



SJHS at 50: Meet Us in Atlanta this Fall!

We are thrilled to welcome you to Atlanta from October 16–18, 2026, for the Southern Jewish Historical Society’s Fiftieth Annual Conference, hosted by the Tam Institute for Jewish Studies at Emory University. For our golden anniversary gathering, this year’s conference theme, “*The Past, Present, and Future of Southern Jewish History*,” is especially apt. (See full conference schedule on page 3.)

The conference will take place on the Emory campus with visits to several other venues. On Friday, October 16, we will convene at the **Breman Museum and Cultural Center**, which hosts exhibits on the Jewish experience in Atlanta and the state of Georgia as well as the history of the Holocaust. Our opening session will feature several leading historians of American Jewish and southern Jewish history, in conversation about how each of these subjects have, and should, inform one another.

On Friday evening we will join **Congregation Or VeShalom**, founded by Sephardic Jews more than a century ago, for Shabbat services. After a dinner of Sephardic cuisine, Stephen Whitfield will deliver the Beeber Family Lecture, a reflection on the study of southern Jewish history since the SJHS’s 1976 founding conference.

Saturday will find us at Emory’s **Candler School of Theology**. Our day will be packed with scholarly sessions and talks on historical matters, including a discussion of the ways past scholars have studied southern Jews and the Civil War, and how such inquiries might develop in the future.

We are especially excited about Saturday evening, which will take place at the conference hotel, the **Courtyard by Marriott Decatur Downtown/Emory**. Along with a dessert

buffet, the evening’s program will honor the Society’s founders and leaders, followed by this year’s Helen M. Stern Cultural Program featuring a not-to-be-missed performance by Atlanta’s own Joe Alterman Jazz Trio.

We will return to Emory on Sunday for our annual members meeting and our final roundtable, a discussion among several younger southern Jewish historians about some of the field’s new

directions and possible futures. Rounding out our conference schedule, we will visit a new exhibit showcasing the rich Jewish Studies collections of Emory’s libraries and museum.

We are also offering two optional add-on events. On Thursday, October 15, pre-conference day-trippers will be taken on an excursion to sites at the heart and soul of Atlanta’s Jewish history. On Sunday afternoon, a seminar will take place for folks interested in doing their own research on southern Jewish

family and community history. Registration for both events is separate from conference registration, and more details will be announced on the SJHS website in the coming weeks.

Conference registration opens in early July. Go to jewishsouth.org/upcoming-conference to access the conference website, where you can register for the conference and add-on events and book your hotel stay (see more hotel info on page 2). Information will be posted as it becomes available, so check the website frequently.

Atlanta awaits ... see you in October!

—Marni Davis, SJHS conference co-chair



Clockwise from top left: Emory University, located in historic Druid Hills. *Emory University*. Nationally known jazz pianist Joe Alterman will perform with his trio on Saturday. *Courtesy of Joe Alterman*. Or VeShalom’s synagogue building expresses its Sephardic roots. *Or VeShalom*. Our hotel is in Decatur, a walkable district filled with shops and restaurants. *Courtesy of Historical Concepts*.



— President's Message —

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Historical Society

You Can Go Home Again By Eric L. Goldstein



On Sunday, June 7, I had the privilege of serving as the guest speaker at a very special gathering in my hometown of Annapolis, Maryland—the 120th anniversary celebration of Congregation Kneseth Israel, the city's oldest synagogue and the one in which I was raised.

While those who grew up in the Deep South might not consider Annapolis to be a southern locale, historians have called it the “northernmost southern town,” citing the role played by slavery and the plantation system, Jim Crow segregation, and an entrenched class hierarchy. Of course, the city also has its own distinctive social and cultural vibe, emanating from its status as Maryland's capital city, its colonial and Revolutionary heritage, and its role as the home of the U.S. Naval Academy. Jews settled in Annapolis as early as 1746; an active Jewish community arose in the 1890s with the arrival of Eastern European Jewish immigrants drawn by the city's expanding business opportunities.

