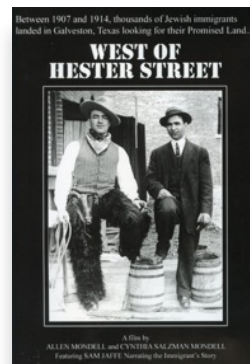
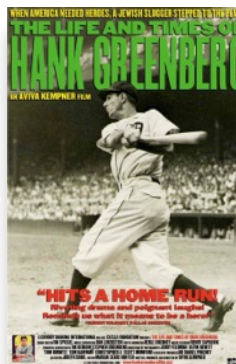




## Texas or Bust: SJHS 2014 Conference Draws Near



*Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center and I. B. Singer's Yiddish typewriter courtesy of the Ransom Center; posters courtesy of Ciesla Foundation and Cynthia Salzman and Allen Mondell, Media Projects, Inc.*

Austin, here we come! The Society's first sojourn in Texas, but its third collaboration with the Texas Jewish Historical Society, is set for October 23–26.

The conference begins on the 40-acre campus of the University of Texas, with the first stop the newly renovated LBJ Presidential Library. There we will hold our plenary session, appropriately titled "In the Oval: Southern Jews and the Presidency." Panelists will offer insights into such prominent insiders as Bernard Baruch, the New York financier with a Confederate heritage; Abe Fortas, the judge who fell from grace; Bernard "B" Rapoport, the philanthropist who got mired in Whitewater; and Morris Abram, diplomat and advisor to five presidents.

While on the UT campus, we will tour the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, one of the world's foremost collections of primary material in literature and the arts. Some artifacts will be on display expressly for our group, including items from the personal collections of Isaac Bashevis Singer, Bernard Malamud, and Arthur Miller. The Center holds the papers of film producer David O. Selznick, and our visit

coincides with an exhibit showcasing the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Selznick's epic motion picture, *Gone with the Wind*.

On Shabbat, we will convene at the beautiful, wooded, and relaxing Dell Jewish Community Campus, located on former ranchland in the city's northwest quadrant. The program promises to be dynamic, with speakers traveling from as far afield as England and Germany. In keeping with the conference theme, "Crossing Borders: Southern Jews in Global Contexts," presentations on topics such as black-Jewish genealogy and Latin American Jews migrating north will explore boundaries both social and geographic. And in a first for an SJHS conference, we will feature a Saturday afternoon panel focusing on documentary movies. The mealtime menus will themselves cross cultural borders, including barbecue on Shabbat, fajitas for Havdalah, and a Sunday morning bagel bar.

In this issue of *The Rambler*, you will find provocative and fascinating previews of some of the subjects that will be explored during the weekend. The full conference program is included on page three, and the conference registration form is on the back page. So fill it out, send it in, and we'll see you in Austin!

## SJHS Conference Hotel and Travel Tips

If you plan to rent a car, ask for a navigation system to help conquer Austin's maze of highways. And make sure you book your hotel reservation by the October 12 cutoff date, because hotels fill up quickly in the Texas capital. The same weekend as the SJHS conference, Austin is hosting a film festival and a book festival. As our meeting winds down, Formula 1 Grand Prix racing fans will begin arriving.

To reserve your room at the Holiday Inn Austin NW-Arboretum, 8901 Business Park Drive, call **877-719-8291** and ask for the special TJHS/SJHS conference hotel rate of \$109/ night. Room fee includes parking and Wi-Fi. Breakfast is not included; there are two restaurants on site. **Your reservation must be received on or before Sunday, October 12.**

For more information see [txjhs.org](http://txjhs.org) or [jewishsouth.org](http://jewishsouth.org). Details about the Holiday Inn Austin NW-Arboretum can be found at [holidayinn.com/hotels/us/en/austin/ausnw/hoteldetail](http://holidayinn.com/hotels/us/en/austin/ausnw/hoteldetail).



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## President's Message

By Dale Rosengarten



Almost two years have passed since I wrote my first letter as SJHS president. I can say unequivocally it has been a privilege and pleasure to work with the cadre of extraordinary individuals—Society officers, board directors, committee chairs, editors, and just plain members—who produce such stellar conferences and publications, year after year. It is the dedication and sweat equity of people like Stuart Rockoff and Dan Puckett, co-chairs of the Birmingham meeting in 2013, and Hollace Weiner and Bryan Stone, chief cooks and bottle-washers for this fall's gala in Austin, that make the president look good.

