK, 1998).

Joseph Krauskopf, fundraising letter, n.d.
(Courtesy of Delaware Valley University Archives.)

another "Only a Jew."[14] Unlike Isaac Leeser and Isaac Mayer Wise, his friend, mentor, and founder of the Hebrew Union College, Krauskopf never published a personal newspaper, so he depended on connections with the press and, in particular, Wise's *American Israelite* to share his exploits. The secular press also became his ally. The newspapers covered his every move with thoroughness and kindness. Krauskopf was a celebrity, and the press proved more than obliging.

Looking South

From the outset, the South proved pivotal to Krauskopf's strategy for raising money for the school. The years 1895 and 1896 were central to his Southern plan, which he implemented almost immediately. Thereafter, he never stopped networking. An announcement appeared in early 1896 that "Rev. Dr. Krauskopf will undertake a lecture tour through the South next month, from which he expects to realize about $2500, leaving $5000 which it is desirable to secure."[15] In current value, that is approximately one hundred thousand dollars, no small amount to amass.

Why the South? Isaac Mayer Wise, writing in the *American Israelite*, understood the reason as soon as Krauskopf announced the tour: "Knowing as well as I do the extremely liberal and charitable Jews who are domiciled in the Southern States, I venture to say that these large-hearted *Yehudim* will respond to the appeal in their usual happy style. It is dollars against toothpicks that the Sunny South will make up the still needed $7,500—either in lecture fees, perquisites or by straight donations. Mark my prediction."[16] Krauskopf knew what he was doing and knew the South had its merit. Moreover, Krauskopf lacked access to potential funders in the North. Baron de Hirsch already funded a school in nearby New Jersey. Krauskopf experienced a stormy relationship for a time with financier Jacob Schiff and thus could not reach out to other big funders in New York.[17] He did well with the wealthy congregants of his Philadelphia synagogue,

---

[14] "Dr. Krauskopf on Tolstoi," *Montgomery Advertiser*, March 5, 1896; "Eloquence and Wisdom: Rev. Dr. Joseph Krauskopf on 'Only a Jew,'" *Chattanooga Daily Times*, February 26, 1896.

[15] *American Israelite*, January 16, 1896.

[16] "The National Farm School," *American Israelite*, January 23, 1896.

[17] Apparently, a misunderstanding between the two men originated when Krauskopf used Schiff's name as an early supporter of the school. Whether he had Schiff's consent was the question, but they worked it out and later Schiff contributed financially to the National Farm School.

but that had its limits. Krauskopf needed to find a pool of receptive donors, and the South offered an existing network in a region anchored in an agricultural economy. Fortunately for Krauskopf, the effects of the Panic of 1893 were fading.

Krauskopf went where the money was with a calculated plan. On February 18, 1895, Adolph S. Ochs, publisher and owner of the *Chattanooga Times*, wrote to a Mr. Lichten, who later became an officer of the school: "Should Dr. Krauskopf pass by or near Chattanooga on his lecturing tour, I should be very much pleased to have him deliver his lecture here." Further, he noted, "Rabbi Krauskopf is doing noble work and is entitled to the enthusiastic support of every self-respecting Jew."[18] The *Chattanooga Times* reported with the headline "An Intellectual Treat in Store": "Rev. Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf, of Philadelphia, conspicuously one of the leading Jewish rabbis of America, at the head of one of the largest and most prosperous Jewish congregations in America, will during the month of April visit this city and deliver a lecture for the benefit of a local Jewish charity and the Jewish Agricultural college."[19]

On March 25, 1895, L. Pape of Pape and Sugarman Life Insurance Agents wrote to Krauskopf, "I have come to the conclusion that your idea in visiting the South some time next fall, is by far the best plan. . . . And you can meantime correspond with Nashville, Chattanooga, Vicksburg, Greenville, Natchez, Montgomery and New Orleans, and by visiting these cities in connection with Memphis will make the traveling expense to each city less and the result to the cause much better."[20] The *Weekly Democrat-Times*, in Greenville, Mississippi, reported on March 23, 1895, under "Of General Interest": "Dr. Joseph Krauskopf is establishing a model farm near Philadelphia, where graduates of orphan institutions and other capable boys and girls may be trained into skillful farmers. It is to be modeled after one in Odessa, now in the third year of existence. The trade and science of farming, stock raising etc., will be taught practically and technically."[21]

---

[18] Adolph Ochs to a Mr. Lichten, February 18, 1895, Krauskopf Papers, Temple University, Series 2.

[19] "An Intellectual Treat in Store," *Chattanooga Times,* March 10, 1895.

[20] L. Pape to Joseph Krauskopf, March 25, 1895, Krauskopf Papers, Temple University, box 23.

[21] *Weekly Democrat-Times* (Greenville, MS), March 23, 1895.

On the Road

Krauskopf started traveling and sharing the story of his visit with Tolstoy. Krauskopf was clearly smitten with Tolstoy and extolled his virtues from the pulpit and the lectern. A newspaper reported, "In many ways, the Rabbi could not have chosen a more unlikely hero with whom he had less in common. Tolstoy's back-to-the-land movement was part of a larger effort to find meaning in his own life and ultimately to combat a political, socio-economic system which he hated."[22] Krauskopf's talks on Tolstoy, however, provided a segue into his story of his proposed farm school and ultimately fundraising.

Montgomery Advertiser,
March 5, 1896.
(Newspapers.com.)

The rabbi traveled extensively through the South in a scripted tour for four or five weeks in early 1896 to raise money for his school.[23] He started on his journey focused on his school, not specifically promoting Reform Judaism, although he was a leading figure in that movement, which numerous Southern congregations practiced. Reform synagogues

[22] Quoted in Sutherland, "Urban Farmer," 352.

[23] Different newspapers reported different durations.

across the South already connected through major family and business ties and through the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, which proved central to Krauskopf's ability to travel and speak. Religion became a common denominator, allowing Krauskopf to move from city to city to various synagogues whose rabbis he knew (or knew by reputation), appealing to their congregants for support. Krauskopf took advantage of the cohesiveness in the Reform German Jewish community across the country.

Notable organizations, like B'nai B'rith, the German Jewish men's organization, were active and popular, and the community was strong. Individuals maintained connections through marriage, business, and organizational ties. At the time, the Reform temples increasingly became a place for women, with the National Council for Jewish Women organized within three years prior to his trip. Krauskopf continued traveling in the South because of its networking opportunities. Other contemporary religious figures like Isaac Mayer Wise and Rev. Russell Conwell, founder of Temple College (now University) and pastor of the Grace Baptist Church in Philadelphia, traveled to share their religious views, but Krauskopf directed his message specifically toward his school, its purpose and benefits, and his philosophy of helping immigrants adapt in their new country.

Agriculture in the South remained anchored in cotton, and modern techniques were just beginning to emerge.[24] Krauskopf came to cities of the South to talk about agriculture for the future, including practical and scientific farming. He invited his audience to join him in facing the future. He had a vision for a school focused on education for farmers. The repetition of the phrase "scientific and practical agriculture" became a mantra and succinctly explained what made Krauskopf's message reverberate. In 1895 the Cotton States and International Exposition, a world's fair, took place in Atlanta from September 18 to December 31, 1895. With six thousand exhibits and attracting eight hundred thousand visitors, it brought

[24] For a reminder that horses were still used on farms rather than tractors, "Charles Hart and Charles Parr set up a business in Charles City, Iowa, in 1900, originally selling a two-cylinder gasoline engine they developed. In 1903 the firm build 15 self-propelled traction engines. . . . [T]hey had a new word for their product, tractor. Peter Liebhold, "These tractors show 150 years of farming history," National Museum of American History, March 1, 2018, accessed June 2, 2026, https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/stories/these-tractors-show-150-years-farming-history.

attention to what the promoters hoped would be the economic transformation to the New South. Thus Krauskopf's message reflected regional trends.

In addition, Krauskopf led the way for Jews to be part of an America that did not trigger antisemitism. Antisemites accused Jews of being unproductive because of their lack of participation in farming, regardless of the fact that land restrictions had been imposed on Jews in numerous European countries. According to Gabriel Davidson, "It still seems to be the general belief that, since their dispersion from their ancestral home, Jews have lost contact with the land so completely and irrevocably that in all of two thousand years they have never been able to thrust new roots into the soil. The truth is that during the whole Diaspora there was never a time when Jews were not engaged in agriculture to some extent."[25] To counteract this calumny, agriculture at the turn of the century served as a central focus of Jewish philanthropy, as evidenced by the work of Baron de Hirsch and others, and then by the kibbutz movement in Palestine. Krauskopf linked the future, science, and agriculture, and he invited Jewish communities in the South to participate while showing them how their involvement and support for the National Farm School would be worth their investment. Whereas few Jews in the South pursued farming, the concentration of the region's economy on agriculture directly and indirectly impacted their commercial ventures.

Krauskopf possessed a sense of politics and knew whom to reach. He frequently asked his personal contacts in the South to connect him to others. When he spoke at a gathering he attracted crowds that further extended his fundraising network, which became widespread and continued to grow with him as the main attraction. The Reform synagogues in the South provided strongholds for connections, and others joined in the campaign. In Memphis, Tennessee, Rabbi Max Stamfield gave a pitch before a committee appointed to handle contributions. The National Council of Jewish Women in Atlanta also collected funds for the school.[26]

---

[25] Gabriel Davidson, "The Jew in Agriculture in the United States," *American Jewish Year Book* 37 (1935–36): 99.

[26] "Count Tolstoi, Philosopher," *Commercial Appeal*, February 24, 1896; "Rabbi Krauskopf's Work," *Savannah Morning News*, March 2, 1896.

Krauskopf's 1896 route through the South, starting in Louisville, KY.
(Map created by Jen Urdang Stern.)

On the Stump

In February and March 1896 Krauskopf embarked on his Southern tour, speaking to crowds almost daily.[27] He knew his audiences and made the message personal in Savannah:

> Some years ago I visited Russia to thoroughly acquaint myself with the condition of my people in that country. . . . Imagine, if you can, what would be the result if the government at Washington should issue an order compelling all

[27] "Rev. Dr. Joseph Krauskopf will leave next Monday morning on his Southern lecture tour, to be gone about a month. In the course of his journey he will visit the following places: Louisville, Ky., Wednesday, February 19th; Nashville, Tenn., Friday, February 21st; Memphis, Tenn., Sunday, February 23rd; Huntsville, Ala., Monday, February 24th; Chattanooga, Tenn., [Tuesday,] February 25th; Atlanta, Ga., [Wednesday], February 26th; Savannah, Ga., Monday evening, March 2d; Montgomery, Ala., Wednesday, March 4th; New Orleans, La., Friday, March 6th; Natchez, Miss., Sunday evening, March 8th; Vicksburg, Miss., Monday, March 9th; Houston, Tex., Wednesday, March 11th; Galveston, Tex, Thursday, March 12th; San Antonio, Tex., Friday, March 13th; and Dallas, Tex, Saturday, March 14th. The tour will include a number of other cities, for which the dates have not yet been fixed.""Rev. Dr. Krauskopf's Southern Tour,"*American Israelite*, February 20, 1896.

> the Jews in America to leave their homes and settle in two or three of the southern states, and even there forbid them to live in villages or the country, but force them to huddle together in congested cities. Such was the meaning of the ukase uttered against the Jews in Russia, forcing them to live in the Pale settlement."[28]

Russia confined Jews into a region in the western area of the empire known as the Pale of Settlement and initiated policies by edict (ukase) which impoverished much of the Jewish community there. The czar's government was inherently antisemitic. The back-to-the soil movement developed in Russia during the nineteenth century, then grew after the rise of antisemitism following the 1881 assassination of Czar Alexander II, and spread to Palestine, Argentina, and the United States. The wave of interest included the *Am Olam* (Eternal People) movement. These forces led to the creation of agricultural settlements in, for example, New Odessa near Portland, Oregon; Happyville in Aiken, South Carolina; Sicely Island, Louisiana; Crimea in South Dakota; Cotopaxi, Colorado; and other colonies. Krauskopf was very involved with the Clarion Jewish Agriculture and Colonization Colony in Utah, and his hope was to expand colonization through his efforts in other states.[29]

Krauskopf's emphasis on the training of orphans also fit within his milieu. Founded in 1854, the Jewish Orphans' Home of New Orleans emphasized manual training for its wards. In 1903 the Isadore Newman Manual Training School began to help educate the orphans and prepare them to become self-sufficient adults.[30] Manual training, especially of

---

28 "Rabbi Krauskopf's Work," *Savannah Morning News*, March 2, 1896.

29 The New Jersey colonies numbered among the very few successes. Most colonies died within a short time because of the lack of agricultural experience of the participants. See, for example, Leo Shpall, "Jewish Agricultural Colonies in the United States," *Agricultural History* 24 (July 1950): 120–46; Ellen Eisenberg, *Jewish Agricultural Colonies in New Jersey, 1882–1920* (Syracuse, NY, 1995); Arnold Shankman, "Happyville: The Forgotten Colony," *American Jewish Archives* 30 (April 1978): 3–19; Max Rosenthal, "Agricultural Colonies in the United States," Jewish Encyclopedia, accessed June 30, 2026, https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/909-agricultural-colonies-in-the-united-states.

30 One of many throughout the country, the Hebrew Orphans Home of Atlanta opened in 1887. The Atlanta chapter of the National Council of Jewish Women, which welcomed and supported Krauskopf, contributed regularly to the orphanage. Ultimately, many of the Jewish orphanages came under the auspices of B'nai B'rith. See Wendy Besmann, "The 'Typical Kid Overachievers': Instilling a Success Ethic in the Jewish Children's Home of New Orleans," *Southern Jewish History* 8 (2005): 121–59; Marlene Trestman, *Most Fortunate Unfortunates: The Jewish Orphans' Home of New Orleans* (Baton Rouge, 2023); Reena Sigman Friedman, *These*

orphans, fit well within the Progressive movement. Thus, the rabbi's emphasis on orphans, farming, and manual training followed national and international trends.

The venues for Krauskopf's talks varied as did the benefits. As has been shown, many of these were the elite German Jewish social organizations, and almost all were Reform temples.[31] He even delivered a discourse at the First Baptist Church in Huntsville, Alabama. "The lecture of Rev. Jos. Krauskopf at the first Baptist church . . . for the benefit of the 'National Farm School' was attended by a large and appreciative audience which was more cosmopolitan in its character than any which ever before listened to a speaker in our city. The lecture was entitled 'Only a Jew.'" He lectured in Vicksburg under the auspices of the B'nai B'rith Literary Association. In New Orleans, "Joseph Krauslopf will deliver a lecture in this city on Friday, March 6th. This will be one of a series of lectures the eminent Rabbi is delivering throughout the South, to benefit the National Farm School Fund, and he expects to realize $2,000 through this tour, which, with the amount already subscribed will make about $16,000." In Chattanooga, Krauskopf addressed the crowd at Concordia Hall. Ochs's newspaper reported, "The presence of Isaac M. Wise distinguished this visit and the funds raised at this event were distributed between the National Farm School and the local Jewish cemetery."[32] Beyond the financial proceeds, Krauskopf described other benefits:

> I have just come from Atlanta. . . . Mr. Landauer of the Southern agricultural works, in Atlanta, has offered to furnish the school with all the plows of every description, and the two Atlanta furniture companies, The Southern and the

---

are Our Children: Jewish Orphanages in the United States, 1880–1925 (Waltham, MA, 1994); Caroline E. Light, *That Pride of Race and Character: The Roots of Jewish Benevolence in the Jim Crow South* (New York, 2014).

[31] "Count Tolstoi, Philosopher," *Commercial Appeal* (Memphis, TN), February 24, 1896; "National Farm School: Interest in the Enterprise Awakened by Dr. Krauskopf's Visit," *Nashville Banner*, February 24, 1896; "Count Tolstoi," *The Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), February 20, 1896; "Savannah," *American Israelite*, February 27, 1896; "Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf: Philadelphia's Learned Rabbi to Lecture in Atlanta," *Atlanta Constitution*, February 17, 1896; "Dr. Krauskopf on Tolstoy," *Montgomery Advertiser*, March 5, 1896; "Dallas, Tex.," *American Israelite*, March 26, 1896; "An Eloquent and Interesting Discourse," *Natchez Democrat*, March 10, 1896.

[32] "Huntsville, Ala.," *American Israelite,* March 5, 1896; *Natchez Democrat*, March 10, 1896; *American Israelite*, February 27, 1896; "Only a Jew," *Chattanooga Times*, February 16, 1896.

Venues where Joseph Krauskopf appeared on his Southern tour. CLOCKWISE: *McDonald's Opera House, Montgomery, AL. (Carolyn1414, CinemaTreasures.org.) The Vine Street Temple, Nashville, TN. (Courtesy of the Annette Levy Ratkin Jewish Community Archives, Jewish Federation of Greater Nashville.) Grand Opera House, San Antonio, TX. (AR-X-016-I036, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.) Temple B'nai Israel, Natchez, MS. (Wikimedia Commons.)*

> National, have offered to furnish three rooms. The Atlanta branch of the National Council of Jewish Women is going to make an aggregate contribution of money, and the young ladies of Atlanta are to get up a fair in aid of the school."[33]

The *Atlanta Journal*, on February 28, 1896, ran a two-column article with a line drawing of Krauskopf and an impressive four-column wide illustration of "The Model School in Which Dr. Krauskopf is Interested." The newspaper observed, "The hall was filled with elegant and fashionable people and the tribute of applause given the lecturer showed the excellent impression he had created. . . . In the reception tendered the lecturer by the local chapter of the national council of Jewish women, a brilliant affair, the secretary [Hoke Smith, Secretary of the Interior and former governor]

Sketch of the planned National Farm School campus, Atlanta Journal*, February 28, 1896. (Newspapers.com.)*

was a leading figure and an hour was spent most pleasantly in handshaking." In Savannah, the report glowed: "The lecture was one of the best that has been delivered in Savannah on any subject recently. It furnished food for thought, and gave a better idea of the character and purposes of Tolstoi than was possessed by the majority of the audience previously. . . . Dr. Krauskopf might be called a Tolstoi convert, from the fervor with which he indorses the teachings of the Russian apostle of reform."[34]

The lecture in Montgomery, Alabama, like those in most of the cities where Krauskopf spoke, featured his "Russia speech":

---

[33] "Rabbi Krauskopf's Work," *Savannah Morning News*, March 2, 1896.

[34] *Atlanta Journal* , February 28, 1896; "Dr. Krauskopf on Tolstoi, the Apostle of Russia, Tonight," *Atlanta Journal*, February 27, 1896; "Russia's Model Apostle," *Savannah Morning News*, March 3, 1896.

> Last night, while speaking of Count Tolstoi, the Russian Apostle, Rev. Dr. Krauskopf said that his audience was no doubt surprised to hear him speak in the same breath of Moses, of Jesus, of [Buddha] and of Tolstoi. Tolstoi is frowned upon by the mighty, ridiculed by the great and his society is questioned by many because he dons a peasant's attire, lives a peasant's life and does a peasant's work. In his deed and thoughts he belongs to that class of men who a thousand years ago were burned at the stake and who two thousand years ago were crucified. He renounced his princely estate like [Buddha], he associated with the lowly like Jesus, which proves him to be of that material of which reformers, redeemers, saviors and martyrs are made.[35]

In San Antonio, he spoke again about "Tolstoy: The Apostle of Russia":

> Men like Moses and Jesus, like Buddha and Tolstoi, come not as other great men come, to dazzle their brief moment, only to end, meteor-like, in nothingness. Neither do they come as comets come to sweep majestically through the universe their brief hour, and then to pass beyond the horizon of man's vision. They come like the planets. They come to stay and to shine forever. They diminish not in size nor lustre, though years pass into centuries, and centuries into millennials. The texture of their nature is designed by the master worker, is spun and woven in divinity's workshop. It ages not. It lasts forever.[36]

Krauskopf's trip to Russia, his meeting with Tolstoy, and his fascination with the author further places Krauskopf and his interested audiences as cosmopolitans.[37] Alongside the aforementioned drawings, the *Atlanta Journal* observed: "Rabbi Krauskopf of Philadelphia, well known throughout the nation as one of its most learned and eloquent divines, delivered a lecture last evening in the hall of the Concordia association on Tolstoi, the Apostle of Russia." The article continued:

> It is safe to say that no man ever spoke to an audience in Atlanta who used the English language in any purer or more classic form. For more than an hour and a half the fascinating rabbi stood before the gathering, without notes, and delivered a discourse, which for intent and eloquence, has never been surpassed in this city.[38]

---

[35] "Dr. Krauskopf on Tolstoi," *Montgomery Advertiser*, March 5, 1896.

[36] "The Apostle of Russia," *San Antonio Express-News,* March 13, 1896.

[37] In a different context, James Loeffler uses the term "rooted cosmopolitans," which can clearly apply to Krauskopf. James Loeffler, *Rooted Cosmopolitans: Jews and Human Rights in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven, 2018).

[38] "Apostle of Russia," *Atlanta Journal*, February 28, 1896.

Handbill advertising Krauskopf's Tolstoy lecture, 1898. (Courtesy of the Special Collections Research Center, Temple University Libraries, Philadelphia.)

Tolstoy's *War and Peace* was published in 1869 and *Anna Karenina* in 1878. Although controversial, these books were seen as masterpieces. Thus it was not surprising that the topic of Krauskopf's discourse was a crowd-pleaser. Although Tolstoy was nominated for the Nobel Prize in literature every year from 1902 to 1906 and the Nobel Peace Prize in 1901, 1903, and 1909, he "stated that he would decline if he were a winner."[39] Krauskopf's use of Tolstoy's name was in its celebrity; it reflected Krauskopf's idolization of Tolstoy and the cult of his celebrity. The fact that Krauskopf had actually met the famous author offered another draw for his audiences, who were thus exposed to great Russian literature.

The rabbi's visit to Russia and highlighting of Tolstoy provided the headline in almost every location. However, Krauskopf typically gave a second discourse if invited on the following day: "Only a Jew." Krauskopf stressed: "So strange is and has been the fate of the Jew. He is ever the

[39] "Nomination Archive, Lev Nikolaevich (Leo) Tolstoy," The Nobel Prize, accessed June 3, 2026, https://www.nobelprize.org/nomination/archive/show.php?id=7378.

simultaneously despised and dreaded and distinguished of mankind, ever at one and the same time the despised peddler, the courted Rothschild, the worshiped Jesus, ever simultaneously the scum, the sage, the savior among his fellowmen, ever at one and the same time despised for his meanness, lauded for his intellectual power, reverenced for his moral and spiritual grandeur." Krauskopf continued by responding to the charge of Jews as Christ-killers:

> [T]hat Jews were first to believe in Him and to follow Him, and but for them, the world might never have had any knowledge of him. As to the crucifixion — distinguished historians, both Jewish and non-Jewish, have ere this shown that the Jews did not crucify Jesus, first, because the offense charged against Him was not punishable, according to the Jewish law, secondly, because the crucifixion was not a Jewish but a Roman mode of capital punishment, thirdly, because the Jew being at that time under Roman subjection, had no right to inflict capital punishment, fourthly, because the offense was not the Messiahship claim, but the kingship claim, which especially in those seditious times, was treason against Rome, and brought speedily a traitor's death upon the aspirant.[40]

Krauskopf took it as his mission to advocate better interfaith relations and to overcome antisemitism. In 1900, he traveled to Oberammergau, Germany, where he observed the Passion Play. Returning home, he wrote a book exposing the antisemitism of the New Testament and explaining how the relationship between Jews and Christians is fraught with misunderstandings.

Homeward Bound

After his tour, a report on March 19, 1896, noted that Joseph Krauskopf arrived in Kansas City, the home of his first pulpit after ordination:

> [Krauskopf arrived following] a four weeks' lecturing tour through the South in the interest of the National Farm School of Doylestown, near Philadelphia, of which project he is the originator. . . . The lecture tour was in the interest of the project, and added about $2500 to the amount already raised, which makes a total of over $16,500. About $20,000 is needed to complete the buildings. There will be no lecture delivered in Kansas City, as Dr. Krauskopf is hurrying home

[40] "Eloquence and Wisdom: Rev. Dr. Joseph Krauskopf on 'Only a Jew,'" *Chattanooga Daily Times*, February 26, 1896.

> to be ready for the opening of the school, which, it is expected, will take place April 1.[41]

When Krauskopf returned to Philadelphia, additional reports included:

> The enterprise was made known throughout the South, and a large number of annual subscribers were secured. Several individuals offered to furnish additional rooms in the school, and to provide materials and implements. In Atlanta the National Council of Jewish Women promised to furnish the Dairy of the Model Farm. In Texas considerable land was given for the purpose of providing settlements for the graduates of the school. . . . As a result of Dr. Krauskopf's trip everything is now in readiness for the immediate prosecution of work on the farm.[42]

The termination of the Southern trip did not end Krauskopf's Southern plan. To achieve his purpose he invited people from the South to visit the school. He sent personal invitations to give addresses at the school's ceremonies and events or for an opportunity to see the school in action, with students performing chores, the dairy in operation, the school buildings newly constructed, and more. Large donors from the South, like the Lasker family who donated a dormitory, received invitations to see how their magnanimous gifts were put to good use. Krauskopf wrote:

> [M]embers of the Morris Lasker family, of Galveston, Texas, who, upon my reaching them, made a donation to THE NATIONAL FARM SCHOOL of the handsome sum of $75,000, which is to be expended upon the erection of the much-needed Domestic Hall. You can readily realize how happy we all are, inasmuch as this is, by far, the largest donation that has as yet been made."[43]

---

[41] "Advice from a Jew Leader," *Kansas City Times*, March 19, 1896.

[42] *American Israelite*, April 2, 1896.

[43] Joseph Krauskopf to Charles Kline, November 8, 1916, Krauskopf Papers, Temple University, box 4. Born in Polish Prussia in 1840, Morris Lasker emigrated to Norfolk, Virginia, at age sixteen. He peddled his way to Weatherford, Texas, where he became a store clerk in 1860. After fighting the Apache Indians and then for the Confederacy, he entered a series of business ventures before establishing the Lasker Real Estate Company and then entering into banking. He won election to the Texas Senate in 1895 and around 1906 purchased the Texas Star Flour Mill, besides investing in the cotton business and presiding over the Galveston Cotton Exchange. Natalie Ornish, "Morris Lasker: A Journey from Immigrant to Influential Investor," Handbook of Texas Online, accessed Jun 3, 2026, https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/lasker-morris; John Gunther, *Taken at the Flood: The Story of Albert D. Lasker* (New York, 1960).

That gift would be worth more than two million dollars in 2026.

Krauskopf created a national board at the school and involved members from across the United States. In 1898, two years after the opening of the school, six of the twenty-four members of the national auxiliary board were from the South, including S. Landauer from Georgia, Bernard Bernheim from Kentucky, Isidor Hernsheim from Louisiana, Henry Frank from Mississippi, Benjamin Herman from Tennessee, and Alex Sanger from Texas.[44]

According to the school's catalogue in 1898, fifteen pupils of the National Farm School were listed, four of whom—Raymond Clyde Becker and Isaac Kaufman from Pine Bluff, Arkansas; Frank Kerchersky from Atlanta; and Solomon Pizer from New Orleans—were from the South. This was significant in several ways. First, it demonstrated that the word about the school had and would spread. Second, it also was important for fundraising since it would be easy to return to these states to raise money when it could be shown that there would be a tangible difference in the careers of these young men. Further, this could impact the larger issue of scientific and practical farming in their home communities. Finally, this provided evidence of Krauskopf's philosophy of assisting immigrant boys and orphans. Of the students from the South, two were born in America, one in Russia, and one in Germany. Pizer came from the Jewish Orphans' Home in New Orleans.[45]

This same catalogue dedicated five pages to "Extracts from Some of the Many Letters Received." The Hon. Andrew D. White, U.S. ambassador to Germany, was included. When White served as the U.S. ambassador to Russia, he had arranged for Krauskopf to meet with Tolstoy. Extracts from letters of Southerners included those from the Rev. Dr. I. L. Leucht, New Orleans; the Rev. Dr. Adolph Moses, Louisville; Mr. S. Landauer, Atlanta; Mr. B. Bernheim, Louisville; Mr. Isidor Hernsheim, New Orleans; Sanger Bros., Dallas; and Mr. Michael Heymann, superintendent of the Jewish Orphans' Home, New Orleans.[46]

Annual reports and school catalogues included fundraising results. For example, in 1898 a list appeared of founders of the National Farm

---

[44] *Catalogue of the National Farm School* (Philadelphia, 1898), 1, DVU Archives, accessed June 3, 2026, https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/community.29997080.pdf.

[45] Ibid., 15.

[46] Ibid., 16–20.

The original farm of the National Farm School, 1897.
(Courtesy of Delaware Valley University Archives.)

Main Building, National Farm School.
(Courtesy of Delaware Valley University Archives.)

School, which would have been a result of Krauskopf's travels and fundraising in 1896. The list included five founders from Alabama, two from Arkansas, one from Florida, twenty-one from Georgia, nine from Kentucky, five from Louisiana, six from Mississippi, one from South Carolina, forty-seven from Tennessee, twenty-one from Texas, four from Virginia, and two from West Virginia. In 1900, B. Bernheim and J. W. Bernheim, Southern philanthropists and bourbon distillers and distributors, provided the biggest gifts from the South at fifty dollars each, and one contributor from San Antonio and one from Memphis numbered among large donors at twenty-five dollars each. Small gifts came from Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, and Tennessee, with Arkansas, Alabama, and Texas showing the most support.[47]

During the next decade, the pool of donors grew significantly. The November 1911 annual report of the National Farm School listed the auxiliary board members from the South: Henry Beer, New Orleans; I. W. Bernheim, Louisville; Henry Frank, Natchez; M. Horkheimer, Wheeling; E. Raab, Richmond; Edw. E. Richards, Mobile; Alex Sanger, Dallas; and David Sternberg, Memphis.[48] For the year ending September 30, 1911, the following cities with donors were included: Alexander City, Birmingham, Gadsden, Huntsville, Mobile (including the Council of Jewish Women), Montgomery, Uniontown, and Wetumpka in Alabama; Helena, Huntingdon, and Little Rock in Arkansas; Jacksonville, Miami, and Pensacola in Florida; Albany, Atlanta, Dublin, Eastman, Sandersville, Savannah, and West Point in Georgia; Brookhaven, Koskiusko, Meridian, Natchez, and Vicksburg in Mississippi; Florence and Rock Hill in South Carolina; Clarksville, Knoxville, Memphis, and Nashville in Tennessee; and Beaumont, Big Spring, Dallas, El Paso, Fort Worth, Galveston, Midland, Mineola, Palestine, San Antonio, and Victoria in Texas. Donor "members" in the South reached a high that year of 120.[49] These lists illustrate that Krauskopf's broad support went beyond just a few cities.

Avoiding controversies that plagued the South and Jews in the region (as well as the nation), Krauskopf did not focus heavily on other

---

[47] Ibid,. 24–31, 32–38.

[48] *Fourteenth Annual Report of the National Farm School* (Bucks County, PA, 1911), 3, DVU Archives, accessed June 3, 2026, https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/community.29997094.pdf.

[49] Ibid., 70–79.

issues of the day like race, segregation, and lynching while on his tour in the South. This is certainly not to suggest that Krauskopf was unaware or uninvolved in these issues, but he likely concluded that it would be imprudent to address them in the context of fundraising. Tensions about race were high at this moment in American history. In the landmark *Plessy v. Ferguson* case (1898), the Supreme Court ruled that racial segregation did not violate the U.S. Constitution, paving the way for the implementation of Jim Crow segregation throughout the South.

Later Krauskopf spoke out, especially as the politics of race sharpened. He invited Booker T. Washington of the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute in Alabama to be present at the National Farm School to deliver an address in 1907. Washington declined the invitation but wrote, "I nevertheless appreciate the invitation, and it may be that another year if it should be agreeable, I could favorably consider the suggestion."[50] Both men came to similar conclusions at about the same time regarding the importance of practical and scientific education and served parallel functions in their communities. Their schools grew out of a belief in the value of manual labor and were dedicated to social uplift. Julius Rosenwald, who funded education for Black children throughout the South and supported Washington, did not fund the National Farm School. Rosenwald was a congregant of Emil Hirsch in Chicago, and Krauskopf and Hirsch had a complicated and uneasy relationship that may at least partly explain Rosenwald's failure to contribute to Krauskopf's school.

The Fifth Annual Conference of the NAACP, April 23–25, 1913, was held at Krauskopf's synagogue, Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel, and Krauskopf gave an address at the first session.[51] Substantial correspondence exists between Krauskopf and individuals and organizations relating to Black rights, illustrating that the rabbi was an active supporter of their causes. The corresponding secretary of the Philadelphia branch of the Afro-American Council wrote to him, "I had the pleasure of listening to your eloquent sermon in behalf of the Negro delivered Easter Sunday morning. It was an eloquent, instructive and fairminded presentation of the subject and cannot fail to do us much good." In another letter,

---

[50] Joseph Krauskopf and Booker T. Washington correspondence, April 22, 1907, Krauskopf Papers, Temple University, box 32.

[51] "National Association for the Advancement of Colored People," *The Crisis* 6 (June 1913): 86.

contradicting the views of Mr. S. H. Rubel of Corinth, Mississippi, Krauskopf declared:

> I plead for human rights, irrespective of race or creed or color. I plead for the up-holding of the Constitution and By-laws of the United States, which guarantee unto the negro his full rights. It is true that crimes are committed by others, and wrongs are done, and have been done, in the North, but no less true is it that I have attacked these as strongly in other discourses of mine, as I attacked, in the discourse of which you speak, the wrongs done to the negro.[52]

In all of his discourses and his extant letters, Krauskopf remained consistent in this view. And in a discourse on April 16, 1916, Krauskopf unequivocally declared, "The white man cannot or will not see that the root of the evil is in the white man's brain, and not in the colored man's skin."[53]

Conclusion

This quotation from Isaiah 11:4 graces the cover of the catalogue of the National Farm School in 1898: "And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks." The use of this passage was consistent with Krauskopf's focus on building community and cooperation. He made each stop in the South more important by creating interconnectedness among the cities he visited. Distinctive connections were nurtured as Krauskopf traveled among cities, as, for example, Natchez knew what Chattanooga was experiencing and a stronger connection and regional identity grew. Positive media coverage provided a dividend. A sense grew of being part of something bigger than their own city; each city knew where Krauskopf had been as part of his roadmap, and each was connected to the others because of it. Southern—and American—Jewry constituted a more cohesive community as a result. Krauskopf may not have initiated this, but he was instrumental in defining and underlining it. The Southern tour was specifically aided by Southern Jews who extended invitations and courtesies to Krauskopf. With the tour, regional consciousness continued to grow. Yet, Jews in the

---

[52] Mrs. B.F. Mossell to Joseph Krauskopf, April 17, 1900, and Joseph Krauskopf to Mr. S.H. Rubel, May 5, 1916, Krauskopf Papers, Temple University, box 26.

[53] "Americanism Waning, Declares The American Negro," discourse by Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf, 151, Series 29, No. 21, Krauskopf Files, KI. This is a sermon, but Krauskopf called them discourses. Many were printed and distributed. The KI Archives holds the full collection of Krauskopf discourses, many of which can be found in other archives as well.

National Farm School course of study, 1900–1901.
(Courtesy of Delaware Valley University Archives.)

South were also aware of the rabbi's initial tour in the West, and they contributed and participated in a national effort headquartered in Pennsylvania. The National Farm School and Krauskopf's outreach thus fostered regionalism within a national model.

Part of his intention, and certainly a result of his tour, was Krauskopf's adherence to the ancient Jewish tradition of self-help. He would have been well acquainted with Leviticus 19:9–10: "When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap all the way to the edges (*pe'ah*) of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and the stranger." Krauskopf was intensely aware of Judaism's history of social welfare and self-reliance. And so here is a central question: Why would Jews in Natchez, Mississippi, care about a farm school in rural Doylestown, Pennsylvania? Why would Jews in Chattanooga, Tennessee care? Why would any Jews in the Southern states bother to care or to give to this cause?

The answer is complex. Krauskopf felt it was the communal responsibility of taking care of the Jewish poor in America that could ameliorate the possibilities of increasing antisemitism. His actions in the South, and the creation of the National Farm School, were viewed as a shield against the expansion of antisemitism in America. Krauskopf's school was not the first and foremost cause of the German Jews to whom he directed his fundraising, but, as with many causes, the giving felt good, and there was that implicit promise that it would head off an increasing problem. Even without the threat of antisemitism, Jews in the South and throughout the country felt a responsibility to help Jews in need in America and overseas. This may be attributed to a mixture of Jewish values and religious and ethnic identity.

Krauskopf was a master networker and an avid letter-writer.[54] Always strategic, he knew that by keeping in touch he and his school would reap the benefits. That the rabbi continued to maintain personal relationships and connections in the South throughout his life shows how Southern Jews were a consistent part of the support system for the National Farm School. Moreover, the donors felt a connection with his words and mission. Krauskopf stayed in touch, and his gratitude was palpable. The South was an essential part of the religious, social, and economic network that helped build the National Farm School.

From a broader perspective, Krauskopf's fundraising travels mirrored those who travelled from Europe, the Holy Land, and within the United States during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to raise funds for *yeshivot* and Jews in need. His efforts for the farm school also presaged

[54] Krauskopf Papers, Temple University, Series 2.

fundraising for Brandeis University, a secular school founded in 1948, sponsored by the Jewish community with significant support from Jews in the South. Itinerant fundraisers and national and international fundraising efforts served as mechanisms for interconnectivity, communications, and an alternative form of Jewish group identity.

Unlikely Sites of Holocaust Memory in the American South: The Cases of Charleston and Whitwell

by

Ashley Valanzola and Chad S. A. Gibbs *

When people think of historical memory in the American South, the Holocaust is probably not the first thing that comes to mind. Nevertheless, the South is home to a range of sites dedicated to Holocaust remembrance, including plaques, memorials, and museums. Places of Holocaust memory in the region, as anywhere, are distinct products of their environment and their creators. Intentionally or not, these sites exist in conversation with an area's local history and residents, reflecting their priorities, politics, and aspirations. Two case studies of memorial efforts in Charleston, South Carolina, and Whitwell, Tennessee, embody the complexity and continuing evolution of Holocaust memory.

