Southern Jewish HISTORY

Volume 24
2021

JOURNAL *of the* SOUTHERN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PERMISSION STATEMENT

SOUTHERN JEWISH HISTORY

Journal of the Southern Jewish Historical Society

2021
Volume 24

Southern Jewish History

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Articles appearing in *Southern Jewish History* are abstracted and/or indexed in *Historical Abstracts; America: History and Life; Index to Jewish Periodicals; Journal of American History; Journal of Southern History; RAMBI-National Library of Israel;* Immigration and Ethnic History Society *Newsletter;* and the *Berman Jewish Policy Archive* (www.bjpa.org).

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ISSN 1521-4206

SOUTHERN JEWISH
Historical Society

The Southern Jewish Historical Society acknowledges with great appreciation a generous donation to the society's endowment to support *Southern Jewish History* as well as the society's grants, archival preservation, and an annual lecture.

Dr. Lawrence J. Kanter
Jacksonville, Florida

The grant was given in partnership with the Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience and the Tulane University Department of Jewish Studies.

MUSEUM OF THE SOUTHERN JEWISH EXPERIENCE

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Southern Jewish History acknowledges with deep appreciation the generous financial support of the following:

Journal Operations Fund
Barbara Fernandez
Kenneth Goldberg
Sharon Goldberg
Phyllis K. Leffler
May Lynn Mansbach
Hindea Markowicz
Judith Mopsik
Helen Marie Stern Memorial Fund
Bernie and Dolly Wax
Hollace Ava and Bruce Weiner

Bauman Family Journal Endowment Fund
Mark and Sandy Bauman
Charles and Minette Cooper
Adam Mendelsohn
Philip and Joan Steel
Bernie and Dolly Wax

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COVER PICTURE:

Viktor Lowenfeld's oil painting The Negro's Burden, *produced while he was an art professor at Hampton Institute in Virginia, 1943–45. Lowenfeld's career and his years at Hampton working with African American art students are detailed in Andrew Sperling's article in this issue. (Collection of Judith Weyburne and Dr. John Lowenfeld.)*

From the Editor . . .

This volume features two articles by graduate students. Yale University law student Eric Eisner provides a corrective as to when North Carolina granted Jews the right to hold office without a test oath to signify if they were Protestants. He positions this from three perspectives: (1) earlier discussions over Jewish office-holding in the state; (2) the relationship with the prevailing image of Jewish support for the Confederacy; and (3) when and why other states removed religious qualifications on Jewish office holding.

Andrew Sperling, a doctoral student at American University, traces the teaching career, techniques, and rights advocacy of art educator Viktor Lowenfeld from his flight from Austria to Hampton Institute, a historically Black college in Virginia. Lowenfeld's pedagogy empowered his blind and African American students to confront discrimination and express themselves freely. His experiences and identity as a Jew and Zionist informed the values he inculcated in his students.

Augustine Meaher begins the primary source section with letters to and from Lisa Stein, Senator Charles O. Andrews (D-FL), and other officials in attempts to rescue her family in Vichy France from the Holocaust. A recent immigrant from Europe, Stein did her best to navigate a complex system and influence the U.S. Department of State and immigration officials with limited results. Her letters provide a personal, human element to the sad story of the government's failure to save more European Jews. Stein and Lowenfeld were among the relatively few who got out of Europe in time.

R. Barbara Gitenstein provides a series of documents on a Jew from New York who spent his adult life in a small Alabama town. His family's mill that he managed supplied needed jobs for the community, and his philanthropy filled community needs. A typical story of small-town Jewry with important variations, decades later his efforts were all but lost.

During the last few years the editorial board has established several policies after candid, thoughtful, and thorough discussions. Sometimes consensus has been reached, and at others the majority has ruled and members have agreed to disagree but always on amicable terms. Thus it is with appreciation that we thank Karen Franklin, Jeffrey Gurock, Adam Meyer, Lance Sussman, and Dan Weinfeld for their outstanding service as they complete their five-year terms.

A book reviewer raised the latest issue faced by the editorial board: journal policy concerning the use of capitalization or lower case for Black/black and White/white when referring to ethnic identity. Consequently, managing editor Bryan Stone and I conducted an extensive search of various guidelines and the policies of other scholarly journals as well as newspapers. When I then brought the issue before the editorial board, it turned out to be as divided as the guidelines, newspapers, and historical journals that we researched.

Although differing from the newest *Chicago Manual of Style*, our normative guide, we have chosen to follow the position of the *Journal of American History* whereby individual authors have the right to choose whether they want Black/black capitalized or lower case. If the author decides to capitalize Black, they also have the option of capitalizing White (a policy in keeping with the latest *Chicago Manual*). Thus we will maintain consistency within articles and reviews—although not necessarily from article to article or review to review—and will continue to monitor the issue to determine any necessary changes in style for future journal volumes. To illustrate how quickly usage is changing, every author facing the choice in this volume opted to capitalize Black, and two also decided to capitalize White.

We thankfully acknowledge the exceptional work done by proofreaders Rachel Heimovics Braun, Karen Franklin, Bernie Wax, Hollace Ava Weiner, and Dan Weinfeld. It always amazes us that each individual reads the articles from a very different lens and identifies errors found by nobody else.

Finally, the journal benefits greatly from the continuing financial support of the Helen Marie Stern Memorial Fund. Having lost our longtime foundation aid a few years ago, this year I penned an article in *The Rambler*, the quarterly newsletter of the Southern Jewish Historical Society, requesting donations from within the SJHS family. Bryan and I felt

overwhelmed with the outpouring of assistance from the several individuals who came forward and whose names appear on the acknowledgement page. Through President Jay Silverberg's efforts, Dr. Lawrence J. Kanter made a major five-year pledge to the endowment fund that will eventually go a long way toward ensuring the well-being of the journal and all of the society's programs.

Mark K. Bauman

"Hebrews in Favor of the South": Jews, Race, and the North Carolina State Convention of 1861–1862

by

Eric Eisner*

On May 20, 1861, the state convention of North Carolina voted to secede from the United States.[1] On December 6, 1861, the convention amended the state constitution to alter the religious test.[2] Contemporary newspapers explained the change to the religious test as a long-overdue extension of the formal right to hold office to North Carolina's Jews.[3] A common thread connected the two votes. One of the primary arguments that supporters of Jewish rights in North Carolina used to justify expanding the religious test was Jewish support for the Confederacy. An October 1861 article published in a North Carolina newspaper crowed about "the unanimity for the Hebrews in favor of the South."[4] The southern newspaper exaggerated Jewish support for the Confederacy. Southern Jews demonstrated a range of reactions to the war, from enthusiastic support to ambivalence, and a variety of responses, including volunteering to join the Confederate army, moving north to avoid Confederate military service, and paying people to take their place in the Confederate army.[5] The White Christian perception of the loyal southern Jew, however, is essential for understanding how North Carolina Jews won the formal right to hold the public offices from which Article 32 of the state's original constitution had excluded them. The anti-Black racism present in the American South and southern Jewish acceptance of slavery and the Confederate cause enabled Jews to achieve political equality in North Carolina.

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The Wording, Meaning, and Implementation of the 1861 and 1868 Religious Tests

Contemporaries disagreed about the meaning of the change to the religious test, and historians continue to dispute its significance. Before the state convention met in 1861, the state constitution barred from holding office anyone "who shall deny the being of God, or the truth of the Christian Religion, or the divine authority of the Old or New Testament."[6] The 1861 convention dropped the reference to Christianity and changed a few crucial words. The 1861 version of the test barred from office anyone who denied "the divine authority of both the Old and New Testaments."[7] Had the test required acceptance of "the divine authority of both the Old and New Testaments," Jews would have remained constitutionally excluded because they accepted one and not the other. As Christian delegates to the convention and contemporary North Carolina newspapers understood it, Jews denied the New Testament but accepted the Old Testament; therefore, by virtue of not denying both, Jews could be eligible for office under the new wording, however strained the

North Carolina State Capitol in Raleigh, 1861. (Wikimedia Commons.)

writing style.[8] The wording has beguiled some—although not all—contemporary Jewish commentators and modern historians. While several historians have claimed that North Carolina's Jews only achieved the right to hold office in 1868 when the adoption of a new state constitution made their right unequivocal, the primary sources will show that the date Jews were constitutionally included in office holding has to be moved back from 1868 to 1861.[9] A distinction also has to be made between de jure and de facto qualifications. Although North Carolina's 1776 constitution seemingly barred Jews from holding office until its 1861 amendment, Jews still held positions in government, and the only attempt to enforce the religious test against a Jewish North Carolinian proved unsuccessful.

The delegates to the 1861 convention and North Carolina newspapers explained the change in wording as accomplishing nothing more or less than expanding those qualified to hold office to include Jews. According to the local newspapers and convention delegates, the amendment's only purpose was to allow Jews to hold office. During the debate, the proposal was described as an "ordinance for amending the Constitution, so as to remove Jewish disability to hold office." Proposals to completely abolish the test failed. Delegates objected to the possibility that Muslims, Pagans, or "China-men" could be allowed to serve in government.[10]

In 1861, Jewish newspapers reported that the new wording allowed Jews to hold office. The *Occident* (Philadelphia) and the *American Israelite* (Cincinnati) triumphantly announced the extension of formal equality to Jews. These newspapers, edited by Isaac Leeser and Isaac M. Wise, respectively, echoed the expressed intent and interpretations of the convention delegates and the North Carolina press. Leeser stood out as the key spokesperson for the traditionalists of the era, and Wise served in the same capacity for the moderate Reformers.

North Carolina historians, following the narrative provided by the delegates and the North Carolina papers, have generally understood the 1861 amendment as an expansion of those eligible to hold office to include Jews under the religious test. Their interpretations have explained the change in wording as accomplishing exactly what its authors claimed it had been written to achieve: the formal acceptance of Jewish office holders. In these works, however, which are not focused on Jewish history, the

1861 amendment receives only glancing mention, sometimes only half a sentence.[11]

In contrast, in 1866, the *Occident*, the *Jewish Messenger* (New York), and the *Israelite* all reported that the new wording had done nothing to alter Jewish disabilities.[12] This reversed the previous interpretations of the Philadelphia and Cincinnati publications. These out-of-state publications did not always possess accurate information about North Carolina politics. North Carolina, the *Israelite* acknowledged, "is the only State in the Union where we have no subscribers and no correspondent, hence we know nothing about it."[13] Historians writing about American Jews, including historians of North Carolina Jewry, have tended to accept the interpretation offered by Jewish papers in 1866 and have argued that the 1861 amendment did not end the formal exclusion of Jews from office. Some of these historians do not mention the 1861 change to the test.[14] Others, while correctly noting that the convention changed the language of the test, still argue that Jews remained formally barred until 1868.[15] Three quote the language of the revised 1861 test.[16] According to these historians, the change in language had no effect on the exclusion of Jews from office. They interpret the phrasing of the amendment to mean that a man was required to accept both scriptures to qualify for office. Neither North Carolina politicians nor the local press understood the test in this way.[17]

The date Jews gained formal equality matters. An 1868 extension of formal equality to Jews creates a narrative of simultaneous progress, in which Reconstruction brought emancipation to the enslaved and full political rights to Jews. "With Reconstruction," Anton Hieke writes, "Jews were finally granted the right to hold executive offices in North Carolina."[18] Samuel Rabinove adds that only the absence "of the old white leadership of the state" at the 1868 constitutional convention made the expansion of the religious test possible.[19] If Jews gained full rights in 1861, however, they achieved equality at the same moment the state plunged into a war to preserve chattel slavery. Jews gained formal equality not despite the old White leadership but through it.

This extension of rights was certainly the expressed goal of the 1861 delegates. North Carolina elites explained their solicitude towards Jews after the South had begun its descent into war as a desire to repay the

loyalty of Jews to slavery, the Confederacy, and white supremacy. This history is essential to understand the motivations of the 1861 delegates.

The History of Article 32 from Convention to Convention

The limits of the North Carolina religious test remained vague. It is not clear exactly what counted as an "office or place of trust or profit in the civil department within this State" as defined by the constitution.[20] North Carolinians disagreed about whether a seat in the legislature counted as an "office" during the controversy over Jacob Henry, a Jewish North Carolinian who won election to the House of Commons in 1808 and 1809.[21] In Maryland, where a Christian-only religious test covered "any office of profit or trust" until 1826, "office" had a capacious definition.[22] Maryland Jews complained not only of being unable to run for city council but also of being unable to serve as commissioned officers in the state militia or even to work as lawyers. Nonetheless, Jews did receive commissions in militia companies and served on juries. Unlike in North Carolina, Jews did not win elected office until after the amendment of the religious test.[23] As proved by the Jacob Henry incident, the only effort to enforce the test in North Carolina, it is difficult to determine whether "office" had a narrower construction for the purpose of the religious test in North Carolina than it did in Maryland.

Regardless of the wording of the 1861 text or the definition of "office," Jews did hold government jobs in North Carolina between 1861 and 1868, when the state adopted a new constitution. Abram Weill served as a Charlotte alderman in 1865, and Emil Rosenthal was appointed to the Wilson town council in 1867. A prominent member of his local Jewish community, Weill had served as a Confederate major and temporarily sheltered Jefferson Davis from federal arrest after the war. In 1866, a North Carolina paper claimed that, after the 1861 amendment, Jews served as justices of the peace. Even this evidence, however, does not settle the practical meaning of the 1861 amendment because Jews also held office before 1861. Jacob Henry served in the legislature in 1808 and 1809, when the constitution appeared to require all office holders to be Protestant, and Michael Grausman served as an official in the state treasury before the Civil War, when the constitutional wording required all office holders to be Christian.[24] An examination of Article 32 of the 1776 constitution, which

imposed the religious test, however, illuminates the contours of the debates.

Five months after the Declaration of Independence, North Carolina adopted a state constitution. Article 32 of the new constitution imposed a religious test:

> That no person, who shall deny the being of God or the truth of the Protestant religion, or the divine authority either of the Old or New Testaments, or who shall hold religious principles incompatible with the freedom and safety of the State, shall be capable of holding any office or place of trust or profit in the civil department within this State.[25]

The debate over the 1776 Constitution was not recorded, but evidence suggests the controversial nature of the inclusion of the religious test.[26] Samuel Johnston, who served as the sixth governor of North Carolina and opposed the religious test, complained in a 1776 letter that his return home had been delayed because "one of the members from the back country" had suggested a religious test. The test "was carried after a warm debate," Johnston wrote, "and has blown up such a flame, that everything is in danger of being thrown into confusion."[27]

There is no evidence that North Carolina ever enforced Article 32. Article 31, by contrast, which prohibited a "clergyman, or preacher of the gospels," from holding office "while he continues in the exercise of the pastoral function," resulted in three expulsions from the legislature, two in 1801 and one in 1820.[28] North Carolina, along with several other states, excluded practicing clergy from political office. Proponents of this restriction variously argued that it kept church and state separate, prevented clergy from using their religious authority to influence their colleagues in the legislature, and preserved religious freedom.[29]

The Case of Jacob Henry Revisited: Jews and Catholics

The unsuccessful attempt to enforce Article 32 against Jacob Henry, a Jewish member of the North Carolina House of Commons, produced significant publicity. Henry first won election to the House of Commons in 1808. In 1809, after his reelection, Hugh Mills challenged Henry's right to hold office, claiming "that a certain Jacob Henry, a member of this house, denies the divine authority of the New Testament" and that "it is contrary to the freedom and independence of our happy and beloved

government, that any person should be allowed to have a seat in this Assembly . . . who is not constitutionally qualified for that purpose."[30] The legislature held a short inquiry into Henry's beliefs, and Henry gave a speech in his defense. William Gaston, a Catholic member of the House of Commons, also argued against expelling Henry. On December 7, 1809, a North Carolina newspaper reported, "The allegations were disproved and the resolution [to expel Henry] unanimously rejected."[31]

Henry's speech found lasting acclaim. The second edition of *The American Speaker*, published in 1814 and advertising itself as a schoolbook with the dual goals of teaching oratory through example and furthering youths' patriotic love of country, included, alongside speeches by George Washington and three presidents' inaugural addresses, Henry's speech on the religious test.[32] In 1818, H. M. Brackenridge, arguing in the Maryland House of Delegates in favor of passing the "Jew Bill," which would allow Jews to hold office in Maryland, quoted from Henry's speech. "Mr. Henry" kept his seat, Brackenridge declared, "and it is part of our education, as Americans, to love and cherish the sentiments uttered by him on that occasion."[33]

Henry's speech is noteworthy for its circumspection about his beliefs. He defined the "religion I profess" as "inculcat[ing] every duty which man owes to his fellow men," "enjoin[ing] upon its votaries the practice of every virtue," and "teach[ing] them to hope for the favour of Heaven exactly in proportion as their lives are directed by just, honourable and beneficent maxims." Henry did not mention the Torah, the Talmud, or any belief or custom that differentiated Judaism from Christianity. Henry closed his speech with a quotation from the New Testament: "whatever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye so even unto them" (Matthew 7:12).[34]

In declining to enforce the religious test, legislators expressed a general opposition to it and personal respect for Henry. One of Henry's supporters in the legislature, denouncing the investigation into Henry's beliefs, declared that he would never "consent that this House shall become a Court of Inquisition." Henry's colleagues, it turned out, said little about his religion. One legislator claimed he had never seen Henry at a synagogue but had "seen him at meetings of Baptists and Methodists." The legislators did not know whether Henry ate pork. John Roberts, who

Last page of Jacob Henry's speech to the North Carolina House of Commons, 1809. General Assembly Session Records, November–December, 1809. (North Carolina Digital Collections, courtesy of the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.)

represented the same county as Henry, testified that he "knew nothing of [Henry's] religion," that Henry "was esteemed a good man and a moral citizen," and that while Henry's "step Father was a Jew, and he understood that Mr. H. was of that religion," he "did not recollect ever to have heard him say so."[35]

Henry was a wealthy landowner and an acculturated Jew. The 1810 census records him living in Beaufort, North Carolina, with twelve enslaved people. In 1812, he served as a captain in the North Carolina militia.[36] Henry built a stately Federal-style house soon after his arrival in North Carolina and sold it to his son in 1835.[37] During Henry's residence in North Carolina, no synagogue existed in the state, and there is no evidence of Henry's observance of Judaism. His 1847 funeral notice in a Charleston newspaper made no mention of Judaism but invited members of the Masonic fraternity to pay their respects. However, Jacob Henry's wife and mother were buried in the Charleston, South Carolina, Jewish cemetery, and Jacob was probably buried there as well.[38]

Gaston, befitting his training as a lawyer, gave an artful construction of Article 32 that would allow Henry to keep his seat. Gaston argued that Henry, as a legislator, was not an officer of the state, because a seat in

Jacob Henry House, Beaufort, NC, and historical marker. (Wikimedia Commons; North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.)

the legislature was not an office but was rather above offices. Therefore, Article 32 did not apply. Historians have tended to dismiss this argument as "talmudic" and "far-fetched."[39] Seth Barrett Tillman, however, criticizes this characterization and defends the legal plausibility of Gaston's argument. As Tillman points out, Gaston's arguments may have convinced the legislators, but they also may have declined to expel Henry for other reasons, or they may have acted with a mix of motivations.[40]

Gaston achieved considerable political prominence in North Carolina, Article 32 notwithstanding. Throughout the early nineteenth century, Gaston served in the state senate, House of Commons, and U.S. House of Representatives. He served as an associate justice of North Carolina's supreme court from 1833 to 1844. Before 1835, Article 32 explicitly invoked Protestantism, and Gaston was an avowed Catholic. Before joining the state supreme court, Gaston asked Governor David Lowry Swain, state supreme court justice Thomas Ruffin, and U.S. Supreme Court chief justice John Marshall whether they thought Article 32 barred him from serving as a justice. All three encouraged Gaston to accept the job.[41]

Gaston argued that Article 32 did not prevent him from becoming a judge and questioned the definability of *Protestant*. "Who shall judicially say what is 'the Protestant Religion' or what is it 'to deny its truth?'" Gaston asked. "The clause disqualifying those who deny the truth of the Protestant religion may have been intended to embrace Roman Catholics," he wrote, but "the clause in question is part of the written, and fundamental law of the land, and is therefore to be expounded by the well established rules of legal interpretation." Although Gaston professed himself a Catholic, judicially, he averred, it was impossible to consider him non-Protestant. Even if Catholics could not be Protestants in the eyes of the state, Gaston continued, Catholics did not "deny the truth of the Protestant Religion." "Protestants have separated from Catholics because, as they alledge Catholics have added to the Christian Code doctrines not revealed," he wrote. "But I know of no affirmative doctrine embraced by Protestants generally which is not religiously professed also by Catholics."[42] Whether the legislature accepted Gaston's reasoning or not, it expressed its belief in his eligibility by electing him to the state supreme court.[43]

William Gaston, 1834.
Engraving by
Asher Brown Durand.
(Metropolitan Museum of Art,
via Wikimedia Commons.)

By 1835, when delegates to the North Carolina constitutional convention debated whether to amend or abolish the religious test, both defenders and detractors claimed that it was no longer enforced. Weldon Nathaniel Edwards (opposed to the Protestant test) and James Strudwick Smith (in favor of keeping the Protestant test) both called it a "dead letter." According to one delegate, however, "public opinion has never considered [the test] *to be a dead letter*." Another delegate worried that "if, after all the discussion upon this matter, it is still retained, it will be a dead letter no longer."[44] No delegate claimed that the test had ever been enforced, and there is no record of its enforcement either before or after 1835.

Gaston advocated a complete end to the religious test, but the majority of delegates valued the test as a symbolic affirmation of state support for Christianity. One delegate explained why he supported an unenforced religious test: "The 32d section merely impresses the truths of Christianity with the seal of the constitution." "Should so solemn an instrument," he asked, "not contain a recognition of the Christian religion?" The convention did, however, broaden Article 32, replacing "Protestant" with "Christian," thereby extending formal equality to Catholics and presumably (although not explicitly mentioned in the *Proceedings and Debates of the Convention*) other non-Protestant Christians who otherwise met the requirements.[45]

An examination of court records fails to clarify Article 32. In 1860, the North Carolina Supreme Court upheld the validity of a contract conducted on a Sunday. One of the justices, dissenting from the decision, quoted Article 32: "Our governors and magistrates," he wrote, "must be christians, and it seems to me to be a necessary consequence that our government is a christian government."[46] Article 32 had an important symbolic value, but it is less clear whether it ever exerted force. Gaston may have been right when he denounced the test for having "brought down upon the Constitution of North Carolina, the double reproach of manifesting at once the *will* to persecute, and the *inability* to execute, its purpose."[47]

The Decline of Religious Tests in the American States

In the early republic, North Carolina enjoyed plentiful company in imposing a religious test for public office. According to Gerard V. Bradley, when delegates met at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in 1787, "every state (save perhaps Virginia) employed religious tests for office."[48] The exact accuracy of this assertion depends on how religious test is defined, although it remains true in broad strokes. Early constitutions in South Carolina, Georgia, Vermont, and New Hampshire explicitly limited office to Protestants.[49] New Jersey's constitution implicitly required office holders to be Protestant.[50] Maryland and Pennsylvania limited office to Christians.[51] Massachusetts explicitly limited eligibility to Christians and implicitly barred Catholics (and possibly members of the Church of England).[52] Delaware required office holders to be trinitarian Christians.[53] Connecticut did not have a religious test oath but provided disqualification for office as a punishment for blasphemy.[54] Rhode Island, like Connecticut, did not adopt a constitution after independence, but statutes limited office holding to Christians.[55]

In 1788, New York passed a law requiring all office holders to renounce foreign allegiance "in all matters ecclesiastical as well as civil," echoing the naturalization oath required by its 1777 constitution. The legislature reiterated the oath for office in 1801.[56] In 1805, Francis Cooper, a Catholic, won election to the New York legislature and refused to take the oath. New York Catholics presented a petition to the legislature objecting to the language in the 1777 constitution and the 1801 statute. In 1806, the state legislature passed the "Catholic Bill," removing the test, and Cooper

took his seat.[57] In Virginia, neither statute nor the state constitution limited office by religious faith, but Virginia criminalized blasphemy by statute and common law. In Bradley's words, "a professed [atheist], polytheist, or unorthodox Christian," elected to public office in Virginia, "would have had to serve from jail."[58]

Most religious tests withered quickly in the new republic. A spate of new state constitutions adopted after the federal constitution, including those of Georgia (1789), South Carolina (1790), Delaware (1792), Kentucky (1792), and Vermont (1793), had no religious tests. In 1790, Pennsylvania replaced its Christian-only test with a requirement to acknowledge "the being of a God and a future state of rewards and punishments."[59] By 1861, North Carolina and New Hampshire were the only states with religious tests that barred Jews from office. Religious tests requiring belief in God proved more durable. Eight state constitutions continue to bar atheists from office, but these tests have been rendered unenforceable since the Supreme Court declared them unconstitutional in 1961.[60]

The closest analogue to the 1861 debate in North Carolina about whether to allow Jews to hold office is the Maryland "Jew Bill." In 1826, after eight years of debate, the Maryland legislature changed the religious test, allowing Jews as well as Christians to hold office. This bill received extensive contemporaneous coverage in the press, and historians have given it significant attention. The Maryland Jew Bill and the 1861 amendment to the North Carolina constitution are unusual, however, since the debates over state religious tests did not usually focus specifically on the fitness of Jews for office.[61]

The only state to bar Jews from office longer than North Carolina was New Hampshire, but the rhetoric surrounding the New Hampshire test did not focus specifically on Jews. The New Hampshire religious test provided that only Protestants could serve in certain positions in state government. Like the North Carolina test, however, there is no evidence that New Hampshire enforced the restriction. Deists and Catholics openly served in positions the constitution appeared to disqualify them from occupying.[62] As in North Carolina, some questions arise about the legal meaning of *Protestant*. In one church property case, the majority of justices argued that Protestant meant non-Catholic Christian, and the dissenting justice argued that, legally, Protestant meant only non-Catholic, meaning that Jews, Deists, and atheists counted as

"Protestants."[63] Similarly, New Hampshirites contested the original motivation of the New Hampshire test. By one account, a combination of anti-Deism and anti-Catholicism motivated the creation of the test. Alternatively, anti-Catholicism may have been the test's sole cause and purpose.[64]

Table. When Jews Won the Formal Right to Office in the United States [65]

State	Year	Method of Change	Old religious qualification	New religious qualification
Ga.	1789	New Constitution	Protestant	None
S.C.	1790	New Constitution	Protestant	None
Penn.	1790	New Constitution	Christian	Theist (implied)
Del.	1792	New Constitution	Trinitarian Christian	None
Vt.	1793	New Constitution	Protestant	None
Mass.	1821	Constitutional Amendment	Christian (implicitly Protestant)	None
Md.	1826	Constitutional Amendment	Christian	Christian or Jew
R.I.	1798 or 1843 (disputed)	Statutory (1798); Constitution (1843)	Christian	None
N.J.	1844	New Constitution	Protestant (implied)	None
N.C.	1861	Constitutional Amendment	Christian	Christian or Jew
N.H.	1877	Constitutional Amendment	Protestant	None

The New Hampshire religious test controversy did not focus on Jews. The Jewish presence in New Hampshire was minimal.[66] Despite their small numbers, however, the *Jewish Messenger* reported that some Jews won elected office (although not to any of the statewide offices that were subject to the religious test). The *Occident* frequently complained

about the New Hampshire test, but New Hampshire newspapers that criticized the test often did not mention Jews at all.[67] The exclusion of Jews did not rise to a significant issue in New Hampshire as it had in Maryland and North Carolina.

The Passage of the 1861 Amendment and the Reasons for It: Race, Slavery, and Civil War

The religious test in North Carolina persisted as an object of controversy even after its 1835 wording included Catholics. Jewish aspirants to public office played an important role in contesting religious tests that excluded Jews. In 1858, Abram Weill presented a petition to the legislature "for the removal of the Jewish disability to hold office." Weill later served as a Charlotte alderman in 1865. Similarly, Solomon Etting and Jacob I. Cohen, Jr., who fought for the passage of the Jew Bill in Maryland, both won election to the Baltimore city council in 1826, the year of the law's passage.[68] Elite Jewish men stood to gain the most from amending religious tests to accommodate Jews, and they played important roles in the efforts to change the religious tests in Maryland and North Carolina.

Much had changed in North Carolina between 1809, when Jacob Henry kept his seat, and 1858, when Weill presented his petition. The 1835 constitutional convention not only expanded the definition of those who qualified to vote, it had also disenfranchised free Black male taxpayers who had previously possessed the right to vote. The property requirement to vote for state senators ended in 1857, although the property requirements to hold office lasted until 1868. By 1858, Black men had no political rights in North Carolina, whereas all White male taxpayers enjoyed the right to vote.[69] The possession of political rights had become deeply intertwined with racial politics, and the struggle to end the Jewish disability to hold office became enmeshed in the racial status of Jews in the South.

Before secession, efforts to amend North Carolina's religious test to include Jews met with failure. In 1858, John S. Dancy introduced a bill to "repeal such clauses of the Amended Constitution of North Carolina, as prohibits persons of the Jewish Israelitish faith from holding offices of profit or trust in the State." The chairman of the judiciary committee issued a report praising the bill that opened with the declaration: "The

Committee are of the opinion that the principle on which the bill is founded, is correct. No person should be proscribed or placed under any civil disabilities on account of religious faith." The religious test had been inserted into the constitution "when the principles of religious liberty were very imperfectly understood in North Carolina." The anti-Jewish clause, the chairman continued, is a relic of "an age of bigotry and intolerance" unfit to be associated with the high ideals of republican government and the Gospel.[70]

Despite its forceful rhetoric in favor of religious freedom, the committee recommended against the bill's passage. The committee report reasoned: "[I]t is highly inexpedient at this time to alter or amend the constitution by legislative enactment" and the "people of North Carolina seem to be satisfied with their government." Furthermore, the committee deemed it unwise "to produce discontent, when peace and happiness prevail."[71] A Baltimore paper praised the report's "sensible opinions" but condemned its opposition to the bill. The committee, the newspaper concluded, "must be composed of a set of decided 'old fogies.'" The *Jewish Messenger* published a premature celebration of the bill's passage but printed a correction when the text of the committee report came to the newspaper's attention and it learned of its error. The report, the newspaper noted, "is strangely inconsistent with itself."[72]

The failure of the 1858 bill did not deter supporters of Jewish rights. Over the summer of 1860, Jewish North Carolinians attempted to pressure legislative candidates to declare their support for Jewish political equality. North Carolina newspapers printed supportive declarations.[73] In February 1861, the *Israelite* declared success. Like the *Jewish Messenger* three years earlier, however, the celebration proved premature, and Isaac M. Wise's newspaper issued a retraction. Again, the bill never came to a direct vote.[74]

More pressing political concerns overtook the debate over Jewish political rights in North Carolina. The ad valorem tax provoked particular controversy. Changing the tax scheme for enslaved labor from the capitation tax (per head) to the ad valorem tax (according to property value) would raise taxes for slaveholders. Support for the proposed tax change came largely from small farmers in the western part of the state, less invested in slaveholding and more supportive of raising money to fund internal improvements. Eastern planters, more invested in slaveholding

and less supportive of government spending, strongly opposed the ad valorem tax, characterizing it as an attack on the institution of slavery.[75] According to the *Israelite*, the effort to end Jewish disabilities "was killed by its opponents putting amendments on it to alter the system of taxation in the state, and thereby defeated our bill." North Carolina papers shared the *Israelite*'s assessment, reporting that amendments in favor of the ad valorem tax had sunk the bill.[76]

Yet at least one opponent of the bill used anti-Jewish rhetoric to justify his support for the status quo. T. N. Crumpler, a western North Carolina legislator who supported the ad valorem tax, accused Jews of being consumers rather than producers. Both the Jewish and North Carolina press condemned the calumny. A Charlotte paper printed a response to Crumpler's remarks with the commendation that the writer, Samuel Cohen, was "a Jew, a gentleman and a good citizen." Cohen concluded his letter with a promise of Jewish loyalty to the South: "As law loving and abiding citizens of North Carolina," should the state "need the services of her sons in the present crisis, the Jews will not cry 'peace when there is no peace,' but will be found among those battling for her rights and institutions."[77]

Jews in and outside of North Carolina pressed for passage of the bill. Isaac Leeser, writing in the *Occident*, decried the failure of the 1858 bill: "[T]he people of North Carolina know that they have been unjust in their recent decision, and it is expected that they will seize the earliest opportunity to remedy the evil." "Mr. Samuel A. Cohen, of Charlotte," the *Jewish Messenger* reported, published an open letter to the candidates for the legislature, which he signed, "Several Israelites." In 1856, two years before the legislative efforts started, the *Israelite* had denounced the religious test in passionate and theological terms. "It is a holy duty, imposed upon all our brethren," Rabbi Max Lilienthal declared, "to efface on this soil of religious and civil liberty, the last stain of intolerance, imported in past times from illiberal Europe." The anti-Jewish clause in the North Carolina state constitution, he continued "is against the Constitution of the United States, and therefore illegal. We deem, that the attention of the legislature has but to be called to such an illegality, and that it will promptly be removed."[78] North Carolina did eventually change its religious test, but the effort took more time and effort than was predicted by Lilienthal's expectation of prompt removal.