Behind the scenes many other "hidden hands" keep the Society's wheels turning: Les Bergen insures that our financial house is in order; Phyllis Leffler takes minutes for board and membership meetings and heads the grants committee; and Barbara Tahsler tracks memberships and gifts—to name just three.

I want to thank editors Mark Bauman, Rachel Braun, Bryan Stone, and Deb Weiner, as well as Simon Mendelsohn, the unsung hero who lays out *The Rambler*, for their tireless work. If I have to single out one initiative during my tenure that gives me special satisfaction it would be the redesign—or, as some call it, the rebranding—of the Society's publications. You may have noticed our new logo and the new look of *The Rambler*, *SjH*, and our website. This did not happen overnight but is the result of a deliberate process guided by an ad hoc committee and led by a talented young graphic designer named Anna Westbury, whose rampant lions flanking a palm tree provoked lively debate, and in the end was the thoughtful choice of the Society's board. For me the symbol says "Southern" and "Jewish" loud and clear.

While I am stepping down as the Society's president and confidently handing the reins to Ellen Umansky, I expect my involvement with SJHS to continue apace. As associate director of the College of Charleston's new Center for Southern Jewish Culture, I look forward to building a collaborative relationship between the Center and SJHS. The Center's director, Adam Mendelsohn, served on the board of SJHS and as editor of *The Rambler*. We both feel a strong allegiance to the two organizations and see a partnership between them as a natural alliance. For the Center it is also a necessity: the projects we plan to propose, including surveys, symposia, oral history collections, and lecture tours, will require a regional partner—a society that reaches into every southern state.

I look forward to seeing everyone in Austin for a weekend of exploration, learning, good food, and good fellowship. If you haven't already done so, I encourage you to register today.

## Two Thumbs Up: Jewish History on the Big Screen

Documentary films, more so than books, revive discussion of forgotten topics, bring oral histories to life, reach a broad audience, and give events cultural density. We're delighted that prominent and accomplished filmmakers will join us in Austin to examine the connections between history and film. Dallas filmmakers Allen Mondell and Cynthia Salzman Mondell of Media Projects, Inc., and Washington-based Aviva Kempner of the Ciesla Foundation will show and discuss excerpts from their award-winning documentaries.

The Mondells will air selections from *West of Hester Street*, a 1984 docudrama credited with reviving scholarship into the Galveston Movement, which brought 10,000 Jewish immigrants to the United States in the years leading up to World War I. Controversies dramatized in that film echo the same issues immigrants face today. The Mondells will also share film clips from *Make Me a Match*, a look at how Jewish singles find mates in the age of the Internet.

Kempner is at work on a documentary about the Rosenwald Schools, the 5,300 African American schools constructed across the South between 1917

and 1932. The schools, built in 15 southern states, were named for philanthropist Julius Rosenwald, the president of Sears, Roebuck, and Co. His foundation provided seed money for partnerships between local school districts and African American communities during the Jim Crow era. Since integration, many of these schools have been lost, and public memory of Rosenwald and his schools is fading. At last year's SJHS conference in Birmingham, keynote speaker Julian Bond, a consultant on the documentary, discussed how his relatives had benefited from these schools and how Rosenwald's philanthropy helped establish the "special relationship" between blacks and Jews evident in the early years of the civil rights movement.

Kempner plans to show the Rosenwald film's first nine minutes, which look at immigrant peddlers such as the philanthropist's father. She also plans to share outtakes from *The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg*, the 1998 documentary about the Detroit Tiger who declined to play on Yom Kippur. In the early 1930s the slugger played for the Piedmont League's Raleigh Capitals and the Texas League's Beaumont Exporters.