In 1972, Maurice Fox and Henry Popowski, two leaders of the Jewish community in Charleston, posed for a photographer in front of a newly installed plaque honoring Jews murdered during the Holocaust. The tablet these men stood before that day owed its existence to efforts undertaken by Charlot Karesh, Gertrude Solomon, and other women of the dedication committee formed for that purpose. Although the group's women drove the process, local press and most of the community gave credit to the Charleston Kalushiner Society, a *landsmanshaft* comprised of Jews from Kałuszyn, Poland.[1] That society voted itself out of existence at about the same time the memorial went up on an interior courtyard wall

* The authors may be contacted at avalanzola@clarku.edu and gibbsc@cofc.edu.

[1] P. Maurice Fox, "Speech Delivered at the Kalushiner Society Plaque Dedication to the Six Million," *Center Talk*, January 1972, 8, *Center Talk* Issues Collection – Jewish Heritage Collection, Addlestone Library Special Collections, College of Charleston.

Maurice Fox, president of the Jewish Community Center, and Henry Popowski, last president of the Kalushiner Society of Charleston, view the plaque donated by the Kalushiner Society, January 9, 1972. (Courtesy of the Jewish Heritage Collection, College of Charleston.)

of what was then the Charleston Jewish Community Center.[2] The placement of this plaque, the persons involved, and the likely audience of that installation in comparison to its large, central, and publicly supported successor, the Charleston Holocaust Memorial, can tell us much about changes to Charleston Jewish life. The latter, dedicated on June 6, 1999, is located in a park at the core of Charleston's identity as a historic Southern city and leisure travel destination. In 2024, efforts to refurbish the memorial and add new wording again displayed the positions, desires, and anxieties of the local Jewish community.

Rural Appalachian Tennessee, meanwhile, might seem like an even less likely location for a Holocaust memorial. Nevertheless, a site known as the Children's Holocaust Memorial now sits on the grounds of the local middle school in Whitwell. This memorial evolved from an educational initiative and collecting project over several decades that brought national and international attention to this small Southern town. A closer look at the evolution of this initiative reveals how Holocaust memorialization has the potential to socially, physically, and psychologically transform a rural town from an isolated community into an internationally connected locale. It is the perfect case study to understand how memorials become part of the collective memory of a community, even if the community is completely divorced from the event being memorialized.[3]

Charleston and Whitwell were chosen for this study because they embody two entirely different forms of Holocaust memorialization in the South. One project stemmed from a local, vibrant Jewish community appalled by the atrocities of the genocide; the other began as an educational initiative in a town with no Jewish residents. In terms of aesthetics, the memorial in Charleston carefully avoided visual representations of mass murder, while the Whitwell Children's Memorial sought to house their memorial in a German boxcar because, for the organizers of this project, it

---

[2] Ashley Walters, "What Kalushin Tells: The Life, Death, and Afterlife of a Polish Shtetl," unpublished presentation, College of Charleston, September 8, 2024; Ashley Walters, "Fraternity, Ethnicity, and Welfare in the Holy City: The Kalushiner Society of Charleston, South Carolina," *Southern Jewish History* 29A (Winter 2026): 29–65. The authors thank Ashley Walters for sharing her research on the Charleston Kalushiner Society and her assistance with this article.

[3] Natasha Goldman, *Memory Passages: Holocaust Memorials in the United States and Germany* (Philadelphia, 2020), 3.

was the ultimate symbol of the Holocaust. Despite these differences, both projects bring to light important themes for understanding Holocaust memory in the American South, foremost among them the presence of religious and racial tensions. In both locations, expanding Holocaust education and creating a memorial space positively impacted the local community. Yet, as with other physical memorials, the meaning and purpose of these sites gradually evolved.[4] The Whitwell project shifted away from a drive to educate and memorialize into an effort to promote a certain image of the town. Simultaneously, the Charleston Holocaust Memorial has become something of a barometer for the worries of a small Jewish community in our troubled present. In all their complexities, both memorials reflect local anxieties and a peculiarly Southern spin on Holocaust memorialization, revealing much about each community and the region writ large.

Whatever purposes these sites serve for their local communities, both memorials offer survivors and their descendants a place to mourn. For Jews in the aftermath of the Holocaust, memorials often served as symbolic graves for murdered friends and family members. Due to the nature of the genocide, few Jews received a proper burial, and family members were robbed of the opportunity to complete the rituals associated with death.[5] Building a memorial as a symbolic grave to cope with absence and loss partly motivated the committee in Charleston, but in Whitwell, the project was not initiated by Jews and had no locally connected Jewish victims to commemorate. Instead, the Whitwell project emerged from the classroom efforts of middle school teachers and students. The founders of the Whitwell memorial did not have specific people in mind when they built the site but instead concentrated on all individuals—Jews and other victim groups—murdered during the Second World War. This type of memorialization is therefore more ambiguous and less rooted in the people and events of the Holocaust than is usually the case.

---

[4] James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven, 1993), x.

[5] Ashley Valanzola, *When She Remembered: Seven Women who Transformed French Holocaust Memory* (Bloomington, IN, 2026), 130–31.

Boxcar at Children's Holocaust Memorial, Whitwell, TN.
(Photograph by Ashley Valanzola, 2024).

Another fascinating dynamic of Holocaust memorialization raised by these two sites concerns the questions of distance and aesthetics. These memorials relate to events that took place on another continent. In some ways, the distance from Europe allows for more local influence than memorials at sites such as Auschwitz-Birkenau or the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin. These American memorials relate to their surroundings, including the Citadel and the Whitwell Middle School, in a way that would perhaps seem bizarre or even inappropriate for sites in Europe. Their aesthetics also raise interesting questions—do they need to be literal in their presentation of the Holocaust because they lack local context or memory related to the events they memorialize? In the case of Whitwell, a boxcar—perhaps one of the most well-known symbols of the genocide—is central to the outdoor memorial space. In contrast, planners of the Charleston memorial intentionally refrained from jarring or heavy designs. The abstract nature of this monument led to some confusion over time, prompting the creation of new signage and messaging. These cases prove that some form of narrative interpretation needs to accompany sites of Holocaust memory.

Historiography and Factors Beyond South Carolina and Tennessee

Sites like Charleston and Whitwell must be situated within the longer trajectory of American Holocaust memory. The efforts of American Jews to preserve Holocaust memory began in the immediate aftermath of the war. Despite the prevailing myth of Jewish silence as it related to the atrocities in Europe, historian Hasia Diner reveals the myriad ways in which "the mass murder of so many Europeans infused every sector of American Jewry." Diner demonstrates how, from 1945 to 1962, American Jews participated in a wide range of memory work including cemetery markers, plaques, scholarly works, music, poems, and drama. They did so as they raised money for Holocaust survivors and pushed to hold perpetrators accountable. Diner aligns with other historians who pinpoint certain international events that further triggered American Jews' involvement with Holocaust memorialization during the 1950s, such as the founding of the Claims Conference in 1951, the show trials and executions of Jewish political and intellectual figures in Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union during the early 1950s, and the publication of Anne Frank's diary in English in 1952, followed by the movie in 1959.[6]

Diner and other scholars recognize the importance of events in Israel for shaping American Jews' involvement with Holocaust memory. Starting with the Israeli Declaration of Independence in 1948, then becoming more pronounced with the trial of Adolf Eichmann and the wars of 1967 and 1973, American Jews' involvement with Holocaust memory often increased as these major events unfolded in Israel.[7] Journalist Judith Miller argues that challenges to Israel's occupation policies in the 1980s made Jews "uncomfortable . . . with efforts to commemorate the Holocaust," suggesting that an unfavorable public perception of Israel directly impacted the ability of American Jews to gather support for Holocaust memorialization.[8] Scholar Rochelle Saidel challenges this correlation by asserting that instead of making Jews uncomfortable with Holocaust commemorations, disappointment with Israel's policies, alongside fear of

---

[6] Hasia R. Diner, *We Remember with Reverence and Love: American Jews and the Myth of Silence after the Holocaust, 1945–1962* (New York, 2009), 3, 12, 16; Rochelle G. Saidel, *Never Too Late to Remember: The Politics Behind New York City's Holocaust Museum* (New York, 1996), 28.

[7] Diner, *We Remember,* 16; Judith Miller, *One, by One, by One: Facing the Holocaust* (New York, 1990), 221–22; Saidel, *Never Too Late,* 28.

[8] Miller, *One, by One, by One,* 229–30.

antisemitism, resulted in the Holocaust becoming a major symbol of Jewish identity in the United States. It substituted for support for and alignment with the state of Israel.[9] As seen with the recent changes to the Charleston Memorial following the attacks of October 7, 2023, what happens in Israel still greatly affects the way American Jews perceive themselves and shapes how they approach and reconsider sites of Holocaust memory.

By the time the projects in Whitwell and Charleston were underway in the 1990s, Holocaust memorialization in the United States had continued to grow. In 1978, the miniseries *Holocaust* helped bring new focus and larger audiences to this history in ways that had not been seen since the television spectacle of the Eichmann trial during the early 1960s.[10] That same year, Holocaust memorialization achieved federal recognition with Jimmy Carter's creation of the President's Commission on the Holocaust. The commission took the form of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, which opened its doors in 1993—the same year that the epic Steven Spielberg film *Schindler's List* thoroughly captivated American audiences.[11] As institutions, memorials, and museums on the Holocaust proliferated throughout the United States, Whitwell and Charleston could pull from and reference these larger projects as they undertook their memorialization plans.

With all the scholarship on Holocaust memorialization in the United States, Southern memorials like those in Charleston and Whitwell have received relatively little attention as compared to sites in major American metropolitan centers or those in Europe and Israel.[12] What scholarship does exist on Holocaust memory and museums in the South tends to

---

[9] Saidel, *Never Too Late,* 40–41.

[10] Barry Trachtenberg, *The United States and the Nazi Holocaust: Race, Refuge, and Remembrance* (New York, 2018), 168–70, 173–75.

[11] Trachtenberg, *The United States and the Nazi Holocaust*, 175–76, 159; Goldman, *Memory Passages,* 56; Saidel, *Never Too Late,* 28–29.

[12] On the Charleston Holocaust Memorial and the work of the International Survey of Jewish Monuments to track all Jewish memorials, see Samuel Gruber, "USA: Charleston's Holocaust Memorial in Shadow of Calhoun Monument," Samuel Gruber's Jewish Art and Monuments (blog), February 26, 2017, accessed February 20, 2025, https://samgrubers-jewishartmonuments.blogspot.com/2017/02/usa-charlestons-holocaust-memorial-in.html; "Welcome," International Survey of Jewish Monuments, accessed March 1, 2025, https://isjm.org.

examine these institutions from a museum studies perspective, or uses specific sites to explore larger themes such as religion and memory practices.[13] A few standalone projects attempt to understand what life was like for Holocaust survivors in the South. However, memorialization features little in these discussions.[14]

Existing literature on these sites has traditionally been the work of locals or other individuals involved with the memorialization projects in question. Site-specific documentaries and related memoirs provide fascinating insight into the decision-making processes behind these memorials, and we cite several examples in this article.[15] Beyond such first-hand accounts, our goal is to expand the context in which these projects are considered by placing them into the larger categories of memorialization, localized Southern history, and Holocaust memory.

The Children's Holocaust Memorial of Whitwell, Tennessee

Whitwell is a small, picturesque town of approximately 1,600 people situated in the Sequatchie Valley, about thirty minutes outside Chattanooga.[16] Originally founded as a coal mining town in 1877, Whitwell made national news for a tragic 1981 mine accident that resulted in the deaths of

---

[13] For example, see Chaim Noy, "'Really made you feel for the Jews who went through this terrible time in History': Holocaust Audience Re-Mediation and Re-Narrativization at the Florida Holocaust Museum," in *Visitor Experience at Holocaust Memorials and Museums*, ed. Diana I. Popescu (New York, 2023), chapter 3; Ashley Valanzola and Jonathan Zisook, "Afterlife of the Sacred: Torah Scrolls on Display in Regional Holocaust Museums," *Jewish Social Studies* 30 (Fall 2025): 176–219; Daniel H. Magilow, "Counting to Six Million: Collecting Projects and Holocaust Memorialization," *Jewish Social Studies: History, Culture, Society* 14 (Fall 2007): 23–39.

[14] For example, see Hannah Herzog, "Rewriting History: Holocaust Survivors in the Jim Crow South and Civil Rights Era, 1945-Present," (master's thesis, University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill, 2018).

[15] For example, see Linda Hooper and Sharon Shadrick, *The Power of a Paper Clip: A Holocaust Study in Rural Appalachia Opens Up the World to Its Students* (Chapel Hill, 2024); Peter W. Schroeder and Dagmar Schroeder-Hildebrand, *Six Million Paper Clips: The Making of a Children's Holocaust Memorial* (Minneapolis, MN, 2004); *Paper Clips*, dir. Elliot Berlin and Joe Fab (Ottawa, ON, Ergo Entertainment, 2004).

[16] Sources list between 1,600 and 1,800 local residents. WDEF News, "Our Town: Whitwell," July 31, 2023, accessed June 16, 2025, https://www.wdef.com/our-town-whitwell.

thirteen people.[17] The last Whitwell underground mine closed in 1997, a major economic hit for the community.[18] Residents of Whitwell are predominantly white and Protestant, and several surrounding towns have been classified as sundown towns—having previously introduced ordinances to keep the towns "all white."[19] Whitwell has no known Jewish residents.

At the outset, the monolithic makeup of the local population factored into the decisions to create a Holocaust memorial. In 1998, educators at the local middle school formed a voluntary group dedicated to studying the Holocaust. The afterschool program began because a parent urged school officials to "address more actively issues of multi-culturalism and prejudice in the curriculum." They chose to study the Holocaust because they wanted "students to learn the importance of respecting different cultures while understanding the effects of intolerance." Approximately sixteen eighth-grade students comprised the first cohort.[20]

A few years later, the 2000–2001 class of the afterschool Holocaust study group came to the school principal, Linda Hooper, to ask if they could collect an object to help them conceptualize six million deaths.[21] After some brainstorming, the students decided to collect paper clips to

---

[17] "Whitwell Tennessee," Sequatchie Valley National Scenic Byway, accessed June 16, 2025, https://sequatchievalleyscenicbyway.com/whitwell.

[18] "Last Whitwell coal mine closes," *Coal Age* 102 (December 1997): 18; Jerry Summers and Frank "Mickey" Robbins, "Mine 21 Disaster—gone but not forgotten," *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, December 2018, accessed June 26, 2025, https://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2018/dec/09/summers-robbins-mine-21-disaster-gone-not-f; "Coal Miners Museum in Whitwell TN Steeped in History," Travel Southeast Tennessee, August 2020, accessed September 21, 2025, https://www.southeasttennessee.com/coal-miners-museum-in-whitwell-tn-steeped-in-history.

[19] James W. Loewen and Matt Cheney, "Tennessee," History and Social Justice, accessed September 13, 2025, https://justice.tougaloo.edu/location/tennessee. An article from 2001 notes how of the four hundred students at Whitwell Middle School, there are no Jewish students and only six students who are Black or Hispanic. John Gehring, "School's Paper Clip Project Attracts Worldwide Attention," *Education Week*, May 2, 2001, accesed May 23, 2026, https://www.edweek.org/leadership/schools-paper-clip-project-attracts-worldwide-attention/2001/05.

[20] Magilow, "Counting to Six Million," 24; "History," Whitwell Middle School, accessed June 16, 2025, https://www.whitwellmiddleschool.org/childrensholocaustmemorial; Hooper and Shadrick, *Power of a Paper Clip*, 6.

[21] Hooper and Shadrick, *Power of a Paper Clip*, 10.

better understand the scale of murder during the Holocaust. Teachers selected the paper clip at the time because they inaccurately believed non-Jewish Norwegians wore them on their lapels during the German occupation to protest the deportation of Jews. With parental and teacher support, students launched a letter-writing campaign to spread the news of their collecting project. They met with moderate success until the attention of three journalists helped launch their project well beyond their classroom.

Dagmar and Peter Schroeder, German White House correspondents, penned several articles about the Paper Clip Project for the German media. In their articles, they asked readers to mail paper clips to Whitwell to support the children's efforts. In response to their reporting, the Schroeders received a range of positive correspondence that they transformed into a book. This book landed in the hands of *Washington Post* editor Dita Smith, a woman who became instrumental to the growth of the project. After visiting Whitwell, Smith published an article about the Paper Clip Project in

Linda Hooper in 2022, with a sculpture of a tree holding eighty-six paperclips. Behind her are shelves of correspondence about the project. (Courtesy of the Rural Schools Collaborative.)

the *Washington Post* on April 7, 2001, that opened the flood gates for millions of paper clips to pour into the school.[22]

The combined publicity brought about by the Schroeders and Smith resulted in two distinct developments. The resounding success of the collection project fostered a desire to create a physical site in which to store the paper clips and honor the memory of the murdered Jews they represented. Simultaneously, the attention brought upon Whitwell led some locals to fear being negatively stereotyped as rural Southerners. When it came to the larger memorialization initiative, a local defensive discourse embodied this fear.

The genesis of the physical site grew from the need to store and display the overwhelming number of paper clips the students and teachers amassed in the early years of the collecting initiative. In a recent coauthored memoir about the project's history, Linda Hooper and Sharon Shadrick mention how the idea to store the paper clips in a boxcar came about during a dinner conversation between the Schroeders and Hooper. At this dinner, Hooper proposed that perhaps if an "authentic German transport car" housed the paper clips that had been collected, that this arrangement could "transform it [the boxcar] from a symbol of hate and intolerance to a symbol of hope." The Schroeders agreed to help, and, through extensive efforts, they procured a train car from Germany. In September 2001, the car arrived to great fanfare. In front of Whitwell Middle School, the car was set upon tracks dating from the war years. Locals dedicated their time to configuring the boxcar to store the paper clips, creating a park around it, as well as designing a butterfly sculpture and painting butterfly steppingstones. They chose the butterfly motif to memorialize Jewish children who died at Terezin and dedicated the site as the Children's Holocaust Memorial. As such, it fulfilled its purpose of serving as a repository for the collection project, while also becoming a memorial for those hoping to honor the victims of Nazi genocide. Regardless of the absence of Jews in Whitwell, the Children's Holocaust Memorial has since drawn Jews from outside the community to reflect and mourn.[23]

---

[22] Schroeder and Schroeder-Hildebrand, *Six Million Paper Clips*, 20–22; Dita Smith, "A Measure of Hope: The Whitwell, Tenn., Holocaust Project Has Spread Far Beyond the Classroom," *Washington Post*, April 6, 2001.

[23] Hooper and Shadrick, *Power of a Paper Clip*, 20, 22–23, 30, 43.

The Children's Holocaust Memorial, Whitwell, TN, 2024.
(Photographs by Ashley Valanzola).

Items from the Children's Holocaust Museum collection, including a concentration camp uniform showing identification numbers. (Courtesy of the Rural Schools Collaborative.)

In 2008, the town constructed a new middle school and moved the Children's Holocaust Memorial to a spot outside that new building. Today, the boxcar, plaques, and memorial butterfly garden sit only a few feet outside the main entrance of the school. A classroom space designated the Holocaust Artifacts Library is located inside the school, to the right of the main entrance. Besides paper clips, this room contains a remarkable range of objects donated to the school, including a Torah scroll and concentration camp uniform. Project leaders have also collected and organized all correspondence related to the initiative.

Going forward, the town plans for these objects and the larger outdoor site to become part of the Whitwell Education and Heritage Center. The steady number of visitors alongside object preservation concerns drove local leadership to seek a different home for the memorial.[24] The proposed center would house the Holocaust-related materials and exhibitions, a mining museum, public library, senior center, and veteran's services. This new site will remain located on middle school grounds. To date, locals have raised just over one hunded thousand dollars of the estimated two million dollars needed.[25] Over time, the evolution of the project into a memorial site imbued the entire town with a sense of purpose and pride, making the Children's Holocaust Memorial something that reflected how individuals from Whitwell viewed themselves and their town, as much as it was about the Holocaust. This transformation can be seen in the film on the Paper Clip Project.

The 2004 Miramax documentary *Paper Clips* lays out the full history of Whitwell's engagement with Holocaust memory from the first group of students to participate in the after-school program to the memorial site dedication in the aftermath of September 11, 2001. The film features the key actors involved with the project including the Schroeders, Linda Hooper, Dita Smith, the Whitwell children, middle school educators, and Holocaust survivors who visited the town. The documentary has been criticized by scholars such as Helene Meyers, who points out the underlying "Christian nationalist narratives of tolerance that supersede unequal but nevertheless interwoven legacies of U.S. racism and antisemitism." Her critique is tied to the fear that a memorialization project on the

[24] Ibid., 109–12.

[25] "Whitwell Education & Heritage Center," accessed June 16, 2025, https://www.whitwellcenter.org.

Holocaust in Whitwell would create memorial competition between Jews and African Americans by placing greater emphasis on the Holocaust over a consideration of local Black history. She notes that the Klan's hometown is one hundred miles away, and, in the same vein, highlights the bombings that targeted Nashville's Jewish community because of its support for the civil rights movement. She believes that tensions caused by "competitive memory syndrome likely encourage Jews to embrace white southerners who embrace the Holocaust and token Jews as their own."[26] We were unable to confirm if any sort of tension or memorial competition occurred as a result of Holocaust memorialization in Whitwell. The low number of local Black residents alongside a general reluctance to speak out about a rural Holocaust memorialization project could account for this general silence. Or perhaps people no longer conceive of memory as a "zero sum struggle," at least not in this context.[27]

Meyers's article raises valid questions about the underlying motives of the project, but she fails to address the defensive posture that underscores many of the key figures' positioning in the film. One of the initial educators involved with the project, David Smith, delivers powerful commentary about the fears Whitwell residents had concerning a documentary focused on their town: "I believe people from the north and west, I believe when they look at children in the South they think—dumb little redneck children. And they're stereotyped. And that's what we're trying to teach in this project: you can't stereotype anyone because you yourself are stereotyped. . . . [T]hat's what we're trying to do. Break those stereotypes."[28]

The same fears about being stereotyped by outsiders are present everywhere in Hooper and Shadrick's memoir as it relates to their initial encounters with journalists in the early stages of the project and especially during filming of the documentary. When Whitwell residents learned the Schroeders were coming to town, Hooper and Shadrick emphasize how "it was exciting to think of the upcoming visit, but it was also nerve-wracking. . . . [T]he students and adults were aware of the stereotypes that

---

[26] Helene Meyers, "The Unmarked Chains of Paperclips," *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 32 (Spring 2024): 31, 39, 42, 43.

[27] Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford, CA, 2009), 3.

[28] *Paper Clips*, 25:00–25:35.

Promotional poster for the 2004 film Paper Clips. *(IMDB.com.)*

exist about the American South, Southerners, Appalachians. Would the Schroeders look at them through the prism of those stereotypes?"[29] As with other journalists they met, their fears regarding the Schroeders turned out to be unjustified; the Schroeders were immediately taken with the children and the project's mission.

When it came time to consider a documentary about the project, Hooper and Shadrick even more explicitly articulated concerns about stereotyping and being presented in a negative light. Their memoir discusses how Hooper was reluctant to engage with filmmakers because she remembered how the media negatively portrayed Whitwell following the 1981 mining accident that shook the community. Hooper and Shadrick present a synopsis of what Hooper said to the filmmakers: "Just to be sure the group understood how fiercely protective Mrs. Hooper was of the students, staff, and community, she said, 'I want this documentary to be about the children. I want lots of footage of children even if they are not a part of the project. I want them to see themselves on the screen and have a sense of pride. And last, but not least, if you make these children or this

[29] Hooper and Shadrick, *Power of a Paper Clip,* 13.

community look like redneck trailer trash, I will rip your heart out and eat it for breakfast.'"[30]

Hooper and others associated with the project sought to break down stereotypes they assumed outsiders had about their children, and, in the process, "give the students and the community a chance to shine and receive credit for all their hard work."[31] These statements reveal exactly how multilayered the motives behind the project were for the creators: education, memorialization, and recognition factored into their thinking. In fulfilling these goals through a Holocaust memorialization project, the initial project leaders hoped to dispel certain negative ideas others outside Whitwell may (or may not) have held about the people in their town.

Besides a concerted effort to project a positive image of Whitwell, those involved with the project soon recognized the benefits of having a Holocaust memorial. Matthew Hiltzik, the upper-level Miramax representative who helped launch the documentary, realized this fact early when he noted how "distributing this film would put Whitwell on the map as a real destination for visitors around the world."[32] Hiltzik's observation proved prescient. Whitwell has made the map for those passing through the area—so much so that it has been coopted as a site of "heritage tourism" by the town and surrounding area.

The Children's Holocaust Memorial is promoted on tourist web pages for Whitwell, Chattanooga, and the Sequatchie Valley National Scenic Byway. This type of heritage is claimed by Whitwell and the surrounding region as the result of a memorialization project, instead of a direct connection to the event or the people memorialized, as with the Charleston Holocaust Memorial. Almost thirty years after the launch of the Holocaust after-school program, the Children's Holocaust Memorial has become part of Whitwell's identity. The participants' efforts and the ways in which they assigned this site a central role in their town's self-presentation show how engaging with Holocaust memory—despite being completely divorced from the event—can transform a place and a group of people. Whether or not the Children's Holocaust Memorial has broken down any stereotypes of the town, it has changed the town's impression of itself—imbuing it with the pride of creation. In this sense, Holocaust

[30] Ibid., 15–16, 17.

[31] Ibid., 16–17.

[32] Ibid., 38.

memorialization has become a "place-making" event, despite the passage of time and the geographical distance between where the horrors unfolded and where they are being memorialized.[33]

The Charleston Holocaust Memorial and Its Evolution

In Charleston, the placement, timing, and uses of the initial community plaque and the later large-scale monument to the Holocaust are as revealing as the evolution of the Whitwell Paper Clip Project. Starting during the 1960s, Charleston Jews—united by an association of landsmen from the old country—sought to memorialize the lost on the wall of the community's space. Not fully thirty years later, however, the next generation of Jewish community leaders replaced associations tied to their migrant origins and the use of a specifically Jewish location with a civic committee tasked with memorializing the Holocaust in the heart of Charleston for all to see.[34] The locations and goals of the early memorial plaque and the later Charleston Holocaust Memorial tell an additional tale of evolving Jewish place-making and community roles in the American South. This is a story at once recognizable anywhere, yet also greatly influenced by its Southern setting and the wider society and geography in which it sits.

The city of Charleston spreads over three peninsulas and several islands on the Atlantic coast. Its main historic area rests on a strip of land between the Ashley and Cooper Rivers bordered to the south by the harbor and the iconic remains of Fort Sumter. Everyone thinks of this core area when they hear the name Charleston, though the West Ashley area on the opposite side of the Ashley River is home to a greater portion of the city's population and houses more of its possibilities for growth. Hemmed in to the north by the City of North Charleston and the east by the posh confines of Mount Pleasant, Charleston's future lies in the geography of West Ashley. Local Jewish leaders and the wider population have long understood these facts.

When Maurice Fox and Henry Popowski attended the mounting of the new plaque made possible by Karesh, Solomon, and the other women of the committee, they stood in what was then the relatively new Jewish

---

[33] Tim Cole, *Holocaust Landscapes* (London, 2016), 2.

[34] David Popowski, "To Honor the Survivors and Remember the Dead: Building a Memorial in Marion Square," *Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina Magazine* (Spring 2018): 10–11.

Community Center (JCC) building in West Ashley. Their presence in that location for this event was one of several actions around that time quietly heralding a change of eras for Charleston Jews. The Kalushiner Society of Charleston was at its end. As was the case for other *landsmanshaft* organizations comprised of migrants and descendants of Jews from the same towns or cities, the group had outlived its function with members aging, passing away, or turning the focus of their community building efforts to organizations without defining connections to the old country. Fox and Popowski became the public faces of this event for the photographer at the JCC in the fast-expanding western corridor of the city. Their geography made sense, as did the audience for this tribute.

The West Ashley JCC building opened in 1966 on what was then called Millbrook Drive, but soon renamed Raoul Wallenberg Boulevard as a memorial to the Swedish diplomat who saved thousands of Jews during the Holocaust. This new structure stands in for an older building in downtown Charleston that is now demolished, replaced with buildings owned by the College of Charleston.[35] At this time, Jews and non-Jews tended to look to the west. The Charleston core did not become the tourist mecca it is today until the tenure of Mayor Joe Reilly from 1975 to 2015. With his work to preserve the historic character of the downtown area while infusing a new economic driver in the form of leisure and tourism dollars, Reilly and those of his era returned a focus to the lower peninsula to levels it had not seen in decades, if not since before the Civil War.[36]

An economic boom and a resurgent old city core in Charleston developed around the same time Americans turned toward study and commemoration of the Holocaust in far greater numbers. Amid this tide of increased Holocaust memorialization, some Jewish residents of Charleston began to call for the creation of a central memorial that would claim secular, non-Jewish space inside the city's new tourist area. In the early 1990s, Charlestonians Pincus Kolender and Joe Engel approached David Popowski with their desire to build a new memorial in the city. Auschwitz survivors Kolender and Engel had made new lives as owners

[35] "Jewish Community Center," Mapping Jewish Charleston, accessed October 24, 2024, https://mappingjewishcharleston.cofc.edu/jewish-community-center.

[36] Robert N. Rosen, *A Short History of Charleston* (rev. ed., Columbia, SC, 2021), 159–90.

of small businesses on King Street—a major thoroughfare of the downtown core and center of Jewish commerce.[37]

David Popowski is the son of Henry, another local Holocaust survivor and last president of the Kalushiner Society of Charleston, who was photographed putting up the original plaque. In the Popowski family story, we can see many of the forces that took this Jewish community from a small prewar core, to new institutions and wealth on the west side, and then back again to prominence on the revitalized old peninsula. David's parents, Henry and Paula, arrived in Charleston as refugees sponsored by the Zucker family. David attended law school and returned to open a practice in the downtown area. Kolender approached David about the memorial because of his legal training and personal connections to Holocaust history through his parents.[38]

In a short piece he wrote on the history of the current memorial and his involvement in its creation, David states that he was at first not convinced of the need for a Holocaust memorial given the small size of the Jewish community in the city, although he was soon spurred on by the outpouring of Jewish and non-Jewish support.[39] The timing of this drive, around the premier of *Schindler's List* and the opening of the national museum, likely drove community interest. Even with that national trend, the eager acceptance and support of this memorial idea by non-Jewish Charlestonians was a surprise. The drive's success, as other locally important ideas failed, also illustrates its deep and lasting significance in the Southern context.

Around the same time as planning to create the Holocaust memorial, a group of Black Charlestonians attempted to build a monument to Denmark Vesey in the same area. Vesey was a Black man who remarkably purchased his freedom and later tried to lead a revolt of enslaved people in 1822. His plot was discovered and violently suppressed. Local officials hanged Vesey along with thirty-four of the sixty-seven others convicted for the attempt. White Charlestonians further reacted to Vesey's resistance

---

[37] Popowski, "To Honor the Survivors," 11. A plaque on the wall of the Sylvia Vlosky Yaschik Jewish Studies Center describes Pincus Kolender's career as a peddler and later shop owner on King Street. For Joe Engel's biography, see *To Auschwitz and Back: The Joe Engel Story*, dir. Ron Small (Synagogue Emanu-El and Anchor Media Group, 2017).

[38] Popowski, "To Honor the Survivors," 11.

[39] Ibid., 11.

by destroying the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, where he and other members of this resistance movement had congregated.[40]

Efforts by African American community leaders to build a Vesey monument did not come to fruition until 2014. In years of arguments over the proposed memorial, opponents characterized Vesey as a "terrorist," compared him to Osama Bin Laden, or called him "an outlaw who was hanged for plotting to kill white people."[41] Such commentators apparently had no wish to remember what those white people were then doing to Vesey's friends and relatives. Ultimately, proponents of the Vesey statue were unsuccessful in bringing his memory to the central and tourist-laden Marion Square. Today the statue of Vesey stands in Hampton Park—across from the new Citadel—further up the peninsula and outside the well-visited city core.[42] In an interview with Ted Rosengarten, one Black

Denmark Vesey statue,
Hampton Park, Charleston.
(Britannica.com.)

[40] "Denmark Vesey," U.S. National Park Service, accessed October 25, 2024, https://www.nps.gov/people/denmark-vesey.htm.

[41] Jack Hunter, "Denmark Vesey Was a Terrorist," *Charleston City Paper*, February 10, 2010, accessed May 23, 2026, https://charlestoncitypaper.com/2010/02/10/denmark-vesey-was-a-terrorist; Elsa McDowell, "Monument's Future Needs Consideration," (Charleston SC) *Post and Courier*, January 23, 2001.

[42] "Denmark Vesey."

educator and lifelong Charlestonian recalled the tangled and often insulting process that brought this to be. Preferring to remain anonymous even today, the person said:

> There was no deep sense of competition with the Jewish people. It was a small group of people that worked for eighteen years to have the city recognize Denmark Vesey only to be told we have to wait our turn. That tells you who is considered not important. . . . The city never would give us the land—that hurt because we have been here a very long time, and we have done a lot for the city. But that's how the city of Charleston rolls. They sent us out to Hampton Park, so we went from the old Citadel to the new one in Hampton Park. The Citadel never could shake us. We were the reason for the Citadel in the first place.[43]

Rosengarten's interviewee points us to the reality that the Citadel was an outgrowth of Vesey's would-be rebellion. Having narrowly avoided their ultimate fear of an uprising by enslaved people, white South Carolinians founded their military academy, today's Citadel, to prepare and arm themselves for such an event in the future.[44]

The Marion Square location sought by supporters of the Vesey memorial neighbors the original Citadel building and the historic Citadel Baptist Church that was hit by shellfire during the Civil War. This park was also home to a large statue honoring one-time vice president and ardent supporter of slavery John C. Calhoun—until its removal after the murder of George Floyd—and still contains an obelisk honoring the Confederate general, South Carolina politician, and enslaver Wade Hampton. Just off Marion Square stands Mother Emanuel AME Church, the successor to Denmark Vesey's destroyed congregation and, in 2015, the site of the racist mass shooting at a bible study session that brought the city to national attention and began America's wider reckoning with Confederate memorials.[45] Many of these sites combine to give Vesey and his memory strong connections to this downtown space.

---

[43] "Ted Rosengarten Interview with Anonymous Charleston Black Educator," September 3, 2025, transcript in possession of the authors. The authors thank Ted Rosengarten and Dale Rosengarten for their expertise, their help with research, and their provision of personal connections to Charleston histories.

[44] "Universities Studying Slavery," Office of Civility and Engagement, The Citadel, accessed September 21, 2025, https://www.citadel.edu/oce/universities-studying-slavery.

[45] Ibid.; Herb Frazier, Bernard Edward Powers Jr., and Marjory Wentworth, *We Are Charleston: Tragedy and Triumph at Mother Emanuel* (Nashville, 2016).

The ownership of Marion Square complicates the matter of Vesey's memorialization and the form of the eventual Charleston Holocaust Memorial. Although commonly thought to be a city park as reflected in the words of Rosengarten's interviewee, the land of Marion Square is actually held by an organization now called the Washington Light Infantry (WLI). The WLI—formerly the Washington Light Infantry and Sumter Guard and, before that, Hampton's Legion—is an undeniably Southern sort of social club with lineage to a militia unit that fought in the Civil War as a formation of the Confederate Army.[46] Although we do not know the private thoughts and deliberations of this group, when the Vesey monument was proposed, the local press reported that the group firmly opposed hosting a structure in his honor.[47] In contrast, David Popowski credits the WLI for being cooperative in hosting the Charleston Holocaust Memorial. The WLI continues to own the ground beneath the monument, which it leases to the Charleston Jewish Federation.

Popowski also does not comment on any design requirements from the WLI during the planning of the monument, although community members often speak of pressure to keep the symbolism light and not overtly invoke the Holocaust visually with statuary or other architectural effects that might be jarring to observers. Some talk of a Holocaust memorial that was not supposed to be too sad and definitely could not look like the Holocaust Memorial of Miami Beach with its design including dozens of statues depicting emaciated victims cast in grotesque states of agony.[48] That said, if the WLI truly did block the Vesey monument and kept the Holocaust memorial that it allowed from being too dark in its overall symbolism, it did not prevent the creation of a monument with wording that highlights the importance of racism and anti-gay bigotry.

Cast in bronze on the memorial's street-facing wall is a panel explaining the origins and progression of the Holocaust. The language

---

[46] "About Us," Washington Light Infantry, accessed October 24, 2025, https://www.washingtonlightinfantry.org/about-us.

[47] McDowell, "Monument's Future."

[48] See the particularly evocative architecture of the Holocaust Memorial of Miami Beach as an example of exactly what Charleston *did not* want. "The Holocaust Memorial," Holocaust Memorial Miami Beach, accessed October 25, 2024, http://holocaustmemorialmiamibeach.org.

The Charleston Holocaust Memorial.
(TOP: Kim Graham Photography, courtesy of Chad S. A. Gibbs;
BOTTOM: User EvanGuthrie, tripadvisor.com.)

employed on this installation is quite progressive and inclusive for the years before 1999. The memorial states:

> From 1933-1945, the National Socialist (Nazi) regime in Germany implemented a racial theory declaring the "German Aryan Race" superior. The Nazis used this perverse theory and their military industrial might to dominate Europe and to separate, imprison, and ultimately destroy millions of human beings. Those whom the Nazis deemed undesirable and sought to eliminate included political dissidents, homosexuals, the mentally and physically disabled, Roma (so-called Gypsies) and Jehovah's Witnesses. But their chief victims were 6 million Jews.
>
> What began as racial laws to strip Jews of their livelihood, their property, and their civil rights accelerated into a campaign to systematically slaughter millions of men, women, and children. By 1942, the machinery of mass murder was in full operation. Jews and other victims from all over Europe were sent to concentration and labor camps throughout Europe and the killing centers at Auschwitz-Birkenau, Sobibor, Majdanek, Treblinka, Belzec, and Chelmno located in Poland.
>
> The denial of human rights combined with advanced technology and a pitiless will to dominate others caused the death of innocent millions and the annihilation of most of the Jews of Europe.[49]

Remarkably in 1999, Charleston, South Carolina, had a Holocaust memorial that mentioned "homosexuals" nine years before such a thing existed in Berlin.[50] The capacious wording of this panel, placing Jews last in a list of major Nazi victim groups, is a sign of a time in which wider connections between minority groups and the intersectionality of Nazi persecution was easier to highlight. This wording also signaled the far less anxious times before 9/11 or the contentious, strife-torn, and warring early twenty-first century.