The fight for Jewish rights received favorable coverage in North Carolina newspapers. "As Presbyterians and friends to civil and religious liberty," a group of North Carolinians wrote, "we regard the clause as odious and intolerant, and shall rejoice to see it expunged from our Constitution." In 1861, when the state amended the constitution, a Charlotte paper praised the development as "just and right." As was common for pro-Jewish newspaper sentiment in the Civil War–era South, the writer justified the support for Jewish rights by reminding the reader of "the spirit of patriotism and devotion exhibited throughout the South by the Hebrews."[79] Newspapers in North Carolina had long decried the disqualification of Jews as a bigoted violation of religious liberty, but by 1861 southern newspapers had another reason to favor Jewish rights: Jewish support for the Confederacy.

When the state convention met in 1861, it quickly made a series of momentous decisions. On May 20, the convention voted to secede from the United States. North Carolina was the next-to-last state to secede and did so only after the Fort Sumter bombardment and Lincoln's call for seventy-five thousand troops. Unionist sentiment in the state had

Journal of the Convention of the People of North Carolina, 1861. (Duke University Libraries, via Internet Archive.)

been strong; in February 1861, voters had initially rejected a secessionist convention in a public referendum. The contentious nature of the controversy over secession in North Carolina highlights the significance of Jewish support for the Confederate cause.

North Carolinians contested the limits of the state convention's power. In August 1861, the legislature attempted unsuccessfully to abolish the convention. The convention claimed the power to overrule the legislature and amend the constitution. Some in the legislature believed that the ordinances of the convention needed to be submitted to the people. The convention prevailed, however, meeting four times between May 20, 1861, and May 13, 1862.[80]

The state convention's amendment of the constitution without submitting any questions to public referendum generated allegations of illegitimacy, but these claims were not strong enough to prevent the convention's amendments from taking effect. The language and timing of the alteration is slightly confusing. Newspapers reported "passage" of the religious test ordinance on June 11 and "ratification" on December 6.[81] Likewise, the official *Journal of the Convention* shows that the amendment passed on June 11, and the official *Ordinances and Resolutions* records that the alteration to the religious test was "*Ratified the 6th day of December*, 1861." The text of the amendment was identical on both of these dates.[82] The convention ratified the ad valorem ordinance on June 25.[83]

On August 21, 1861, state senator Burgess Sidney Gaither argued that the ordinances of the convention were legitimate and binding, including both the ad valorem tax and the amendment to the religious test. Bedford Brown, however, contended that although the convention's passage of the ad valorem tax was legitimate, the adoption of the Confederate constitution was not. Referring "to the Jewish disability act," Gaither asked "if that was not in force?" Gaither apparently believed that the amendment had taken effect on June 11.[84] Gaither's view of the convention's powers prevailed over Brown's. The convention never submitted any questions to the people. Newspapers reported that the ordinance was "[r]ead three times and ratified in open Convention the sixth day of December, A.D., 1861," the same language used to report the ratification of other ordinances.[85] The state followed the convention's ordinances, and so the "Jewish disability act" had the same force as its other ordinances. Disagreement persisted, however, even among those in North

Carolina's government, as to the exact timing of the amendment to Article 32.

The delegates debated whether to amend the religious test to include Jews or whether to abolish the test completely. The former justice of the North Carolina supreme court, Thomas Ruffin, known for his uncompromising opinions in defense of slavery, championed Jewish rights in the 1861–62 convention. Ruffin introduced the amendment to change the religious test. On the motion of another delegate, the question was divided into two parts: first, to strike out the existing Christians-only religious test, and second, to replace it with a new religious test intended to include both Christians and Jews. The convention voted on the two elements separately. The vote to strike out the existing religious test passed 84 to 20. The vote to include a religious test that restricted office to those who did not reject the divinity of both the Old and New Testament passed 84 to 22. Another delegate proposed ending the religious test entirely. That motion failed 33 to 69. The convention then voted 96 to 9 to adopt Ruffin's proposal.[86]

The delegates argued that completely ending the religious test would harm the state. One delegate objected to the possibility of granting equality to "Mahomedans, Indians, China-men, Japanese and Hotentots."[87] Ruffin wanted Jews to be allowed to hold office, but he objected that the same right might apply also to "Turks, Pagans, [or] Coolies." A religious test must continue, Ruffin argued, because "all our laws are founded on the idea that we are a religious people," and the complete abrogation of the religious test "would have a tendency to weaken the sense of religious obligation among the people."[88]

For nineteenth-century Americans, religious and racial categories often blended together, as seen, for example, in the rhetoric around the physiognomic distinctiveness of the "Mormon race."[89] The 1861 delegates exhibited this tendency, mixing religious ("Mahomedans") and racial ("Hottentots") categories in their lists of hypothetical outrages that an end to the religious test might cause. The end of the religious test would not have changed the racial qualification. So nonwhite North Carolinian men could neither vote nor hold office, regardless of the fate of the religious test. The delegates' rhetoric, however, illustrates the interconnectedness of religion and race in the minds of nineteenth-century White North Carolinians. The proponents of eligibility for Jewish and Christian

Judge Thomas Ruffin in the 1860s. Photograph by Matthew Brady. (U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.)

men (but not men of other faiths) contrasted the racial and religious suitability of Jews with others whom they deemed religiously or racially unfit.

The text of Ruffin's amendment to the religious test did not mention Jews by name, but its avowed purpose was to allow Jews to hold office. Since 1835, the North Carolina Constitution had denied the right to hold office to any person who denied "the Christian religion" or "the divine authority either of the Old or New Testaments." In 1861, the state convention removed the reference to Christianity and reworded the reference to the Bible, so the test now barred any person who denied "the divine authority of both the Old and New Testaments." The "sole object of the amendment," a Greensboro newspaper explained, "was to remove the disqualification of Jews." Delegates objected to the total removal of "all religious tests as a qualification for office, so that" all men "would all be put on the same footing, and all equally entitled to hold civil office in this State." Responding to fears that the change in wording might allow men neither Jewish nor Christian to hold office, a delegate clarified that "the object of the proposed amendment is to apply only to the Jews."[90] A majority was willing to give Jews the same political rights as Christians, but no majority could be found to extend the same rights to other, less favored

religious groups. The proponents of the amended religious test made their intent unambiguous, the new test's stilted wording notwithstanding.

News of the convention's amendment to the religious test spread throughout the summer. On June 15, a member of the North Carolina government sent a letter to Mendes Cohen of Baltimore, the brother of Jacob I. Cohen, Jr., who had fought for the Maryland Jew Bill, informing him that Jewish disabilities in North Carolina had come to an end. Mendes Cohen wrote a letter relaying news of the state convention's ordinance amending the constitution on June 23. The *Occident* printed Cohen's letter on July 1, as did the *Israelite* on July 12.[91] The passage of the Maryland Jew Bill in 1826 had turned the attention of the North Carolina papers to their own state's religious test. "Since the passage of the Jew Bill in Maryland," the *Carolina Observer* reported, "it has been discovered that the Constitution of this State is more in want of amendment than that of Maryland, one of its provisions going so far as to exclude Atheists, Jews, and Catholics, from a participation in the common rights of citizens." The *Raleigh Register* regretted that North Carolina appeared "more intolerant even than" Maryland, but expressed optimism that the religious test "will no doubt be expunged whenever an opportunity occurs for so doing."[92] For thirty-five years, however, North Carolina had done nothing to remove Jewish disabilities.

What had changed between the *Israelite*'s premature declaration of Jewish political equality on February 1, 1861, and its reporting of constitutional change just five months later?[93] Christian support for Jewish rights was wider than it was deep. North Carolina newspapers expressed their support of Jewish equality, but not as their first priority. Jews lobbied for change, but the Jewish community in North Carolina was quite small. In 1860, there was no Jewish congregation, and, according to one historian, only 210 Jews resided in the state.[94] Political controversies like the fight over the ad valorem tax delayed action on the political rights of the state's few Jews.

The state's secession on May 20 acted as another important development. Before secession, proponents of Jewish rights appealed to the ideal of religious liberty. After secession, increasingly, southerners sympathetic to Jewish interests cited Jewish support for the Confederate cause as a reason for their political inclusion. Article 6, section 4 of the Constitution of the Confederate States of America copied the no religious test clause of

the U.S. Constitution verbatim (with the substitution of "Confederate" for "United"): "no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the Confederate States." The Confederate States of America had adopted this constitution on March 11, 1861, and the North Carolina state convention voted to "adopt and ratify" the Confederate Constitution on June 19, 1861. Thus, the Confederate endorsement of the no religious test clause also may have influenced the state convention.[95]

North Carolina newspapers emphasized the fealty of southern Jews to the Confederacy. One North Carolina newspaper reprinted a "Religious Notice.—To the Soldiers of the Hebrew Faith of the Confederate States." "This is to remind you," the notice informed the paper's readers, "that the 5th and 6th of September will be the day of Memorial (Roshhashonoh, 5622 [1861],) and the 14th the day of Atonement (Yome Kepoor)." Praise of southern Jewish loyalty prefaced the notice: "No class of our citizens have responded more liberally to the treasury and army of the Confederacy than the Southern Jews."[96] The newspaper used the political loyalty of southern Jews to justify respect for Jewish religious traditions.

Wilmington Journal, *September 5, 1861.*
(Newspapers.com.)

In the state convention, delegates in favor of expanding the right to hold office to Jews cited Jewish support for the Confederacy and slavery. The Jews "ought to be let in," argued delegate W. F. Leak, because "they believe in the true God"; "they hold to future rewards and punishments"; and "their history proves that they have always been found fighting on the side of their adopted country." The delegate found the shared theological history of Judaism and Christianity important because he "never [could] consent that the God of the Bible shall be ignored." Concern long existed that without a belief in a future state of rewards and punishment officeholders could not be trusted to honor oaths, and the delegate worried, "[How] can you *bind* a man to the discharge of any obligation who feels none?" The delegate also attached great significance to the political leanings of Jews, praising their "commendable" support for the Confederacy.[97]

Supporters of amending the religious test defended Jews as economically productive and economically important to the Confederacy. In a North Carolina newspaper, Samuel Cohen responded to Crumpler's claim that Jews were consumers and not producers, that if Crumpler examined "the taxbooks in the counties where Jews reside" he would discover that they "produce their share of the State Revenue." In 1862, a Raleigh newspaper reported that the "Jewish citizens of Wilmington, now in Charlotte" raised "over eleven hundred dollars" for "the sick and suffering poor of Wilmington." The newspaper exclaimed, "Would to God that more of our men were Jews of that sort." In May 1861, a Wilmington paper similarly praised Jews for their political and financial support: "The jews in this State, have in this emergency shown themselves just as willing to contribute their services and their means as any other religionists." A delegate to the 1861 convention who supported amending the religious test pointed to Jewish financial support to the Confederacy "in this our country's greatest need." He cited "Mr. [Moses Cohen] Mordecai, of South Carolina, a Jew," who "has been the largest contributor to the Confederate Treasury of any private gentleman."[98]

By 1861, Whiteness was a prerequisite for political inclusion in the South, but the racial position of Jews in the antebellum South was complicated. On the one hand, Jews were considered racially distinct from the White Christian majority. On the other hand, White southerners did not treat Jews as Black either socially or legally before the Civil War.[99] Unlike

many Irish and Italians, southern Jews did not tend to engage in ditch digging, domestic service, or other occupations that White southerners associated with Blacks. According to Mark Greenberg, since southern Jews "clustered in commercial ventures and purchased blacks rather than toiling as manual laborers, their 'whiteness' was rarely questioned, and they faced relatively less social ostracism than other immigrant groups."[100] Some historians argue that southern antisemitism was more economic and religious than racial, and White southerners did not seriously question the Whiteness of Jews during the antebellum period.[101]

Jewish Americans have used a number of words to describe themselves, *race* among them. Jews often referred to themselves as members of the Jewish faith, emphasizing Judaism's religious element. Using the language of race ran the risk of undermining Jews' claim to Whiteness and their belonging in America. Some Reform rabbis explicitly disclaimed any racial element to Judaism. Other more traditionalist Jews explicitly affirmed racial pride in Jewishness. Many Jews in the North and South expressed unease with a universalistic Judaism that denied the importance of blood and welcomed intermarriage at a time between the early national period and Civil War during which intermarriage was widespread. Christians and Jews both defined Jews as a separate race with specific racial characteristics into the twentieth century. In the antebellum American South, Jews were perceived to constitute a distinct race, even as most non-Jewish southern Whites counted them among the White majority.[102]

North Carolina newspapers covered the debates among the prominent antebellum racial theorists.[103] Jews figured prominently in environmental and biblical theories of racial difference. According to a North Carolina writer committed to the environmental theory, "In the northern countries of Europe [Jews] are white; in Germany many of them have red beards; in Portugal they are tawny . . . but no change has occurred in their cast of feature, habits, or ideas." Another North Carolina newspaper article used the Bible to dispel the environmental and multiple genesis theories. Shem, who "must have been a red man," the article claimed, "was the father of the Jewish race, who are of the same hue, varying it is true, some being of a darker, and some of a lighter shade," a fact partly explained from Jews' "amalgamation by marriage with white, and with the darker nations, as the African." The author used this theory of racial

difference to justify American slavery: "Noah declared, Ham, with his posterity, should serve or become servants to both the posterity of Shem and Japheth," and "the African race" are "the descendants of Ham."[104] These authors defined Jews as racially distinct from the White majority, but also racially distinct from the Black minority. As slavery became an increasingly important national political controversy throughout the antebellum period and political rights became ever more closely tied to whiteness in North Carolina, the non-Blackness of Jews proved a vital prerequisite for their inclusion in state politics.

North-Carolinian,
August 21, 1841.
(Library of Congress.)

Jews did not receive rights and acceptance only in slave societies, but anti-Black racism often eased the acceptance of Jews into White society. In France, on the one hand, Jews gained equal rights as a result of the egalitarian spirit of the French Revolution.[105] In Jamaica, on the other hand, Jews gained equal rights in the context of slavery and anti-Black racism. The White Christian elite of Jamaica evinced hostility to both Jews and Blacks, but, in the early nineteenth century, Jamaica's government granted legal equality to Jews to forestall what it saw as the "greater danger": Black equality. The Jamaican Jews, as Samuel and Edith Hurwitz write, "shared

the values and prejudices of the dominant elements in Jamaican society. Thus, in an effort to present a 'united front,' the White Christians of Jamaica sought [after decades of resistance] to grant the Jews full rights." In 1833, two years after Jews gained full rights in Jamaica, Britain abolished slavery throughout its empire.[106] Both Jamaica and North Carolina sought to remove anti-Jewish political restrictions when race-based slavery was threatened, suggesting that the specter of Black freedom caused White Christians in both places to expand Jewish political rights in order to cement White solidarity.

North Carolina newspapers praised Jews for supporting slavery. "It is a singular fact," one North Carolina newspaper declared in 1861, "that the most masterly expositions which have lately been made of the constitutional and the religious argument for slavery are from gentlemen of the Hebrew faith," singling out Senator Judah Benjamin of Louisiana and Rabbi Jacob Morris Raphall of New York. Another North Carolina newspaper reprinted an article that not only claimed southern Jewish support for the Confederacy but also that Jews "residing without the Confederate States are with us to a man." Jewish support for the Confederacy, the article averred, had caused the "Jews of Chatham-street, New York, and of Harrison-street, Baltimore, [to be put] under the surveillance of the Federal detectives."[107]

Although few Jews participated in the abolition movement, Jewish support for slavery was far from universal. On the eve of the Civil War, Baltimore had three rabbis, an abolitionist, a moderate, and a defender of slavery.[108] A few rabbis, mostly Reform rabbis in the North including Liebman Adler (Detroit then Chicago), David Einhorn (Baltimore then Philadelphia), and Bernard Felsenthal (Chicago), spoke out against slavery. Most northern Jews, however, "maintained a discreet silence on the subject." In the South, Jews expressed support for slavery. Morris Raphall, a prominent Orthodox rabbi in New York, famously endorsed southern Christian arguments that the Hebrew Bible provided support for slavery.[109]

North Carolinians praised Raphall for his defense of slavery. An 1860 article in a Wilmington paper reported that Raphall was an "affable," "pleasant," and "learned" man who believed the only people who did not believe in the "lawfulness of slavery" were "persons who have not been religiously educated." According to a delegate to the 1861

Rabbi Morris J. Raphall, c. 1850.
Lithograph by Philip Haas.
(Library of Congress.)

convention who supported amending the religious test, Raphall wrote "the best defence of slavery on scriptural grounds that has come under my observation." Raphall fits less neatly as a Confederate sympathizer than these North Carolina newspapers suggested. Although Raphall offered a controversial biblical defense of slavery, he criticized American slavery for failing to live up to the biblical standard and remained a Unionist throughout the Civil War.[110]

Antisemitism and Philosemitism

Equivocal and hostile views of Jews sometimes found expression in the antebellum North Carolina press. An 1839 article in the *Newbern Spectator* expressed the belief that Jewish suffering was punishment from God: "That the Jews should be degraded and despised is part of their chastisement, and fulfillment of prophecy." The author expressed hope that "the dawn of a better day" would save the suffering Jews, "which raising them alike from neology and rabbinism, shall set them at large in the glorious liberty of the Gospel."[111] Antebellum southern anti-Jewish prejudice marked Jews as "other," but it neither prevented Jews from finding

success in southern society nor did it prevent them from enjoying the legal and economic benefits of whiteness.

The Civil War inflamed antisemitism throughout the country. The rhetoric towards Jews in the North Carolina press hardened. North Carolina newspapers accused Jews of being dishonest speculators. "The Jews," a Wadesboro paper pronounced in 1862, are "a speculating race, since their traffic in the blood of Christ." In 1863, a Raleigh paper differentiated between "respectable merchants, whether they be Jews or Gentiles" and "those swarms of Jewish traders, who employ under-ground railroads to carry on their work of extortion upon the people."[112] This anti-Jewish turn, however, largely postdates the change in the religious test.

The 1861 amendment to the constitution did not settle the racial status of Jews or their fitness for citizenship in North Carolina. Zebulon Vance, who served as governor of North Carolina during the Civil War, delivered a celebrated philosemitic speech, "The Scattered Nation," throughout the country after the Civil War. The exact date of authorship

Zebulon Baird Vance, c. 1870. Photograph by Matthew Brady. (Library of Congress.)

is not known, but Vance likely wrote the speech between 1868 and 1873. In 1874, North Carolina newspapers proudly reported that Vance, "that gifted son of our State," delivered his "beautiful lecture on the Jewish people" to an audience in Baltimore. Vance's motivation to defend the Jewish people, historian Leonard Dinnerstein argues, was "the hostility he observed toward Jews in North Carolina and elsewhere." In the speech, Vance noted, "There are objections to the Jew as a citizen; many objections; some true and some false, some serious and some trivial." Like the delegates to the 1861 convention, Vance partially justified his respect for Jews with anti-Black racism. "In the negro," Vance claimed, "the trunk constitutes 32 per cent. of the height of the whole body, in the European 34 per cent., in the Jew 36 per cent."[113] For Vance, as for other racial theorists, Jews were racially distinct from Europeans. In Vance's philosemitic speech, however, Jews were further removed from Blacks than they were from other Europeans. By the time Vance gave his speech, the North Carolina constitution granted full political rights to all men who believed in God, Black and White, Jewish and Christian. Reconstruction constitutions, however, as the long history of Jim Crow amply demonstrates, did not provide lasting solutions to the problems of prejudice and inequality in the South.

Postwar Constitutional Change and the Right to Hold Office during Reconstruction

The overwhelming concerns of the 1861 state convention had been connected to slavery, the ad valorem tax, secession, and the new Confederate state. These issues colored the debate over Jewish political rights. Southern politicians praised Jews for their financial contributions to the Confederacy, support for slavery, and willingness to take up arms for the southern cause. Antiblack racism, slavery, and Jewish acceptance of these facets of antebellum southern life allowed southern Jews to achieve a certain measure of cultural acceptance and inclusion.

The defeat of the Confederacy forced changes in North Carolina's government. President Andrew Johnson appointed a provisional governor for North Carolina on May 29, 1865. In October 1865 and May–June 1866, a constitutional convention met in North Carolina to draft a new constitution as a condition for the state to rejoin the Union. Voters for this

convention had to have been eligible to vote under state laws as they existed before May 20, 1861, thus preventing Black men from voting. In October 1865, the convention voted to nullify the ordinance of secession, abolish slavery, and repudiate Confederate debt. The proposed constitution carried over the wording of the religious test from 1861, excluding anyone who denied "the divine authority of both the Old and New Testaments."[114] This wording provoked the ire of the Jewish press.

Jewish newspapers vocally protested the perceived attempt to bar Jews from holding office. The Board of Delegates of American Israelites, the first attempt at a national Jewish organization, called into existence in 1859 in reaction to uncoordinated American Jewish responses to the Mortara case, published an appeal in the North Carolina papers to reject the proposed constitution because of its religious test.[115] The *Jewish Messenger*, the *Occident*, and the *Israelite* published articles critical of the proposed constitution. All three correctly quoted the language of the religious test, and all three interpreted it as excluding Jews. The reaction of the Jewish press to the proposed constitution is somewhat puzzling. In 1861, the *Israelite* and the *Occident* had celebrated the very same language that they decried in 1866. "When we heard," the *Occident* reported in 1866, that North Carolina planned to revise its constitution "to alter it in compliance with the views of the President of the United States, we at once dreaded that the concessions made to Israelites in the Convention which voted the State from the Union, would be stricken out from the new fundamental law."[116] These two periodicals apparently accepted the intent and interpretation of the 1861 convention delegates regardless of the wording the convention employed. As they hoped, the proposed constitution did not alter the "the concessions made to Israelites" in 1861 since the 1861 and 1866 terminology were entirely identical.

The North Carolina press tried to reassure concerned Jews that the 1866 religious test would do no harm. Replying to the board of delegates, a Raleigh paper assured its "Jewish friends" that the proposed constitution would have the exact same religious test as already existed. Other North Carolina papers printed similar articles, noting that the state had changed its religious test in 1861 to include Jews and the same wording was to be carried over into the 1866 constitution. One Wilmington paper expressed puzzlement at "how strangely" the board of delegates had "misapprehended the purpose and meaning" of

the 1861 amendment. The paper offered a grammatical explanation of how the word *both* operated in the test: "There must be a denial of the divine authority, not only of the *New*, but also of the *Old* Testament, not of *one*, but of *both*, to disenfranchise." A Raleigh newspaper, in a similar vein, wrote, "the Board of Delegates are laboring under a misapprehension." The object of the 1861 amendment "was clearly to remove the unjust proscription imposed upon Jews, while, at the same time, carefully guarding against allowing deists, atheists or infidels to hold office or places of trust and profit." The paper adduced further evidence of the 1861 test's meaning: "[S]ince 1861, we know of instances having occurred in which persons of Jewish persuasion have been appointed to, and have discharged duties of, the office of Justice of the Peace."[117]

Voters rejected the 1866 proposed constitution, although for reasons unrelated to the religious test. The proposal, while forbidding slavery, would have essentially preserved the antebellum political order, largely reproducing the 1776 Constitution as amended in 1835 (and retaining the 1861 amendment to the religious test). Black men would have regained the franchise, a right they had held before 1835, but political apportionment would be based on the White population. The proposed constitution also retained property qualifications for office holding. The Civil War had transformed political expectations in North Carolina, and the voters rejected the proposed constitution.[118]

The Jewish press celebrated the constitution's rejection. The *Israelite* expressed its satisfaction: "The State's honor is redeemed, and its fanatics and bigots are humbled and humiliated." The *Occident*, while noting that the result probably had very little to do with North Carolinians' feelings

American Israelite, *Sept 28, 1866. (Newspapers.com.)*

about religious freedom, took similar pleasure in the proposed constitution's failure.[119] The explanations in the North Carolina papers that the proposed 1866 constitution posed no threat to Jews either did not reach or did not convince the writers of the Jewish press.

After the defeat of the proposed constitution in 1866 and Congress's passage of the Reconstruction Acts in 1867 and 1868, delegates met at a new convention from January 14 to March 17, 1868. The Reconstruction Acts divided the former Confederate states (except Tennessee) into five military districts. The states could be readmitted to the Union and their representatives and senators seated in Congress only after the states ratified the Fourteenth Amendment and adopted new constitutions. Adult men, regardless of race, needed to qualify to vote for the delegates to the convention, and the resulting constitution had to provide universal adult male suffrage (except those disenfranchised for felony or rebellion). Men who could not take an oath of past and future loyalty to the Union (the "Ironclad Oath") also could not vote.[120] Of the 120 delegates at the 1868 North Carolina convention, 107 were Republicans, including 13 Black delegates.[121] North Carolina's new constitution marked a significant departure from the antebellum political order. Conservatives divided between those who advocated limiting the franchise to White men and those who were willing to accept some Black male voters, but only with a property requirement limiting the franchise. A coalition of Black and poor White men voted to ratify the new constitution, overcoming conservative opposition and enacting universal manhood suffrage.[122] In the 1868 constitution, neither race nor poverty restricted the franchise.

The 1868 constitution also changed the religious test. To hold public office in the state, a man now only needed to profess belief in "Almighty God." This religious test clearly allowed Jews to hold office. The 1861 amendment failed to help North Carolinians who accepted neither the Old nor New Testament, and the language of Article 32, forbidding those who "hold religious principles incompatible with the freedom and safety of the State" from holding office may have excluded Christian pacifists.[123] The 1868 constitution, therefore, may have extended the formal right to office to Quakers, Moravians, and Deists for the first time.[124] It remained possible that some of the people disparagingly referenced in the 1861 debate over the religious test, "China-men, Japanese," may have been excluded

as "godless" even after 1868. Regardless of these possibilities, the implications of the new wording received no discussion.[125]

Conclusion

During Congressional Reconstruction, the national government forced the former Confederate states to write new state constitutions. North Carolina's new constitution's inclusion of a religious test was unusual but not unique among these postwar state constitutions. Eight former Confederate states including North Carolina adopted new constitutions in 1868, Texas followed in 1869, and Tennessee and Virginia did so in 1870. Of these eleven constitutions, nine had no religious test, whereas North Carolina and Tennessee required a belief in God. No significant changes further eroded religious tests for office in the United States (except New Hampshire's abolition of its Protestant-only test in 1877) after the Civil War until 1961, when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that states could not bar atheists from holding office.[126]

Although North Carolinians long considered the religious test a "dead letter," it proved a long-lasting source of controversy. The religious test provided a terrain for controversies over the bounds of citizenship, as only certain North Carolinians were guaranteed full participation in the state's political life. Between independence and secession, North Carolina expanded political equality for White Christian men, ending the formal exclusion of Catholics from office in 1835 and the property requirement to vote for the state senate in 1857. At the same time as the state loosened religious requirements, it hardened racial lines, disenfranchising free Black men in 1835.[127] In 1861, as the country descended into civil war, North Carolina contested whether Jews deserved the full measure of political inclusion. The fitness of Jews for citizenship did not receive a final answer in 1861, and it remained a live question even after the Civil War. During the Civil War and Reconstruction, the position of Black Americans dominated political debate. The controversy over Jewish office holding in North Carolina was coterminous and connected. In secession, war, and Reconstruction, Americans questioned and contested the fundamental structure of the nation. The story of Jewish political rights in North Carolina is inseparable from these struggles over the meanings of race, democracy, and citizenship in America.

NOTES

I would like to thank Mark Bauman, Leonard Rogoff, Sarah Pearsall, Seth Barrett Tillman, and an anonymous peer reviewer for their helpful comments and suggestions.

[1] *Ordinances and Resolutions Passed by the State Convention of North Carolina. First Session in May and June, 1861* (Raleigh, NC, 1862), 3.

[2] The convention's publications provide June 11, 1861, as the date of the "passage" of the amendment to the constitution and December 6, 1861, as the date when the amendment to the constitution was "ratified." The convention acted on its own authority and did not submit the amendment to the public. *Journal of the Convention of North Carolina Held on the 20th Day of May, A. D., 1861* (Raleigh, NC, 1862), 93; *Ordinances and Resolutions*, 56. Newspapers also reported that the amendment passed on June 11 and was ratified on December 6. "North Carolina State Convention," *Fayetteville (NC) Observer*, June 17, 1861; "Proceedings of the North Carolina State Convention," *Daily Journal* (Wilmington, NC), June 18, 1861; *Semi-Weekly Raleigh (NC) Register*, December 25, 1861; *Weekly Standard* (Raleigh, NC), December 25, 1861.

[3] See, for example, *Greensborough (NC) Patriot*, June 14, 1861.

[4] "Loyalty of the Jews," *Western Democrat* (Charlotte, NC), October 1, 1861.

[5] Anton Hieke, *Jewish Identity in the Reconstruction South: Ambivalence and Adaptation* (Berlin, Germany, 2013), 164–200.

[6] North Carolina Constitution of 1776, art. XXXII (amended 1835).

[7] *Ordinances and Resolutions*, 56.

[8] I use *Old Testament* here and elsewhere instead of *Jewish* or *Hebrew Bible* because that is how the Christian delegates and newspaper writers referred to it.

[9] See, for example, Morton Borden, *Jews, Turks, and Infidels* (Chapel Hill, 1984), 46; Leonard Rogoff, *Down Home: Jewish Life in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill, 2010), 71; Hieke, *Jewish Identity in the Reconstruction South*, 177–78.

[10] *Greensborough Patriot*, June 14, 1861; "North-Carolina State Convention," *Weekly Standard*, June 5, 1861; *Journal of the Convention … 1861*, 92; *Semi-Weekly Standard*, June 15, 1861; *Greensborough Patriot*, June 14, 1861; "North-Carolina State Convention," *Semi-Weekly Standard*, June 5, 1861.

[11] Samuel A'Court Ashe, *History of North Carolina* (Raleigh, NC, 1925), 2:625; Gary R. Govert, "Something There Is That Doesn't Love a Wall: Reflections on the History of North Carolina's Religious Test for Public Office," *North Carolina Law Review* 64 (1986): 1086; William S. Powell, *North Carolina Through Four Centuries* (Chapel Hill, 1989), 348; John V. Orth, "North Carolina Constitutional History," *North Carolina Law Review* 70 (1992): 1775. Paul E. Herron claims that the 1861 convention "eliminated the religious test for office." Paul E. Herron, *Framing the Solid South: The State Constitutional Conventions of Secession, Reconstruction, and Redemption, 1861–1902* (Lawrence, KS, 2017), 89.

[12] "North Carolina," *Occident and American Jewish Advocate* (Philadelphia) 24 (September 1866): 281–82; *American Israelite* (Cincinnati), July 20, 1866; *Jewish Messenger* (New York), July 27, 1866.

[13] *Israelite*, July 20, 1866.

[14] Stanley F. Chyet, "The Political Rights of the Jews in the United States: 1776–1840," *American Jewish Archives* 10 (1958): 49; Henry L. Feingold, *Zion in America: The Jewish Experience from Colonial Times to the Present* (New York, revised edition, 1981), 30; Samuel Rabinove, "How—and Why—American Jews Have Contended for Religious Freedom: The Requirements and Limits of Civility," *Journal of Law and Religion* 8 (1990): 137–38; Hieke, *Jewish Identity in the Reconstruction South*, 177–78; Seth Barrett Tillman, "A Religious Test in America?: The 1809 Motion to Vacate Jacob Henry's North Carolina State Legislative Seat—A Re-Evaluation of the Primary Sources," *North Carolina Historical Review* 98 (January 2021): 2n5.

[15] Borden, *Jews, Turks, and Infidels*, 46; Rogoff, *Down Home*, 71.

[16] Leon Hühner, "The Struggle for Religious Liberty in North Carolina, with Special Reference to the Jews," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 16 (1907): 65–66; Peter Wiernik, *History of the Jews in America: From the Period of the Discovery of the New World to the Present Time* (New York, 1912), 120–21; Borden, *Jews, Turks, and Infidels*.

[17] Leonard Rogoff has suggested that another possible explanation is that when the South lost the Civil War, the national government voided the Confederate state constitutions. Thus in 1866 the changes from 1861 were no longer in effect. Nonetheless, I have been unable to locate any evidence that the change to the religious test had been voided. The ordinance of secession was held null and void by the first ordinance of the Convention of 1865 (as confirmed by an 1867 case, *State v. Bell*), but a June 1866 case cites the pre–Civil War state constitution as governing authority (*Gardner v. Hall*). *State v. Bell*, 61 N.C. 76, 89 (1867) (per curiam); *Gardner v. Hall*, 61 N.C. 21, 22-24 (1866) (per curiam).

[18] Hieke, *Jewish Identity in the Reconstruction South*, 177.

[19] Rabinove, "How—and Why," 138. Rabinove dates 1868 as the end of the "Protestant oath," but the test had expanded to include Catholics in 1835.

[20] North Carolina Constitution of 1776, art. XXXII.

[21] Tillman, "A Religious Test in America?" 1–16.

[22] Maryland Constitution of 1776, art. XXXVII.

[23] According to Eric Goldstein and Deborah Weiner, the Maryland religious test had little practical effect except preventing "two wealthy, influential Jewish businessmen," Solomon Etting and Jacob I. Cohen, Jr., from serving on the Baltimore city council, but the supporters of the Jew Bill "found it expedient to downplay the de facto civic acceptance" of Maryland's Jews. According to Edward Eitches, however, the test "prevented Jews from becoming lawyers and commissioned officers in the state militia." Eric L. Goldstein and Deborah R. Weiner, *On Middle Ground: A History of the Jews of Baltimore* (Baltimore, 2018), 46–49; Edward Eitches, "Maryland's 'Jew Bill,'" *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 60 (March 1971): 258.

[24] Leonard Rogoff, "A Tale of Two Cities: Race, Riots, and Religion in New Bern and Wilmington, North Carolina, 1898," *Southern Jewish History* 14 (2011): 41; "North Carolina

and the Jews," *Daily Sentinel* (Raleigh, NC), July 30, 1866. On Weill and Rosenthal before, during, and after the war see Rogoff, *Down Home*, 80, 82, 88, 89, 93, 94, 97, 130, 188. Grausman refused to own enslaved people and hired free Black employees. Rogoff, *Down Home*, 62.