# Crossing Borders: Southern Jews in Global Contexts

Southern Jewish Historical Society 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference / Texas Jewish Historical Society Fall Meeting  
Austin, Texas, October 23–26, 2014

Bryan Edward Stone and Hollace Ava Weiner, Conference Program Co-Chairs

## Thursday, October 23

**3 pm** Check-in, registration at Holiday Inn Austin NW-Arboretum

**6 pm** SJHS board dinner at Iron Cactus Austin North

## Friday, October 24

*All daytime events are on the campus of the University of Texas at Austin.*

*LBJ Presidential Library*

**9 am** Welcome messages and self-guided tour

**10:30 am Plenary Session: “In the Oval: Southern Jews and the Presidency”** (Moderator: Ellen M. Umansky)

- ▶ Claudia Anderson, LBJ Presidential Library supervisory archivist, “LBJ and Austin Jewry: Reality vs. Hyperbole”
- ▶ Cecily Abram, “Stepping Stones from Georgia to Geneva: Morris Abram and His Ties to Five Presidents”
- ▶ Don Carleton, “Capitalist with a Conscience: Bernard Rapoport’s Rapport with Bill Clinton”
- ▶ Stephen Whitfield, “Bernard Baruch and Abe Fortas: No Southern Jewish Style in Politics”

**Noon** Box lunches and discussion with plenary panelists

*Briscoe Center for American History*

**1 pm** View artifacts from Texas Jewish Historical Society Collection

*Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center*

**2 - 3:30 pm** Tour exhibit marking 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Gone with the Wind*, with artifacts from producer David O. Selznick’s collection, plus a special display of objects from literary collections of Jewish interest

*Dell Jewish Community Campus*

**6 - 9 pm** Erev Shabbat service, Congregation Agudas Achim  
Kosher barbecue dinner, Jewish Community Association of Austin

- ▶ **Keynote Speaker:** Samuel D. Gruber  
Architectural historian, author, historic preservationist  
“**Saving Synagogues: Different Goals, Different Strategies in Brenham, Brookhaven, Birmingham and Beyond**”

Introduced by Sherry Zander, small-town synagogue historian

## Saturday, October 25

*All daytime events are on the Dell Jewish Community Campus.*

**9 am Concurrent panels**

**Zionism in the South: Religion, Race, and Reaction**

(Moderator: Marni Davis)

- ▶ Lee Shai Weissbach, “A Southern Jew, Before and After”
- ▶ Allison Schottenstein, “Houston’s ‘Basic Principles’: Whitening the Synagogue Walls”
- ▶ Peggy Pearlstein, “A Journey to Palestine in 1946: The Emergence of a Zionist Lobby in the Southeast”

**The Atlantic as Highway: Four Centuries of Jewish Migration** (Moderator: Mark K. Bauman)

- ▶ Dale Rosengarten, “Port Jews and Plantation Jews”
- ▶ Keith and Nancy Atkinson, “Crossing Borders: The Nunes Carvalhos, a Transatlantic Family”
- ▶ Anton Hieke, “Leaving the South: Southern Jewish Migration to Europe”

**10:30 am A Foot in Two Worlds: Transnationalism and Southern Jews** (Moderator: Suzanne Seriff)

- ▶ Sebastian Klor, “Latino Jews in Texas”
- ▶ Alan Astro, “Texas Yiddish Writers in a Global Context”
- ▶ Josh Parshall, “The Arbeter Ring and Transnational Yiddishkeit”
- ▶ Jay Silverberg, “The Meyer Brothers of Louisiana: Letters from Home”

**Noon Luncheon Speaker:** Theodore Rosengarten

“**Diplomacy’s Cruel Sword: The Civil War’s 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Legacy**”

**1 pm Jewish History on the Big Screen: Documentary Filmmakers** (Moderator: TBA)

- ▶ Aviva Kempner, *The Life & Times of Hank Greenberg; Yoo Hoo, Mrs. Goldberg; Partisans of Vilna; The Rosenwald Schools* (forthcoming)
- ▶ Cynthia Salzman Mondell and Allen Mondell, *West of Hester Street; Make Me a Match; The Monster Among Us*

**2:30 pm Blacks and Jews: The Genealogical Record** (Moderator: Leonard Rogoff)

- ▶ Sadie Day Pasha, “Cohen of Georgetown County, South Carolina, 1760–1960”
- ▶ Anthony Cohen, “The Search for Patrick Sneed: Retracing the Footsteps of an American Jewish Slave’s Escape on the Underground Railroad”