These newcomers discovered that the state government and the Naval Academy provided economic stability that allowed local families to weather even the leanest of times. Meanwhile, the symbolic landscape of Annapolis provided opportunities to identify with American history and values. Jews played a part in commemorating the city's role in our nation's founding, in supporting American military might as scientists and researchers in local defense labs, and in welcoming and caring for Jewish midshipmen training for naval careers.

Beyond the city's specific local and regional identity, however, Annapolis Jews were shaped by conditions that characterized small-town Jewish life across the U.S. Like their counterparts in other small communities, Jews who came to Annapolis hoped to escape the competition and crowded conditions of larger cities and seize the opportunities for success and mobility that small towns offered. They understood that they would have to make compromises, and that in many ways they would have to work harder to have the kind of religious and ethnic community they desired. Lacking the safety nets and amenities enjoyed by their relatives in major urban centers, they had to depend on each other, as well as on their own skill, initiative, and creativity, to erect the framework of a vibrant Jewish community.

While this type of life was challenging, it also had wonderful benefits: a tightly knit Jewish society that offered intimacy and support and felt like a large extended family, and a high rate of Jewish affiliation, since small-town Jews had to be more committed to their synagogues and communities in order to make them viable. Annapolis Jews often expressed pride, for example, that their children received a more intensive religious education than their counterparts in Baltimore, and that, as a community, they raised more money, per capita, each year for Jewish charities than many larger American cities and towns.

continued on page 6...



Jewish midshipmen congregate at the former Kneseth Israel building at Prince George and East Streets, 1957. Rabbi Morris Rosenblatt is at right. The author's father, Lawrence B. Goldstein, is first on the left in the second row. *Photo by Morris Lieberman, courtesy of Eric L. Goldstein.*

Book Your Conference Hotel Room!

Our 2026 conference hotel is the Courtyard by Marriott Decatur Downtown/Emory, located in downtown Decatur, just east of Atlanta. This charming, walkable district features dozens of restaurants, coffee shops, and browsable stores. It is also easily accessible via MARTA, Atlanta's rapid transit rail system. For info and reservations, go to jewishsouth.org/upcoming-conference to link to the hotel's website.

“The Past, Present, and Future of Southern Jewish History”

50th Annual Conference of the Southern Jewish Historical Society
Atlanta, Georgia, October 16-18, 2026

(Note: Changes may be made to accommodate speakers and venues.)

Thursday, October 15 (Optional Add-On)

Bus tour of Jewish Atlanta. Sites include Oakland Cemetery, Ponce City Market, and historic Jewish congregations.

Friday, October 16 (at Breman Museum)

Breakfast on your own. Buses depart from conference hotel at 8:30 am.

9–9:45 am: Registration and view exhibits at Breman Museum

9:45–10 am: Welcome Remarks

**10–11:30 am: SESSION 1 (Plenary Roundtable)
The Provincials? Southern Jewish History and American Jewish History in Dialogue**

(co-sponsored by the American Jewish Historical Society)

Michael Cohen, moderator

- ▶ Melissa Klapper
- ▶ Hasia Diner
- ▶ Mark Bauman

11:30 am–1 pm: Lunch and Janice Rothschild Blumberg Lecture
Marni Davis, “A One-Man Boom: Ben J. Massell and the Building of Modern Atlanta”

**1:15–2:45 pm: SESSION 2 (Concurrent Panels)
West Virginia Jewry: A Southern Story? (Roundtable)**

Phyllis Leffler, chair

- ▶ Emily Matchar
- ▶ David Weinfeld
- ▶ Deborah Weiner

Southern Jewish Public History—Archives and Audiences

Dale Rosengarten, chair

- ▶ Bruce Cohen, “A Model Approach to Preserve and Share Savannah’s Jewish History: Congregation Mickve Israel’s History and Heritage Committee”
- ▶ Anne Parsons and Marilyn Forman Chandler, “Voices Across Time: Recording Greensboro’s History, 1978–2026”
- ▶ Suman Roy, “Jewish Heritage of Jonesboro, Arkansas: Material Culture and Memory”

6–6:50 pm: Shabbat Services at Or VeShalom Synagogue

Buses depart from conference hotel at 5:30 pm.

