



SJHS 50th to Feature Three Keynote Speakers

Three distinguished keynote lecturers will headline the SJHS 50th Anniversary Conference, to take place on October 16–18 in Atlanta. They will explore the city’s Jewish past and reflect on our conference theme, “The Past, Present, and Future of Southern Jewish History.”

Marni Davis, associate professor of history at Georgia State University, will deliver the Janice Rothschild Blumberg Lecture at lunch on Friday at The Breman, Atlanta’s Jewish museum and cultural center. A

longtime SJHS member and this year’s conference co-chair, Davis is known for her celebrated book *Jews and Booze* (2014), which explores Jewish integration into American society through the lens of the alcohol trade and the contentious politics surrounding Prohibition. Recently Davis has been researching the role of Jews in Atlanta’s emergence as a major 20th-century American city and business hub. Her talk will focus on Lithuanian Jewish immigrant Ben Massell, who became the city’s most active real estate developer at mid-

century. Often called the “Father of Atlanta’s Skyline,” Massell is a central figure in Davis’s forthcoming book, which promises to break new ground in multiple scholarly fields by demonstrating how Jewish experiences and contexts are crucial to southern, and American, urban history.

Following Shabbat services and dinner on Friday evening at Congregation Or VeShalom, Stephen J. Whitfield will present the Beeber Family Lecture, sponsored by the Helen M. Stern Foundation. His talk, “Birthmarks, 1976–2026,” will serve as the SJHS 50th anniversary address. Whitfield will explore the Society’s history and reflect on the growth and development of the field it launched. Perhaps no other scholar is as well suited to

undertake this task. As a young assistant professor, Whitfield was a speaker at the 1976 SJHS founding conference in Richmond. He later became a major interpreter of American Jewish life and author of such works as *A Death in the Delta: The Story of Emmett Till* (1988) and *In Search of American Jewish Culture* (1999).

Currently the Max Richter Professor Emeritus of American Civilization at Brandeis University, Whitfield has remained a stalwart SJHS leader, as well as one of the nation’s most incisive observers of southern Jewish culture and history.



Clockwise from top left: Ben Massell was known as the “Father of Atlanta’s Skyline.” Here it is in the 1950s. *Tracy O’Neal Photographic Collection, Georgia State University Library.* Daniel J. Boorstin. *Library of Congress.* Lawrence Kanter and Steve Whitfield at the SJHS 2016 conference in Natchez. *Photo by Rachel Myers.* One of the sites on our pre-conference tour of Jewish Atlanta. For tour details, see page 4. *Photo by David Seibert.*

The Dr. Lawrence J. Kanter Lecture delivered by Jon Boorstin will highlight Saturday’s sessions, held at Emory University. A novelist and Oscar-nominated filmmaker, Boorstin will speak on his recent book *The American*, a biography of his Atlanta-born father, historian Daniel J. Boorstin, one of the most important public intellectuals of the 20th century. The elder Boorstin, who won the Pulitzer Prize in 1974 for *The Americans: The Democratic Experience*, spent his career pondering what it meant to be American but never wrote about his own past. His son tells the “hidden history”

of his family: Daniel’s immigrant father, Samuel Boorstin, was the youngest lawyer on the defense team of Leo Frank. After fleeing Atlanta in the wake of Frank’s lynching in 1915, he relocated his family to Tulsa, where Daniel grew up against the backdrop of another traumatic event, the infamous Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921. *The American* ponders how Daniel Boorstin’s career as an interpreter of American life was shaped by his early experiences with racial conflict and antisemitism in the urban South.

The conference will be filled with many other fascinating sessions and events. See page 3 for the full schedule and go to jewishsouth.org/upcoming-conference for more details. See you in Atlanta!



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Historical Society

— President's Message —

Four “Hometown Heroes” Who Have Inspired Me

By Eric L. Goldstein



I write with great excitement as we approach the SJHS's 50th anniversary conference in my hometown, Atlanta—but also with a tinge of sadness, since this is my final President's Message. It's been a wonderful two years, and I am thrilled to hand over the reins to Shari Rabin, who I know will take the Society to new heights in its work of studying, preserving, and educating the public about the southern Jewish past.

