



## SJHS 2019: A Timely Exploration of Jews, Race, and Public Memory

The SJHS 2019 conference in Charlottesville kicked off on a beautiful fall morning with a tour of Thomas Jefferson's mountaintop home, Monticello. It proved a fitting start for a conference on "Jews, Race, and Public Memory"—because a visit to Monticello entails grappling with all three topics. In order to provide a more accurate, nuanced, and inclusive narrative of Jefferson and his famous home, Monticello's tour guides are now required to share the long-ignored stories of two families who played crucial roles there: the enslaved Hemings family, whose relationship to the Jeffersons was deep and thoroughly entwined; and the Levys, the Jewish family that purchased Monticello eight years after Jefferson's death and stewarded the property into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In a special meeting for SJHS members after the tour, the site's interpretive staff discussed the rationale for adding the two families to the official narrative. "In many ways, the Levys were Monticello's first curators," noted one. By restoring the home, preserving it, and filling it with Jefferson-related objects, they enabled Monticello to play a central role in Jefferson's legacy.

The group then enjoyed lunch at the University of Virginia's Brody Jewish Center. Speaker Marc Leepson, whose book *Saving Monticello* tells the Levy story, offered further insight on the "pugnacious" Commodore Uriah P. Levy, the naval officer who bought Monticello in 1834, and his nephew Jefferson Monroe Levy, who owned the property from 1882 to 1923, when he sold it to its current owner, the Thomas Jefferson Memorial

Foundation. Leepson also discussed the antisemitism that caused the Levys' stewardship to be either denigrated or ignored for decades. That afternoon, SJHS president and Charlottesville resident Phyllis Leffler gave a tour of downtown Jewish sites, starting on the steps of Beth Israel synagogue.

After evening services at Beth Israel, keynote speaker Nicole Hemmer of Columbia University introduced a key focus of the weekend: the events surrounding the August 2017 Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville. Hemmer emphasized the centrality of antisemitism to the "alt-right," underestimated in many analyses. After dinner, John Mason of the University of Virginia discussed how Charlottesville residents reacted to the rally, personalizing how they experienced the assault on their town. He also noted the complex legacy of Thomas Jefferson, whose contradictory views have allowed the far right to claim him for their own. Today, observed Mason, we are fighting over whose Jefferson truly represents our nation.

Saturday's sessions kicked off with a panel on southern Jews and public

memorialization. David Weinfeld spoke on Richmond Jews' participation in the 1954 American Jewish tercentenary celebration and local 1961–1965 Civil War commemorations. Led by SJHS founder Sol Viener, Jews used these occasions to demonstrate their integration into Richmond's southern milieu, showing that their regional identity was a key part of their American Jewish identity.

*continued on page 4...*



Top left: Morning at Monticello.

Top right: Phyllis Leffler on the steps of Beth Israel.

Left: Monticello tour guide at the grave of Rachel Levy, mother of Uriah Levy.

Photos by Deborah Weiner.



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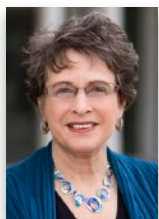
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## President's Message By Phyllis Leffler



Last August, we sent an electronic survey to all members of the Southern Jewish Historical Society so that we could learn directly what appealed to our members and what they would like to see the Society do better. In November, we sent another survey to assess people's reactions to the just-finished conference in Charlottesville. I write to share with you the results of those two surveys.

From the membership survey, we learned several things: We are a wonderful combination of lay and professional historians, archivists, and genealogists. The vast majority of respondents (88 percent) are either very satisfied or satisfied with the *Rambler*; almost as many (81 percent) are either very satisfied or satisfied with the journal. A whopping 95 percent reported their overall opinion of SJHS as either positive or very positive.

We asked also how SJHS can better serve you. The responses fall into three areas: Some of you focused on the importance of increasing membership and attracting younger members; some suggested regional conferences and programs held more than once a year; and some suggested that more funds be available to support scholars, archives, and museums.