7–9 pm: Dinner and Beeber Family Lecture

Stephen Whitfield, “Birthmarks, 1976–2026”

Saturday, October 17 (at Candler School of Theology, Emory University)

Breakfast on your own. Buses depart from conference hotel at 8:30 am.

9–10:30 am: SESSION 3

Unearthing and Archiving Cabbagetown’s Jewish History

Jeffrey Trask, chair

- ▶ Jacob Elsas, “Understanding Jacob”
- ▶ Nina Elsas, “Murals and Memory in Cabbagetown”
- ▶ Erich Nunn, “Music, Myth, and History in Cabbagetown”

**10:45 am–12:15 pm: SESSION 4 (Concurrent Panels)
Southern Jewish History Through a Queer Lens (Roundtable)**

McKenzie Wren, chair

- ▶ Molly Edlein
- ▶ Gus Kaufmann
- ▶ Rebecca Stapel-Wax

Being Southern Jews, Representing Southern Jewishness

Ellen Umansky, chair

- ▶ Rachel Gordan, “Southern First, American Second, Jewish Later: Alfred Uhry’s Staging of Southern Jewishness”
- ▶ Heather Nathans, “Dixie Fantasia: Performing the Confederacy Onstage, 1861–1865”
- ▶ Ashley Walters, “Dirty Dancing in the Upstate: Glenn Springs, SC, and Jewish Leisure Culture in the Segregated South”

12:15–1:15 pm: Boxed lunch provided by SJHS

1:15–2:30 pm: Dr. Lawrence J. Kanter Lecture

Jon Boorstin, “From Leo Frank’s Atlanta to the Library of Congress: The Southern Jewish Roots of Daniel J. Boorstin”

**2:45–4:15 pm: SESSION 5 (Concurrent Panels)
The Past and Future of Studying Southern Jews and the Civil War (Roundtable)**

Sarah Imhoff, chair

- ▶ Adrienne Armas
- ▶ Laura Eckstein
- ▶ Adam Mendelsohn
- ▶ Shari Rabin

Southern Jews and Others

Alison Greene, chair

- ▶ Geoff Levin, “Southern Jewish Diplomats and the 19th Century Islamic World”
- ▶ Marilyn Miller, “Ralph Bunche, Rabbi Feibelman, and Black-Jewish Allyship in New Orleans”
- ▶ Emily Williams, “(Not Quite) Leaving the Jewish Fold: Evangelist Hyman Appelmann’s Use of Jewish Identity in Southern Baptist America”

5–7 pm: Dinner on your own—make reservations!

7:30–9:30 pm: SJHS 50th Birthday Celebration and Helen M. Stern Cultural Program

Held at conference hotel

- ▶ Celebration of the Founders and Leaders of the SJHS
- ▶ Joe Alterman Jazz Trio

Sunday, October 18 (at Candler School of Theology, Emory University)

Buses depart from conference hotel at 8:30 am.

9–9:45 am: Bagel breakfast and annual members meeting

10–11:30 am: SESSION 6 (Plenary Roundtable)

New Directions in Southern Jewish History

Shari Rabin, chair

- ▶ Max Daniel
- ▶ Ashley Low
- ▶ Jacob Morrow-Spitzer
- ▶ Mimi Wooten

11:30 am–12:30 pm: Visit “From Tablet to Table,” Emory Library Special Collections

1–6 pm (Optional Add-On): Seminar on Family and Community Historical Research in Southern Jewish History
Preliminary list of topics. Check website for updates!