[25] North Carolina Constitution of 1776, art. XXXII. According to William S. Powell, the purpose of the phrase "religious principles incompatible with the freedom and safety of the State," was to exclude "religious bodies as Quakers, Moravians, and others who refused to bear arms in times of war." Powell, *North Carolina Through Four Centuries*, 273. I thank Seth Barrett Tillman for this and another citation.

[26] Govert, "Something There Is That Doesn't Love a Wall," 1076–79. According to John V. Orth, Article 32, in its 1776 formulation, "was aimed at (respectively) atheists, Roman Catholics, Jews, and Christian pacifists like Quakers and Moravians." Orth, "North Carolina Constitutional History," 1764.

[27] Griffith J. McRee, *Life and Correspondence of James Iredell, One of the Associate Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States* (New York, 1857), 1:339. "Tradition" identifies the "back country" supporter of the religious test as David Caldwell, a Presbyterian minister. As Stephen Weeks notes, however, "this assertion has never been proven." Gary Freeze, "Like A House Built Upon Sand: The Anglican Church and Establishment in North Carolina, 1765–1776," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 48 (December 1979): 429; Stephen B. Weeks, "David Caldwell," in Samuel A. Ashe, ed., *Biographical History of North Carolina from Colonial Times to the Present* (Greensboro, NC, 1905), 1:206, 209.

[28] North Carolina Constitution of 1776, art. XXXI; Powell, *North Carolina Through Four Centuries*, 273.

[29] John Witte, "Facts and Fictions about the History of Separation of Church and State," *Journal of Church and State* 48 (2006): 30–31; Govert, "Something There Is That Doesn't Love a Wall," 1079; Delaware Constitution of 1776, art. XXIX; Maryland Constitution of 1776, art. XXXVII; New York Constitution of 1777, arts. XXXVIII–XXXIX; South Carolina Constitution of 1778, art. XXI; Tennessee Constitution of 1796, art. VIII, sect. 1.

[30] "House Resolution to Vacate the Seat of Jacob Henry," General Assembly Session Records, box 2, folder 16, North Carolina Digital Collections, accessed January 25, 2021, https://digital.ncdcr.gov/digital/collection/p16062coll36/id/101617.

[31] *Star* (Raleigh, NC), December 7, 1809. According to Seth Barrett Tillman, the newspaper's conclusion that the vote was unanimous "is not entirely unreasonable, but it is certainly not sound." Tillman, "A Religious Test in America?" 30.

[32] *The American Speaker: A Selection of Popular, Parliamentary and Forensic Eloquence* (Philadelphia, 1814), iii–vii, 279–82.

[33] *Speeches on the Jew Bill in the House of Delegates of Maryland* (Philadelphia, 1829), 91.

[34] "State Legislature," *Star*, December 14, 1809. Henry's speech can be found in the General Assembly Session Records, box 2, folder 16, North Carolina Digital Collections, accessed January 25, 2021, https://digital.ncdcr.gov/digital/collection/p16062coll36/id/101619.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Rogoff, *Down Home*, 43; Third Census of the United States, 1850, Carteret County, North Carolina; "Pay Voucher: Jacob Henry," North Carolina Digital Collections, accessed January 25, 2021, https://digital.ncdcr.gov/digital/collection/p16062coll7/id/5607.

[37] The house still stands in Beaufort as a registered historic place. "Jacob Henry House," *National Register of Historic Places – Nomination and Inventory*, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, accessed January 25, 2021, https://files.nc.gov/ncdcr/nr/CR0005.pdf.

[38] Rogoff, *Down Home*, 43, 94; "State Legislature," *Star*, January 4, 1810; *Charleston (SC) Courier*, October 14, 1847; Alice R. Cotten, "Henry, Jacob," in *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, ed. William Stevens Powell (Chapel Hill, 1988), 3:114.

[39] "State Legislature," *Star*, December 28, 1809; Hühner, "The Struggle for Religious Liberty," 52; Govert, "Something There is That Doesn't Love a Wall," 1080; John V. Orth, "Fundamental Principles in North Carolina Constitutional History," *North Carolina Law Review* 69 (1991): 1360.

[40] Tillman, "Religious Test in America?," 12–26.

[41] Charles H. Bowman, Jr., "Gaston, William," in Powell, *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography,* 2:283–85; Joseph Herman Schauinger, "William Gaston: Southern Statesman," *North Carolina Historical Review* 18 (April 1941): 123–24; Govert, "Something There is That Doesn't Love a Wall," 181–82. For highly sympathetic accounts of Gaston's jurisprudence on the North Carolina Supreme Court, see Barbara A. Jackson, "Called to Duty: Justice William J. Gaston," *North Carolina Law Review* 94 (2016): 2066–96; Timothy C. Meyer, "Slavery Jurisprudence on the Supreme Court of North Carolina, 1828–1858: William Gaston and Thomas Ruffin," *Campbell Law Review* 33 (2010): 313–39; and Joseph Herman Schauinger, "William Gaston and the Supreme Court of North Carolina," *North Carolina Historical Review* 21 (April 1944): 97–117.

[42] William Gaston to William A. Graham, November 12, 1834, William Gaston Papers, #272, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Tillman suggests that "officer" could also mean positions subordinate to "apex authority." He writes: "[A]ll the positions Gaston held were (as far as I know) apex positions: elected federal or state positions, including his service as a Justice on the Supreme Court of North Carolina." In this interpretation, "apex positions" would not be subject to the Article 32, but subordinate government offices would. Tillman, "Religious Test in America?" 21–25.

[43] Gaston received 112 votes. Henry Seawell received 43 votes. "Scattering and blanks" accounted for the remaining 36 votes. "General Assembly," *Tarborough (NC) Free Press*, December 6, 1833; *Newbern (NC) Spectator, and Literary Journal*, December 6, 1833.

[44] *Proceedings and Debates of the Convention of North Carolina: Called to Amend the Constitution of the State, Which Assembled at Raleigh, June 4, 1835* (Raleigh, NC, 1836), 218, 244, 234 (emphasis in original), 262.

[45] Ibid., 280, 310, 320, 323–24, 331–32.

[46] *Melvin v. Easley*, 52 N.C. 356, 370 (1860) (Battle, J., dissenting). Capitalization as in original.

[47] *Proceedings and Debates of the*, 280 (emphasis in original).

[48] Gerard V. Bradley, "The No Religious Test Clause and the Constitution of Religious Liberty: A Machine That Has Gone of Itself," *Case Western Reserve Law Review* 37 (1987): 679.

[49] South Carolina Constitution of 1778, arts. III, XII, XIII; South Carolina Constitution of 1790. No religious test appeared in the South Carolina Constitution of 1776. Georgia Constitution of 1777, art. VI; Georgia Constitution of 1789; Vermont Constitution of 1777, ch. II (Plan or Frame of Government), sect. IX; Vermont Constitution of 1786, ch. II (Plan or Frame of Government), sect. XII (Vermont became a state in 1791); New Hampshire Constitution of 1784, part II, arts. XIV, XXIX, XLII, and LXI; *The Constitution of New Hampshire as Amended by the Constitutional Convention Held at Concord on the First Wednesday of December, A.D. 1876* (Concord, NH, 1877), 9, 11, 15. The constitutional amendment passed by referendum in 1877 and came into effect in 1879. Wilfrid H. Paradis, *Upon This Granite: Catholicism in New Hampshire, 1647–1997* (Portsmouth, NH, 1998), 30.

[50] New Jersey Constitution of 1776, art. XIX; New Jersey Constitution of 1844. Article XIX of the New Jersey Constitution of 1776 guarantees that "all persons, professing a belief in the faith of any Protestant sect . . . shall be capable of being elected into any office of profit or trust, or being a member of either branch of the Legislature." For sources that consider the 1776 Constitution to have barred non-Protestants from office, see Borden, *Jews, Turks, and Infidels*, 15; Bradley, "No Religious Test Clause," 682–83; John K. Wilson, "Religion Under the State Constitutions, 1776–1800," *Journal of Church and State* 32 (Autumn 1990): 764; Daniel L. Dreisbach, "The Constitution's Forgotten Religion Clause: Reflections on the Article VI Religious Test Ban," *Journal of Church and State* 38 (Spring 1996): 265; John Fea, "Disestablishment in New Jersey," in *Disestablishment and Religious Dissent: Church-State Relations in the New American States, 1776–1833*, ed. Carl H. Esbeck and Jonathan J. Den Hartog (Columbia, MO, 2019), 32–33. For contrary interpretations, see *Proceedings and Debates of the Convention*, 292; *Hale v. Everett*, 53 N.H. 9, 113 (1868); George Bancroft, *History of the United States, From the Discovery of the American Continent* (Boston, 1875), 9:279 n.1.

[51] Maryland Constitution of 1776, Declaration of Rights, art. XXXV, Frame of Government, art. LV; *Laws Made and Passed by the General Assembly of the State of Maryland at a Session Begun and Held at the City of Annapolis, on Monday the Sixth Day of December, Eighteen Hundred and Twenty-Four* (Annapolis, 1824), 154–55; *Laws Made and Passed by the General Assembly of the State of Maryland at a Session Begun and Held at the City of Annapolis, on Monday the Twenty-sixth Day of December, 1825* (Annapolis, 1825), 21. (Constitutional amendments had to pass two consecutive sessions of the Maryland legislature. The state's General Assembly passed the Jew Bill on February 26, 1825, and confirmed it on January 5, 1826.) Pennsylvania Constitution of 1776, ch. II (Frame of Government), sect. 10; Pennsylvania Constitution of 1790, art. IX, sect. 4. The 1790 constitution guaranteed that "no person, who acknowledges the being of a God and a future state of rewards and punishments, shall, on account of his religious sentiments, be disqualified to hold any office or place of trust or profit under this

commonwealth." This phrasing implies that those who did not acknowledge these religious opinions might be barred from office. William Bentley Ball, "The Religion Clauses of the Pennsylvania Constitution," *Widener Journal of Public Law* 3 (1994): 716.

[52] Massachusetts Constitution of 1780, ch. VI, art. I; Massachusetts Constitution of 1780, Articles of Amendment, art. VI (1821). The 1780 constitution originally required officeholders to affirm their belief in "the Christian religion" and to "renounce and abjure all allegiance, subjection and obedience" to any "foreign power" in "any matter, civil, ecclesiastical or spiritual," a provision intended to exclude Catholics. According to Daniel L. Dreibach, the "oath was clearly directed at Roman Catholics, although arguably it also applied to members of the Church of England." Dreisbach, "The Constitution's Forgotten Religion Clause," 266–67. See also Bradley, "No Religious Test Clause," 681–82; Wilson, "Religion Under the State Constitutions," 764.

[53] Delaware Constitution of 1776, art. XXII; Delaware Constitution of 1792.

[54] Historians disagree as to the religious test in Connecticut. Chad D. Lower writes, "[T]here were no religious tests or oaths for public office" in Connecticut. "Considering the religious conservatism in Connecticut," John K. Wilson argues, "one would expect test oaths to exist, but there appears to be no evidence for or against this supposition." Gerard V. Bradley claims that Connecticut had a religious test that required belief in Trinitarian Christianity. Bradley's evidence is a Connecticut law that forbids anyone "convicted before any of the Superior Courts of this State" of blaspheming against the Holy Trinity from possessing any "Offices or Employments, ecclesiastical, civil or military." This statute does not constitute a religious test oath because aspirants for office were not required to affirmatively declare any religious beliefs. Chad D. Lower, "The Political Ideology of Connecticut's Standing Order" (Ph.D. dissertation, Kent State University, 2013): 74; Wilson, "Religion Under the State Constitutions," 764; Bradley, "No Religious Test Clause," 683. See also John D. Cushing, ed., *First Laws of the State of Connecticut* (Wilmington, DE, 1982), 67.

[55] Rhode Island repealed its anti-Catholic test in 1783, giving all Christians the right to hold office. In 1798, the legislature passed a law that expanded religious freedom but failed to explicitly mention Jews. In 1843, Rhode Island adopted a new constitution, and Jews gained the right to hold office at that point. According to James S. Kabala, "between 1798 and 1843 it was still somewhat ambiguous whether Jews had" the right to hold office. James S. Kabala, "Church and State in Rhode Island," in Esbeck and Den Hartog, *Disestablishment and Religious Dissent*, 56–57. See also Borden, *Jews, Turks, and Infidels*, 13; Wilson, "Religion Under the State Constitutions," 764; Scott D. Gerber, "Law and the Lively Experiment in Colonial Rhode Island," *British Journal of American Legal Studies* 2 (2013): 468–72.

[56] *Laws of the State of New York Passed at the Sessions of the Legislature Held in the Years 1785, 1786, 1787 and 1788, Inclusive, Being the Eighth, Ninth, Tenth, and Eleventh Sessions* (Albany, 1886), 2:637; New York Constitution of 1777, art. XLII; *Laws of the State of New York* (Albany, 1802), 1:401.

[57] *American Citizen* (New York), February 10, 1806; *Republican Watch-Tower* (New York), February 11, 1806; *American Citizen*, February 12, 1806; Jason K. Duncan, *Citizens or Papists?:*

The Politics of Anti-Catholicism in New York, 1685–1821 (New York, 2005), 71–78, 117–32; Leo Raymond Ryan, *Old St. Peter's, The Mother Church of Catholic New York* (New York, 1935), 83–86.

[58] Bradley, "No Religious Test Clause," 683.

[59] Georgia Constitution of 1789; South Carolina Constitution of 1790; Delaware Constitution of 1792; Kentucky Constitution of 1792; Vermont Constitution of 1793; Pennsylvania Constitution of 1790, art. IX, sect. 4.

[60] *Torcaso v. Watkins*, 367 U.S. 488 (1961). North Carolina Constitution, art. VI, sect. 8; Arkansas Constitution, art. XIX, sect. 1; Maryland Constitution, art. XXXVII; Mississippi Constitution, art. XIV, sect. 265; South Carolina Constitution, art. XVII, sect. 4; Tennessee Constitution, art. IX, sect. 2; Texas Constitution, art. I, sect. 4.

[61] On the Maryland Jew Bill, see E. Milton Altfeld, *The Jew's Struggle for Religious and Civil Liberty in Maryland* (Baltimore, 1924); Joseph L. Blau, "The Maryland Jew Bill: A Footnote to Thomas Jefferson's Work for Religious Freedom," *Review of Religion* 8 (1944): 227–39; Eitches, "Maryland's 'Jew Bill,'" 258–79; Borden, *Jews, Turks, and Infidels*, 35–40; James S. Kabala, *Church-State Relations in the Early American Republic, 1787–1846* (London, 2016), 95–105; Goldstein and Weiner, *On Middle Ground*, 34–49; Eric Eisner, "'Suffer Not the Evil One': Unitarianism and the 1826 Maryland Jew Bill," *Journal of Religious History* 44 (September 2020): 338–55. The geographic breadth of the contemporary newspaper coverage is illustrated by a few examples: *Hallowell (ME) Gazette*, October 22, 1823; "Political Sketch," *City Gazette* (Charleston, SC), October 9, 1823; *Westchester Herald* (Ossining, NY), February 9, 1819.

[62] New Hampshire Constitution of 1784, part II, arts. XIV, XXIX, XLII, and LXI; *Hale v. Everett*, 53 N.H. 9, 116 118, 130 (1868); *Hale v. Everett*, 53 N.H. 9, 172 (1868) (Doe, J., dissenting); William Plumer, Jr., *Life of William Plumer, By his Son, William Plumer Junior* (Boston, 1857), 51.

[63] *Hale v. Everett*, 53 N.H. 9, 92, 129 (1868); *Hale v. Everett*, 53 N.H. 9, 169 (1868) (Doe, J., dissenting). The contention that one needs to be Christian to be Protestant as defined by the New Hampshire constitution is also found in *Attorney Gen. ex rel. Abbot v. Dublin* 459, 573 (1859). For more on Charles Doe, see John Reid, "The Obscurity of Over-Elaboration: The Style and the Influence of Mr. Justice Doe," *University of Pittsburgh Law Review* 24 (October 1962): 59–72; John Reid, "The Last Lawmaker: Charles Doe and Judicial Power," *Wayne Law Review* 10 (1964): 553–79; Jay Surdukowski, "Not Your Average Doe: Notes on the Recently Discovered Library of Chief Justice Charles Doe," *New Hampshire Bar Journal* 48 (Winter 2008): 11–23.

[64] *Hale v. Everett*, 53 N.H. 9, 123-124 (1868); *Hale v. Everett*, 53 N.H. 9 172 (1868) (Doe, J., dissenting).

[65] Virginia, New York, and Connecticut never had religious tests for public office that formally barred Jews and so are not included in this table. Georgia Constitution of 1777, art. VI; Georgia Constitution of 1789; South Carolina Constitution of 1778, arts. III, XII, XIII; South

Carolina Constitution of 1790; Pennsylvania Constitution of 1776, ch. II (Frame of Government), sect. 10; Pennsylvania Constitution of 1790, art. IX, sect. 4; Ball, "Religion Clauses of the Pennsylvania Constitution," 716; Delaware Constitution of 1776, art. XXII; Delaware Constitution of 1792; Vermont Constitution of 1777, ch. II (Plan or Frame of Government), sect. IX; Vermont Constitution of 1786, ch. II (Plan or Frame of Government), sect. XII; Vermont Constitution of 1793; Massachusetts Constitution of 1780, ch. VI, art. I; Massachusetts Constitution of 1780, Articles of Amendment, art. VI (1821); Bradley, "No Religious Test Clause," 681–82; Dreisbach, "The Constitution's Forgotten Religion Clause," 266–67; Wilson, "Religion Under the State Constitutions," 764; Maryland Constitution of 1776, Declaration of Rights, art. XXXV, Frame of Government, art. LV; *Laws Made and Passed by the General Assembly of the State of Maryland, 1824*, 154–55; *Laws Made and Passed by the General Assembly of the State of Maryland, 1825*, 21; Kabala, "Church and State in Rhode Island," 56–57; Borden, *Jews, Turks, and Infidels*, 13; Gerber, "Law and the Lively Experiment in Colonial Rhode Island," 470–72; Wilson, "Religion Under the State Constitutions," 764; New Jersey Constitution of 1776, art. XIX; New Jersey Constitution of 1844; North Carolina Constitution of 1776, art. XXXI; *Ordinances and Resolutions*, 56; North Carolina Constitution of 1868, art. VI, sect. V; New Hampshire Constitution of 1784, part II, arts. XIV, XXIX, XLII, and LXI; *The Constitution of New Hampshire as Amended*, 9, 11, 15; Paradis, *Upon This Granite*, 30.

[66] Some Jews contributed to the salary of the freethinking religious leader at the center of the *Hale* case, Francis E. Abbot. *Hale v. Everett*, 53 N.H. 9, 99 (1868). A *bikur holim* society organized in New Hampshire in 1857, and an estimated 150 Jews resided in the state in 1878 according to William B. Hackenburg, *Statistics of the Jews of the United States* (Philadelphia, 1880), 6. See also "Progress of Judaism in New Hampshire," *Jewish Messenger*, November 20, 1857.

[67] "New Hampshire," *Jewish Messenger*, January 14, 1859; "Jewish Emancipation," *Occident* 3 (1845): 109; "Progressive Reforms," *Occident* 12 (1854): 384; "Massachusetts," *Occident* 14 (1856): 450; Isaac Leeser, "North Carolina and the Israelites," *Occident* 17 (1859): 533; "New Hampshire and North Carolina," *Occident* 17 (1860): 299; "Revision of the Constitution," *New Hampshire Patriot & State Gazette* (Concord, NH), August 30, 1849; "The Election of Delegates," *New Hampshire Patriot & State Gazette*, September 12, 1850; "The Convention," *Farmer's Cabinet* (Amherst, NH), October 31, 1850. There is a reference to the eligibility of all, "be he Jew, Mahomedon, or Catholic" in "The Constitutional Convention," *New Hampshire Patriot & State Gazette*, December 26, 1850.

[68] "House of Commons," *Weekly Standard*, December 8, 1858; Rogoff, *Down Home*, 82; Goldstein and Weiner, *On Middle Ground*, 35.

[69] *Proceedings and Debates of the Convention*, 80–81, 331–32; Orth, "North Carolina Constitutional History," 1773, 1792; Karin L. Zipf, "'The Whites Shall Rule the Land or Die': Gender, Race, and Class in North Carolina Reconstruction Politics," *Journal of Southern History* 65 (August 1999): 505–6.

[70] "Jewish Disabilities," *New Era* (New Bern, NC), December 21, 1858.

[71] Ibid.

[72] "Jews in North Carolina," *Sun* (Baltimore), December 13, 1858; "North Carolina," *Jewish Messenger*, December 31, 1858.

[73] Rogoff, *Down Home*, 71; "Jewish Disabilities of North Carolina," *Israelite*, August 31, 1860; "Jewish Disabilities," *Times* (Greensboro, NC), August 25, 1860; "Jewish Disabilities," *Iredell Express* (Statesville, NC), September 14, 1860.

[74] "Political Disabilities," *Western Democrat*, August 28, 1860; "Jewish Disabilities of North Carolina," *Israelite*, August 31, 1860; "Jewish Disabilities," *Iredell Express*, September 14, 1860; "North Carolina," *Israelite*, February 1, 1861; "The Disabilities of North Carolina," *Israelite*, March 22, 1861.

[75] See George Ruble Woolfolk, "Taxes and Slavery in the Ante Bellum South," *Journal of Southern History* 26 (May 1960), 198–99; Donald C. Butts, "The 'Irrepressible Conflict': Slave Taxation and North Carolina's Gubernatorial Election of 1860," *North Carolina Historical Review* 58 (January 1981): 44–66; Powell, *North Carolina through Four Centuries*, 339–48.

[76] "The Disabilities of North Carolina," *Israelite*, March 22, 1861; "Proceedings of the Legislature of North Carolina," *Semi-Weekly Raleigh Register*, February 27, 1861; "The Jewish Disability Bill," *Western Democrat*, March 5, 1861; "The Jewish Disability Bill," *Western Democrat*, March 12, 1861.

[77] *Western Democrat*, March 5, 1861; Thomas N. Crumpler, *Speech of T. N. Crumpler, of Ashe, on Federal Relations, Delivered in the House of Commons, Jan. 10, 1861* (Raleigh, NC, 1861); "The Jewish Disability Bill," *Western Democrat*, March 12, 1861; Rogoff, *Down Home*, 71; "Jewish Disabilities of North Carolina," *Israelite*, August 31, 1860. After the amendment's passage, the *Occident* reported that "great credit is due to Mr. [Samuel] Cohen of Charlotte, N.C., for the efforts he has made in this matter, and for the personal influence he successfully wielded with gentlemen of distinction in his State." "North Carolina," *Occident* 19 (1861): 191.

[78] Isaac Leeser, "North Carolina and the Israelites," *Occident* 16 (1859): 536; "North Carolina," *Jewish Messenger*, August 17, 1860; Max Lilienthal, "Laws regarding Jews in the United States," *Israelite*, June 20, 1856. The U.S. Supreme Court failed to adopt Lilienthal's view of the Constitution until *Torcaso v. Watkins*, 367 U.S. 488 in 1961.

[79] "Jewish Disabilities," *Greensborough Patriot*, August 25, 1860; "The Disability Removed," *Daily Bulletin* (Charlotte, NC), July 1, 1861.

[80] "Senate," *Weekly Standard*, August 28, 1861; Powell, *North Carolina Through Four Centuries*, 348.

[81] "North Carolina State Convention," *Fayetteville Observer*, June 17, 1861; "Proceedings of the North Carolina State Convention," *Daily Journal*, June 18, 1861. See also *Semi-Weekly Raleigh Register*, December 25, 1861; *Weekly Standard*, December 25, 1861.

[82] *Journal of the Convention*, 90–93; *Ordinances and Resolutions*, 56; "North Carolina State Convention," *Fayetteville Observer*, June 17, 1861; "Proceedings of the North Carolina State Convention," *Daily Journal*, June 18, 1861. See also *Semi-Weekly Raleigh Register*, December 25, 1861; *Weekly Standard*, December 25, 1861.

[83] *Ordinances and Resolutions*, 33. According to Donald C. Butts, the convention ratified the ad valorem tax in 1861 "to placate the nonslaveholders." Butts, "Irrepressible Conflict," 66.

[84] "Senate," *Weekly Standard*, August 28, 1861.

[85] *Semi-Weekly Raleigh Register*, December 25, 1861; *Weekly Standard*, December 25, 1861.

[86] *Journal of the Convention*, 90–93. The *State Journal* (Raeligh, NC) gave the same tallies as the official journal for the first two votes (the "reporter did not learn" the result of the third and fourth votes). "Proceedings of the Convention," *State Journal*, June 15, 1861. Other contemporary newspapers gave slightly divergent counts. The *Semi-Weekly Standard* reported that the first vote passed 85 to 19 (instead of 84 to 20), that the second vote passed 44 to 22 (instead of 84 to 22), that the third vote failed 33 to 69, and the fourth passed 95 to 10 (instead of 96 to 9). *Semi-Weekly Standard*, June 15, 1861. The *Semi-Weekly Raleigh Register* reported that the first voted passed 85 to 19 (instead of 84 to 20), the second vote passed 84 to 22, and the third vote failed 33 to 69 (the paper did not give a count for the fourth vote). *Semi-Weekly Raleigh Register*, June 15, 1861. Although the use of the term "ratified" seems odd, both the newspapers and the convention's publication use that term.

[87] *Greensborough Patriot*, June 14, 1861.

[88] "North-Carolina State Convention," *Semi-Weekly Standard*, June 5, 1861.

[89] See W. Paul Reeve, *Religion of a Different Color: Race and the Mormon Struggle for Whiteness* (Oxford, 2015).

[90] North Carolina Constitution of 1776, art. XXXII; *Ordinances and Resolutions Passed by the State Convention*, 56; *Greensborough Patriot*, June 14, 1861; "North-Carolina State Convention," *Weekly Standard*, June 5, 1861.

[91] "North Carolina," *Occident* 19 (1861): 191; *Israelite*, July 12, 1861. See also Isaac M. Fein, *The Making of an American Jewish Community: The History of Baltimore Jewry from 1773 to 1920* (Philadelphia, 1971), 22–25. The official publication of the convention refers to the alteration as an "ordinance" that "amended" the constitution. *Ordinances and Resolutions*, 56. However intriguing this reference to the Maryland Jew Bill, this remains the only place that I found it noted.

[92] "Intolerance," *Carolina Observer* (Fayetteville, NC), February 22, 1826; *Raleigh Register and North-Carolina Gazette*, March 3, 1826.

[93] "North Carolina," *Israelite*, February 1, 1861; Mendes I. Cohen, letter dated June 23, 1861, *Israelite*, July 12, 1861.

[94] Hieke, *Jewish Identity in the Antebellum South*, 33. See also Rogoff, *Down Home*, 94–97.

[95] Constitution of the Confederate States of America, art. VI, sect. 4; U.S. Constitution, art. VI, clause 3; *Ordinances and Resolutions*, 8–28.

[96] "Day of Memorial," *Wilmington (NC) Journal*, September 5, 1861.

[97] "Remarks of W. F. Leak," *Semi-Weekly Standard*, June 26, 1861 (emphasis in original).

[98] *Weekly State Journal*, March 20, 1861; "The Fever in Wilmington," *State Journal* (Raleigh, NC), October 11, 1862; "The Convention—Some Plain Suggestions," *Daily Journal*, May 18, 1861; "Remarks of W. F. Leak," *Semi-Weekly Standard*, June 26, 1861. On Mordecai and his

support for the Confederacy see Robert N. Rosen, *The Jewish Confederates* (Columbia, SC, 2000), 2, 34, 40, 47, 220. Capitalization as in original.

[99] For discussion of the racial position of southern Jews, see Leonard Rogoff, "Is the Jew White?: The Racial Place of the Southern Jew," *American Jewish History* 85 (September 1997): 195–230; Mark I. Greenberg, "Becoming Southern: The Jews of Savannah, Georgia, 1830–70," *American Jewish History* 86 (March 1998): 55–75; Hieke, *Jewish Identity in the Reconstruction South*.

[100] Greenberg, "Becoming Southern," 63.

[101] Eric L. Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity* (Princeton, 2006), 16–19; Rosen, *Jewish Confederates*, 9–34; Greenberg, "Becoming Southern," 62–63.

[102] Rogoff, "Is the Jew White?," 205. For more on Jews' racial self-perception, see Eric L. Goldstein, "'Different Blood Flows in Our Veins': Race and Jewish Self-Definition in Late Nineteenth Century America," *American Jewish History* 85 (March 1997): 29–55.

[103] For more on nineteenth-century racial thought, see William Stanton, *The Leopard's Spots: Scientific Attitudes Toward Race in America, 1815–59* (Chicago, 1960); Thomas F. Gossett, *Race: The History of an Idea in America*, rev. ed. (Oxford, 1997); Christopher A. Luse, "Slavery's Champions Stood at Odds: Polygenesis and the Defense of Slavery," *Civil War History* 53 (December 2007): 379–412.

[104] *North Carolina Argus* (Wadesborough, NC), March 21, 1861; "Supposed Origins of Human Complexions, with the Ancient Signification of the Names of the Three Sons of Noah, and Other Curious Matter," *North Carolinian* (Fayetteville, NC), August 21, 1841.

[105] An extensive literature exists on Jews and the French Revolution. See Jacques Godechot, "La Révolution française et les Juifs (1789–1799)," *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* 48 (1976): 47–70; Robert Badinter, *Libres et égaux: l'émancipation des Juifs, 1789–1791* (Paris, 1989); Jay R. Berkovitz, "The French Revolution and the Jews: Assessing the Cultural Impact," *AJS Review* 20 (1995): 25–86.

[106] Samuel J. Hurwitz and Edith Hurwitz, "The New World Sets an Example for the Old: The Jews of Jamaica and Political Rights 1661–1831," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 55 (September 1965): 55. For more on slavery in Jamaica, see Christer Petley, *Slaveholders in Jamaica: Colonial Society and Culture during the Era of Abolition* (London, 2016).

[107] "The Hebrews and Slavery," *Daily Bulletin*, January 19, 1861; "Loyalty of the Jews," *Western Democrat*, October 1, 1861.

[108] Isaac M. Fein, "Baltimore Rabbis during the Civil War," in *Jews and the Civil War: A Reader*, ed. Jonathan D. Sarna and Adam D. Mendelsohn (New York, 2010), 181–96; Goldstein and Weiner, *On Middle Ground*, 77–94.

[109] Jayme A. Sokolow, "Revolution and Reform: The Antebellum Jewish Abolitionists," in Sarna and Mendelsohn, *Jews and the Civil War*, 137, 126; Bertram W. Korn, "Jews and Negro Slavery in the Old South, 1789–1865," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 50 (March 1961): 191–98; Morris J. Raphall, *The Bible View of Slavery* (New York, 1861); Robert F. Southard, "The Debate on Slavery: David Einhorn and the Jewish Political Turn," *American Jewish Archives* 64 (2012): 137–43.

[110] "Not Religiously Educated," *Daily Journal*, April 5, 1860; "Remarks of W. F. Leak," *Semi-Weekly Standard*, June 26, 1861; Raphall, *Bible View of Slavery*; Leonard Rogoff, "Who is Israel? Yankees, Confederates, African Americans, and Jews," *American Jewish Archives Journal* 64 (2012): 27–52.

[111] *Newbern Spectator*, June 7, 1839.

[112] John Higham, *Send These to Me: Immigrants in Urban America* (Baltimore, 1984), 123; Mark I. Greenberg, "Ambivalent Relations: Acceptance and Anti-Semitism in Confederate Thomasville," *American Jewish Archives* 45 (Spring/Summer 1993): 13; "A Retrospect—The Rich—The Poor—Speculators," *North Carolina Argus*, November 27, 1862; "The Cry for Bread," *Christian Advocate* (Raleigh, NC), April 9, 1863.

[113] Selig Adler, "Zebulon B. Vance and the 'Scattered Nation,'" *Journal of Southern History* 7 (August 1941): 370; *Morning Star* (Wilmington, NC), February 17, 1874; Leonard Dinnerstein, "A Note on Southern Attitudes Toward Jews," *Jewish Social Studies* 32 (January 1970): 44; Zebulon Baird Vance, *The Scattered Nation* (New York, 1916), 53, 42.

[114] Powell, *North Carolina Through Four Centuries*, 381–82; "Constitution of North Carolina," *Weekly Standard*, July 3, 1866; "The new Constitution—The Jews," *Daily Sentinel*, July 31, 1866; "North Carolina and the Jews," *New Berne (NC) Times*, August 2, 1866.

[115] The Mortara case, which ignited global outrage in the 1850s and 1860s, revolved around the seizure and captivity by the Papal States of a Jewish boy from Bologna who was thought to have been baptized by a family servant. Myer S. Isaacs, "Religious Liberty in North Carolina," *Daily Journal*, August 3, 1866; Bertram Wallace Korn, *The American Reaction to the Mortara Case, 1858–1859* (Cincinnati, 1957); Mark K. Bauman, "Variations on the Mortara Case in Midnineteenth-Century New Orleans," *American Jewish Archives Journal* 55 (2003): 43–58, reprinted in Mark K. Bauman, *A New Vision of Southern Jewish History: Studies in Institution Building, Leadership, Interaction, and Mobility* (Tuscaloosa, 2019): 15–24.