We are taking these suggestions very seriously. You, of course, can help us in these endeavors. I urge you to give gift memberships to those you know who might become more engaged with us. If you have an idea for a local program, I hope you will be in touch—if possible, we will try to deliver with scholars in your area. We already have plans for an event in Atlanta this March, and are looking into other possibilities as well. Of course, for grants—which are so important to continue the work of SJHS—we rely on your generosity through gifts to the Society beyond the basic membership cost.

Our second survey went out after the Charlottesville conference. We had 104 registrants for the conference. Of those who responded, 97 percent reported that the conference either met or exceeded their expectations. Because Charlottesville provided the opportunity to focus on issues of white supremacy and antisemitism that are of such present concern, this conference experimented a bit more with combining the historical and the contemporary. Eighty-eight percent of respondents appreciated that balance.

Your responses provide a lot of food for thought. Thanks to those who took the time to let us know your reactions. I welcome your feedback and suggestions at any time. You will be hearing more from us as we work to build together for the future.



Behind-the-scenes talk with interpretive staff at Monticello, 2019 conference. Photo by Dana Herman.

## Texas Synagogue Recovers from Hurricane Harvey By Hollace Weiner

When Hurricane Harvey slammed into the Texas Gulf Coast in August 2017, it left more than \$200,000 in damage to Congregation K'nesseth Israel, a yellow-brick synagogue with a barrel-vault roof built in 1930 in Baytown. Although the premises were insured, the insurance company has paid nothing.

Appeals for help went out to generations of Jews with family ties to the congregation, chartered in 1928 when the area was an oil-patch town called Goose Creek. With grants from the Jewish federations of Houston and San Antonio, family and foundations, and



Texas Jewish Historical Society.

small donations from across the country, \$200,000 was raised for restoration. The building reopened last April, and the congregation celebrated its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary. In October, the Texas Jewish Historical Society held its fall board meeting there.

The synagogue was designed by Texas architect Lenard Gabert and has a state historic marker. Congregation K'nesseth Israel's history is online in the booklet, "Oil Gevalt: The History of the

Baytown, Texas, Jewish Community 1928-2008," by Donald L. Teter ([baytown.org/home/showdocument?id=1889](http://baytown.org/home/showdocument?id=1889)).



## CALL FOR PAPERS

### Expanding the Archive(s) of Southern Jewish History

#### 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Southern Jewish Historical Society

October 23–25, 2020 Charleston, South Carolina

The Southern Jewish Historical Society will host its 45<sup>th</sup> annual conference on October 23–25 in Charleston, South Carolina. The year 2020 marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Jewish Heritage Collection at the College of Charleston. In honor of this milestone, the conference will examine how archives have influenced the study of southern Jewish history and culture in the past and how they might continue to do so in the future. The conference theme, “Expanding the Archive(s) of Southern Jewish History,” reflects how archives today are reconsidering the role they play in contributing to knowledge. How might we use archival material—or create new collections—to discover new southern Jewish voices and stories? How might digital humanities and digital archives help us achieve our archival mission?

Besides regarding archives as institutions, we aim to broaden conceptions of “the archive” that we use to understand southern Jewish history. For instance, what does the built



Foot locker of Captain A. Ellis Poliakoff, US Army Medical Corps, World War II. Courtesy of Special Collections, College of Charleston Libraries.

environment tell us about Jewish life in the South? What can we learn from material culture? From oral histories, ethnographic fieldwork, or literary texts? Possible topics include the history of individual, congregational, and academic southern Jewish archives; southern Jewish materials in non-Jewish and/or non-southern archives; archival efforts to collect contemporary materials and/or those from “silenced” communities; southern Jewish foodways; and other innovative and interdisciplinary methods for studying Jews in the South. We also welcome

proposals that explore how archival sources shape a given subject.

We encourage the submission of traditional panels and roundtables as well as other creative formats, including hands-on workshops. The deadline for panel and paper proposals is March 29, 2020. Send all proposals and inquiries to program co-chair Shari Rabin (srabin@oberlin.edu).