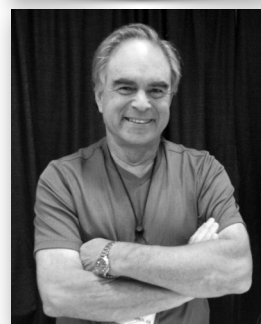
To share my pride in welcoming you all to my home city in October, I want to celebrate four “hometown heroes”—Atlantans who have preceded me as SJHS leaders and whose contributions make this city an especially fitting place to celebrate our 50th anniversary.

Two past presidents from Atlanta who are no longer with us did much to lay the groundwork for our organization's success. Janice Rothschild Blumberg, the “First Lady” of Jewish Atlanta, was not only the wife and partner of civil rights leader Rabbi Jacob M. Rothschild, but also an accomplished writer and historian who authored important books in the field of southern Jewish history. One of the early shapers and presidents of the SJHS, Janice played an integral role in every aspect of the Society for more than four decades and served as our goodwill ambassador until her death at 100 in 2024. Distinguished attorney Beryl Weiner was president when I attended my first conference in Atlanta in 1993. As in all his community efforts, Beryl gave generously of his time and resources, providing free legal work to the SJHS and donating the services of his administrative assistant, Barbara Tahsler. Since Beryl's death in 2014, Barbara has continued this tradition of generosity by giving her time to act as SJHS administrator.

Bruce Beeber, an Atlanta pediatrician and Jewish community leader, served as SJHS president in the late 1990s and has continued to lend his advice and support. Most significantly, for more than a decade Bruce has guided the generous financial support of the Helen M. Stern Foundation, which he serves as a trustee. Under Bruce's oversight, the Stern Foundation has subsidized our journal, *Southern Jewish History*, and has underwritten a major cultural program and keynote lecture each year at our conference. This year's 50th anniversary gathering in Atlanta, in particular, bears the stamp of Bruce's wisdom and influence, and would not be possible without the generosity of the Stern Foundation and Bruce's continued devotion.

Last, but certainly not least, is Mark Bauman, who, as author and editor, has done more than any other individual to shape southern Jewish history as a scholarly field. While presidents serve the SJHS for a maximum of two years, Mark's tenure as editor of *Southern Jewish History* since its founding in 1998 has made him the longest-serving and most influential of any of our Society's leaders. His early articles and books created a framework for understanding Atlanta Jewish history, and his work later expanded to take in the entire southern Jewish experience. Although his accent still reveals his New York origins, Mark's credentials as a southerner are undisputed owing to his half-century of living and working in Atlanta and environs.

It has been my honor to follow in the footsteps of these four “hometown heroes” during my service as SJHS president. I have benefited greatly from knowing each of them, and they continue to be an inspiration and model for me in my own work. I look forward to honoring the memory of Janice and Beryl, and celebrating the contributions of Bruce and Mark, at our upcoming gathering in Atlanta. I hope to see you all there!



Top: Janice Rothschild Blumberg. SJHS files. Beryl Weiner. Dignity Memorial. Bottom: Mark Bauman. Photo by Hollace Ava Weiner. Bruce Beeber. Photo by Ellen Umansky.

"The Past, Present, and Future of Southern Jewish History"

50th Anniversary 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, with option to visit Leo Frank memorial site.

Friday, October 16 (at The Breman Museum)

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

9-9:45 am: Registration and view exhibits at The Breman

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 and the Tulane University Grant Center for the American Jewish Experience, in memory of Bernard Wax.

David Weinfeld, 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

Welcome: Rev. Dr. Terrence Johnson, Dean, Candler School of Theology
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 Appelman'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 Anniversary 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-1 pm: From Tablet to Tablet: Exploring Emory's Jewish Studies Collections (Woodruff Library, Emory University)

1-6 pm (Optional Add-On): Research Workshop on Southern Jewish Family and Local History

Co-sponsored by the Shapell Manuscript Foundation.
See page 4 for workshop program.

Go Deeper: Tour and Workshop to Enhance Upcoming Conference

Beyond the scholarly sessions, history talks, and cultural events on offer at this year's conference, two "add-on" experiences will enable attendees to dive deeper into Jewish Atlanta and/or deepen their own personal engagement with southern Jewish history. We hope you will join us for one (or both) of these optional programs.