[116] "North Carolina," *Occident* 24 (1866): 281; "North Carolina," *Jewish Messenger*, July 27, 1866; *Israelite*, July 20, 1866; "North Carolina," *Occident* 19 (1861) 190–91; *Israelite*, July 12, 1861; "North Carolina," *Occident* 24 (1866): 281.

[117] "The new Constitution—The Jews," *Daily Standard*, July 31, 1866; "North Carolina and the Jews," *New Berne Times*, August 2, 1866; "North Carolina and the Jews," *Daily Sentinel*, July 30, 1866; "Religious Liberty in North Carolina," *Wilmington Journal*, August 9, 1866; "North Carolina and the Jews," *Daily Sentinel*, July 30, 1866.

[118] Orth, "North Carolina Constitutional History," 1771–72, 1775–76; Powell, *North Carolina Through Four Centuries*, 280, 382; Robert N. Hunter, Jr., "The Past as Prologue: Albion Tourgée and the North Carolina Constitution," *Elon Law Review* 5 (July 2013): 95–97.

[119] *Israelite*, September 28, 1866; "North Carolina," *Occident* 24 (1866): 382.

[120] John Hope Franklin, *Reconstruction: After the Civil War* (Chicago, 1961), 69–73; Powell, *North Carolina Through Four Centuries*, 385.

[121] Leonard Bernstein claims that there were thirteen Black delegates while Karin Zipf places the number at fifteen. Evidence from newspapers and the census shows that the two

disputed delegates, John W. Peterson and Samuel Highsmith, were both White, making thirteen the correct figure. Leonard Bernstein, "The Participation of Negro Delegates in the Constitutional Convention of 1868 in North Carolina," *Journal of Negro History* 34 (October 1949): 391, 394; Zipf, "Whites Shall Rule," 505; "Republican Candidates for the Constitutional Convention," *Tri-Weekly Standard* (Raleigh, NC), November 5, 1867 (marking the Black candidates with the parenthetical "colored"); Jno. W. Peterson, Ninth Census of the United States, 1870, Duplin County, North Carolina; S. Love Highsmith, Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, Pender County, North Carolina.

[122] Zipf, "Whites Shall Rule," 499–534.

[123] North Carolina Constitution of 1868, art. VI, sect. 5; North Carolina Constitution of 1776, art. XXXII.

[124] According to John V. Orth, Article 32, in its 1776 formulation, "was aimed at (respectively) atheists, Roman Catholics, Jews, and Christian pacifists like Quakers and Moravians." Orth, "North Carolina Constitutional History," 1764. Although the 1835 change removed Catholics from this list and the 1861 change removed Jews, the 1868 test did not change the position of atheists. Any otherwise eligible person who accepted "Almighty God," but accepted neither the Old nor New Testament, or who held "religious principles incompatible with the freedom and safety of the State," also won the formal right to hold office only in 1868. According to Leon Hühner, Article 32 barred, among others, "Jews, Quakers, Mohammedans, [and] Deists," but the 1868 constitution excluded only "atheists and infidels." Hühner, "The Struggle for Religious Liberty," 41, 63, 66, 68.

[125] *Greensborough Patriot*, June 14, 1861; Rogoff, *Down Home*, 81–82. In 1866, Thaddeus Stevens introduced a bill in Congress requiring delegates to the North Carolina constitutional convention to "swear on the holy Evangelists of Almighty God (or affirm as the case may be)." The board of delegates complained, and the objectionable oath did not become law. The 1861 amendment to the North Carolina constitution did not eliminate all threats to the political inclusion of North Carolina Jewry. "Civil Government in North-Carolina," *Tri-Weekly Standard*, December 20, 1866; "A Test Oath," *Occident* 25 (1867): 251; "You Shall Have Him," *Israelite*, January 11, 1867; "The Israelites," *Charleston Daily Courier*, June 14, 1867.

[126] North Carolina Constitution of 1868, art. VI, sect. 5; Tennessee Constitution of 1870, art. IX, sect. 2; *The Constitution of New Hampshire as Amended*, 9, 11, 15; *Torcaso v. Watkins*, 367 U. S. 488 (1961).

[127] *Raleigh Register*, March 3, 1826; *Journal of the Convention*, 218, 244; Orth, "North Carolina Constitutional History," 1773; *Proceedings and Debates of the Convention*, 80–81, 331–32.

Creative Power: A Jewish Refugee in the Jim Crow South, 1939–1946

by

Andrew Sperling*

In early March 1938, Viktor Lowenfeld returned home to find a note pinned to the front door of his Vienna apartment. The note demanded that he, his wife Margaret, and their seven-year-old son, John, abandon their home and all assets within three days. Neighbors watched silently from behind peepholes as the family left with only suitcases full of clothing and, in Viktor's case, a small portion of the drawings his child pupils at the Hohe Warte Institute for the Blind had created over the past twelve years. His blind students' artwork provided the ultimate testament to his budding legacy as an art educator. His unorthodox approach to teaching art enraged colleagues who insisted on the creative incapacity of those with visual disabilities. Yet his haptic-visual theory, which posited that society's most marginalized were those most "subjectively bound up with the self" and able to produce the purest art, captured the attention of some of the world's finest intellectuals.[1] Lowenfeld's companions and occasional acquaintances included Helen Keller, Sigmund Freud, and Martin Buber, each of whom held his artistic theories in high esteem.

Lowenfeld's rising reputation mattered little in the face of the Nazi annexation of Austria. As a Jewish man and modernist artist deeply entrenched in work with those whom the Nazis viewed as other social undesirables, most facets of Lowenfeld's personal and professional persona were anathema to German fascism. Fleeing to England shortly after receiving the notice of eviction, Lowenfeld mourned the loss of the now unrecognizable land in which he had been raised and sought new opportunities for creative freedom.

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After an exhausting period of moving between cities and countries and struggling to find stable employment, he wound up in the Jim Crow South, heading a new art department at the Hampton Institute, a historically Black college in Virginia founded as an agricultural school in 1868. Between 1939 and 1946, Lowenfeld and his students helped transform the traditionally conservative Hampton into an unlikely space of relatively radical Black politics. The artwork produced by students under Lowenfeld's mentorship anticipated Black Power aesthetics, resisted racist confines on Black identities, and visually expressed controversial politics during the highly sensitive war years. Inextricable from this story of Black artistry is its surprising Jewishness. For as much as Lowenfeld's history with blind communities influenced his commitment to democratize the art world, his strong Zionist convictions and experiences as an Austrian Jew most informed his teaching at Hampton. Consequently, the art created there represented a dialogical relationship between Blackness and Jewishness, one characterized by shared empathy, healing, and identity affirmation in response to an antisemitic and anti-Black world. The benefits of artistic expression at Hampton did not merely extend to its students. Against an unfamiliar rural, southern, and Christian environment totally distant from his Jewish lifestyle in Vienna, Lowenfeld sought connection to his heritage through the mentoring of anti-Nazi, antiracist artistry.

While only a slice of the Jewish refugee experience, Lowenfeld's story at Hampton resonates as an example of the resilience and adaptability of Jewish identity. Lowenfeld's ideas were originally inculcated in an antisemitic Austro-German culture and later repurposed in the racially stratified South.[2] The interchange between Zionism and Black self-expression emerging from Hampton suggests not only a transference of ideas, but the inherent value of seeking Jewish presence in predominantly Black sources. The artwork and oral histories of Hampton students placed into conversation with Lowenfeld's words suggest that his Jewish background and status as a refugee scholar galvanized his challenges to racial boundaries. Far from "paralyzed by fear," a term sometimes associated with southern Jewry's historical position, Lowenfeld purposely fused Jewish and Black history together as a means of producing provocative art.[3] However tempted he might have been to chase the comforts of Whiteness, especially as a Jewish foreigner in the South, Lowenfeld's idealistic opposition to intolerance mandated that he view Hampton as a unique

opportunity. In early 1939, Lowenfeld's new American acquaintance, the noted psychologist Gordon Allport, found him a stint as an art therapist at the Perkins School for the Blind in Watertown, Massachusetts, building on his prior experience. The appointment was only temporary, and after an otherwise fruitless search for a permanent position, Allport reached an agreement with Hampton administrators. "I would be most fascinated in [teaching art] in a Negro institution," Lowenfeld recalled of his fortuitous job offer. For him it signaled an "entirely new phase," not the "double handicap" some refugee advocates assumed Jews teaching at Black institutions would face.[4]

As an Austrian Jew, Lowenfeld understood the stifling constraints of Nazism's "sameness of expression" that skewered abstract, modernist art and promoted antisemitic imagery recalling centuries of dehumanizing tropes in its propaganda.[5] The same "regimentation of stereotypes" existed at Hampton, where White Christian patrons had long been interested in exoticized depictions of Black people through the institute's collection of African arts and crafts. As such, before Lowenfeld's art department, the prevalent examples of artistry at Hampton reinforced stereotypes of primitivity and enabled White Christian benefactors to imagine themselves as uplifting the Black race through agricultural and industrial education. Lowenfeld's classes provided a very different sort of education, one that allowed participants cathartic relief from society's injustices, rooted in the confluence of Black and Jewish experiences.

Viktor Lowenfeld while on the faculty at Pennsylvania State University. (Used with permission of the Eberly Family Special Collections Library, Penn State University Libraries.)

This essay establishes connections between Lowenfeld's earlier experiences as a modernist Jewish art educator in Vienna and his later activities as a teacher and department head at Hampton Institute. Considering both Black and Jewish sources as well as extending the analysis to artwork, it examines how Lowenfeld's Zionist politics and his exposure to European antisemitism and Nazism influenced his teaching practices in the Jim Crow South.

Historical and contemporary notions of Black and Jewish kinship in the United States have been attributed to shared histories of persecution and common enemies in the modern era. Yet few studies have examined how Jewish refugees to America—and particularly to the South—reckoned with their escape from one racist, authoritarian system and then confronted another. Gabrielle Simon Edgcomb's *From Swastika to Jim Crow: Refugee Scholars at Black Colleges*, which assembles the stories of a number of refugees, stands almost alone in its attempt to juxtapose the persecutions in Nazi Europe with anti-Black racism in the Jim Crow South through the biographies of Jewish exiles. Nonetheless, Edgcomb's work only briefly considers Lowenfeld's place at Hampton, although his pedagogy and relationship to students complicates her idea that refugees were largely silent about Nazi persecutions while teaching at Black institutions. She has explained their silence as the assumption that strangers would not understand the "other" world, leaving Jewish refugees to internalize their suffering or limit it to their immediate Jewish or White communities.[6]

Refugees might have been reluctant to discuss their pain, but Edgcomb fails to fully consider how they could communicate such perspectives through their teaching practices and, particularly in Lowenfeld's case, through politically charged art. The story of Viktor Lowenfeld at the Hampton Institute therefore demonstrates a transference of ideas not always openly discussed but deeply felt in the work he and his students produced together. Accordingly, this essay articulates how European Jewish identities could converge with Black southern identities in ways that were mutually beneficial. Several scholars have pushed back against romanticization of midcentury Black and Jewish relations in the United States, arguing that, among other contentions, Jewish experiences with antisemitism do not naturally produce a kinship or even sympathy with people of color afflicted by racism. This is certainly true, but Lowenfeld's time at Hampton is one instance where his Jewish identity and the history

attached to it greatly mattered to all parties involved. The astonishing artwork and the liberating politics they represent reveal the potential, albeit not the inevitability, of the personal empowerment and reclamations that can rise out of conversation and union between these two marginalized groups. Although this narrative ends in Hampton, Virginia, its origins can be traced to Vienna at the close of World War I, when a teenage Lowenfeld nurtured his Zionist and artistic impulses.

Lowenfeld in Vienna

In 1914, Viktor Lowenfeld's father was drafted into the Austro-Hungarian army. Thereafter Viktor, his mother, and three siblings suffered from financial strife and hunger throughout the war years. When his father returned in 1918, embittered by the war's outcome, he dismissed his son's interest in art as a trivial distraction and waste of financial resources.[7] The war had disrupted Lowenfeld's adolescence as it had for every Austrian, and his forced estrangement from art contributed to his adoption of pacifism. At age fifteen, he found that the most appealing strategy to prevent further war and devastation was participation in the Zionist youth movement. Through the Austrian branch of the Blue-White movement, which had originated in Germany partly in response to the antisemitic nationalism of other youth groups, Lowenfeld discovered the value of Jewish self-esteem. He joined others in farming for a period of time, romanced by the idea of "making soil produce something," and ultimately formed the basis of much of his later pedagogy.[8]

These processes were part of a broader, particularly central European Zionist movement—muscular Judaism—conceptualized by Max Nordau at the Second Zionist Congress in 1898. According to the logic of muscular Judaism, regeneration of the land amounted to the revitalized Jewish body, and the symbolic figure of the "muscle Jew" recalled the idols of Jewish antiquity.[9] The chance to affirm one's Jewish identity while taking refuge from antisemitic attacks against it was psychologically satisfying and instrumental in protecting Jewish culture. The peaceful pastoralism inherent in Lowenfeld's experience with this form of Zionism additionally fostered his commitment to preserving the innocence of youth against the hawkish inclinations of adults.

By 1920, these sentiments strengthened through his close friendship with Zionist philosopher Martin Buber, who lamented the lack of Jewish

artists during the period of their relationship. Buber, a famed art historian and a founder of cultural Zionism, had argued in favor of a Jewish national art at the Fifth Zionist Congress in 1901. He problematized antisemitic claims such as Richard Wagner's notion that Jewish artists could only be imitative rather than capable of producing exemplary, original art. In response, Buber called for "consciously Jewish" public art that would portray its easily identifiable national characteristics.[10]

Lowenfeld's resurgence as an artist coincided with his conversations with Buber, as well as larger Zionist cultural trends within Austro-German society. Consequently, while teaching art to Jewish pupils in the 1920s and 1930s at the Chajes Realgymnasium, a Zionist school in Vienna, Lowenfeld had students produce art that more closely expressed Jewish identities than it did Austrian national pride. Students drew sketches of rabbinical figures, Hebrew lessons between teachers and students, and even biblical scenes. Former student Avram Kampf, for instance, depicted the binding of Isaac with its titular character prominently displayed. The approach to Jewish pedagogy was based on the beliefs of its founder, Rabbi Zwi Peres Chajes, and combined "observance of Jewish tradition, a Zionist outlook, and a comprehensive, culturally open-minded curriculum."[11] This mixture of traditional religious teachings and Zionism meant that in Lowenfeld's art classes, students could freely depict biblical events without fear of offense, despite the complicated dynamic between visual arts and Jewish tradition. In the opinions of some scholars such as Kaufmann Kohler and Salo W. Baron, visual representations of Jewish figures from the Bible were prohibited by the Second Commandment, which forbade images, but many Zionist leaders in the modern era rejected these beliefs and expressed the need to overcome them.[12] Buber was one of them. His vision of Jewish national art included reclaiming biblical figures as part of Zionism's regenerative process.[13] Lowenfeld carried these ideas into his classroom, honoring Jewish tradition and ultimately reclaiming it from an increasingly hostile culture.

Historian Michael Brenner has shown that this postwar period of the "Jewish renaissance," a term coined by Buber, demonstrated a quest for community through which Jewish heritage could be preserved.[14] Antisemitic forces had failed to revere Jewish war service and prevented Jewish immersion into the predominant culture, leading Lowenfeld, the son of a Jewish veteran, to feel intense detachment from his country. Art

was a process through which Jewish cultural pride could be maintained, and, in this same way, other people excluded from the nation's self-image—including the visually impaired in Austria—could find meaningful liberation. Lowenfeld's transition into viewing art as a liberating force shaped his subsequent approach to teaching blind students. After attending the University of Vienna, he favored a modernist, abstract style, finding art to be an inexact flowing of one's inward feelings. His preferred aesthetic led him to consider that "blind people, because they are deprived of the sense of sight," could likely produce emotionally pure art free from the threat of bland, uninspired imitation.[15]

Yet his insistence on the "refined sensibility" of the blind was problematic to many of his contemporaries. His superior at the Hohe Warte Institute for the Blind furiously argued that the blind "cannot create," since creative activity depended on the ability to visually organize the surrounding world.[16] Lowenfeld nevertheless engaged his blind students in sculpting, drawing, and painting activities and, in the process, developed his haptic-visual theory, which he later taught to Black students at Hampton Institute. Lowenfeld's theory of haptic artistry maintained that art could emerge in different ways according to one's social conditioning. Individuals could either be haptic-minded, as in emotionally and "subjectively bound up with the self," or visually minded, "objective" observers who become acquainted with their physical environment through their eyes. Haptics, by way of their social marginalization, are more likely to visually depict restrictions and limited spatial perspectives, intensely displaying their inner, emotive selves.[17]

Lowenfeld eventually viewed his Black students as possessing the same inclinations as his blind students as a result of their oppression. His theories about artistic proclivities might be overly schematic, but the larger point is that his subsequent teaching practices in segregated Virginia were formed after years of experience in Vienna, where fascist undercurrents had long brewed. His approach to pedagogy emerged through interaction with a system that denigrated social outliers. Likewise, his perspective on the transformative power of art was shaped by European antisemitism and spiritual Zionism that defended a stigmatized identity and honored Jewish heritage. The social developments that defined Lowenfeld's life in Vienna—its illiberal constraints on artistry, racist stigmatization, and pride in Jewish identity—have certain parallels in the

societal structure of the Jim Crow South and at the institution where he soon taught.

Hampton Institute's Transformation and the Black Press

Prior to Lowenfeld's arrival at Hampton, Black students had spent decades advocating for a richer curriculum that would liberalize the school beyond its agricultural and industrial origins. The conditions that allowed for this transformation to occur can mainly be traced back to a 1927 student strike, when students rallied for liberalization, and the subsequent Depression era in which economic conditions shifted White attitudes toward labor. The 1927 Hampton student strike was informed by years of outrage at White administrators and their strict rules and expectations. Racist practices during a film screening in Ogden Hall were the final straw, leading to organized student protests that were widely publicized across the nation. Students were shown the silent film *Chang*, which depicts a Lao tribesman whose livelihood flounders when he attempts to integrate into urban society.[18] The racist characterizations evident in the film did not prompt the protests but were entirely consistent with Hamptonian trends of propagating racial stereotypes, particularly those which involved ethnic primitivism.

According to W. E. B. Du Bois's written report for the *Nation,* the film began to play without the expected dimming of the lights, a sign that White supervisors of the event did not trust students to conduct themselves appropriately in a darkened room.[19] A commotion ensued and persisted for several days. Students refused to participate in the singing of plantation songs, an enduring staple of the school's multiracial church services that helped preserve nostalgic fantasies of the Old South. In a statement to his friend Du Bois, L. F. Coles pointed to White paternalistic traditions as the primary catalysts behind the student strikes following the lighting incident. He remarked sharply, "The great trouble with the school generally, as I [see] it, is that they are trying to handle students as if they were little children. . . . [Faculty] have spent more time trying to teach the Negroes their places and a certain definite kind of education for them than they have spent trying to give them an education that would make them men and women capable of saving the world and [solving] its great [problems]."[20] White administrators had failed to meet the spirit of higher education and, instead, guarded the school as a space through which the

Baltimore Sun, *October 15, 1927.*
(Newspapers.com.)

South's racial order could be safely maintained. The refusal to dim the lights also suggested gendered stereotypes of oversexed, aggressive Black men and sexually loose Black women. This was why, in the "Petition of the Hampton Students" drafted during the strike, students expressed discomfort with rules regarding dress code and social dancing between men and women. Among other demands, the petition called for "the educational system [to be] especially improved," including the ability to take electives and the addition of qualified faculty members, because many students believed that some teachers had inadequate educational bona fides.[21] Lowenfeld, who had earned the equivalent of a doctoral degree in Vienna, eventually fulfilled such hiring requirements. Under his art program, students could seek their desired electives while engaging in artistry that challenged the racial and gender stereotypes that had prompted the student strike.

Earlier in the decade of Lowenfeld's arrival at Hampton, the economic hardships of the Great Depression had additionally motivated Hampton officials to alter the school's curriculum. As Whites increasingly sought work opportunities, financiers of institutions such as Hampton questioned the validity of training Black people exclusively for jobs that could be performed by desperate White laborers. Depression-era unemployment especially enticed the White working class to "accept any grade of work and almost any rate of pay," making the displacement of Black workers in industrial and agricultural fields inevitable.[22]

Hampton Institute's educational model was rendered futile as a result, enabling its partial transition into liberal arts. The efforts of student protesters and larger Black movements, which included Black war veterans and Harlem artists advocating for improved curricula, bolstered these developments. These improvements created the conditions necessary for an artist such as Lowenfeld to teach at Hampton, but the school was still deeply embedded in a culture of White paternalism. The collapse of industrial training prompted White officials and financiers to refocus their efforts toward building racial coalitions that still assumed Black subordination. The new platform was intended to "influence more directly the training of Black leaders," thereby recognizing the rising frequency of prominent Black voices, many of which were considered too radical.[23] To those who supported or accepted segregation and racism, these influential and growing voices seen through intellectual movements such as the Harlem Renaissance needed to be tempered and controlled in spaces of higher education, where they were likely to foment as students embraced the arts and humanities.

Hampton's institutional history highlights the South's clinging to antebellum social conditions and the political consciousness of students who resisted the boundaries White administrators attempted to place on them. The institution's initial purpose and dynamic, rooted in notions of White Christian supremacy and the primitive nature of non-Whites, made the eventual teaching appointment of a modernist, Austrian Jewish artist seem nearly revolutionary. In the era of Lowenfeld's immigration, predominantly White institutions held elitist sensibilities that often stemmed the hiring of Jewish faculty, and, although Black institutions were less selective, White Christian administrators at Hampton still questioned the hiring of a Jew. Dr. Arthur Howe, the president of the institute at the time

of Lowenfeld's hiring, inquired whether "Mr. Lowenfeld would be happy in an institution placing much emphasis upon the Christian religion through its services and ideals."[24] Gordon Allport, Lowenfeld's acquaintance and now advocate, responded with the reassurance that Lowenfeld "is not particularly Jewish in appearance."[25] Lowenfeld saw no potential conflicts and was enthused to start an "entirely new phase" in his pedagogical career, finding the challenge of building an art department at a Black institution similar to what he had accomplished with the Institute for the Blind. "Nothing had been done there," he recalled. Soon his Jewish heritage served as the basis for an authentic teacher-student dynamic rather than the hindrance administrators feared.[26]

It would be too simplistic a narrative, however, to suggest that Lowenfeld's social position as a Jewish refugee escaping racial oppression immediately endeared him to all Black students. With his thick Austrian accent and cultural habits, Lowenfeld carried a distinct air of foreignness and cosmopolitanism that reinforced certain stereotypes about Jews. In the *Washington Tribune,* Black journalist Kelly Miller posited the differences between anti-Black racism in the South and antisemitism in Europe: "Georgia fears the Negro will lower the level of Anglo-Saxon civilization. Hitler fears the Jews will raise it too high."[27] Miller's analysis creates a parallel of racial oppression, but his impression of antisemitism is superficial and demonstrative of some American perceptions about Jews. European antisemitism was indeed fueled by anxieties that Jews were overly dominant, but Jews were also stigmatized as harbingers of regressive culture. Central European Jews, often through their association with African American cultural trends such as jazz music, were viewed as social pollutants. East European Jews were regarded as filthy, uncivilized, and primitive, making antisemitism an irrational current in which Jews were simultaneously too wealthy and urbane but also too poor and uncouth. Yet as Miller and other voices attest, a key image of European Jewry that cemented itself in American culture was the Jewish debonair.

Other Black publications illuminate varied responses toward the evolving Jewish crisis under Nazism and demonstrate the perceptions Hampton students might have held when first encountering Lowenfeld, whose background and heritage were no secret. Some opinion pieces were antisemitic, defending Hitler's politics as a rational response to the Jewish "international thinking element."[28] One article makes the case that in both

Europe and the United States, "Jews use all of the tricks of the Jewish faith" to financially exploit people, including Black consumers and tenants.[29] These lines of thought in response to Nazism were unusual but sufficiently prevalent to suggest that some antisemitic ideas had infiltrated Black communal and intellectual discourse. For the most part, Black newspapers sympathized with the plight of European Jews and drew connections to American racism. In 1936, the *Afro-American*, the longest-running and one of the most influential Black papers, labeled the South and Nazi Germany as "mental brothers."[30] Writers such as the Reverend Adam Clayton Powell used the press to advocate direct action. Powell's editorial argued that Jewish suffering in Europe signaled the potential for racial intolerance everywhere: "Apathy spells our own doom. Our only success is to stop fascism. . . . We must aid the Jew in Germany."[31]

Hampton students, as youth especially attuned to political discourse, were familiar with the Jewish crisis and its relevance to African Americans. They understood the circumstances behind Lowenfeld's arrival, and, even if impressions of Jewish people were regularly marred by stereotypes, his experiences in a toxic culture of racial intolerance enabled in them an early openness to trusting an otherwise strange and alien figure. The skepticism of previous Hampton students toward White professors persisted into the 1930s and 1940s, but Lowenfeld's unique status as a Jewish refugee was compelling and offered a rare, intellectually stimulating experience. Samella Lewis, one of Lowenfeld's star students, had originally enrolled at Dillard University, a New Orleans–based, historically Black institution, where she studied under artist Elizabeth Catlett. Lewis recalled that early in her college education, Catlett suggested she transfer to Hampton to study in the intriguing new program under Viktor Lowenfeld.[32] Lewis's decision to leave a Black mentor she had admired and valued for a Jewish foreigner indicates the exciting appeal teachers and students saw in Lowenfeld's approach. Lewis surmised that she could learn not only about artistry, but about the world in general through contact with a teacher whose circumstances were so exceptional.

Lowenfeld's Teaching Practices

When Lowenfeld began his teaching career at Hampton in the fall semester of 1939, the artistic and pedagogical theories he had cultivated

Samella Lewis.
(Courtesy of Scripps College, Claremont, CA.)

in Austria found a new home in the Jim Crow South. Antisemitism impelled Lowenfeld to develop artistry that affirmed his Jewish identity and stirred within him an intense resistance to intolerant societies and rigid artistic schemas. Understanding the reality of American anti-Black racism, he encouraged his Hampton students to produce art that represented their authentic selves, chipping away at the stifling omnipresence of Eurocentric styles. This approach entailed forging connections to ancestral and cultural pasts, whereas many students were predisposed to mimic European and White imagery in their work. Lewis, who had nurtured her interest in painting from an early age, recalled a schoolteacher's gift to her, a "history of art" book that in hindsight she could only identify as entirely Eurocentric.[33] Lewis and other students, informed by White hegemonic standards in books and popular media, believed such aesthetics to be the only representations of legitimate artistry.

Lowenfeld observed that students appeared self-conscious, ashamed of African art, and had "by no means freed [themselves] from the influences which were partly superimposed upon [them]."[34] He further took issue with the architectural aesthetics of Hampton's campus, problematizing colonial styles that were at odds with the thoroughly modernist art he wanted his students to produce. Hampton's built environment, in his view, represented a continued colonial dominance over Blackness. His protestations amounted to nothing more than material for a short essay, but importantly, these early impressions of Hampton's

Virginia Hall at Hampton Institute, designed by Richard Morris Hunt, 1874. The building is still in use. (Wikimedia Commons.)

students and spaces betrayed his specifically Jewish and modernist roots in Austria. His rejection of outdated or historicist architecture—that which had imitated and recreated historical aesthetics—emerged from his position in the Viennese Secession, a segment of Austro-German culture that celebrated multiple artistic styles against the rising "sameness of expression" regimented by many elites and, eventually, fascists. Lowenfeld reviled aesthetics that dangerously appropriated traditional, monumental architectural styles the likes of which would characterize the physicality of Nazism and its purported redemption of "the city" from corrupting forces, such as Jews, that were accused of contributing to its degradation. Modernism was the necessary key for a democratic lifestyle free from the grandiosity of totalitarian movements.

Finding apparent traces of colonialism on Hampton's campus and in the artistic mentalities of the students, Lowenfeld developed a pedagogy of self-determination. His recognition of Black shame and his belief in producing dignified self-expressions originated in his and his wife Margaret's interactions with Jewish youth in Vienna. Having both taught at

the Chajes Realgymnasium, they attempted to foster communal bonding coincidently with efforts to promote fulfilling and positive Jewish identities. As a physical education teacher, Margaret conducted nature activities that emphasized the productive exploitation of the land, instilling group cooperation and survival skills in children in accordance with tenets of muscular Judaism. These inclinations toward group survival and solidarity persisted at Hampton, where students noted his interest in their personal lives and friendships and his occasional interventions to settle disputes. Lewis, typically quiet and solitary although not unfriendly, recalled how Lowenfeld meddled in her social relationships. As a light-skinned woman from New Orleans, a city with a reputation for color caste, Lowenfeld questioned whether Lewis was an ostracized victim or the one ostracizing others. He quickly caught on to internalized racism and worked tirelessly—sometimes, to the point of irritation—to dismantle its presence in his classroom, seeking racial unity as a means of communal prosperity. Lewis had also initially rejected portraying Blackness in her paintings, later recalling that she "wouldn't associate with certain people" in art because she was ashamed. Lowenfeld challenged what she called her "weaknesses," and, although it led to moments of conflict, she believed that his pedagogy allowed her to truthfully examine her social position. Throughout the rest of her career as artist and art educator, Lewis viewed the invocation of African symbols and aesthetics—respectfully depicted, in contrast to White artists who portrayed Black "buffoons"—as an opportunity for reclamation and cultural reconnection to the Black ancestral past.[35]

As previously detailed, Lowenfeld's desire to procure artwork free from self-conscious confines predated his teaching position at Hampton. His pedagogy in Vienna similarly embraced "authentic" heritages that honored Jewish history, traditions, and people, while simultaneously resisting antisemitic impositions on Jewish identities. When Jewish students at the Chajes Realgymnasium recreated scenes from the Bible or drew tranquil sketches of Jewish communities, they fostered intimate connections to Judaism but also reclaimed Jewishness against a society that often visually caricatured Jews through propaganda imagery. As with group solidarity, these affirmations that engendered positive views of Jewishness mirrored a clear equivalent at Hampton. To find the "true self," one liberated from the proliferation of stereotypes or the seeming superiority

of European culture, Lowenfeld urged students to freely and consciously accept their African heritages. To this end, Hampton artists began sketching Black figures with "authentic" emotions accumulated over centuries of oppression. Sculptures, watercolor paintings, and charcoal drawings of fatigued Black faces stood out as particularly challenging to southern idealizations of Blackness, in which happy-go-lucky "mammies" and other forms of minstrelsy disguised true historical conditions. The artistic styles encapsulated in these works were not only notable for the figures within them, but for their positioning on the canvas or page, which wholly reflected Lowenfeld's theory of haptic artistry. Lowenfeld had continued to theorize haptic artistry—the idea that the underprivileged had a uniquely subjective perspective that could be dependent on senses other than seeing—through the Black and southern experience.

In his essay "Negro Art Expression in America," Lowenfeld proclaimed that "the horizon of the sharecropper is his cornfield," just as "the horizon of the laundry-woman is her tub," recalling common Black social and economic positions. These were perspectives that only disadvantaged people could understand: visually limited to the immediate task or struggle at hand, yet highly specific and emotive when transformed into art. In Lowenfeld's words, when one's "freedom is restricted . . . we become self-centered like the prisoner whose only outlook is the walls of his prison or the bars of his cell." This theorized subjectivity was as Jewish as it was Black. In the same essay, Lowenfeld remembered "very well how my whole thinking and doing became paralyzed when Hitler marched into Vienna, the city in which I lived, and the only thought I was capable of was centered around the idea of how to get out of this hell."[36] Much of the artwork produced at Hampton affirmed Lowenfeld's theory of the haptic artist, depicting close-ups of Black faces, detached from surroundings and even their bodies, emphasizing only that which is immediately present or concerning to the observer. One untitled sketch by student Ivy Babb depicts a woman seemingly floating in space; her expression is pained or tired, in contrast to racist depictions of Black women domestics as overly jovial servants to White families. The sketch follows the tenets of haptic artistry but is also implicitly political for its subtle charge of Black discontent and its contradiction to White southern fantasies of Black womanhood. These reconceptualizations of Black bodies in art at Hampton were informed by Lowenfeld's earlier practices with Jewish youth,

Ivy Babb, untitled sketch, c. 1943–45.
(Viktor Lowenfeld Papers, Pennsylvania State University Archives, Special Collections Library.)

suggesting a profound interplay between his European Jewish experience, Zionist ideas of Jewish self-empowerment, and the politics of Blackness in the South.

Provocative Politics

As an adolescent Lowenfeld had imagined a Zionist fantasyland. His idea was to establish a Jewish youth settlement, Wyckfohr, on a desolate island in the North Sea, in which a Youth Republic could govern itself free from the constraints of adults. The vision was born from frustration and disillusionment with the politics of the era. After the older generation's warmongering led to such great destruction in World War I, a pacifistic space in which young people could think for themselves without oppressive structures sounded most ideal.[37] These imaginings represented early indications of Lowenfeld's resistance to the political

structures of his day, and his belief in unencumbered self-discovery in young people found transnational significance with the Black art emanating from Hampton.