**6 pm** Havdalah dinner cruise on Lady Bird Lake

View of Austin skyline and nightly flight of bats from beneath the Ann W. Richards Congress Avenue Bridge

## Sunday, October 26

*Holiday Inn Austin NW-Arboretum*

**8 am** SJHS membership meeting / TJHS board meeting

*Dell Jewish Community Campus*

**10 am** Bagel bar and coffee

**10:30 am Meet the Authors** (Moderator: Scott Langston)

- ▶ Kay Goldman, *Dressing Modern Maternity: The Frankfurt Sisters of Dallas and the Page Boy Label*
- ▶ Caroline E. Light, *That Pride of Race and Character: The Roots of Jewish Benevolence in the Jim Crow South*
- ▶ Additional author(s) TBA

**12:30 pm** Groundbreaking ceremony for B’nai Abraham, Texas’s oldest Orthodox synagogue, which will be moved from Brenham, Texas, to the Dell Jewish Community Campus



# David O. Selznick and *Gone with the Wind*

By Stephen Whitfield

*In advance of viewing the *Gone with the Wind* exhibition at the University of Texas during the SJHS conference, we asked cultural historian and SJHS member Stephen Whitfield to offer some reflections on David O. Selznick's epic film.*

Those with the power to produce movies are akin to deities in Hollywood. In the last two decades, for example, seven winners of Academy Awards have explicitly thanked God when accepting their Oscars. But according to a recent *Harper's Index*, 30 winners have thanked Harvey Weinstein. His predecessors, in the golden age of the film industry from the interwar years to the immediate postwar period, included two major independent producers. One was Samuel Goldwyn, whose reputed "touch" traversed several genres. The other was David O. Selznick, whose career is so indelibly associated with one movie that most filmgoers would scratch their heads if asked to identify who actually directed *Gone with the Wind* (1939). No wonder then that on October 24 memorabilia associated with that film will be on display for conference attendees in Austin.

To highlight Selznick's role in adapting Margaret Mitchell's blockbuster novel (1936) is only fitting, because both the book and the film converge on the fateful intersection of region and race that is central to the understanding of the national experience—and to southern Jewish history as well. In the late 1930s, readers and audiences came down with what was commonly diagnosed as "Scarlett fever," and what remains relevant is the enduring popularity of both works. Depending on how ticket sales are calculated in taking account of inflation, *Gone with the Wind* (the movie) joins *Gone with the Wind* (the novel) as among the most commercially successful works ever created. As epics, both versions belong in the line that begins in 1852 with *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, extends through D. W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), and continues in our own time, perhaps, with *Roots* (1976), the Alex Haley saga also adapted into a couple of television series

that placed the American dilemma in an African American perspective.



Scarlett O'Hara's famous ball gown made from draperies is on display at the Ransom Center's *Gone with the Wind* exhibition on the UT campus. Courtesy of the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center



That Margaret Mitchell admired the Reverend Thomas Dixon, whose deplorably racist novel *The Clansman* (1905) inspired *Birth of a Nation*, suggests how troubling this epic legacy has been. It is hardly comforting to note that Selznick toned down the racial anxiety (and racist assumptions) that characterize the novel of the Atlanta-based Mitchell. Selznick acknowledged the force of the criticism that the NAACP launched in pressing him to resist neo-Confederate apologetics. It also helped that he enlisted Ben Hecht, soon to become an ardent Zionist polemicist, as script doctor. Hecht disclaimed ever having bothered to read the novel. Nor could Selznick have been unaware of the way that his own family and other Jews had been persecuted in Tsarist Russia, a sensitivity that may have softened Mitchell's defense of the Old South.

But had he been more Jewish in sensibility, Selznick might have appreciated the cruelty of his film toward an American minority far more despised than his own. Selznick swam within a society, however, that imposed humiliation upon even the most accomplished black Americans. Consider Hattie McDaniel, who portrayed Mammy, the loyal slave who succors Miz Scarlett. When leading members of the cast came to Atlanta to celebrate the gala premiere of *Gone with the Wind*, McDaniel was pointedly excluded from the entourage. And when the Oscars were later awarded in Los Angeles, she was not permitted to sit with collaborators who had made so sensational a film. The winner for Best Supporting Actress was forced to sit at the rear of the room.