On **Thursday, October 15**, attendees will tour sites at the heart of Atlanta's Jewish history. Our pre-conference day trip starts at beautiful Oakland Cemetery, the city's oldest public park and the home of Georgia's second-oldest Jewish burial ground. We then travel to Atlanta's storied Temple (aka the Hebrew Benevolent Congregation) on Peachtree Street. There, Bill Rothschild, son of the late Rabbi Jacob Rothschild and Janice Rothschild Blumberg, will discuss the history of the congregation—Atlanta's oldest—as well as Atlantans' movement for racial equality and the 1958 Temple bombing. From there, we head to lunch at Ponce City Market, a 1926 Sears & Roebuck facility that has been converted into a nationally renowned food hall and shopping destination.

After lunch, we make our way to Ahavath Achim, Atlanta's second oldest Jewish house of worship and the first founded by Eastern European immigrants. We will visit the magnificent

sanctuary and hear from Mark Bauman, emeritus professor at Atlanta Metropolitan State College and editor of *Southern Jewish History*, who will give us an overview of Atlanta's historic synagogues. After that, options: take a bus back to the conference hotel or venture a few more miles to Marietta, to visit the historical marker at the site of the 1915 lynching of Leo Frank. We will be joined there by Rabbi Steven Lebow of Temple Kol Emeth, who played a pivotal role in establishing the marker in Frank's memory.



Ahavath Achim's stunning sanctuary. *Partners for Sacred Places*.

On **Sunday, October 18**, immediately following the main conference, SJHS and the Shapell Manuscript Foundation are offering a workshop for folks interested in learning research methods to uncover the southern Jewish past and strategies to preserve family and community history (see program below).

The workshop will be especially useful for anyone who has thought about creating a local archive or researching the history of their southern Jewish family or community. Whether you're not sure

where to start, or you've already started and want advice about how to go further, this workshop will be rewarding and worthwhile.

Please visit jewishsouth.org/upcoming-conference to sign up for these events. Space is limited, so don't delay!

Research Workshop on Southern Jewish Family and Local History

Post-conference event, Sunday, October 18, at Candler School of Theology, Emory University

Co-sponsored by the Shapell Manuscript Foundation. Separate registration required.

1–2:30 pm: Lunch Program (boxed lunch provided by SJHS) Georgia Discoveries from the Shapell Roster of Jewish Service in the American Civil War

Eric Goldstein, welcoming remarks

- ▶ Shapell Roster director Adrienne DeArmas, introduction
- ▶ Alexandra Apito and Caitlin J. Winkler, Shapell Roster researchers

2:45–3:30 pm: Concurrent Sessions (choose one) Southern Jewish Resources on JewishGen

- ▶ Karen Franklin, JewishGen outreach director

Southern Jewish Historical Newspapers Online

- ▶ Katalin Rac, Jewish Studies librarian, Emory University

3:45–4:30 pm: Concurrent sessions (choose one) Creating Your Own Family History Book

- ▶ Gary Palgon, professional genealogist
- #### Partnering with Archives to Preserve Your History
- ▶ Katie Weber, South Texas Jewish Archives, Rice University

4:45–6 pm: Sources for Southern Jewish Family History at Jewish Archives

- ▶ Max Modiano Daniel, Jewish Heritage Collection, College of Charleston
- ▶ Casey Fishman, Ida Pearle and Joseph Cuba Archives, The Breman
- ▶ Dana Herman, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati

An Evolving Field: Emory Exhibit Highlights Jewish Studies Collections

By Katalin Rac

While SJHS celebrates its 50th anniversary, Emory University marks the 50th anniversary of its Jewish studies program with a special exhibition, *From Tablet to Tablet: Exploring Emory's Jewish Studies Collections*. Conferencegoers will be able to peruse this exhibit, on view until February 2027 in the Robert W. Woodruff Library's Schatten Gallery. A collaboration between the Tam Institute for Jewish



Some of the items on display in the exhibit. *Tam Institute for Jewish Studies*.

Studies, Emory University Libraries, and the Michael C. Carlos Museum, the exhibit showcases the rich and diverse holdings that support teaching and research at Emory and beyond. It also explores Jewish studies as an academic endeavour, examining its evolving place in academia from its roots in 19th-century Europe until today.

continued on next page...

Pursuing A Historical Mystery in Baton Rouge

By Harriet Friedmann

As a child, I knew a just few things about Rabbi Marvin Reznikoff. He was kind. He was a close friend of my mother, the volunteer secretary at Liberal Synagogue. At her request, he told me about the Holocaust, why I had no grandparents, and why my mother had scars on her face and arms. When I was 17, he arranged for me to tutor brave Black high school students who were the first to integrate schools in East Baton Rouge Parish.