He urged students to produce art styles that not only reclaimed a dignified heritage but directly confronted the characteristics of anti-Black racism, leaving little doubt as to whose art and voice was being presented. This "consciously Black" art proved especially provocative given that its production was simultaneous with the American war effort to defeat fascism in the name of democracy. While many Black Americans viewed the campaign against Nazi intolerance as an opportunity to secure the same democratic principles at home, the work of Hampton artists was hardly genial or patriotic. John Biggers, Lowenfeld's most famous student, appreciated Lowenfeld's emphasis on producing art that revealed the artist's internalized emotions even when they were deeply critical of social structures. In his earliest art lessons with Lowenfeld, Biggers, who was born in rural North Carolina in 1924, recalled his distressing childhood memories, growing up impoverished in a matriarchal household. Biggers reflected that he could not quite "get over the treatment of women," and that "the

Viktor Lowenfeld with Hampton Institute students including John Biggers (seated) with his painting Mother and Child*, 1944. (Courtesy of Hampton University Archives.)*

Viktor Lowenfeld, right, in front of John Biggers's painting Dying Soldier *at the "Young Negro Art" exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1943. Also pictured (left to right): Dr. Ralph Bridgeman, Hampton Institute president-elect; Ludlow Werner, son of the editor of the* New York Age*; Dr. William Jay Schieffelin, oldest trustee of Hampton Institute; Flemmie P. Kittrell, Hampton Institute Dean of Women. (Charles W. White Papers, Smithsonian Institution.)*

image of a mule in harness with blinders on kept coming to mind." Accordingly, his earliest drawings were unpolished sketches of working Black women. He ultimately found the exercises profound enough to pursue art seriously, regardless of his initial plan "to learn to become a plumber, [because] the economic urge was always present."[38] Biggers's sketches were sympathetic to their subjects but innately critical of the conditions facing the underprivileged. He answered Lowenfeld's call for defiant artwork through these engagements with his cultural memories and the social critiques that underpinned them.

In 1942, Biggers gained national attention for his politically incisive mural *Dying Soldier*, a scathing depiction of a Black soldier trapped in barbed wire. The mural displays the soldier's thoughts during his final

Museum of Modern Art press release announcing the opening of "Young Negro Art: Work of Students at Hampton Institute," September 30, 1943.
(Courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art, New York.)

moments of life, including fleeting moments of joy but also legacies of racial oppression. Above all, it is a critique of American hypocrisy, of a nation that can sacrifice Black bodies for an anti-Nazi cause while still upholding racial discrimination. Biggers's critique of the American war system resonated with Lowenfeld's wartime sorrows and the realization that Austrian Jewish patriots, including his father, had faced antisemitism. Biggers recalled that Lowenfeld leaned on his persecution as a Jew to familiarize himself with "the Negro's problem in this country," and his enthusiasm for free expression inspired politically combative art such as *Dying Soldier*.[39] Moreover, the mural shares similarities with surrealist work by German Jewish artists known to Lowenfeld, including Otto Dix and Georg Grosz, both of whom depicted chaotic despair at the hands of German nationalism. Felix Nussbaum's 1944 painting *The Triumph of Death*, completed months before his murder in Auschwitz, exudes further similarities, suggesting inescapable horror for Europe's Jews. These German Jewish artists, employing the same stylistic devices as Lowenfeld, developed a visual language to explore themes of anti-Nazism and Jewish hopelessness that worked just as well to depict Black suffering.

Despite his concerns about the possible financial limitations of a career in art, the draw of emotional catharsis that had been achieved through creating works such as *Dying Soldier*, a masterpiece of social surrealism, convinced Biggers to pursue the profession.[40] Lowenfeld praised the mural's eclectic appearance and its political audacity, but its reception among a wider White audience was expectedly fraught. Lowenfeld's art department had attracted enough national attention to secure him and select students an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in New York. Critics blasted *Dying Soldier* as "screaming propaganda" that was unsubtle and tacky, and only praised Lowenfeld for a "commendable" but unfulfilled effort to teach Black people artistic prowess.[41] The resistance of artistic elites to Hampton artists was less important than the authentic emotionalism that Lowenfeld and his students felt they had created. In his remarks at the exhibition, Lowenfeld noted that students had "developed rapidly" their abilities to avoid imitating classical, White, and European styles, instead successfully engaging in art that was consciously and meaningfully Black. The earliest creations of Hampton art showed the immense influence of White beauty standards, regimented in part by American fashion magazines, but by the early 1940s, students resisted

Whiteness in their artistic inclinations and depicted beautiful figures with consistently "Negro features."[42]

Equally striking was the interplay between Black and Jewish histories that emerged from these collaborative processes. Although its significance was lost on many of their artistic contemporaries, the Hampton dynamic between Lowenfeld and his students demonstrates the adaptable lessons of the European Jewish experience and its potential uses in a highly racialized society such as that which prevailed in the Jim Crow South. Lowenfeld benefited from this dynamic, as directing politically inspired art in the South helped sustain consciousness of his Jewishness and the forces that had threatened to destroy it. He often began lectures referencing his plight as an Austrian Jew, and this openness allowed him and his students to collectively process the tragedy of the Nazi genocide.

Biggers recalled that one evening Lowenfeld had invited him to dinner with his family following an abnormally long day working in the studio. On the way, the teacher stopped to collect mail at the post office and returned to his car a "ghostly white." After driving for minutes in uncomfortable silence, Lowenfeld abruptly pulled over to read aloud the contents of a letter that shocked Biggers and permanently altered their relationship. "In this letter, they were telling him of some of his folks that they had discovered were burned in those camps," Biggers recollected. Devastated, Lowenfeld lamented the difference between the Nazism that had claimed the lives of his family and former students and the southern prejudices that afflicted Black people. "They aren't killing you," he said, "they segregate you, they discriminate, but they aren't killing you for being Black."[43]

Although lynchings in the United States were routine and ritualized, Lowenfeld was stunned by the extent of Nazi atrocities that had reinforced his otherness as a Jew, disrupting the comfort he might have been acquiring in his new life. The emotionally draining exchange enhanced the personal and professional bonds between Lowenfeld and Biggers, whose understanding of Jewish suffering helped transcend whatever "racial barriers" might have previously existed. The trauma of the Holocaust strengthened Lowenfeld's resolve to produce politically meaningful art at Hampton that could effectively combat Nazi or White supremacist tendencies. Rather than internalize his pain out of fear of inconveniencing others with a specifically Jewish hardship, Lowenfeld repurposed the

events in Europe to make a difference in southern society. The consequent artwork seamlessly blended Jewish and Black experiences together in visual critiques of intolerant societies while also honoring the persistence and singularity of each community.

Black and Jewish Convergences

The immense destruction brought about by Nazi ingenuity emboldened Lowenfeld's view that creative expression should only be harnessed for just causes. Reflecting on the destruction of Europe's Jews, he condemned how "creativity could be misused," urging students to be purposeful and morally sound in all that they produced.[44] The lessons of the Jewish experience were visually evident in Hampton artwork created at the war's close and in the years after. Ivy Babb depicted striped figures in an ambiguous space struggling to carry a corpse, recalling horrors of both the Holocaust and the war, implicitly critiquing a relentlessly violent world. Another student sketched miserable, bald figures in cramped conditions, their sunken eyes and emaciated faces mirroring the common

Ivy Babb, untitled sketch, 1944.
(Viktor Lowenfeld Papers, Pennsylvania State University Archives, Special Collections Library.)

Charles White in his studio.
(Wikimedia Commons.)

imagery emanating from death camps. The figures have European features, and the timing, combined with Lowenfeld's presence, suggests the Holocaust as a probable influence. The art also resonates with Black experiences, recalling historical scenes of Black oppression such as the Middle Passage and implying the connectivity of Black and Jewish persecution and the establishment of shared empathy at Hampton.

Artist Charles White related antisemitism to anti-Black racism more explicitly, as is demonstrated in his 1944 drawing *Headlines*, which features an anxious man surrounded by a collage of newspapers reporting various atrocities. The bottom portion of the work includes a headline about Nazism's attack on communism, while another reads "Speakers Link Anti-Semitism, Anti-Negroism." White had been the recipient of a Rosenwald Fellowship and chose to complete his project at Hampton in 1943, wanting to immerse himself in Black southern culture but also enticed by the school's highly reputed art department. Lowenfeld advised him during the completion of his mural, *The Contribution of the Negro to Democracy in America*, which celebrated "Black beauty."[45] The student's efforts to visually promote Black self-esteem and the subsequent invocation of antisemitism in his work indicate Lowenfeld's likely impact.

Lowenfeld's artistry was also shaped by his interactions with Black artists at Hampton. Given his intensive teaching and writing responsibilities, he painted less than in his youth, but between 1943 and 1945 created *The Negro's Burden*. The oil-on-canvas portrays a Black male struggling under the weight of an overwhelming mass that forms shackles around his wrist. The piece may be interpreted as a statement on Black perseverance against hardship and evinces some of the lessons Lowenfeld learned while living in the South. He formed these impressions from interactions with students and faculty alike, having initially shared a home with Moses Williams, a Black professor from Hampton. Williams recalled that he and his family regarded the Lowenfelds as "people that we had known all our lives, who were completely sympathetic."[46] Rather than buy their first home in a predominantly White neighborhood, the Lowenfelds settled in the all-Black area of Phoebus, Virginia, and Viktor opted to use Black drinking fountains and toilets instead of segregated White facilities.[47]

Lowenfeld remained close to the Black community throughout his tenure at Hampton and also occasionally participated in Jewish communal activities in Newport News. While no records illuminate his and Margaret's belonging to any particular congregation, he delivered lectures on art theory at Temple Rodef Sholem and hosted concerts for another Jewish refugee and Hampton colleague, the musician Hans Mahler, on behalf of the Jewish Welfare Board.[48] His public lectures typically discussed "visual and non-visual" applications of art, simplifying his haptic theory into layman's terms, and were presented with slideshows showcasing the work of both his blind and Black students. Through these regular addresses to the public, Lowenfeld championed artwork that implicitly defied intolerant beliefs. The social commentary of his lectures was not lost on audiences, as is exemplified in an article written by Marion L. Starkey, a White colleague from Hampton. She praised Lowenfeld's method of guiding students toward "an unconscious release from their own emotional conflicts," including physical or racial "handicaps." Like Starkey, other White faculty at Hampton approved of Lowenfeld's teaching methods, and several attended his lectures concerning art appreciation.[49]

His ascendant popularity with students, colleagues, and the general public eventually fueled his exit as Hampton administrators grew skeptical. According to Lewis, "[Lowenfeld] became too popular for Hampton

and the administration forced him out." Frequent visits from New York art elites and voluminous press attention surrounding his publications and lectures turned Lowenfeld into an unwanted celebrity. Lewis surmised that administrators feared "if he were famous, then maybe he wouldn't be subservient." Lowenfeld consequently began teaching at Pennsylvania State University in 1946, and some Hampton students including John Biggers followed him for graduate studies. "He was not happy there," Lewis recalled, for White students "had too much" and were not as receptive to his pedagogy as Hampton artists were.[50]

Lowenfeld's theories as an artist and art educator were widely respected but were most meaningful to marginalized groups such as Jews, the blind, and African Americans. In this sense, he and his students at Hampton imagined a form of creative exchange that depended on mutual compassion and recognition of the structures that bound them together. Lowenfeld's unhappiness following his departure from Hampton suggests that he was most fulfilled while assisting other social undesirables in their pursuits of dignity and self-acceptance. Hampton offered the key to actualizing the political fantasies he imagined in Vienna, and his discovery of passionate liberalism while there became the basis of his newly established American Jewish identity.

These instances of connection through art contain broader implications about Black and Jewish historical relations, a dynamic studied through abundant literature but one that remains heavily debated. The traditional narrative locates the 1950s as the golden age of Black and Jewish allegiance, before the rise of Black Power dismantled these working relationships. Marc Dollinger has complicated the notion that Black Power alienated Jews, arguing instead that it represented a model of identity politics useful to Jewish activists and was always an anticipated outcome of the fight for equality.[51] Lowenfeld's existence at Hampton supports this claim, as he encouraged proud aesthetics in Black art while relying on Black and Jewish commonalities. Through relatively radical Black art, Lowenfeld grieved what would later be termed "the Holocaust," and the Nazi assault on modernism, finding immediate purpose in the afflictions of his life in an entirely new social environment.

In 1960, at the age of fifty-seven, Lowenfeld passed away from a heart attack during a faculty meeting. He missed the peak years of civil rights activism, but his teachings at Hampton contributed to Black self-

expression especially in the politically provocative works of John Biggers, Samella Lewis, Charles White, and Elizabeth Catlett, all of whom became influential teachers and theorists in later years. Biggers's stated goals as a professor at Texas Southern University best encapsulate Lowenfeld's spirit. "I hoped to help the young Blacks," he suggested, "substitute a feeling of self-respect for their then-current feelings of self-contempt by developing an appreciation for their own art and heritage."[52]

Though only a fragment of the southern Jewish experience, Lowenfeld's career is informative in several ways. His time at Hampton is noteworthy not merely because he was a Jew, but because the culture that emerged in the art department was understood to be Jewish in its origins and outcomes even in an overwhelmingly Christian setting. These convergences are not natural products of Black and Jewish interaction or collaboration, but, for the actors involved in Hampton's early art department, such identities mattered and added emotional heft to the artistic proceedings. In the practices and artistry at Hampton, the confluence between spiritually Zionist principles and Jewish oppression with Blackness in the South and Black artistic expression was unmistakable.

These cultural transferences demonstrate the inherent value and often untapped potential of locating Jewish voices through Black sources, such as the vital testimonies of Hampton students, as well as the visual art they produced, works that speak to Black and Jewish legacies of oppression, struggle, and survival. These works additionally indicate the potential to resist racist confines and mediate the effects of trauma through art, teaching, and unity among socially marginalized groups. The experiences of Jewish refugee scholars at historically Black colleges and universities, particularly in the Jim Crow South, have been relatively unexplored—in part because the Jewish refugee scholars somewhat surprisingly did not leave memoirs. Yet through reconstructing such narratives, the profound significance of their teachings and their lives can be discovered.

NOTES

[1] Viktor Lowenfeld, teaching materials, n.d., box 1, folder 62, Viktor Lowenfeld Papers (587), Pennsylvania State University Archives, Special Collections Library, Pennsylvania State University, State College, PA (hereafter cited as Lowenfeld Papers).

[2] Viktor Lowenfeld is one of many Jewish refugee scholars featured in the documentary film *From Swastika to Jim Crow*, directed by Lori Cheatle and Martin D. Toub (Brooklyn: Pacific Street Films, 2000).

[3] Clive Webb, *Fight Against Fear: Southern Jews and Black Civil Rights* (Athens, GA, 2001): xvii.

[4] Viktor Lowenfeld, audio of recorded lecture at Pennsylvania State University (1958), box 77, reel 113, Lowenfeld Papers; Kathleen Hemby Hanstein to Thomas Jones, March 6, 1944, box 1, item 17, Gabrielle Simon Edgcomb Collection (1999.A.0037.31), digitized materials, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC (hereafter cited as Edgcomb Collection).

[5] Viktor Lowenfeld, "Art and Society: A Dilemma," c.1950, box 1, folder 56, Lowenfeld Papers.

[6] Gabrielle Simon Edgcomb, *From Swastika to Jim Crow: Refugee Scholars at Black Colleges* (Malabar, FL, 1993), 78. Stephen J. Whitfield discusses a variety of reactions of refugee scholars at Black Mountain College to racism in the South and at their institutions in "Black Mountain and Brandeis: Two Experiments in Higher Education," *Southern Jewish History* 16 (2013): 127–68.

[7] Viktor Lowenfeld, "Autobiographical Lectures," in *The Autobiographical Lectures of Some Prominent Art Educators*, ed. Ralph Raunft (Reston, VA, 2001), 4.

[8] Ibid., 5.

[9] Todd Presner, *Muscular Judaism: The Jewish Body and the Politics of Regeneration* (New York, 2007), 4.

[10] Martin Buber, *The First Buber: Youthful Zionist Writings of Martin Buber*, ed. Gilya G. Schmidt (Syracuse, NY, 1999), 100.

[11] Susan K. Leshnoff, "Viktor Lowenfeld: Portrait of a Young Art Teacher in Vienna in the 1930s," *Studies in Art Education* 54 (2013): 160.

[12] For discussion of aniconism, the presumed Jewish aversion to art stemming from biblical doctrine, see Kalman P. Bland, *The Artless Jew: Medieval and Modern Affirmations and Denials of the Visual* (Princeton, 2000). Challengers to these traditions included Martin Buber, Moses Hess, and Alfred Nossig, as discussed in Martin Buber, *Juedische Kuenstler* (Berlin, 1903).

[13] Presner, *Muscular Judaism*, 71.

[14] Michael Brenner, *The Renaissance of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany* (New Haven, 1996), 24.

[15] Lowenfeld, "Autobiographical Lectures," 7.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Viktor Lowenfeld, teaching materials, n.d., box 1, folder 62, Lowenfeld Papers.

[18] Edward K. Graham, "The Hampton Institute Strike of 1927: A Case Study in Student Protest," *American Scholar* 38 (Autumn 1969): 668–83.

[19] W. E. B. Du Bois, article draft, "The Hampton Strike, ca. November 2, 1927," W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312), Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

[20] L. F. Coles, "Hampton students strike article, ca. October 1927," 5–6, W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312), Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

[21] Edward Graham, "Hampton Institute Strike," 675.

[22] James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860–1935* (Chapel Hill, 1988), 235.

[23] Hoda M. Zaki, *Civil Rights and Politics at Hampton Institute: The Legacy of Alonzo G. Moron* (Urbana, IL, 2007), 18, 263.

[24] Arthur Howe to Gordon Allport, May 23, 1939, box 1, folder 9, item 58, Edgcomb Collection.

[25] Gordon Allport to Arthur Howe, May 29, 1939, box 1, folder 9, item 60, Edgcomb Collection.

[26] Lowenfeld PSU lecture.

[27] Kelly Miller, quoted in Lunabelle Wedlock, "The Reaction of Negro Publications and Organizations to German Antisemitism," *The Howard University Studies in the Social Sciences* 3 (1942): 49.

[28] J. A. Rogers, quoted in Wedlock, "Reaction of Negro Publications," 87.

[29] Quoted in ibid., 133.

[30] Quoted in ibid., 111.

[31] Adam C. Powell, quoted in ibid., 53.

[32] Transcript, "Interview with Samella Lewis, Tape #1," 15, box 66, folder 7, Samella S. Lewis Papers (Manuscript Collection No. 1132), Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University, Atlanta.

[33] Ibid., 8.

[34] Viktor Lowenfeld, "Negro Art Expression in America," 1945, 5, box 19, folder 12, Lowenfeld Papers.

[35] Lewis interview, 21.

[36] Lowenfeld, "Negro Art Expression in America," 6.

[37] Lowenfeld, "Autobiographical Lectures," 5.

[38] Transcript, "Artists Series: An interview with John Biggers," 4, 1983, box 59, folder 4, John Biggers Papers (Manuscript Collection No. 1179), Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives and Rare Book Library, Emory University, Atlanta (hereafter cited as Biggers Papers).

[39] John Biggers, quoted in "I've Hit My High: Dr. John Biggers moves in giant strides through classroom and museum," *Houston Press*, November 17, 1968, box 32, folder 5, Biggers Papers.

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[42] Press Release, "Museum of Modern Art," 1943, box 1, folder 41, Lowenfeld Papers.

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[45] Charles White, "Autobiographical Essay," c. 1950s, box 4, folder 64, Charles White Papers, 1933–1987, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

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PRIMARY SOURCES

A Daughter's Love: Lisa Stein, Senator Charles Andrews, and American Refugee Policy during the Holocaust

by

Augustine Meaher*

Correspondence of Lisa Stein, U.S. Senator Charles Andrews, Charles Andrews, Jr., and Others, October 1941–August 1943.[1]

The response of southern Jews to the European refugee crisis following the rise of Hitler is understudied, and Charles Oscar Andrews, the senior senator from Florida from 1936 to 1946, is not a politician usually associated with international relations, refugees, or the Holocaust. His papers in the University of Florida's special collections, however, contain a rich correspondence related to his attempts, with the involvement of his office staff and his son, to aid a Jewish constituent obtain an entry visa for her mother trapped in Vichy France. Historians have previously explored how some southern politicians such as Alabama's Lister Hill and Texas's Lyndon B. Johnson helped constituents gain visas for relatives to escape war-torn Europe, but this is the first and so far only discovery of a Florida senator providing such assistance.[2] This case study also provides an example of southern Jews being affected by international events and acting to help Jews outside of the South.

These letters are unique in that they contain not only correspondence between a Jewish constituent and a southern senator but also include communications to and from the various federal agencies involved in the visa process and letters from the actual visa applicant in Vichy France, which together provide a complete picture of the process and the role played by

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each. Two other aspects make these documents and situation worthy of note. The Jewish petitioner was a recent refugee who had fled Hitler's Germany, and the European location was Vichy France rather Germany or other countries like Poland or Austria typically associated with such an issue.

These letters offer a valuable example of how some southern Jews responded to the rise of Nazism and came together to assist those trying to flee persecution, thus they confirm earlier historical interpretations. Dan J. Puckett, for example, argues that this response was most common among Jews who were relatively newly arrived in the United States. The initial responses and continued Nazi persecution ultimately led to cooperation between such people and more established Jews. Nonetheless, fear of attracting unwanted attention in the heavily Protestant Jim Crow South ensured that many southern Jews maintained a low profile in these endeavors. Thus, many Jews throughout the South "organized themselves locally and at the state level to support persecuted Jews" but did not criticize President Franklin Roosevelt's restrictive immigration policy, since doing so would not have sat well in the solidly Democratic region.[3] Southern Jews remained constrained by southern political norms.

Setting the Stage

In 1940, Florida had approximately twenty-five thousand Jewish residents who mainly resided in Jacksonville and Miami Beach.[4] Liselotte "Lisa" Stein, age twenty-six, with her husband, Friedrich Stein, age thirty-two, owned and ran a fifty-seven acre chicken farm valued for tax purposes at two hundred dollars outside of Sanford. Friedrich, who had raised chickens in Germany, was imprisoned in a concentration camp until relatives obtained his release and helped him flee to their home in Belize. The Jewish Agricultural Association awarded him seven hundred dollars to move to Sanford, and the local community contributed another three thousand dollars to allow him to purchase land.[5] The Steins in occupational terms were "very southern," and Florida, especially its central part where farms and citrus orchards dominated, was still very southern. The nearest sizable Jewish community was in Orlando, thirty miles to the south, home of the largest Jewish community in central Florida, estimated to be near one thousand by 1940.[6] Jews held prominent positions in the citrus and agricultural sectors that were the basis of Orlando's economy.[7]

Jewish Orlando was a tight-knit ethnic community where "everyone knew everyone else and assumed roles in the business, civic and cultural life of the life of the city," which included several kosher establishments and a Jewish cemetery.[8] It was this Jewish community that supported Lisa Stein in her attempt to gain a visa initially for her parents, Friedrich and Bertha Marx, and then, following the death of her father in December 1941, for her widowed mother.

Without such community support, the State Department bureaucracy would have been insurmountable for the Steins and other Jews. To secure a U.S. entry visa, a bond of five hundred dollars was required, and two people unrelated to each other had to sponsor the individual to ensure that the immigrant did not become a "public charge" for at least five years. Individual Jews throughout the South "sponsored family members and numerous nonfamilial refugees."[9] In doing so they were continuing to support Jews outside of the country in times of trouble as well as members of their own community. Abraham M. Bornstein provided the five-hundred-dollar bond necessary for Lisa Stein's mother to receive an entry visa. Bornstein's sponsorship of Stein's mother epitomized how Jews supported each other. Bornstein was originally from Lodz, Poland, and was a silk manufacturer in Paterson, New Jersey, later in Pennsylvania. He moved to Florida for health reasons in 1931 and became a citrus grower and leader in the Jewish communities of Orlando and central Florida.[10] His assistance to Stein's application for a visa for her mother was crucial and complemented the political support of Senator Andrews.

Andrews's Florida office coordinated the senator's aid to his Jewish constituents. From this office, his son Charles O. Andrews, Jr., a lawyer in Sanford, served as the conduit for many of the letters between the senator, the senator's Washington office, and Lisa Stein. Charles O. Andrews, Jr.'s main correspondent in Washington, D.C., was Orja Sutliff, chief of staff for Senator Andrews in Washington. The events of the war disrupted Stein's efforts many times as the immigration process became increasingly difficult. Senator Andrews and his office continued to support her efforts, however, by applying pressure to an unfriendly and unhelpful State Department, whose bureaucracy took no account of the chaos and confusion caused by the war except to view it as a possible cause of a flood of undesirable immigrants. The senator's office also guided Stein through the

Senator Charles O. Andrews
of Florida, 1939.
(Library of Congress.)

State Department bureaucracy, explaining every new wartime regulation and how best to comply while applying pressure to the State Department.

These letters also provide an interesting insight into a little-studied area of American diplomatic history. American diplomatic relations and interactions with Vichy France are usually a footnote in wider diplomatic histories of American-French relations. Vichy foreign policy remains an understudied area of French history as well. *Vichy France and the Jews*, by Michael Marrus and Robert Paxton, provides an impressive analysis of the policies Jews in Vichy France had to cope with but says little about the plight of non-French Jews in Vichy attempting to escape Europe and reach the United States. Adam Rayski's *The Choice of the Jews under Vichy* provides an excellent understanding of the daily life of Jews in Vichy, but again his research is primarily focused on the experience of French Jews; he mentions American diplomatic relations with Vichy only tangentially.[11]

The correspondence reprinted in this article thus provides new insight into the plight of German Jews in Vichy France seeking to gain entry into the United States and reinforces earlier analysis of State Department intransigence in allowing refugees fleeing Nazi tyranny to enter the United States. They also offer excellent insight into the plight of those trying to escape the Holocaust. Finally, these letters and telegrams provide a

human face to the refugees desperately seeking entry into the United States and a detailed insight into the bureaucratic maze they faced.

This human face appears at its most poignant when Bertha Marx, Stein's mother, describes her situation in a detention camp:

> Sometimes everything seems like a nightmare and I just cannot get [out of] it. But now I know that it was destiny that I should not see you any more. Thinking of you gives me the strength to stand it as long as I will be able to. I know that you, my dearest beloved child, have done everything in your power, but the authorization did not come! If the same should arrive today or tomorrow it may mean that I am saved.[12]

Lisa Stein described herself as a Jewish German refugee in the United States:

> My husband and I are Jewish refugees from Germany. My husband lost both of his parents by the persecution of Hitler, his father was found hanged in his house one morning, his mother died two months later as consequence of the shock she had suffered.
>
> My husband was brought to the concentration camp "Dachau." All our property was taken. [We received a] visa for British Honduras where my husband[']s cousin resides and where we could wait until our American Quota number was called up, was the reason that he got released from "Dachau." He got crippled in this camp and is crippled since.[13]

Internment camp at de Gurs, France, 1939.
(Collection Amicale du Camp de Gurs, Museum
of the History of Justice, Crime, and Punishment.)

The Steins escaped Germany mere days before the outbreak of World War II in Europe in 1939—a condition of her husband's release from Dachau—and arrived in Tampa in February 1940.[14] Lisa Stein stated, "From the very day, we entered this country, we tried to [save] the life of my old parents by bringing them over to this country."[15] Her parents "were evacuated from Heidelberg on a sealed train on October 23, 1940, and were placed in a concentration camp, Camp de Gurs, Basses Pyrenees, Unoccupied France."[16] Nazi Germany viewed unoccupied France as a "dumping ground for Germany's pariahs."[17]

Policies, Procedures, and Antisemitism

Many in the State Department were wary of the country becoming the final destination of "Germany's pariahs." A would-be refugee faced numerous barriers to receiving an entry visa for the United States. No specific refugee class existed, and entry was severely limited by the Immigration Act of 1924, which imposed annual quotas based on national origin. A potential immigrant had to wait until a space was available within the quota, which could be over a year after their visa was approved.[18] Breckinridge Long, a Missouri lawyer well connected in the Democratic Party who served as U.S. Ambassador to Mussolini's Italy from 1933 to 1936, had become an Assistant Secretary of State for Special Problems in January 1940 and was responsible for the Visa Division.[19] Chief of the Visa Division, Avra Warren, assisted Long. Shortly after the fall of France in summer 1940, Long wrote:

> We can delay and effectively stop for a temporary period of indefinite length the number of immigrants into the United States. We could do this simply by advising our consuls to put every obstacle in the way and to require additional evidence and to resort to various administrative advices which would postpone and postpone and postpone the granting of the visas.[20]

Long's antisemitism continued to restrict the entry of Jews into the United States throughout most of the war.[21]

Secretary of State Cordell Hull declined to implement Long's proposal but instructed State Department officials abroad to "take additional caution when screening refugees." Following American entry into World War II, all applications had to be reviewed by an interdepartmental committee in Washington to ensure that a potential refugee did not pose a

threat to national security. Lisa Stein and Senator Andrews corresponded most frequently with Avra M. Warren, who supported Long's restrictive policies. Warren visited Europe shortly after Long's memo and advised American consuls to "curtail drastically the entry of refugees into the United States."[22] The senator's office also corresponded with Warren's assistants, Eliot B. Coulter and Howard K. Travers.

Breckinridge Long, c. 1934.
(Library of Congress.)

Vichy France maintained diplomatic relations with the United States but, as a Nazi client and collaborationist state, its government was deeply antisemitic. Vichy did nothing to facilitate the departure of Jews from its territory to safe countries; indeed, it actively sought to prevent their departure. To leave Vichy France, a refugee first had to obtain an entry visa for an overseas country. Once an entry visa had been obtained, a refugee qualified for a French exit visa. By summer 1942 it had become extremely difficult to obtain a French exit visa and technically impossible if a person had entered France after 1936. It was, however, still possible to obtain a visa by bribery, usually facilitated by the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society

Exterior of the HIAS office at 425 Lafayette St., New York City. (Ontherescuefront.wordpress.com/2018/06/15/.)

Jewish refugees look out from the deck of the SS Serpa Pinto *before its departure from the port of Lisbon, September 1941. (Photograph by Milton Koch. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC.)*

(HIAS), the sole Jewish emigration agency recognized by the Vichy government. HIAS, a U.S. organization, had arranged with Chase National Bank so that the Banque de France's frozen dollars in the United States could be released against the francs paid by prospective immigrants to HIAS and consuls in Vichy.[23]

With exit visa in hand, a refugee then had to obtain a transit visa, usually for Portugal and/or Spain. As Lisa Stein presciently warned, "the hard thing is to get them to Lisbon, because Portugal only issues transit-visas for people whose departure [is a certainty.]"[24] Portugal, a neutral country and generally considered more sympathetic to the allied cause than Franco's Spain, served as the primary transit nation for refugees fleeing to the United States. William L. Shirer described Lisbon in October 1940 as "the one remaining port on the Continent from which you can get a boat or a plane to New York."[25] Yet Portuguese authorities would only issue transit visas if the refugee could show proof of having purchased an onward ticket, and the transit visa was valid for only fourteen days. Another possibility was to proceed to French North Africa, which was under Vichy control, and make one's way from there to Casablanca and thence on to Lisbon via Tangiers. However, this route was even more difficult and was hindered by the lack of the necessary consulates for transit visas—despite having being made famous by the film *Casablanca*. The course of the war made obtaining the necessary visas and travel increasingly difficult.[26]

The visa process was complicated enough, but for most refugees in unoccupied France the mere act of going to the consuls in Vichy and Marseille was all but impossible. Most were detained in the Gurs internment camp. The camp was perennially short of water, and an individual had only a slight chance, a little over 10 percent, of emigrating from it.[27] Once the preliminary visa steps had been completed, a would-be refugee was often transferred to the transit camp of Les Milles, which, although an improvement from Gurs, still remained a "soul-deadening experience."[28] Les Milles allowed inmates day passes to visit consulates, a policy that greatly facilitated exiting Vichy France. Some internees were even housed in overcrowded Marseille hotels. The frequent moving of internees between camps and hotels made it all the more difficult for their applications to be processed.

Prisoners chop wood in the Les Milles internment camp in southern France, April 1942. (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Ilse Cohn Rothschild.)

Interaction between Lisa Stein and Senator Andrews and His Office

In October 1941, Lisa Stein approached Senator Andrews's office in Orlando and requested the senator's assistance in obtaining a visa for her mother. The U.S. had recently closed its consulates in Nazi-occupied Europe, and the Vichy government believed these changes meant the United States would stop issuing visas to refugees; thus Vichy threatened to close the camps near Marseille.[29] Senator Andrews's papers indicate this was the first time he was asked for such assistance by any of his constituents, and it is unclear why Stein approached him. Florida's other senator, Claude Pepper, was aware of the Jewish refugee plight, having returned to the United States in 1938 on an ocean liner carrying four hundred Jewish refugees, but in "his comments to the press, Pepper neglected to mention them."[30] Senator Pepper's files do not indicate that any constituents approached him for such assistance.[31] Furthermore, none of Florida's five congressional representatives took much if any interest in the plight of Europe's Jews.

Andrews, Jr., subsequently requested that his father "do anything possible to assist this party[,] she seems very worthy."[32] The senator's first response was simply informational, but the Stein case clearly caught his attention. He wrote personally to the head of the Visa Division, "I shall greatly appreciate if you will personally look into this case and if it is at all possible, approve the application for a visa."[33] He promised his son, "[I] will keep in behind it."[34] Senator Andrews did indeed keep behind it, most likely because of his connection to central Florida, including its small but politically active Jewish community.

Stein came agonizingly close to getting her mother out of Vichy France. In November 1941, the State Department informed Senator Andrews that a visa had been granted. By informing the senator of the issuance of the visa, the Visa Division likely assumed that the senator would cease pressuring the staff. Furthermore, this meant that Stein would know that her mother had received a visa, which without the senator's intervention, she would have only found out once her mother received her visa and informed her of having it, something that would have taken months.