*Stephen Whitfield is the Max Richter Professor of American Civilization at Brandeis University.*

## Jewish Floridian Is Now Online

The University of Florida Libraries recently launched a new database, the Ethnic Newspapers from Florida collection ([ufdc.ufl.edu/ethnicnews](http://ufdc.ufl.edu/ethnicnews)), which includes all issues of the longstanding Florida Jewish newspaper, the *Jewish Floridian*. The digitized *Jewish Floridian* comprises 5,551 issues containing a wealth of historical, social, economic, and genealogical information. The collection can best be searched by clicking on the "Text Search" tab, writing search terms in the box, and clicking the "go" button. Happy searching!

## Morris Abram, JFK, and MLK: A Leader Looks Back

*Morris Abram, small-town Georgia boy, rose to become a prominent civil rights attorney, presidential advisor, and head of national Jewish organizations. At the upcoming SJHS conference, his niece Cecily Abram will discuss his ties to five American presidents.*

*This edited excerpt from Abram's memoir, *The Day Is Short*, concerns his role as an Atlanta attorney in mediating among Martin Luther King Jr., John F. Kennedy's presidential campaign, and Mayor William Hartsfield during a 1960 sit-in at the Jewish-owned Rich's Department Store.*

Just days before the election, [JFK aide] Harris Wofford caught me on the phone one Saturday morning as I was leaving home with my nine-year-old daughter Ann for her promised "day with Daddy." "Morris," Harris said, "Martin Luther King Jr. is in jail in Atlanta."

"Surely you don't have to call me long-distance to tell me," I replied. "Everybody knows that."

"But I want you to get him out and claim the credit for Senator Kennedy. Go see Mayor Hartsfield." I pointed out that I was one foot out the door with Ann. "Take her with you."

There were 19 demonstrators keeping Martin company in the Fulton County jail. Were they all to be released? King, moreover, had said he wouldn't come out on bail. The charges filed by Rich's Department Store were unjust. His cry was "jail not bail." And police had also arrested a contingent of Klansmen for anti-black demonstrations. It was a tangled mess.

Hartsfield was extremely excited. "Yeah, come down at once," he said. When I arrived at City Hall he [had] unsettling news. "I've just told the Negro leadership that representatives of Senator Kennedy called and asked me to release MLK. There was a reporter in the room and the story by now is on the wires."

I was barely able to digest this potentially catastrophic development. We had to obtain the consent of the police, the prosecuting officer, the black leadership, Rich's, and finally, the consent of MLK himself, which proved as difficult as all the above put together.

[At one point, local JFK operative] Bobby Troutman burst into the office. He had heard the story on the radio and was envisioning his southern political strategy going right down the tube. "Who," he demanded, "is the representative of Senator Kennedy who is trying to get this King fellow out of jail?" Then it dawned on me. Wofford and [JFK advisor Sargent] Shriver had cooked up this whole scheme with no prior clearance with anyone else in the Kennedy campaign.

We began at ten in the morning and negotiated until eight that evening without stopping for food. My hungry little daughter received a political immersion she will never forget. By the end of the day we had worked out the simpler parts of the deal. Hartsfield recommended the release of everybody, the blacks and the Klansmen, without bail. But Martin announced that he had not been legally vindicated. The charge, under an unjust law, was still hanging over his head. He flatly refused to leave jail until all charges were dropped.

Getting them dropped would be no mean feat. Richard H. Rich, a friend of Hartsfield and mine, was in terror that his company would be charged with caving in to black pressure. Very late Saturday evening the mayor and I barged in on Rich at home in dressing gown and slippers. "Atlanta's getting a horrible image, a horrible image!" Hartsfield exclaimed. Rich shrugged sympathetically. "Look," Hartsfield went on. "I've agreed to release the Klansmen. Their supporters are delighted. If you drop the charges against

King those happy rednecks will barely notice." Finally Rich agreed. The charges were lifted.

[But the story did not end there.] After his release, King was picked up for a parole violation in DeKalb County, because of an earlier charge for driving with an out-of-state license. Judge Oscar Mitchell had sentenced King to the state prison at Reidsville, [but] had suspended the sentence provided King did not violate any Georgia law. Mitchell [now] sentenced King to six months hard labor in Reidsville where he was promptly taken in handcuffs.