More recently, members of the Charleston Jewish Federation and several community partners requested that one of this article's authors, Chad Gibbs, join a committee working on refurbishment and additions to the Charleston Holocaust Memorial. The present drive to update the monument stems at least in part from discomfort and dissatisfaction with the vague and little-explained symbolism of the monument and the related tendency of tourists and some locals to completely misunderstand or just

---

[49] Charleston Holocaust Memorial, photos of text in authors' possession.

[50] "Berlin Remembers Persecuted Gays," BBC News, May 27, 2008, accessed October 28, 2024, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7422826.stm.

plain miss what they are seeing. The legacy of those somewhat hushed discussions of what the Charleston memorial should look like resulted in a structure most casual observers and pedestrians do not recognize as Holocaust-related. When Gibbs takes students to the memorial each year (a ten-minute walk from the College of Charleston campus), at least a few with deep Charleston roots say something like "I had no idea this was here" or "I've seen this, but I had no idea it was a Holocaust memorial." In an effort to fix this, new signage was added to the monument in 2024.

Along three main routes of approach, the Charleston Holocaust Memorial gained new structures that tell the visitor what they are about to see, explain its symbolism, and offer very brief lines on the Holocaust. As a committee member, Gibbs provided input on this wording and several style choices. He offered pushback to what he saw as a conspicuous narrowing of the meaning and commemoration of the memorial. The new wording reads as follows:

> Charleston Holocaust Memorial
>
> The Charleston Holocaust Memorial honors the memory of the six million Jews and millions of others murdered during the Holocaust.
>
> It is a sacred space, a sanctuary, a place for contemplation, and a place to meditate and reflect.
>
> The symbolic design elements invite each visitor's individual interpretations to create a personal, meaningful, and emotional experience.
>
> The inscription wall facing Calhoun Street details the history of the Holocaust and lists survivors who settled in South Carolina. This wall also includes the names of 24 major concentration, transit, and extermination camps positioned east to west to reflect their extent throughout Europe. An eternal flame across from the wall serves as a memorial candle for the victims.
>
> The long bench in front of the wall offers a place to pause for thoughtful reflection. So too does the rectangular, sunken lawn on the north side of the Memorial.
>
> The four-sided iron screen surrounding the Memorial defines a sacred space—a place apart.
>
> A bronze tallit, or Jewish prayer shawl, drapes the center. One tassel, called a tzitzit, has been cut off. When this is done a tallit can be used as a burial shroud.

New signage placed at all three main avenues of approach,
Charleston Holocaust Memorial, 2024.
(Photograph by Chad Gibbs.)

> Thank you for visiting this Memorial, and for taking the time to REMEMBER.
>
> Dedicated June 6, 1999
> Hon. Joseph P. Riley, Jr., Mayor
> City of Charleston[51]

As any product of a committee does, the wording on the monument represents a compromise between competing visions. The new text also represents a change from the original intent of those involved in 1999 and shows something of the zeitgeist of 2024, particularly in its opening lines. Just twenty-five years after Charleston listed homosexual victims on its monument, groups beyond Jews are now "millions of others" on this inscription. An earlier draft named only Jews as victims of Nazi persecution.

---

[51] New signage plans, documents, and architectural schematics in possession of Chad S.A. Gibbs.

This most recent evolution of the Charleston memorial is an indication of its times and a window on the local and national anxieties of recent years. As Gibbs participated in the process of adding to the Charleston memorial, he came to see the recent drive to make the monument do more, educate more vigorously, and further underscore the history of Jews as victims as a sign of fears about the rise of antisemitism in the red-state South and globally in 2024. Committee members working on the memorial expressed as much and spoke openly of how their concerns also stem from their views on the post–October 7 world. Their voices demonstrate the present mood of a community that has undeniably done well in Charleston since 1945, as evidenced by their ability to achieve prominent position in the public space in a manner rarely granted to other minorities in Charleston.

Conclusion

Both Whitwell and Charleston give home to unlikely and unexpected Holocaust memorials. These Southern locales are kindred in their possession of memorials that display local anxieties and desires almost as much—if not more—than they teach about the lessons of the Shoah. In Charleston, we see peculiarly Southern issues concerning race and history play out in the Jewish community's access to central city space. At the same time, Charleston Jews are representative of the nervousness Southern Jewish communities face as they move toward the core of civic life while remaining concerned with widespread antisemitism. In Whitwell, absent a Jewish community, a different sort of Southern anxiety over representation and respect emerges. In this case, the lack of diversity in the town and fears of being stereotyped as racist pushed a community to study and memorialize the Holocaust. Simultaneously, each site demonstrates freighted views of a memorial's purpose.

The central Charleston Holocaust Memorial and the Whitwell Children's Holocaust Memorial came about following an explosion of public discourse on the Holocaust. A national increase in Holocaust education and awareness certainly played a role in the local acceptance of both projects. Also shared among these two memorial initiatives are the specifically Southern concerns of their wider communities. In Charleston, the Holocaust memorial found acceptance and a ready home at the base

of a memorial to John C. Calhoun (prior to its removal), while a near contemporaneous drive to honor Denmark Vesey was pushed further from the city core. Nonetheless, the final Holocaust design completely avoided confrontational or evocative aesthetics. In Whitwell, another monument to a crime committed thousands of miles away against peoples who do not live in the area achieved prominence while the more local tragedies of race violence, lynching, and the Klan remain unacknowledged in the public architecture.

The similarities between these memorials raise larger questions about education, race, and Jewish history in the South. Historian Shari Rabin's recent work, *The Jewish South: An American History*, provides a comprehensive history that reveals the balancing act of Southern Jews as they were, at times, both privileged and othered. The book also raises the important question about the way Jewish history is understood at sites of Holocaust memory. Holocaust education, as well as memorials like those in Charleston and Whitwell, demonstrate that the histories of faraway Jewish suffering have often been privileged over the creation of public displays and monuments to the persecution and resistance of Black people in America. Meanwhile, Rabin points out that these initiatives of Holocaust education and memorialization could potentially "be used to condemn prejudice elsewhere without fully confronting its prevalence at home."[52] She is right in worrying about the use of Holocaust memory in the South if it enables the avoidance of more "uncomfortable" local histories, or as they have been recently termed in some Southern states, "divisive concepts."

However, other international examples demonstrate that different possibilities for Holocaust memory exist. For example, in Australia, the Holocaust has been used in comparative frameworks examining Australian colonial projects that legitimized the subjugation and dispossession of Indigenous people. Australian museums have been at the forefront of highlighting the connections between the genocidal violence in Europe and the colonial practices of racial segregation and extermination of Indigenous people in Australia.[53] In this sense, there is perhaps more to be

[52] Shari Rabin, *The Jewish South: An American History* (Princeton, 2025), 200.

[53] Jennifer Barrett, Avril Alba, and A. Dirk Moses, "Introduction: The Holocaust and Human Rights: Transnational Perspectives on Contemporary Memorial Museums," in *The Holocaust*

gained by memorializing the Holocaust alongside the legacies of colonialism and enslavement in the American South.

Besides avoiding uncomfortable local histories or privileging Jewish history, Holocaust memorialization and education initiatives—especially in places without a vibrant Jewish community—risk introducing non-Jews to Jewish history through the Holocaust and antisemitism. By teaching the Holocaust and no other components of Jewish history—not even local Southern Jewish history—educators risk that the Holocaust "will become all that non-Jewish Americans know about a thousand years of European Jewish civilization."[54]

With the Charleston and Whitwell memorials maturing, connections in their evolution over time become apparent. As the product of a self-confident and relatively secure Jewish community in 1990s Charleston, the original public memorial spoke to wider issues of race and sexuality, while the fraught and distraught days and months after the Hamas attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, have played a role in the push for this structure to do more, including a desire for it to educate the public against antisemitism. On similar ground, the Whitwell memorial—predominantly supported by non-Jews and mostly displaying their fears and desires—has moved toward a position as a visitation site and as an educational ambassador for a people who often feel maligned in national discourse. Only time will tell how these projects evolve in the future. What remains certain, however, are the ways in which both memorials speak to their Southern settings through uniquely localized takes on Holocaust education and memory.

---

and Human Rights: Transnational Perspectives on Contemporary Memorials, ed. Jennifer Barret, Avril Alba, and A. Dirk Moses (Philadelphia, 2025), 3–4.

[54] Saidel, *Never Too Late*, 42. Saidel quotes James Young articulating a similar sentiment. Dara Horn is another vocal critic of Holocaust education and memorialization initiatives like the one in Whitwell for introducing "students to Judaism by way of antisemitism." Dara Horn, "Is Holocaust Education Making Anti-Semitism Worse?" *The Atlantic*, April 3, 2023, 12.

PRIMARY SOURCES

Uncovering History Through Ticket Stubs and Performance Contracts: Temple Israel's Men's Forum of the 1930s

by

Timothy Riggio Quevillon *

One never knows what archival gems they will find in a synagogue library. Found documents can tell the history of a community, a people, and a region in a way that public libraries and university archives cannot. Although numerous synagogues have donated materials to local or national archives, an equal number keep their records and refuse consolidation into larger collections. The archive at Temple Israel in Paducah, Kentucky, is extensive. While some records found their way to the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati over the years, the vast majority of Paducah's community records remain in the temple library. In 2024, the Riverlands Jewish Archive, a digital archive operating out of Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, began combing through these extensive temple holdings for the first time, digitizing and cataloguing everything the archivists found. The result was a digitized archival collection of more than ten thousand documents from 1885 through 2015.[1]

One of the overlooked gems in this archive is an overstuffed manilla folder labeled "Men's Forum." Containing seventy-four items, the folder holds a wide variety of materials related to a speaker series that ran from 1926 to 1941, initially at the temple and then at Hotel Irvin Cobb. This relatively short-lived program brought speakers from around the world to

* The author may be contacted at timothy.quevillon@wku.edu.

[1] Although catalogued, the most recent ten years are largely withheld from online view. The Riverlands Jewish Archives online catalog can be found at http://www.riverlandsjewisharchive.org or https://riverlandsjewisharchive.catalogaccess.com. Temple Israel remains open and thriving, and can be reached at templeisraelky.org.

Paducah to present about world affairs on the eve of World War II. However, the archival footprint of the speaker series remains light. Only a handful of booking contracts and ticket stubs have survived to the twenty-first century.[2] The question then becomes: how does one discover the historical story of an event with so little remaining? The short answer is "more research." The long answer involves extensive searching for context clues. Knowing the background of the community, the history of the 1930s, and the expertise of the speakers provides a glimpse into what was likely discussed at an event, even if we lack the lecture's transcript. In other words, by understanding the context clues, we can ascertain the larger histories of an event, the organization fostering it, and the local community.

Jewish Life in Paducah

Paducah's Jewish history is representative of other communities within the region and across the country. Amy Hill Shevitz identifies twenty-four small Jewish communities along the Ohio River at one time. These stretched as far north as Ambridge and Aliquippa in Pennsylvania and as far west as Cairo in Illinois. Hill draws a sharp distinction between the small river enclaves and the larger cities along the river like Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, and Louisville, which housed more established and extensive Jewish communities. She argues that focusing on the smaller river towns is critical to understanding the American Jewish experience, as they played a pivotal role in Jewish settlement and migration patterns. To her, the life of Jews in small-town America was distinct from life in the large ethnic centers of bigger cities. Given the relative sparseness of Jewish population in these predominantly Protestant communities, small-town Jews adapted and accommodated to American life in ways that were often quite different from their big-city counterparts. For example, she notes that relations with non-Jews were often markedly different for smaller communities because Jews "felt a greater need to present Judaism in terms that non-Jews could understand."[3]

---

[2] "Men's Forum Receipts from Hotel Irvin Cobb," Temple Israel Men's Forum, box 1, folder 3, Temple Israel (KY) Papers and Records, Riverlands Jewish Archive, Bowling Green, KY (hereafter cited as Temple Israel Papers).

[3] Amy Hill Shevitz, *Jewish Communities on the Ohio River: A History* (Lexington, KY, 2007), 1–3.

In the broad scope, Jewish settlement in Paducah echoes larger regional trends. As the American South industrialized and rebuilt during the postbellum decades, new lines of transit increasingly connected inland communities of the hinterland to the large population centers of the coasts. Increased traffic in riverboats and railroads allowed Jews to migrate away from established centers to the smaller towns along the southern frontier. As a result, by 1881, Jews lived in an estimated 522 communities across the South.[4] This expansion of transit fueled Paducah's growth as Jews farther upriver traveled down the Ohio to settle in the lower Ohio River Valley.[5]

Paducah's Jewish community traces its history to the 1840s, when the first Jewish business owners arrived. However, despite the presence of over twenty Jewish families in 1859, an organized Jewish community failed to form until after the Civil War. In the wake of expulsion by General Grant and their return following the cessation of the war, Paducah's Jews felt compelled to create more tangible benevolent institutions for Jews in western Kentucky. In 1864, they chartered a burial society and in 1868 held High Holiday services for the first time. They met for services for the next three years before amending the charter of the Chevra Yeshurun Burial Society to include a formal congregation. In September 1871, Kehillah Kodesh Bene Yeshurun (Holy Community of the People of Righteousness) opened on Chestnut Street in downtown. Notwithstanding initial debate over religious practice, mixed gendered seating, and head coverings, Paducah's Jews largely adhered to Reform practices and joined the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in 1880.[6]

The first seventy years of organized Jewish life witnessed immense population growth. By 1878, an estimated two hundred Jews lived in Paducah, and by 1937, the figure rose to six hundred, constituting about 1.7 percent of the city's overall population. The relatively robust size of Paducah's Jewish community led to the creation of numerous auxiliary groups attached to the temple. From the temple's conception, a strong

---

[4] Shari Rabin, *The Jewish South: An American History* (Princeton, 2025), 127–29.

[5] A large number of Paducah's earliest Jewish migrants arrived from urban centers in southern Ohio and western Pennsylvania like Cincinnati and Pittsburgh. Isaac W. Bernheim, *History of the Settlement of Jews in Paducah and the Lower Ohio Valley* (Paducah, KY, 1912).

[6] Lee Shai Weissbach, "Stability and Mobility in the Small Jewish Community: Examples from Kentucky History," *American Jewish History* 79 (Spring 1990): 359.

Temple Israel, Paducah, c. 1930s. (Courtesy of the Riverlands Jewish Archive, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green.)

sisterhood gathered regularly, providing an outlet for local Jewish women and assistance for the synagogue. Similarly, founded during the 1870s, the Harmony Lodge of B'nai B'rith served as the primary organization for local Jewish men.[7]

As the Jewish population grew, so too did its synagogue. By 1893, with almost one hundred member families, Kehillah Kodesh Bene Yeshurun outgrew its initial edifice and moved into a new, large Moorish-style synagogue at Seventh and Broadway in downtown. Upon moving, the temple adopted a new charter and rechristened itself as Temple Israel. The grandeur of the new edifice matched the community's affluence and place in society. By the 1930s, Rabbi Alexander Feinsilver led weekly services; a robust religious school taught dozens of children each week; and High Holiday services saw the temple packed beyond capacity.[8]

These Jews also engaged heavily in civic activism. For example, Joseph Friedman, a whiskey distiller, built and operated the Palmer

[7] Ibid., 369–70.

[8] Lee Shai Weissbach, *The Synagogues of Kentucky: Architecture and History* (Lexington, KY, 2011), 53–92

Hotel and Kentucky Theatre and served as president of the Paducah Commercial Club for several years. Friedman, one of the city's leading philanthropists, built a settlement house to help impoverished residents of the city during the Panic of 1893. Friedman's partners in his whiskey firm, the Keiler family, followed his lead in philanthropy and civic activism. In 1923, John Keiler donated five thousand dollars to build a stadium for Tilghman High School, subsequently named Keiler Field. In 1930, the family donated a large tract of land to the city for a park, also bearing the family name. After the Ohio River flooded over in 1937, local business leader Herbert Wallerstein worked tirelessly to get a floodwall built to keep the city from flooding again. Finally, Govriel Rosenthal, a dry goods seller, helped create Paducah Junior College in 1932 and served seventeen years on the board of trustees, ensuring access to higher education for many across western Kentucky. Looking back at the Jewish community's civic activism, a 1966 article in the *Paducah Sun-Democrat* stated, "their service has been of the utmost character and valour . . . [and Jews] have always been an integral part of the civic and industrial scene here."[9]

Postcard of the Hotel Irvin Cobb in downtown Paducah.
(Courtesy of the Riverlands Jewish Archive, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green.)

[9] Ed Kimbrell, "Paducah Jewry: Small in Numbers, They Have Served with Distinction More Than 100 Years," *Paducah Sun-Democrat*, May 22, 1966.

The Temple Israel Men's Forum provides an excellent example of local Jewish civic activism. This speaker series brought some of the biggest names in Western thought to Kentucky. From 1937 through 1940, the Temple booked four to five speakers to lecture at Hotel Irvin Cobb in downtown Paducah. These events were open to the public, and Temple Israel took charge of selling tickets. Since the Jewish community was somewhat small, the majority of attendees were not Jewish, even if many of the forum's topics explicitly related to prewar Jewish issues.

What Specifically Survived?

Through the years, many of the documents related to the Men's Forum have disappeared. While a collection of seventy-four documents may seem robust, the logistical nature of most documents does not, on their surface, suggest great historical insight. Documentation of specific topics, scripts, or presentations no longer remains. Instead, the archival record on the Men's Forum includes a handful of ticket stubs, sales ledgers, booking letters between Bernard Michelson of Temple Israel and the speakers' agents, performance contracts, and logistical receipts and contracts.[10]

However, from the archival footprint, some key details about the forum emerge. It ran from at least 1931 through 1941, only to end when the United States entered World War II. Thanks to a lone ticket stub from 1931, we know that the Forum ran from the early 1930s, but no other information remains regarding talks before 1937. Hotel receipts tell us that the temple rented the ballroom of Hotel Irvin Cobb, which was owned by Men's Club member Adolph Weil. Given the large number of receipts from local newspapers and printing companies, we also know that the forum was a highly publicized event that attracted attendees from across western Kentucky and southern Illinois. From speaker schedules, we also know that the forum hosted about three or four speakers per year on a largely bimonthly basis between September and May. These artifacts all point to an event that garnered a lot of interest, attendance, and participation in a relatively sparsely populated region of the country.[11]

With an archival footprint this small, the question becomes how do we gain historical insight from seemingly innocuous items like a hotel

[10] Temple Israel Men's Forum, box 1, Temple Israel Papers.

[11] "Men's Forum Receipts from Hotel Irvin Cobb," Temple Israel Men's Forum, box 1, folder 3, Temple Israel Papers.

Hotel Irvin Cobb receipt, May 27, 1938.
(Courtesy of the Riverlands Jewish Archive, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green.)

receipt or mailing list? The answer is to treat them as puzzle pieces whose surrounding pieces provide the context and background. We know at least a partial list of the speakers. This information allows us to make educated hypotheses about subjects based on the speakers' background and expertise. We also know when the talks took place. This allows us to examine the broader historical and geopolitical contexts around these talks. We know that the late 1930s were gripped with economic and diplomatic insecurity that would have permeated the consciousness of the general

public. Finally, we know about the events' audiences. Speakers were often hired on the basis of audience interest and engagement. Thus, understanding the worldview of those in attendance offers valuable insight into how a speaker may have catered their talk to meet these interests. Knowing these three elements of the broader context uncovers an incredible amount about the history of Temple Israel's Men's Forum.

Featured Speakers and Topics

Over a little more than three years, the Men's Forum invited roughly a dozen speakers to Paducah. Each speaker brought specific expertise and topics, but largely they fell into one of two camps. The first and more prevalent camp illustrated expertise in foreign affairs and the global crises of the 1930s. Speakers such as Lord Marley, J. B. Matthews, H. V. Kaltenborn, Nicholas Roosevelt, and Pierre van Paassen provided presentations on the existential crises facing European politics leading to World War II. While each possessed particular knowledge, tremendous overlap occurred around fascism and the danger it posed to a democratic West. The second and smaller group of speakers were experts on psychology, religion, and spirituality. These included Henry C. McComas, a psychologist and expert on fraud among mediums, and Henry C. Link, a psychologist who urged a return to religion as a means of solving psychological distress.[12] Although much can be gained from dissecting the themes from McComas and Link, this article focuses solely on the discussion of foreign policy.

Lord Marley – December 2, 1937

The first speaker to come to Paducah for the Men's Forum was Dudley Aman, First Baron Marley, more commonly known as Lord Marley. Marley, who served in the House of Lords, joined the Royal Marine Artillery during World War I and received the Distinguished Service Cross for his service at the Second Battle of Ypres.[13]

Marley's presence in the Riverlands Jewish Archive is one of the most robust of the Men's Forum speakers. The archive contains letters between Bernard Michelson of the Men's Forum and W. Colston Leigh, Inc.,

---

[12] Henry C. McComas, *Ghosts I Have Talked With* (Baltimore, 1937); Henry C. Link, *The Return to Religion* (New York, 1936).

[13] Nicole Taylor, "The mystery of Lord Marley: Nicole Taylor on the trail of an English peer in Stalin's Jewish Autonomous Region," *Jewish Quarterly* 52 (Summer 2005): 65–69.

Dudley Aman, First Baron Marley, c. 1930
(Wikimedia Commons.)

Confirmation of Lord Marley's lecture in Paducah, December 2, 1937.
(*Courtesy of the Riverlands Jewish Archive, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green.*)

Marley's booking agent. Cashed checks written from the Men's Forum checkbook for Marley's booking fees and associated publicity survive to the twenty-first century, as do the performance contract and invoices for payment of speaker's fees.[14]

By the 1930s, Marley served as a prominent Labour Party member in Parliament. He held numerous positions in British Parliament between 1930 and 1941, including serving as Undersecretary of State for War, vice-president of the Army Council, Chief Labour Whip in the House of Lords, Deputy Speaker of the House of Lords, and Chairman of the Parliamentary Advisory Committee for the aid of Jews in Europe. This last position brought Marley the most notoriety in Jewish communities. In this position he became deeply involved in Jewish affairs in the Soviet Union and Germany. He worked directly with authorities in the Jewish Autonomous Oblast of Birobidzhan in eastern Siberia. Joseph Stalin designated this area as a semiautonomous region for the resettlement of Russian Jews. Marley wrote the English translation of *The Brown Book of Hitler Terror and the Burning of the Reichstag*, a 1933 book that detailed the conditions of German Jews and Hitler's devoutly antisemitic ideologies. Historians widely credit its publication with igniting early interest among American Jews in the conditions in Nazi Germany.[15]

By the time Marley arrived in Paducah in December 1937, Nazi persecution of German Jews was in full force. Following the passage of the antisemitic Nuremberg Laws in 1935, a wave of violence against Jews swept across Germany. Not only were Jews losing their jobs and livelihoods, but they also now increasingly faced threats to their lives. This wave of violence ultimately culminated in 1938's violent pogrom *Kristallnacht* and the creation of Jewish ghettos.

J. B. Matthews – February 16, 1939

The first invited speaker of 1939 was American linguist and political activist Joseph Brown "J. B." Matthews. Nothing has survived related to Matthews's booking. The only way one would know from the archival material that the Men's Forum sought him out is his name on the schedule listed on the back of the 1938–39 season tickets. This lack of record likely stems from his last-minute cancellation of his appearance. Days before he

[14] Temple Israel Men's Forum, box 1, folder 6, Temple Israel Papers.

[15] Taylor, "Mystery," 65–69.

was scheduled to speak, Matthews was summoned before the U.S. Senate to testify on communism. Thus, he was replaced by American adventurer Gordon B. Enders. Despite this, I include him here as he was the temple's originally intended speaker, which adds credence to the Forum's motivations in selecting speakers.[16]

Matthews was a supporter of the American communist party during the mid-1930s, often referring to himself as a "fellow traveler," an English translation of the Russian word "*poputchik*."[17] He spoke at Madison Square Garden at a communist rally in 1933, served as head of the American League Against War and Fascism, and launched several communist-aligned organizations, including the American Friends of the Chinese People, American Youth Congress, and the National Student League. During the 1930s, he visited the Soviet Union at least five times. However, by 1938, Matthews became disillusioned with the movement, and he came to Paducah during this period of disillusionment. Coming on the heels of

J. B. Matthews testifying before the Dies Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives, August 22, 1938. (Wikimedia Commons.)

[16] "Men's Forum 1938–39 Season Ticket," Temple Israel Men's Forum, box 1, folder 2, Temple Israel Papers; "Enders Replaces Matthews as Temple Speaker Thursday," *Paducah Sun Democrat*, February 15, 1939.

[17] *Poputchik*, or "one who travels the same path," is the Russian term for someone who is intellectually sympathetic to the ideology of the Communist Party and cooperates with party politics but is not a formal member.

the publication of his memoir, *Odyssey of a Fellow Traveler*, in which he disavowed communism and attempted to repent for his previous activism, Matthews went on a speaking tour discussing the threats communism posed to the West. He spoke frequently on the crises facing eastern Europe and the nations caught between two aggressive empires in the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany.[18]

The context of Soviet relations with Nazi Germany particularly bothered Matthews. Newspaper columnist and radio commentator George Sokolsky said of Matthews: "I have among my friends and acquaintances literally dozens of men and women who during the Hitler-Stalin Alliance were so ashamed of Soviet cynicism that from ardent Communists they became ardent anti-Communists. Such a man was Dr. J. B. Matthews, [who] while never a Communist, was associated with that party as a fellow traveler."[19] For many communists, Stalin's peace with an antagonist Nazi regime proved a bridge too far. Stalin's acquiescence to such a reviled European leader dashed the idealism with which many activists approached communism.

H. V. Kaltenborn – April 25, 1939

American radio news commentator Hans von "H. V." Kaltenborn spoke before the forum in 1939. Kaltenborn worked at CBS and NBC as an on-air anchor for over thirty years. He was best known for his knowledge of foreign affairs and international politics. Throughout the 1930s, he covered the various crises across Europe and East Asia that led to World War II. This gave him unique insight into the state of world affairs on the eve of war.[20]

A small number of items from H. V. Kaltenborn's talk survive in the archive, primarily scheduling correspondence between him and Bernard Michelson. The archive includes a series of back-and-forth letters between Kaltenborn and Michelson working on the initial scheduling of his talk. Also included in the archive is a series of telegrams exchanged between the two when mechanical issues threatened to derail his travel to Paducah.

---

[18] J.B. Matthews, *Odyssey of a Fellow Traveler* (New York, 1938).

[19] Victor S. Navasky, *Naming Names* (New York, 1980), 86.

[20] James Sylvester Kolb, *H.V. Kaltenborn: An Analysis of His Thought and His Career* (Madison, WI, 1966).

H.V. Kaltenborn (left) and Andre Kostelanetz rehearsing for a presentation at the World's Fair, New York 1939. (New York Public Library.)

Kaltenborn also appears on the 1938–39 season ticket calendar that features J. B. Matthews.[21]

Kaltenborn's expertise of particular interest to Paducah's Jewish community was his experience in Nazi Germany. He first became embroiled in European affairs during the early 1930s when he was one of only three American journalists to interview Adolf Hitler. He later reported extensively on the Spanish Civil War, the Sudetenland crisis of 1938, and multiple Nuremberg rallies.[22] By the time he spoke at Temple Israel in 1939, Kaltenborn had won renown as one of the foremost American experts on Nazi Germany. In April 1939, Europe stood on the brink of war. While the Allied powers hoped that concessions on militarization, annexation of Austria, and occupation of the Sudetenland would pacify Germany, in less than six months war broke out between Germany, Italy, Poland, Britain, and France.[23]

---

[21] Temple Israel Men's Forum, box 1, folder 10, Temple Israel Papers.

[22] Christopher Sterling and John Kittross, *Stay Tuned: A History of American Broadcasting* (New York, 2001).

[23] Edward Bliss, Jr., *Now the News: The Story of Broadcast Journalism* (New York, 2010).

Nicholas Roosevelt – May 17, 1939

The month after Kaltenborn's appearance, Nicholas Roosevelt spoke before the Men's Forum. Roosevelt's lecture provides the most surviving materials. The archive holds a series of letters between Michelson of the Men's Forum and W. Colston Leigh, Inc., the booking agents for Roosevelt. These letters discuss terms of scheduling and date conflicts, the final speaker fees, and the availability of publicity materials for the talk. The archive also includes a signed performance contract and an invoice for Roosevelt's speaking fees, subsequently paid by the temple.[24]

Roosevelt's father, James West Roosevelt, and President Theodore Roosevelt were first cousins, making him also a distant relation of then-President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Nicholas Roosevelt was an American diplomat stationed in Hungary and a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. His expertise and experience culminated in a handful of articles for the journal *Foreign Affairs* during the 1930s. The most notable of these dealt with the financial and political crises in Europe during the 1920s and 1930s. His 1925 article, "The Ruhr Occupation," examined French takeover of key German resource regions like the Ruhr and the danger that continued French pilfering of these resources in the name of reparations posed for diplomatic relations. He argued that continued siphoning of German natural resources would only fuel radicalism and animosity within the German populace.[25] He followed this in 1933 with an article entitled "Salvaging the Debts of Eastern Europe," in which he detailed the 650 million dollars in defaulted loan repayments to the United States accrued by eight eastern European nations. He argued that unless the United States absolved these debts, eastern Europe faced imminent financial collapse and risked being swallowed up by an authoritarian force.

By the time Roosevelt visited Paducah in 1939, the fallout from the Great Depression and the untenable debt payments was in full force. Reparations having been long unpopular with the German public, on seizing power in 1933, Adolf Hitler announced Germany would no longer abide

[24] Temple Israel Men's Forum, box 1, folder 11, Temple Israel Papers.

[25] Nicholas Roosevelt, "The Ruhr Occupation," *Foreign Affairs* 4 (October 1925): 113–22. On Roosevelt's background, see "Biographical History," Nicholas Roosevelt Papers, Syracuse University Libraries Special Collections Research Center, accessed May 20, 2026, https://library.syracuse.edu/digital/guides/r/roosevelt_n.htm.

by the Treaty of Versailles or pay debts and reparations owed. The worst-case scenario put forth by Nicholas Roosevelt earlier in the 1930s now came to fruition in the form of a violent reactionary government in Germany.

Alfred Duff Cooper – February 28, 1940

Alfred Duff "A. D." Cooper, a British politician and former Secretary of War under Neville Chamberlain's government, provided the first speech in 1940. The only document remaining about Cooper's visit in the archive is an invoice from W. Colston Leigh, Inc., requesting payment for Cooper's speech. Temple Israel paid three hundred dollars to bring Cooper to Paducah in February 1940, a fee of over seven thousand dollars in modern calculations.[26]

Alfred Duff Cooper, 1939.
(Wikimedia Commons.)

Although a member of Parliament for a quarter century, A. D. Cooper is best remembered for his high-profile resignation as First Lord of the Admiralty, or political head of the British Navy, in the wake of the Munich Agreement in 1938. Cooper had long been outspoken in his opposition to Nazism in Germany. During his trip to Germany in 1934, he attended that year's Nuremberg rally and returned appalled by what he had witnessed. Consequently, he became a vocal critic of the Nazi regime.

[26] Temple Israel Men's Forum, box 1, folder 12, Temple Israel Papers.

Payment invoice for lecture by Alfred Duff Cooper, February 28, 1940. (Courtesy of the Riverlands Jewish Archive, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green.)

As Secretary of War, Cooper began pushing for rearmament of the British military in the face of Nazi threats, a position that resulted in Prime Minister Chamberlain urging him to tone down his criticism. As First Lord of the Admiralty, he continually pushed for more spending on the Royal Navy and drew the ire of Chamberlain for being "indiscreet" and a "firebrand." By 1938, Cooper outspokenly criticized Chamberlain's policy of appeasement. When Britain signed on to the Munich Agreement, which forced Czechoslovakia to cede control of the Sudetenland to Germany, Cooper stormed out in disgust and resigned from the cabinet.[27]

Over the next two years, Cooper vocally criticized Chamberlain, appeasement, and a policy he believed doomed Europe to the death and destruction of the Holocaust. He wrote countless articles for London's *Evening Standard* newspaper and embarked on a series of speaking engagements across the United States encouraging Americans to pressure

[27] John Julius Norwich, ed., *The Duff Cooper Diaries: 1915–1951* (London, 2005).

their government toward joining the war effort. He called for liberal democracies to stand firm against the Nazis and predicted that Winston Churchill would become prime minister, a seemingly eccentric prediction at the time. Cooper spoke before Temple Israel's Men's Forum during this national tour.[28]

Pierre van Paassen – March 31, 1941

The final known speaker for the Temple Israel Men's Forum was Pierre van Paassen, a journalist and foreign correspondent for numerous newspapers across the United States and Canada. Like J. B. Matthews and A. D. Cooper before him, very little on van Paassen's talk survives. All that exists in the archive is his signed performance contract.[29]

During the 1930s, van Paassen gained notoriety for his reporting on fascist Italy, the Spanish Civil War, and colonial conflicts across the Middle East and North Africa. An avowed antifascist, he reported on the violent excesses of Europe's fascist governments. This early reporting culminated in his first book, *Nazism: An Assault on Civilization*. An edited volume published in 1934 that contained articles by many of the top experts on Germany, Van Paassen's work was one of the first American books extensively documenting Nazi ideology. The authors stressed that Nazism was not merely a political shift but a systemic assault on human rights, ethics, and democratic institutions. Van Paassen's volume pioneered as one of the first books to warn of the likelihood of a forthcoming Holocaust against European Jews.[30] Van Paassen's reports on Europe's fascist parties eventually got him into trouble with the German government. Following Hitler's rise to power, van Paassen was arrested by German authorities and spent ten days in the Dachau concentration camp. Following his release, van Paassen remarked that he was expelled "from Germany by Joseph Goebbels."[31]

By spring 1941, van Paassen toured the United States promoting his book *The Time is Now!* This book, published later that year, forcefully argued for American involvement in World War II to stop the spread of

---

[28] Michael Stenton, *Radio London and Resistance in Occupied Europe: British Political Warfare, 1939–1943* (London, 2000).

[29] Temple Israel Men's Forum, box 1, folder 14, Temple Israel Papers.

[30] Pierre Van Paassen, ed., *Nazism: An Assault on Civilization* (New York, 1934).

[31] Pierre Van Paassen, *To Number Our Days* (New York, 1964), i–ii.

Contract between the Temple Israel Men's Club and Pierre Van Paassen, March 31, 1941. (Courtesy of the Riverlands Jewish Archive, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green.)

German expansion, most notably, immediately join the United Kingdom on the front lines. Published at a time when many Americans still clung to the idea of neutrality, van Paassen's book caused a tremendous stir.[32]

Deducing Themes from the Speaker Lineup

While the performance contracts and ticket stubs fail to offer a direct glimpse into the topics of discussion at each talk, the context as a whole suggests trends. Three important backdrops are important to consider: the expertise of the speakers, American politics during the 1930s, and the priorities and concerns of American Jewish communities in that decade. From the three contexts and the speakers' background and interests, we can surmise the topics and themes of these lectures without having concrete evidence of their content in the form of a transcript.

A common theme becomes clear. Each man was an expert on some aspect of Nazi Germany during the 1930s. Whether it was Matthews becoming disillusioned with communism in the wake of the Molotov-Ribbentropp pact or Kaltenborn interviewing Adolf Hitler, the five men who came to Paducah to speak on global affairs all reacted negatively and vociferously to the threat posed by Nazism. This speaks to a pattern of Jewish activism in western Kentucky on the eve of World War II. The public nature of the Men's Forum, the fervent publicity and advertising, and the widespread inclusion of non-Jewish residents in Paducah speaks to Jews' insistence on combatting American isolationist attitudes at a time when mainstream American organizations were not. In this way, the talks became less about publicizing Nazi atrocities and more about compelling the American public to action.

The question of American consciousness of Nazi atrocities is interesting, as scholarship often examines public consciousness after the fact and not beforehand. For example, Kristen Fermaglich's *American Dreams and Nazi Nightmares*, Arlene Stein's *Reluctant Witnesses,* Deborah Lipstadt's *Holocaust: An American Understanding,* and Hasia Diner's *We Remember With Reverence and Love* all examine how evidence from liberation and the testimony of the survivors fueled the rise of Holocaust consciousness in the United States in the decades that followed World War II.[33] Much of the

---

[32] Pierre van Paassen, *The Time is Now!* (New York, 1940).

[33] Kirsten Fermaglich, *American Dreams and Nazi Nightmares: Early Holocaust Consciousness and Liberal America, 1957–1965* (Waltham, MA, 2006); Arlene Stein, *Reluctant Witnesses: Survivors,*

conversation centers around what went wrong and how to avoid such a tragedy in the future.

When examining prewar Jewish responses, early trends in scholarship tended to ask why the American Jewish community at large seemingly failed to pressure the Roosevelt administration to act. Peter Novick went so far as to refer to earlier critiques as a "comfortable morality tale that has passed for history." In his view, not wanting to be seen as victims or become the targets of antisemitism, American Jews downplayed the urgency of the Holocaust in public life and instead opted for more subtle means of activism.[34] Similarly, Felicia Herman suggests that American Jews were hesitant to be seen as exerting influence over American politics out of fear that it would spark charges of Jewish control over key American industries.[35]

However, labeling the Jewish response as timid in the face of fears of antisemitism is simplistic. American Jews faced an uphill battle in American politics, having only begun to be assimilated into wider American society. Rafael Medoff notes that "President Roosevelt's private attitudes toward Jews . . . play[ed] a role in shaping policy decisions," arguing that nothing American Jews could have done would have overwhelmed the president's latent antisemitism. Medoff further suggests that Roosevelt managed to manipulate leadership of the American Jewish establishment into "keeping quiet" on matters related to the Holocaust.[36]

Despite this uphill battle, some scholars have noted that while the American Jewish establishment was often stifled, smaller segments of the American Jewish community continued to act. This split is best identified in Efraim Zuroff's book *The Response of Orthodox Jewry in the United States to the Holocaust*. By focusing on smaller rescue organizations like the Vaad Hatzala, Zuroff notes that smaller and regional organizations often did not face the pressure of widespread antisemitic backlash in the way that

---

Their Children, and the Rise of Holocaust Consciousness (New York, 2014); Deborah E. Lipstadt, *Holocaust: An American Understanding* (New Brunswick, NJ, 2016); Hasia R. Diner, *We Remember With Reverence and Love: American Jews and the Myth of Silence After the Holocaust, 1945–1962* (New York, 2009).