Florida Democratic legislator Charles O. Andrews, Jr., c. 1949. (State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory.)

American Export Lines advertisement for passage on the SS Excalibur. *(ssmaritime.com/Excalibur.htm.)*

The senator followed up by contacting American Export Lines, a passenger shipping company, to advise them that Bertha Marx had the appropriate visas and ask them to hold her booking longer than the customary seven days prior to sailing. The senator's request meant the booking was held until four days prior to departure, but the additional three days was insufficient for Bertha Marx to obtain the necessary exit and transit visas that could only be obtained once an American entry visa was obtained and to make it to Lisbon. The American Export Lines operated a route between the United States and the Mediterranean that provided the primary means of escape from Europe: its Lisbon-New York route was a lifeline for refugees who could make it to Lisbon.[35] The Pan American Clipper airliner also flew from Lisbon to New York, but it carried far fewer passengers and was much more expensive.[36]

American entry into World War II and the German declaration of war against the United States on December 11, 1941, did not directly affect Vichy France, which remained neutral (albeit pro-German) and maintained diplomatic relations with the United States. American entry into the war resulted in the need for an attorney to assist Bertha Marx in

securing a new American entry visa. Unsurprisingly, Andrews, Jr., recommended the services of his law partner, Dozier DeVane, to guide Stein through the newly created Interdepartmental Visa Review Committee. DeVane was assisted by Barney J. Cohen, another law partner of Andrews, Jr. Stein also contacted HIAS to help negotiate the byzantine visa system. The involvement of a United States senator ensured that Lisa Stein received not only general HIAS assistance but also direct support from Isaac L. Asofsky, executive director of the immigration agency.[37]

However, as a German national, Lisa Stein's mother's status now changed from that of would-be immigrant to enemy alien. This greatly increased the difficulty of Stein's receiving an American visa for her mother as transatlantic voyages became increasingly rare. The possibility remained that at any time the war would result in a break in American-Vichy relations or the German occupation of unoccupied France. Stein worried in early 1942:

> Important is, that we got the invitation for the hearing before the appeal board and if we are able to present the case in the very [near] future (that means before we break relations with France, which I am afraid will be inevitable).[38]

In mid-February 1942 Sutliff warned, "I have been advised by Mr. McKee of the State Department that all visa applications of 'enemy aliens' will be decided on by the Inter-departmental Visa Review Committee." He continued, "From what I am able to gather on an off the record basis, these applications are going to be very difficult to put through."[39] Subsequent events verified the correctness of Sutliff's prediction. Two months later the State Department informed Stein that the preliminary examination "has not resulted in a favorable recommendation to the American consular officer concerned."[40] Stein began the appeals process and advised Andrews, Jr., that the State Department letter "is the usual letter, everybody is getting, who applies for a new authorization."[41] The State Department was again placing a barrier in the way of those seeking entry to the United States by requiring all applicants to undergo a lengthy examination, something impossible for many to attend or support. The German declaration of war on the United States meant new entry regulations for the United States, as Warren explained:

> A reexamination of Mrs. Marx's case has been necessitated in view of the recent regulations pertaining to enemy aliens. Mrs. Marx, by reason of

> her German nationality is classifiable as an enemy alien, and under the established procedure, her case, after preliminary examination, will be considered by the Interdepartmental Visa Review Committee and will then be placed before the Board of Appeals.[42]

The correspondence reprinted below was written during the darkest days of World War II. From it one can follow an individual through the refugee process and gain appreciation for the efforts of Jews and southern politicians to assist those caught in wartorn Europe. The correspondence presents an important window into some of the internal documents within the State Department and also shows how a United States senator could influence the process, albeit in a limited manner. The senator's efforts to bring Bertha Marx to the United States were ultimately unsuccessful. Because of the course of the war in Europe and the State Department bureaucracy, by the time the final visa had been issued Marx had already been deported to Auschwitz, where she was doomed to a fate her last letter indicates she expected. The documents confirm what is already known about the refugee process. However, they also illuminate a previously unknown example of a United States senator attempting to help a constituent bring a Jewish refugee into the United States, despite the fact that he was neither generally concerned with Jewish affairs nor particularly interested in international relations. He was simply supporting a constituent in her battles with the State Department. The letters also reveal how international events affected a southern Jewish community and how Jews responded to the rise of Nazism and aided a newly arrived member of their community.

Conclusion

Bertha Marx was transported to Auschwitz shortly after her last letter to her daughter, a fate she alluded to in that final letter. The break in American-Vichy relations and the German occupation of previously unoccupied France resulted in the deportation of almost all Jewish internees. The Steins were divorced in 1944 but then disappear from the historical record; hopefully the publication of these letters will lead to more information about them. However, these letters alone serve as an amazing example of a daughter's love for her parents at a time of great international and personal tragedy.

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Correspondence of Lisa Stein, U.S. Senator Charles Andrews, Charles Andrews, Jr., and Others, October 1941–August 1943.

[*The letters below appear as in the original without corrections.*]

Charles O. Andrews, Jr., the senator's son, to Orja Sutliff, chief of staff to Senator Andrews in Washington, D.C., October 4, 1941

Mrs. Lisa Stein, Route 2, box 159, Sanford, has asked that we assist her in securing a visa for her mother and father from unoccupied France in time to come to America on the S.S. Excalibur sailing from Lisbon November 7th.

Her father's name is Friedrich Marx, and he is in Barracks No. 24, Camp de Gurs, Basses [Pyrenees], Unoccupied France. Her mother's name is Bertha Marx, and she is in Barracks 8 of the same Camp.

Mrs. Stein has deposited with the Refugee Committee ticket for passage on the Excalibur and also railroad ticket from the camp to Lisbon, and has put up bond for their admission to this country. All that needs to be done to permit them to sail on November 7th is for the American Consul at Marseilles to grant them a visa to permit their passage to embarkation on November 7th.

On August 30th she applied to Mr. A. M. Warren, Acting Chief, Visa Division, State Department, Washington, for the visa. She understands its file number is VD 811,111, Marx, Friedrich.

Please do anything possible to assist this party as she seems very worthy.

Senator Charles Andrews, telegram to Andrews, Jr., October 7, 1941

State Department advises unable to say whether or not visa for Friedrich Marx will be issued in time for embarkation on November 7th. Have so advised Mrs. Lisa Stein, Sanford, and will wire her more fully tomorrow.

Lisa Stein to Andrews, Jr., October 10, 1941

I called you twice yesterday but could not get in touch with you. I am in receipt of a telegram from Washington: I quote:

> Reference Friedrich Marx Application For Visa Now Under Consideration By State Department But Unable To Determine When Visa Will Be Issued Indications Are That Approval Will Not Be Had This Week Have Made Personal Appeal To State Department And Am Doing Everything Possible To Expedite Action And Issuance Of Visa Will Advise You Further Immediately Upon Receipt Of Definite Information. Charles O Andrews US Senator

The reason I called you up over the phone, my dear Mr. Andrews, was, to assure you again of my gratitude and appreciation of what you have done for me.

Cover memorandum to message below, October 17, 1941

Charles: Talked with State Department also, on this. Will keep in behind it.

Senator Andrews to Avra M. Warren, Chief, Visa Division, U.S. State Department, October 17, 1941

Re: Visa, Friedrich Marx, VD 811,111.

Your division of the State Department has requested Mrs. Lisa Stein of Sanford Florida, to submit a financial report for Abraham M. Bornstein, who executed a bond for Mr. & Mrs. Friedrich Marx, to the effect that they would not become a public charge for five years after admission to the United States.

Mrs. Stein has forwarded this report to me requesting that I place it in your hands, and accordingly, you will find it attached hereto.

Opposite page: *"Mrs. Lisa Stein . . . has asked that we assist her in securing a visa for her mother and father." Charles O. Andrews, Jr., to Orja Sutliff, chief of staff to his father, Senator Charles O. Andrews, October 4, 1941. (Courtesy of Charles Oscar Andrews Papers, Special and Area Studies Collections, George A. Smathers Libraries, University of Florida, Gainesville.)*

Mrs. Stein has been advised by the American Export Lines that it is too late to cancel the reservations which have been made for Mr. & Mrs. Marx to sail from Lisbon, Portugal on November 7th, and if these reservations are not used she will forfeit the cost of the tickets which have been paid for, in amount of nearly $1000, and furthermore, that it will be impossible to secure reservations for space on the American Export Lines, if these are not used, for at least a year.

I shall greatly appreciate it if you will personally look into this case, and if it is at all possible, approve the application for visa in order that Mr. & Mrs. Marx may avail themselves of the reservations to [sail] from Lisbon on November 7th.

Thanking you, and with good wishes,

Stein to Andrews, Jr., October 24, 1941

To-day I got a letter from the Lauier Travel Service and I want to inform you right away about the contents. They write, I quote: "Dear Mrs. Stein. I have a letter from the American Export Line and they suggest that at present we leave the holding of your parents reservation up to their Lisbon office.

They say, that Lisbon holds space until four days before sailing, then it is usually cancelled unless word is received from the prospective passengers by that time. They say, that it may be possible that the Department of State will give advisory approval of the immigration visa in time for them to sail as scheduled. And they further advise that they will appreciate it if we will notify them immediately you receive word that this visa has been granted.

However, when you are certain that the visa will not be obtained for your father and mother in time for them to use the accommodations on the "Excalibur", they want me to notify them at once and they will cable their Lisbon office issuing them the necessary instructions.

So, when you hear anything, please advise me. And if you do not hear by November 1st from the State Department, please so advise me and I'll tell the American Export Line."

Andrews, Jr., to Stein, October 25, 1941

I am passing this information on to Senator Andrews with the suggestion that he again contact the Visa Division of the State Department

and request that they expedite consideration of your parents' application for the visas.

Andrews, Jr., to Sutliff, October 25, 1941

Mrs. Stein has advised me that the American Export Lines have advised her that they will hold the reservations for her parents until four days before sailing time. The Excalibur sails from Lisbon on November 7th.

Please keep in touch with the State Department and do everything possible to secure the granting of the visas in time for sailing on November 7th.

Warren to Senator Andrews, November 13, 1941

With reference to your interest in the visa case of **Mr. Friedrich and Mrs. Berta Marx,**

I take pleasure in informing you that, after careful consideration of the documents submitted, the Department has given advisory approval to the appropriate American Officer at **Marseille** for the issuance of **immigration visas**.

Andrews, Jr., to Senator Andrews, November 18, 1941

Dear Dad:

Mrs. Lisa Stein has been advised by the American Export Lines that space has been reserved for her mother and father, Mr. and Mrs. Friedrich Marx, on the SS "Exeter" sailing from Lisbon on December 26th.

She has also been advised that the State Department has authorized the issuance of a visa by the Consul at Marseilles.

Please check this and do everything possible to assure that the visa is actually issued and that these people are able to arrive in Lisbon in time to sail on this boat.

Andrews, Jr., telegram to Senator Andrews, December 18, 1941

Re passport visa Friedrich Marx please check with State Department and find out if visa issued in this matter for SS Exeter from Lisbon December 26th also try to find out if that ship will sail that date. Please advise.

Senator Andrews, telegram to Andrews, Jr., December 18, 1941

Retel. Friedrich Marx. State Department has authorized American Consul at Marseilles to issue visa. It is not customary for State Department to follow up in these cases. In order to determine whether visa has actually been issued it would be necessary to cable consul at Marseilles and this can be done if Mrs. Stein wishes to bear expense.

Maritime commission under strict orders not to release any information regarding movement of ships so far impossible for us to determine whether SS Exeter will sail from Lisbon December 26. Will continue efforts and give you further report tomorrow.

Senator Andrews, telegram to Andrews, Jr., copy mailed to Stein, December 22, 1941

Re Friedrich Marx. Maritime Commission just advised that American Export Lines Service has been discontinued and SS Exeter will not sail from Lisbon on December 26.

Stein to Andrews, Jr., December 27, 1941

I am in receipt of the two telegrams and though the contents was a very sad one for me, I want to thank you very much for your kindness and your warm interest in that case.

I have asked the American Export Lines to refund the money.

Am pretty certain my folks are in receipt of their visas now although I did not hear from them since that cable I lately read to you over the phone. They are in the transit camp Les Milles (near Marseilles) Groupe 13 and they could not have left camp . . . otherwise.

I learned that there is one chance left and that is the Pan-American Clipper Lisbon–New York, but I do not know how to get a reservation there. I could easily do it if the Export Line refunds the money. I am positive that they take passengers which are in Lisbon and have their American visa. But the hard thing is to get them to Lisbon, because Portugal only issues transit-visas for people whose departure [is a certainty.]

Andrews, Jr., to Stein, January 7, 1942

I understand that there will be one more American Export Line sailing from Lisbon, carrying the American Diplomatic Corps from Germany.

I would suggest that you keep in contact with the American Export Lines and if they have any space available for passengers other than the Diplomatic Corps, they might be able to work your parents in, in view of their disastrous experiences in missing the November 7th boat.

The only other suggestion I have is for you to get in touch with Pan-American Airways who are operating the clippers from Lisbon. It is possible they will continue to operate from Lisbon, for a while at least, after which time it seems they will be operated direct from London, and of course it will then be impossible to secure space for your parents.

Andrews, Jr., to Sutliff, January 23, 1942

Mrs. Lisa Stein, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Marx, has made deposit for tickets on the Pan-American Clipper for about March 1st. However, it might be possible for them to secure passage on an earlier plane if they could secure a visa to enter Portugal and stay pending the securing of definite reservations.

Please check with the proper authorities and advise us. Mrs. Stein will gladly pay the cost of any cables or other necessary messages in connection with this matter.

Andrews, Jr., to Stein, January 28, 1942

Attached is a copy of telegram received from Senator Andrews. You will note he suggests that you get in touch with the Portuguese consul and attempt to get this visa. The nearest Portuguese consul to Orlando [is in Tampa].

Barney J. Cohen to Stein, February 9, 1942

On my arrival here [Williams Hotel, Daytona Beach, FL] I found the following telegram from the Hias which was wired from New York at 3:26 P.M.:

> "Received this morning check from Mrs. Stein for transportation her mother Bertha Marx. We cabling our European office facilitate and expedite emigration will keep you informed." HIAS

I feel confident that Mr. Asofsky will use all of the resources at his command to do whatever possible in the shortest possible time.

In turn, I will keep you posted if I should [hear] anything from New York between now and the time I plan to go thru Sanford on Wednesday.

"I learned that there is one chance left and that is the Pan-American Clipper Lisbon–New York." Lisa Stein to Charles O. Andrews, Jr., December 27, 1941. (Courtesy of Charles Oscar Andrews Papers, Special and Area Studies Collections, George A. Smathers Libraries, University of Florida, Gainesville.)

With kind regards to Frederich and yourself,

Andrews, Jr., to Sutliff, February 13, 1942

You have a file on the request of Bertha and Friedrich Marx for a visa to leave unoccupied France. Their daughter has just learned that Mr. Marx has died.

Mrs. Marx is at the Hotel Levant, Rue Fruchier 37, Marseille, France. Her daughter secured reservation for her for clipper passage early in March. They have just been advised of the new alien and naturalization requirements as published in the Federal Register of January 20, 1942, page 376. They have also some additional information which suggests that they retain a lawyer in their effort to secure admission of an enemy alien under present conditions. Their previous permission was granted prior to the declaration of war and is probably of no value now.

Please check with the State Department and advise if it is necessary to file a new application for permission to enter the country and if so is there a place where a lawyer could and should be of assistance.

Sutliff, telegram to Andrews, Jr., February 17, 1942

Not necessary to file new application. Appeal Board will notify interested parties in time for hearing.

Sutliff to Andrews, Jr., February 17, 1942

With reference to your note of February 13, please be advised that I have contacted the Visa Division of the Department of State in an effort to determine the procedure which should be followed in securing a visa for Mrs. Friedrich Marx.

I have been advised by Mr. McKee of the State Department that all visa applications of "enemy aliens" will be decided on by the Inter-departmental Visa Review Committee and that all interested persons will be notified as to the date of the hearing. Mr. McKee further advised that it is not necessary that a lawyer be employed. However, counsel is permitted. He suggests that affidavits would serve the purpose. . . .

From what I am able to gather on an off the record basis, these applications are going to be very difficult to put through. It is not necessary,

however, that a new application be made as the hearings before the Committee will be on the original application.

Warren to Senator Andrews, March 2, 1942

I have your letter of February 19, 1942 regarding the visa case of Mrs. Friedrich (Berta) Marx.

A reexamination of Mrs. Marx's case has been necessitated in view of the recent regulations pertaining to enemy aliens. Mrs. Marx, by reason of her German nationality, is classifiable as an enemy alien, and under the established procedure, her case, after preliminary examination, will be considered by the Interdepartmental Visa Review Committee and will then be placed before the Board of Appeals.

Your interest in Mrs. Marx' case has been noted, and you are assured that you will be informed when her case is reached for consideration by the Visa Review Committee. At that time the sponsors or other interested persons, if they so desire, will be given an opportunity to appear before such Committee in person, through an attorney or other intermediary to make such further representations as they may wish.

Andrews, Jr., to Stein, March 3, 1942

Enclosed herewith I hand you a letter to the Interdepartmental Visa Review Committee, Washington, which letter should be signed by you and Mr. Stein on the lines indicated, and mailed on to the Committee in the envelope attached thereto.

Let me know if there is anything further I can do, also let me know when you hear from the Interdepartmental Review Committee.

Stein to Interdepartmental Visa Review Committee, March 3, 1942 (letter enclosed under cover above)

There is now pending before the Visa Division of the State Department an application for the admission to the United States of Bertha Marx, whose address is now: Hotel Levant, Rue Fruchier 37, Marseille, France.

The undersigned, Lisa Lotte Stein and Friedrich Stein, daughter and son-in-law of Bertha Marx, are presenting this, her request for admission to the United States. The said undersigned Lisa Lotte Stein and Friedrich Stein are German nationals who were deported from Germany on August

27, 1939, and sailed from Amsterdam, Holland, to British Honduras.They were admitted to the United States under quota numbers on February 27, 1940. The mother and father of the undersigned Lisa Lotte Stein left Germany on October 23, 1940, from Heidelberg, Germany, in a sealed train and were placed in a concentration camp, Camp De Gurs, Basses Pyrenees, Unoccupied France. Applications for admission, and affidavits of support, signed by A. Bornstein and the undersigned daughter and son-in-law were duly filed, and passage arranged for sailing to America on the S.S. Excalibur sailing from Lisbon on November 7, 1941.

On November 12, 1941, the State Department authorized the American Consul at Marseille, France, to issue the visa, which of course was too late for sailing on November 7th. Passage was secured on the American Export liner S.S. Exeter to sail from Lisbon on December 26, 1941. War was declared on December 8 and the sailing of the Exeter from Lisbon was cancelled. Mr. Friedrich Marx died in the concentration camp about December 15, 1941.

The undersigned have arranged passage through the Hebrew Immigration Assistance Society, 425 Lafayette, Street, New York City, on a Portuguese steamer sailing from Marseille to New York the latter part of March, 1942. Mrs. Marx's health is bad and the undersigned are very anxious that Interdepartmental Visa Review Committee should recommend to the State Department that a visa be authorized in order to permit Mrs. Marx to sail from Marseille on the passage arranged by the Hebrew Immigration Assistance Society, and it is respectfully requested by this letter that the Department will view with favor this application.

The undersigned intend to become American citizens, and have applied for and been granted their first papers as United States citizens. They are now operating a poultry farm near Sanford, Florida and are a self-sustaining unit of the community and are fully able to support their mother, Mrs. Bertha Marx, should they be granted admission to the United States.

Andrews, Jr., telegram to Sutliff, March 17, 1942

Re Visa Bertha Marx German national. Application for review of this case dated March 3d was filed with Interdepartmental Visa Review Committee. Parties have been advised transportation will be available shortly. Please check and do anything possible to expedite consideration of this application.

Sutliff, telegram to Andrews, Jr., March 17, 1942

Retel Bertha Marx. Possibility of expediting consideration of this application. Please advise by wire if possible exact date when transportation will be available. This information will be material in obtaining earlier consideration.

Senator Andrews, telegram to Sutliff, March 19, 1942

Retel Bertha Marx. Have requested Isaac Asofsky, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, 425 Lafayette Street, New York City, to wire you information regarding arrangements for passage. $420.00 has been deposited to pay for passage and have been advised ships sail twice monthly and that she will be permitted to sail on one of these ships as soon as the visa is issued. If Mr. Asofsky does not confirm this information please wire me.

Barney J. Cohen, telegram to Isaac Asofsky, Executive Director, HIAS, March 19, 1942

Interdepartmental visa review committee Washington has application of Bertha Marx, Marseille, France under reconsideration. . . . Request has been made for detailed information regarding arrangements for transportation facilities. Please wire Senator Charles O. Andrews, Senate Office Building, Washington, what arrangements have been made also stating that $420.00 has been deposited for passage and that arrangements have been made for sailing on ships which sail twice a month as outlined to me over the telephone.

Asofsky to Stein, March 23, 1942

We wish to advise you that at the request of Mr. Barney J. Cohen, we have telegraphed to Senator Charles O. Andrews at Washington, D.C., the following concerning funds deposited with us for the transportation expenses of the above:

> "We confirm receiving $420 for transportation expenses Bertha Marx Marseille. We cabled our Lisbon office arrange passage of Bertha Marx from Lisbon or Casablanca soon after visa granted."

Handwritten at bottom of letter by Lisa Stein:

My mother wrote, that the Marseille office of the "Hias" got in touch with her, re: passage.

I trust that the sailing dates of the ships from Casablanca are kept secret, and therefore no information about a certain day and time of sailing can be given long in advance.

Sutliff to Andrews, Jr., March 23, 1942

I received from the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society the following telegram:

> "We confirm receiving 420 dollars for transportation expenses Bertha Marx Marseille. We cabled our Lisbon office arrange passage of Bertha Marx from Lisbon or Casablanca soon after visa granted." (signed) HIAS.

As indicated in my telegram to you of the seventeenth, early consideration by the Interdepartmental Visa Review Committee might be obtained if a definite date for passage had been set which would require a decision on this case out of its regular turn; however, in view of the existing circumstances, there seems to be no way of obtaining consideration outside of its regular chronological order.

I have been assured by an official of the State Department that an "urgent" tag has been attached to this case and it will receive every possible consideration.

HIAS, telegram to Cohen, April 7, 1942

Retel our Cable to Lisbon Office confirming $420. deposit for transportation Berta Marx passed censor and undoubtedly delivered.

Warren to Stein, April 16, 1942

Madam:

I refer to your interest in the visa case of H. Marx.

A preliminary examination of this case, with particular reference to sections 58.47 and 58.48 of the regulations covering the control of persons entering the United States (Volume 6, Federal Register, pages 5931–5932), issued under the President's proclamation of November 14, 1941 has not

resulted in a favorable recommendation to the American consular officer concerned.

However, the case will be given further consideration by the Interdepartmental Visa Review Committee, as provided in section 58.57(c) of the aforementioned regulations. This provision gives an opportunity to interested individuals to appear in person, or through an attorney or other intermediary, before the Committee to make such pertinent additional statements as may be deemed appropriate.

There are enclosed two copies of an Application for Appearance which should be completed and forwarded to the Department by the person particularly interested in appearing in the case at a hearing before the Committee. If it is desired that other interested persons or their intermediaries appear at the hearing, additional forms of Application for Appearance will be furnished upon receipt in the Department of a request stating the names of the persons who desire to appear, and the names of the alien visa applicants.

If, on the other hand, it is desired that the case be considered by the Committee without a hearing, it is requested that the Department be so advised.

Upon receipt of an Application for Appearance or a communication indicating that it is desired to have the case considered without a hearing, together with reasonable evidence that the persons seeking admission into the United States have made arrangements to travel to this country, the case will be entered for action by the Committee. Notice will be sent to the interested persons sufficiently in advance of the date set for hearing in order that they may make any arrangements necessary.

Next two pages: *"A preliminary examination of this case . . . has not resulted in a favorable recommendation to the American consular officer concerned." A. M. Warren, Chief, Visa Division, Department of State to Lisa Stein, April 16, 1942. (Courtesy of Charles Oscar Andrews Papers, Special and Area Studies Collections, George A. Smathers Libraries, University of Florida, Gainesville.)*

Eliot B. Coulter, Acting Chief, Visa Division, to Senator Andrews, April 17, 1942

I refer to your interest in the visa case of Berta Marx.

The preliminary examination of this case has not resulted in a favorable recommendation to the American consular officer concerned. However, the case will be given further consideration by the Interdepartmental Visa Review Committee and the interested persons have been appropriately informed in this connection.

Stein to Warren, cover letter for applications for appearance, April 25, 1942

Please find enclosed applications for appearance before the Interdepartmental Visa Review Committee.

My husband and I are Jewish refugees from Germany. My husband lost both of his parents by the persecution of Hitler, his father was found hanged in his house one morning, his mother died two months later as consequence of the shock she had suffered.

My husband was brought to the concentration camp "Dachau." All our property was taken. [We received a] visa for British Honduras where my husband[']s cousin resides and where we could wait until our American Quota number was called up, was the reason that he got released from "Dachau." He got crippled in this camp and is crippled since. From the very day, we entered this country, we tried to [save] the life of my old parents by bringing them over to this country. But shortly after we had arrived here, my parents got deported from Germany and put in a camp in France. After 13 months of sufferings, of mental and physical torture, my father was sent to another camp near Marseille, where he died after three weeks. My mother was then released and sent to Marseille in order to get her visa. The consul had notified her, that he had a cable from the State Department, dated November 13, containing advisory approval for the issuance of [an] immigration visa. Upon arrival in Marseille, the consul asked her for a new authorization from the State Department, according to the proclamation of November 14 [1941]. My mother is nearly 5 months in Marseille, without having obtained the documents, which were the reason for her release and there is the grave danger of a new and most severe

imprisonment, which may be fatal for her, if she cannot get her visa in the very [near] future.

May I therefore take the privilege to ask for permission to make some additional statements in person before the committee, statements and facts, that might be of interest for a favorable decision.

Stein to Andrews, Jr., May 6, 1942

Yesterday I had letter from my mother, which I do not attach because it is nothing in it of special interest, only one thing is: she writes, that the first new authorizations to issue visa for aliens of enemy nationality have arrived in Marseille. I am very happy about this, because it shows, that exceptions have been made and there is a good chance, I hope, that there will be given a new-authorization in this special case, too. The letter, which was received from the State Department, telling, that the pre-examination has not resulted in a favorable recommendation to the consul is the usual letter, everybody is getting, who applies for a new-authorization. Important is, that we got the invitation for the hearing before the appeal board and if we are able to present the case in the very [near] future (that means before we break relations with France, which I am afraid will be inevitable), I am still hopeful to save my mother. Most important is, that you get the hearing as quick as possible, about everything else I do not worry, there is nobody, I would be more sure of to get this case through but you, my dear Mr. Andrews, and I can only assure you again of my appreciation and my deepest gratitude. You already put in so much of your time, much more than I ever dreamed I could ask you for, and if my mother need not perish by nazi torture and can enter this blessed country of freedom and liberty and safety, I owe it to you.

To be frank, I do not admit much value to those letters, because my people could not say anything, each letter had to pass the censor, you know, and it is impossible for me to show the real meaning of some hidden hints by translation. They can not say we perish with hunger and we do not get food packages but have to write for them, and they can not say we get beaten to death, because all the people over there die from "heart trouble," from a "stroke" and so on, a throb of the heart. Besides my people would not put me in more mortal anguish about them as I already am, by writing me the true conditions, the only letter, which is some kind of

plain, is the letter to my aunt, which I therefore annex. So if you think the letters are of some value, please use them.

I am very anxious of course, to hear from you as soon as you have [an] exact date for the hearing, and if I am allowed to appear as a witness or not, I would just love to tell a little of the persecution we suffered before we left Germany, and what happened to us, until we reached these shores.

Thanking you for your generosity and helpfulness.

Warren to Senator Andrews, May 26, 1942

Referring to your interest in the visa case of Mrs. Bertha Marx, I am pleased to inform you that the case is scheduled for a hearing before an Interdepartmental Visa Review Committee on June 8, 1942, at 9:30 A.M. Other interested persons have been notified, and you, as well as they, will be informed of the decision in the case.

Dozier DeVane, attorney for Lisa Stein, to Secretary, Interdepartmental Visa Review Committee, May 28, 1942

Notice of hearing scheduled for 9:30 A.M., on June 8, 1942, in above matter is acknowledged.

At the present time I plan to be in Washington all of next week and am anxious to be back in my office on June 8th. Therefore, if you can do so I would greatly appreciate your moving this hearing up to any day next week after Monday, June 1st, that is convenient for you.

If you are not able to act upon this request and notify me here by the end of this week, I can be reached at the Raleigh Hotel in Washington all of next week.

Memorandum for Hearing on Application for Visa. Bertha Marx Application for Visa [n.d., probably late May 1942]

Bertha Marx is a German national now at Hotel Levant, Rue Fauchier 37, Marseille, France.

The applicant, together with her husband Friedrich Marx (now deceased) and her daughter Liselotte Stein and her husband, Friedrich Stein, and Mr. Stein's parents, were all residents of Heidelberg, Germany. Liselotte Stein and her husband, Friedrich Stein, are German nationals

who left Germany on August 27, 1939, and sailed from Amsterdam, Holland, to British Honduras. They were admitted to the United States on February 27, 1940, on quota numbers.

Since leaving Germany Mr. Stein's parents have died, his father by suicide and his mother from persecution. Bertha Marx and her husband, Friedrich Marx (now deceased) were evacuated from Heidelberg on a sealed train on October 23, 1940, and were placed in a concentration camp, Camp de Gurs, Basses Pyrenees, Unoccupied France.

Mrs. Stein, the daughter of the applicant in this cause, secured passage for her mother and father on the SS Excalibur of the American Export Line, sailing from Lisbon November 7, 1941. Funds were deposited with the American Export Line and all arrangements were made for sailing. Application was made to the State Department for a visa to be issued permitting Mr. and Mrs. Marx to leave Marseille for Lisbon in time to sail on November 7th. On November 12, 1941, the State Department authorized the American consul at Marseille to issue visa[s] to Mr. and Mrs. Marx. This of course was too late for the sailing on November 7th.

Mrs. Stein then secured accommodations to sail on the SS Exeter scheduled to sail from Lisbon December 26, 1941. War was of course declared on December 8, 1941, and the sailing of the Exeter was cancelled.

On December 21, 1941, Mr. Friedrich Marx died in the concentration camp.

Mrs. Stein, through the Hebrew Immigration Aid Society, 425 Lafayette Street, New York City, made arrangements for her mother, Mrs. Bertha Marx, to sail on a Portuguese steamer from Casa Blanca, North Africa, and arrangements have been made with French authorities for transportation to Casa Blanca. It is of course impossible to secure absolute assurance that the passage is available. However, the Hebrew Immigration Aid Society has advised the State Department direct that there has been deposited with it $420.00 for transportation expenses for Bertha Marx, Marseille, and that they have cabled their Lisbon office to arrange passage for Mrs. Marx from Lisbon to Casa Blanca as soon as the visa is granted. It appears that these two steps have to be taken simultaneously, and it is impossible to secure one without the other.

This case is therefore before the Committee on its merits, and on the assumption that passage can and will be arranged by the Hebrew Immigration Aid Society. The question is whether or not Bertha Marx

should be admitted to the United States under the existing regulations. Bertha Marx is a woman of advanced age and has been horribly treated by the authorities of Germany. Her bond, under the regulations, has been arranged under the usual procedure, and is vouched for by Mr. A. Bornstein a respectable and substantial citizen of Clermont, Florida.

It would seem that by no stretch of the imagination could Bertha Marx be considered an undesirable alien, and that neither the spirit nor letter of the law providing for the national security of the United States would be violated by the granting of a visa to Bertha Marx, thereby permitting her to secure passage to the United States.

Andrews, Jr., telegram to DeVane, June 3, 1942

Mrs. Stein leaving via bus early tomorrow arriving Washington late Friday. please advise by ten o'clock A.M. Thursday if there has been an advancement of the time for the hearing.

DeVane, telegram to Andrews, Jr., June 4, 1942

Retel Stein case, no notice of advancement of hearing received. Staying over few more days.

DeVane to Stein, June 10, 1942

I herewith return the two photographs of your husband which you gave me in Washington.

Before leaving Washington, I made arrangements to provide funds for cabling notice to the Marseille office of the State Department, in case the appeal board acts favorably on the application for passport for your mother.

I trust you had a safe and pleasant trip home.

Howard K. Travers, Chief, Visa Division, to DeVane, July 29, 1942

With reference to your interest in the visa case of Berta Marx.

I take pleasure in informing you that after further consideration of this case in the light of existing conditions, the Department has given renewed advisory approval to the appropriate American officer at Marseille, France for the issuance of an immigration visa.

Notification of this action has been transmitted by cable. A statement of the exact telegraphic charges will be sent to you at a later date.

DeVane to Travers, August 4, 1942

Many thanks for your letter of July 29th advising me that the State Department has given renewed advisory approval to the appropriate American officer at Marseille, France, for the issuance of an immigration visa to Bertha Marx.

I am indeed happy to see this poor soul rescued from the persecution of the nazis.

We will remit telegraphic charges as soon as you advise me the amount.

D. W. Corrick, Chief, Division of Accounts, Department of State, to DeVane, August 5, 1942

Under date of July 29, 1942, the Department upon your request, incurred an expense for one telegram to the American Consul at Marseille in regard to visa case of Bertha Marx amounting to $2.33.