I was a child when Rabbi Reznikoff left town and when he returned a couple of years later. I didn't know why he left. I knew he returned because

members of our tiny congregation, including my parents, petitioned the board to bring him back. I knew that my father and the board president were enemies. Only much later did I connect those two facts.

Recently I decided to investigate my hunch that Liberal Synagogue had been divided over Rabbi Reznikoff's civil rights leadership during tense conflicts over Jim Crow, when he became a prominent participant in the campaign to desegregate Baton Rouge schools.

I started by learning about Liberal Synagogue's origins. I was surprised to discover that it was formed by a split from B'nai Israel in 1945 in a dispute over Zionism: after opposition to a Jewish state was written into the B'nai Israel constitution, some 30 families broke away. I believe I heard so little about this issue in the 1950s because everything was

overshadowed by conflicts over Jim Crow and desegregation.

Next, the United Jewish Congregation (UJC) of Baton Rouge provided the dates of all rabbis in its legacy synagogues. Marvin Reznikoff was Liberal Synagogue's rabbi twice: 1949 to 1955 and 1957 to 1976. I now knew to look for board minutes from 1955 and 1957.

However, I had no idea where the minutes might be found. The tiny synagogue building of my youth had been left behind when the congregation, renamed Beth Shalom, moved into a large, modern building in 1980. In turn, that building closed when Beth Shalom and B'nai Israel merged back together in 2022. Repeated phone calls led to frustration: no one seemed to know the whereabouts of the Liberal Synagogue minutes. A former Beth Shalom board member had last seen them in a broom closet. The quest seemed hopeless.

With help from UJC rabbi Sarah Smiley, I contacted Rabbi Reznikoff's daughter, Tamara. She said, "Your call is a miracle. I have closets full of documents I don't know what to do with." I flew to her home in Phoenix to help her, and we sent the Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience (MSJE), which already had some Liberal Synagogue records, a first tranche of 20 boxes of documents and artifacts.

In those papers, I found the gem I was looking for: a 1957 letter from the Liberal board, inviting Reznikoff to take up a position as Rabbi. Its wording was surreal. It read like a normal hire of a new applicant, ignoring that he had previously served the congregation for many years. Yet the short letter offered to help his family return to their old house, acknowledging the past connection.

In late 2025, I again inquired about the minutes at the UJC office. After

a bit of confusion, a staff member said she thought the bound minutes of Liberal Synagogue might be in two boxes on a high shelf awaiting pickup by the LSU archives. Success! She set me up in the library where I spent two long days reading about life at Liberal Synagogue. Minutes of the crucial years were complete—but lacked any mention of Rabbi Reznikoff's leaving or returning.

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Top left: Rabbi Marvin Reznikoff speaks in Denham Springs, a KKK stronghold. MSJE. Top right: Flyer, Baton Rouge, 1965. *From We Were Merchants*, by Hans Sternberg (LSU Press). Bottom: Liberal Synagogue letterhead. MSJE.

Emory's Jewish Studies Collections on Display During Conference

continued from page 4...

Visitors will see a breathtaking variety of materials used by scholars to understand the Jewish experience as it developed over millennia, from a 4000-year-old cuneiform tablet to a tablet of a more recent variety (electronic). Newspapers, original manuscripts and letters, paintings and photos, sacred texts and ritual objects, even botanical specimens make an appearance. Sections explore the many disciplinary approaches—or “ways of knowing”—that scholars use to study multifaceted Jewish life. Tam Institute faculty selected items to display that have influenced their work and offer their reflections in video clips. Worldwide in scope, the exhibit also traces the development of

Jewish studies at Emory as it transformed from a small Methodist college into an internationally known research institution.

Artifacts from southern Jewish history include an 1804 handwritten prayer book from Charleston, a Sephardic cook book, a letter from Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. to Rabbi Jacob Rothschild, and the famous halachic ruling in which Atlanta rabbi Tobias Geffen declared Coca-Cola kosher. For more info, visit libraries.emory.edu/exhibitions-programs.

Katalin Rac is Jewish Studies Librarian at Emory. She co-curated the exhibit with Emory professor and SJHS president Eric Goldstein.

Temple Mishkan Israel Begins New Chapter in Selma

By Stephanie Butler

What happens when a historic synagogue no longer has the congregation it once did, but its history, its building, and its place in the community remain as important as ever?