[34] Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (Boston, 2000).

[35] Felicia Herman, "Hollywood, Nazism, and the Jews, 1933–41," *American Jewish History* 89 (March 2001): 61–89.

[36] Rafael Medoff, *The Jews Should Keep Quiet: Franklin D. Roosevelt, Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, and the Holocaust* (Philadelphia, 2019), xv–xvi.

large-scale national organizations would have and thus were more likely to have a vibrant response.[37]

Building on this background, an increasing amount of scholarship examines the growing consciousness among American Jews in the South of the events unfolding across Europe before the war. For example, in his monograph *In the Shadow of Hitler*, Dan Puckett argues that although many Southerners were more concerned with the rising threat posed by Japan in the late-1930s and most newspapers focused their coverage on the Pacific, Alabama's Jewish communities focused on spreading awareness of the horrors facing Europe's Jews in the hopes of preventing escalation and facilitating rescue. Rather than finding a Jewish community that was sheepish toward Holocaust activism, Puckett found a population in Alabama that took charge in activism, recognizing a Protestant and xenophobic antisemitism that was rife across the American South in the prewar years. Puckett argues that this antisemitism was in many ways not altogether different from the racism of rank-and-file Germans during the same period, who perceived a silent Jewish menace based on religious and racial connotations, despite having Jewish neighbors they liked and interacted with regularly. In this case, it is not hard to see why Southern Jews may have increasingly adopted an "it could happen here" mentality.[38]

Temple Israel fits within this last pattern. By the late 1930s, the Jewish community was well established in Paducah, with Jewish businesses lining downtown streets. During the early twentieth century, at least thirty Jewish businesses operated in the city. Given the small size of the Jewish population, patrons of Jewish stores were overwhelmingly non-Jews, making Jewish shopowners part of many non-Jews' everyday interactions. Beyond this, Jews took an active role in local community affairs. As indicated above, Govriel Rosenthal established the local junior college. He used his personal fortune to fund the school's payroll through its lean early years. Marshall Nemer followed Rosenthal's lead and served on the college's board of trustees for years as well. Other prominent Jews served as lawyers, judges, city officials, and heads of local fraternal organizations.

---

[37] Efraim Zuroff, *The Response of Orthodox Jewry in The United States to the Holocaust: The Activities of the Vaad ha-Hatzala Rescue Committee, 1939–1945* (Hoboken, NJ, 2000).

[38] Dan J. Puckett, *In the Shadow of Hitler: Alabama's Jews, the Second World War, and the Holocaust* (Tuscaloosa, 2014).

The Jewish community was so ingrained that Irvin Cobb wrote of his experience growing up in Paducah: "I was nearly grown and had to go north of the Ohio River before I knew there was such a nasty vicious thing as antisemitism."[39] These factors suggest that the Jewish community in Paducah lacked the greater fears of antisemitism that plagued large national organizations. Instead, the members of Temple Israel's Men's Club felt so emboldened by their position in western Kentucky that they actively prioritized anti-Nazi activism through their annual Men's Forum.

Rather than being representative of American Jews' hesitance in the face of rising Nazism, the Men's Forum speaks to a broader pattern of political engagement on the part of American Jews during the 1930s. Matthew Frye Jacobson argues that continued Jewish allegiances to their brethren in Europe created a level of diasporic nationalism that "reinforced the sense of collective national destiny . . . and advanced their arguments for self-determination." This climate of diasporic nationalism shaped Jewish responses to, and often critique of, American foreign policy during the early-twentieth century.[40] The lineup of speakers at Temple Israel suggests that not only did Paducah's Jews maintain a national attachment to Jews in Europe, but they actively sought an American policy structure that would prioritize stopping the suffering from Nazi persecution.

The timing of the Men's Forum is also critical to understanding its importance in American political activism, as it highlights the ambivalence the men of Temple Israel sought to combat. During the late 1930s, isolationism and neutrality in global affairs dominated American politics. Between 1935 and 1939, Congress passed a series of Neutrality Acts with bipartisan support in the wake of the Nye Committee hearings, which assigned blame for American involvement in World War I and urged measures to avoid American entanglements in further wars. These four acts sought to keep America neutral by prohibiting American industries and organizations from engaging in trade with and/or supporting any "belligerent" nation in a war. Designed to be overarching, they provided

[39] Temple Israel, "History," accessed May 20, 2026, https://templeisraelky.org/history.

[40] Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Special Sorrows: The Diasporic Imagination of Irish, Polish, and Jewish Immigrants in the United States* (Berkeley, CA, 2002).

no distinction between aggressor and victim in their treatment of warring nations.[41]

The American response to the Holocaust among non-Jews has long been a topic of rich scholarship. Two books published in 1968 set off the modern historiographic interpretation. *While Six Million Died* by Arthur Morse and *Paper Walls* by David S. Wyman criticized the Roosevelt administration for deliberately obstructing opportunities for rescuing Jews from Nazi persecution. Both authors charge that Roosevelt permitted antisemitic State Department officials to further restrict immigration quotas beyond their already meager allowances. Consequently, Jews who should have been allowed to immigrate under existing quotas were denied entry and, in many cases, returned to Germany to face their deaths. Martin Gilbert's *Auschwitz and the Allies* and Monty Penkower's *The Jews Were Expendable*, published in the 1980s, built on this thesis of abandonment. Beyond highlighting how Allied forces refused to respond, they maintained that these were refusals of perfectly feasible measures that could have prevented Jewish deaths. Jeffrey Gurock's anthology *America, American Jews, and the Holocaust* similarly critiques Roosevelt for making political decisions in the face of what was essentially a moral question and not a political one. More recent scholarship has downplayed antisemitism in the State Department in favor of a narrative around alternate priorities by American diplomats. Godfrey Hodgson suggests that diplomats focused on maintaining artistic treasures in cities such as Kyoto and Rothenburg or rescuing prized horses from Austria as a means for preserving world culture during a time of war.[42] In this view, Allied inaction was not so much willful abandonment as it was neglect.

---

[41] Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932–1945* (New York, 1995); Richard Aregood, Richard Shafer, and Eric Freedman, "American Isolationism and the Political Evolution of Journalist-Turned-US Senator Gerald P. Nye," *Journalism Practice* 9 (2015): 279–94.

[42] Arthur D. Morse, *While Six Million Died: A Chronicle of American Apathy* (Amherst, MA, 1968); David S. Wyman, *Paper Walls: America and the Refugee Crisis, 1938–1941* (Amherst, MA, 1968); Martin Gilbert, *Auschwitz and the Allies: A Devastating Account of How the Allies Responded to the News of Hitler's Mass Murder* (New York, 1981); Monty Noam Penkower, *The Jews Were Expendable: Free World Diplomacy and the Holocaust* (Urbana, IL, 1983); Jeffrey S. Gurock, ed., *America, American Jews, and the Holocaus*t (New York, 1997); Godfrey Hodgson, *The Colonel: The Life and Wars of Henry Stimson, 1867–1950* (New York, 1990). See also, Henry L. Feingold, *The Politics of Rescue: The Roosevelt Administration and the Holocaust, 1938–1945*

Many of these national trends existed within local Paducah institutions. This is most identifiable in the pages of the city's largest newspaper, the *Paducah Sun-Democrat*. The paper's arguments around neutrality largely focused on concerns in East Asia. An August 1937 editorial on American neutrality, published months before Lord Marley spoke at the Men's Forum, focused entirely on the ongoing conflict between Japan and China and asked whether America could remain neutral in the face of such hostility. The editorial notes threats to Americans living in China and the chance that the conflict threatened America's west coast. However, no mention of the threats posed by Nazi Germany or Adolf Hitler received coverage. While a single editorial, it represents a larger pattern of reporting in Paducah.[43]

Between 1933 and the outbreak of World War II in 1939, articles on increasing Japanese militarism filled over five thousand pages of the *Sun-Democrat*, often constituting three or four articles per page. For Paducah's newspaper, the threat posed by Japan to American interests in East Asia was a clear priority. In contrast, only about 2,900 pages of the *Sun-Democrat* had articles on Nazi Germany before the war. More starkly, only 195 articles in total mentioned Nazi persecution of its Jewish population. The *Sun-Democrat* focused clearly on East Asia as the primary threat to Americans.

This highlights a larger trend by American newspapers. Laurel Leff notes in *Buried by the Times* that American newspapers largely followed the lead of the *New York Times* and shelved coverage of Nazi atrocities to the back pages, where they received little fanfare. Papers also typically used more generic terms such as *refugee* or *nationalities* to refer to Jewish victims of Hitler instead of naming them as Jews. Leff argues that this led to an American public woefully uninformed about Nazi persecution and systematic murder of European Jews.[44]

The ticket stubs of the Men's Forum evidence an opposite trend. Although sponsored by Temple Israel, the majority of the attendees were not only not members of the temple, but most were not Jewish. The one

---

(New Brunswick, NJ, 1970); Saul S. Friedman, *No Haven for the Oppressed: United States Policy toward Jewish Refugees, 1938–1945* (Detroit, 1973); Carlo D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War* (New York, 1990).

[43] "Can We Be Neutral?," *Paducah Sun-Democrat*, August 16, 1937.

[44] Laurel Leff, *Buried by the Times: The Holocaust and America's Most Important Newspaper* (New York, 2005).

Temple Israel Men's Forum season ticket, 1938–39. (Courtesy of the Riverlands Jewish Archive, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green.)

year for which we have an authoritative list of attendees, 1938–39, portrays this well. Of the 297 "season tickets" sold for that year's lecture series, identifiable Jews purchased only forty-two.[45] Instead, the majority of tickets went to the non-Jewish neighbors, coworkers, and friends of Temple Israel members. This was not an accident, nor was it the happenstance of being a demographic minority. The members of Temple Israel made a concerted effort to recruit the wider public through an extensive advertising campaign in local media in an effort to build public consciousness and indignation.[46] The goals of the Men's Forum are further highlighted by the fact that Paducah's Jews dictated the specific topics discussed in the Men's Forum lectures. In one of the scheduling letters between Bernard Michelson and William B. Feakins, Inc., the booking agent notes that he did not fill in a topic on the performance contract, as he wanted "suggestions from [Temple Israel] as to the best subject for a

[45] Based on cross referencing in Temple Israel and B'nai B'rith membership records.

[46] "Ledger of Season Ticket Sales, 1938–39," Temple Israel Men's Forum, box 1, folder 2, Temple Israel Papers; "Promotional Receipts," Temple Israel Men's Forum, box 1, folder 4, Temple Israel Papers.

mixed audience."[47] Highlighting awareness of Hitler's antisemitic policies played a central role in the Men's Forum, bucking the larger trend in Paducah's public sphere. This all demonstrates that the goals of the forum's leaders went beyond mere education and instead were focused on provoking public response.

The Men's Forum proved to be one of Temple Israel's largest community initiatives in its now 160-year history in Paducah. Bringing in some of the best-known speakers in the world and with two hundred to three hundred in regular attendance, the speaker series demonstrated the demand for knowledge in Paducah, as well as the high level to which Jews were accepted by and part of the wider community. In this way, despite the limited documentation remaining, we can still glean an important history of the prewar Jewish South and of small-town Jewry nationally. The list of speakers and the wider context around their talks demonstrates a community that prioritized awareness for Jews in distress overseas. This is particularly evocative given the contemporary prominence of isolationism and neutrality in the United States. We can discern from these contexts that Paducah's Jews, as well as many in the wider non-Jewish population, bucked national trends in the late-1930s and prioritized the horrors facing European Jews in American foreign policy concerns. Above all, the history of Temple Israel's Men's Forum demonstrates that the Jews of Paducah were cosmopolitans aware and concerned about their brethren in Europe. Their effort to stand out also informed their non-Jewish neighbors with the result that they, too, became more aware and cosmopolitan.

[47] Temple Israel Men's Forum, box 1, folder 13, Temple Israel Papers.

MEMOIR

Shabbat in the Orange Grove: Joseph Wittenstein's Early Orlando History

by

Deborah Gurt *

Joseph Wittenstein, "A Chronology of the Early Jewish Settlers in the Orange County Area from 1875 to about 1925"[1]

Joseph Wittenstein's slim manuscript, "A Chronology of the Early Jewish Settlers in the Orange County Area from 1875 to about 1925," outlines the history of Jewish settlement in and around Orlando, Florida. Written in 1975, it situates itself in the historical moment of the United States's bicentennial celebration. Written specifically for this occasion, the work seeks to celebrate a Jewish contribution to American history, to trace the Jewish role in the economic development of the city of Orlando and environs, and to document the texture of Jewish life for early Jewish settlers in the area. Our author does not provide much detail about his family but frames his story within the grand and optimistic narrative of Jewish immigrants seeking refuge from poverty and persecution and finding a land of opportunity in the United States.

With other records we can piece together some details of Wittenstein's biography. Joseph Wittenstein was the first generation of his family to be born in the United States. His mother and father came as immigrants from Imperial Russia. His mother, Esther Shader, arrived from Schedrin,

* The author can be contacted at dgurt@southalabama.edu.

[1] Joseph Wittenstein, "A Chronology of the Early Jewish Settlers in the Orange County Area From 1875 to About 1925," 1976, Orlando Public Library, transcribed and annotated by Deborah Gurt. Two copies of the Wittenstein manuscript are held for library use in the Orange County library system, one at the Orlando Public Library (Downtown) and the other at the West Oaks Genealogy branch. Reprinted with permission of the Wittenstein family.

a Hasidic town in the Bobruisk region, in 1907 with her parents, and father Morris Wittenstein arrived from Nemyriv in Vinnitsa, Ukraine, via Argentina in 1894, also with his parents.[2] Both families initially settled in Pittsburgh, where the elder Shader worked as a carpenter and Wittenstein a cigar maker.

In 1912 Peter David Wittenstein, Joseph's paternal grandfather, purchased a one-hundred-acre citrus grove located on the south shore of Lake Fairview in Orange County, Florida. The following year, Israel Shader, Joseph's maternal grandfather, bought an adjacent dairy farm in Fairvilla. Esther and Morris Wittenstein were married in 1913, and both of their families made the move to Florida. According to the Institute of Southern

The Wittenstein Family at their home at 424 East Central Avenue in Orlando, 1943. LEFT TO RIGHT: Morris Wittenstein, Bertha Wittenstein Fraiberg, Joe Wittenstein, Esther Shader Wittenstein, and Florence Wittenstein Tobias. (State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory, Mosaic Collection.)

[2] Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania; Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania.

Jewish Life's history of Orlando, the Shader and Wittenstein families were part of a wave of immigration to Orlando, dubbed the "Pittsburgh wave," consisting of several interconnected families who sought to escape the hardships and crowding of the northern city.[3] They also believed that a rural way of life would prove more accommodating to Jewish ritual observance, which was clearly important to both families.

Both of Wittenstein's grandfathers were traditionally religious men, Peter David having been a *sofer* (scribe), as well as a lay religious leader trained to perform kosher slaughter and ritual circumcisions. Israel Shader was also traditionally Orthodox and took responsibility for ensuring the new community had the necessities for religious observance. He brought a *sefer torah* for use by the community. Because of the distance between the outlying homesteads and the city of Orlando, the scroll was housed at the home of one family, Mr. and Mrs. Morris Levy, whose land was more centrally located. The Levy grove became the site of weekly Shabbat services as well as High Holiday celebrations, and even the occasional wedding. In 1917 Rose Gleibman and Aaron Harry Levy married in the orange grove using a Zionist flag as their chuppah.[4]

The focus of this manuscript is firmly on the economic footprint of this community, and Wittenstein enumerates the changing business profile of the area, noting the types of Jewish-owned businesses that opened and those that thrived or closed. He traces the ups and downs of economic conditions and their impacts on the Jewish community. This focus on enumerating businesses may in part reflect the tools available to our author. Wittenstein describes his methods for researching his manuscript and notes that for early residents of the area, he relies on the imperfect process of picking out Jewish-sounding names from business directories and census lists. This method leads him astray at least once, as research tools available to us today are broadly expanded. Wittenstein gives us a couple of population milestones to measure the area's growth, noting that Orlando's population in 1915 was 3,894, in 1920 up to 9,282, then in 1930 the

---

[3] "Orlando, FL," ISJL Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities,"accessed August 8, 2025, https://www.isjl.org/florida-orlando-encyclopedia.html.

[4] Marcia Jo Zerivitz, "Comments on Wittenstein Memoir," April 27, 2026. Zerivitz, founding executive director of the Jewish Museum of Florida, provided details of the wedding through email correspondence with the author.

area experienced almost 200 percent growth.[5] Thus, the work in large part consists of lists of names, businesses, and occupations, which gives a sense of the growing population and evolving economic structure of the area, but little in the way of rich description.

Wittenstein's younger brother Neil offers a more fulsome picture of their rural childhood in a 2015 oral history interview.[6] There he describes in detail the rhythms of laborious daily life on a dairy farm, the family's relative poverty but never hunger. He tells of interactions with neighbors and friends as a nine-year-old driving a milk delivery truck and selling eggs and milk in a nearby Black neighborhood, separate from his regular rounds, to earn some extra cash. He also tells the sad story that ended the Wittenstein family ownership of the dairy as the result of an injury his father sustained and the burdensome cost of medical treatment. He further explains the demise of the family orange business. Citrus farming was a risky endeavor, and two years of subsequent frosts killed off the stocks of the family orange groves.

One notable feature that this document does capture is the longevity of the community. Wittenstein in 1975 references many original businesses remaining in operation to the fourth and fifth generations, including some Shader family enterprises. Unlike many smaller Southern towns, subsequent generations seem to have remained in the area, even if, like our author as a CPA, they pursued white-collar professions. The surroundings, of course, underwent substantial development after World War II, and sections that had been farmland or groves became neighborhoods and industrial hubs. The area transformed with further investment by Walt Disney and the developing tourist economy. Land that had been the Wittenstein and Shader citrus groves beside Lake Fairvilla was developed in the 1960s as the Palomar neighborhood, which became popular with Jewish families, earning it the nickname, "the Golden Ghetto."[7] This expansion of horizons may be the key to the community's longevity.

---

[5] For contemporary numbers, see City of Orlando, *Growth Management Plan: 2024–2050 Growth Projections Report* (Orlando, FL, 2024), accessed May 24, 2026, https://www.orlando.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/departments/edv/city-planning/2024-to-2050-growth-projections-report.pdf.

[6] Jane Tracy, "Neil Wittenstein Speaks at College Park Oral History Night," Orlando Memory, October 20, 2015, accessed May 24, 2026, https://orlandomemory.org/people/neil-wittenstein-speaks-at-college-park-oral-history-night.

[7] "Orlando, FL."

Wedding of Rose Gleibman and Aaron Levy,
Orlando, 1917, attended by the city's entire Jewish population.
(State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory, Mosaic Collection.)

In 2017 the city's first Jewish congregation, Ohev Shalom, celebrated its centennial. Congregation leaders undertook production of an expansive public exhibit documenting the history of Jews in Orange County, Florida. Members of the extended Wittenstein and Shader family took part in the project, which resulted in the exhibit *Kehillah: A History of Jewish Life in Greater Orlando*, held at the Orange County Regional History Museum from November 2017 to February 2018.[8] It is worth noting that the original *sefer torah* used by the community on those Sabbaths in the Orange Grove was later buried in the Ohev Shalom cemetery. The period of Jewish institution-building in Orlando began with this congregation and seems to

[8] David Bornstein, "Kehillah: A History of Jewish Life in Greater Orlando Opening November 12," Heritage Florida Jewish News, October 13, 2017, accessed May 24, 2026, https://www.heritagefl.com/story/2017/10/13/news/kehillah-a-history-of-jewish-life-in-greater-orlando-opening-november-12/8663.html.

have been spurred by external pressures, as Wittenstein notes in reference to Jewish exclusion from the Liberty Bonds parade in 1917.[9]

One final observation resonates with what Shari Rabin has described as the "fundamental modern Jewish question: whether and how should they enact their identities as Jews."[10] Though the early settlers treasured their religious observance and embodied a self-reliant approach to communal life, the closing of this memoir includes Wittenstein's statement that some of the families lost their Jewish identity over time, and our author assures his readers in 1975 that their background is "kept inviolate and secure from idle gossip." This statement sits uncomfortably with Wittenstein's early proclamation that Jewish immigrants to America "brought, with pride, our faith—a faith in one God from which arose other great religions."

Nevertheless, one contribution of this resource lies in its depiction of migration from city to frontier, where Jewish merchants applied business acumen and innovation to agriculture and technology, advancing practices such as refrigeration, packaging, and mass distribution of produce. Furthermore, it demonstrates the flourishing of grounded religious practice in the semirural environment and its evolution into a broad range of communal institutions to scaffold Jewish life. It tells a Southern story of internal Jewish institution building (and splintering), and external cultural integration, an example at work here of the centrifugal and centripetal forces that Mark K. Bauman describes at work in Atlanta.[11] Given that much of the existing Florida Jewish historiography has focused either on influential men such as David Levy Yulee or centered geographically on the greater Miami area, Wittenstein's memoir opens an unexplored vista on Florida Jewish history.

---

[9] Both Wittenstein and the ISJL Encyclopedia entry for Orlando attribute this comment to Mrs. Pauline Berman, and a 1918 Orlando Sentinel article names her husband, N. (Nat) Berman, as chair of the committee of "the Jewish Synagogue of Orlando" tasked with raising funds for the Third Liberty Loan.

[10] Shari Rabin, *The Jewish South : An American History* (Princeton, 2025), xi.

[11] Mark K. Bauman, "Centripetal and Centrifugal Forces Facing the People of Many Communities: Atlanta Jews from the Leo Frank Case to the Great Depression," in *A New Vision of Southern Jewish History: Studies in Institution Building, Leadership, Interaction, and Mobility*, ed. Mark K. Bauman (Tuscaloosa, 2019), 26.

-o0o-

Joseph Wittenstein, "A Chronology of the Early Jewish Settlers in the Orange County Area from 1875 to about 1925"

GREETINGS! My name is Joseph Wittenstein. I was born on the Shader farm, now the site of the Shader Industrial Park in Fairvilla. My parents were the late Morris Wittenstein and Esther Shader, who came to Orlando from Pittsburgh immediately after their marriage in 1913. I was the first of their four children, the other three being Florence Tobias, Tybe Kahn, and Neil Wittenstein.

For a few years I was the only Jewish child in the Fairvilla area.[12] It was requested of my parents that I be permitted to attend the Epworth League children's functions at the Fairvilla Methodist Church for the reason that "little Joseph needed the companionship of other children." I recall with fondness these church functions.

My early formal education was in the Fairvilla school first located on the northeast corner of Silver Star Road and Highway 441. It had two teachers, each of whom taught four grades. It had two classrooms and forty-three students. A new and larger four-room school was built in the early 1920s near the corner of Silver Star Road and Rio Grande Avenue. Two of the rooms were separated by a collapsible wall, which when opened made our auditorium. My mother was president of the PTA for two of the years I was in school there. My early Hebrew education was charged to my grandfather, Peter Wittenstein. I was tutored each day after school until his departure to Tel Aviv in 1922.[13]

Most Jews are in the United States by grace of a national policy in the middle 1800s permitting our grandparents or great-grandparents who came from scores of countries to settle here. We came to this fertile, rich

[12] Rose Kanner was the first Jewish child born in the Orlando area, in 1904. The family lived in Sanford, twenty-four miles to the north of Fairvilla.

[13] There appears to have been strong Zionist commitments among the Orlando communities, judging by the number of families mentioned who made aliyah in the 1920s and '30s, as well as the possession of a Zionist flag, which doubled as a wedding canopy on at least one occasion.

Esther Shader Wittenstein with her son Joe, Orlando, 1915. (State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory, Mosaic Collection.)

land, and we brought our own Jewish culture. And we brought, with pride, our faith—a faith in one God from which arose other great religions.

We learned that the Liberty Bell, from which pealed forth the birth of freedom, was inscribed with a quote from Leviticus in the Old Testament: "Proclaim liberty through the land to all the inhabitants thereof." We are grateful that so many of the Jewish people came to America to find freedom and were given the opportunities to thrive and to provide benefits to Americans and to people of the world generally.

At this commemoration of the two-hundredth anniversary of the United States, it is fitting to mention at least a few Jews who left their indelible imprint on the development and culture of this country. To start with there was Haym Salomon, who helped finance the revolution that started it all. There was Steinmetz, who discovered how to harness electrical power. There was Tesla, who harnessed the power of Niagara Falls and for whom that power plant is named.[14]

In the theater there was Edward G. Robinson, Paul Muni, and many others. The greatest impresario of all was Sol Hurok, who died recently.

[14] Wittenstein is apparently mistaken about Nikola Tesla's heritage. The Serbian engineer was the son of Eastern Orthodox parentage and was not Jewish.

Among the movie industry greats were Louis B. Mayer, Darryl F. Zanuck, and others. Musicians who will always be remembered include George Gershwin and Irving Berlin. Writers include Edna Ferber, George S. Kaufman, and Neil Simon. Entertainers are never-to-be-forgotten personalities like Eddie Cantor, Al Jolson, and Jack Benny. America and the world will always be grateful to Jonas Salk and Albert Sabin, who arrested and almost vanquished infantile paralysis. There is the famous chemist Leo Sternbach, who invented librium and valium to keep us all at ease. I could go on and on but the real purpose of this message is to discuss the early Jewish settlers of Central Florida.

An area of Central Florida known as Orange County was established on December 29, 1824, and was carved from a much larger area of the state known as Mosquito County. The first county seat was the town of Enterprise on the north shore of Lake Monroe. The size of Orange County was adjusted at a later date, and a northern section became Seminole County and the town of Enterprise became a part of Volusia County.

Orlando became the county seat in 1856, but was not yet an incorporated town. My written source of the early history of the area was *Webb's Historical Index and Bibliography*.[15] In 1880 the county had a population of 6,618 persons.

By way of background, I was asked to prepare the early Jewish history in the area by the Bi-Centennial Committee and to include such items as Civil War Memories of local Jewish citizens. The then Jewish census of the U.S. was quite small. In a recently published book, *In Search of a Dream* by Professor Irving Howe, he states that there was a substantial migration of Jews from Germany to the United States after the 1848 revolution in Germany.[16] Also, following the assassination of Czar Alexander II in Russia in 1881, there began a migration of Jews from Russia and Poland during the next twenty years. Far and away the out-migrations from Germany, Russia, and Poland were to the United States rather than Palestine, as Zionism had not become important and Palestine was much more remote than the United States to the Jewish people of Europe. As the first

[15] Wanton S. Webb, *Webb's Historical, Industrial and Biographical Florida* (New York, 1885).

[16] No publication is listed in WorldCat with the bibliographic information Wittenstein provides here. It may be he is referring to Howe's classic *World of Our Fathers* (New York, 1976).

Looking west down Pine Street, Orlando, 1882.
(Photograph by Stanley J. Morrow, State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory, Mosaic Collection.)

large Jewish influx began about 1850, there was, therefore, a comparatively small number of people of the Jewish faith in the U.S. at the beginning of the Civil War period, and they were settled mainly in the large centers of population and were basically nonagrarian in occupation, as European nations had limitations of ownership of land by Jews.[17]

Jews of all classes were discriminated against in the European countries, thus the better educated, those trained in some skills and crafts, as well as the lower classes migrated to America. In other ethnic groups the elite, the skilled, and the better educated were not forced to emigrate as they were happily established in their countries and did not have to seek better livelihoods and conditions for themselves and their families. Thus,

[17] This presentation leaves out the early establishment of a Jewish agricultural settlement near Micanopy, Florida, by Sephardic businessman and utopian Moses Elias Levy, which lasted from 1822 to 1835.

according to Professor Howe, the amalgam of the Jewish immigrants had a normal proportion of the better classes, permitting an easier, general economic adjustment.

The early surge of Jewish in-migrants saw the various barriers to acceptance into American social and economic communities, and they realized that education was the vehicle for social and economic advancement. They thus exploited themselves so that their children would receive higher educations. Enough of early Jewish-American background.

Florida's early settlers during the late 1800s and the early 1900s came by steamship from New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore to Jacksonville, and from Jacksonville they came by paddleboat down the St. Johns River to Sanford and then to other Central Florida areas by stagecoach or railroad. Most of the small railroad lines used to interconnect. The area had two railway companies in 1880 and had several more during the next thirty years. By way of additional background on the development of mid-Florida, the town of Key West was well established and was a thriving area by the time of the Civil War because of its accessibility by water. Many early area residents came to the Orlando area from Key West, which was an unblockaded Southern seaport town during the Civil War and which had lost its commercial importance after the close of that war. The Central Florida area started to develop after the War between the States because of the overland rail route from large eastern areas of New York, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and Baltimore to Jacksonville.

From Jacksonville one would travel via the St. Johns River south to Mellonville, now Sanford, on the south side of Lake Monroe and Enterprise on the north side of the lake. Rail transportation opened the mid-Florida area for business and visits as an alternate to traveling by ship from northern coastal cities to Key West.

The mid-Florida area had many small railroad companies. They have all since been abandoned and consolidated into one main railroad. The small rail companies permitted the people to settle away from the edge of navigable streams and led to land development for other uses. The area was a source of lumber and naval stores, such as turpentine for paint manufacture and tar for caulking small structures and seagoing vessels to make their wooden joints and seams waterproof.

Further by way of background, counties were established at a size, and the county seats centrally located therein, so that county residents

could make a round trip from their homes to the county seat by horse and wagon to transact business during the course of a day and return to their homes by nightfall. Orange County is approximately 1,008 square miles in size. To give some basis of comparison to visualize the size of the county, it is about one-eighth of the size of the State of Israel at the time of its establishment.

In examining some of the early federal census forms, I saw no evidence identifying the population as to religious practice or background, but there was as to country or area of origin and reason for coming to this area. An 1876 county voter list indicates a Jake, Charles, and Mike Cohen. An early map shows the location of a store operated by them on the north side of Church Street between Orange Avenue and what is now Magnolia Avenue. I presume their names are listed in order of age, and J. R. Cohen is shown as an Orlando alderman when the town was incorporated. It also included the following names: J. J. Cone, Philip Geist, Joshua Jacobs, Benjamin Moses, F. H. Moses, and J. J. Stein, some of whom may have been Jewish. Florida's first senator was Jewish. His name was David Levy Yulee. He served from 1845 to 1851. One of his descendants, Samuel Yulee Way, was a former mayor of Orlando.[18]

The 1884 population of Orlando was established to be 1,638 persons. There are no official Orange County records prior to 1870 as the courthouse was destroyed in a deliberately set fire during that year. There seems to be a further gap in the records during the 1890s.

An 1885 census lists names of local citizens, who by their names may have been Jewish:

Berlin, David (Wife, M. I.), occupation baker, from Pennsylvania
Birnbaum, A. H. (Wife, Belle), two sons, Walter and Morton
Goldin, Rubin (Wife, Muncie) farmer
Mandhoff, Z. (Wife, M.) son ten, daughter eight, farmer from Russia
Weinberg, L. K. from Sweden
Gumpert, S. (Wife, Ida) one son, four daughters
Bucksbaum, Albert, age forty-four, merchant from Germany, three sons, one daughter
Abrams, Jacob, engineer
Habstein, Peter (Wife, Emily) from Prussia, real estate, three children
Goldstein, ___ (Wife, ___) Germany, merchant, one son, Harry

[18] David Levy Yulee was the son of Moses Elias Levy; Samuel Yulee Way, mayor of Orlando from 1932–34 and 1938–40, was a further descendant.

Cohen, T. (Wife, Augusta) merchant, two sons, one daughter
Goldin, Rubin (Wife, Anna), ice cream maker from Virginia, wife from North Carolina
Myerson, Max, thirty-two (Wife, Saide, age twenty-two), Germany, daughter Hattie
Leventhal, H., age fifty-eight, widowed, Prussia, merchant, came to relieve rheumatism
Schreiber, M., fifty-nine (Wife, Leida, thirty-three), tailor, Germany, wife from Baltimore
Marx, Jacob, age sixty, (Wife, E., fifty-eight), Germany

An 1887 business directory included merchants and professionals from surrounding towns of Sanford, Kissimmee, Apopka, Longwood, Tavares and Winter Park. Following is a partial list of the names which I thought to be Jewish-sounding. Their occupations were also listed:

Berlin, David, baker
Birnbaum, Alfred, dry goods and clothing
Gazan, Nathan, proprietor, Central Hotel
Gittlesohn Bros. (Solomon and Wolf), gentlemen's furnishings, trunks, boats, etc.
Mairson, Julius, dry goods and men's furnishings
Prag, Maurice, notions and curiosities

A short time later the town of Mellonville had its name changed to Sanford after a General Sanford, who retired to and did a lot of developing in the area. It was larger than Orlando, and its census included 2,378 persons. Its business directory included three Jewish sounding names:

Cohen, Maurice (Wife, Theresa) dry goods, gents. furn. and millinery
Myerson, Max, grocer and gents furn. (may have moved from Orlando)
Schreiber, Michael, tailor (may have moved from Orlando)

The preceding items were gleaned from various written sources. The rest of the facts are pieced together from various people in and out of the local area. Early Jewish background information has been supplied in part by Anne Kanner Samuels, who was born in Sanford, also by Stella Moses Orrit and Gertrude Dingfelder. I received assistance on early Orlando area history from Saul Levy, who was a 1917 Orlando High School graduate and now lives in Miami; from Aaron Kanner, who was born in Orlando in 1905; from Myer Shader, who moved to Orlando in 1916; from Pauline Berman, who moved to Orlando from Jacksonville in 1909; from Miss Hatabel Hyer, who was born in Orlando in 1887; and several others. An 1887

Aaron Kanner,
three years old, Orlando, 1908.
(State Archives of Florida, Florida
Memory, Mosaic Collection.)

Sanford directory mentioned three families, others must have arrived immediately thereafter. A Sidney and Fannie Frank had a general merchandise store and had two children, Felix and Flossie. Charles Kanner, first of the well-known Kanner family, came to Sanford in 1889. Frank and Celia Seligman (she being a sister of Charles) preceded Charles but did not remain long, having moved to Quincy, Florida.

Charles Kanner brought his boyhood sweetheart from Roumania, Pauline Abrahams, they were married February 26, 1891, by a rabbi brought in from Jacksonville. They had five children, all of whom were well-educated. They were Abe O., an attorney and one of Florida's first appellate judges; Harry, who became a doctor; Israel, who became an architect; and two daughters, Ruth and Anne, both of whom became school teachers.

The early 1890s saw additional arrivals into the area. There were at least four new Jewish families. Joe Meisterman and his wife Charlotte; a

niece, Bertha Hameister, came several years later to live with them and care for them; a family named Henry Benedict; another named Pepper; and a Mr. and Mrs. J. Feinberg. He came from Alabama but lived in Quincy before coming to Orlando. The latter was a gentleman's tailor and haberdasher. I have a photo of his advertisement in an 1893 newspaper. They had one daughter. She is currently living on Park Lake Street in Orlando. She later became a teacher in Orlando and was married to a man named Ellsworth. They had one son who died in infancy.

Harry Kanner and his son Aaron in an orange grove near Orlando, c. 1912.
(State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory, Mosaic Collection.)

The big freeze of December 1894 and January 1895 had drastic economic effects on the area. Many people dependent on agriculture for a living were forced to go elsewhere. The Kanner family left Sanford to go into the ship chandlery business in Miami. Aaron Kanner, now living in

Miami, a son of Harry and Rachel Kanner, had an 1898 newspaper clipping where all the Kanners were arrested in Miami for violating the Sunday blue laws by selling merchandise to fishermen unloading their catch at the docks and were reloading with supplies to go back to sea. The press was sympathetic and had an editorial that ice cream and tobacco vendors and other similar shops should similarly be arrested for selling their wares on Sunday. They returned to Sanford in early 1900 and started farming a newly introduced vegetable in the area called celery.

Part of the Kanner family moved to Palatka, and Harry, who followed his brother Charles to Sanford, also brought his boyhood sweetheart from Roumania and they were married in 1904 in Sanford by a rabbi brought from Jacksonville. They moved to Orlando in 1905 and bought a shoe store from Eugene Duckworth, who many years later became mayor of Orlando. The store was located on Orange Avenue. Two other Kanner brothers came to Sanford. They were Kalman, who had come about 1905, and Asher in 1910. Asher had two sons, Murray and Jack, who are both residing in Sanford at this time.

Dr. P. Phillips settled in Orlando in 1898 and became one of the most prominent citrus growers in the area.[19] Kissimmee had at least one Jewish settler who came in the early 1890s. His name was Moses Kotz. They were in the hardware business, and their business was known as Kotz and Makimson Hardware Co. The business exists today as Makimson Hardware Co. The Kotz family were highly respected citizens. There is a dearth of facts regarding Jewish settlers until 1904, when the Ben Solomon family arrived. At least three of their children were born in Orlando; their names were Morris, Helen May, and Thoba. Ben's wife, Minnie, was the sister of Mrs. Charles Kanner. The Solomons had what was for Orlando a large store on the east side of Orange Avenue between Pine and Church Streets near or next to the Guernsey Hardware Store. Among my sources of information was an old-timer named Lucille Fair, who was an Orlando High

[19] Phillips was an intriguing character in Orlando history, at one time the largest citrus grower in the world with a massive and successful operation. His medical credentials are a subject of dispute, but he was a devoted philanthropist, and his foundation is still extant, distributing twelve million dollars annually in support of arts, education, health, children and youth, and social services, according to the Dr. P. Philips Foundation website. Dr. Phillips Charities, accessed May 7, 2026, https://drphillips.org.

At the Solomon home in Orlando. CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Rose Berman, Pauline Berman, Dr. Eugene Hoffman, Belle Hoffman, Mr. and Mrs. Sam Klein, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Stalberg, Hymie Levine, Minnie Solomon, Ben Solomon. (State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory, Mosaic Collection.)

School graduate of 1926. Her family lived across the street from the Solomon family on the corner of Orange Avenue and Livingston Street. Lucille said she loved to sit on the Solomons' porch and listen to Celia, one of the Solomon girls, practice the piano. Celia graduated from Rollins and later from Juilliard in New York and became a concert pianist and teacher of music.