It will be appreciated if a check drawn payable to the order of the Secretary of State of the United States is forwarded to this office promptly in settlement of this account and accompanied by this bill to assure prompt credit.

Stein to Andrews, Jr., October 23, 1942[43]

You have surely wondered why you did not hear anything from me in regard [to] how the immigration case of my mother was coming along. After having no news for a long time, I have received a letter now, dated August 11 and sent from a new address, Camp les Milles. Groupe 16. It reads: (I try to translate):

> My beloved children, I am very near to our dear father now, and yet so far away. . . . [ellipses in original]. From our [window] I can see the cemetery. Maybe I will be able to obtain permission to visit Daddy's grave before we are sent away from here. Our room is just above the one where daddy lay dead, and I can not express in words how terrible [it is]. Sometimes everything seems like a nightmare and I just cannot get [out of] it. But now I know that it was destiny that I should not see you any more. Thinking of you gives me the strength to stand it as long as I will

> be able to. I know that you, my dearest beloved child, have done everything in your power, but the authorization did not come! If the same should arrive today or tomorrow it may mean that I am saved, when we are sent to a place, there an emigration seems impossible.
>
> It still is uncertain if people who have the visa authorization are allowed to stay here. Those with the visa in the passport can stay, I am sure. From 11 women of the "Hotel Levant, Room 78" 6 were picked out and I of course was among them. All I want now to do is to wish you, my dearest, dearest, children, the best of everything. My greatest desire is that you, my beloved child, be brave, do not worry or grieve. You shall enjoy your life. That you can do, if you only want to master it, even when everything seems to be crumbling. I too had spent some beautiful hours at the ocean, which I used to love so much, and today, I am glad about it. Now it is good that I have put on some weight again. I have so many things I wanted to bring you, for instance, Daddy's watch and many other things if I would only know how I could let you have them. Now I have to finish my letter. Good bye, God bless you, 1000 kisses from your mother, who loves you so much.
>
> August 12: I just received your letter of June 8 and some hours later I received the authorization from Washington, but unfortunately only those who have the visa in the passport are allowed to stay.

This is the full contents of the letter. I tried to translate though I was not very successful in doing it, but I know you are interested in it. I have heard nothing since, except that I had a letter from a friend in Switzerland sending me [the] copy of this letter. She wrote that upon receipt of those lines she had telephoned to the head of a refugee relief organization in France, asking him to try to save my mother from being handed over to the Nazis, especially regarding that she had the authorization from Washington to enter the U.S. But it did not help and my mother had to "leave." She writes that her cousin with the visa in the passport was deported too and the Laval traitor refuses to give exit visas to people under 60 years of age who want to emigrate [to] any other country but Germany.[44]

I do not know where my mother was sent and I may never be able to find out. What I know is that wherever she is she cannot write. If I should hear something, I will let you know.

Mr. Andrews, I want to take the opportunity to thank you again for everything you have done in this case. I know you have done everything in your power—everything that could be done. It just should not be that she should come. Let me assure you again of my deepest gratitude and of my appreciation for all

your sympathy and kindness. I will never forget about it as along as I live. Please assure Mr. DeVane of my gratefulness and give him my regards.

And here is one request I am having. May I have the original letters (those written in German) written by my father and mother, which you keep in your files? I do not expect to get any more letters so I would like very much to have them for memory. You could send them either over here or to my Sanford address, Rt. 2 Box 159.

The Nazis murdered my father, crippled my husband, took all my property and belongings, and I can [guess] now if my dear mother will die, starved to death, beaten to death, or kicked to death by the boot of a Nazi, I have now only one desire, that with my hate for those huns, my university education, and my thorough knowledge of German and French languages and ways, I can be given a chance to serve this country in [its] fight for freedom and democracy.

"The Nazis murdered my father, crippled my husband, took all my property and belongings, and I can [guess] now if my dear mother will die, starved to death, beaten to death, or kicked to death by the boot of a Nazi." Lisa Stein to Charles Andrews, Jr., October 23, 1942. (Courtesy of Charles Oscar Andrews Papers, Special and Area Studies Collections, George A. Smathers Libraries, University of Florida, Gainesville.)

"Was very sorry to receive your letter . . .
and your apparent feeling that there is no possible hope of your
mother getting out of France." Charles Andrews, Jr., to Lisa Stein, October 28, 1942.
(Courtesy of Charles Oscar Andrews Papers, Special and Area Studies Collections,
George A. Smathers Libraries, University of Florida, Gainesville.)

Andrews, Jr., to Stein, October 28, 1942

Was very sorry to receive your letter of October 23rd, quoting from your mother's letter and your apparent feeling that there is no possible hope of your mother getting out of France. I think we should also continue to hope that something will happen that will make it possible for her to come to this country.

I assure you that if there should be any developments in which we might be able to help you, do not hesitate to call upon us.

At your request, I am sending you all of the original letters which we have in our files from your parents.

DeVane to Fred [Friedrich] Stein, August 16, 1943

I thank you very much for your letter of the 11th enclosing money order in the amount of $13.65, which we have applied on Mrs. Stein's account, for expenses advanced in connection with the above matter.

The total amount which we paid was $33.51, and I enclose herewith a duplicate statement, with the $13.65 credited, showing a balance due of $19.86.

I sincerely trust that our efforts have been successful, or will be in the near future. We are indeed interested in this matter, and hope to hear that it has worked out as desired.

Stein to Andrews, Jr., August 23, 1943

. . .

As to my mother, am sorry to write you that I did not receive a word from her since she got deported from France.

May I mention again that I deeply appreciate everything you have done in this matter and I still hope that one day my mother will be over here and be able to thank you again in person.

Andrews, Jr., to Stein, August 25, 1943

I have your letter of the 23d and am returning herewith the receipt which you enclosed therewith. Also enclosed is a receipted bill for the entire amount of our charges against you.

I am indeed sorry that you were billed for $19.86 in error, and this was due entirely to carelessness on the part of our office force. I am sure you know this could not have happened purposely.

Sorry to hear that you have had no further word from your mother, and join with you in hoping that you and she will be re-united.

NOTES

[1] The letters are contained in Legislative Files: Treasury Department, box 19, folder 3, Charles Oscar Andrews Papers, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL (hereafter cited as Andrews Papers). Used with permission. The views expressed in this article are those of the author and not the United States Air Force or government.

[2] Dan J. Puckett, *In the Shadow of Hitler: Alabama's Jews, the Second World War, and the Holocaust* (Tuscaloosa, 2014), 45; Claudia Wilson Anderson, "Congressman Lyndon B. Johnson, Operation Texas, and Jewish Immigration," *Southern Jewish History* 15 (2012): 81–118.

[3] Puckett, *In the Shadow of Hitler*, 2.

[4] "Virtual Jewish World: Florida, United States," Jewish Virtual Library, accessed March 14, 2020, https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/florida-jewish-history. See also, "Jacksonville, FL," Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities, accessed May 30, 2020, https://www.isjl.org/florida-jacksonville-encyclopedia.html, and "South Florida," Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities, accessed May 30, 2020, https://www.isjl.org/florida-south-florida-encyclopedia.html.

[5] Joel M. Greenberg, Seminole County Tax Collector, "Historical Information Request," e-mail to author, May 10, 2020; Roz Fuchs and Marcia Jo Zerivitz, *Kehillah: A History of Jewish Life in Greater Orlando* (Sanford, FL, 2017), 30. The author and editors thank Rachel Heimovics Braun and Marcia Jo Zerivitz for bringing this information to their attention.

[6] Todd Bothel, Registrar, Jewish Museum of Florida-FIU, "Information Request," e-mail to author, May 11, 2020. See also, "Orlando, FL," Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities, accessed May 30, 2020, https://www.isjl.org/florida-orlando-encyclopedia.html.

[7] Manifest of Alien Passengers, S.S. *General Tosta*, February 15, 1940, accessed May 5, 2020, https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:KDHT-KGB. The author contacted all of the Jewish organizations in Sanford and Orlando and even the poultry farmer's association, but none of them could shed any light on the Steins. These organizations were very helpful, but apparently the Steins lived uneventful and normal lives. No death certificate is recorded for her in Florida, and the tax assessor was unable to pinpoint when they sold the chicken farm. Essentially just by chance they still retained the 1940 assessment.

[8] "Orlando," Jewish Virtual Encyclopedia, accessed April 17, 2020, https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/orlando.

[9] Puckett, *In the Shadow of Hitler*, 43.

[10] Fuchs and Zerivitz, *Kehillah*, 25.

[11] Michael R. Marrus and Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews* (Stanford, CA, 1981); Adam Rayski, *The Choice of the Jews Under Vichy: Between Submission and Resistance* (Notre Dame, IN, 2015). See also Eric T. Jennings, *Escape from Vichy: The Refugee Exodus to the French Caribbean* (Cambridge, MA, 2018).

[12] Bertha Marx, quoted in Lisa Stein to Charles O. Andrews, Jr., October 23, 1942, Andrews Papers.

[13] Lisa Stein to Charles O. Andrews, Jr., cover letter for applications for appearance, April 25, 1942, Andrews Papers.

[14] Manifest of Alien Passengers, S.S. *General Tosta*, February 15, 1940, accessed May 5, 2020, https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:KDHT-KGB.

[15] Stein to Andrews, Jr., April 25, 1942, Andrews Papers.

[16] "Memorandum for Hearing on Application for Visa," n.d. [probably late May 1942], Andrews Papers.

[17] Donna F. Ryan, *The Holocaust & the Jews of Marseille: The Enforcement of Anti-Semitic Policies in Vichy France* (Urbana, IL, 1996), 109.

[18] Meredith Hindley, *Destination Casablanca: Exile, Espionage, and the Battle for North Africa in World War II* (New York, 2017), 49.

[19] Henry L. Feingold, *The Politics of Rescue: The Roosevelt Administration and the Holocaust, 1938–1945* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1970), 136.

[20] "Breckinridge Long," Americans and the Holocaust, accessed December 20, 2019, https://exhibitions.ushmm.org/americans-and-the-holocaust/personal-story/breckinridge-long.

[21] Rafael Medoff, *The Jews Should Keep Quiet: Franklin D. Roosevelt, Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, and the Holocaust* (Lincoln, NE, 2019), 193; Feingold, *Politics of Rescue,* 135.

[22] Yehuda Bauer, *American Jewry and the Holocaust: The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1939–1945* (Detroit, 2017), 51. See also, "U.S. Policy and the Holocaust Refugee Crisis: Weighing the Evidence," National Archives, accessed December 21, 2019, https://www.docsteach.org/activities/printactivity/us-policy-and-the-holocaust-refugee-crisis.

[23] Mark Wischnitzer, *Visas to Freedom: The History of HIAS* (Cleveland, 1956), 168.

[24] Lisa Stein to Charles Andrews, Jr., December 27, 1941, Andrews Papers.

[25] William L. Shirer, *Berlin Diary, 1939–1941* (New York, 1941), 542 (diary entry for October 15, 1940).

[26] Hindley, *Destination Casablanca,* 49, 55.

[27] "Gurs," The Holocaust Encyclopedia, accessed December 27, 2019, https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/gurs.

[28] Ryan, *Holocaust & the Jews of Marseille,* 89.

[29] Susan Elisabeth Subak, *Rescue and Flight: American Relief Workers Who Defied the Nazis* (Lincoln, NE, 2010), 25.

[30] Joan E. Denman, "Senator Claude D. Pepper: Advocate of Aid to the Allies, 1939–1941," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 83 (Fall 2004): 125.

[31] Claude Pepper Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL.

[32] Andrews, JR, to United States Senator, October 4, 1941, Andrews Papers.

[33] Senator Andrews to Avra M. Warren, October 17, 1941, Andrews Papers.

[34] Senator Andrews to Andrews, Jr., October 17, 1941, Andrews Papers.

[35] A detailed description of the problems of obtaining a steamship ticket from Lisbon to the United States is found in Marion Kaplan, "Lisbon is Sold Out!: The Daily Lives of Jewish Refugees in Portugal during World War II," Tikvah Center Working Paper 01/13 (2013), accessed May 30, 2020, http://www.law.nyu.edu/sites/default/files/TikvahWorkingPapersArchive/WP1Kaplan.pdf.

[36] A detailed description of these routes is found in Subak, *Rescue and Flight*, 84–118.

[37] Wischnitzer, *Visas to Freedom*, 169.

[38] Stein to Andrews, Jr., May 6, 1942, Andrews Papers.

[39] Sutliff to Andrews, Jr., February 17, 1942, Andrews Papers.

[40] A. M. Warren to Stein, April 16, 1942, Andrews Papers.

[41] Stein to Andrews, Jr., May 6, 1942, Andrews Papers.

[42] Warren to Senator Andrews, March 2, 1942, Andrews Papers.

[43] By the time Stein received this letter, her mother had already been murdered at Auschwitz.

[44] Pierre Laval was French prime minister in the 1930s and served as a high-ranking official in the collaborationist Vichy government between 1940 and 1944, acting as its head from 1942 to 1944. With the liberation of France, he briefly fled to Spain but was arrested and executed by the de Gaulle government in 1945.

PRIMARY SOURCES

A Manhattan Jew in a Small Alabama Town: Journals and Selected Correspondence of Seymour Gitenstein

by

R. Barbara Gitenstein*

Journals:

Seymour Gitenstein, "First Chapter" (undated)
Seymour Gitenstein, "Early Thoughts About My Life in Florala" (undated)
Anna Green Gitenstein and Seymour Gitenstein, "The Franklin Ferguson Company 1932–1970" (c. 1970)
Anna Green Gitenstein and Seymour Gitenstein, "The Florala Memorial Hospital" (1970)

Correspondence:

Seymour Gitenstein to Anna Green, December 31, 1942
Milton Gitenstein to Seymour Gitenstein, August 17, 1960
Rose Barbara Gitenstein to Seymour Gitenstein, April 7, 1967[1]

My father, Seymour Gitenstein, was a direct descendant of eastern European Jews who were part of the influx to America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. His identity and sense of self-agency were founded in embracing risk, which characterized those immigrants. In many ways this placed him squarely in the psychological history described so vividly in works such as Edward Cohen's *The Peddler's Grandson* and Stella Suberman's *The Jew Store*.[2] But Seymour's solitary move to Florala, Alabama, in the 1930s had significant

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differences from these histories. Like Cohen's and Suberman's ancestors, Seymour Gitenstein braved the isolation and loneliness of a move to a completely foreign part of the United States. It took special courage and powerful optimism to move from a home in a part of the country he knew well to a place with a drastically different dialect and totally different customs. Seymour's transition to Alabama from Manhattan at the age of seventeen echoed much of what the previous generations had experienced, both those who immigrated from eastern Europe to the United States and those who migrated from the Northeast to the South.[3] Like many other Jews who preceded him in moving to the southern United States, Seymour sought to establish himself as a community leader. Unlike others such as Eli Evans's father, Emanuel "Mutt" Evans, as depicted in *The Provincials*, Seymour did not find his place in political but rather in community leadership.[4] He did not establish himself as a voice for the Confederacy like Louis Rubin's uncles as described in *My Father's People*.[5] In fact, Seymour Gitenstein developed a somewhat conflicted relationship with the myth of the Lost Cause. It would be inaccurate to describe him as a liberal proponent of civil rights for the Black community in South Alabama, but he also was no Confederate apologist.

Much of Seymour's beliefs can be understood by a close reading of four journal documents. Two of these focus on the history of his first years in Florala, Alabama—one on the history of the shirt factory he managed with his father and brother, the other on the building of the local hospital. While it is likely that my mother, Anna Green Gitenstein, actually wrote the latter two documents (her initials appear at the bottom of both), the substance and details of all four would have been provided by Seymour, and the authorship of the first two (more disjointed memories than formal journals) is clearly Seymour. Often awkward, sometimes inaccurate, always revealing, these narratives give great insight into Seymour Gitenstein and his version of survival and Jewishness in a small town in Alabama.

The documents about Seymour's early years in Florala reveal an insecurity, based in large part on his sense of being less valued by his family than either of his older siblings but also on the emotional barriers he created as a consequence of the emotional shock of his lonely move from New York City to Florala by himself at the age of seventeen. The histories of the

factory and the hospital are clearly written and straightforward descriptions of historical events and individuals who were important in the two enterprises. The emphasis on names in these histories characterizes how Seymour viewed any enterprise: people mattered more than things, and close interpersonal relationships fueled the success of any project. Although the tone of the histories illustrates a self-serving quality, the historical facts that underpinned the successes of Franklin Ferguson and the Florala Memorial Hospital are powerful. All four documents were likely intended for a larger audience and perhaps designed to serve, as they are today, as primary documents to help explain Seymour Gitenstein's life in the South. Although the four primary documents that are the focus of this essay do not detail Seymour's interpretation of Jewish values, these can be extrapolated, not just by his actions (for instance supporting education and health care for the community) but also by his consistent desire to make a difference.

In order to understand the import of these documents, I have provided a great deal of historical context in my analysis and augmented that analysis by reference to three revealing personal letters: one from Seymour to Anna a month before they married in 1943 describing the challenges of living in Florala; one to Seymour from his brother, Milton, regarding the possibility of Seymour's moving his family away from Florala; and one to him from his daughter, Rose Barbara Gitenstein, explaining the difficulties for the family growing up in Florala after Seymour made clear his preference for remaining in the small town.

Beginnings in Manhattan and Early Years in Florala

Seymour was a son of New York City, but he lived for over seventy-eight years in Florala, Alabama, a small town abutting the Florida panhandle. As "First Chapter" indicates, my father's grandmother, Celia (Sadie) Rosner Goran Bralower, was married twice. Her first husband, Harry Goran, died in a forestry accident in Traverse City, Michigan. Celia seems to have had three children with Harry Goran: Jenny, William, and Harry. It seems that Jenny and William were born in Romania, but only Jenny accompanied Celia to the United States. William may not have been reunited with Celia for almost a decade after her immigration. After Goran's death, in about 1885, Celia married Louis Bralower, who apparently adopted Jenny and Harry. Celia and Louis had three children who lived

to adulthood: Esther Rose Bralower (Seymour's mother), Charles Bralower, and Herman Bralower. Their first child died as an infant, and likely another daughter, Sallie, also died as a child. Seymour's father, Israel Gitenstein, emigrated from Moldova to the United States in 1891 as a twelve-year-old. In 1906, Israel married sixteen-year-old Rose Bralower.[6]

Seymour's memories of his mother and grandmother were somewhat conflicted. He admitted that they showed preference for his other siblings, particularly his older sister. As he writes in "First Chapter" (rendered as in the original with all errors intact), his older sister "was rea;y very good natured and on the surface I guess the mostg talented at least letS say she had the mostg nerve and reallyg had also the mostg attention of my father and mother ans I guess the rest of the family including Grand ma who had come to live with us."[7] Seymour's memories of Celia were complex: "Grandma of Roumanian Russian Jewish stock very strong minded and vy very self willed I guess, altho I didnt realize that until mwny years later."[8] He admired his grandmother's courage and her commitment to hard work. Seymour described her move back to New York after the death of her first husband as brave and remarked how she supported herself and her two children as a laundress.[9]

His memories of Rose were almost worshipful: "Now her name was really Esther Rose but Aunt Jennie mothers older sister said she discarded the Esther when she mwas in her teens Mother was very ambitious and when she was firstly matchedup with my fathdrs brother she threatened suicide if Grandma pushed this marriag she was all of 16!!!!"[10]

Like many other eastern European Jewish immigrants to the United States, Israel Gitenstein went into the textile industry. This history is well documented in the lives of the Phillips–VanHeusen family and in the novel *The Rise of David Levinsky* by Abraham Cahan, the editor of the *Forverts*. Even before the Great Depression destroyed the economy and resulted in millions of bankruptcies, my grandfather went bankrupt in 1926. To improve his business chances, he sought to reestablish the business by moving south—a region closer to the materials and employee base necessary for making shirts and men's underwear.[11] The South boasted abundant cotton and cheaper labor than the North. The family tried a number of different locales. Some family members even remember that the factory first moved from New York to Paterson, New Jersey, and only later to Jacksonville then DeFuniak Springs, Florida, and

Israel Gitenstein and Rose Bralower, c. 1900
(Courtesy of R. Barbara Gitenstein.)

finally Florala, Alabama, a town of about two thousand. The latter enterprise included a small ancillary factory that operated for a short time in Crestview, Florida.[12] A passage in "The Franklin Ferguson Company, 1932–1970" explains: "The Franklin Ferguson Company was founded in 1932 by Israel Gitenstein, father of the present partners, Milton and Seymour Gitenstein. Mr. Gitenstein [Israel] moved to Florala from Geneva, Alabama in 1932."[13] Whatever the details of the various moves, they were driven by the business considerations of improving margins. Israel never intended to leave New York City or relocate his family to the South. Only after his younger son, Seymour, precipitously left New York at the age of seventeen did Israel spend more than a couple of days in any of the various factory locales in the South.

The Gitensteins' actions in many ways mirrored the impulse of many other Jews of eastern European descent. As Terry Barr writes, "[A]s many historians have noted, Jewish immigrants, particularly from eastern Europe, were adept at filling the needs of a new town."[14] But Seymour's move to Florala was not typical. Rather than older son Milton's taking leadership, Seymour, the second son, did so. Rather than establishing

some commuting or temporary living situation in small-town Alabama, Seymour moved alone with little or no preparation in management, creation of a support system in the new community, or any implication that this move was either temporary or up for modification or sharing in the future.

Two years prior to the move, while working for his father at the age of fifteen, Seymour's heart was elsewhere. As he relates in "First Chapter," both he and his brother, Milton, knew that "it was expected of us to go into our family business and altho it hadnt really been that all good as I remember back when I was 12 and 14 years old we did make a living and we never lacked for anything."[15] Seymour, a very good student, was admitted into Townsend Harris, a competitive liberal arts high school for boys in New York City. He remembered his years at Townsend Harris with great pride, noting that many of his friends—also children of Jewish immigrants—became well known in their fields. For instance, Seymour remembered Jonas Salk as a talented student but neither kind nor friendly. Education was the path to a life of economic prosperity embraced by Jewish families, like so many other immigrants to the United States. Seymour's memories of the caliber of the education might seem fanciful reminiscences of a sixty-year-old, but in fact he did not exaggerate the quality of education at Townsend Harris. In 1975, when I was completing my doctorate in English and American literature, my father called to ask me if I had read the obituary of his high school English teacher in the *New York Times*. When I seemed puzzled, he named Lionel Trilling.[16]

During his early teenage years, Seymour largely invested his psychic energy in classical music, particularly his budding talent as a pianist. His parents engaged several instructors to encourage his development. In his later years, Seymour remembered attending enthralling concerts with his mother at Carnegie Hall, hearing the great Moriz Rosenthal and meeting Sergei Rachmaninoff. This was Seymour's life before he moved to Florala, Alabama—Lionel Trilling as his high school English teacher and sitting behind Rachmaninoff while they both listened to Moriz Rosenthal perform.

Photographs of a young Seymour of that era match this life: he was quite handsome, with a full head of wavy black hair, piercing dark brown, almost black, eyes, and an aesthetic demeanor. The physical transformation to the craggy nonagenarian with bushy eyebrows and unkempt

wild hair, still curly but gray and thin, is a testament not just to the years but to an attempt to remake himself—to hide his essential gentleness. Throughout his life, Seymour retained two foundational commitments: a somewhat idiosyncratic interpretation of Jewish values and a dedication to Florala, a community where, although foreign to his Manhattan Jewish upbringing, he felt sheltered and that allowed him to develop without the pressures of an overbearing father and two older siblings who always seemed to outshine him. Living in Florala allowed him to become a powerful enough presence in the small community to control the narrative of his life. As he references in "Early Thoughts About My Life in Florala," the social allowances provided to members of the leading families of a small community intrigued him.

In New York, the Gitenstein family belonged to Ansche Chesed, a Conservative synagogue, but their adherence to ritual was closer to their Reform-affiliated friends. Seymour and Milton became *b'nai mitzvah*, and the family kept kosher, although they were viewed as less religiously observant than other members of the Gitenstein family. Part of the laxity can be explained by Rose Gitenstein's influence. A determined and principled woman, Rose would not allow the gender roles defined by Orthodox or Conservative Judaism to limit her sense of purpose or action. She became very well known for her involvement in supporting Jewish orphans of World War II. In fact, one year after her death, a notice in the *New York Times* indicated that the Federation for European Relief raised thirty-five thousand dollars in her memory to support the Rose Gitenstein Home in Bellevue, France, which housed a hundred orphan children from Warsaw.[17] Like Seymour, Rose viewed her commitments to social reform and social justice as the main vehicles for expressing her Jewish identity. Seymour gave Rose most of the credit in assuring that the family always lived in comfortable quarters in the city: "Mother made sure we lived ina very comfortable apartment either back in Harlem as a very young man and then later during my teen age on the upper west side of Manhattan o Riverside Drive and also on West End avenus which was just beginning to go down."[18]

In 1942, Seymour had been living alone in Florala for almost ten years when his sister and my mother's close friend from Hunter College, my Aunt Rhoda, reintroduced him to Anna Green. Thus began a tortured relationship that likely never satisfied either of them but that tied them to

one another in love and need for the rest of their lives. In early love letters to Anna, Seymour asserted that they could live in Florala or elsewhere, although the latter may not have been a sincere offer. A letter from Seymour's brother, Milton, on August 17, 1960, indicates how deeply this conflict about living in the small town permeated the life of the Florala Gitensteins. The letter was clearly precipitated by some strong reaction to an episode, likely initiated by Anna, about her unhappiness in living in Florala. Milton wrote:

> It is not worth your getting upset and Anne upset and the kids involved to have to live in Florala.
>
> As a matter of fact, if you want you can move to Montgomery right away by renting a furnished house. There is nothing that is impossible as long as the kids feel well and you have no health problems. The other matters can all be solved.
>
> If you live in Montgomery, actually the commuting twice a week or 3 times a week is comparable to living in New York, where I spend almost 3 hours a day commuting. I know you are giving this consideration with Anne.
>
> Then of course there is the possibility of your coming back to New York. Very few factories are run by families. Most of them are run by hired help so it is not as though we are doing something out of the ordinary.

This offer, twenty-eight years after Seymour moved to Florala, likely reflected Milton's genuine concern about his brother and his brother's family's emotional health, but the New York Gitensteins made no actions to facilitate such a move.

"First Chapter," begins with the words, "I guess I didn't really have to make that first trip down here [to Florala]—at least many years later mother and dad made that clear to me—But really as I look back at it I had to come." That expression, "I had to come," begs for analysis. The real reason Seymour moved to Florala and whether Rose supported the move are issues open to disagreement, but the lifelong commitment to remain in Florala and not live in New York is explainable by a powerful emotional rationale, some of which was the desire to separate himself from the family narrative of the second son. But there was also a suspicion throughout Seymour's life that one of the precipitating forces behind his move alone

to Florala at such a young age was to flee the fallout of a sexual encounter with one of his beloved piano instructors.

By the end of Seymour's life, his friends and family recognized his sexual orientation as the secret that both energized and threatened his success, although they never openly discussed it. During his life he struggled emotionally with identity issues that led him to seek psychological counseling, but he never shared the source of these issues with the family. Anna was likely aware of more of the details of Seymour's situation, but she shared none of this with her family and surely not with her children. However, when Seymour was in his 90s and a resident at the Florala Rehabilitation Center, he admitted to me that he was a homosexual and then almost immediately denied that he had said what he had just said—only to repeat the same conversation the next day. By this time, my sister, brother, and I were in our late 50s and 60s, and we greeted the information with the relief of finally understanding so much behind this complex, conflicted, generous, self-serving, frightened man whom we loved deeply.

In 1932 Seymour took that first daunting trip south to oversee the factory Israel owned. He describes his trip to Florala and his earliest days there in "Early Thoughts about My Life in Florala." He boarded a train at New York's Penn Station, traveled to Jacksonville, and transferred to another train to DeFuniak Springs, Florida. There Seymour was met by a man whom he had seen only once before, who had traveled to New York to try to impress those Yankee Jews that he was good enough to be a supervisor for their new operation in Florala, Alabama. Seymour never mentioned the man's name, but the man picked Seymour up at the DeFuniak station and drove the twenty-three miles to Florala. Seymour wrote that when he was left at the hotel that was to be his home for a short period, the man told the seventeen-year-old New Yorker to eat whatever they served him, no matter what it was. Seymour wrote, "a little tiny rotund woman waited on him [the manager] hand and foot. She cooked, she cleaned and she did everything else. The food was awful." It is hard to appreciate the poignancy of this shy, sheltered aesthete, a son of Manhattan, looking out the windows of that train hurtling south to his new life or trying to eat the overcooked vegetables and food fried in bacon drippings that were placed before him. Although in his later years Seymour openly ate pork and other nonkosher food, this food on his first nights in Florala must have been shocking.

In this Geronimo Hotel (which later became the Colonial Hotel), as he remembered, more roach guests resided than humans, but life in the hotel was a good initiation into the life of his new community. Two or three days after his first night, the young New Yorker returned to the Geronimo to find someone had shot out all the windows, either because he was angry or because he was drunk or simply because he *could* shoot out any windows he wanted. The shooter was Mr. Britton, the son of the family who owned the Britton Lumber Company in nearby Lakewood, Florida. Mr. Britton, Sr., was also the president of the Bank of Florala and the Lake Jackson Hotel Company.[19] No one even imagined that the police should be called on anything that a Britton might do. The powers that be just rejoiced that it was only windows rather than people that had been shot. Seymour was impressed that in this new culture, if you were one of the town fathers, you could do pretty much whatever you wanted. He learned over time, however, that the rules differed for a Yankee Jew no matter how many years that Jew was a resident, but as a town leader he still received leeway to be himself. This suspicion of the newcomer is an ironic parallel to what Seymour observed in his "First Chapter" when he wrote of his family living on West End Avenue in Manhattan: "There were a good many old timers there who resented the influx of the Jews whether

Colonial Hotel, Florala, Alabama. (FloralaHistory.com.)

"because they were just Jews or because they neve really had any contac with these mysterious people."[20] In Florala, Seymour Gitenstein remained an outsider.

He eventually moved out of the hotel and lived in a series of rooms and apartments. Seymour wrote, "I lived in a little apartment of an old house owned by Mrs. R. L. Miller who was a doctor's wife. She had a little upright piano. I practiced there."[21] Later he rented a larger place from Mrs. Miller that could accommodate a Steinway piano, one of the early Steinway grands made in the United States. He worked in the factory all day, came back to his piano at night, and practiced, practiced, practiced. The nights provided solace for this immigrant from the concert halls of New York City as he acculturated to the rough life of small-town South Alabama in the 1930s. As he remembered, the early years of 1932 to 1937 were very difficult for the business. Israel, unlike his son, saw no value in investing in modern equipment, so he did not provide sufficient financing. A nearby textile factory, Alatex in Andalusia, Alabama, gave significant competition, and every night Seymour was alone in a small room with a large piano.

Creating a Jewish Community

In "Early Thoughts" Seymour Gitenstein described the very small Jewish community in Florala when he moved there:

> There was two Jewish families in town, one was a very fat lady and her two daughters and her husband. They owned a little retail store. I can't say they weren't nice to me. They were. Then there was another family who had a son and daughter. This was the mother and father of Jenny Lurie Young who turned out to be one of my best friends and who really was a very nice person. The boy was Mr. Herman Lurie with whom I am still very friendly with. These people were nice to me although they were selfish to the extent that they were looking for payrolls and things like that in town. I think this is what they were interested in.[22]

During his entire time in Alabama, Seymour's Jewish affiliation was in Montgomery, a hundred miles from Florala, where he belonged to Temple Beth Or, the Reform congregation, an interesting choice considering that his family in New York had belonged to a Conservative synagogue.

Beth Or was the successor to Kahl Montgomery, a German Jewish congregation dating to the 1840s.[23] In the early twentieth century, recently arrived eastern European Jews formed the Orthodox Agudath Israel, and then Sephardic Jews established Etz Ahayem in the city.[24] My brother was a bar mitzvah, and he, my sister, and I spent many years traveling to Montgomery for Sunday school at Beth Or. But for the most part the Gitenstein's interaction with the Montgomery Jewish community was limited to the High Holidays and to social occasions during the periodic shopping trips to Montgomery that Anna enjoyed. Part of the reason for this isolation was that we did not fit into the social class of the temple community. The joke in Beth Or circles, hearkening back to its German heritage, was that as a member, you were either a Weil, a Greil or you were a schlemiel. Clearly, the Gitensteins from Romania and Moldova were not German; we did not fit into the class of the significantly more established Weils and Greils. Nevertheless, Seymour chose this Reform congregation for affiliation.

Seymour's other Jewish contacts were limited to the small Jewish community of Covington County, in which Florala is situated: the Bermans and Rosens in Andalusia, the Finkelsteins in Opp, and the Luries in Florala. Two Jewish families resided in Andalusia, twenty-two miles from Florala: Sam and Rose Berman and their children, Hilda, Anne Louis (known as Toopie), and Doris; and Sol and Rebecca Rosen and their daughter, Hannah. Sam Berman was born in Andalusia and owned a department store, I. Berman and Son, with his father. After Sam sold the store, he became a very successful real estate agent. Sol and Rebecca Rosen, who moved to Andalusia in the 1940s or 1950s, had a women's clothing store that Rebecca's parents, Harris Simon and Elizabeth Kaufman Turner, who also lived in Andalusia, had established.