Bobby Kennedy phoned Mitchell to protest, outraging every tradition in the South. Shriver cornered Jack Kennedy and persuaded him to call Coretta King to express support and sympathy. Impulsively—or let us hope intuitively—Kennedy consented and called Mrs. King.

For whatever reason, Judge Mitchell released King on bail. But Bobby Kennedy's call to Mitchell had cost dearly. Kennedy strategists now plotted to milk the exposed position for every possible benefit. Harris Wofford asked if I could get King to announce his support for Kennedy. I told Wofford that King would not endorse any political candidate, but it dawned on me that Martin Luther King Sr. might not be bound by such self-imposed restrictions.

My chore was facilitated by some legal matters I was handling for King Sr. He [stopped] by my office. As we concluded our business, I said, "Dr. King, Senator Kennedy would like Martin to announce for him."

"He can't do that in his position."

"What about you?"

"Well Mr. Abram, as a Baptist I have been opposed to Senator Kennedy on religious grounds." That startled me. "Nevertheless, in view of what Kennedy has done for my son, I'm going to vote for him."

"Will you say that publicly?" I asked. "Mr. Abram," he said, "have your reporters at the Ebenezer Baptist Church on Sunday." This was a few days before the election. "I will say that because of what Senator Kennedy has done for my son, I want to get for him a whole bushel basket full of votes." Daddy King was as good as his word.

John F. Kennedy was elected president a few days later by a margin of about 100,000 votes.

*Excerpt submitted by Cecily Abram, courtesy of the Morris Abram estate.*



Morris Abram with Robert Kennedy and with Lyndon and Lady Bird Johnson. From *The Day Is Short*. Courtesy of the Morris Abram estate



## — Society News —

### Former SJHS Board Member Recognized “Honoring Generations Past”

*The following is excerpted from The Hallmarker, the newsletter published by The Hallmark retirement community in Atlanta. It highlights the work of Hallmark resident Betsy Teplis, former membership chair and longtime member of the SJHS, in preserving Atlanta's Jewish heritage.*

Historic Oakland Cemetery, the oldest in Atlanta, is known not only for notables interred there—the famous golfer Bobby Jones, author Margaret Mitchell, and Mayor Maynard Jackson—but for many Confederate soldiers and generations of Jewish Atlantans of German and Eastern European descent as well. That the latter's sections were in disrepair aroused the concern of Betsy Blumberg Teplis, a Hallmark resident whose great-grandparents, Gitel and David Saul, are buried there.

Ms. Teplis organized restoration of the Ahavath Achim Synagogue section and



Betsy Teplis speaking at the rededication of the Ahavath Achim section of Oakland Cemetery, Atlanta. *Courtesy of Betsy Teplis*

planned the rededication of the area, for which she was awarded a volunteer-of-the-year award by the synagogue. Many prominent Atlantans attended, including former Mayor Sam Massell. A plaque recounting the history of the plot was unveiled.

Ms. Teplis's historic interests have included membership chair of the Southern Jewish Historical Society and board member of the Historical Oakland Foundation. Her family pride extends not only to the past but also to her grandson, an Army captain who was awarded the Bronze Star when he served in Iraq and is now stationed in South Korea.

Born in Birmingham and raised in Atlanta, Ms. Teplis has three children, four grandchildren, and a great grandchild who is a seventh generation Atlantan.

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### Sumner Levine – In Memoriam and In Appreciation

By May Lynn Mansbach

Sumner Levine, dear friend, mentor, and tireless and devoted supporter of the Southern Jewish Historical Society, passed away suddenly on June 27 in Athens, Greece, where he was traveling with Phyllis, his wife of 59 years, en route to a family wedding in Israel. Sumner's loss leaves an immense void in our Memphis community and in the ranks of dedicated advocates of southern Jewish history.



Sumner Levine (right) with SJHS co-founder Saul Wiener at the SJHS Memphis meeting, 2003. *Photo by Bruce Weiner*

people responded to his gentle persistence. Low-key and witty, kind and inclusive, he was the glue that for so long helped to hold the Memphis society together. In his memory, the JHS of Memphis and the Mid-South has established the Sumner Levine Speaker Series, now accepting tribute donations.