## SJHS Grants Support Eight Projects in 2019

The SJHS Grants Committee received 21 grant requests this year, a record number, totaling \$105,565 in requested funds. With \$8,500 to draw on, many worthy projects went unfunded and others were only partially funded. However, we were able to support a host of fine projects:

### Research/Travel Grants:

- ▶ E. Howard Ashford (SUNY-Oneonta), to complete his article, “Freedom Journey: Jews and African Americans in the Former Confederacy.”
- ▶ Samantha Baskind (Cleveland State University), to complete her book, *Moses Jacob Ezekiel: The Life of a Confederate, Expatriate, Jewish Sculptor*.
- ▶ Amy Milligan (Old Dominion University), to complete her book, *The Last Jews of Selma, Alabama*.

### Scott and Donna Langston Archival Grants:

- ▶ Jewish Historical Society of Memphis and the Mid-South, to support digitization of *The Hebrew Watchman*, a newspaper that served Memphis Jews from the 1920s to 1980s.
- ▶ Ohel Shalom Temple of Norfolk, to preserve two important archival collections: the papers of the Nusbaum and Goldback families.



SJHS conference goes at Moses Ezekiel's Jefferson statue at the U. Va. Rotunda. Photo by Deborah Weiner.

- ▶ Temple Emanuel of Greensboro, to digitize the congregation's historical records. The records will enter the digital collection of the University of North Carolina-Greensboro library, a project partner.

The committee thanks the Langstons and other generous donors for their continued support of archival grants.

### Project Completion Grant:

- ▶ Texarkana Museums System for an exhibit on the city's Mount Sinai Temple, to be mounted in the Museum of Regional History. The Texas congregation closed in 2015 after 140 years as the area's only Jewish house of worship.

Thanks to the generosity of the Helen M. Stern Foundation, Inc., and its trustee Bruce Beeber, the committee supported a cultural project that will bring southern Jewish history to a broad public audience:

- ▶ Alexandra Horowitz for “Reawakened,” a documentary short on the Charlottesville Jewish community's response to the Unite the Right events of August 2017.

—Eric Goldstein, Chair

Similarly, Melissa Young described how Jews in turn-of-the-20<sup>th</sup>-century Birmingham publicly embraced a southern identity as a way of becoming American. As the young city of Birmingham emphasized its (tenuous at best) ties to the antebellum South, Jews—prominent as town leaders—did the same, despite their recent arrival. Samantha Baskind discussed Moses Ezekiel: Virginia native, proud southerner, and renowned late-19<sup>th</sup>-century sculptor who created major southern memorials, including the Confederate memorial at Arlington cemetery and the Thomas Jefferson statue outside the U. Va. Rotunda (ironically, site of a tense encounter between Unite the Right marchers and counter-protesters).

Later Saturday morning, Anna Tucker, Jeremy Katz, and Catherine Lewis discussed the 2015 events in and around Atlanta commemorating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Leo Frank lynching. Free lectures, community conversations, and a Breman Museum exhibition strove to place the incident within a broad context and relate it to issues of race and economic change, rather than “silo” it as simply a case of antisemitism. Bringing in multiple voices and diverse viewpoints, organizers sought to reach a wide audience and carry on a thoughtful conversation around difficult subjects.

Concurrently, organizers of the recent National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute in Charleston shared lessons from this initiative to encourage educators to incorporate southern Jewish history into the classroom. Shari Rabin talked about the vision behind the project and demonstrated the use of southern Jewish family photos in her teaching. Michael Cohen led a conversation about southern Jewish exceptionalism and gave examples of Institute participant projects that moved beyond it. Dale Rosengarten presented a slide show of the two-week Institute, with a focus on the place-based learning that was at its core.