The Harry Kanner shoe store was across the street from the Solomon store, and Aaron, the first of their three children, was born here in 1905. He was an Orlando High School graduate of 1923. He is a well-known attorney in Miami. Harry closed or sold his shoe store and opened the New York Bargain House on or near the corner of Church Street and Orange Avenue. Harry was a horse fancier and owned a well-known trotter named Nutland Patch, a son of Dan Patch. The horse was raced at local area fairs. Harry Kanner also owned a beautiful buggy and rode around the town on Sunday afternoons. This had been mentioned to me by one of the old-timers as the Kanners being the only Jewish family to participate

in this activity. They had two other children born in Orlando. They were Rosebud (Mrs. Albert) Friedman, now residing in Miami, and the late Samuel Kanner, who was an attorney.[20]

Next to arrive were Nat and Pauline Berman, who moved here in 1909 from Jacksonville. They had two daughters, Sylvia (Mrs. Al) Prince and Zelda (Mr. Jack) Gross. Nat Berman opened a tailoring shop. In several conversations with Mrs. Berman, she indicated that they were the third family that acknowledged being Jewish, the other two being the Solomons and the Kanners. Other old time families—the Benedicts, Pollacks, Feinburgs and possibly the Peppers—were still here at that time. Sometime later Nat Berman went into the real estate business in the employ of Henry Benedict.

Mrs. Berman was a charter member of the Orlando Civic League and the United Missionary Society, which was the forerunner of the Young Women's Community Club. [21] Nat was a charter member of the Lions Club of Orlando.

A 1909 Orlando City Directory lists the Benedicts, Bermans, Kanners, and Solomons as recognizable Jewish names. Henry, David, Samuel, and Rose Levy settled in Geneva in 1912 and went into citrus and beef cattle. Rose Levy still lives there at this time. Rose Edith Jacobson of Sanford is related to them.

The next contingent of Jews came from Pittsburgh in 1912.[22] First of these was Peter David and Bella Wittenstein, later followed by Mr. and Mrs. Moses Levy. Wittenstein bought land and a grove of one hundred acres on the south shore of Lake Fairview, and the north border of the property was Lake Silver. This later became a well-known residential area known as Palomar. The area occupied by Robert E. Lee Junior High School was part of a grove originally planted by Peter and Morris Wittenstein.

---

[20] According the ISJL entry, Rosebud (Rose) Kanner (b. 1904) was the first known Jewish child born in the Orlando area. "Orlando, FL."

[21] See "The Young Women's Community Club," Riches, Orlando Public Library accessed May 5, 2026, https://richesmi.cah.ucf.edu/omeka/exhibits/show/orlandolibrary/ywcc. The involvement of a Jewish woman with a Christian social service organization in the 1920s shows a certain ecumenicism.

[22] The ISJL Encyclopedia describes this group of migrants "the Pittsburgh wave." According to Wittenstein here, it consisted of his parents, the Wittensteins and Shaders, as well as the Levy, Levine, and Meitin families, including several households and generations over the span of a few years between 1912 and 1915. "Orlando, FL."

The Levys bought a twenty-four-acre grove on what is now Edgewater Drive with the north boundary of what is now Princeton Street. This property became the center of the College Park area. Peter Wittenstein also had a large sweet potato farm on the present site of Interlaken just west of Palomar, and what is now Maury Road was for many years known as Wittenstein Road.

Also from Pittsburgh came the Harry Levine family, who had a nice home on the corner of Orange Avenue and Concord Street, the present site of the Firestone Tire Store. They stayed until 1923 and moved to Tel Aviv. Their three sons remained in the family business known as the Florida Leather Co. When the Levine sons left the area, they sold the leather business to other members of their family, the Louis Abramowitzes and the Morris Tetenbaums.

The Levines were followed by the Israel and Rose Shader family in 1913, who bought a grove on the west side of Lake Fairview. Israel Shader was a very religious person and brought from Pittsburgh the first *sefer Torah* to the Orlando area. As the Shaders, Wittensteins, and Meitins lived north of the central area, the local Jewish citizens apparently agreed to let the *sefer Torah* remain at the Levy grove as it was pretty much the central area between Orlando and the Fairvilla area to the north. All of the Shader children were in Orlando. They were Jacob and Fannie Meitin; George and Sarah Miller; Morris and Esther Wittenstein, who were the first of the Shader family to arrive; Isadore and Gittle Shader; Myer and Beatrice Shader; and Ben and Bessie Shader. Several of the third and fourth generations of the Shader and Wittenstein families are well known in the area, and the fifth generation is growing in numbers.

Peter David Wittenstein was considered a learned man. His family migrated from White Russia to Argentina several years earlier and then to the United States in 1884. In Russia he was a scribe, a person authorized to write Torahs, all of which are handwritten. He was also a lay religious leader, a *shochet* and a mohel. A *shochet* was a man trained and authorized to slaughter animals to provide kosher meat and fowl. A mohel is one trained in circumcision. A few years later Rabbi Wm. Wittenstein, who later became the Chief Rabbi of Paterson, New Jersey, bought into the family grove, and his family spent a large part of winter months here. His son Sol, who was married to Dora in 1922, was a well-known insurance agent in the area. Their son, Sheldon, currently operates the business.

The Shader family of Orlando, date unknown. TOP: Fannie Meitin, Sarah Miller, Esther Wittenstein; CENTER: Israel Shader, Rose Shader; BOTTOM: Ben Shader, Myer Shader, Isadore Shader. (State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory, Mosaic Collection.)

A few facts about the Orlando area in the early 1900s. The first paved street began at the Church Street rail depot and ran easterly to Main Street, now Magnolia Avenue. An early Orlandoan, Daisy Muir, had the honor of making the first drive on the new paving in her surrey. The north and south extension on Main Street was of clay and began at Lake Lucerne on the south and went to Livingston Street on the north. This street had the leading hotels from the Tremont near Anderson Street to the Wyoming on the block between Livingston and Amelia Streets. Among its famous patrons were John L. Lewis, founder of the CIO, and Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau.

Later Orange Avenue was paved from Lake Lucerne north to Washington or Jefferson Streets. All paving was about eight feet wide (a regular

parking area in a car lot is ten feet to twelve feet in width). When buggies or wagons were passing each other, each kept one set of wheels on the paving, giving about one-half of the road to the other vehicle. The paving was later extended north to Marks Street, the site of the Orlando water system. Many old-timers will remember the old stand-pipe water tower on the southwest corner of Marks and Orange Avenue.

The fashionable places to live were west of Orange Avenue on Central Street; on Hughey Avenue from Washington Street to South Street; the area around Lake Lucerne; north on Orange Avenue; and north on Magnolia Avenue.

A 1915 Orlando directory shows the city population to be 3,894 persons, and Orange County had 8,135 residents. An example of describing one's location in earlier directories would be to state, for example, that he occupied the third building on the north side of Livingston Street between Orange Avenue and Magnolia Avenue. Orlando was now more populated and more sophisticated and devised a numbering system for buildings and homes. The 1915 directory had a professional section with several small display advertisements by doctors, dentists, and lawyers. The residents with Jewish-sounding names and their occupations are listed:

Benedict, Joseph & Sylvia, Florida Real Estate and Invest. Co.
Feinberg, Jacob & Naomi, gents furnishings
Kanner, Harry & Rae, dry goods
Kanner, Kalman, dry goods
Berman, Nat & Pauline, empl. Florida Real Est. and Inv. Co.
Kaplan, Irving, waiter
Levine, Harry & Esther, citrus grower, 502 N. Orange
Isen, Max, dry goods, 601 W. Church Street
Meisterman, Joseph & Charlotte, 301 West St.
Phillips, Dr. P.
Solomon, Benjamin & Minnie, clothing store
Stalberg, Harry & Hannah, pawn broker
Harris, Ansel & Yetta, fruit grower

The Levy, Meitin, Shader, and Wittenstein families are not listed as they did not live inside the city limits.

Regular Saturday religious services (minyans) were held at the Levy grove. All of the Jewish residents were Orthodox, or had Orthodox leanings in their religious observance. Their businesses were closed on the

Sabbath, and the Saturday services served the Jewish religious requirements and much of the social requirements of the area. During High Holidays those attending the services would spend the night between the first and second days of Rosh Hashanah at the Levys. They would also spend the night following Kol Nidre there. They slept in the various rooms and on the veranda surrounding the house, as the walk in the deep sand to their homes and return would be too strenuous. Their horses were often "anchored" and were fed in the surrounding grove.

The Kanners and Solomons, Orlando's first two Jewish families, date unknown. BACK ROW: A.O. Kanner, unidentified man; MIDDLE ROW: Harry Kanner, Pauline Kanner, Grandmother Abrams, Minnie Solomon, A.O. Kanner; FRONT ROW: Herman Kanner, Ruth Sandler, Celia Solomon, Blanche Bollas. (State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory, Mosaic Collection.)

Following the original Pittsburgh group were some additional arrivals. Max Isen and his wife came in 1914 and opened a dry goods and grocery store at the corner of Church and Terry Streets. An interesting sidelight was that Mrs. Isen brought her sister from New York who later became the wife of Aaron Harry Levy, son of Moses Levy. They were the

parents of Dr. Morton Levy. A family named Greenberg came in 1915 and opened a fine ladies dress shop, but according to Lucille Fair, it was too high-style and expensive for the area. The store was not a success and the Greenbergs later moved away. A family named Friedman lived on the corner of Concord and Hughey Streets and was an early citrus grower and real estate owner. A family named Richman was also an early settler. They lived on a grove in Maitland and later moved to a house on Concord Street. They had a son named Paul who became a Reform rabbi, and a daughter named Lillian. A family named Roseman also lived on West Concord, and their daughter, Laura, was an early 1920s high school graduate.

A family named Hirsch was here in the late teens and had a store on Bryan Street near Central. Perry Weinberg and Harry and Hannah Stalberg came to Orlando from Key West about 1915. Weinberg had an Orange Avenue jewelry store, and Stalberg opened a pawn shop. Ivan and Minnie Burman came from Indianapolis and purchased a laundry business about 1918. He later leased and operated the San Juan Hotel that was Orlando's finest for several years. They had a daughter named Tybell who graduated from Orlando High School. She later married Dr. A. H. Spivack, a prominent Orlando surgeon for several years.

About this same time Orlando was developing into quite a citrus packing center. The W. B. Mouser packing house was at the corner of South Street and the railroad. The C. A. Marsh packing house was at Jackson Street and the railroad. There were two other packing houses at Amelia and the railroad and another on Concord Street. There was Orange Crate manufacturing plant, the Pounds Crate Co. on Garland Street, and the rail spur that supplied crates to these and other packing houses. The Cain-O'Berry Boiler Co., which later became the Harry P. Leu Company, sold the packing house machinery to these and other establishments.

Sanford also had good growth during this same period. In about 1910 a Fleisher family moved there and were prominent growers. The same year Abraham and Stella Moses settled there and shipped fruit and produce to the famous wholesale Washington Market in New York. A son Morris and his wife, Frances, also came to Sanford, and another son, Paul, handled the New York end of the business. They became large celery and cabbage growers. In 1914 Sam and Clara Benjamin came from New York

and opened a dry goods business. They had four daughters and one son, Frank, who is a CPA in Jacksonville.

Isaac and Fannie Schwartz came from Key West in 1915 and opened a grocery store. Dr. Roy Brown, a dentist, came there to practice upon his graduation. He was a nephew of the Schwartzes. Harry and Bertha Bandel came in 1916. He moved to Orlando a few years later when two brothers, Max and Louis, moved here with their families. In 1917 Saul and Faye Robbins and son Milton came to Sanford. A year later Al Raefield, a cousin of Faye's, opened a general merchandise store. He became most active in Jewish communal affairs and was an early president of Orlando's first Jewish congregation. The middle 1920s brought Julius and Gertrude Dingfelder to Sanford. He was a grower and civic leader. Their two children are Margaret (Mrs. Arthur) Corey of Orlando and Simon Dingfelder of Tampa.

Back in Orlando again, Hyman and Esther Lieberman came here in 1915. He was employed by Ben Solomon and later they opened their own millinery store. Their children were Bea (Mrs. Irving) Lippton and the late Orwin Lieberman. They were followed in 1917 by Louis and Bertha Lieberman. A son William settled in Leesburg, and a daughter, Esther, married Sam Fleisher from Sanford.

This now brings us to the era of World War I. Saul Levy, an Orlando High School graduate of 1917, joined the U.S. Navy. Isadore Shader was with the U.S. Expeditionary Forces in France. Morris Levine and Myer Shader were in other branches of the Armed Service.

Pauline Berman told me that there were parades and functions extolling patriotism and exhorting people to buy Liberty Bonds, the World War I equivalent of E Bonds. There was editorial comment in the local paper that Jews and Negroes were conspicuously absent from the Liberty Bond rallies. This was refuted by Mrs. Berman, who said that the Jewish citizenry were not specifically invited as there was no recognized Jewish organization in the Orlando area.[23] She feels that this led to the purchase of an available building, which became Orlando's first synagogue. I was told that it was a small church that had formerly belonged to a Seventh Day Adventist group and was located at the corner of Central and Terry Streets, which at that time was in a very nice residential area. Congregation Ohev Shalom was organized in the home of Harry Kanner in 1917.

[23] See note 9 above.

Hyman and Esther Lieberman at the Hat Box,
their store located on South Orange Avenue in Orlando, 1922.
(State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory, Mosaic Collection.)

His residence, near the corner of Pine and Terry Streets, was a short block to the south of the first synagogue.

A Mr. A. Stetner was elected the first president of the new congregation. I could not determine Mr. Stetner's occupation, but I did find someone who remembered that for many years he was a winter visitor from New Haven, Connecticut, and that he had a reputation as a good card player. The second president was a Mr. Perry Weinberg, a respected jeweler. Neither name appears in the 1921 Orlando directory, so they may have resided outside the corporate limits. Weinberg died in Orlando in 1930 and is interred at Congregation Ohev Shalom Cemetery.

The Samuel Klein family, he was a brother of Pauline Berman, who moved away to California. The 1920 federal census showed that the Orlando population was now up to 9,282 persons. The 1921 city directory listed the following names that were identifiably Jewish but I know to be incomplete as several other Jewish families were living inside the city limits. Again, not included were those outside the corporate limits:

Jeanne Berman
Jonas and Yetta Cohen

Ned and Pearl Berman
Leo Goldberg
Rose Berman (mother of Nat)
Emil and Cecilia Metzinger
I. N. and Minnie Burman
Dr. P. Phillips
Harry and Mamie Cohen
Sol and Dora Wittenstein

After World War I, many people were able to go to the northern cities to visit family or for business. I fondly recollect that they would bring back kosher salami and halvah, a candy made of almonds, honey, etc., to share with many local Jewish people. It was a great treat to have these food items.

There were at least two prominent men who were Spanish-American War Veterans. They were Phil Rosenberg and Sol Samuels. Phil owned land and operated the Astor Hotel, which was on Orange Avenue on a site now occupied by the CNA Building, and Sol was manager of the Rialto Theatre, a popular movie house on West Church Street a few doors west of Orange Avenue. I remember their marching in many parades.

Following World War I, Orlando started having spectacular growth. First there was a short nationwide depression, or period of economic readjustment, as the nation was in transition from a war economy to a peace economy. Then in Florida followed a period of prosperity that was known as the Florida Boom. Land speculation was rampant. Prices advanced so rapidly that land changed ownership two or three times before the first real estate transaction would have a chance to be recorded in the county courthouse. Fortunes were made by many and like today, when the economic excitement subsided, many of those holding properties at that time ran into economic problems. The boom ended here about 1926 or 1927 after it crested in 1925 and became part of a national recession climaxed by the stock market crash of 1929.

Many who came into the area during this period left indelible marks on the community. I knew many of these people as some were friends of my parents and several were active in the religious or business life of the central Florida area. I will mention several of the prominent names, but not in any particular order and with the hope there have been no omissions. I. N. Burman leased the San Juan Hotel about 1921. It had Orlando's finest public ballroom and restaurant. Pauline (Mrs. Nat) Berman was

very active in Red Cross during World War I. She was an active member of the Sorosis Club.[24] She was also the first woman radio newscaster in the United States; she was one of the spokespersons for the Jewish community and was active in many affairs and organizations. The Leader Department store operated by Harry Stalberg was a large, very popular downtown store. The Berger boys, Phil, Sam and Lou, had one of Orlando's finest men's stores known as the Waldorf Shop with excellent name brand merchandise. Phil was married to Naomi and for many years operated Bergers Tavern. The Tavern was a rendezvous for sports and entertainment personalities visiting in the area. Lou married Dorothy Wilson, a cousin of the Shaders. Emil Metzinger built the Fort Gatlin Hotel, which occupied about one-half block on Orange Avenue between Concord and Amelia Streets. Herman's loan office and jewelry store was operated by the first of the Lefkowitz family in the area. Hyman Roth operated Mack's Dress Shop, a fine ladies' store on Orange Avenue.

A costume, tuxedo rental store, and tailoring shop was operated by Mr. and Mrs. Ben Labelman, who came in 1919, the forerunner of LaBelle Furs. The third generation of the family is now in the business. Sol and Dora Wittenstein, who were married in 1920, operated a grocery store on the corner of Summerlin and East Washington Streets. He later became one of Orlando's leading insurance agents. Dora was active in community life and was especially recognized as a long-time board member of the Orange County Parental Home. Morris Wittenstein operated the College Park Dairy, which had a fine reputation and served milk products to several schools and the two area hospitals. The Millers, Meitins, and Shaders operated the MMS Fruit Company, an early area Jewish-owned citrus shipping business and the forerunner of Zellwood Fruit Distributors, now operated by Ralph Meitin and his son, Julian.

One of the early popular well-known eating places was Faulk's Orange Delicatessen, which was located on Orange Avenue between Church and Jackson Streets. A small nice dress shop that fell by the wayside was operated by Sam Weinstein, who moved back to New York and became famous as Samuel Winston Fine Creations. A fancy grocery store was operated by the Barbanels, and Orlando's first kosher butcher shop was operated in that store by Jonas Cohen, a brother-in-law, and was located

[24] See "The Orlando Sorosis Club," Riches, Orlando Public Library, accessed May 5, 2026, https://richesmi.cah.ucf.edu/omeka/exhibits/show/orlandolibrary/sorosisclub.

on Church Street west of the railroad. They sold out to Morris Wilson and Sidney Blattner from Jacksonville in 1925, who in turn sold to Mickey and Mary Safer in 1927. Jesse and Mollie Rosen, with their baby daughter Ruth Esther, moved to Orlando from Richmond, Indiana, in 1924. He operated the Orlando Fish and Poultry Co. Mollie was active in Girl Scouts, the Sorosis Club, and was one of the organizers of Beth El Congregation. The Friday night services were frequently held at their house. This congregation was the nucleus that later became the Congregation of Liberal Judaism.[25]

Sanford at this time had several Jewish families who came to Orlando for religious services. Earlier, Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Moses donated land and built a synagogue there. Mr. Charles Kanner donated its first Torah. They found they could not support a rabbi so the congregation was dissolved. Several of the members joined Congregation Ohev Shalom in Orlando, and their Torah was brought to Orlando.

Congregation Ohev Shalom was keeping pace with Orlando's growth. Their old location was fast becoming a commercial area, so the Central and Terry Streets location was sold and a fine, new edifice was erected at the corner of Church Street and Eola Drive in 1925. The building was designed and construction supervised by H. George Miller. By this time the Florida Boom reached astronomical heights, and Orlando was growing at a pace far in excess of the recent growth rate brought about by the opening of Walt Disney World. This brought many Jewish newcomers to the area. Although I made inquiry from several long-time residents, it is likely that I have not included all Jewish residents, and beg forgiveness for any omissions. Following are several names and some of their occupations. These people came in the middle 1920s and are listed alphabetically:

J. B. Asher, CPA
Wm. Berkowitz, family clothing store
Arstein Brothers, men's clothing
Morris Baker, shoes
I. J. Becker, shoes
Blam family

[25] Reform Judaism wasn't institutionally established in Orlando until 1950, but in the 1920s through 1940s there was the nucleus of the community, which met in private homes. For a time, they merged with Congregation Ohev Shalom, later splitting off to officially join the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, now the Union of Reform Judaism. Today they are the Congregation of Reform Judaism.

Dedication of Congregation Ohev Shalom, Orlando's first synagogue, 1926.
(State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory, Mosaic Collection.)

Sidney Blattner family
Bonime family
Goldsmith family, shoe department in Dickson-Ives Dept. Store
Sam Fischer, Fischer Frocks, later Fischer Seafoods, Cocoa Beach
Louis and Gertrude Ehrlich, men's clothing
_____ Ehrlich, railroad cross ties
Leo Goldberg, wholesale produce
_____ Forst, shoe store
Abraham Fox, retailing
David and Josephine Hillman, wholesale dry goods
Abe and Bluma Haimowitz, 5¢ & 10¢ store
Sam and Freida Haimowitz, real estate and insurance
Ben Greenberg, scrap metal
Jacobson, Louis and Theresa, tie store
John and Pauline Jacobson, Sunshine Dept. Store
George and Bessie Friedland, Maitland, citrus
Lavick S. and Rebecca Frankel, retail clothing
Harry Kottleman family, pawn shop
Kamenoff family, bags and scrap metal
Sam Levenson, real estate and citrus
Philip Kessler, scrap dealer
Meer family, Winter Park, retail store

Philip Metlin family, scrap dealer
Ed Newald, Dodge auto agency
Moss Leonard and Ruby
Ottenberg, Joe and Minnie
John Petosky, citrus and real estate
Philip Salonic, dry cleaner
A. H. Soowal, dry cleaner
A. F. Stone, F. W. Grand 5¢ & 10¢ store
Max (Mickey) and Mary Safer, groceries and kosher meat
Rev. B. Safer
Sol and Etta Samuels
Phil Rosenberg, Astor Hotel
Morris Seigle family
Ben Sigal family
M. M. Segal family, Sunshine Dept. Store
Albert Silverstein
George Silverstein
Fred Speigel, artist
Fred and Blanche Schiff, insurance, auto parts, real estate
Rosenbloom family, Southern Furniture Company
Joseph Shapiro family, retailing
Abe Shapiro family, retailing
Shulsinger family (kosher butcher)
Nathan Stein, citrus grower
Reuben and Feida Tannenbaum
Morris Wilson family
Louis Wolly family

Following are several firsts among the Jewish residents of the area during the 1920s. These are listed to the best of my knowledge and with some fear of contradiction:

First doctor (MD), Eugene Hoffman, Opthalmologist
First nurse, Belle (Mrs. Eugene) Hoffman
First artist, Fred Speigel
First architect, Arthur Beck
First piano teacher, Ruth (Mrs. Arthur) Beck
First lawyer, Charles Metzger
First certified public accountant, J. B. Asher
First woman radio commentator, Pauline (Mrs. Nat) Berman—*nationwide*
First scoutmaster, H. N. Roth
First meat packer, Henry Levy
First dental assistant, Kitty Fields
First pharmacist, Sam Kleinman

First restaurant, Joe Faulk
First dress manufacturer, Sam Fischer
First waiter, Irving Kaplan
First milk processor, Morris Wittenstein
First milk producer, Israel Shader
First citrus packer and shipper, Dr. P. Phillips
First kosher butcher shop, Jonas Cohen
First mohel and *shochet*, Peter D. Wittenstein
First pawn broker, Harry Stalberg
First dentist, Roy Brown

The end of the boom era and the beginning of the depression period is a good place to bring this part of the chronology to a close. I will let the mantle of responsibility for continuance fall upon others for establishment of the facts concerning local Jewish citizenry. Following this period, several Jewish families moved away because of adverse economic conditions, and many other families moved into the area to get a new economic start in the hopes of getting along better here than in their former locations, which resulted in many changes. I have spent many hours in developing these facts. I contacted others who had moved away from the area. I discovered that several families still residing here lost their Jewish identity in the course of time and managed to become totally integrated into civic and social life of the non-Jewish business, cultural, and social superstructure of the Orlando community. I give them assurance that their background is kept inviolate and secure from idle gossip.

This compilation has been a lot of work but it has also been a lot of genuine pleasure. I beg forgiveness from those who were omitted from mention by inadvertence. Be assured that there was malice toward none and charity toward some in a few instances. It has brought for me new friendships and acquaintances. I hope it proves to be a source of information and some pleasure to those who read it or hear it.

Book Reviews

Moses Jacob Ezekiel: Jewish, Confederate, Expatriate Sculptor. By Samantha Baskind. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2025. 294 pages.

Samantha Baskind describes the eponymous subject of her new book, *Moses Jacob Ezekiel: Jewish, Confederate, Expatriate Sculptor,* as "a study in contradictions," who spent decades as an expatriate in Italy but never renounced his American citizenship or emotional attachment to his natal South (2). Born into a prominent Sephardic family in Richmond, Virginia, Ezekiel (1844–1917) took pride in his service to the Confederacy and later cherished the opportunity to demonstrate his love for the South when he was commissioned to create a Confederate memorial for Arlington National Cemetery.

Although Ezekiel's Confederate ties cast a shadow over the entire book, Baskind takes a broader approach to his work and establishes three goals that guide her through the entirety of his oeuvre: to recover and contextualize Ezekiel's work within the society that initiated it; to explore the business of art in the late nineteenth century and the market Ezekiel navigated; and to examine how his sculpture was influenced by the triad of identities that appear in the book's title. However, none of these purposes define the book as much as the "additional dimension" that Baskind embraced halfway through the project, "when Ezekiel—or at least some of his sculptures—became relevant again for all the wrong reasons" (2). Ezekiel was swept up in the broader conversation that reemerged in the 2010s about how Americans commemorate our past. The book is as much a

scholarly monograph about a nineteenth-century Jewish American artist as an exploration of how the past intersects with the present.

Baskind organizes the book to reflect her interest in the full body of Ezekiel's work. She wades through the various subjects that occupied Ezekiel—his monument *Religious Liberty* in Philadelphia, the Bible, the arts and antique, and American presidents—before ending with a chapter focusing on his Confederate monuments. She explicitly asks readers not to jump to the final chapter, explaining that it "is not the beating heart of this book, even as it is essential" (11). Readers who heed her request will see Baskind emerge as an authoritative voice on Ezekiel, perhaps best attested by the fact that she located eleven lost sculptures over the course of her research or her insightful analysis that Ezekiel quietly encoded Judaism in *Religious Liberty*, which appears on Baskind's cover, by crafting the outstretched right hand of its central figure in the form of the priestly blessing. Future researchers will appreciate that Baskind shares her deep knowledge of Ezekiel and his work in the form of one hundred illustrations, many of which reproduce artwork that has been lost or relocated.

Baskind adds historical depth to the study by exploring the afterlives of individual sculptures, treating them as characters who deserve their own biographies. Chapter four explains why a set of statues Ezekiel created for elevated niches in the exterior of an art museum at one point decorated the land around a private swimming pool on the way to their current home at the Norfolk Botanical Gardens. Some readers may find that, at times, Baskind gently sidesteps the afterlives of certain sculptures. For example, chapter five develops an argument about why Thomas Jefferson was an attractive figure for nineteenth-century Jews like Ezekiel and the Bernheim brothers, who commissioned Ezekiel to sculpt the third president in Louisville. It focuses on Jefferson as a symbol of religious

freedom but noticeably avoids entering a longer discussion about how changing attitudes towards Jefferson and his relationship with slavery may affect the sculpture's valence in the present.

At other times, readers may sense that some of the sculptures have a more complicated afterlife than the text suggests. For instance, some readers will be skeptical about the idea that Ezekiel's first Confederate monument, *Virginia Mourning Her Dead*, now has a meaning "divorced from the Civil War" (169). Earlier in the book, Baskind analyzes how the meaning of Ezekiel's *Religious Liberty* has evolved since it was moved to its current location outside the Weitzman National Museum of American Jewish History. She emphasizes that its location near Independence Mall in Philadelphia, "mere steps away from the Liberty Bell, a block south of the National Constitution Center, and a block north of Independence Hall, where American liberty was born," allow the monument to serve as "a proud reminder of the liberties that have allowed Jews to thrive, finally in freedom, in America (the very theme of the museum)" (36). For some viewers, *Religious Liberty* undoubtedly evokes the sense of pride that Baskind describes. Yet, if one were to use her spatial analysis to guide them through the Independence National Historical Park, they would encounter a site that provokes deeper reflection about pluralism and American democracy. As they approached the Liberty Bell or went from the National Constitution Center to Independence Hall, they would find the President's House site and its multiple displays that honor the enslaved people who toiled in George Washington's household in Philadelphia. Thus, when read in conversation with its present-day location near the Independence National Historical Park, Ezekiel's *Religious Liberty* engages in a more complex conversation about American democracy than Baskind suggests.

Baskind begins and ends the study in the world of a twenty-first-century historian involved in controversies stemming from Ezekiel's lifelong Confederate ties. The preface focuses on an event Baskind calls "the Princeton exhibition debacle" in which she and a donor canceled a planned exhibition after university officials asked her to omit Ezekiel and another artist with connections to the Confederacy from the show (xii). A second controversy exposes a different side of the discourse about Ezekiel. Baskind had already completed the conclusion, in which she artfully ties the book together by demonstrating that its title is also her own epitaph

for Ezekiel and the intended final line of the volume, when a petition from a group who called themselves the Society for the Preservation of Jewish Civil War History compelled her to add an epilogue. Reproducing both the petition and the response, the epilogue is most memorable for its poignant and appropriate criticism of the petitioners' attempt to construe the removal of Ezekiel's Confederate memorial *New South* from Arlington National Cemetery as an incident of antisemitism. These two episodes frame the six well-paced chapters that constitute the core of the volume.

Moses Jacob Ezekiel: Jewish, Confederate, Expatriate Sculptor responds to a pressing need to understand a figure in the crosshairs of the American culture wars. It successfully recovers a once-acclaimed artist who contributed, but was not limited to, the memorial landscape of the Lost Cause. Readers may not agree with all of the book's conclusions, but it ultimately raises a set of questions that should occupy scholars engaged in the emerging conversation about Southern Jews, race, and religion in the years after the Civil War.

Joseph M. Weisberg, Brandeis University
The reviewer may be contacted at jweisberg@brandeis.edu.

Melting Point: Family, Memory, and the Search for a Promised Land. By Rachel Cockerell. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2024. 400 pages.

What can you learn about history from investigating your family's story? Rachel Cockerell's *Melting Point: Family, Memory, and the Search for a Promised Land* provides an excellent example of how exploring one's past can offer valuable insight into the larger events of history. Cockerell's research into her great-grandfather, David Jochelman, took her on a globetrotting journey of discovery which resulted in this narrative. The author's artful retelling invites readers to follow David and his descendants through Switzerland, England, New York City, Galveston, and a young State of Israel as the Jochelman family migrated and branches diverged from one another over time.

The book is divided into three sections: "Part One: Vienna, Basel, Galveston," "Part Two: New York," and "Part Three: London." Part One

explores the development of the early Zionist movement, looking at the founding of the Jewish Territorial Organization (ITO) and the role David Jochelman played in it. The ITO was an offshoot of the Zionist movement that rerouted eastern European Jews away from overcrowded New York to the port of Galveston in an effort known as the Galveston Movement. The Galveston Movement was short-lived, 1907–1914, and sought to re-distribute Jews in the American West and Southwest. Part Two examines the life of Jochelman's son from his first marriage, Emjo Basshe (born Emannuel Jochelman), who became a playwright in New York City. Basshe's life took a different trajectory than his younger sisters, Fanny and Sonia, who are at the heart of Part Three.

In the final section, Cockerell focuses on her grandmother Fanny and aunt Sonia's experiences in England from the 1930s to early 1950s, including Sonia and her family's immigration to Israel. This section also includes interviews with Cockerell's father, aunts, and cousins, who provide readers with firsthand accounts of life in England during World War II. Especially poignant, they emphasized the experience of children who at the time did not grasp the extent of the horrors being committed by the Nazis towards Jews. These accounts contrast with the inclusion of newspaper excerpts describing British Jews protesting their country's lack of action against the growing threat of Adolf Hitler in 1933 (259). These moments in *Melting Point* demonstrate the variation of Jewish experiences in Europe during World War II. Not until the family moved to Israel after the war did they learn more about the Holocaust (341).

Melting Point employs a unique approach to its writing, as Cockerell offers little of her own analysis. In her preface, she explains that previous drafts included her thoughts in each chapter, but it did not feel right to her to include these (i). Instead, *Melting Point* is a collection of excerpts from primary source materials: newspaper articles, advertisements, diaries, and oral history interviews. Cockerell skillfully crafted these together to form a cohesive narrative that, for the most part, flows chronologically. This book provides a broad resource for scholars and others interested in Jewish and Zionist history between the 1890s and 1950s, as many more than one hundred primary source documents are utilized.

However, although this tactic offers valuable insight to some readers, I would caution against it being one's introduction to Zionist

history. For a novice in this content, it can be confusing to recognize the significance of several of the figures featured in the work. Cockerell does examine a few historical figures in detail. Her first chapter opens with personal accounts of people describing their meetings with Theodor Herzl, and chapter 2 uses the same tactic to introduce Israel Zangwill. Zangwill and Herzl were two of the most prominent Zionist leaders in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and their significance should be rightfully fleshed out. Others such as Alexander Z. Gurwitz would also benefit from a more thorough discussion in the text. Gurwitz's accounts—taken from his memoir *Memories of Two Generations*, edited by Bryan Edward Stone—give insight into the Galveston Movement (chapter 15), but need further elaboration for those unfamiliar with Texas Jewish history.

I enjoy the stylistic choice of using the snippets from primary sources to craft the narrative, but *Melting Point* would be stronger with some sort of identification for these figures. This could either be done by including an appendix of all the historical figures whose perspectives are shared or by including explanatory footnotes. Even if not every person with a firsthand account is famous, including information about who they are would help other researchers searching for lesser-known individuals who were impacted by the Galveston Movement and the Zionist Revisionist movement.

Furthermore, while Cockerell does note that her offline research outside of her home in England occurred after the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions, citations with the dates for the specific interviews she conducted should be included in the book. Without this, readers have only a general timeframe between the end of restrictions and *Melting Point*'s publication in 2024. Again, such information would be helpful for future researchers so that they could be mindful of the time when that information was gathered and potentially compare it to other accounts from those

interviewees at different points in their lives. While Cockerell has introduced great resources to the scholarly community, they need more context. The book includes many photographs throughout, yet, once again, a lack of citations and descriptions makes them less impactful.

Although *Melting Point* would be a stronger work had it overcome these issues, I believe it remains a great addition to the scholarship in fields such as Jewish, Zionist, and immigration history. Cockerell shows readers how, even with the same Jewish families, opinions on Zionism differed, such as Sonia Jochelman's indifference to the Revisionist movement while her husband, Yehuda "Leva" Benari, was a devout follower of the movement's leader, Vladimir Jabotinsky (273, 298). She also highlights how drastically the paths of once close families can diverge. In her afterward, Cockerell ponders the moment the Mapesbury Road household in London, comprising both Fanny and Sonia's families, was destined to grow apart. She wonders if it was when Sonia and Leva decided to move to Israel or earlier, when her grandmother, Fanny, chose to marry a non-Jewish man (347–48). Although the book could have differed structurally to improve its utility to historians, Cockerell's research into the world of her great-grandfather and his children ultimately provides historical insight into the complexity of the Jewish experience.

Gabrielle Lyle, Del Mar College
The reviewer may be contacted at drgabriellelyle@gmail.com.

I Am a Georgia Girl: The Life of Lucille Selig Frank. By Ann Hite. Macon: Mercer University Press, 2025. 337 pages.

"Women is losers," sang arguably the greatest blues singer of all time, Janis Joplin. Sadly, she was correct in the field of history, in which women's voices have often been squelched, silenced, censored, or ignored. Having been an undergraduate at Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio, during the early 1970s, I can attest to that fact. There was no such thing as "women's studies" until late in my college career. Which brings me now to this new biography of Lucille Selig Frank, *I Am a Georgia Girl*, by Ann Hite. When I first met Hite three years ago, she was knee-deep in her study of Lucille Frank, the wife of Leo Frank, who was lynched in 1915

in Marietta, Georgia. She introduced herself to me after a lecture and asked simply, "What do you know about Lucille Frank?" I was embarrassed to admit that her question left me gobsmacked by my ignorance of the topic. "Well," I said, "she was Leo Frank's wife." And that was the extent of my knowledge. Admittedly I know a great deal about Leo Frank. I have worked toward his complete exoneration for the past thirty years, but my knowledge of Lucille was notable for its absence. And so, for me and for many others, Hite has stepped into the breach of that ignorance. Her book sits at the intersection of women's history and Southern Jewish history, a field that is only beginning to receive sustained scholarly attention. Her work joins a growing canon of scholarship, including *Daughters of Israel, Daughters of the South* by Jennifer Stollman, *Going South: Jewish Women in the Civil Rights Movement* by Debra L. Schultz, *America's Jewish Women* by Pamela S. Nadell, *A Southern Woman's Story* by Phoebe Yates Pember and introduced by George C. Rable, and *The Civil War Diary of Emma Mordecai* edited by Dianne Ashton and Melissa Klapper.

Hite begins by explaining her early fascination with the Frank case, sparked by her grandmother's recollection of being present at the site of the lynching in Marietta. The oft-told story—that Frank gave his wedding ring to a stranger to deliver to Lucille—has haunted Hite since childhood. Her central argument is that the story of Leo Frank must be told through the perspectives of the women most intimately connected to the case: Mary Phagan (the victim), Fanny Coleman (her mother), Rae Frank (Leo's mother), and Josephine Selig (Lucille's mother). Above all, Hite contends, the case can only be fully understood through Lucille's perspective.

> The Frank case is, in many ways, like an onion. You peel one layer away and you think everything is uncovered. Until you look closer. And then you realize there is another layer to the story, and yet another one after that. And then, even one more after that. Hite immediately sees the importance

of sex and gender issues in shaping the Frank trial. The American South had been devasted by the Civil War. By 1913 their rich farm lands had been denuded and many Southerners were thrown into poverty. The Coleman/Phagans were one such family. They had to send their thirteen-year-old daughter to work in a crowded and dirty pencil factory in order to help pay for their rent and food each week. To a once proud agrarian family, nothing could have been more shameful.