For more than 150 years, Temple Mishkan Israel has been part of Selma's story. Founded in 1870, its synagogue dates to 1900. The congregation helped shape the civic, economic, and cultural life of the city. Like many small southern Jewish communities, however, Selma's Jewish population has dwindled over time, prompting an important question: What comes next?

Rather than viewing that question as an ending, Temple Mishkan Israel has chosen to see it as an opportunity. As the Jewish population has grown smaller, the congregation's vision has grown broader. It has embarked on an initiative to preserve its historic campus and its Jewish heritage while expanding its role as a center for education, public history, and cultural engagement. The goal is to build on the Temple's past in ways that serve today's community and future generations.

Though no longer a large, active congregation, Temple Mishkan Israel remains a place where Jewish life happens. The

congregation will continue to host worship, lifecycle celebrations, and visiting Jewish groups while creating ways for the broader public to explore Selma's Jewish story and its connection to the city's history. Current work includes preservation planning, archival and collections projects, oral history efforts, and program development. The Temple is also building partnerships that will increase opportunities for educational experiences, community engagement, and heritage tourism.



Historic Temple Mishkan Israel, Selma. *Courtesy of Stephanie Butler.*

Many historic congregations throughout the South are wrestling with similar questions about preservation, sustainability, and relevance. "Temple Mishkan Israel does not pretend to have all the answers," says board president Ronnie Leet, "but we hope that our work will show that historic synagogues can continue to educate, inspire, and contribute to our communities in meaningful ways."

The Temple welcomes opportunities to collaborate with historians, preservationists, educators, museums, and community organizations interested in preserving and sharing the history of Jewish life in the American South.

Stephanie Butler is director of community programs for Temple Mishkan Israel.

Educators on the Freedom Trail: Holocaust in Context Teacher Study Tour

By Chad S.A. Gibbs and Hana G. Green

The Holocaust took place in a world beset by the forces of hate. While that is easy enough to say, the more difficult task is finding the right methods to teach about its lessons today.

Recently the College of Charleston partnered with the South Carolina Council on the Holocaust and scholar Lauren Ashley Bradford on a teacher study tour bringing into conversation histories of racial hatred at home and abroad. Following the Freedom Riders route, our group of South Carolina high school teachers traveled to Montgomery, New Orleans, and Birmingham.

In Montgomery, we visited the National Memorial for Peace and Justice and the Legacy Museum, where our teachers studied Black history in the U.S. from enslavement to mass incarceration. Having confronted this saga and discussed the

nature of our country as it went to war in 1941, we turned our attention to the Holocaust. In New Orleans, we visited the National World War II Museum and also stopped at the Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience, where we learned about southern Jews, their encounters with the civil rights movement, and the postwar refugee experience. In Birmingham, the group discussed the ongoing struggle for equality while visiting the Civil Rights Institute and the 16th Street Baptist Church.

As Holocaust educators find themselves weighed down by deepening antisemitism and civil rights teachers find their messages under attack, the bridges built by this trip could not be more important.

Chad Gibbs directs the Zucker/Goldberg Center for Holocaust Studies at the College of Charleston. Former Center postdoc Hana Green teaches at TAMU-San Antonio.



At the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute. *Courtesy of Chad Gibbs.*

Pursuing A Historical Mystery in Baton Rouge

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Why would such momentous decisions be taken without acknowledgment? The context was intense: a cross burned at the home of a Black minister; a KKK poster with a swastika superimposed on a Star of David. Tamara recalled guards outside the Reznikoff house. I feel confident in concluding that

we will never have details of the internal politics of a Jewish community torn between fear and justice.

Harriet Friedmann is professor emerita of sociology at the University of Toronto and a member of Danforth Jewish Circle, an inclusive and unaffiliated Toronto synagogue.

NEWS AND NOTES

Visiting the South? Check out ISJL's Tour Services



Congregations, organizations, and families looking to enhance a visit to the Jewish South have an amazing resource at their disposal: the tour curriculum and consulting services recently developed by the Institute of Southern Jewish Life.

The curriculum, *Southern and Jewish on the Road*, helps visitors expand their understanding of American and Jewish identities through the lens of southern Jews, southern culture, and civil rights. Groups nationwide have already used units on Jackson, Selma, Birmingham, and Montgomery; a new unit on Memphis has just been released. Appropriate for teens and adults, the curriculum includes pre- and post-trip lessons for each city, along with place-based activities for local museums and historical sites. Not seeing the city on your itinerary? Don't worry, more cities are in development!

