



## SJHS in Mobile: Exploring “Southern Jews, American Citizens”

When the Southern Jewish Historical Society meets in Mobile, Alabama for its 43<sup>rd</sup> annual conference from October 26–28, 2018, conference-goers will dialogue with outstanding scholars from across the nation on the conference theme, “Southern Jews, American Citizens.” We will explore how southern Jews have negotiated their regional, national, and ethnic identities, hearing and discussing presentations on a variety of topics rooted in communities throughout the South. These include southern Jewish involvement in national movements, Jewish military service and commemorations, and contributions made by Mobile’s Jewish community.

Mobile is an ideal setting for the conference. Alabama’s oldest city (founded by the French in 1702), it has strong military ties and an active Jewish community. Our Friday morning bus tour will explore the city’s Jewish sites. Well-known novelist and journalist Roy Hoffman will join us for lunch at Spring Hill College. A Mobile native whose writings have addressed Jewish life in the South, Hoffman will give personal reflections and stories about his town. That afternoon, we will learn about the Mobile Christian-Jewish Dialogue Board, one of the nation’s oldest such organizations.

The keynote address, presented by the Beeber Family Speaker Series of the Helen M. Stern Memorial Foundation, will follow supper at Springhill Avenue Temple. We are especially excited to have with us Jeffrey Rosen, professor of



Top: Mobile skyline from Fort Conde.

Middle left: Roy Hoffman.

Middle right: Jeffrey Rosen.

Bottom: Congregation Sha'arai Shomayim occupied this temple from 1907 to 1955, when it moved to Springhill Avenue. *Special Collections, College of Charleston Libraries.*

law at George Washington University Law School and president and CEO of the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia. His 2016 book *Louis D. Brandeis: American Prophet* (Yale University Press) argues for the ongoing relevance of the nation’s first Jewish Supreme Court justice. Brandeis grew up in Kentucky and Rosen will reflect on how his perspective as a southern Jew shaped his historical and contemporary legacy. (Arrangements for the appearance of Jeffrey Rosen made through Greater Talent Network LLC, New York, NY.)

The University of South Alabama, an institution endowed and supported by several Jewish families, will host the conference on Saturday. A day of stimulating panels will be capped by the Helen M. Stern Cultural Encounter. Judah Cohen, professor of musicology and Jewish studies at Indiana University, will discuss 19<sup>th</sup>-century Jewish American music, with a Mobile twist. University of South Alabama music professors Laura Moore (piano) and Thomas Rowell (tenor) will accompany Cohen’s talk, performing period music composed and arranged by Mobile’s own Joseph Bloch and the Schlesinger brothers. Saturday evening will be free to relax or explore the city on your own.

Panel presentations on Sunday morning will bring the conference to a close. It will be a rich three days in Mobile, as we explore significant and, in some cases, understudied features of southern Jewish history. Hope you can make it!

### SJHS Conference Hotel Information – Reserve Soon!

The conference hotel is the Admiral Hotel Mobile, Curio Collection by Hilton. Reservations must be made by September 28 to receive the conference rate of \$119 per night. This includes breakfast but not taxes.

Book your room by going to [jewishsouth.org/upcoming-conference](http://jewishsouth.org/upcoming-conference) and clicking on the link, or call the hotel at 800-445-8667 and request the SJHS rate using the group code MOBCUQ.



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## President's Message By Dan J. Puckett



This October we'll meet in Mobile, Alabama, for only the second time, the first way back in 1981. Known for its Moonpies and Mardi Gras (the oldest annual Mardi Gras celebration in the U.S.), Mobile is home to the oldest Jewish community in Alabama and one of the oldest in the South, with its first congregation established in 1844. Today, the community is served by two Jewish congregations, the Springhill Avenue Temple/Congregation Sha'arai Shomayim and Ahavas Chesed Synagogue.

This year also coincides with the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War I. Mobile, and indeed the entire state of Alabama, has had a close connection to the military (no other event shaped Mobile as much as did the Second World War). Our theme of the meeting, "Southern Jews, American Citizens," capitalizes on this theme and other expressions of citizenship. Our program committee, led by former SJHS president Scott Langston, has put together a program that should satisfy our academic and non-academic members alike.