During Frank's murder trial Coleman gave a lengthy interview to the Atlanta newspapers. The interview is more than just a recounting of what happened to the little girl on the day of her murder. She used this interview to raise concerns about putting little girls in factory jobs that were meant for adults. In an early iteration of the #MeToo movement, Coleman told other mothers that, without protection or regulations, their daughters could likewise fall victim to adult predators. During the Frank trial itself, women were browbeaten and threatened with incarceration unless they gave the testimony that the prosecutor needed to convict Frank. Minola McKnight, the Frank and Selig family cook, gave damaging testimony about Frank's alibi. She later recanted her statements, attributing them to having received the "third degree" treatment at the hands of the Fulton County police. This became a pattern in the Frank trial as one woman after another testified that Frank was of low moral character, only to recant that testimony after their appearance in court.

The centerpiece of Hite's book is Lucille Frank's writing. After having been criticized because she had not visited her husband during the first two weeks of his incarceration, she wrote a long letter to the three newspapers in Atlanta defending her actions and proclaiming his innocence. Hugh Dorsey, the prosecutor, responded by questioning whether Lucille had written the letter since he could not imagine a woman having such strong opinions! In one startling piece of irony, Hite reminds us that women were totally banned from the courtroom at one stage of the trial because Judge Leonard Roan deemed women too sensitive to hear the violent details of Phagan's murder.

Where *I am a Georgia Girl* falls short is in its reconstruction of scenes lacking eyewitness accounts. On page after page, Hite has to imagine what must have been said: "We can only guess Lucille's state as the case closed in"; "She must've harbored some worry even if she didn't speak the thoughts aloud"; "One can only imagine Lucille watching from the door

with thoughts racing through her mind" (90). Although this limitation is understandable, it occasionally blurs the line between historical analysis and imaginative reconstruction. Nevertheless, Hite makes a significant contribution to the vast literature on the Frank case. Lucille Frank emerges as a compelling and active advocate for her husband rather than a peripheral figure. Hite ultimately argues that a full understanding of the Leo Frank case requires elevating Lucille Frank's voice. In doing so, Hite's voice—clear, persistent, and interpretive—plays a crucial role in reshaping the narrative.

Steven Lebow, Temple Kol Emeth, Marietta, Georgia
The reviewer may be contacted at rabbilebow@gmail.com.

Translating the Ketubah: The Jewish Marriage Contract in America and England. By Benjamin Steiner. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2025. 320 pages.

Benjamin Steiner's *Translating the Ketubah* transforms a seemingly narrow subject—the Jewish marriage contract—into a sweeping study of adaptation, law, and culture, with particularly important implications for understanding regional variation in American Jewish life. Steiner demonstrates that ketubah translations were never neutral; they were cultural acts with both legal and social implications through which Jews negotiated belonging in distinct local contexts. The book opens with a vivid anecdote about the apocryphal claim that George Washington signed a ketubah in 1784, which frames Steiner's central argument that the ketubah has long served as a site of aspiration and adaptation. From colonial New York onward, Jews translated ketubot to ensure enforceability under common law, especially within the constraints of coverture, which subsumed married women's legal identities under their husbands. In this context, the ketubah took on heightened importance as a protective instrument for Jewish women.

While Steiner's early chapters establish the ketubah's legal adaptability, the book's most original and compelling contribution lies in its treatment of the antebellum South, where Jewish law, regional legal structures, and the slave economy intersected in stark and unsettling ways. In

South Carolina and Georgia, Steiner shows, the ketubah's economic provisions retained unusual durability, functioning not only as symbolic documents but as tangible mechanisms for property transfer. His analysis of *Levy v. Hart* (1840) is particularly arresting: the court's inventory of Jane Hart Levy's marriage portion included enslaved individuals alongside household goods, revealing how Jewish marital practice became entangled with the legal and moral frameworks of slavery. That nearly 40 percent of surviving antebellum ketubot in these states referenced enslaved persons underscores the extent to which Southern Jewish life was embedded within—and implicated in—the region's "peculiar institution" of slavery.

Yet Steiner resists reducing this history to complicity alone. Instead, he highlights the paradoxes that defined Southern Jewish experience: the same ketubot that reinforced systems of racial exploitation also afforded Jewish women forms of property protection unavailable to many of their Christian counterparts. In this sense, the Southern ketubah emerges as both a conservative and adaptive instrument—one that illuminates how minority communities navigated the legal and economic structures of a slave society while preserving distinct religious traditions. This regional focus significantly enriches the historiography, positioning the South not as peripheral but as central to understanding the evolution of American Jewish legal culture.

Subsequent chapters extend Steiner's geographic scope while reinforcing his core argument about adaptation. In California, the ketubah became a tool of social integration in a frontier environment lacking formal religious infrastructure, as lay leaders and later rabbis modified its language to align with American norms. Figures such as Julius Eckman—whose career linked Charleston and New Orleans to San Francisco—underscore the continuities between Southern and Western Jewish networks, suggesting that regional adaptations were part of a broader national

pattern rather than isolated developments. Similarly, Steiner's discussion of Victorian London and Chief Rabbi Nathan Adler's 1880 "abstract" of the ketubah situates these American innovations within an international context of ritual reform and linguistic accommodation.

The book's later chapters trace the ketubah's transformation in twentieth-century America, particularly within Conservative Judaism's efforts to reconcile tradition with modern family ideals. Steiner's reinterpretation of the Lieberman clause as a tool aimed as much at preserving marriage as at facilitating divorce adds nuance to existing scholarship, while his epilogue on contemporary practices highlights the ketubah's continued evolution as both a legal document and an artistic expression.

What makes *Translating the Ketubah* exceptional is its ability to braid legal history, gender analysis, and cultural interpretation into a narrative that is both erudite and accessible, while also drawing attention to the importance of regional context—especially the American South—in shaping Jewish lived experience. At times, the book's thematic breadth feels diffuse, and a more explicit theoretical framing of translation as cultural performance might have strengthened its cohesion. Nevertheless, Steiner's archival depth and interpretive ambition are impressive. The volume fills a conspicuous gap in Jewish historiography, complementing recent studies of material culture while opening new avenues for examining legal pluralism and vernacularization. For historians of American Judaism, the book is particularly valuable in foregrounding how regional settings—from Charleston and Savannah to San Francisco—mediated the translation of religious tradition into lived practice. In doing so, Steiner not only recovers the ketubah's legal and cultural significance but also reveals how American Jews, especially in the South, navigated the tensions between adaptation and continuity in a complex and often contradictory society.

Barry L. Stiefel, College of Charleston
The reviewer may be contacted at StiefelB@cofc.edu.

Public History Reviews

Finding Judaism in the Holy City. Curated by Shari Rabin. Lowcountry Digital History Initiative, College of Charleston Libraries, https://ldhi.library.cofc.edu/exhibits/show/finding-judaism. Reviewed May 2026.

"Finding Judaism in the Holy City," a public history platform that "seeks to share South Carolina's rich history with the College of Charleston (CofC) Community as well as the local and global public," is part of The Lowcountry Digital History Initiative (LDHI), combining the work of academic specialists with graduate students from the college. To date, LDHI has produced nearly thirty online exhibits rich in illustrative material from CofC's libraries with original texts narrating a wide range of topics. The exhibit "Finding Judaism in the Holy City" is curated by Shari Rabin, associate professor of Jewish Studies, Religion, and History at Oberlin College and president-elect of the Southern Jewish Historical Society. Rabin's latest book, *The Jewish South: An American History* (Princeton University Press, 2025) was a finalist for the National Jewish Book Award. Dr. Laura Yares, Michigan State University, served as an Editorial Contributor to the exhibit. Previously, Rabin cocurated another online exhibit, Mapping Jewish Charleston (2020).

The goal of "Finding Judaism in the Holy City" is to offer "a more complete view of the historical landscapes of Charleston." Charleston is religiously diverse, a mix in which Judaism could become "lost." The 1669 Lockean *Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina* called for broad religious toleration. By the colonial period, several different faiths found a new home in South Carolina. The Anglicans established St. Michaels, the first

(https://ldhi.library.cofc.edu/exhibits/show/finding-judaism/synagogues.)

(https://ldhi.library.cofc.edu/exhibits/show/finding-judaism/publicsquare.)

church in Charleston in 1680, and by 1706 the Church of England was proclaimed the official religion of the colony. Having an established religion, however, did not diminish the possibility of religious diversity. The city's Circular Congregational Church was organized by English Congregationalists, French Huguenots, and Scots-Irish Presbyterians in 1681. German Lutherans built St. Johns in 1742. In 1787, Reverend Richard Allen took the first steps toward establishing Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal (AME), Charleston's first Black church, and the city's first Catholic Church, St. Mary's, was also organized in the late 1780s.

Exactly when Charleston became known as the "Holy City" is a matter of debate. Although rooted in the city's founding principle of religious tolerance, other factors played a role in earning Charleston its spiritual nickname. Local laws restricted the height of downtown buildings to showcase the city's many church steeples. Perhaps even civic competitiveness motivated the building of fine religious buildings in the city. Newspaper columnist Frank B. Gilbreth Jr. popularized the name "Holy City" in the 1950s. The local tourist industry embraced the religious appellation for the city, a name seemingly appropriate for a city with approximately four hundred churches. The unusual number of churches in Charleston is abundantly clear to anyone who has visited even briefly.

The early history of the Jewish community in Charleston is well known. Sephardic Jews first arrived in the city in 1695. By 1749, they were able to establish Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim (KKBE), "Holy Community of the House of God," which modeled itself after the Bevis Marks synagogue in London. During the Revolution, a "Jews' Company" was mustered under the command of a Quaker, Captain Richard Lushington. The Jews of Charleston, along with members of other Jewish communities in the United States, sent a letter of congratulations to newly elected President George Washington. In the aftermath of the War of 1812, Charleston, with its large port and easy access to regional agricultural markets, including cotton, briefly became the home of the largest Jewish community in the United States. During the 1820s, Charleston was also the site of the first American Reform Jewish congregation and home to several of the leading Jewish cultural figures in the United States, including Dr. Jacob De La Motta, Isaac Harby, and Penina Moïse.

Rabin's framing of Charleston Jewish history in the exhibit is challenging and thoughtful. She primarily focuses on the nineteenth century and includes issues of both gender and race. "Finding Judaism in the Holy City" is not a tour guide, but an existential exploration of inner and public Judaism and their intersection in Charleston. Rabin begins with an analysis of the most visible Jewish place, the synagogue, and from there examines the home and, interestingly, the cemetery, as the private spheres of Jewish life. Special attention is paid to the role of women in the home. Finally, Rabin reports on Jews in "the public square," where both visible and invisible Judaism mix. It is interesting to see how Reform Judaism's doctrine of "the mission of Israel" blends traditional Jewish views of charity with general, communal charity. Similarly, Rabin reports on how Zionism is incorporated in local Jewish life where Gustavus Poznanski, "rabbi" of the city's Reform congregation, proclaimed in 1838 that Charleston was his Jerusalem.

Online exhibits offer universal, free access to the world of lifelong learning. The aggregate number of website visits to leading museums alone is literally in the hundreds of millions. "Finding Judaism in the Holy City" is a worthwhile stop on the web for students, adult learners, and even academics interested in a broad range of topics from American Jewish history to the history of Charleston, South Carolina. The clarity of its texts, choice of themes, and attractive illustrations make it a rewarding experience for all who view it and explore Judaism in the "Holy City" of Charleston.

Lance Sussman, Gratz College
The reviewer may be reached at lancejsussman@gmail.com.

Holocaust Survivors in a New Land: The New Americans Social Club of New Orleans. Curated by John Menszer and Michael Jacobs. Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience, New Orleans, LA.

The end of World War II left much of Europe devastated. In addition to millions of dead and wounded soldiers and civilians, the conflict created millions of refugees, including Jewish survivors of the Holocaust. While many Jewish refugees went to Palestine, over a hundred thousand

came to the United States, including around six thousand who passed through the Port of New Orleans between 1946 and 1953. Some stayed in the Crescent City, where they rebuilt their lives with the help of the city's Jewish community. They made New Orleans their home, and as survivors did in cities across the United States, found jobs, raised families, and established clubs and organizations to support each other and preserve their shared memories.

The Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience (MSJE) tells this story in its new exhibit, *Holocaust Survivors in a New Land: The New Americans Social Club of New Orleans*, which opened on March 20, 2026, and runs through the end of the year. Using artifacts, photographs, and oral history interviews with survivors, the exhibit explores how Holocaust survivors built new lives for themselves and their families in a city and a country that were deeply foreign to them.

Occupying a single large room on the museum's third floor, the exhibit is organized thematically around major moments in the lives of survivors as they came to the United States. It first contextualizes their story against the larger backdrop of U.S. refugee policy after World War II. Subsequent sections explore their efforts to adapt to American and New Orleans society, the assistance they received from Jewish organizations, and the challenges they faced as they assimilated into their new city, region, and country. The exhibit gives visitors ample opportunity to delve into individual survivors' stories and experiences at video and audio stations, which draw on extensive oral history interviews with survivors that New Orleans lawyer and photographer John Menszer collected in the 1990s. It also incorporates a series of portraits Menszer took of individual survivors, each of which has a brief description and a QR code linking to a web page where visitors can learn more about the survivor's story.

Survivors who settled in the United States did so with help from local and national Jewish organizations. In New Orleans, one of the most active groups helping newly arrived Holocaust survivors was the local chapter of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW), which in 1949 sent volunteers to the Port of New Orleans to greet new arrivals as they first set foot on American soil. The exhibit features an interview with Sara Berenson Stone, who as a young social worker was one of the volunteers who went down to the docks to greet survivors and help them get the

"New Americans" arriving at the Port of Embarkation in New Orleans, 1949. (Courtesy of the Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience.)

support they needed in New Orleans or on the way to their final destination elsewhere in the United States.

As survivors built new lives in New Orleans with the help of the city's Jewish community, they participated in early Holocaust commemoration ceremonies. As Hasia Diner observed in her 2009 book *We Remember with Reverence and Love: American Jews and the Myth of Silence after the Holocaust*, survivors in the United States did not wait for the Holocaust to achieve wider prominence in American culture. Instead, they held informal gatherings to preserve the memory of the millions of Jews who died in the Holocaust and the communities they left behind. From a small commemoration of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in June 1951 to larger Yom

HaShoah ceremonies that continue today, Holocaust survivors in New Orleans educated the people of their adopted home city about the horrors they experienced and its lessons for future generations.

While MSJE's exhibit focuses on the New Americans Club of New Orleans, it includes numerous references to similar groups around the South. The challenges facing survivors were not unique to New Orleans, but shortly after their arrival, they received a stark reminder that the Holocaust remained disturbingly relevant. After the release of *Exodus,* a film which chronicled the founding of the State of Israel, George Lincoln Rockwell launched a "hate ride" to New Orleans in early 1961, ostensibly to protest the film. Racial tensions were high in the city following attacks on buses carrying Freedom Rider protestors who were headed for New Orleans. Upon learning that the founder of the American Nazi Party was in town, many New Orleans Jews vowed to confront him, including Holocaust survivors; only Rockwell's last-minute arrest by police prevented a larger incident. (The incident was documented in 2019 by Lawrence N. Powell in *Troubled Memory: Anne Levy, the Holocaust, and David Duke's Louisiana*).

The exhibit highlights some of the tensions that arose between New Orleans's established Jewish community and the newly arrived Jewish refugees. Similarly to what happened decades earlier around the turn of the twentieth century, when large numbers of eastern European Jews arrived in the United States, survivors coming from more traditional and Orthodox communities in eastern Europe encountered a Jewish community in New Orleans that was largely German and Reform.

For all the horrors that Holocaust survivors endured and the challenges they faced in adapting to a new city, country, and culture, MSJE's exhibit also celebrates their perseverance and success. A 1952 report by the New Orleans Section of the NCJW quoted in the exhibit proudly noted that most of them had become "useful citizens and integrated members of the New Orleans Jewish Community" and no longer needed their financial support. Many started families, and several went on to create successful businesses. Along the way, the New Americans Club provided community and support for decades as the survivors aged.

In addition to telling a fascinating and important story, MSJE's exhibit illuminates New Orleans's Jewish history in the twentieth century,

an area that remains largely unexamined in Southern Jewish historiography. Exhibits like this are a reminder that stories based around a single community's experience of globe-spanning events reveal a great deal about much larger topics such as the Holocaust and the Southern Jewish experience. The exhibit provides a model that historians can and should replicate with Jewish communities across the American South.

Sean Scanlon, The National WWII Museum, New Orleans, LA

Black and Jewish America: An Interwoven History. Four-part PBS documentary series, hosted by Henry Louis Gates Jr., codirected and coproduced with Phil Bertelsen and Sara Wolitzky. Aired February 3–24, 2026.

Henry Louis Gates Jr. wades into tumultuous waters in this four-part historical survey of Black and Jewish relations in America—the next logical step in Gates's decades-long preoccupation with the fraught encounter. "Let My People Go," the opening salvo of the series, begins at a Passover seder, where the story of the exodus from slavery at the heart of both Black and Jewish traditions is told. Guests around the table include Antiguan American novelist Jamaica Kincaid, *The New Yorker* editor David Remnick, chef Michael Twitty, two rabbis (one Black, one Asian American), and sundry scholars, journalists, and community leaders, Black and Jewish and a few who are both.

Twitty, who is Black, Jewish, and gay, features the theme of creolization in his recipes for West African brisket, kosher soul collards, and kugel made from sweet and white potatoes. He claims kinship with Rabbi Shais Rishon, whose mother's ancestors had been practicing Jews since the 1780s. On the screen we meet an African-born Jew named Billy Simmons, known to have worshiped at Charleston's KKBE in the 1850s, and men of mixed race like Matthew Levy and Francis Cardozo, who had Jewish fathers but were Christians.

Through images and interviews, the series chronicles hundreds of years of history, from antiquity to the present. Episode 1 juxtaposes the experience of persecution and exile common to Jews and Blacks. Religious hatred in Europe fueled the Inquisition and the expulsion of Jews from

Catholic Spain and Portugal. In 1492, at the height of that exodus, Columbus set out on his fateful voyage, destined to open the Western Hemisphere to European colonization. In its wake, the Indigenous peoples of the region were eradicated, and the horrors of racial slavery were unleashed.

Over the next three and a half centuries, at least twelve million Africans were deported to the so-called New World and forced into perpetual servitude, while Jewish settlers eventually were accepted as full citizens, eligible to become members of the white establishment. As such, in both Southern and Northern colonies, they benefited from the system of Black enslavement as traders, masters and mistresses, and public officials.

While early American Jews generally did not extend the lessons of the Exodus story to Black people, the enslaved found voice in the Hebrew Bible, embracing Moses in clandestine religious services, music, and acts of resistance. I wish more time had been spent examining the roles Jews played in the Civil War and Reconstruction—subjects that have been the focus of productive new research. I understand, however, the need to leap to the twentieth century, where the story turns on two great migrations: the flight of eastern European Jews from the Pale of Settlement and the passage of southern Blacks to northern cities.

In both cases, there is push and pull—discrimination and pogroms in the old country, and economic opportunities in the new land. Both the Black press and the Yiddish press covered the resettlement of the two peoples and their different outcomes. A turning point in Black-Jewish relations came with the 1908 race riot in Springfield, Illinois, which propelled a coalition of Black and Jewish professionals and intellectuals to organize the NAACP. Here the storyline focuses on W. E. B. DuBois and Joel Spingarn, whose shared social conscience and friendship made them effective allies. Similarly, Booker T. Washington and Julius Rosenwald's collaboration on building schools transformed the educational landscape for Black children across the South.

"Let My People Go" ends on a bleak note: rising white supremacy, a resurgent KKK, the lynching of Leo Frank, and the eruption of the eugenics movement at home and abroad. Episode 2, "Strange Fruit," celebrates connections between Black and Jewish creators in jazz and film in America, then shifts to dark clouds gathering overseas: the Nuremburg Laws that mirrored the American system of Jim Crow, the sidelining of Jewish

Michael Twitty at the head of the Passover table in Black and Jewish America: An Interwoven History. *(PBS.com.)*

athletes in the 1936 Olympics in Germany, and the annihilation of Europe's Jews as witnessed by Black GIs. Racial disparities widened after World War II, with the GI Bill giving white veterans a leg up the socioeconomic ladder, while African Americans were barred from access to housing, schools, and jobs.

"The Grand Alliance" chronicles the brief Golden Age of Black/Jewish relations in the 1960s. Like Skip Gates, I came of age in this period and witnessed firsthand the coming together and breaking up of interracial activism. I spent Freedom Summer raising bail for Northern students, including my boyfriend, arrested in Mississippi. I was a member of Long Island's first youth committee on civil rights, demonstrating in support of SNCC and CORE until we no longer felt welcome and turned our outrage toward the Vietnam War.

In 1967, Israel's Six-Day War and the bitter battle over control of the public schools in the Ocean Hill/Brownsville section of Brooklyn further eroded bonds between Jews and Blacks. Episode 3 ends with the plaintive question: can the two peoples find common ground again? Contention flares in the final segment, called "Crossroads." Affirmative action, Zionism, the Nation of Islam, and rioting in Crown Heights find Jews and

people of color on opposing sides. In the face of white nationalist violence, however, both groups mourn the massacres at Mother Emanuel in Charleston in 2015 and at Tree of Life in Pittsburgh three years later.

Across these contentious decades, a remarkable cast of commentators—insightful, articulate, and ethnically diverse—keeps the narrative coherent. The depth and breadth of research is palpable in the film's high production qualities. An added dose of star power ups the ante. My favorite sequence among many is the interview with playwrights Anna Deavere Smith and Tony Kushner, who demonstrate the power of art to lay bare painful truths.

The lessons the series has to teach are more pertinent today than ever. At this moment, when books are snatched from library shelves and history is being erased, Gates courageously tackles a difficult subject in all its complexity, providing a blueprint for dialogue across differences and for a renewed alliance to save democracy.

Dale Rosengarten, College of Charleston
The reviewer may be reached at RosengartenD@cofc.edu.

Glossary

Aliyah (plural: ***aliyot***) ~ literally, *going up*; moving from the Diaspora to Israel; the act of going up to the front of the synagogue for an honor, such as reading from the Torah during religious services

B'nai B'rith ~ literally, *children of the covenant;* Jewish social service fraternity established in 1843

Chuppah (*variants*: ***chippe***, **huppah**) ~ wedding canopy

Hasidic ~ of or relating to **Hasidism**, a Jewish mystical sect founded in Poland in the mid-eighteenth century

High Holidays (*also* **High Holy Days**) ~ Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the two most important holidays on the Jewish calendar

Ketubah ~ Jewish marriage contract

Kibbutz (*plural:* **kibbutzim**) ~ a collective farm in Israel, often originally based on socialist principles

Kol Nidre ~ the service in the synagogue on the eve of Yom Kippur; prayer recited in the synagogue on the eve of Yom Kippur

Kosher ~ conforming to Jewish law, especially dietary law

Kristallnacht ~ literally *night of broken glass,* November 9–10, 1938; Nazi-sponsored pogrom throughout Germany and Austria bringing widespread murder, arrests, and destruction of property, including synagogues, escalating the violence against Jews

Landsmanschaft (*plural*: ***Landsmanshaftn***) ~ social and benevolent society comprised of ***landsmen***

Landsman (*plural*: ***landsleit*** or ***landsmen***) ~ a fellow countryman; someone from the same area in Europe

Minyan (*plural:* **minyanim**) ~ quorum of ten adult males traditionally required for public worship; some congregations now count adult women

Mohel (*plural*: **mohelim**) ~ person who performs ritual circumcision

October 7 (*also* **10/7**) ~ the coordinated terrorist attacks by Hamas militants carried out against Israel on October 7, 2023, in which more than 1,200 Israelis were killed and some 250 taken hostage

Pale of Settlement ~ region of the Russian Empire in which Jews were required to live between 1791 and 1917

Pogrom ~ organized violent attack, a massacre, against Jews

Rosh Hashanah ~ literally, *head of the year*; the new year on the Hebrew calendar; one of holiest days of the Jewish year

Sefer Torah ~ (*variant of* **Torah**); first five books of the Hebrew scripture; often refers to the physical Torah scroll

Semichah ~ rabbinical ordination

Shabbat ~ **(***also* ***shabbos***) ~ Jewish Sabbath; Friday evening to Saturday evening at the appearance of the first stars

Shoah ~ the Holocaust, from the modern Hebrew word for catastrophic destruction

Shochet (*variant*: ***shokhet***) ~ ritual slaughterer, kosher butcher

Sofer ~ scribe; a specially trained scholar who carefully inscribes the Hebrew words on the Torah scrolls

Tallit (*variants:* ***tallis***, ***tallith*****;** *plural*: ***tallitot, tallesim***) ~ prayer shawl

Torah ~ Five Books of Moses; first five books of the Bible; the body of Jewish law and ritual tradition

Tzitzit ~ fringes on a tallit

Yehudim ~ Jews

Yeshivah (*plural*: **yeshivot**) ~ school for Jewish learning, rabbinical seminary

Yom Kippur ~ Day of Atonement; holiest day of the Jewish year

Note on Authors

Lynda Barness and **Rabbi Lance J. Sussman**, Ph.D., have been writing partners since 2022. They started with a three-volume series of Sussman's sermons and recently wrote a full-length biography, *Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf and the Remaking of American Judaism*. Together they focus on the American Jewish experience and have written articles about Rabbi Bertram W. Korn, Gershom Mendes Seixas, and Jews in the American Revolution.

Chad S.A. Gibbs is an assistant professor of Jewish studies and director of the Zucker/Goldberg Center for Holocaust Studies at the College of Charleston. His book *Survival at Treblinka: Geography, Gender, and Social Networks in Jewish Resistance* appeared in 2026. Gibbs is a historian of the Holocaust focusing particularly on Jewish resistance. His work has been supported by Yad Vashem, the Claims Conference, and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, among others.

Deborah Gurt is associate librarian and director of the Doy Leale McCall Rare Book and Manuscript Library at the University of South Alabama. She also serves as curator of the Agnes Tennenbaum Holocaust Library Collection. Gurt holds a master's in Jewish studies from Gratz College, an MLIS from Rutgers, and is a current doctoral student in the Gratz College program in Jewish studies. In 2023 she published "Community Oral History to Widen the Path: The Jewish Mobile Oral History Project" in the *Journal of Contemporary Archival Studies*. Gurt's research interests center on Jewish history and memory in the local context and leverage her interdisciplinary training and archival engagement.

Steven Lebow is a graduate of Kenyon College and of the Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati. He holds a master's in Jewish Studies, a rabbinical degree (*semichah*), and a doctorate of divinity. He is the retired senior rabbi of Temple Kol Emeth in Marietta, Georgia, and the country's leading advocate for the complete exoneration of Leo Frank.

Gabrielle Lyle earned her Ph.D. in history from Texas A&M University in 2024. Lyle's research focuses on the development of Jewish communities in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands in the twentieth century. She is also interested in the portrayals of race and gender in DC Comics. Her published works include "How Do Your Students Feel About That?: A Reflection of

the Use of Graphic Narratives in History Surveys in the State of Texas," featured in *Inks: The Journal of the Comic Studies Society*, and "Hebrew in Harlingen: An Examination of Jewish Community Development in the Rio Grande Valley" in the *Journal of South Texas*. Lyle is an assistant professor of history at Del Mar College in Corpus Christi, Texas.

Timothy Riggio Quevillon, Ph.D., is the Jewish Heritage Fund Professor of History at Western Kentucky University and the director of the Center for Riverlands Jewish Life & Culture. He publishes extensively on Jewish history in the American South and Midwest. His first book, *Moshe & Meir*, is in progress, as are forthcoming articles "Hoosier HaZikaron: Capturing Indiana's Jewish Memory in Film and Word" and "Crossroads of the Jewish World: Connecting Pardubice, Czechoslovakia, and Terre Haute, Indiana, through a Sefer Torah," both due out in early 2027.

Dale Rosengarten is curator and historian emerita, Special Collections, Addlestone Library, College of Charleston. Founding director of the Jewish Heritage Collection at the College of Charleston Library, Rosengarten assembled a distinguished archives on Southern Jewish history and culture and produced several online exhibits: https://mappingjewishcharleston.cofc.edu; https://synagoguesofthesouth.cofc.edu; and https://lifeofthesynagogue.library.cofc.edu. She curated the landmark exhibition *A Portion of the People: 300 Years of Southern Jewish Life* (2002) and cocurated *By Dawn's Early Light: Jewish Contributions to American Culture from the Nation's Founding to the Civil War* (2016). In her other field of research, African American Lowcountry basketry, Rosengarten's work includes the exhibition and catalog *Row Upon Row: Sea Grass Baskets of the South Carolina Lowcountry* (1986, 2022); *Social Origins of the Lowcountry African American Basket* (1997); *Grass Roots: African Origins of an American Art* (2008); and, coming in 2028, a retrospective showcasing the work of celebrated basketmaker Mary Jackson.

Sean Scanlon is a military historian at the National WWII Museum in New Orleans. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and was a visiting assistant professor at the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts and the University of Mississippi. He is currently writing a history of the New Orleans Jewish community during World War II.

Jay Silverberg is completing a book about his family, combining a decade of historical and genealogical research in libraries, cities, and towns in the

United States, Germany, and Spain. His article in this volume is his third for the journal, the first two appearing in volumes 18 and 27, the former about his family's first Jewish immigrants to Louisiana and the latter about conflicts his family confronted from the Civil War through the mid-1930s. He graduated from the University of Missouri with BA in journalism and is a retired journalist and corporate crisis management consultant.

Barry L. Stiefel, Ph.D., is professor of historic preservation and community planning in the Department of Art and Architectural History at the College of Charleston. He is the author of numerous publications, including *Monuments of Diverse Heritage in Early America: Placemaking and Preservation by Black, Indigenous, and Jewish Peoples* (2025). Stiefel's research addresses sustainability in heritage preservation, cultural-ethnic architectural history (including Jewish studies), historic transportation mobility, human-centered historic preservation, community-building through historic places, diversity, equity, and inclusion in historic preservation, and preservation education.

Ashley Valanzola holds the David P. Angel Endowed Chair in Holocaust Pedagogy and Antisemitism Studies and is assistant professor of history at Clark University in Worcester, MA. She received her Ph.D. from George Washington University. Valanzola specializes in modern Europe, the Holocaust, memory studies, and women and gender history. Her book, *When She Remembered: Seven Women who Transformed French Holocaust Memory*, was published in June 2026. She has also published articles in *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* and *Jewish Social Studies*.

Joseph M. Weisberg is a Ph.D. candidate in history at Brandeis University. He was recently awarded the Sid and Ruth Lapidus Graduate Student Fellowship at the Center for Jewish History (CJH), where he will spend the 2026-2027 academic year working on his dissertation "Slavery, Commerce, and Judaism in an Early American Family." His dissertation reflects his broader interest in probing the complex ways that slavery and Jewish life shaped each other in early America. Weisberg came to Brandeis after graduating *summa cum laude* from Haverford College with bachelors degrees in history and Spanish.

Where to Find Southern Jewish History

Free search and download of the full contents of *Southern Jewish History* are available on Academia.edu. Visit the journal's page at http://independent.academia.edu/SouthernJewishHistory.

Full contents, including all three issues of *The Journal of the Southern Jewish Historical Society* (1958–63), are also available on the SJHS website: http://www.jewishsouth.org/contents-southern-jewish-history-volume.

Print copies of past volumes may be purchased online at http://www.jewishsouth.org/store/printed-journals or by mailing a check made out to the SJHS to: Managing Editor, PO Box 271432, Corpus Christi, TX 78427.

Current print volume: $20 for individuals; $40 for libraries/institutions.
Back issues: $15 for individuals; $40 for libraries/institutions.
Please add $20 for mailing outside the U.S.

SJH *Website*

Indexes of past issues and authors, a cumulative glossary, complete errata, and *SJH* award winners can be found at www.jewishsouth.org/about-southern-jewish-history



Research Grants Available

The Southern Jewish Historical Society awards annual grants to support research in southern Jewish history. The application deadline for each year's awards is in March.

The Project Completion Grant is intended to facilitate the completion of projects relevant to Jewish history in the southern United States. Grants may not be used to fund research or travel, but are intended to cover production or completion expenses such as the editing or indexing of a publication, costs related to illustrations or photo permissions, the production of a media project, or the fabrication of exhibits.

The Dr. Lawrence J. Kanter Grants assist scholars and independent researchers with travel and other expenses related to conducting research in Southern Jewish history. Graduate students completing doctoral dissertations are particularly encouraged to apply. A Kanter grant also is available for research into Florida Jewish history.

The Scott and Donna Langston Archival Grant supports projects aiming to preserve archival materials related to Southern Jewish history, either in secure repositories or in digital format.

The SJHS Grant Committee will evaluate each proposal based on its relevance to the goals of the society, its scholarly merits, its significance and educational impact, and the likelihood of its successful completion.

Awards will be presented at the society's annual fall conference, with recipients being notified in advance.

Complete details and application information is available at www.jewishsouth.org/sjhs-grants-applications.

Join the Southern Jewish Historical Society

The SJHS membership structure has recently changed. Members now select a membership *type* and then choose one of four membership *levels* in order to give at the standard rate or make an additional gift. An individual joining at the Patron level, for example, would pay $122.

Type	*Level*
Individual: $72	Standard: + $0
Household: $100	Patron: + $50
Institutional: $100	Cedar: + $250
Student/Reduced: $36	Sycamore: +$1,000

Visit www.jewishsouth.org/store/annual-membership
or send a check to Memberships, PO Box 71601, Marietta, GA 30007-1601

Charleston Research Fellowship

The Pearlstine/Lipov Center for Southern Jewish Culture invites applications for its research fellowship program, which supports archival research in Special Collections at the College of Charleston. Applications are welcome from scholars, graduate students, journalists, filmmakers, artists, or exhibition curators whose work would benefit from doing research in Charleston. Preference will be given to researchers using materials from the Jewish Heritage Collection at the College's Addlestone Library.

An application form and additional information are available at https://jewish-south.cofc.edu/. Applications are due by March 1, 2027. Please address inquiries to Center Director Ashley Walters at waltersa1@cofc.edu.

COLLEGE of CHARLESTON
PEARLSTINE/LIPOV CENTER FOR SOUTHERN JEWISH CULTURE



Randy Feinberg and Eli "Sonny" Evans at the Young Judaea Convention, Camp Blue Star, June 10–15, 1952. "Two crazies! Two of the funniest boys I know!! & I mean funny." Gift of Sandra Garfinkel Shapiro. Special Collections, College of Charleston.