The first Saturday afternoon panel took up Jews, race, and politics across three centuries. Adam Jortner examined how differences between two prominent Jewish families in 18<sup>th</sup>-century Savannah led one (the Sheftalls) to be seen as “white” while the Nunez family’s race was in question. In turn, the racial

status of Jews correlated with their acceptance as full citizens. Jacob Morrow-Spitzer, reporting that more than 30 Jews served as mayors in southern towns during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, attributed their status to the role of Jewish merchants in reviving a devastated post-Civil War economy. He discussed two mayors who showed no evidence of anti-black sentiment, yet had the support of the white power structure at a time of violent reinforcement of white supremacy. Matthew Brittingham analyzed Jewish immigrant politics through the lens of a Yiddish newspaper, the Baltimore *Amerikaner*, in 1908–1909.

Though the newspaper promoted Jewish unity, it prioritized immigrant causes. For example, it opposed legislation (sponsored by “uptown” Jews) that disenfranchised blacks, in part because the legislation could potentially be used against immigrants.

In a session focusing on how Jewish identity manifested in the southern landscape, Laura Cochrane contended that the Klan influenced the design of a southeast Texas synagogue, as shown by the choices made by its rabbis and a renowned New York architect. The architecture and stained glass openly emphasized Jewish symbols and identity, which Cochrane saw as a direct response to antisemitism. Catherine Eskin described the controversy, steeped in antisemitism, over the development of a Jewish facility and discriminatory housing practices in Lakeland, Florida.



Top left: Photo by Deborah Weiner. Top right: Photo by Dale Rosengarten. Bottom: Janice Blumberg offers her perspective in a session on the 2015 Leo Frank commemorations. Photo by Deborah Weiner.

At the Saturday afternoon session on heritage tourism, Ruth Gruber discussed “dark tourism”: heritage sites that commemorate terrible events such as the Holocaust and slavery. In Europe and America, sites of trauma for Jews and blacks were long-ignored but have increasingly become subject to exploration. Such places become “sites of memory,” providing an opportunity to reclaim a deliberately forgotten past. Neva Specht and Carrie Streeter traced the interpretive history of Flat Top Manor, a mansion owned by the textile-magnate Cone family that was acquired by the National Park Service in 1950. The NPS ignored the mansion’s Jewish connection, converting it to an Appalachian crafts museum. Specht and Streeter have worked with the NPS to incorporate the family’s Jewish background into the site’s interpretive offerings.



The Sunday morning session was devoted to the Unite the Right march and its ramifications. Amy Spitalnick, head of Integrity First for America, a nonprofit that is suing the organizers on behalf of 11

Charlottesville residents injured during the rally, asserted that the violence was not spontaneous, but rather, was planned online by extremists who masked their violent aims under the guise of “free speech.” The fact that the marchers were armed, she pointed out, both showed their true intent and chilled the free speech of their critics. Michael Signer, mayor of Charlottesville at the time of the rally, described how the city’s residents rose to the occasion. He characterized their multifaceted response as a form of “democratic resilience” that offers lessons for the future in the fight against extremism. He expressed optimism while noting that such resilience is not easy to sustain and that action must be taken on many fronts.

U. Va. Law School dean Risa Goluboff and noted journalist Dahlia Litwick addressed constitutional

issues related to free speech, hate speech, and freedom of assembly, as well as the important role of antisemitism in the rhetoric of rally leaders. Their selection of Charlottesville as the

site for their rally was not random, Lithwick observed: as a southern city and home of Thomas Jefferson, its liberal ethos and cosmopolitan nature was seen as a betrayal of traditional southern values. Goluboff described the differing reactions of black and Jewish U. Va. students in the event’s aftermath. Jews voiced concern about physical violence; the university responded with steps to increase security. African Americans expressed little surprise at the violence; skeptical of policing as a solution, they focused on addressing issues of inequality and racism.

Attendees found much food for thought in a conference that connected past and present to a much greater degree than past SJHS gatherings. The stimulating conversations will resonate far beyond that beautiful fall weekend.