- ▶ Lunch with the Shapell Foundation: Researching Jewish Civil War history
- ▶ Doing research in southern Jewish history on JewishGen
- ▶ Accessing and using southern Jewish historical newspapers
- ▶ Writing your own family or community history
- ▶ Best practices for research in southern Jewish archives

From Shelf to Showcase: Highlights from The Breman's New Exhibition

By Molly Edlein

When the William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum opened its doors in 1996, it expanded upon a vision that began some ten years earlier with the creation of a community archive to honor and preserve the stories of Jewish Atlanta. That archive grew to become the largest repository of Jewish archival material in the Southeast. Today, the archivists of the Ida Pearl and Joseph Cuba Family Archives steward over 1,200 manuscript collections, 1,500 artifacts, 40,000 photographs, and 600 oral histories, and hold a deep commitment to preserving stories of Jews in Georgia and Alabama.

The Breman Museum recently opened *Treasurers & Tchotchkes* (affectionately known as *T&T*), a special exhibit designed by museum curator Jane Leavey and the archival team. *T&T* draws objects from the Cuba Family Archives that have never before been exhibited in order to tell the diverse tale of the Jewish South, from early peddlers in rural Georgia to Sephardic shoemakers in downtown Atlanta, youth groups in 1940s Savannah, and lesser-known stories that range far and wide.

The SJHS conference in Atlanta will hold its Friday sessions at the museum, giving attendees an opportunity to view this special exhibit. The Breman's archivists have chosen three of their favorite artifacts to highlight for *Rambler* readers.

Jacob's Pharmacy, established by Jewish pharmacist Joseph Jacobs in Atlanta in 1884, is well known as the first establishment to serve Coca Cola. But it also sold a wide variety of health and beauty products, including Dr. Fred Palmer's products—and it is Dr. Palmer who is at the heart of the story told in the pharmacy display. Palmer, a white man, married Julia Hayes, a formerly enslaved woman, in 1872. They lived openly, though illegally, as an interracial couple. Yet Dr. Palmer benefited economically from the very racial system that denied him and his wife a legal marriage. His skin whitener, which used mercury to bleach the skin, was marketed to Black Americans with “too-dark skin,” as one advertisement put it. In displaying a bottle of this “remedy,” *T&T* invites viewers to contemplate the complex relationship of Jewish southerners in the racial hierarchy of the American South.

A beautiful and classic example of 1920s fashion, the wedding dress of Josephine (Jo) Joel Heyman must be appreciated for its beauty and craftsmanship. But it also tells the story of a women's rights pioneer, challenging viewers to look beyond aesthetics to the wondrous work of the woman who wore it.

Jo Heyman graduated from Smith College in 1923 and married Herman Heyman, a prominent Atlanta attorney, the following year. But she was not willing to accept the role of typical housewife, instead becoming a prominent Atlanta activist and civic leader. Jo challenged the lack of medical care for Black women and children in the 1920s, creating a hospital program to assist Black mothers struggling to breastfeed. She championed the rights of Jewish women through her involvement in several Atlanta Jewish institutions. She forwarded the power of women's votes as founder of the DeKalb County League of Women Voters chapter. And she promoted human rights through her presidency of the Atlanta chapter of the United Nations.

The final object chosen by the archivists tells the tale of a thriving but often overlooked group in the Georgia Jewish community: Bukharan Jews. For over a thousand years, Bukharan Jews led their lives in the vibrant cities of Central Asia, in modern-day Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Under Soviet control, Bukharan schools, publications, and

religious leaders were banned and oppressed, and the Bukharan Jewish community strove to preserve their culture in the face of forced assimilation. The collapse of the Soviet Union provided an escape from persecution, and the majority of Bukharan Jews immigrated to Israel and the U.S.

Many Bukharan Jews settled in the metro-Atlanta area, establishing a synagogue and mikvah and maintaining their cultural practices. In 2001, members of the local Bukharan community gifted a *jomah*, a Bukharan ceremonial robe, to Jewish Federation president Eliot Arnovitz. In including this artifact, *T&T* challenges typical Ashkenormative narratives and highlights one of the many uniquely beautiful communities that enrich southern Judaism.