Contents of Back Issues
Southern Jewish History *and* The Journal of the SJHS

SOUTHERN JEWISH HISTORY

VOLUME 29A (2026)

Genesis: The Origins of the Modern Southern Jewish Historical Society, *Mark K. Bauman*

Fraternity, Ethnicity, and Welfare in the Holy City: The Kalushiner Society of Charleston, South Carolina, *Ashley Walters*

Nita and Zita: The Gellert Sisters' Worlds of Dancing and Art, *Marci (Darling) Johnson*

MEMOIRS: Rebraiding Southern Jewish Identity: The Savannah Memoir of B.H. Levy Jr., *Lance J. Sussman, Lynda Barness, and Karen Franklin*

BOOK REVIEWS

Tim Allis, *Henri Bendel and the Worlds He Fashioned*, reviewed by Einav Rabinovitch-Fox

Ralph Eric Criss, *The Boss of New Orleans: Martin Behrman and Machine Politics in the Crescent City*, reviewed by Robert Bloomberg

Richard Kreitner, *Fear No Pharoah: American Jews, the Civil War, and the Fight to End Slavery*, reviewed by David Weinfeld

Shari Rabin, *The Jewish South: An American History*, reviewed by Marni Davis

PUBLIC HISTORY REVIEW: LGBTJews in the Federal City, reviewed by Rachael Davis

VOLUME 28 (2025)

"The Dark-Eyed Jew" of Alabama: The Life and Folktales of Abraham Mordecai, *Amy K. Milligan*

Typing for Wages, Suffrage, and Peace: The Life of Rachel Brill Ezekiel, *Judith Ezekiel*

Jews Against Jim Crow: The Lawyers Constitutional Defense Committee, *Stephen J. Whitfield*

PRIMARY SOURCES: Responsa to Rabbi Perry Nussbaum: Interracial Marriage, Conversion, and Reform Judaism in Jackson, Mississippi, 1968, *Shari Rabin*

BOOK REVIEWS

Dianne Ashton and Melissa R. Klapper, eds., *The Civil War Diary of Emma Mordecai*, reviewed by Ellen M. Umansky

Jason K. Friedman, *Liberty Street: A Savannah Family, Its Golden Boy, and the Civil War*, reviewed by Paul Finkelman

Betsy T. Phillips, *Dynamite Nashville: Unmasking the FBI, the KKK, and the Bombers Beyond Their Control*, reviewed by Stephen J. Whitfield
Morris S. Riskind, ed. Bryan Edward Stone, *Neither Fish nor Fowl: A Mercantile Jewish Family on the Rio Grande*, reviewed by Melissa Cohen-Nickels
PUBLIC HISTORY REVIEWS
Introduction: Public History Reviews Section, *Shari Rabin and Ashley Walters*
Steven Pressman, *Moses Jacob Ezekiel: Portrait of a Lost (Cause) Artist*, reviewed by Andrew Gerstenberger

VOLUME 27 (2024)

In Memoriam: Janice Oettinger Rothschild Blumberg (February 13, 1924 – February 21, 2024), *Mark K. Bauman*
Houses Divided that Remained Standing: Conflicting Loyalties within an Extended Southern Jewish Family, *Jay Silverberg*
Matisse's Cosmopolitans in the New South: The Cone Sisters Collect Modern Art, *Leonard Rogoff*
The Constitution, Corpus Christi, and the Statue on the Bay, *Mary Jo O'Rear*
PRIMARY SOURCES: The Shapell Roster of Jewish Service in the American Civil War: A Resource for Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century American Jewish History, *Adrienne DeArmas*
MEMOIRS: Transcending Race, Religion, and Class: Select Huntsville Memoirs by Margaret Anne Goldsmith, *Lance J. Sussman and Lynda Barness*
BOOK REVIEWS
Devery S. Anderson, *A Slow, Calculated Lynching: The Story of Clyde Kennard*, reviewed by Stephen Whitfield
Mark K. Bauman, *The Temple and Its People to 2018: The Hebrew Benevolent Congregation: Living Up to the Name and the Legacy*, reviewed by Tobias Brinkmann
Joel Gereboff and Jonathan L. Friedmann, *Jewish Historical Societies: Navigating the Professional–Amateur Divide*, reviewed by Dana Herman
Jerome Novey, *The Life and Letters of Samuel Ellsworth Fleet: An Immigrant's Tale*, reviewed by Marcia Jo Zerivitz
Marlene Trestman, *Most Fortunate Unfortunates: The Jewish Orphans' Home of New Orleans*, reviewed by Reena Sigman Friedman
Diane Catherine Vecchio, *Peddlers, Merchants, and Manufacturers: How Jewish Entrepreneurs Built Economy and Community in Upcountry South Carolina*, reviewed by Scott M. Langston
FILM REVIEWS
People of the Crossing: The Jews of El Paso, reviewed by Bryan Edward Stone
The Nita and Zita Project, reviewed by Rachel Merrill Moss

EXHIBIT REVIEWS

A Better Life for Their Children: Julius Rosenwald, Booker T. Washington, and the 4,978 Schools that Changed America, reviewed by Emily Rena Williams

What is Jewish Washington?, reviewed by Andrew Sperling

Infinite Poem, reviewed by Nora Katz

WEBSITE REVIEW

Synagogues of the South: Architecture and Jewish Identity, reviewed by Christopher D. Cantwell

VOLUME 26 (2023)

In Memoriam: Eli N. Evans (1936–2022), *Marni Davis*

In Memoriam: Lee Shai Weissbach (1947–2022), *Hasia Diner*

Training and Dispersing Young Jews Fleeing Hitler: The National Youth Administration Refugee Program and the South, *Claudia Wilson Anderson*

Witnessing History: Civil Rights and the Jews of Selma, Alabama, *Amy K. Milligan*

The Jewish Legacy of "Bombingham": Exploring the Causes and Consequences of the Attempted Bombing of Temple Beth-El in Birmingham, Alabama in 1958, *Margaret Norman and Melissa Young*

PRIMARY SOURCES: Black Newspapers and Jewish Advertising: Jim Crow on the South's Western Periphery, *Timothy Riggio Quevillon*

MEMOIRS

From *Goldene Medina* to Gold Star Father: The Georgia "Jew Store," *Lance J. Sussman*

Memoirs of Oscar Dreizin of Butler and Macon, Georgia, c. 1948, *Lance J. Sussman and Karen Franklin, eds.*

BOOK REVIEWS

Neil Kinghan, *A Brief Moment in the Sun: Francis Cardozo and Reconstruction in South Carolina*, reviewed by Mitchell Snay

Adam D. Mendelsohn, *Jewish Soldiers in the Civil War: The Union Army*, reviewed by Robert N. Rosen

Peter M. Wolf, *The Sugar King. Leon Godchaux: A New Orleans Legend, His Creole Slave, and His Jewish Roots*, reviewed by Jacob Morrow-Spitzer

EXHIBIT REVIEW

Beth-El Civil Rights Experience, reviewed by Ashley Walters

FILM REVIEWS

A Crime on the Bayou, reviewed by Stephen J. Whitfield

The Levys of Monticello, reviewed by Lauren B. Strauss

VOLUME 25 (2022)

Maryland's Jews, Military Service, and the American Revolutionary Era: The Case of Elias Pollock, *Owen Lourie*

"Did You Ever Hear of Judah Benjamin?" Fictional Representations of the Jewish Confederate, *Michael Hoberman*
Max Moses Heller: Jewish Mayor in the Sunbelt South, *Andrew Harrison Baker*
PRIMARY SOURCES: "A Good Place to Emigrate to Now": Recruiting Eastern European Jews for the Galveston Movement in 1907, *Joshua J. Furman*
MEMOIRS
Contextualizing Rabbi Davidow's Memoir: A Historical Introduction To Jewish Life in the Mississippi Delta, 1943–1961, *Lance J. Sussman and Paul Finkelman*
Growing Up Jewish in the Mississippi Delta, 1943–1961: A Rabbi's Memoir, *Fred Davidow*
REVIEW ESSAY: Memoirs and Archives: Celebrating the Jews of Atlanta, *Jacob Morrow-Spitzer*
BOOK REVIEWS
Howard Ball, *Taking the Fight South: Chronicle of a Jew's Battle for Civil Rights in Mississippi*, reviewed by Fred V. Davidow
Andrew Feiler, *A Better Life for Their Children: Julius Rosenwald, Booker T. Washington, and the 4,978 Schools that Changed America*, reviewed by Deborah Dash Moore
Marilyn Grace Miller, *Port of No Return: Enemy Alien Internment in World War II New Orleans*, reviewed by Shael Herman
T. K. Thorne, *Behind the Magic Curtain: Secrets, Spies, and Unsung White Allies of Birmingham's Civil Rights Days*, reviewed by Raymond Arsenault
James Traub, *Judah Benjamin: Counselor to the Confederacy*, reviewed by Michael Hoberman
EXHIBIT REVIEWS
The Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience, reviewed by Irwin Lachoff
History with Chutzpah: Remarkable Stories of the Southern Jewish Adventure, 1733–Present, reviewed by Leah Lefkowitz
A Source of Light, reviewed by Ashley Walters
WEBSITE REVIEW
Jewish Merchant Project, reviewed by Diane Vecchio

VOLUME 24 (2021)

"Hebrews in Favor of the South": Jews, Race, and the North Carolina State Convention of 1861-1862*, Eric Eisner*
Creative Power: A Jewish Refugee in the Jim Crow South, 1939–1946, *Andrew Sperling*
PRIMARY SOURCES: A Daughter's Love: Lisa Stein, Senator Charles Andrews, and American Refugee Policy during the Holocaust, *Augustine Meaher*
PRIMARY SOURCES: A Manhattan Jew in a Small Alabama Town: Journals and Selected Correspondence of Seymour Gitenstein, *R. Barbara Gitenstein*

BOOK REVIEWS

Roselle Kline Chartock, *The Jewish World of Elvis Presley*, reviewed by Michael Rothschild

Sherry Z. Frank, *A Passion to Serve: Memoirs of a Jewish Activist*, reviewed by Ellen M. Umansky

Billy Keyserling with Mike Greenly, *Sharing Common Ground: Promises Unfulfilled but Not Forgotten*, reviewed by Orville Vernon Burton

Allison E. Schottenstein, *Changing Perspectives: Black-Jewish Relations in Houston during the Civil Rights Era*, reviewed by Hollace Ava Weiner

Mary Stanton, *Red Black White: The Alabama Communist Party, 1930–1950*, reviewed by Stephen J. Whitfield

WEBSITE REVIEW

L'dor V'dor: Jewish Women and their Impact on New Orleans, reviewed by Rachel Kranson

FILM REVIEWS

Reawakening, reviewed by Phyllis K. Leffler

Atlanta: The City Too Busy To Wait, reviewed by Bob Bahr

VOLUME 23 (2020)

Southern Jews, Woman Suffrage, *Leonard Rogoff*

New Jewish Women: Shaping the Future of a "New South" in the Palmetto State, *Diane C. Vecchio*

Two Commemorations: Richmond Jews and the Lost Cause during the Civil Rights Era, *David Weinfeld*

Moshe Cahana, Ethical Zionism, and the Application of Jewish Nationalism to Civil Rights Struggles in the American South, *Timothy R. Riggio Quevillon*

PRIMARY SOURCES: Resources for Southern Jewish Research: A Family History Perspective, *Karen S. Franklin and Anton Hieke*

BOOK REVIEWS

Mark K. Bauman, *A New Vision of Southern Jewish History: Studies in Institution Building, Leadership, Interaction, and Mobility*, reviewed by Gary Phillip Zola

S. Perry Brickman, *Extracted: Unmasking Rampant Anti- semitism in America's Higher Education*, reviewed by Carl L. Zielonka

David E. Lowe, *Touched with Fire: Morris B. Abram and the Battle Against Racial and Religious Discrimination*, reviewed by Jonathan B. Krasner

Walker Robins, *Between Dixie and Zion: Southern Baptists and Palestine before Israel*, reviewed by Yaakov Ariel

Marcia Jo Zerivitz, *Jews of Florida: Centuries of Stories*, reviewed by Kenneth D. Wald

EXHIBIT REVIEW

Modern Visions, Modern Art: The Cone Sisters in North Carolina and Modern Visions, Mountain Views: The Cones of Flat Top Manor, reviewed by Leonard Rogoff

Website Review

Mapping Jewish Charleston: From the Colonial Era to the Present Day, reviewed by Curt Jackson

Film Review

Shared Legacies: The African American-Jewish Civil Rights Alliance, reviewed by Aaron Levi

Volume 22 (2019)

In Memoriam: Leonard Dinnerstein (1934–2019), *Mark K. Bauman*

"Free From Proscription and Prejudice": Politics and Race in the Election of One Jewish Mayor in Late Reconstruction Louisiana, *Jacob Morrow-Spitzer*

Rabbi Edward L. Israel: The Making of a Progressive Interracialist, 1923–1941, *Charles L. Chavis, Jr.*

A Call to Service: Rabbis Jacob M. Rothschild, Alexander D. Goode, Sidney M. Lefkowitz, and Roland B. Gittelsohn and World War II, *Edward S. Shapiro*

Hyman Judah Schachtel, Congregation Beth Israel, and the American Council for Judaism, *Kyle Stanton*

Primary Sources: A Foot Soldier in the Civil Rights Movement: Lynn Goldsmith with SCLC–SCOPE, Summer 1965, *Miyuki Kita*

Book Reviews

Eric L. Goldstein and Deborah R. Weiner, *On Middle Ground: A History of the Jews of Baltimor*e, reviewed by Deborah Dash Moore

Charles McNair, *Play It Again, Sam: The Notable Life of Sam Massell, Atlanta's First Minority Mayor*, reviewed by Ronald H. Bayor

James L. Moses, *Just and Righteous Causes: Rabbi Ira Sanders and the Fight for Racial and Social Justice in Arkansas, 1926–1963,* reviewed by Marc Dollinger

Leon Waldoff**,** *A Story of Jewish Experience in Mississippi*, reviewed by Joshua Parshall

Exhibit Reviews

The National Memorial for Peace and Justice, reviewed by Elijah Gaddis

Gone 2 Texas: Two Waves of Immigration, Soviet and South African, reviewed by Nils Roemer

Website Review

Jewish Heritage Fund for Excellence Jewish Kentucky Oral History Project, reviewed by Joshua Parshall

Volume 21 (2018)

The Atlanta Federal Penitentiary and Area Jews: A Social Service Case Study, *Mark K. Bauman and Leah Burnham*

Insiders or Outsiders: Charlottesville's Jews, White Supremacy, and Antisemitism, *Phyllis K. Leffler*

Primary Sources: The Galveston Diaspora: A Statistical View of Jewish Immigration Through Texas, 1907–1913, *Bryan Edward Stone*

Book Reviews

Michael R. Cohen, *Cotton Capitalists: American Jewish Entrepreneurship in the Reconstruction Era*, reviewed by Edward S. Shapiro

Arlo Haskell, *The Jews of Key West: Smugglers, Cigar Makers, and Revolutionaries, 1823–1969*, reviewed by Raymond Arsenault

Shari Rabin, *Jews on the Frontier: Religion and Mobility in Nineteenth-Century America*, reviewed by Lee Shai Weissbach

Exhibit Reviews

The Legacy of the Hebrew Orphans' Home: Educating the Jewish South Since 1876, reviewed by Caroline Light

Kehillah: A History of Jewish Life in Greater Orlando, reviewed by Mark I. Pinsky

Website Review

The Texas Slavery Project, reviewed by Joshua Furman

Volume 20 (2017)

The Achievement of Mark K. Bauman, *Stephen J. Whitfield*

Four German Jewish Families and the Built Environment of Huntsville, Alabama, 1852–2017, *Leonard Rogoff with Margaret Anne Goldsmith*

Primary Sources: Monuments and Memory: Fort Worth's World War I "Tribute to Our Boys," *Hollace Ava Weiner and Lynna Kay Shuffield*

Book Reviews

Alexander Z. Gurwitz, tr. Amram Prero, ed. Bryan Edward Stone, *Memories of Two Generations: A Yiddish Life in Russia and Texas*, reviewed by Jarrod Tanny

P. Allen Krause, ed. Mark K. Bauman with Stephen Krause, *To Stand Aside or Stand Alone: Southern Reform Rabbis and the Civil Rights Movement*, reviewed by Adam Meyer

Leonard Rogoff, *Gertrude Weil: Jewish Progressive in the New South*, reviewed by David Weinfeld

Exhibit Review

The First Jewish Americans: Freedom and Culture in the New World, reviewed by Hasia Diner

Film Review

Rosenwald, reviewed by Matthew H. Bernstein

Volume 19 (2016)

In the Board We Trust: Jewish Communal Arbitration Cases in Antebellum Charleston, South Carolina, *Barry L. Stiefel*

Nameless Graves: The Touro Infirmary Cemetery in New Orleans, 1888–1908, *Florence M. Jumonville*

"NCJW Joins the War on Poverty": The National Council of Jewish Women and the Quest for Opportunity in 1960s Atlanta, *Emily Alice Katz*

Personality Profile: Esther Kahn Taylor: Hadassah Lady Turned Birth Control Advocate, *Ellen G. Rafshoon*
Primary Sources: Both Sides of the Same Coin: Two Atlantans in Israel's War of Independence, *Jeremy Katz*
Book Reviews
Hasia Diner, *Roads Taken: The Great Jewish Migrations to the New World and the Peddlers Who Forged the Way*, reviewed by Anton Hieke
Debbie Z. Harwell, *Wednesdays in Mississippi: Proper Ladies Working for Radical Change, Freedom Summer 1964*, reviewed by Miyuki Kita
Tom Rice, *White Robes, Silver Screens: Movies and the Making of the Ku Klux Klan*, reviewed by Matthew H. Bernstein
Marlene Trestman, *Fair Labor Lawyer: The Remarkable Life of New Deal Attorney and Supreme Court Advocate Bessie Margolin*, reviewed by Melvin I. Urofsky
Website Review
The William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum, reviewed by Anna Tucker
Exhibit Reviews
Seeking Justice: The Leo Frank Case Revisited, reviewed by Ellen G. Rafshoon
Congregation Mickve Israel Museum, reviewed by Lynn Levine
Film Review
Carvalho's Journey, reviewed by Michael Hoberman

Volume 18 (2015)

Being Jewish in Columbus, Georgia: The Business, Politics, and Religion of Jacob and Isaac Moses, 1828–1890, *Scott M. Langston*
The Legal, Political, and Religious Legacy of an Extended Jewish Family, *Joel William Friedman*
Primary Sources: Louisiana Letters, 1855–1871: The Story of an Immigrant Jewish Family, *Jay Silverberg*
Book Reviews
Kimberly Marlowe Hartnett, *Carolina Israelite: How Harry Golden Made Us Care about Jews, the South, and Civil Rights*, reviewed by Hank Klibanoff
Nick Kotz, *The Harness Maker's Dream: Nathan Kallison and the Rise of South Texas*, reviewed by Allison Elizabeth Schottenstein
Monique Laney, *German Rocketeers in the Heart of Dixie: Making Sense of the Nazi Past during the Civil Rights Era*, reviewed by Dan J. Puckett
Caroline E. Light, *That Pride of Race and Character: The Roots of Jewish Benevolence in the Jim Crow South*, reviewed by Marni Davis
Adam D. Mendelsohn, *The Rag Race: How Jews Sewed Their Way to Success in America and the British Empire*, reviewed by Edward S. Shapiro
Jennifer A. Stollman, *Daughters of Israel, Daughters of the South: Southern Jewish Women and Identity in the Antebellum and Civil War South*, reviewed by Anton Hieke

Website Review

Jewish Atlantic World, reviewed by Shari Rabin

Exhibit Reviews

The Life of the Synagogue, from the William A. Rosenthall Judaica Collection, online exhibit reviewed by Rachel Gross

Of Passover and Pilgrimage: The Natchez Jewish Experience, exhibit reviewed by Joshua Cobbs Youngblood

Volume 17 (2014)

Marx Cohen and Clear Springs Plantation, *Seth R. Clare*

Rabbi Maurice Mayer: German Revolutionary, Charleston Reformer, and Anti-Abolitionist, *Anton Hieke*

A Certain Ambivalence: Florida's Jews and the Civil War, *Daniel R. Weinfeld*

An Interview with Bernard Wax, *Adam Mendelsohn*

Postscript: Reminiscences and Observations, *Bernard Wax*

Primary Sources: In Southern States: Historical Texts from the Arbeter Ring's Southern District (English Translation from Yiddish), *Josh Parshall*

Primary Sources: Two Civil Rights Testimonies, *Edward K. Kaplan*

Book Reviews

Anton Hieke, *Jewish Identity in the Reconstruction South: Ambivalence and Adaptation,* reviewed by Lee Shai Weissbach

Dan J. Puckett, *In the Shadow of Hitler: Alabama's Jews, the Second World War, and the Holocaust,* reviewed by Kirsten Fermaglich

Website Review

Gershwind-Bennett Isaac Leeser Digital Repository, website reviewed by Adam Mendelsohn

Volume 16 (2013)

A Tale of Two Cities' Jewish Architects: Emile Weil of New Orleans and B. Marcus Priteca of Seattle, *Eugene Normand*

Edward Loewenstein's Midcentury Architectural Innovation in North Carolina, *Patrick Lee Lucas*

The Arrival of a Provocateur: Responses to William Dudley Pelley in Asheville, 1930 to 1934, *Seth Epstein*

Black Mountain and Brandeis: Two Experiments in Higher Education, *Stephen J. Whitfield*

Primary Sources: Resettlement of Holocaust Survivors in Alabama, *Dan J. Puckett*

Primary Sources: Melvin Wali Ali Feiler Meyer: A Student's Struggle with Insider/Outsider Status in Civil Rights–Era Alabama, *Dina Weinstein*

Book Reviews

Janice Rothschild Blumberg, *Prophet in a Time of Priests: Rabbi "Alphabet" Browne, 1845–1929: A Biography*, reviewed by Lance Sussman

Jeff Clemmons, *Rich's: A Southern Institution*, reviewed by Marni Davis

EXHIBIT REVIEW

Passages through the Fire: Jews and the Civil War. American Jewish Historical Society and the Yeshiva University Museum, reviewed by Jeffrey S. Gurock

VOLUME 15 (2012)

Teaching Southern Jewish History: A Dialogue, *Scott M. Langston and Bryan Edward Stone*

Samuel and Saul Isaac: International Jewish Arms Dealers, Blockade Runners, and Civil War Profiteers, *Adam Mendelsohn*

Congressman Lyndon B. Johnson, Operation Texas, and Jewish Immigration, *Claudia Wilson Anderson*

Between the Borscht Belt and the Bible Belt: Crafting Southern Jewishness Through Chutzpah and Humor, *Jarrod Tanny*

PRIMARY SOURCES: Zionism on the West Texas Plains, *Stuart Rockoff*

BOOK REVIEWS

Rich Cohen, *The Fish That Ate the Whale: The Life and Times of America's Banana King,* reviewed by Stephen J. Whitfield

Marni Davis, *Jews and Booze: Becoming American in the Age of Prohibition,* reviewed by Thomas R. Pegram

Robert H. Gillette, *The Virginia Plan: William B. Thalhimer and a Rescue from Nazi Germany,* reviewed by Michael Murphy

Kathryn J. McGarr, *The Whole Damn Deal: Robert Strauss and the Art of Politics,* reviewed by Hollace Ava Weiner

Arthur Remillard, *Southern Civil Religions: Imagining the Good Society in the Post-Reconstruction South,* reviewed by Mitchell Snay

EXHIBIT REVIEW

That You'll Remember Me: Jewish Voices of the Civil War, Beth Ahabah Museum and Archives, reviewed by John Kneebone

WEBSITE REVIEW

Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life, reviewed by Dina Pinsky

VOLUME 14 (2011)

Contextualizing the Franco-Jewish Experience in the South, *Lee Shai Weissbach*

A Tale of Two Cities: Race, Riots, and Religion in New Bern and Wilmington, North Carolina, 1898, *Leonard Rogoff*

PERSONALITY PROFILE: Paula Ackerman: Pioneer in the Pulpit, *Ellen M. Umansky*

A Southern Senator and Israel: Senator J. William Fulbright's Accusations of Undue Influence over American Foreign Policy in the Middle East, *Arlene Lazarowitz*

PRIMARY SOURCES: The Bible and Bombings: Southern Rabbis Respond During the Civil Rights Movement, *Scott M. Langston*
BOOK REVIEWS
Rebecca T. Albert, *Out of Left Field: Jews and Black Baseball,* reviewed by Jeffrey S. Gurock
Anny Bloch-Raymond, *Des berges du Rhin aux rives de Mississippi: Histoire et récits de migrants juifs,* reviewed by Helen Y. Herman
Karen L. Cox, *Dreaming of Dixie: How the South Was Created in American Popular Culture,* reviewed by Stephen J. Whitfield
Jonathan Sarna and Adam Mendelsohn, eds., *Jews and the Civil War: A Reader,* reviewed by Anton Hieke
EXHIBIT REVIEWS
National Museum of American Jewish History: Core Exhibition, Philadelphia, reviewed by J. Kime Lawson
Down Home: Jewish Life in North Carolina, traveling exhibition, reviewed by Patrick Lee Lucas
WEBSITE REVIEW
The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, reviewed by Julian H. Preisler

VOLUME 13 (2010)

Jews at the Cape Fear Coast: A Portrait of Jewish Wilmington, NC, 1860–1880, *Anton Hieke*
That Spirit Must be Stamped Out: The Mutilation of Joseph Needleman and North Carolina's Effort to Prosecute Lynch Mob Participants during the 1920s, *Vann Newkirk*
Kristallnacht and North Carolina: Reporting on Nazi Antisemitism in Black and White, *Robert Drake*
The Hermans of New Orleans: A Family in History, *Stephen J. Whitfield*
Rabbi Benjamin Schultz and the American Jewish League Against Communism: From McCarthy to Mississippi, *Allen Krause*
PRIMARY SOURCES: Leo Frank Revisited: New Resources on an Old Subject, *Sandra Berman*
NECROLOGY: Solomon Breibart (1914–2009), *Janice Rothschild Blumberg*
BOOK REVIEWS
Matthew H. Bernstein, *Screening a Lynching: The Leo Frank Case on Film and Television,* reviewed by Michael Rothschild
Benjamin Ginsberg, *Moses of South Carolina: A Jewish Scalawag during Reconstruction,* reviewed by Robert P. Bloomberg
Leonard Rogoff, *Down Home: Jewish Life in North Carolina,* reviewed by Michael Cohen

Hans J. Sternberg with James E. Shelledy, *We Were Merchants: The Sternberg Family and the Story of Goudchaux's and Maison Blanche Department Stores,* reviewed by Mary L. Kwas

Bryan Edward Stone, *The Chosen Folks: Jews on the Frontiers of Texas,* reviewed by Stuart Rockoff

Clive Webb, *Rabble Rousers: The American Far Right in the Civil Rights Era,* reviewed by Leonard Dinnerstein

VOLUME 12 (2009)

Quick to the Party: The Americanization of Hanukkah and Southern Jewry, *Dianne Ashton*

Two Generations of the Abraham and Fanny Block Family: Internal Migration, Economics, Family, and the Jewish Frontier, *Mary L. Kwas*

Commerce and Community: A Business History of Jacksonville Jewry, *Stephen J. Whitfield*

NOTES: A Second Eyewitness to Jim Conley's Actions: The Leo Frank Case Revisited, *Stephen Goldfarb*

PRIMARY SOURCES: Grassroots Reactions to Kishinev Pogrom in Fort Worth and Atlanta, *Hollace Ava Weiner and Sandra Berman*

EXHIBIT REVIEWS

Beyond Swastika and Jim Crow: Jewish Refugee Scholars at Black Colleges, Museum of Jewish Heritage, New York, reviewed by Philip Kasinitz

Forgotten Gateway: Coming to America through Galveston Island, 1846–1924, Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum, Austin, Texas, reviewed by Bryan Edward Stone

Voices of Lombard Street: A Century of Change in East Baltimore, Jewish Museum of Maryland, Baltimore, reviewed by Marni Davis

VOLUME 11 (2008)

In the Shadow of Hitler: Birmingham's Temple Emanu-El and Nazism, *Dan J. Puckett*

Harry Golden, New Yorker: I ♥ NC, *Leonard Rogoff*

Charleston Jewry, Black Civil Rights, and Rabbi Burton Padoll, *Allen Krause*

PERSONALITY PROFILE: A Sephardic Physician in Williamsburg, Virginia, *Alan L. Breitler and Susan Pryor*

PRIMARY SOURCES: Tales of Two Weddings: Henrietta Shebeiner marries Aaron Davis, June 7, 1870, Eufaula, Alabama, *Daniel R. Weinfeld*

Rosa Benjamin marries Jacob Katz, July 7, 1886, Micanopy, Florida, *Rachel Heimovics Braun and Marcia Jo Zerivitz*

BOOK REVIEWS

Hollace Ava Weiner, *Jewish 'Junior League': The Rise and Demise of the Fort Worth Council of Jewish Women,* reviewed by Ieva Zake

VOLUME 10 (2007)

SJHS MEMORIES

Ruminations about the SJHS, *Bernard Wax*

The Pioneer Period of the SJHS (1976–1983), *Saul J. Rubin*

The Distance Traveled: Reminiscences of Twenty-five Years in SJHS, *Janice Rothschild Blumberg*

Conferences and Presidents: SJHS History in Pictorial Memory

Making History: An Interview with Saul Viener, *Eric L. Goldstein*

Reflections on the Past and Future of the Southern Jewish Historical Society, *Eli N. Evans*

Framing Florida Jewry, *Stephen J. Whitfield*

A Shtetl in the Sun: Orthodoxy in Southern Florida, *Edward S. Shapiro*

"The Law of Life is the Law of Service": Rabbi Ira Sanders and the Quest for Racial and Social Justice in Arkansas, 1926–1963, *James L. Moses*

THE UNUSUAL AND BIZARRE: Barney and Clyde: A Tale of Murder and Madness, *Jean Roseman*

REVIEW ESSAYS

More than Plantations and Pastrami: Southern Jewish History Comes of Age, *Kirsten Fermaglich*

Measuring Julius Rosenwald's Legacy, *Stuart Rockoff*

BOOK REVIEWS

Andrea Greenbaum, ed., *Jews of South Florida,* reviewed by Mark I. Greenberg

Eliza R. L. McGraw, *Two Covenants: Representations of Southern Jewishness,* reviewed by Bryan Edward Stone

Mary Stanton, *The Hand of Esau: Montgomery's Jewish Community and the Bus Boycott,* reviewed by Dan J. Puckett

Deborah R. Weiner, *Coalfield Jews: An Appalachian History,* reviewed by Dana M. Greene

Hollace Ava Weiner and Kenneth D. Roseman, eds., *Lone Stars of David: The Jews of Texas,* reviewed by Bobbie Malone

VOLUME 9 (2006)

Sophie Weil Browne: From Rabbi's Wife to Clubwoman, *Janice Rothschild Blumberg*

Rabbi Dr. David Marx and the Unity Club: Organized Jewish-Christian Dialogue, Liberalism, and Religious Diversity in Early Twentieth-Century Atlanta, *George R. Wilkes*

Uptown and Traditional, *Jessica Elfenbein*

Israel Fine: Baltimore Businessman and Hebrew Poet, *Peggy Kronsberg Pearlstein*

At One with the Majority, *Mary Stanton*

NECROLOGY: Saul Viener (1921–2006), *Bernard Wax*

REVIEW ESSAY: Jews, Whiteness, and Civil Rights, *Ronald H. Bayor*

BOOK REVIEWS

Marcie Cohen Ferris, *Matzoh Ball Gumbo: Culinary Tales of the Jewish South,* reviewed by Hasia R. Diner

Valerie Frey, Kaye Kole, and Luciana Spracher, *Voices of Savannah: Selections from the Oral History Collection of the Savannah Jewish Archives,* reviewed by Mark I. Greenberg

Laurie Gunst, *Off-White: A Memoir,* reviewed by Cheryl Greenberg

C. S. Monaco, *Moses Levy of Florida: Jewish Utopian and Antebellum Reformer,* reviewed by Saul S. Friedman

VOLUME 8 (2005)

Entering the Mainstream of Modern Jewish History: Peddlers and the American Jewish South, *Hasia Diner*

Samuel Fleishman: Tragedy in Reconstruction-Era Florida, *Daniel R. Weinfeld*

Anti-Jewish Violence in the New South, *Patrick Q. Mason*

The "Typical Home Kid Overachievers": Instilling a Success Ethic in the Jewish Children's Home of New Orleans, *Wendy Besmann*

Macey Kronsberg: Institution Builder of Conservative Judaism in Charleston, S.C., and the Southeast, *Peggy Kronsberg Pearlstein*

NECROLOGY: Samuel Proctor (1919–2005), *Chris Monaco*

BOOK REVIEWS

David J. Ginzl, *Stein Mart: An American Story of Roots, Family and Building a Greater Dream*, reviewed by Hollace A. Weiner

Jeffrey Gurock, *Orthodoxy in Charleston: Brith Sholom Beth Israel and American Jewish History,* reviewed by Deborah R. Weiner

Clara Silverstein, *White Girl: A Story of School Desegregation,* reviewed by Adam Mendelsohn

Lee Shai Weissbach, *Jewish Life in Small Town America: A History,* reviewed by Leonard Rogoff

VOLUME 7 (2004)

HISTORIAN PROFILES

In Distinguished Company: A Profile of Solomon Breibart, *Harlan Greene and Dale Rosengarten*

"What Was on Your Mind Was on Your Tongue": A Profile of Leonard Dinnerstein, *Clive Webb*

"A Sense of Connection to Others": A Profile of Stephen Whitfield, *Deborah R. Weiner*

Edgar Goldberg and the *Texas Jewish Herald:* Changing Coverage and Blended Identity, *Bryan Edward Stone*

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS, A Prussian-born Jewish Woman on the Florida Frontier: Excerpts from the Memoir of Bertha Zadek Dzialynski, *Canter Brown, Jr.*

BOOK REVIEWS

Emily Bingham, *Mordecai: An Early American Family,* reviewed by Jennifer A. Stollman

Alan M. Kraut, *Goldberger's War: The Life and Work of a Public Health Crusader,* reviewed by Jane Rothstein

Raymond A. Mohl with Matilda "Bobbi" Graff and Shirley M. Zoloth, *South of the South: Jewish Activists and the Civil Rights Movement in Miami, 1945–1950,* reviewed by Deborah Dash Moore

Steve Oney, *And the Dead Shall Rise: The Murder of Mary Phagan and the Lynching of Leo Frank,* reviewed by Marni Davis

VOLUME 6 (2003)

Christian Science, Jewish Science, and Alfred Geiger Moses, *Ellen M. Umansky*

Synagogue Music for Birmingham, Alabama: Arthur Foote's *Azi v'Zimrat Yoh*, *John H. Baron*

Two Far South: Rabbinical Responses to Apartheid and Segregation in South Africa and the American South, *Adam Mendelsohn*

The Ku Klux Klan and the Jewish Community of Dallas, 1921–1923, *Rosalind Benjet*

Articles relating to Southern Jewish History Published in *American Jewish History, American Jewish Archives Journal,* Their Predecessors, and *Southern Jewish History*, *Mark K. Bauman*

VOLUME 5 (2002)

Rabbi Alphabet Browne: The Atlanta Years, *Janice Rothschild Blumberg*

Rabbi Bernard Illowy: Counter Reformer, *Irwin Lachoff*

James K. Gutheim as Southern Reform Rabbi, Community Leader, and Symbol, *Scott M. Langston*

A Sugar Utopia on the Florida Frontier: Moses Elias Levy's Pilgrimage Plantation, *Chris Monaco*

LETTER TO THE EDITOR, Revisiting Annie T. Wise, Arlene G. Rotter

INDEX TO VOLUMES 1 THROUGH 5

VOLUME 4 (2001)

Removal Approval: The Industrial Removal Office Experience in Fort Worth, Texas, *Hollace Ava Weiner*

Climbing the Crystal Stair: Annie T. Wise's Success as an Immigrant in Atlanta's Public School System (1872–1925), *Arlene G. Rotter*

PERSONALITY PROFILE: David Mendes Cohen, Beleaguered Marine, *Robert Marcus and Jim Quinlan*

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS, A Polish Jew on the Florida Frontier and in Occupied Tennessee: Excerpts from the Memoirs of Max White, *Richard E. Sapon-White*

REVIEW ESSAY, In the High Cotton, *Stephen J. Whitfield*

VOLUME 3 (2000)

A Shtetl Grew in Bessemer: Temple Beth-El and Jewish Life in Small-Town Alabama, *Terry Barr*

Lynchburg's Swabian Jewish Entrepreneurs in War and Peace, *Richard A. Hawkins*

Interaction and Identity: Jews and Christians in Nineteenth Century New Orleans, *Scott Langston*

VOLUME 2 (1999)

The Jews of Keystone: Life in a Multicultural Boomtown, *Deborah R. Weiner*

Lives of Quiet Affirmation: The Jewish Women of Early Anniston, Alabama, *Sherry Blanton*

Jewish Merchants and Black Customers in the Age of Jim Crow, *Clive Webb*

Mercy on Rude Streams: Jewish Emigrants from Alsace-Lorraine to the Lower Mississippi Region and the Concept of Fidelity, *Anny Bloch*

Kosher Country: Success and Survival on Nashville's Music Row, *Stacy Harris*

"From the Recipe File of Luba Cohen": A Study of Southern Jewish Foodways and Cultural Identity, *Marcie Cohen Ferris*

VOLUME 1 (1998)

Why Study Southern Jewish History? *Gary P. Zola*

"Ride 'em Jewboy": Kinky Friedman and the Texas Mystique, *Bryan Edward Stone*

Synagogue and Jewish Church: A Congregational History of North Carolina, *Leonard Rogoff*

Amelia Greenwald and Regina Kaplan: Jewish Nursing Pioneers, *Susan Mayer*

PERSONALITY PROFILE, Harry Reyner: Individualism and Community in Newport News, Virginia, *Gertrude L. Samet*

AS TOLD TO MEMOIRS, Ruth and Rosalie: Two Tales of Jewish New Orleans, *Bobbie Malone*

THE JOURNAL OF THE SJHS

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 1 (NOVEMBER 1958)

Foreword, *Jacob R. Marcus*

Moses Myers and the Early Jewish Community of Norfolk, *Malcolm H. Stern*

Acquisitions to SJHS Collection at Valentine Museum

Tombstones That Tell a Story, Charleston's Historic Coming Street Cemetery, *Thomas J. Tobias*

Franklin J. Moses: Chief Justice of South Carolina, *Harry Simonhoff*

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 2 (OCTOBER 1959)

Religious Freedom and the Jew in Colonial Virginia, *Louis Ginsberg*

Rebecca Gratz and Henry Clay: an American Jewess Observes a Leader's Drive for the Presidency, *Joseph R. Rosenbloom*
Rev. M. J. Michelbacher (Illustration)
A Letter from Herman Hecht to his Son Armand Hecht
Monticello and the Levy Family, *Malcolm H. Stern*
George Jacobs, A Versatile Jew, *Emilie V. Jacobs*

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 3 (NOVEMBER 1963)

The American Civil War, *Robert W. Waitt, Jr.*
Not Forgotten—Henry Gintzberger—Private C.S.A., *J. Ambler Johnston*
Acrostic for Rosa Cohn, *W. Flegenheimer*
Some Notes on the History of the Organized Jewish Community of Norfolk, Virginia, *Malcolm H. Stern*
Program for Confederate Memorial Ceremony—Hebrew Cemetery

Index of Authors Southern Jewish History *(1998–2026)*
The Journal of the SJHS *(1958–1963)*

NOTE: Articles that appeared in The Journal of the Southern Jewish Historical Society *are noted below with* JSJHS.