Top: Eric Goldstein (moderator), Matthew Brittingham, Adam Jortner, and Jacob Morrow-Spitzer on southern Jews and politics. Photo by Deborah Weiner.

Bottom: On Saturday evening, the Helen M. Stern Cultural Encounter presented “Convergence: Children of the Ghetto + Black Shul,” co-sponsored by the Institute of Southern Jewish Life. Anthony Russell and Dmitri Gaskin gave a performance of Yiddish songs and African American spirituals that was both rousing and soulful.

## SJHS “20 in 20 Campaign” Seeks \$20,000 to Support Grants, Journal

As the Southern Jewish Historical Society grows in stature each year, so does the demand for what we offer.

Our leading peer-reviewed journal, *Southern Jewish History*, attracts preeminent scholars seeking to publish their ground-breaking essays. Our conferences are venues for presentations about our past and its critical links to the present. Researchers and archivists seek our grants to preserve and extend the rich history that forms the bedrock of our Society. (See page 3 for a description of this year’s grants.) **Funds requested in 2019 were more than ten times the amount SJHS was able to award.**

As a result, we continue to seek new and innovative ways to extend our reach. To that end, the SJHS Board of Directors is asking members to contribute to the “20 in 20” campaign—an

effort to raise \$20,000 in 2020. To date, the board has pledged \$2,000 toward the goal. Funds raised will be invested with the SJHS endowment and allocated to support research grants and the journal’s ongoing publication.

“We greatly appreciate the support our members provide through their dues and other financial contributions. Both are vital to the Society’s success. We’re hopeful that this request for additional support—a first for SJHS—is accepted with the same level of interest and caring that our members have previously shown,” said SJHS President Phyllis Leffler.

You can use this convenient link to become an SJHS “20 in 20” supporter: [jewishsouth.org/store/make-donation](http://jewishsouth.org/store/make-donation). Please make your donation today!

## NEWS AND NOTES

### JHSSC To Highlight South Carolina Jewish Women

The Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina's spring meeting on May 2–3 will commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment with the theme, "Profiles in Valor: Jewish Women of the Palmetto State." The conference will pay tribute to women who campaigned for the right to vote, worked behind the counter in family stores, and fought their way onto the *bimah* and into the board room.

To be held at the University of South Carolina in Columbia, the conference will feature a keynote by Joyce Antler, author of *You Never Call! You Never Write! A History of the Jewish Mother*, followed by a panel discussion; a driving tour of Columbia's City of Women

(columbiacityofwomen.com) project; and a festive reception. Sunday morning's program, "Sisterhood: South Carolina Suffragists," will include a sneak preview of an SCETV documentary presented by its directors, Betsy Newman and Beryl Dakers. To register or learn more, visit [jhssc.org](http://jhssc.org).

Charleston-born Anita Pollitzer, legislative secretary of the National Women's Party, conferring with political supporters at party headquarters in Nashville, Tennessee, August 1920. *Library of Congress*.



### Dallas JHS Acquires Important Collection

Dallas Jewish Historical Society recently acquired the esteemed collection of the late Morton Rachofsky, donated by his nephew, Sam Feldman. Included are three original works of art by Rachofsky, a prolific inventor whose workshop is full of exceptionally intricate, puzzle-like wood, metal, and composite sculptures. DJHS also obtained a 25-hour circadian clock invented by Rachofsky in 1986 and patented by Circadian Clock Company in 1990.

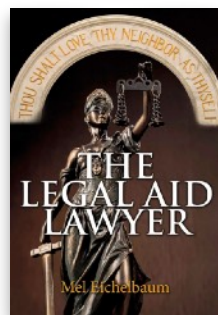
DJHS also received photographs, correspondence, and artifacts related to Morton's father, banker Meyer Rachofsky. Known for his civic-mindedness, Meyer participated in the Elks Lodge, Free Masons, Hella Temple Shrine, National Jewish Hospital, B'nai B'rith, Dallas Hebrew Free Loan, Maccabees, Save-A-Life, Zionist Organization of America, and congregations Tiferet Israel and Shearith Israel.