Molly Edlein is a Jewish educator and archivist from Atlanta who serves as archivist at the William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum.



Clockwise from top left: Palmer's Blood Purifier, c.1900. Curator Jane Leavey prepares the Bukharan ceremonial robe, c. 2001, for display. Some of the other textiles featured in *Treasurers & Tchotchkes*. Photos by Molly Edlein. Jo Heyman at her 1924 wedding. The photo and the wedding dress are both on display in the exhibit. *Ida Pearle and Joseph Cuba Archives for Southern Jewish History at The Breman Museum.*

Berthe Francfort: A Jewish Texan Who Died in the Holocaust

By Ivan Koop Kuper

Berthe Levy Francfort was one of a small number of Jewish Americans residing in Western Europe during the outbreak of WWII to die at the hands of the Nazis, according to historian Sir Martin Gilbert. Granddaughter of a Confederate veteran, she may have been the only native Texan to perish in the “Final Solution.”

Berthe was born in 1895 in Texarkana, Bowie County, just 30 years after the Civil War ended. Her father Martin Meyer Levy, a French immigrant and a café proprietor, is believed to have been a founder of Texarkana’s Mount Sinai Congregation in 1894. Her mother Rosa was born and raised in Jefferson, Texas. Rosa’s father, Arnold Faber, fought for the Confederacy.

Little is known about Berthe’s formative years in Texarkana. Evidence suggests that she left Texas behind by 1917 and created a new life for herself in New York City, where she met and married Manhattanite Paul Gabriel Francfort.

The Francforts, like many other Americans, moved to Paris in the 1920s seeking the good life, and also to be closer to both Berthe’s and Paul’s extended French families. They resided in an apartment building located at 118 Lafayette in the 10th *arrondissement*.

The Second World War began on September 1, 1939, with the invasion of Poland, and by June 1940 the German *Wermacht* had completed its invasion and occupation of France. Within the next two years, the provisional fascist government

began to impose the French version of Germany’s Nuremberg Laws, known as *Statut des Juifs*, on France’s Jewish population.

In July 1942 the Nazis implemented their infamous roundup and deportation (*La Grande Rafle*) of all foreign and “stateless” Jews who were living in Paris. And four months later, fate caught up with the Francforts: on November 3, Berthe and Paul were arrested in their upscale mid-rise apartment by French police, who were complicit with the *Gestapo*. The couple was sent to the Drancy detention camp in the Paris suburbs, where they remained for the next six months waiting out their destiny.

On the morning of March 25, 1943, Berthe and her husband Paul were deported from the Bourget-Drancy railway station outside of Paris on Transport 53. A total of 1,008 people including 121 children were crammed into the train at 50 per boxcar, for what they were told would be “settlement in the east.” The deportees arrived at their destination on March 30, 1943, at Sobibor extermination camp in eastern Poland, after enduring a five-day journey without food or water.

Berthe Levy-Francfort, age 48, and her husband, Paul Gabriel Francfort, age 58, who both maintained their U.S. citizenship, were put to death upon their arrival at Sobibor.



Top: Jews arriving at the Drancy internment camp outside of Paris. The Francforts spent six months there before being deported to Sobibor death camp. Bottom: Paris memorial to the Jews rounded up by French police, ultimately to be sent to the death camps. *Wikicommons*.

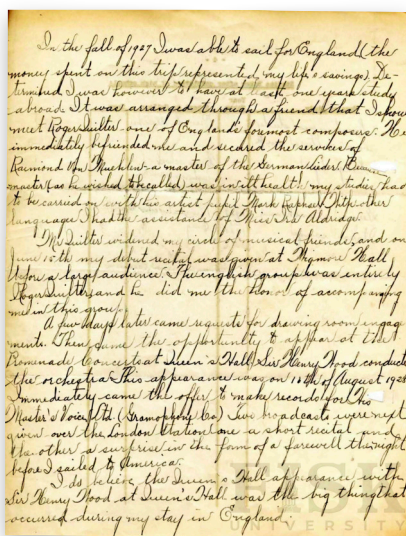
Ivan Koop Kuper is a Houston-based freelance writer, webcaster, professional drummer, and real estate broker. He can be reached at koopkuper@gmail.com.