"Acquisitions to SJHS Collection at Valentine Museum," *JSJHS* v. 1:1

"A Letter from Herman Hecht to his Son Armand Hecht," *JSJHS* v. 1:2

Anderson, Claudia Wilson, "Congressman Lyndon B. Johnson, Operation Texas, and Jewish Immigration," v. 15

—— "Training and Dispersing Young Jews Fleeing Hitler: The National Youth Administration Refugee Program and the South," v. 26

Ariel, Yaakov, Book Review, Walker Robins, *Between Dixie and Zion: Southern Baptists and Palestine before Israel*, v. 23

Arsenault, Raymond, Book Review, Arlo Haskell, *The Jews of Key West: Smugglers, Cigar Makers, and Revolutionaries, 1823–1969*, v. 21

—— Book Review, T. K. Thorne, *Behind the Magic Curtain: Secrets, Spies, and Unsung White Allies of Birmingham's Civil Rights Days*, v. 25

Ashton, Dianne, "Quick to the Party: The Americanization of Hanukkah and Southern Jewry," v. 12

Bahr, Bob, Film Review, *Atlanta: The City Too Busy To Wait*, v. 24

Baker, Andrew Harrison, "Max Moses Heller: Jewish Mayor in the Sunbelt South," v. 25

Barness, Lynda, "Transcending Race, Religion, and Class: Select Huntsville Memoirs by Margaret Anne Goldsmith" (with Lance J. Sussman), v. 27

—— "Rebraiding Southern Jewish Identity: The Savannah Memoir of B.H. Levy Jr." (with Lance Sussman and Karen Franklin), v. 29A

Baron, John H., "Synagogue Music for Birmingham, Alabama: Arthur Foote's *Azi v'Zimrat Yoh*," v. 6

Barr, Terry, "A Shtetl Grew in Bessemer: Temple Beth-El and Jewish Life in Small-Town Alabama," v. 3

Bauman, Mark K., "Articles relating to Southern Jewish History Published in *American Jewish History*, *American Jewish Archives Journal*, Their Predecessors, and *Southern Jewish History*," v. 6

—— "The Atlanta Federal Penitentiary and Area Jews: A Social Service Case Study" (with Leah Burnham), v. 21

—— "In Memoriam: Leonard Dinnerstein (1934–2019)," v. 22

—— "In Memoriam: Janice Oettinger Rothschild Blumberg (February 13, 1924 – February 21, 2024), v. 27

—— "Genesis: The Origins of the Modern Southern Jewish Historical Society," v. 29A

Bayor, Ronald H., Review Essay, "Jews, Whiteness, and Civil Rights," v. 9

—— Book Review, Charles McNair, *Play It Again, Sam: The Notable Life of Sam Massell, Atlanta's First Minority Mayor*, v. 22
Benjet, Rosalind, "The Ku Klux Klan and the Jewish Community of Dallas, 1921–1923," v. 6
Berman, Sandra, "Grassroots Reactions to Kishinev Pogrom in Fort Worth and Atlanta" (with Hollace Ava Weiner), v. 12
—— "Leo Frank Revisited: New Resources on an Old Subject," v. 13
Bernstein, Matthew H., Book Review, Tom Rice, *White Robes, Silver Screens: Movies and the Making of the Ku Klux Klan*, v. 19
—— Film Review, *Rosenwald*, v. 20
Besmann, Wendy, "The 'Typical Home Kid Overachievers': Instilling a Success Ethic in the Jewish Children's Home of New Orleans," v. 8
Blanton, Sherry, "Lives of Quiet Affirmation: The Jewish Women of Early Anniston, Alabama," v. 2
Bloch, Anny, "Mercy on Rude Streams: Jewish Emigrants from Alsace-Lorraine to the Lower Mississippi Region and the Concept of Fidelity," v. 2
Bloomberg, Robert P., Book Review, Benjamin Ginsberg, *Moses of South Carolina: A Jewish Scalawag during Reconstruction,* v. 13
—— Book Review, Ralph Eric Criss, *The Boss of New Orleans: Martin Behrman and Machine Politics in the Crescent City*, v. 29A
Blumberg, Janice Rothschild, "Rabbi Alphabet Browne: The Atlanta Years," v. 5
—— "Sophie Weil Browne: From Rabbi's Wife to Clubwoman," v. 9
—— "The Distance Traveled: Reminiscences of Twenty-five Years in SJHS," v. 10
—— Necrology: "Solomon Breibart (1914–2009)," v. 13
Braun, Rachel Heimovics, "Rosa Benjamin marries Jacob Katz, July 7, 1886, Micanopy, Florida" (with Marcia Jo Zerivitz), v. 11
Breitler, Alan L., "A Sephardic Physician in Williamsburg, Virginia" (with Susan Pryor), v. 11
Brinkmann, Tobias, Book Review, Mark K. Bauman, *The Temple and Its People to 2018: The Hebrew Benevolent Congregation: Living Up to the Name and the Legacy*, v. 27
Brown, Jr., Canter, "A Prussian-born Jewish Woman on the Florida Frontier: Excerpts from the Memoir of Bertha Zadek Dzialynski," v. 7
Burnham, Leah, "The Atlanta Federal Penitentiary and Area Jews: A Social Service Case Study" (with Mark K. Bauman), v. 21
Burton, Orville Vernon, Book Review, Billy Keyserling with Mike Greenly, *Sharing Common Ground: Promises Unfulfilled but Not Forgotten*, v. 24
Cantwell, Christopher D., Website Review, Synagogues of the South: Architecture and Jewish Identity, v. 27
Chavis, Charles L., Jr., "Rabbi Edward L. Israel: The Making of a Progressive Interracialist, 1923–1941," v. 22
Clare, Seth R., "Marx Cohen and Clear Springs Plantation," v. 17

Cohen, Michael, Book Review, Leonard Rogoff, *Down Home: Jewish Life in North Carolina,* v. 13
Cohen-Nickels, Melissa, Book Review, Morris S. Riskind, ed. Bryan Edward Stone, *Neither Fish nor Fowl: A Mercantile Jewish Family on the Rio Grande*, v. 28
Davidow, Fred, "Growing Up Jewish in the Mississippi Delta, 1943–1961: A Rabbi's Memoir," v. 25
—— Book Review, Howard Ball, *Taking the Fight South: Chronicle of a Jew's Battle for Civil Rights in Mississippi*, v. 25
Davis, Marni, Book Review, Steve Oney, *And the Dead Shall Rise: The Murder of Mary Phagan and the Lynching of Leo Frank,* v. 7
—— Exhibit Review, Voices of Lombard Street: A Century of Change in East Baltimore, Jewish Museum of Maryland, Baltimore, v. 12
—— Book Review, Jeff Clemmons, *Rich's: A Southern Institution*, v. 16
—— Book Review, Caroline E. Light, *That Pride of Race and Character: The Roots of Jewish Benevolence in the Jim Crow South*, v. 18
—— In Memoriam: Eli N. Evans (1936–2022), v. 26
—— Book Review, Shari Rabin, *The Jewish South: An American History*, v. 29A
Davis, Rachael, Public History Review, LGBTJews in the Federal City
DeArmas, Adrienne, "Primary Sources: The Shapell Roster of Jewish Service in the American Civil War: A Resource for Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century American Jewish History," v. 27
Diner, Hasia R., "Entering the Mainstream of Modern Jewish History: Peddlers and the American Jewish South," v. 8
—— Book Review, Marcie Cohen Ferris, *Matzoh Ball Gumbo: Culinary Tales of the Jewish South,* v. 9
—— Exhibit Review, *The First Jewish Americans: Freedom and Culture in the New World*, v. 20
—— In Memoriam: Lee Shai Weissbach (1947–2022), v. 26
Dinnerstein, Leonard, Book Review, Clive Webb, *Rabble Rousers: The American Far Right in the Civil Rights Era*, v. 13
Dollinger, Marc, Book Review, James L. Moses, *Just and Righteous Causes: Rabbi Ira Sanders and the Fight for Racial and Social Justice in Arkansas, 1926–1963*, v. 22
Drake, Robert, "*Kristallnacht* and North Carolina: Reporting on Nazi Antisemitism in Black and White," v. 13
Eisner, Eric, "'Hebrews in Favor of the South': Jews, Race, and the North Carolina State Convention of 1861-1862," v. 24
Elfenbein, Jessica, "Uptown and Traditional," v. 9
Epstein, Seth, "The Arrival of a Provocateur: Responses to William Dudley Pelley in Asheville, 1930 to 1934," v. 16
Evans, Eli N., "Reflections on the Past and Future of the Southern Jewish Historical Society," v. 10

Ezekiel, Judith, "Typing for Wages, Suffrage, and Peace: The Life of Rachel Brill Ezekiel," v. 28
Fermaglich, Kirsten, Review Essay, "More than Plantations and Pastrami: Southern Jewish History Comes of Age," v. 10
—— Book Review, Dan J. Puckett, *In the Shadow of Hitler: Alabama's Jews, the Second World War, and the Holocaust,* v. 17
Ferris, Marcie Cohen, "'From the Recipe File of Luba Cohen': A Study of Southern Jewish Foodways and Cultural Identity," v. 2
Paul Finkelman, "Contextualizing Rabbi Davidow's Memoir: A Historical Introduction To Jewish Life in the Mississippi Delta, 1943–1961," v. 25
—— Book Review, Jason K. Friedman, *Liberty Street: A Savannah Family, Its Golden Boy, and the Civil War*, v. 28
Flegenheimer, W., "Acrostic for Rosa Cohn," *JSJHS* v. 1:3
Franklin, Karen S., "Resources for Southern Jewish Research: A Family History Perspective" (with Anton Hieke), v. 23
—— "From the Memoirs Section Editors," v. 25
—— "Memoirs of Oscar Dreizin of Butler and Macon, Georgia, c. 1948" (with Lance J. Sussman), v. 26
—— "Rebraiding Southern Jewish Identity: The Savannah Memoir of B.H. Levy Jr." (with Lance Sussman and Lynda Barness), v. 29A
Friedman, Joel William, "The Legal, Political, and Religious Legacy of an Extended Jewish Family," v. 18
Friedman, Reena Sigman, Book Review, Marlene Trestman, *Most Fortunate Unfortunates: The Jewish Orphans' Home of New Orleans*, v. 27
Friedman, Saul S., Book Review, C. S. Monaco, *Moses Levy of Florida: Jewish Utopian and Antebellum Reformer,* v. 9
Furman, Joshua, Website Review, The Texas Slavery Project, v. 21
—— "'A Good Place to Emigrate to Now': Recruiting Eastern European Jews for the Galveston Movement in 1907," v. 25
Gaddis, Elijah, Exhibit Review, The National Memorial for Peace and Justice, v. 22
Gerstenberger, Andrew, Public History Review, Steven Pressman, *Moses Jacob Ezekiel: Portrait of a Lost (Cause) Artist*, v. 28
Ginsberg, Louis, "Religious Freedom and the Jew in Colonial Virginia," *JSJHS* v. 1:2
Gitenstein, R. Barbara, "A Manhattan Jew in a Small Alabama Town: Journals and Selected Correspondence of Seymour Gitenstein," v. 24
Goldfarb, Stephen, "A Second Eyewitness to Jim Conley's Actions: The Leo Frank Case Revisited," v. 12
Goldsmith, Margaret Anne, "Four German Jewish Families and the Built Environment of Huntsville, Alabama, 1852–2017" (with Leonard Rogoff), v. 20
Goldstein, Eric L., "Conferences and Presidents: SJHS History in Pictorial Memory Making History: An Interview with Saul Viener," v. 10
Greenberg, Cheryl, Book Review, Laurie Gunst, *Off-White: A Memoir,* v. 9

Greenberg, Mark I., Book Review, Valerie Frey, Kaye Kole, and Luciana Spracher, *Voices of Savannah: Selections from the Oral History Collection of the Savannah Jewish Archives,* v. 9
—— Book Review, Andrea Greenbaum, ed., *Jews of South Florida,* v. 10
Greene, Dana M., Book Review, Deborah R. Weiner, *Coalfield Jews: An Appalachian History*, v. 10
Greene, Harlan, "In Distinguished Company: A Profile of Solomon Breibart" (with Dale Rosengarten), v. 7
Gross, Rachel, Exhibit Review, The Life of the Synagogue, from the William A. Rosenthall Judaica Collection, v. 18
Gurock, Jeffrey S., Book Review, Rebecca T. Albert, *Out of Left Field: Jews and Black Baseball,* v. 14
—— Exhibit Review, Passages through the Fire: Jews and the Civil War. American Jewish Historical Society and the Yeshiva University Museum, v. 16
Harris, Stacy, "Kosher Country: Success and Survival on Nashville's Music Row," v. 2
Hawkins, Richard A., "Lynchburg's Swabian Jewish Entrepreneurs in War and Peace," v. 3
Herman, Dana, Book Review, Joel Gereboff and Jonathan L. Friedmann, *Jewish Historical Societies: Navigating the Professional–Amateur Divide*, v. 27
Herman, Helen Y., Book Review, Anny Bloch-Raymond, *Des berges du Rhin aux rives de Mississippi: Histoire et récits de migrants juifs,* v. 14
Herman, Shael, Book Review, Marilyn Grace Miller, *Port of No Return: Enemy Alien Internment in World War II New Orleans*, v. 25
Hieke, Anton, "Jews at the Cape Fear Coast: A Portrait of Jewish Wilmington, NC, 1860–1880," v. 13
—— Book Review, Jonathan Sarna and Adam Mendelsohn, eds., *Jews and the Civil War: A Reader,* v. 14
—— "Rabbi Maurice Mayer: German Revolutionary, Charleston Reformer, and Anti-Abolitionist," v. 17
—— Book Review, Jennifer A. Stollman, *Daughters of Israel, Daughters of the South: Southern Jewish Women and Identity in the Antebellum and Civil War South*, v. 18
—— Book Review, Hasia Diner, *Roads Taken: The Great Jewish Migrations to the New World and the Peddlers Who Forged the Way*, v. 19
—— "Resources for Southern Jewish Research: A Family History Perspective" (with Karen S. Franklin), v. 23
Hoberman, Michael, Film Review, *Carvalho's Journey*, v. 19
—— "'Did You Ever Hear of Judah Benjamin?' Fictional Representations of the Jewish Confederate," v. 25
—— Book Review, James Traub, *Judah Benjamin: Counselor to the Confederacy*, v. 25
Jackson, Curt, Website Review, Mapping Jewish Charleston: From the Colonial Era to the Present Day, v. 23

Jacobs, Emilie V., "George Jacobs, A Versatile Jew," *JSJHS* v. 1:2
Johnson, Marci (Darling), "Nita and Zita: The Gellert Sisters' Worlds of Dancing and Art," v. 29A
Johnston, J. Ambler, "Not Forgotten—Henry Gintzberger—Private C.S.A.," *JSJHS* v. 1:3
Jumonville, Florence M., "Nameless Graves: The Touro Infirmary Cemetery in New Orleans, 1888–1908," v. 19
Kaplan, Edward K., "Two Civil Rights Testimonies," v. 17
Kasinitz, Philip, Exhibit Review, Beyond Swastika and Jim Crow: Jewish Refugee Scholars at Black Colleges, Museum of Jewish Heritage, New York, v. 12
Katz, Emily Alice, "'NCJW Joins the War on Poverty': The National Council of Jewish Women and the Quest for Opportunity in 1960s Atlanta," v. 19
Katz, Jeremy, "Both Sides of the Same Coin: Two Atlantans in Israel's War of Independence," v. 19
Katz, Nora, Exhibit Review, Infinite Poem
Kita, Miyuki, Book Review, Debbie Z. Harwell, *Wednesdays in Mississippi: Proper Ladies Working for Radical Change, Freedom Summer 1964*, v. 19
—— "A Foot Soldier in the Civil Rights Movement: Lynn Goldsmith with SCLC–SCOPE, Summer 1965," v. 22
Klibanoff, Hank, Book Review, Kimberly Marlowe Hartnett, *Carolina Israelite: How Harry Golden Made Us Care about Jews, the South, and Civil Rights*, v. 18
Kneebone, John, Exhibit Review, That You'll Remember Me: Jewish Voices of the Civil War, Beth Ahabah Museum and Archives, v. 15
Kranson, Rachel, Website Review, L'dor V'dor: Jewish Women and their Impact on New Orleans, v. 24
Krasner, Jonathan B., Book Review, David E. Lowe, *Touched with Fire: Morris B. Abram and the Battle Against Racial and Religious Discrimination*, v. 23
Krause, Allen, "Charleston Jewry, Black Civil Rights, and Rabbi Burton Padoll," v. 11
—— "Rabbi Benjamin Schultz and the American Jewish League Against Communism: From McCarthy to Mississippi," v. 13
Kwas, Mary L., "Two Generations of the Abraham and Fanny Block Family: Internal Migration, Economics, Family, and the Jewish Frontier," v. 12
—— Book Review, Hans J. Sternberg with James E. Shelledy, *We Were Merchants: The Sternberg Family and the Story of Goudchaux's and Maison Blanche Department Stores,* v. 13
Lachoff, Irwin, "Rabbi Bernard Illowy: Counter Reformer," v. 5
—— Exhibit Review, The Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience, v. 25
Langston, Scott M., "Interaction and Identity: Jews and Christians in Nineteenth Century New Orleans," v. 3
—— "James K. Gutheim as Southern Reform Rabbi, Community Leader, and Symbol," v. 5
—— "The Bible and Bombings: Southern Rabbis Respond During the Civil Rights Movement," v. 14

—— "Teaching Southern Jewish History: A Dialogue" (with Bryan Edward Stone), v. 15
—— "Being Jewish in Columbus, Georgia: The Business, Politics, and Religion of Jacob and Isaac Moses, 1828–1890," v. 18
—— Book Review, Diane Catherine Vecchio, *Peddlers, Merchants, and Manufacturers: How Jewish Entrepreneurs Built Economy and Community in Upcountry South Carolina*, v. 27
Lawson, J. Kime, Exhibit Review, National Museum of American Jewish History: Core Exhibition, Philadelphia, v. 14
Lazarowitz, Arlene, "A Southern Senator and Israel: Senator J. William Fulbright's Accusations of Undue Influence over American Foreign Policy in the Middle East," v. 14
Leffler, Phyllis K., "Insiders or Outsiders: Charlottesville's Jews, White Supremacy, and Antisemitism," v. 21
—— Film Review, *Reawakening*, v. 24
Lefkowitz, Leah, Exhibit Review, *History with Chutzpah: Remarkable Stories of the Southern Jewish Adventure, 1733–Present*, v. 25
Levi, Aaron, Film Review, *Shared Legacies: The African American-Jewish Civil Rights Alliance*, v. 23
Levine, Lynn, Exhibit Review, Congregation Mickve Israel Museum, v. 19
Light, Caroline, Exhibit Review, The Legacy of the Hebrew Orphans' Home: Educating the Jewish South Since 1876, v. 21
Lourie, Owen, "Maryland's Jews, Military Service, and the AmericanRevolutionary Era: The Case of Elias Pollock," v. 25
Lucas, Patrick Lee, Exhibit Review, Down Home: Jewish Life in North Carolina, traveling exhibition, v. 14
—— "Edward Loewenstein's Midcentury Architectural Innovation in North Carolina," v. 16
Malone, Bobbie, "Ruth and Rosalie: Two Tales of Jewish New Orleans," v. 1
—— Book Review, Hollace Ava Weiner and Kenneth D. Roseman, eds., *Lone Stars of David: The Jews of Texas,* v. 10
Marcus, Jacob R., "Foreword," *JSJHS*, v. 1:1
Marcus, Robert, "David Mendes Cohen, Beleaguered Marine" (with Jim Quinlan), v. 4
Mason, Patrick Q., "Anti-Jewish Violence in the New South," v. 8
Mayer, Susan, "Amelia Greenwald and Regina Kaplan: Jewish Nursing Pioneers," v. 1
Meaher, Augustine, "A Daughter's Love: Lisa Stein, Senator Charles Andrews, and American Refugee Policy during the Holocaust," v. 24
Mendelsohn, Adam, "Two Far South: Rabbinical Responses to Apartheid and Segregation in South Africa and the American South," v. 6
—— Book Review, Clara Silverstein, *White Girl: A Story of School Desegregation,* v. 8

—— "Samuel and Saul Isaac: International Jewish Arms Dealers, Blockade Runners, and Civil War Profiteers," v. 15
—— "An Interview with Bernard Wax," v.17
Meyer, Adam, Book Review, P. Allen Krause, ed. Mark K. Bauman with Stephen Krause, *To Stand Aside or Stand Alone: Southern Reform Rabbis and the Civil Rights Movement*, v. 20
Milligan, Amy K., "Witnessing History: Civil Rights and the Jews of Selma, Alabama," v. 26
—— "'The Dark-Eyed Jew'" of Alabama: The Life and Folktales of Abraham Mordecai," v. 28
Monaco, Chris, "A Sugar Utopia on the Florida Frontier: Moses Elias Levy's Pilgrimage Plantation," v. 5
—— Necrology: Samuel Proctor (1919–2005), v. 8
Moore, Deborah Dash, Book Review, Raymond A. Mohl with Matilda "Bobbi" Graff and Shirley M. Zoloth, *South of the South: Jewish Activists and the Civil Rights Movement in Miami, 1945–1950*, v. 7
—— Book Review, Eric L. Goldstein and Deborah R. Weiner, *On Middle Ground: A History of the Jews of Baltimor*e, v. 22
—— Book Review, Andrew Feiler, *A Better Life for Their Children: Julius Rosenwald, Booker T. Washington, and the 4,978 Schools that Changed America*, v. 25
Morrow-Spitzer, Jacob, "'Free From Proscription and Prejudice': Politics and Race in the Election of One Jewish Mayor in Late Reconstruction Louisiana, v. 22
—— Review Essay: "Memoirs and Archives: Celebrating the Jews of Atlanta," v. 25
—— Book Review, Peter M. Wolf, *The Sugar King. Leon Godchaux: A New Orleans Legend, His Creole Slave, and His Jewish Roots*, v. 26
Moses, James L., "'The Law of Life is the Law of Service': Rabbi Ira Sanders and the Quest for Racial and Social Justice in Arkansas, 1926–1963," v. 10
Moss, Rachel Merrill, Film Review, *The Nita and Zita Project*, v. 27
Murphy, Michael, Book Review, Robert H. Gillette, *The Virginia Plan: William B. Thalhimer and a Rescue from Nazi Germany,* v. 15
Newkirk, Vann, "That Spirit Must be Stamped Out: The Mutilation of Joseph Needleman and North Carolina's Effort to Prosecute Lynch Mob Participants during the 1920s," v. 13
Norman, Margaret, "The Jewish Legacy of 'Bombingham': Exploring the Causes and Consequences of the Attempted Bombing of Temple Beth-El in Birmingham, Alabama in 1958" (with Melissa Young), v. 26
Normand, Eugene, "A Tale of Two Cities' Jewish Architects: Emile Weil of New Orleans and B. Marcus Priteca of Seattle," v. 16
O'Rear, Mary Jo, "The Constitution, Corpus Christi, and the Statue on the Bay," v. 27
Parshall, Josh, "*In Southern States*: Historical Texts from the Arbeter Ring's Southern District (English Translation from Yiddish)," v. 17

—— Book Review, Leon Waldoff, *A Story of Jewish Experience in Mississippi*, v. 22
—— Website Review, Jewish Heritage Fund for Excellence Jewish Kentucky Oral History Project
Pearlstein, Peggy Kronsberg, "Macey Kronsberg: Institution Builder of Conservative Judaism in Charleston, S.C., and the Southeast," v. 8
—— "Israel Fine: Baltimore Businessman and Hebrew Poet," v. 9
Pegram, Thomas R., Book Review, Marni Davis, *Jews and Booze: Becoming American in the Age of Prohibition,* v. 15
Pinsky, Dina, Website Review, Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life, v. 15
Pinsky, Mark I., Exhibit Review, Kehillah: A History of Jewish Life in Greater Orlando, v. 21
Preisler, Julian H., Website Review, The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, v. 14
"Program for Confederate Memorial Ceremony—Hebrew Cemetery," *JSJHS* v. 1:3
Pryor, Susan, "A Sephardic Physician in Williamsburg, Virginia" (with Alan L. Breitler), v. 11
Puckett, Dan J., Book Review, Mary Stanton, *The Hand of Esau: Montgomery's Jewish Community and the Bus Boycott,* v. 10
—— "In the Shadow of Hitler: Birmingham's Temple Emanu-El and Nazism," v. 11
—— "Resettlement of Holocaust Survivors in Alabama," v. 16
—— Book Review, Monique Laney, *German Rocketeers in the Heart of Dixie: Making Sense of the Nazi Past during the Civil Rights Era*, v. 18
Quevillon, Timothy R. Riggio, "Moshe Cahana, Ethical Zionism, and the Application of Jewish Nationalism to Civil Rights Struggles in the American South," v. 23
—— Primary Sources: "Black Newspapers and Jewish Advertising: Jim Crow on the South's Western Periphery," v. 26
Quinlan, Jim, "David Mendes Cohen, Beleaguered Marine" (with Robert Marcus), v. 4
Rabin, Shari, Website Review, Jewish Atlantic World, v. 18
—— "Responsa to Rabbi Perry Nussbaum: Interracial Marriage, Conversion, and Reform Judaism in Jackson, Mississippi, 1968," v. 28
—— "Introduction: Public History Reviews Section" (with Ashley Walters), v. 28
Rabinovitch-Fox, Einav, Book Review, Tim Allis, *Henri Bendel and the Worlds He Fashioned*, v. 29A
Rafshoon, Ellen G., "Esther Kahn Taylor: Hadassah Lady Turned Birth Control Advocate," v. 19
—— Exhibit Review, Seeking Justice: The Leo Frank Case Revisited, v. 19
"Rev. M. J. Michelbacher" (Illustration), *JSJHS* 1:2
Rockoff, Stuart, Review Essay, "Measuring Julius Rosenwald's Legacy," v. 10

—— Book Review, Bryan Edward Stone, *The Chosen Folks: Jews on the Frontiers of Texas,* v. 13
—— "Zionism on the West Texas Plains," v. 15
Roemer, Nils, Exhibit Review, Gone 2 Texas: Two Waves of Immigration, Soviet and South African, v. 22
Rogoff, Leonard, "Synagogue and Jewish Church: A Congregational History of North Carolina," v. 1
—— Book Review, Lee Shai Weissbach, *Jewish Life in Small Town America: A History,* v. 8
—— "Harry Golden, New Yorker: I ♥ NC," v. 11
—— "A Tale of Two Cities: Race, Riots, and Religion in New Bern and Wilmington, North Carolina, 1898," v. 14
—— "Four German Jewish Families and the Built Environment of Huntsville, Alabama, 1852–2017" (with Margaret Anne Goldsmith), v. 20
—— "Southern Jews, Woman Suffrage," v. 23
_____ Exhibit Review, Modern Visions, Modern Art: The Cone Sisters in North Carolina and Modern Visions, Mountain Views: The Cones of Flat Top Manor, v. 23
_____ "Matisse's Cosmopolitans in the New South: The Cone Sisters Collect Modern Art," v. 27
Roseman, Jean, "Barney and Clyde: A Tale of Murder and Madness," v. 10
Rosen, Robert N., Book Review, Adam D. Mendelsohn, *Jewish Soldiers in the Civil War: The Union Army*, v. 26
Rosenbloom, Joseph R., "Rebecca Gratz and Henry Clay: an American Jewess Observes a Leader's Drive for the Presidency," *JSJHS* 1:2
Rosengarten, Dale, "In Distinguished Company: A Profile of Solomon Breibart" (with Harlan Greene), v. 7
Rothschild, Michael, Book Review, Matthew H. Bernstein, *Screening a Lynching: The Leo Frank Case on Film and Television,* v. 13
—— Book Review, Roselle Kline Chartock, *The Jewish World of Elvis Presley*, v. 24
Rothstein, Jane, Book Review, Alan M. Kraut, *Goldberger's War: The Life and Work of a Public Health Crusader,* v. 7
Rotter, Arlene G., "Climbing the Crystal Stair: Annie T. Wise's Success as an Immigrant in Atlanta's Public School System (1872–1925)," v. 4
—— Letter to the Editor, "Revisiting Annie T. Wise," v. 5
Rubin, Saul J., "The Pioneer Period of the SJHS (1976–1983)," v. 10
Samet, Gertrude L., "Harry Reyner: Individualism and Community in Newport News, Virginia," v. 1
Sapon-White, Richard E., "A Polish Jew on the Florida Frontier and in Occupied Tennessee: Excerpts from the Memoirs of Max White," v. 4
Schottenstein, Allison Elizabeth, Book Review, Nick Kotz, *The Harness Maker's Dream: Nathan Kallison and the Rise of South Texas*, v. 18
Shapiro, Edward S., "A Shtetl in the Sun: Orthodoxy in Southern Florida," v. 10

—— Book Review, Adam D. Mendelsohn, *The Rag Race: How Jews Sewed Their Way to Success in America and the British Empire*, v. 18
—— Book Review, Michael R. Cohen, *Cotton Capitalists: American JewishEntrepreneurship in the Reconstruction Era*, v. 21
—— "A Call to Service: Rabbis Jacob M. Rothschild, Alexander D. Goode, Sidney M. Lefkowitz, and Roland B. Gittelsohn and World War II," v. 22
Shuffield, Lynna Kay, "Monuments and Memory: Fort Worth's World War I 'Tribute to Our Boys'" (with Hollace Ava Weiner), v. 20
Silverberg, Jay, "Louisiana Letters, 1855–1871: The Story of an Immigrant Jewish Family," v. 18
—— "Houses Divided that Remained Standing: Conflicting Loyalties within an Extended Southern Jewish Family," v. 27
Simonhoff, Harry, "Franklin J. Moses: Chief Justice of South Carolina," *JSJHS* v. 1:1
Snay, Mitchell, Book Review, Arthur Remillard, *Southern Civil Religions: Imagining the Good Society in the Post-Reconstruction South,* v. 15
—— Book Review, Neil Kinghan, *A Brief Moment in the Sun: Francis Cardozo and Reconstruction in South Carolina*, v. 26
Sperling, Andrew, "Creative Power: A Jewish Refugee in the Jim Crow South, 1939–1946," v. 24
—— Exhibit Review, What is Jewish Washington?, v. 27
Stanton, Kyle, "Hyman Judah Schachtel, Congregation Beth Israel, and the American Council for Judaism," v. 22
Stanton, Mary, "At One with the Majority," v. 9
Stern, Malcolm H., "Moses Myers and the Early Jewish Community of Norfolk," *JSJHS* v. 1:1
—— "Monticello and the Levy Family," *JSJHS* v. 1:2
—— "Some Notes on the History of the Organized Jewish Community of Norfolk, Virginia," *JSJHS* v. 1:3
Stiefel, Barry L., "In the Board We Trust: Jewish Communal Arbitration Cases in Antebellum Charleston, South Carolina," v. 19
Stollman, Jennifer A., Book Review, Emily Bingham, *Mordecai: An Early American Family,* v. 7
Stone, Bryan Edward, "'Ride 'em Jewboy': Kinky Friedman and the Texas Mystique," v. 1
—— "Edgar Goldberg and the *Texas Jewish Herald*: Changing Coverage and Blended Identity," v. 7
—— Book Review, Eliza R. L. McGraw, *Two Covenants: Representations of Southern Jewishness,* v. 10
—— Exhibit Review, Forgotten Gateway: Coming to America through Galveston Island, 1846–1924, Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum, Austin, Texas, v. 12
—— "Teaching Southern Jewish History: A Dialogue" (with Scott M. Langston), v. 15

—— "The Galveston Diaspora: A Statistical View of Jewish Immigration Through Texas, 1907–1913," v. 21
—— Film Review, *People of the Crossing: The Jews of El Paso*, v. 27
Strauss, Lauren B., Film Review, *The Levys of Monticello*, v. 26
Sussman, Lance, Book Review, Janice Rothschild Blumberg, *Prophet in a Time of Priests: Rabbi "Alphabet" Browne, 1845–1929: A Biography*, v. 16
—— "From the Memoirs Section Editors," v. 25
—— "Contextualizing Rabbi Davidow's Memoir: A Historical Introduction To Jewish Life in the Mississippi Delta, 1943–1961," v. 25
—— "From *Goldene Medina* to Gold Star Father: The Georgia 'Jew Store,' v. 26
—— "Memoirs of Oscar Dreizin of Butler and Macon, Georgia, c. 1948" (with Karen Franklin), v. 26
—— Transcending Race, Religion, and Class: Select Huntsville Memoirs by Margaret Anne Goldsmith" (with Lynda Barness), v. 27
—— "Rebraiding Southern Jewish Identity: The Savannah Memoir of B.H. Levy Jr." (with Lynda Barness and Karen Franklin), v. 29A
Tanny, Jarrod, "Between the Borscht Belt and the Bible Belt: Crafting Southern Jewishness Through Chutzpah and Humor," v. 15
—— Book Review, Alexander Z. Gurwitz, tr. Amram Prero, ed. Bryan Edward Stone, *Memories of Two Generations: A Yiddish Life in Russia and Texas*, v. 20
Tobias, Thomas J., "Tombstones That Tell a Story, Charleston's Historic Coming Street Cemetery," *JSJHS* v. 1:1
Tucker, Anna, Website Review, The William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum, v. 19
Umansky, Ellen M., "Christian Science, Jewish Science, and Alfred Geiger Moses," v. 6
—— "Paula Ackerman: Pioneer in the Pulpit," v. 14
—— Book Review, Sherry Z. Frank, *A Passion to Serve: Memoirs of a Jewish Activist*, v. 24
—— Book Review, Dianne Ashton and Melissa R. Klapper, eds., *The Civil War Diary of Emma Mordecai*, v. 28
Urofsky, Melvin I., Book Review, Marlene Trestman, *Fair Labor Lawyer: The Remarkable Life of New Deal Attorney and Supreme Court Advocate Bessie Margolin*, v. 19
Vecchio, Diane C., "New Jewish Women: Shaping the Future of a 'New South' in the Palmetto State," v. 23
—— Diane Vecchio, Website Review, Jewish Merchant Project, v. 25
Waitt, Robert W., Jr., "The American Civil War," *JSJHS* v. 1:3
Wald, Kenneth D., Book Review, Marcia Jo Zerivitz, *Jews of Florida: Centuries of Stories*, v. 23
Walters, Ashley, Exhibit Review, *A Source of Light*, v. 25
—— Exhibit Review, Beth-El Civil Rights Experience, v. 26
—— "Introduction: Public History Reviews Section" (with Shari Rabin), v. 28

—— "Fraternity, Ethnicity, and Welfare in the Holy City: The Kalushiner Society of Charleston, South Carolina," v. 29A
Wax, Bernard, "Ruminations about the SJHS," v. 10
—— Necrology: Saul Viener (1921–2006), v. 9
—— "Postscript: Reminiscences and Observations," v. 17
Webb, Clive, "Jewish Merchants and Black Customers in the Age of Jim Crow," v. 2
—— "'What Was on Your Mind Was on Your Tongue': A Profile of Leonard Dinnerstein," v. 7
Weiner, Deborah R., "The Jews of Keystone: Life in a Multicultural Boomtown," v. 2
—— "'A Sense of Connection to Others': A Profile of Stephen Whitfield," v. 7
—— Book Review, Jeffrey Gurock, *Orthodoxy in Charleston: Brith Sholom Beth Israel and American Jewish History,* v. 8
Weiner, Hollace Ava, "Removal Approval: The Industrial Removal Office Experience in Fort Worth, Texas," v. 4
—— Book Review, David J. Ginzl, *Stein Mart: An American Story of Roots, Family, and Building a Greater Dream,* v. 8
—— "Grassroots Reactions to Kishinev Pogrom in Fort Worth and Atlanta" (with Sandra Berman), v. 12
—— Book Review, Kathryn J. McGarr, *The Whole Damn Deal: Robert Strauss and the Art of Politics,* v. 15
—— "Monuments and Memory: Fort Worth's World War I 'Tribute to Our Boys'" (with Lynna Kay Shuffield), v. 20
—— Book Review, Allison E. Schottenstein, *Changing Perspectives: Black-Jewish Relations in Houston during the Civil Rights Era*, v. 24
Weinfeld, Daniel R., "Samuel Fleishman: Tragedy in Reconstruction-Era Florida," v. 8
—— "Henrietta Shebeiner marries Aaron Davis, June 7, 1870, Eufaula, Alabama," v. 11
—— "A Certain Ambivalence: Florida's Jews and the Civil War," v. 17
Weinfeld, David, Book Review, Leonard Rogoff, *Gertrude Weil: Jewish Progressive in the New South*, v. 20
—— "Two Commemorations: Richmond Jews and the Lost Cause during the Civil Rights Era," v. 23
—— Book Review, Richard Kreitner, *Fear No Pharoah: American Jews, the Civil War, and the Fight to End Slavery*, v. 29A
Weinstein, Dina, "Melvin Wali Ali Feiler Meyer: A Student's Struggle with Insider/Outsider Status in Civil Rights–Era Alabama," v. 16
Weissbach, Lee Shai, "Contextualizing the Franco-Jewish Experience in the South," v. 14
—— Book Review, Anton Hieke, *Jewish Identity in the Reconstruction South: Ambivalence and Adaptation,* v. 17

—— Book Review, Shari Rabin, *Jews on the Frontier: Religion and Mobility in Nineteenth-Century America*, v. 21
Whitfield, Stephen J., Review Essay, "In the High Cotton," v. 4
—— "Framing Florida Jewry," v. 10
—— "Commerce and Community: A Business History of Jacksonville Jewry," v. 12
—— "The Hermans of New Orleans: A Family in History," v. 13
—— Book Review, Karen L. Cox, *Dreaming of Dixie: How the South Was Created in American Popular Culture,* v. 14
—— Book Review, Rich Cohen, *The Fish That Ate the Whale: The Life and Times of America's Banana King,* v. 15
—— "Black Mountain and Brandeis: Two Experiments in Higher Education," v. 16
—— "The Achievement of Mark K. Bauman," v. 20
—— Book Review, Mary Stanton, *Red Black White: The Alabama Communist Party, 1930–1950*, v. 24
—— Film Review, *A Crime on the Bayou*, v. 26
—— Book Review, Devery S. Anderson, *A Slow, Calculated Lynching: The Story of Clyde Kennard*, v. 27
—— "Jews Against Jim Crow: The Lawyers Constitutional Defense Committee," v. 28
—— Book Review, Betsy T. Phillips, *Dynamite Nashville: Unmasking the FBI, the KKK, and the Bombers Beyond Their Control*, v. 28
Wilkes, George, "Rabbi Dr. David Marx and the Unity Club: Organized Jewish-Christian Dialogue, Liberalism, and Religious Diversity in Early Twentieth-Century Atlanta," v. 9
Williams, Emily Rena, Exhibit Review, A Better Life for Their Children: Julius Rosenwald, Booker T. Washington, and the 4,978 Schools that Changed America, v. 27
Young, Melissa, "The Jewish Legacy of 'Bombingham': Exploring the Causes and Consequences of the Attempted Bombing of Temple Beth-El in Birmingham, Alabama in 1958" (with Margaret Norman), v. 26
Youngblood, Joshua Cobbs, Exhibit Review, Of Passover and Pilgrimage: The Natchez Jewish Experience, v. 18
Zake, Ieva, Book Review, Hollace Ava Weiner, *Jewish 'Junior League': The Rise and Demise of the Fort Worth Council of Jewish Women,* v. 11
Zerivitz, Marcia Jo, "Rosa Benjamin marries Jacob Katz, July 7, 1886, Micanopy, Florida" (with Rachel Heimovics Braun), v. 11
—— Book Review, Jerome Novey, *The Life and Letters of Samuel Ellsworth Fleet: An Immigrant's Tale*, v. 27
Zielonka, Carl L., Book Review, S. Perry Brickman, *Extracted: Unmasking Rampant Anti-semitism in America's Higher Education*, v. 23
Zola, Gary P., "Why Study Southern Jewish History?," v. 1

—— Book Review, Mark K. Bauman, *A New Vision of Southern Jewish History: Studies in Institution Building, Leadership, Interaction, and Mobility*, v. 23



MUSEUM OF THE
SOUTHERN
JEWISH
EXPERIENCE

818 Howard Ave.
New Orleans, LA

msje.org



Texas Jewish Historical Society

Advocating for Texas Jewish history since 1980 through active membership, educational conferences, grant funding, publishing, archiving, providing research resources, and more.

Looking to the Past, Acting for the Future

txjhs.org