In addition to meeting in a community where we haven't met in quite a long while, we'll be able to introduce new faces and new institutions to the Southern Jewish Historical Society. One of the sponsors of the meeting is the recently established Jewish and Holocaust Studies Program at the University of South Alabama, and one of the key individuals organizing the local arrangements is Dr. David Meola, the Bert & Fanny Meisler Assistant Professor of History and Jewish Studies at USA. David, along with many other volunteers and supporters throughout the Mobile community, has been busy ensuring that our time in the Port City is well spent.

It'll be good for the SJHS to return to Mobile after so long. Looking forward, over the next few years, we'll be meeting in places that we've never visited, and old haunts that will make us wonder why we haven't returned sooner. Stay tuned!



Mardi Gras in Mobile, 2010. Carol M. Highsmith Archive, Library of Congress.

## Houston Jewish History Archive Is Launched

The Program in Jewish Studies at Rice University, in partnership with the Woodson Research Center in the Fondren Library, announces the launch of the Houston Jewish History Archive (HJHA). Its mission is to collect, preserve, and make accessible the documents and memories that tell the story of Jewish life in Greater Houston and South Texas.

Planning for the HJHA was well underway when Hurricane Harvey hit last August. Jewish institutions located in the devastated Meyerland district lost countless records, lending a new urgency and a new impetus to the effort. Since then, Joshua Furman, Rice's Stanford and Joan Alexander Postdoctoral Fellow in Jewish Studies, and Melissa Kean, the university's centennial historian, have worked to rescue materials damaged in the storm. Their efforts received a boost in March when the HJHA was awarded a \$23,000 Chairman's Emergency Grant from the NEH.



Congregation Beth Jacob in Houston commissioned this nine-foot-long banner in 1942 to honor local Jewish men and women serving in World War II. It lists more than 200 individuals. Gold stars indicate those who were killed in action. The banner was recovered from a garage in southwest Houston after Hurricane Harvey and will be preserved in the HJHA. A fundraising effort to restore it is underway. Houston Jewish History Archive.

*continued on page 6...*



# Mobile: Alabama's Oldest Jewish Community By Shannon Lundgren

Phillip Phillips, one of Mobile's first Jewish community members, arrived in 1835 from South Carolina with his young bride, Eugenia. Elected to the Alabama state legislature and then to the U.S. House of Representatives, he enjoyed a successful career before deciding to open a legal practice in Washington, D.C. in 1855. When the Civil War broke out, Phillips—a committed Unionist—remained in Washington.

His wife, in contrast, achieved fame (or infamy) as a Confederate spy. Arrested for espionage, she was released thanks to her husband's political influence. The couple moved to Richmond and then to New Orleans, where Eugenia Phillips again got in trouble with federal authorities.

The Phillips family's political involvement may have been especially notable, but they were not the only politically-involved Mobile Jews in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, at a time when Jews faced restrictions in other states. Israel Jones served on the city council and was briefly acting mayor; Confederate veteran Adolph Proskauer served in the state legislature during Reconstruction.

Early Jews also participated in Mobile's cultural life, including Mr. Judah, a performer who gave Shakespearian recitations and opened a school in the early 1820s. The self-styled "ORIGINAL" George Davis achieved local renown as an auctioneer, performer, and eccentric. Joseph Bloch became a central node in Mobile's music scene as the music director of Spring Hill College, while also serving the Jewish community.

In 1841, a group of Jews bought a plot of 12 graves in the Magnolia Cemetery. This marks the transition of Mobile's Jewish population from a disparate group of individuals into an organized Jewish community—the oldest in the state of Alabama.

Alabama's first official congregation, Sha'arai Shomayim, was organized in 1844 and moved into its first house of worship two years later. Its first rabbi followed Sephardic rites. After some conflict, the congregation switched to the "German ritual" in the 1850s and became a founding member of the Reform



Top: Rabbi Alfred G. Moses and his Sha'arai Shomayim confirmation class. *Courtesy of Erik Overbey Collection, The Doy Leale McCall Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of South Alabama.*

Middle: Eugenia and Philip Phillips. *Library of Congress.*

Bottom: Congregation Sha'arai Shomayim occupied the Jackson Street Temple from 1853 to 1907. *Courtesy of Springhill Avenue Temple Archives, The Doy Leale McCall Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of South Alabama.*

movement in 1873. In 1870, Mobile faced the dreaded yellow fever and residents with means fled the city. Sha'arai Shomayim's rabbi, Abraham Laser, remained to tend to the sick and eventually succumbed to the illness. He was the first rabbi buried in the Magnolia Cemetery.