Fisk Completes Rosenwald Digital Project

By Beth Chernoff

Some 50 people gathered on Friday, June 5, at Fisk University’s Franklin Library to celebrate the completion of the Rosenwald Digitalization Project. The Project began in 2020 with a \$1.6 million grant from the Mellon Foundation and 15 industrial scanners, with the goal of preserving the records of the Julius Rosenwald Fund and making them more accessible to the public.

The Rosenwald Fund Collection consists of almost 600 boxes and some 674,000 items. The online portal enables access to nearly the entire collection, including records pertaining to philanthropist Julius Rosenwald and his family; Rosenwald schools built throughout the South; and the Rosenwald Fellowships, which were awarded to Black writers, artists, and intellectuals to support creative and academic work.



A page from Marian Anderson’s Rosenwald Fund application, accessed online. *Rosenwald Database, Franklin Library Special Collections, Fisk University.*

Attendees at the event included Fisk staff instrumental in the project and professionals from other museums and libraries. A few Rosenwald School alumni came, as well as several descendants (including a Georgia man carrying his great-aunt’s well-preserved report cards). After an informal presentation and picnic-style lunch, guests were invited to explore the Archives reading room. Special Collections librarian and Fisk graduate Connor Joseph showed the group some documents, such as opera singer Marian Anderson’s 200-page application to the Rosenwald Fund. (She was awarded \$1500 to study in Germany.) Her entire application can now be seen online.

To access the portal, visit rosenwald.fisk.edu/s/rosenwald-fund-collection.

Beth Chernoff has served as a librarian in museum and state government settings, and now works ad hoc on research projects for the federal government.

SJHS Members Meet Up at AJHS Biennial Conference

Several SJHSers attended the American Jewish Historical Society Biennial Conference in Cleveland this past spring and took the opportunity to gather for an informal workshoping session. They discussed a chapter of David Weinfeld's work-in-progress manuscript about Jews and the Lost Cause.

The session was the brainchild of Ashley Walters, who plans to continue organizing works-in-progress workshops at upcoming academic conferences that draw historians of southern Jewry. The goal is "to create a space to support and encourage colleagues who are writing on southern Jewish topics," says Walters.



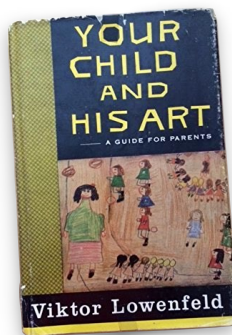
Participants in the first southern Jewish history works-in-progress workshop. Clockwise from left: Ayelet Brinn, Ashley Walters, Mimi Brown Wooten, Shari Rabin, David Weinfeld, Eric Goldstein, and Emily Katz.

SJHS Announces 2026 Grant Awards

The SJHS Grants Committee awarded five grants this year for a variety of projects.

Laura Auketayeva, program director of Rhode Island's Sandra Bornstein Holocaust Education Center, received an Evans Fund Grant in Honor of Eli Evans to conduct archival research at Virginia's Hampton University on Austrian Jewish art educator Viktor Lowenfeld for her book *Hired to Safety*, on Jewish refugee scholars who found employment at HBCUs in the South.

Rebecca J. Becker, executive director of the Crescent College History Project, received a Dr. Lawrence J. Kanter Grant for research travel to Little Rock to support her biography of Raye Frieda Tuchfeld, a Little Rock Jewish woman who attended Crescent College in Arkansas.



Groundbreaking art educator Viktor Lowenfeld is the subject of one grantee's research.

Gabriel Ben-Jacob, Ph.D. candidate at Northwestern University, received the Rabbi Allen Krause Fund Grant to conduct archival research in Richmond and Atlanta on 19th-century southern Jewish leaders and philanthropic networks for his project *A New Covenant: Jewish Restoration and the Rise of American Zionism*.