The ISJL tour services team also offers virtual consultations, assisting groups with trip goals, local contacts, and itineraries. This past year, the team has helped a rabbi biking across the South, a university group of future journalists, and many groups in between. Team members are looking forward to working with the larger SJHS community.

Learn more at isjl.org/tourresources, and reach out to culture@isjl.org with any questions.

On View at Mickve Israel: Savannah and Religious Liberty



There's still time to see *Forging Our Sacred Liberty: The Declaration of Independence and Religious Freedom in Savannah, 1733-1790*, the special exhibit mounted by Congregation Mickve Israel in May (see the Spring 2026 *Rambler*). The exhibit invites visitors to examine the role of the

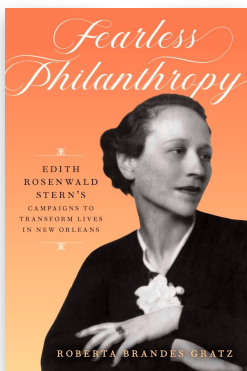
Jewish community in colonial-era Savannah, where the promise of religious freedom took shape well before being enshrined as a constitutional right.

Running through January 2027, the exhibit celebrates the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence and the seeds of religious tolerance that were planted by Savannah colonists. For Jews and other religious minorities, Georgia was truly a colony set apart. By exploring their experiences and contributions, the exhibit illuminates a hidden history of one of America's most enduring ideals.

Featuring rare artifacts and colonial-era documents, *Forging Our Sacred Liberty* is the work of a committed group of lay leaders advised by historians, including Dr. Lance Sussman, Dr. Gary P. Zola, and Dr. Shari Rabin. For more information, please visit mickveisrael.org/America250 or contact Deanna Sorrells, dsorrells@mickveisrael.org.

—Margie Levy, Savannah, Georgia

Fearless Philanthropy: Introducing Edith Rosenwald Stern



While Julius Rosenwald has received much attention from historians, few people know of the impact of his daughter, whose Jewish values, progressive views, and great wealth made her an important New Orleans civic and moral leader. In *Fearless Philanthropy: Edith Rosenwald Stern's Campaigns to Transform Lives in New Orleans*, award-winning journalist Roberta Brandes Gratz relates how Stern encountered a city rife

with racism and run by entrenched social rules when she arrived with her husband Edgar, a cotton broker, in 1921.

She refused to fall in line. Following in her father's footsteps, she founded two pioneering educational institutions. She and Edgar championed civil rights, with Edith funding the desegregation campaign of the women's group Save Our Schools. The couple led the creation of Pontchartrain Park, the nation's first FHA-backed Black middle-class housing development. She fought an expressway and helped revitalize the French Quarter.

In showing how the Sterns pursued their goals within a political and social climate antagonistic to change, Gratz offers a fascinating chronicle of New Orleans during a pivotal time, while illuminating the life of one of its unsung heroes.



Member Spotlight

Mimi Wooten (Charlotte, NC)

When did you join the SJHS and why?



I joined the SJHS in 2021 during my first year of graduate school at the University of Michigan before attending my first SJHS conference in 2022. I grew up in Charlotte, so the intersections of southernness and Jewishness have always been a part of my life. After working as a History and Heritage intern at the Institute of Southern Jewish Life in Jackson,

Mississippi, in the summer of 2019, I knew that I wanted to keep southern Jewish history at the center of my research and that joining the SJHS would support that goal.

What is your favorite part of SJHS membership?

The best thing about SJHS membership is attending the annual conference. As a graduate student, the SJHS conference is a supportive and generative site for making connections with others engaged in southern Jewish history, for learning about what is new and cutting edge in the field, and for testing out new ideas and sharing my research. I love that the conference

brings together community members, professionals, and scholars alike to discuss a region and a history we all care about so deeply.

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

It is so challenging to choose one! Given that we are convening in Atlanta this October, I would recommend checking out the Esther and Herbert Taylor Oral History Collection housed at the William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum. The collection contains over 1,000 oral history interviews and is a great way to get acquainted with histories of urban Atlanta, Jewish life across Georgia and Alabama, the experiences of women and children, Ottoman Sephardi histories, and so much more. I enjoy working with oral history interviews because of their material richness—the sound of someone's voice or the look on their face as they tell a story—and because they often divulge the granular details of everyday life that are so often lost in other types of sources.

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.