Peggy Jalenak, a friend and a past president of the Jewish Historical Society of Memphis and the Mid-South, called Sumner the “wind beneath the wings” of the Memphis society. During and after his own tenure as president, he worked unceasingly to keep the society aloft and healthy. Always available to do whatever was needed, Sumner was also a master at involving others. He jokingly called himself “the nudge,” but

Sumner became SJHS president after planning a successful SJHS conference in Memphis in 2003. After his term, he was an essential advisor to his successors and worked to ensure that his adopted hometown was well represented in the SJHS membership rolls.

A Boston native, Sumner first traveled to Memphis in December 1953 for a family wedding. When he returned to Boston, he found his driveway covered with snow and worked hard to shovel it away. The next day, the snowplows cleared the streets and pushed all the snow he had shoveled right back onto his driveway. He decided then and there to move to Memphis.

An avid reader, Sumner was always expanding his knowledge. He was fascinated by the South, history in general, the world around him, travel, synagogues, news, politics, museums, and the performing arts. He loved a good card game and he loved sports, especially Memphis Tigers and Grizzlies basketball. And fortunately for us, he believed in the great importance of learning about and preserving Jewish history. His career experiences were equally varied: over the years he worked in retail, food, heating and cooling, collections, and insurance.

Sumner's chief joy was his family—wife Phyllis, daughters Beth Orlansky (now an SJHS board member) and her husband Steve, Jan Reisman and her husband Marc, and his five grandsons. A southern gentleman by way of Boston, a selfless individual, and a devoted friend to many, he will be sorely missed. May his memory be a blessing.

*May Lynn Mansbach of Memphis is a former SJHS board member and a past president of the Jewish Historical Society of Memphis and the Mid-South.*

# NEWS AND NOTES

## JHS South Carolina Fall Meeting Announced



The first Jewish couple married in Aiken, S.C.  
Courtesy of Nelson Danish

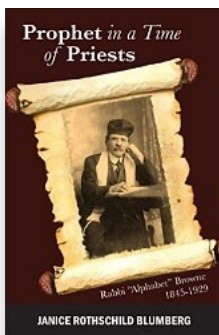
The Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina invites you to its fall meeting, "Jewish Roots, Aiken Branches: From Shtetl to Small-Town South," on November 15-16, 2014, to celebrate the unveiling of a historic marker at Aiken's Congregation Adath Yeshurun, a small-town synagogue nearing its hundredth anniversary. The weekend will include a tour of Aiken and its historic sites, a panel discussion of "Aiken Pioneers, Then and Now," as well as a talk presented by Richard Gergel and Robert Rosen on the early Jews of South Carolina. The weekend will conclude with the historical marker dedication and a reception to follow. To register or for more information, please visit [jhssc.org/events](http://jhssc.org/events).

## Franco-German Jews Along the Mississippi River

From France and Germany, they crossed the Atlantic Ocean to become peddlers, small shop owners, or sugar and tobacco traders. In *From the Banks of the Rhine to the Banks of the Mississippi: The History of Jewish Immigrants and their Individual Stories*, author Anny Bloch-Raymond explores the stories and testimonies of descendants of Franco-German Jews who settled along the Mississippi River in Louisiana and Mississippi. Her study covers approximately 210,000 immigrants over a span of five generations, focusing on how identities and cultures were affected by migration.

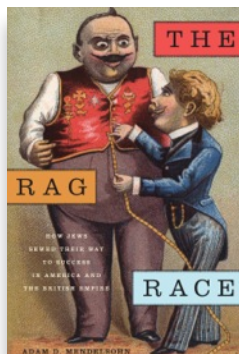
Originally published in France, the book is now available from [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) and other online shops in an English language version translated by Catherine Temerson. Bloch-Raymond, an SJHS member, teaches Jewish culture at the University of Toulouse in France. She received a completion grant from the SJHS for this study in 2009.

## Prophet in a Time of Priests Is Reissued



As protégé of Isaac Mayer Wise, Rabbi "Alphabet" Browne had a ringside seat for the development of American Judaism, but lost favor when he set out on his own. His multifaceted career included politics, legal battles, Zionism, serving as a pallbearer for President Ulysses S. Grant, and publishing the first Jewish newspaper in the South. Janice Rothschild Blumberg's book about Browne, *Prophet in a Time of Priests*, is available in a newly revised edition with index. It can be found on [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) in both paperback and Kindle formats.