Morton's sculptures are on display at the DJHS office at the Aaron Family JCC at 7900 Northaven Rd. For more information, contact 214.239.7120 or visit [djhs.org](http://djhs.org).



Dallas Jewish Historical Society.

### SJHS Member Pens Memoir



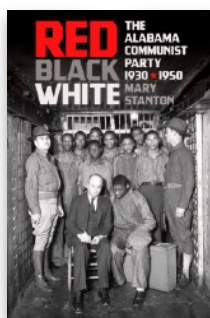
Mel Eichelbaum didn't embrace Judaism until his teenage years when his family settled in San Antonio, Texas. Under the guidance of Rabbi David Jacobson, the tutelage of Milton Bendiner, and the comradeship of the San Antonio Federation of Temple Youth, Jewish values were planted deep inside of him. He was a college senior in November 1963. Alone in the sanctuary of Temple Beth-El in a state of sorrow after the assassination of President Kennedy, he experienced a eureka moment which led

him to become a lawyer dedicated to helping the poor and underprivileged.

Eichelbaum's recently published memoir, *The Legal Aid Lawyer*, tells how a young Jewish lawyer, spurred on by the pursuit of justice and *Tikkun Olam*, became the chief litigator of San Antonio's Legal Aid Association and undertook major civil rights and poverty law cases that ended up making legal history.

The book is available in hard cover or as an e-book. For info, see [meichelbaum7.wixsite.com/mysite](http://meichelbaum7.wixsite.com/mysite).

### Book Explores Communist Party in Depression-Era Alabama



With *Red, Black, White: The Alabama Communist Party, 1930–1950*, author Mary Stanton offers the first narrative history of the American Communist movement in the South during the 1930s. Written as a collective biography of District #17 (CPUSA) Reds, many of whom were Jewish, the book explores how communists worked for economic justice and racial equality in Alabama prior to the New Deal and the modern Civil Rights Movement.

A noted chronicler of social justice movements in the South, Stanton covers tortured notions of loyalty and betrayal, the Cult of White Southern Womanhood, Christianity in all its iterations, the scapegoating of African Americans, Jews, and communists—and how these groups fought back, and fought together, for social justice in a fractured region. Published by University of Georgia Press, the book is available from [ugapress.org](http://ugapress.org) and Amazon.



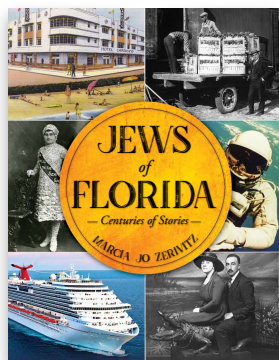
## New Book Celebrates the Jews of Florida

Culminating decades of research, author Marcia Jo Zerivitz, L.H.D., founding executive director of the Jewish Museum of Florida-FIU, has released *Jews of Florida: Centuries of Stories*. The first comprehensive history of the Jews of Florida from colonial times to the present provides a sweeping tapestry of voices spanning centuries. Says Zerivitz, "It's all about roots and memory and Jewish continuity."

Supported by 716 images, the 434-page coffee table book highlights the contributions of Floridian Jews, who have been integral to every area of Florida's growth, from tilling the land and developing early communities to boosting tourism and pushing mankind into space. Despite not being officially allowed to live in Florida until 1763, Jewish immigrants escaping expulsions and exclusions were among its earliest settlers. The Sunshine State's Jews have been Olympians, Nobel Prize winners, computer pioneers, politicians, educators, and leaders in business and the arts, while maintaining their heritage to ensure Jewish continuity for future generations.

The genesis of the book goes back to the 1980s, when Zerivitz traveled throughout the state to retrieve the "hidden" history of Jewish life in Florida for the MOSAIC traveling exhibit. She created an archive and then opened the Jewish Museum of Florida in 1995. To increase awareness of the contributions of Jews, Zerivitz also initiated the legislation for Florida Jewish History Month (January) and Jewish American Heritage Month (May).