The city rebounded in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and began to attract Eastern European Jewish immigrants. In 1894 they founded an Orthodox congregation, Ahavas Chesed. Both congregations grew in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and laid the cornerstones to new synagogues.

Despite Jewish civic involvement, antisemitism was not unknown. In 1910 defense attorney William C. Fitts made antisemitic remarks to a jury in regard to the robbery of Julius W. Olensky's pawnshop. Prominent Jewish figures published a letter of protest in the *Mobile Register* and Fitts eventually apologized.

This activism continued into World War II when local Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant clergymen sent a petition to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, decrying the Nazi treatment of Jews. In 1973, the Sha'arai Shomayim Men's Club initiated what became an interfaith conference with Mobile's Protestant ministers to discuss the relationship between Jewish and Christian thought, which continues today as the Mobile Christian-Jewish Dialogue.

Both congregations moved away from downtown in the 1950s. Sha'arai Shomayim became known as the Springhill Avenue Temple, named for the location it has occupied since 1954. In 1952, Ahavas Chesed affiliated with the Conservative movement and moved even further west to its current home in 1990.

These moves have not displaced the Jewish community from the Mobile scene. To this day, Mobile's Jewish population remains an active and vibrant part of a Gulf Coast locale renowned for its rich culture.

*Shannon Lundgren is a history major at the University of South Alabama. She serves as editor of the student newspaper, The Vanguard.*

# A Jewish Actor Tours the South: The Saga of M.B. Curtis

By Richard Schwartz

M.B. Curtis was one of the nation's foremost actors from 1879 to 1905. Known for his groundbreaking production of *Sam'l of Posen*, a comedic play about an awkward immigrant who becomes a traveling salesman, he was the first Jewish actor to portray a Jewish male character on the American stage. For the first time in American theater history, the audience laughed *with* the Jewish character, not at him.

Curtis annually toured the South, where he and his alter ego were much loved. In fact, his *Sam'l* was conceived in Texas with the help of a fellow performer, and first staged in Georgia. Curtis later recounted, "While we were roosting upon the fences, waiting for the trains to come along, Rodney and I planned out the play. Well, we broke up in Texas by our leading lady capturing the affections of some cattle-king, and somehow or other I got back to New York with nothing in my pocket, though with *Sam'l of Posen* half written."

Sometime later, while appearing in another play in Richmond, his manager asked what else he could do. "I had a ms. play in my trunk, and read him the first act," Curtis said. The manager replied, "Great. Will open in this to-morrow at Athens, Ga." Curtis objected. "This was Sunday. I said: 'It can't be done; why the parts are not even written out. It is impossible; we have no wigs, no costumes!'"

"Bosh!" was the manager's answer. "I'll soon settle that," and away he went. An hour or so afterward he was back in the hotel with six clerks from the railroad office, friends of his, whom he got to copy out the play. By one o'clock that night the parts were distributed, and at ten o'clock next morning, [on the train] to Athens, we held our first rehearsal." The play opened that night to an "immense" crowd.

At least one southern Jew had a strong reaction during the premier, according to Curtis. "I could not help noticing an old Hebrew gentleman, and presumably his daughter, who were sitting in the first seat. I saw the old gentleman's head bow lower and lower toward the stick on which were resting his hands, and

I noticed him now and then pass the back of his hand across his face, as if wiping his cheek."

Then, "a funny thing happened, which neither my wife [who played the female lead] nor I shall ever forget. . . . When Samuel says to her, 'I have not made much this trip,'" the old man

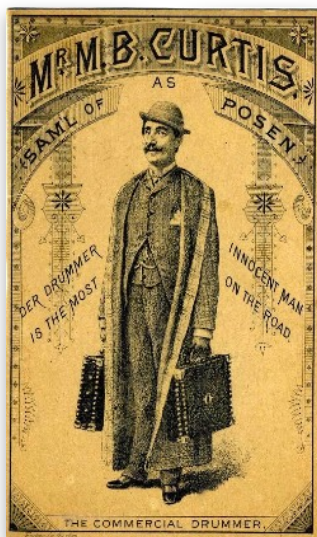
reached into his pocket and threw fifty cents onto the stage. He then threw another half dollar, causing the girl who sat beside him to "pluck at his sleeve, and try to wake him from his reverie. But the old man so far forgot himself that he rose up and threw a dollar. By this time the house, seeing what was done, began to shower nickels. My wife . . . hearing only the clash of coin, became frightened and ran off the stage; as also soon did the heavy villain."