Cassidy Blackwell, director of the Augusta Jewish Museum, received a Scott and Donna Langston Archival Grant for her work developing the museum, which is housed in Georgia's oldest standing synagogue. She will use the grant to purchase recording equipment, closed captioning software, and website design services to complete the museum's oral history project and make it publicly available.

Ashley LaRue Low, Ph.D. candidate at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, received a Dr. Lawrence J. Kanter Grant for her dissertation on the Jewish history of Kinston, North Carolina. The grant will fund travel to archives and oral history sites across North Carolina.

You Can Go Home Again continued from page 2...

As I spoke to the crowd at Kneseth Israel about the distinctive features of Jewish life in Annapolis, there was a palpable ambivalence in the room. On the one hand, there was great nostalgia and appreciation for the "glory days" of the community, which experienced its height between World War II and the 1980s. At the same time, there was a recognition that the synagogue today claims a much smaller membership, attracts fewer young people, and struggles more to carry out its core functions than it did decades ago. But as I pointed out to my listeners, such problems are not unique to Kneseth Israel, to small-town congregations, or even to American Jews. Today, people in general are more spread out, they come and go more frequently, and they have many commitments and relationships that draw on their time and attention, so they don't rely on synagogues, churches, and clubs the way they used to. These are facts of life for all of us, no matter what our background or affiliation.

I also reminded my hometown friends that they have some important tools to keep their community going and make it more vibrant. On my regular visits, I told them, I still see the strong ties of intimacy, friendship, and common cause among community members that I remember so fondly from my youth. While it is not an overflowing congregation, or a youthful congregation, or a wealthy congregation, a group of active participants still rely on each other and are committed to making a difference for one another. Fortunately, Annapolis is a thriving city that attracts many transplants. With the creativity and persistence the community has long shown, Kneseth Israel can speak compellingly to these newcomers, since people do continue—especially in this changing and fluid world—to look for connection, meaning, and fellowship. For my part, I'm looking forward to the 150th!

NEWS AND NOTES

Portsmouth Jewish Museum Announces 2026 Summer Concert Series



A scene from last year's concert series. Photo by Jennifer Priest.

The Jewish Museum and Cultural Center in Portsmouth, Virginia, has provided a “Wonderful Wednesdays” evening concert series in July and August for 17 years, begun by one of its founders, Zelma G. Rivin. “My mother wanted to provide musical events for the Coastal Virginia community during the typically quiet months of July and August, when other cultural organizations were on summer break,” explained her son Rick Rivin. Concerts are held at the JMCC’s

building, the former Chevra T’helim Synagogue, in the beautifully renovated sanctuary.

This year’s performers include Trio Sefardi, a group presenting songs from the descendants of Jews exiled from Spain in 1492 with an emphasis on Bosnian singer and composer Flory Jagoda (July 8); well-known jazz pianist Lenore Raphael Duo, who performs songs from the Great American Songbook (July 15); Troy Breslow, a hometown Orthodox Jewish country music singer who has just issued his first CD (July 29); and classical pianist Junwen Liang, who will feature American composers in honor of the nation’s 250th birthday (August 19). On August 26, a quartet of singers from the Virginia Chorale and their artistic director Charles Woodward will present an evening of American songs by Jewish composers. This concert is dedicated to the memory of founding JMCC board member and former SJHS president Minette Cooper, who passed away last year.

For more information, please visit jewishmuseumportsmouth.org.

SAJHS Recognized at Luncheon with Spanish Ambassador to U.S.



Ambassador Bau speaks in St. Augustine. Courtesy of Merrill Shapiro.

The St. Augustine Jewish Historical Society was recognized recently at a luncheon hosting the Spanish ambassador to the U.S., Ángeles Moreno Bau, held on the campus of Flagler College. The luncheon celebrated the choice of the City of St. Augustine as the recipient of the 11th Bernardo de Gálvez Award in recognition of its historical significance and the role it has played in preserving the shared history between Spain and the United States. The St.