The Miami-Dade Public Schools' Department of Social Studies wrote a Study Guide for 6<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> grades that is offered to all Florida counties. For further information or to schedule a book talk and signing, contact Marcia Jo Zerivitz, mzerivitz@me.com. The book, published by The History Press, is available at book talks or by visiting [arcadiapublishing.com](http://arcadiapublishing.com) or Amazon.



Above: Leo Benjamin and Ruth Belle Zion with alligators, Miami, 1911.

Left: Harry Kanner shows off his orange crop, Orlando, 1910.

From the Collections of the Jewish Museum of Florida-FIU, originated by Marcia Jo Zerivitz, L.H.D., Founding Executive Director.

## Visit Monroe, Louisiana's Virtual Jewish Museum

In 2017, the Precious Legacy Archives/Museum in Monroe, Louisiana, received a Donna and Scott Langston Archival Grant from the SJHS as well as a grant from the Jewish Endowment Foundation of Louisiana. These grants made possible the first of many online virtual exhibits for Congregation B'nai Israel's Precious Legacy Museum. The museum features Jewish artifacts, Northeast Louisiana Jewish history, a children's museum, congregation members' military service, and a Holocaust exhibit.



Visitors can view a sample of the collection at [bayoujews.org/precious-legacy-museum.html](http://bayoujews.org/precious-legacy-museum.html).

Boy Scout Charles Snyder (second from left), circa 1950s. Precious Legacy Archives/Museum.

## Updates from the CSJC

The Research Fellowship program of the College of Charleston Pearlstine/Lipov Center for Southern Jewish Culture last fall brought Daniel Gullotta from Stanford University and this winter Jillian Hinderliter from the University of South Carolina to the Special Collections reading room, to spend uninterrupted time working on their dissertation projects. Tufts professor Heather Nathans will come to Charleston to pursue her research this spring and will deliver a talk on "Southern Circuits: Intersections of Race, Religion, and Ethnicity on the 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Stage."

On April 2, the CSJC will hold a repeat performance of a panel from SJHS's fall meeting. Amy Spitalnick, executive director of Integrity First for America, and former Charlottesville Mayor Michael Signer will discuss "Pursuing Justice: Fighting Hate with the Law."

## SJHS Member to Speak on Mississippi's First Jews

A paper on "Mississippi's First Jewish Immigrants" has been accepted for the Mississippi Historical Society annual meeting, to be held at Delta State University in Cleveland, MS, March 5–6. Submitted by Milt Grishman of Biloxi, the paper will recount the arrival in 1720 of French, German, and Jewish colonists as part of the ill-fated John Law Settlement, the earliest attempt at European settlement along Mississippi's Gulf Coast.

Grishman's research adds background and context to a little-known chapter of Mississippi history. The business manager of the Law Settlement is identified in the historical record as Elias Stultheus, "a Jew from the Rhineland." After much hardship, many settlers perished in Biloxi. Surviving colonists went first to Arkansas and later to New Orleans, where they settled along the Mississippi River in a bend that became known as the German Coast.



## Join SJHS OR Gift a Membership

The SJHS advances the study, preservation, and presentation of the Jewish experience in the American South. We award prizes and grants, publish original scholarship, 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 (but see page 5 for our exciting new “20 in 20” funding initiative).

Please join us today—or if you are a current member, gift a membership to someone else!

To join online or by mail, visit [jewishsouth.org/store/annual-membership](http://jewishsouth.org/store/annual-membership) for details.

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## SJHS Board Transitions: Welcome and Thanks!

We welcomed three new board members at our Charlottesville membership meeting: Josh Furman (Rice University), attorney Steve Krause, and past-president Ellen Umansky. Marni Davis (Georgia State University) has joined on as our new secretary, replacing Eric Goldstein, who moved to the general board. A big thanks to four retiring board members for their service: Ron Bayor, Michael Cohen, Jim Pfeifer, and Terri Tillman.