The stagehands figured out what was happening and reassured the cast, who came back onstage. "The heavy villain even so far overcame his timidity that he gathered up \$11, whilst my wife and I picked up \$13; which sum, in dollars, and quarters and nickels, we have kept as a memento of that occasion."

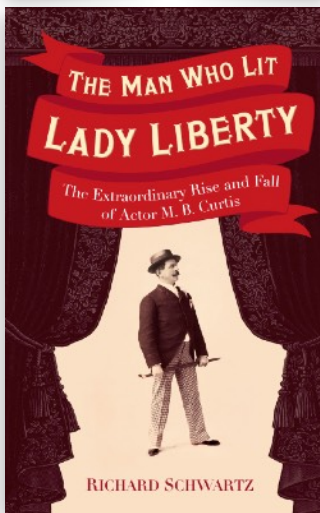
This startling reception was an auspicious start to a smashing success. Popular throughout the nation, the play seemed to resonate especially in the South. In 1881 an *Atlanta Constitution* critic called Curtis's performance "character acting which has seldom been equaled and never excelled." In 1896 the newspaper observed, "One can see *Samuel* time after time and discover new beauties in it and new opportunities upon which to laugh."

Curtis's life had its highs and lows; among other things, he was a pioneer in silent movies, personally paid to light the Statue of Liberty when Congress refused to do so in 1886, and was tried three times for the murder of a San Francisco police officer. His time in the South stands out among the highlights.

Richard Schwartz is on tour with his new biography, *The Man Who Lit Lady Liberty: The Extraordinary Rise and Fall of Actor M.B. Curtis*. To purchase the book at a 30 percent discount, use the promotional code RAIMW at [heydaybooks.com/book/the-man-who-lit-lady-liberty/](http://heydaybooks.com/book/the-man-who-lit-lady-liberty/).



Images courtesy of Richard Schwartz.





# Following a Research Trail: The Alexander Hart Story

By Alice Titus

Memorial Day 2017 was approaching, and amidst controversy over Confederate memorials, the rabbi of a neighboring synagogue called to ask about Alexander Hart, a former congregant of Norfolk's Ohef Sholom Temple who had served as a major in the Army of the Confederate States of America. Hart is buried in Norfolk's Forest Lawn Cemetery, and on each Memorial Day, an American flag and a Confederate flag can be seen on his gravesite. The rabbi wondered if the flags were placed there by his descendants.

Genealogical research revealed that Hart's direct descendants had moved out West, and the last one had recently passed away. However, in looking through our 174-year-old congregation's archives, I found Hart's obituary, which identified him as a lay leader of our congregation. My interest was sparked, and when asked to write about Hart in our temple bulletin, I dug deeper into published and unpublished sources that would shed more light on his life.

Archival research into Ohef Sholom's minute books unearthed a 1907 board of directors request for "Major Hart to officiate at Friday evening services" while the rabbi was out of town. Further minute book research indicated that this wasn't an isolated request. Major Hart, who had moved to Norfolk around 1894, had officiated as a lay leader before.

Discovering the role Hart had played in our congregation sparked questions about his religious training and early life. Publications on the history of the Jewish community of Tidewater supplied information on his birth, his family, and his association with a congregation in Staunton, Virginia. The website of that temple, Temple House of Israel, revealed that Hart was the leading figure in the formation of Staunton's first Jewish congregation in 1876. The website included a biography of Hart and information on his military career.