## The Rag Race Explores the Clothing Industry and Jewish Success



The majority of Jewish immigrants who made their way to the United States between 1820 and 1924 arrived nearly penniless, yet today their descendants stand out as exceptionally successful. How can we explain this dramatic ascent? By comparing the economic trajectory of Jews in America with those in the British Empire, Adam Mendelsohn reaches a novel conclusion in *The Rag Race: How Jews Sewed their Way to Success in America and the British Empire*. He argues that

the Jews who flocked to the United States during the age of mass migration were aided appreciably by their association with a particular corner of the American economy. From humble beginnings, Jews rode the coattails of the clothing trade from the margins of economic life to a position of unusual promise and prominence, shaping both their societal status and the clothing industry as a whole.

Although global in scope, *The Rag Race* pays particular attention to the role of the South as an engine of the clothing trade—and as a field for Jewish enterprise—before and after the Civil War. *The Rag Race*, published by New York University Press, can be pre-ordered at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com). It comes out in December.

## Fort Worth Exhibit Showcases Two Trips to Israel



Rabbi Schur at the Sea of Galilee.  
Courtesy of Beth-El Congregation

The exhibit *Journeys to Israel: 1954 and 2014*, on display at Beth-El Congregation in Fort Worth, is a study in contrasts. Sixty years ago, Louisiana Rabbi Bob Schur went on a fact-finding trip to Israel for his local Jewish federation. He

documented his travels with black-and-white snapshots, postcards, aerograms typed on his portable Olivetti, and 8 mm film—all of which ended up in the Beth-El Archives after he moved to Fort Worth. Last summer, four Fort Worth teenagers visited Israel with the North American Federation of Temple Youth. They sent no letters or postcards, only texts and emails. Their videos and stills are posted on Instagram.

Rabbi Schur's films show roads with little traffic and archeological sites yet to be excavated; the teens took a crowded funicular to the top of Masada. The rabbi wrote about gunshots in the Negev; the teens saw rocket fire above Jerusalem and ran for air raid shelters. These are just some of the contrasts presented in the exhibit, which will be on display for a year. For more information, contact Beth-El Congregation, [bethelfw.org](http://bethelfw.org).

## Conference Registration Form

### 39<sup>th</sup> Southern Jewish Historical Society Annual Conference / Texas Jewish Historical Society Fall Meeting

Crossing Borders: Southern Jews in Global Contexts. Austin, Texas, October 23-26, 2014

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse/Companion \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_ City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate how many guests will: Ride bus to UT campus Fri. morning \_\_\_\_ Ride bus to dinner cruise Sat. night \_\_\_\_  
Need vegetarian meals \_\_\_\_

**Registration for full program:**\* Includes lunch/dinner Fri. and Sat., bagel bar Sun., and transport to all events. \$175/person. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**For Austin residents ONLY:**\* Mini-conference option. Includes Fri. dinner, Sat. programs and lunch at Dell Campus. \$75/person. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**\*ALL conference registrants must be members of SJHS or TJHS.** If you are not a member or wish to renew, include membership dues. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Payment** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to JCAA and mail with this form to: Davie Lou Solka, 3808 Woodbrook Cr., Austin, TX 78759. Or register online with a credit card at [www.shalomaustin.org/historical](http://www.shalomaustin.org/historical).

**Registration deadline is Sun., October 12.**

\$25 per person will be added after that date.

Registration must be cancelled by October 12 to receive a refund.

Questions? Contact us through our website, [sjhs.org](http://sjhs.org).

**HOTEL MUST BE RESERVED SEPARATELY.** See page 1 for information.

#### **SJHS dues:** (circle appropriate level)

Student (individual only) \$15

#### **Individual or family membership:**

General member \$36

Patron \$50

Century \$100

Cedar \$500

Sycamore \$1,000

Magnolia \$2,500

#### **TJHS dues:** (circle appropriate level)

Student member \$18

Annual \$35

Supporting \$50

Organization \$100

Sponsor \$100

Sustaining \$250

Benefactor \$500

Patron \$1000