Augustine Jewish Historical Society was cited for its role in promoting the Spanish background of our nation’s oldest city of European origin.

As the U.S. commemorates the 250th anniversary of its independence, Ambassador Bau spoke of the unfortunate tendency to see the legacy of Spain’s considerable activity and influence in Florida and elsewhere in the nation as “an appendage—an afterthought” in our history.

The message was heard clearly by the St. Augustine Jewish Historical Society. The Society sees a great parallel between the relationship of Spanish-speaking communities in colonial America to English-speaking communities, as well as the relationship between Jews of Spanish-speaking communities and the more prevalent Jews of Yiddish-speaking Ashkenazic communities.

For info on the award, visit spainusa.org/en.

—Merrill Shapiro

Researcher Seeks Stories of Soviet Jewry Movement in Texas

Hello there, my name is Eric Meyer Lane. My history senior seminar thesis at the University of Texas in San Antonio focuses on the participation of Texan Jews in the Free Soviet Jewry movement of the late 20th century, specifically in Austin, Dallas, Houston, and San Antonio. I want to hear the stories of those who took part, whether in a leadership role, simply attending an event, or anything in between. I would also like to hear from former Soviet Jews who emigrated to America and now reside in those cities.



Bumper sticker of a student group active in the Soviet Jewry movement, 1973. Courtesy of Eric Lane.

Most of the academic literature on the Free Soviet Jewry movement focuses on the national level or on cities considered major to the movement. This project seeks to highlight Texan cities and their Jewish communities to explore this understudied area and contribute to scholarship on southern Jewry.

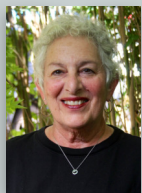
Interviews may be conducted in person, via zoom, or via telephone, and recorded conversations will remain private. If you are interested in being interviewed or if you have questions or thoughts to share, please contact me at ericmeyerlane@gmail.com.



Member Spotlight

Kerry Rosen (Tybee Island, GA)

When did you join the SJHS and why?



After spending my first 30 years up North (Cleveland, Boston, Rochester), I moved to Hattiesburg, Mississippi, in 1977, probably the first time I realized there were Jews in the South. I spent 20-plus years there, worked in academic advising at the University of Southern Mississippi, belonged to Congregation B'nai Israel, and raised two daughters who went to

Camp Jacobs. When the nest was empty in 1998, I moved to Jupiter, Florida, taking a job at Florida Atlantic University as director of admissions for its Honors College.

Fifteen years ago, my husband Phil and I retired to Tybee Island, outside of Savannah. We joined Mickve Israel, the oldest Jewish congregation in the South, and my interest in southern Jewish history grew. I got very involved with our History and Heritage Committee, became a docent, and worked on the renovation of our award-winning museum. And, naturally, I joined the SJHS.

What is your favorite part of SJHS membership?

I enjoy reading the *Rambler* and the *Journal*, finding both of them to be great resources for learning about southern Jews in different places and eras. This diversity continues to be fascinating to me!

What is a piece of southern Jewish history (a book, article, site, or something else) that you would recommend?

If you want to learn more about the early years of southern Jewish history, I encourage you to visit Savannah and Mickve Israel. Take a tour and see our gorgeous sanctuary, along with North America's oldest Torah and other artifacts. View our new exhibition, *Forging Our Sacred Liberty: The Declaration of Independence and Religious Freedom in Savannah, 1733-1790*. You can also read the recently-published *Jews of Savannah: An Escape, A Voyage, A Home*. To arrange a tour or buy the book, visit our website, mickveisrael.org.

Shalom y'all, as this Southern-Jew-by-choice has learned to say!

Our "Member Spotlight" feature seeks participants! If you are open to being spotlighted in a forthcoming Rambler, please send your answers to SJHS vice-president Shari Rabin at sharirabin@gmail.com. Please limit your submission to no more than 400 words.