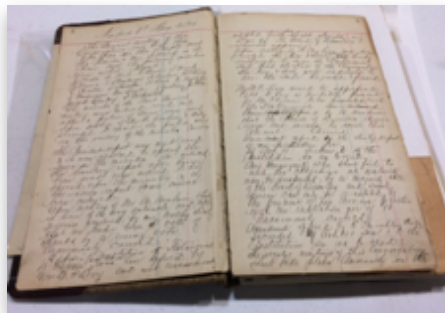
It turned out that Hart's life was well documented both on and off the web. The Jewish-American History Foundation's website provided a glimpse into Hart's life as a soldier with digitized excerpts from his diary, the original of which is preserved at the American Jewish Archives along with other documents relating to his life. Robert Rosen's book *The Jewish Confederates* contained information on Hart, as did the websites *antietam.aotw.org*, *geni.com*, and the ubiquitous *ancestry.com*.

Born in New Orleans in 1839, Hart was the son of a temple president, grandson of a hazzan, and great-grandson of a rabbi. He enlisted in the 5<sup>th</sup> Louisiana Infantry just one month into the war, fought in several battles, and was wounded three times. Taken prisoner in September 1864, he spent time in two Union hospitals and at least two Union prisons before being included in a prisoner exchange. On his way to his next assignment, he stopped in Richmond to visit his fiancée and then spent Passover with friends in North Carolina, bringing them matzo he had carried from Richmond.

At war's end, Hart married, settled in Richmond, and later moved with his family to Staunton and eventually to Norfolk. His early life had been punctuated by the violent upheavals of wartime. His later life included business successes and failures, as well as the disruptions of two long-distance moves. These difficulties were mitigated by the stability of an extended and nuclear family and an ongoing commitment to his Jewish roots. That commitment was

revealed along a research trail that started in the holdings of our archives, one of many invaluable repositories of our rich American Jewish history.

*Alice Titus is Archivist at Ohef Sholom Temple, Norfolk, Virginia*



Top: Ohef Sholom Temple minute book, 1899–1907.  
Bottom left: A young Alexander Hart.  
Bottom right: Alexander Hart in later life.  
*Images courtesy of Ohef Sholom Temple.*

## Digital History Workshop to Follow Mobile Conference

SJHS conference participants are invited to extend their weekend in Mobile with a Digital History Workshop at the University of South Alabama on Sunday afternoon, October 28. The workshop is free to attend, and refreshments will be provided.

Attendees will work together to produce an online map that visualizes Mobile's Jewish history over several decades. For local historians, this is an opportunity to learn more about creating online, public-facing resources. For college instructors, it is an opportunity to explore digital history as a pedagogical tool.

Josh Parshall and Nora Katz (Institute of Southern Jewish Life) and Elijah Gaddis (Auburn University) will lead the event. Professor David Meola is assisting with logistics, and the University of South Alabama's Earth Sciences Department will provide the space.

Keep an eye out for details in the next *Rambler*, or contact Josh Parshall ([jparshall@isjl.org](mailto:jparshall@isjl.org)) for more information!

## Arkansas Happenings: From Women Rabbis to Broncho Billy By Jim Pfeifer

In March, Temple B'nai Israel in Little Rock opened the exhibition "Women in the Rabbinate—The Arkansas Connection." It features rabbis Laura Lieber, Fayetteville native and first female Arkansan to become a rabbi (ordained, 1999); Angela Graboys, first woman to occupy a permanent Arkansas pulpit (Hot Springs, 1989–1991); and Katie Bauman, first female rabbi confirmed at Little Rock's Temple B'nai Israel (ordained, 2009). The exhibit also displays the 1972 class photo of retired B'nai Israel Rabbi Eugene Levy, showing his classmate Rabbi Sally Priesand, the first woman ordained by Hebrew Union College. Rabbi Levy's comments on being part of this historic event accompany the photo.

The exhibit draws attention to the 1921 comments of Rabbi Louis Witt, who served 12 years in B'nai Israel's pulpit, back when Reform leaders first considered the subject of women in the rabbinate. Said Witt, "This body of men should do nothing that would stand in the way of any forward movement in behalf of the womanhood of America. . . . Five years ago I had to argue in favor of women's rights when that question came up in the Arkansas legislature, but I did not feel that there would be need to argue that way in a liberal body of men like this."

The exhibit was mounted with assistance from the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives. It complemented a month-long program with guest speakers on



Top left: Temple B'nai Israel's "Women in the Rabbinate" exhibit will be on view until June. Top right: Max Aronson, aka Broncho Billy Anderson. Bottom: Unveiling the marker "Max Henry Aronson, The First Cowboy-Western Movie Star." All courtesy of Jim Pfeifer.

the subject of women in the rabbinate.

A far different event related to Arkansas Jewish history took place on March 21–22: a celebration of Gilbert M. "Broncho Billy" Anderson. The Oscar-winning Anderson, born Max Aronson in downtown Little Rock to Jewish parents, became the first silent film cowboy star and then founded a major film studio. Charlie Chaplin and Gloria Swanson were just some of the stars who thrived under the patronage of Aronson's Essanay Studios.

Silent film experts Rena and David Kiehn, of the Niles Essanay Silent Film Museum in California, curated the two-day event. They spoke on Broncho Billy and showed film clips at the Historic Arkansas Museum on March 21, Aronson's 138<sup>th</sup> birthday. The following day, the film program moved to Pine Bluff, where the Aronson family

later lived and worked in the cotton industry. Jerry Klinger of the Jewish American Society for Historic Preservation generously funded a bronze marker inscribed to recall the life of Max Aronson/Broncho Billy at the site of his birthplace.

The interfaith event was co-sponsored by the First United Methodist Church (the current occupant of the Aronson home) and the Jewish Federation of Arkansas.

*Jim Pfeifer is an architect in Little Rock, board member of SJHS, and has served as volunteer Temple archivist.*

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## Houston Jewish History Archive Is Launched continued from page 2...

Furman, currently working on a book on Houston Jewish history, serves as the HJHA's inaugural director. Its central purpose, he says, is "to ensure that the legacy of Jewish life in Houston and the surrounding region is never washed away or destroyed, and that generations of community members and scholars will be able to access these materials and learn from them." Already, the HJHA is home to important collections from several synagogues, the Jewish Federation of Greater Houston, and the Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center.

Furman and other scholars continue to gather items endangered by floods, neglect, or simply the passage of time. "Many synagogues don't have archives or any systematic way of keeping their records, and there's never been a centralized place where

one could go to learn about all of the Jewish institutions and families of Houston under one roof," he notes. Adds Professor Matthias Henze, founding director of the Jewish Studies program, the archive will "form a strong link between the Jewish community and the Rice campus."

The Houston Jewish History Archive has been made possible by a generous grant from the Stanford and Joan Alexander Foundation. Additional supporters include the Texas Jewish Historical Society, the N.M. Pryzant Family Fund, the Carolyn and Jay Kaplan Fund, and Dr. Michael Ozer and Ms. Patricia Kalmans. To learn more or to discuss donations of records, contact Dr. Furman at [jf36@rice.edu](mailto:jf36@rice.edu).



## NEWS AND NOTES

### Dallas JHS Spring Events

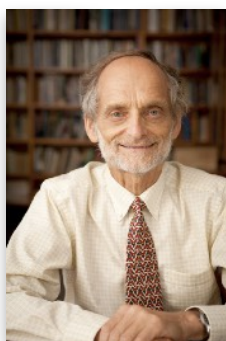
In March, the Dallas Jewish Historical Society's lecture series featured author Marlene Trestman, who spoke on her forthcoming book, *The History of New Orleans Jewish Orphans' Home, 1856-1946*. Dallas is within the service area of the Home's successor agency, Jewish Children's Regional Service in New Orleans.

DJHS now looks forward to May 3, when its major annual event, "One Story at a Time," will this year feature the Tobolowsky family, pioneer Jews in Dallas who remain as engaged contributing members of the community. The family today includes a professor of law (Peggy), a metal sculptor (George), and a California-based character actor (Steven) who has appeared in many films and continues to go proudly by his family name. For more information about DJHS and its events, visit [djhs.org](http://djhs.org).



Marlene Trestman speaks at the Dallas Jewish Historical Society's lecture series. Courtesy of DJHS.

### JHSSC Celebrates Long-Term Director



Marty Perlmutter

Nearing its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary and surpassing 500 dues-paying members, the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina is the largest Jewish membership organization in the state. With regular meetings, digitized cemetery records, state historical markers, and the forthcoming Jewish Merchant Project, as well as a biannual magazine, robust archives, and oral histories produced by the staff of the Jewish Heritage Collection at the College of Charleston's Addlestone Library, the JHSSC has accomplished an incredible amount in its relatively short history. This success is

thanks in large part to the leadership and tenacity of Dr. Martin Perlmutter, who has served as executive director since the Society's inception and plans to retire this July.

The JHSSC will celebrate Marty's many years of service and accomplishment by awarding him the Order of the Jewish Palmetto, the Society's highest honor, at a reception in Charleston on April 28 during its spring meeting. Titled "Memory, Monuments, and Memorials," the meeting will focus on the history of minority exclusion and white supremacy in South Carolina, the monuments that enshrine public memory, and the ethics of cultural tourism. To learn more, please visit [jhssc.org](http://jhssc.org).

### TJHS Panel Examines Recent Jewish Immigration



The panel "Gone 2 Texas: Two Waves of Immigration, Soviet & South African" examined wandering Jews in our time. Soviet Jews fleeing

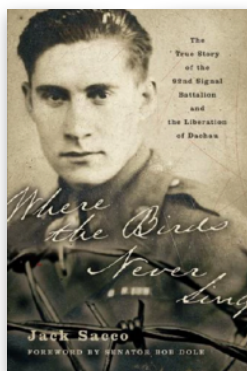
antisemitism and South African Jews fleeing civil unrest both journeyed to the U.S. from the 1970s into the early 1990s. Both emigrated during periods when grassroots protests led to regime changes—the collapse of the USSR in 1991 and the end of apartheid in 1994. The Texas Jewish Historical Society conducted follow-up interviews to learn how these ex-pat families fared in the Lone Star State. Mark A. Goldberg, director of Jewish Studies at the University of Houston, moderated the panel during the 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Gathering of the TJHS in Fort Worth on April 14.

### News from the Pearlstine/Lipov Center

The Pearlstine/Lipov Center for Southern Jewish Culture at the College of Charleston inaugurated the spring semester with a celebration of Director Shari Rabin's first book, *Jews on the Frontier: Religion and Mobility in Nineteenth-Century America*, which won the 2017 National Jewish Book Award for best book in American Jewish Studies. Next up, the Center's two research fellows spoke on their projects: journalist Sue Eisenfeld on "A Yankee's Journey through the Jewish South," and University of Virginia Ph.D. candidate Brian Neumann, who (thanks to the fellowship) expanded his research on the nullification crisis of the 1830s to include Jewish involvement in the controversy. On March 14, Tulane University's Michael R. Cohen, author of *Cotton Capitalists: American Jewish Entrepreneurship in the Reconstruction Era*, talked in conversation with Shari about this important yet neglected topic, setting the stage for a major conference on Reconstruction hosted at the college.

To keep up with the Center, sign up for the email list at [jewishsouth.cojc.edu/contact-us/email-list/](http://jewishsouth.cojc.edu/contact-us/email-list/).

### San Antonio Holocaust Museum Hosts Bestselling Author



The Holocaust Memorial Museum of San Antonio is hosting Pulitzer Prize-nominated and *New York Times* bestselling author Jack Sacco on April 22 at 3 pm. Sacco's book, *Where the Birds Never Sing*, tells the story of the 92<sup>nd</sup> Battalion and the liberation of Dachau. In a foreword, Senator Bob Dole writes, "Jack Sacco has paid his father and all those who have ever served this country the ultimate tribute." Sacco also plans to speak at Texas Tech University on April 23 and University of Texas in Austin on April 26. For more information see [sajss.com/jacksacco/](http://sajss.com/jacksacco/) or call 210.616.4811.



## Become an SJHS Member

The SJHS advances the study, preservation, and presentation of the Jewish experience in the American South. We award prizes and research grants, publish original scholarship, support exhibitions, and hold a stimulating annual conference. Members receive the quarterly *Rambler* and our annual journal, *Southern Jewish History*. You must be a member to attend the annual conference.



Our major source of funding is membership dues. To join online or to send a check by mail, visit [jewishsouth.org/store/annual-membership](http://jewishsouth.org/store/annual-membership) for details. Please join us today!



## See Inside for News on the 2018 Conference and Free Post-Conference Workshop!

Our annual conference will take place in Mobile, Alabama, from Friday to Sunday, October 26 to 28. It will be followed by a free Sunday afternoon Digital History Workshop (see page 5). Join us for a stimulating weekend on the Gulf Coast!