In Opp, twenty miles from Florala, Leo and Muriel Finkelstein resided with their four children: Nathan, Arnold, Rose Lynn, and Richard. Leo's brother-in-law, Myer Bukantz, established a dry goods store in Opp, which Leo took over after Myer died in a car accident. After her husband's death, Leo's oldest sister, Gisella Meller, moved to Opp to join her brother and sister, Hannah Bukantz, and niece, Nathalie Bukantz. In Florala, Mike and Esther Lurie, the parents of Jenny and Herman, owned a dry goods store, while Mike's brother Israel and Lakie Lurie, the parents of Bernice and Doris, owned a furniture and gift store. All of the Covington County

Jewish families welcomed the lonely young man from Manhattan, but the differences between their Alabama upbringings and his Manhattan past made the relationships somewhat tenuous. In later years, Anna developed a closer relationship with Muriel Finklestein, partially because, unlike the Bermans, Rosens, and Luries, Muriel was not from the Deep South, and my brother and I were close in age to the Finklestein children.[25]

During his courting of Anna Green, Seymour Gitenstein made much of their radical contrast with the real (that is, Protestant) citizens of Florala.[26] That difference would become part of their bond to one another, a kind of special isolation from a world that had not been particularly kind to either of them. Such isolation was not comfortable, especially for Anna. She came to know Seymour through his sister, as both were students at Hunter College, graduating together in 1941. Anna majored in economics because that is what her father thought more practical than English. Neither the family nor Hunter College records can confirm Rhoda Gitenstein Sumberg's major. However, she became a greatly admired teacher in Westchester County, New York, of foreign languages including Latin, French, and Spanish. Initially Rhoda and Anna met by pure chance—in the classroom, students were seated alphabetically, thus Gitenstein sat next to Green—but they became close friends, eventually leading to Rhoda's introduction of Anna to her brothers, Milton and Seymour.

Anna and Seymour dated sporadically from 1939 to 1942, when Anna decided to get a job in Washington, D.C., and end her romantic ties with him. After a winter bout with pneumonia, she quit her job with the Federal Security Agency and visited her Hunter friend to recuperate. At the time Rhoda Gitenstein lived in Niceville, Florida, as her husband was a captain in the Quartermaster Corps stationed at Eglin Air Force Base, some thirty-five miles from Niceville. Rhoda invited her brother to visit his former girlfriend, and on January 16, 1943, Anna and Seymour married in Montgomery, Alabama.

Like many Jews who moved south from the Northeast, Seymour tried to create a Jewish family enclave in the isolated town, a pattern recognizable in the other Jewish families of Covington County. Seymour convinced Anna's parents to move to Florala in 1944, followed by her sister and her young family in 1955. In 1961, the first blow to Seymour's attempt to create a protective enclave for his wife occurred when Anna's father died. Then in 1967, Anna's sister Florence and her husband, Mel,

Seymour and Anna Gitenstein, c. 1942. (Courtesy of R. Barbara Gitenstein.)

moved back north to Philadelphia. This break in the group was traumatic for the family, especially for Anna. The publicly shared story was that the Silvermans moved to Philadelphia for more opportunities and a larger Jewish community. Yet in reality the Silvermans moved away from Florala to get away from their overbearing in-law, Seymour.

Seymour had become not just a city father, but the paterfamilias of the Gitenstein/Green/Silverman family. He expected all members of the family to accept his opinions without question. Mel chafed at this relationship. Seymour became furious and resentful of the Silverman decision to move, its impact on Anna, and the fact that anyone would question his authority. By 1967 Seymour and Anna's two elder children were old enough to question the objectivity of their father in this emotional event. In an April 7, 1967, letter, I wrote to respond to my father's resentment and criticism of any view contrary to his own about the Silvermans' move. The letter revealed a growing awareness that Seymour's view of life in Florala was self-serving. I acknowledged that our financial comfort was

largely based on his decision to remain in Florala and run the successful factory operation.

> The fact remains [however] that the path you took and the path you set for Mom and us was not easy. You might have accomplished the same monetary success in some metropolitan community; but due to, at first, your family's need and then your own choice you stayed in Florala, choosing the really more difficult method. Because you chose this, we (Mom, Mark, Susie and I) in [effect] had our situation chosen for us. We were all put in a very difficult situation. This is a fact.[27]

Although Seymour was not willing to acknowledge that living in Florala might have met his needs, it provided significant obstacles for the rest of the family.

Anna insulated her natural insecurity by fully embracing the cultural norms of middle-class nonimmigrant America. A beautiful woman, she dressed the part of a southern wife of a captain of industry and shunned any action or image of her family's immigrant past. (I remember her horror at my grandmother's predilection for carrying items in paper shopping bags.) Seymour, on the other hand, felt a strong tie to his Jewish

Left to right: Mark, Anna, Rose Barbara, Seymour, and (in front) Susan Gitenstein, c. 1959. (Courtesy of R. Barbara Gitenstein.)

identity, although this identity had more to do with social justice issues than religious dogma or practice. Our only nod to kashruth was that pork was not cooked in our home. We ate pork at restaurants and at friends' houses but did not make it at home. Like many other Classical Reform Jews, we changed our day of worship from Saturday to Sunday. After we abandoned the long Sunday round-trip drive to Beth Or for Sunday school, Seymour began a tradition of Sunday services for our immediate family and other Jews in Covington County. For Seymour, Jewishness was intimately tied to the music of the services that we held in our living room on Sunday mornings and not to ritual. The four documents that are the focus of this essay do not detail these services. However, understanding the characteristics of these services provide nuance to Seymour's life in Alabama.

Just as he led the family in other matters, Seymour planned and directed the services. When we moved into the large house Seymour built to placate Anna's unhappiness in Florala, he bought an electric organ, which he played to accompany the singing during Sunday services. The piano in the living room was for Chopin, Schumann, and occasionally for accompanying me singing Broadway tunes. The organ was for services, and just as he knew no pianissimo at the piano, Seymour played the organ at full volume. During the years the Silvermans lived in Florala, these Sunday gatherings normally numbered eleven people. In the early years when members of the Lurie family resided in Florala, their children, Marsha and Steve, sometimes joined us. Periodically, the Finkelstein children also attended. While my brother, cousin Alan, grandfather, and Uncle Mel read portions from the Bible or other Jewish sources, these were not the focus of the service; the focus was the music. My sister, cousin Emily, and I sang while Seymour played the organ. My mother, aunt, and grandmother were mostly observers. Everyone sang the *Sh'ma* and "All the World," and I sang the "*Etz Hayim*." Services ended with everyone singing the hymn "Father Let Thy Blessing," a singularly Christian-sounding hymn included in the *Union Hymnal*, accompanied by that singularly Christian—now Reform—instrument, the organ.

The Business and Understanding the South

In "The Franklin Ferguson Company, 1932–1970," Seymour asserts that the Gitenstein family established Franklin Ferguson of Florala in 1932

as a subsidiary of Riverside Shirt and Underwear in New York City. The use of multiple names for separate corporate entities of the business was a typical tactic taken by small businesses in order to separate the tax liabilities for separate functions. Riverside, the corporate umbrella, provided the executive center and the locus of most of the sales activity. Gitenstein Brothers was used interchangeably with Riverside. Franklin Ferguson was the factory where the product was made. A third entity, Smith Johnson Real Estate, owned the property on which the factory sat as well as the factory equipment. Franklin Ferguson was almost solely the responsibility of Seymour Gitenstein.

Franklin Ferguson advertisement, April 1, 1943. (Florala News.)

Franklin Ferguson began with forty employees, whereas at the time of the writing of its history, the factory employed some eight hundred.[28] During its heyday, the company had customers in every state in the union and Canada, as well as parts of Europe and Africa. Seymour and Anna took pride in the modern equipment (in opposition to his father's preference for older machinery) and air conditioning that supported the work of the employees: "Specially adapted machinery was introduced, such as the electronic button-holer, and the positioning single needle machines. Air conditioning installations were begun in 1944. . . . Other recent modern improvements include electronically controlled spreading machinery and the latest developments in electronic cutting machines."[29] Seymour and

Anna also took pleasure in celebrating employment opportunities for the local community. The journal lists sixteen individuals in leadership roles in the operation, all from the Florala region, and chronicles the number of employees who were citizens of Florala and surrounding towns in Alabama (Lockhart, Opp, Samson, Wing, Baker, Coffee Springs, and Kingston) and Florida (Crestview, DeFuniak Springs, Laurel Hill, Ponce de Leon, Darlington and Lakewood). Anna and Seymour were also very proud of the benefits that they offered the employees such as life insurance, retirement, no-cost loans, medical coverage with minimal membership costs, college scholarships, a cancer fund, and preventative health care programs including the services of a full-time registered nurse, the wife of one of the doctors who worked in the clinic.

From the beginning of his time in Florala, the social and cultural differences from his former life shocked Seymour. He could not get accustomed to rigid southern segregation. He wrote, "There was no integration yet and it was a very difficult period for me to understand having been brought up in New York City forgetting about the religious differences, the social economic and other standards of life that were so different."[30] He found it hard to accept that his employees, particularly the women, could not get good (or, in some cases, any) health care. Often women would come to work despite being ill because their families needed the income: "[V]ery often a girl would come in and evidently she had tremors or some nervous disorder or had been out too late or what have you and we would take her to our little pitiful restroom which had a bed in it."[31] He could not understand why the local physicians would not treat his female employees. Seymour recognized that his employees were very different from him, and many of their customs and cultural patterns were foreign and in some cases contradictory to his upbringing, but he refused to be judgmental. Acknowledging the complexity of his relationship to Florala norms, in the late 1980s Seymour wrote, "I had no idea of the morality or immorality of our people. Our little household was very strictly constructed. I can't be critical because later on these people taught me an awful lot and gave me a better understanding of life really than I got at home." This inelegant and confusing contrast between what he experienced in his "little household," under his mother's watchful eye, and the laxer rules of decorum, social interaction, and sexual encounters of "our people" of the factory did not translate into condescension.[32]

The Hospital: A Jewish Touch to a Community Service

Observing how local doctors treated the poorer women who worked for him in the factory, Seymour developed a long-term desire to enhance medical care for the community. During the 1950s he worked with two local doctors to build a clinic for the factory employees. In 1962, after the death of his father-in-law, Seymour became obsessed with construction of a community hospital. He recorded the history in "The Florala Memorial Hospital," likely written in 1970. Seymour took great satisfaction in the fact that he personally contributed or raised from local and regional sources all the resources for the hospital. The hospital "was built entirely with personal funds and not money from what they called the Hill Burton Administration and of course spending all this personal money was a terrific strain. I spent my entire savings and even got my family to allow some of the funds to come from the company assets."[33] The personal savings that Seymour referenced eventually became the Anna and Seymour Gitenstein Foundation. The proceeds of the sale of the hospital in the 1980s increased the corpus of the foundation that has since supported higher education, notably scholarships for children of local residents; medical research, particularly related to Alzheimer's disease; and cultural programs, especially music and music education.[34]

The hospital was founded in 1963 as a nonprofit, and on July 9, 1964, it welcomed three-thousand visitors to an open house. "The Florala Memorial Hospital" details the names of administrative as well as professional leadership and describes the twenty-three-bed facility that was "equipped with the latest scientific medical equipment . . . completely air conditioned and heated by heat pumps."[35] The operating room featured a defibrillator, pacemaker, and a cardiac monitoring system, technology that was previously unavailable locally. Seymour and Anna took pride in the number of people who attended the opening, the "favorable comment by travelers as well as out of town visitors" about the stained glass windows that were the distinctive architectural feature, the "lavish" praise of "[o]ut of state visitors," and the commendations of visiting doctors from Pensacola, Fort Walton Beach, Boston, and New York. In 1970 Seymour's dreams for the future were high: "Future plans for the hospital include additional rooms and improved medical equipment. The hospital is destined to grow into a larger complex over the years."[36]

Florala Memorial Hospital under construction, c. 1962.
(Courtesy of R. Barbara Gitenstein.)

Stained glass windows at the Florala Memorial Hospital, 1965.
*(*Powergrams*, March 1965.)*

Seymour wanted to make sure that the hospital provided a service to the community as well as a monument to values and people that mattered to him. Two artifacts that enhanced the grounds manifest that desire: the columns from the high school that previously stood on the property and the stained glass windows that had graced Temple Beth Or's abandoned 1902 building.[37] The columns became the centerpiece of a garden in memory of Cliff Matthews, son of Seymour's closest friend, C. N. Matthews, a local physician who worked with Seymour to improve health care in the community. The windows, salvaged from a garbage dump in Montgomery, became the central architectural feature of the small hospital. The columns are not particularly distinguished examples of Doric architecture, and the windows are not particularly exceptional examples of painted glass so typical of southern religious architecture. Nonetheless, together they acted as powerful symbols of Seymour's commitment to the community, bringing part of his Jewish heritage into the tight-knit Protestant community while simultaneously celebrating the distinctive history of Florala.

Confronting Antisemitism and Segregation

Building on his personal interpretation of *tzedekah* and dedication to community, Seymour relished the idea of being a town father. This communal dedication was similar to other Jews of the South including such predecessors as Jacob and Isaac Moses of Columbus, Georgia.[38] "By the 1950s, southern Jews, no matter their country of origin, were middle-and upper-class business people, from small store owners to department store owners to department store magnates. They held public offices. . . . Jewish citizens were frequently at the center of efforts to build schools, medical institutions, and cultural venues throughout the South."[39] Seymour's Jewish identity and his Yankee heritage made him both a part of and apart from the leadership of Florala. In order to solidify his position as a town father, during the 1960s he threw himself more and more into the workings of the small town. Although he genuinely cared for the people in Florala, he also relished being patron of his own fiefdom. He enjoyed the prestige, he enjoyed the devotion, and he demanded the attention. He significantly contributed to that community, in fact—organizing and helping fund the building of a hospital, recruiting and supporting doctors to help

provide the community with consistent health care, and helping mitigate racial tensions that were ever-present but that escalated during the 1950s.

As many scholars note, southern Jews were not for the most part leaders in the civil rights movement. Clive Webb aptly quotes a letter from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to Rabbi Jacob M. Rothschild: "I think we all have to admit . . . that there are Jews in the South who have not been anything like our allies in the civil rights struggle and have gone out of the way to consort with the perpetrators of the status quo."[40] Even the most principled members of the rabbinate were few and far between. "The importance of southern rabbis should not be exaggerated," Webb writes. "[I]n the drama of the desegregation crisis they were but supporting players. While some rabbis risked their lives in lonely support of civil rights, others remained willfully silent."[41] Even in the years when Americans were becoming more aware of the horrors of the Holocaust and reacting with growing sympathy for Europe's Jews, as Dan Puckett notes, "Alabama's Jews, like the southern white non-Jewish majority, exhibited a profound cognitive dissonance in regard to the implications of Nazi fascism and the Holocaust to racial intolerance in Alabama and the South."[42]

One of the most poignant descriptions of this disconnect is captured in the quotation of a Jew from Mississippi in the essay by Marvin Braiterman, "Mississippi Marranos": "We know right from wrong, and the difference between our God and the segregationist God they talk about down here. But their God runs Mississippi, not ours. We have to work quietly, secretly. We have to play ball. Anti-Semitism is always right around the corner."[43] Some historians have observed that by the early 1960s, the Jewish refusal to speak out was becoming more fraught. Albert Vorspan in "The Dilemma of the Southern Jew" describes the changing atmosphere for Jews in the South as synagogue bombings became more frequent.[44] Any connection between the awareness of the Holocaust and of the consequences of chattel slavery was overshadowed by the fear of synagogue bombings and ethnic violence.

Whereas Seymour Gitenstein never marched or demonstrated, neither did he accept southern racial mores even after living in the region for decades. Instead, like so many Jews in the South, he worked to achieve peaceful desegregation. In his early days in Alabama, Seymour felt the discrepancy between the values he brought from his New York Jewish upbringing and the culture of small-town white Alabama, even as he

Downtown Florala, Alabama, c. 1950s. (FloralaHistory.com.)

strove to become accepted in this new land. To be accepted meant that he either had to remain silent when he observed the racial prejudice so common in the 1940s South or become oblivious to those prejudices.

The primary documents analyzed in this article make no specific reference to Seymour's involvement in the desegregation of the Florala schools, yet in fall 1965 he was named chairman of the school board just as the community was navigating federal desegregation directives to school districts. Although he received tacit support from others in the community, white and Black, Seymour seemed to embrace the notion that it was his responsibility to get the community through the difficult days to come with as little violence as possible. To the white citizens he argued that it would be better if they crafted their future rather than resist and thereby invite the federal government to force a plan on Florala. To the Black citizens he argued that he, as an outsider, was the best liaison between them and the white leadership. The plan that was implemented was simple though draconian: the schools that had previously served only the white community remained open with plans for expansion; the schools that had served the Black community were closed. In many ways, Seymour's plan worked. During the integration of Florala's schools, while there were many raised voices and much animus and anxiety, no violence or destruction of property occurred.[45] Seymour provided important leadership during this transition, but he did not succeed alone. Other town

leaders helped. The white community did not view him as a firebrand for desegregation but a moderate voice of reason, and the Black community recognized him as an ally outsider.

While I can find no newspaper or journal documentation of the awareness in the community of the difference between the Gitenstein family relationship with the Black community and that of the rest of the white community, I have vivid memories of knowing it to be so. First, there was the way Seymour managed the desegregation directive. Second were the comments from white friends who would often "apologize" after some racist comment before me or my brother by saying something like, "I know you do not agree with this kind of talk." Finally, my family broke social norms: I sat for lunch with the Black women who cooked and cleaned for Anna, even as a teenager; I cleaned my own room, unheard of in families who had "help"; and Anna hosted a party for her youngest child's integrated eighth-grade class in our home. Viewed from a distance, that none of these behaviors resulted in violence is surprising. Perhaps the strangeness of our status shielded us—Yankees, Jews, and the family of the largest employer in town. Everyone knew that the Gitensteins did not follow all the norms of southern society, including racial segregation. Possibly this special status allowed Seymour to succeed in leading the town's desegregation efforts.

In recent communications with current and former residents of Florala, it came as no surprise that white and Black perspectives differed dramatically. To a person, the white contacts had no awareness of racial strife or antisemitism from 1940 to 1970.[46] While not every Black person shared seriously negative experiences of racism, some did. Hazel Bryant was born in Florala in 1939 but moved to Jersey City, New Jersey, to attend high school. As a child she believed the move was for health reasons; as an adult, she learned from her father that she was sent north because her family knew that as an African American girl she would not have received the kind of education she deserved in South Alabama. In a December 19, 2020, telephone conversation, Bryant discussed numerous examples of the racism that permeated the South of her childhood. For instance, she informed me that if a Black person went to a store in Florala during her childhood, they were not allowed to try on shoes, only to buy the size they requested. The books that the students in the Black Carver Junior High received before integration were defaced hand-me-downs from the white

school, with the n-word written in the margins and whole chapters torn out. In the face of these everyday racist experiences, the memory of Jackie Waters's killing on the Florala square on January 15, 1920, was not a distant memory for the Bryant family nor the Black students who studied with the damaged and desecrated textbooks. After Waters was accused of raping a white woman, a white mob chased him to the town center, told him to run, and then shot him in the back.[47]

Even in the face of Seymour's contributions to civic life in Florala, our acceptance in Florala was circumspect. No specific quotations from the four journal entries support this view, but childhood memories and ancillary research support my conclusion. In fall 1963, rumblings among the factory employees concerning the establishment of a union grew. Some of them started wearing "I'm for ACWA," the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Association, while others wore buttons that read "I'm for Seymour." Other community members outside of the factory became involved in the disagreement, and the undercurrent of antisemitism and its close cousin, resentment of interlopers from the North, became more

Seymour Gitenstein in front of a Florala factory building, c. 1962. (Courtesy of R. Barbara Gitenstein.)

apparent.[48] Although the workers never unionized, Seymour received death threats. He had created a powerful enemy in a local doctor who ran a hospital and interpreted Seymour's aspiration for a new hospital as competition. Dr. J. F. Holley's supporters fueled the growing anger at the Yankee Jew, and Holley attempted to build a small shirt factory to compete with Franklin Ferguson.

Interestingly enough, Seymour does not reference the reality of antisemitism in any of the documents upon which this study is based. However, in a very early letter to his bride to be, Anna, he acknowledges the reality of what life will be like for the transplanted New Yorker. This honesty differs from the sensibility that permeates the rest of his writings and, in some ways, the manner in which he managed his life in Florala. On December 31, 1942, Seymour wrote Anna:

> I will try my best to make you happy—wherever we may live whether it be here (Florala) or elsewhere———Please try and understand that Florala is no Bed of Roses—I explained to you how these people—are narrow, Selfish, Likeable, charming, hateful, Antisemitic, honest and Dishonest—I could go on—But you can grow to like it and broaden—with your Experience.
>
> I am selfish I guess in asking you to give up your family, friends, to devote yourself to me—but maybe you will not be so lonesome here—You will have much *new experience*—
>
> Please give all these things a thought and prepare *yourself for them*—[49]

The local newspapers, the *Florala News* and the *Andalusia Star News*, offer little insight into the undercurrent of antisemitism present in Florala. Interviews with white, non-Jewish residents of Florala reveal no awareness by the majority culture of significant antisemitism. However, interviews with Black residents reveal a more nuanced narrative. Hazel Bryant described how, to the majority white community, Jews were outsiders, objects of derision and suspicion. She spoke of how her mother would hear comments from the white Protestant family members regarding these attitudes because the majority whites had so little regard for Blacks that they did not feel any need to censor their conversations in front of them.

A review of the history of John G. Crommelin provides further insight into covert and overt antisemitism in Alabama. Rear Admiral John

Crommelin was one of five brothers born in Montgomery, Alabama, who served with distinction in the military. John, the oldest son, attended the University of Virginia and the U.S. Naval Academy. He became a well-known officer and strong advocate for the air force wing of the World War II navy operation. In 1949, he joined what came to be known as "The Revolt of the Admirals."[50] The admirals who participated in this "revolt" received a hearing before the House Armed Services Committee. Consequently, Secretary of the Navy Francis Matthews branded Crommelin as "faithless, insubordinate and disloyal" and forced Crommelin to retire.[51]

In 1950, after his retirement, Crommelin began his career as a perennial suitor for public office in Alabama, first running against Lister Hill for U.S. Senate. Four years later, Crommelin was a candidate for Alabama governor and became a voice in Ten Million Americans Mobilizing for Justice, a group resisting the censure of Senator Joseph P. McCarthy. At a Madison Square Garden event, Crommelin spoke of a "Hidden Force" that was intent on undermining the federal government. The next year, after the organization disbanded, Crommelin defined that Hidden Force as a group of "300 Jew Zionists" who were attempting to "control the world."[52] Over the next thirty years, such antisemitism permeated his campaign rhetoric, including second runs for the U.S. Senate and governorship, a nomination for the Vice Presidency of the United States with the National States' Rights Party, and numerous runs for local positions including mayor of Montgomery. During his multiple attempts at political office, Crommelin campaigned in Covington County and Florala in particular. Mark Gitenstein, Seymour's son, remembers that during at least one of those visits, Crommelin specifically called Seymour out as a Jew and thereby a danger to Alabama's way of life.

Crommelin was often dismissed as a member of a radical fringe, but he exerted tremendous impact on the politics of Alabama and America. In his races against such moderates as Lister Hill and John Patterson, he successfully pushed his opponents to adopt more rigid racial segregationist poses, and he always attributed social problems to Jews. In the twilight of his career as a perennial candidate, he had significant impact on up-and-coming voices for the militant right such as David Duke and John Kasper. Kasper introduced Crommelin to Ezra Pound and encouraged Crommelin's advocacy for violent resistance to internationalism and the federal

government. This resistance had a strong undercurrent of fears of an international Jewish conspiracy. All of these beliefs and commitments came to be foundational for contemporary right-wing militias.[53]

The insidiousness of Alabama antisemitism is apparent in the attempt to erase the reality of such voices as John Crommelin. For instance, in 1996, Crommelin's obituary in the *Montgomery Advertiser* celebrated his patriotism with little mention of his political aspirations and no mention of his antisemitism. In 2003, the Alabama Military Hall of Honor celebrated Crommelin as a great hero.[54] On May 29, 2020, the *Andalusia Star News* published an article, as part of series on the five Crommelin brothers, celebrating John G. Crommelin while remaining entirely silent on any aspect of his political forays or antisemitic positions.[55] While the documents reviewed in this analysis do not speak to Crommelin's impact on South Alabama and his deleterious impact on Jews from Alabama, a short review of his continued admiration in the community reinforces my vivid childhood memories. Perhaps citizens of Florala and Covington County were not going to vote for John Crommelin, but they attended his political rallies and did not condemn his international Zionist conspiracy theories. And any person who hailed from New York City, even after forty years as a resident, was closer to the International Zionists than to the purity of white military leadership of the Crommelin family.

The Later Years

By the late 1980s, Riverside Shirt and Underwear Company was floundering. Seymour committed much of his personal resources to try to keep the company afloat, covering the payroll and trying everything to stem the inevitability of cheaper textiles from Asia. Still, in 1987, the company went bankrupt. Losing all that he had created in the business was a terrible personal loss for Seymour, but another loss would be greater. Within a year of the bankruptcy, Anna died. Seymour was alone again, as he had been before he convinced Anna Green to marry him. His life after Anna's death reinforced his idiosyncratic definition of being a Jew in small-town Alabama.

Seymour remained very proud of what he had accomplished in the small town, remembering with great pride that he had introduced air conditioning into the local textile industry; provided retirement and life insurance for his employees when other manufacturers did not; and that

Seymour Gitenstein with plaque marking a lab named in Anna's memory, c. 1992. (Courtesy of R. Barbara Gitenstein.)

he actually cared about his employees' health. In his history of the business he states that "[p]ersonal contact and communication between management and employee have been a continuing policy. Warm personal memories keep alive the tradition of concern in the company."[56] Seymour's management style was retail: focused on individuals, he knew every employee, his or her spouse, his or her children, and each family's current personal and financial challenges. When he walked around the plant he talked to everyone, and they all greeted "Mr. Seymour." He felt that personal relationships mattered, that his value was seen in his actions, not just his financial position. As he had learned from his mother, social and philanthropic actions were an essential part of his Jewish identity. He wanted to feel that he left the place where he lived better than when he arrived—all of which is true. But in his own Seymour way, he also wanted to receive credit for those gifts, to be recognized and admired. He wanted it confirmed that in the end there were those who loved him more than his parents and grandmother loved his talented older sister and his charming older brother.

From the time of Anna's death in 1988 until 2004, Seymour remained alone in a four-thousand-square-foot house that he had built for his wife in the middle of a pecan orchard. He spent time with friends, sometimes visited family, but mostly returned to that lonely life of the 1930s. He continued to attend High Holiday services at Temple Beth Or, but his Jewish life became more and more attenuated from ritual and from a congregation. After hip surgery, when he moved full-time into the local rehabilitation center, his trips to Beth Or became more often substituted by Sunday services at the local Methodist Church.

Seymour's funeral was held in the Florala High School four days after his death in 2010. To no one's surprise, he had left specific plans with the Evans Funeral Home director. The ceremony was a strange combination of Hebrew prayers, personal reminiscence, and a eulogy by a rabbi who barely knew Seymour. What really captured Seymour, however, was the music that he had chosen: "*Etz Hayim*," "Shall We Gather at the River," "All the World," Chopin, and "Hello Dolly." The ceremony closed with the only hymn that he could have chosen: "Til We Meet Again." The music represented his life, weaving Carnegie Hall with Hebrew prayer and Christian hymns.

Conclusion

Doubtless, the fates of Seymour Gitenstein and Florala became inextricably intertwined. Seymour had a tremendous impact on the cultural, economic, and social life of his adopted town. Seymour likely would never have succeeded in the way that he did on the larger and more competitive canvas of New York City. He needed to be the big fish in the small pond, and he needed to be seen as a city father, respected for his generosity and influence and indulged for his idiosyncrasies, including his volcanic temper. Like so many Jews who moved south in the early to mid-twentieth century, Seymour never found full acceptance as a fellow citizen, but unlike Anna, he learned to thrive in this liminal existence. The primary documents on which this article is based reveal the personal ruminations of a singular individual but also mirror much of the pattern of life for northern Jews who moved to small southern towns in the mid-twentieth century.

The current state of Seymour Gitenstein's two great projects reinforces the intertwining of his life and the life of Florala. In 1960 the River-

side Shirt Company employed almost a thousand people, and in 1970 its payroll approached three million dollars. In 1987, the competition from Japanese imports forced the company into bankruptcy. Currently, the factory buildings are abandoned. In 1964, the Florala Memorial Hospital opened with twenty-three beds, equipped with state-of-the-art equipment. It closed in 2013, and, after several unsuccessful attempts by investors, the city of Florala took over the buildings in February 2020. As quoted in the *Andalusia Star-News*, Florala Mayor Terry Holley stated, "We don't know exactly what we are going to do" because the hospital buildings are in "pretty rough shape."[57]

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Journals:

Seymour Gitenstein, "First Chapter" (undated)
Seymour Gitenstein, "Early Thoughts About My Life in Florala" (undated)
Anna Green Gitenstein and Seymour Gitenstein, "The Franklin Ferguson Company 1932–1970" (c. 1970)
Anna Green Gitenstein and Seymour Gitenstein, "The Florala Memorial Hospital" (1970)

Correspondence:

Seymour Gitenstein to Anna Green, December 31, 1942
Milton Gitenstein to Seymour Gitenstein, August 17, 1960
Rose Barbara Gitenstein to Seymour Gitenstein, April 7, 1967

NOTE ON THE TEXT

The transcriptions reproduced below attempt to replicate the original documents precisely, including grammatical and typographical errors. The only changes were to remove words that were crossed out in the original typescripts, where it was plainly the author's intent to delete them, and to reproduce in conventional typeface documents that were originally typed in all caps.

Seymour Gitenstein, "First Chapter" (undated)

First chapter :=

I guess I didnt really have to make that first trip down here—at least many years later mother and dad made that clear to me—But really as I look back at it I had to come.

Papa had just gotton over his first series of serious illnesses and and he wasnt easy to handle. My brother and myself had already began to realize that it was expected of us to go into our family business and altho it hadnt really been that all good as I remember back when I was 12 and 14 years old we did make a living and we never lacked for anything.

Mother made sure we lived ina very comfortable apartment either back in Harlem as a very young man and then later during my teen age on the upper west side of Manhattan o Riverside Drive and also on West End avenus which was just beginning to go down and some of the apartment building had seen much better days, and much better or rather much more affluent tenants—

There were a good many old timers there who resented the influx of the Jews whether because they were just Jews or because they neve really had any contac with these mysterious people albeit I am talking about the New York City of the 20"s.—

There were four of us, my older sister who was rea;y very good natured and on the surface I guess the mostg talented at least letS say she had the mostg nerve and reallyg had also the mostg attention of my father and mother ans I guess the rest of the family including Grand ma who had come to live with us after Grandpa had passed on and unfortunately Mothers half brother had gone through the family millions I am not kidding grandma really had a lot of money which Grabdpa had amassed during the first World War and before that.

Grandma of Roumanian Russian Jewish stock very strong minded and very self willed I guess, altho I didnt realize that until mwny years later when my older sister came and stayed with my wife and myself during a very trying period of our lives both going thru serious surgey within 6 weeks of one another.—well enough of that

Grandma had two of her own children when she arrived from the old country and went straight out west to Traverse city Michigan with the

Seymour Gitenstein, "First Chapter," p. 1.
(Courtesy of R. Barbara Gitenstein.)

young ones and it is there that she lost her first husband—he was tree fellsman and was unfortunately killed.—

she bravely went back tok New York with the two children possibly sounrd 1880 or maybe later and for a time worked as laundred in a laundry= there was a very trying period for her a— she must have been avery strong willed young woman also an extremely good health.

She myst have met my grandfather about 1885 =He was also from Roumania and altho he also had left a family overseas he started all over with Grand ma and Mother (Rosie) was the firstg born—Now her name was really Esther Rose but Aunt Jennie mothers older sister said she discarded the Esther when she mwas in her teens Mother was very ambitious and when she was firstly matchedup with my fathdrs brother she threatened suicide if Grandma pushed this marriag she was all of 16!!!!—

well myv father mustg have been pratty ggood to her altho I do remember some complaints later in life

Seymour Gitenstein, "Early Thoughts About My Life in Florala" (undated)

1-The train trip down from Pennsylvania Station to DeFuniak Springs, I bought my own ticket, I don't remember what it was, but when the train came to Jacksonville we were late and I had to stay over night in a strange hotel and then go over to DeFuniak Springs on a little "rinky-dink" railroad, it looked pretty good but it was very dirty as I remember.

When I arrived in DeFuniak I was picked up by one of the men who was training the people for the work in Florala. I was about 17. The gentleman I met I had met in New York. He looked to be in his late 40's. He took me to the old Colonial Hotel on the lake and told me no matter what they served me to eat it.

There was a beautiful old building in terrible state of repair later on as you will read on I took the old hotel and rebuilt it.

The manager sat in a great big "Grandpa's" chair in the lobby and a little tiny rotund woman waited on him hand and foot. She cooked, she cleaned and she did everything else. The food was awful.

My first night in Room 16 at the head of the staircase to the left, as you walk in the walls were full of water beetles or cockroaches whichever you please to call them and I covered myself with a sheet. A couple of days

later I came back from work, the plant was located over the Florala Fair and over the Lurie building, it must have been about 5 or 6 o'clock in the evening and I heard a lot of gun shots. When I got to the hotel there was a loud man shooting all the windows out of the building. It turned out to be Mr. Britton whom I never met but with whom I soon became very friendly later. I don't know why he did it. I guess he was either angry or upset.

There was two Jewish families in town, one was a very fat lady and her two daughters and her husband. They owned a little retail store. I can't say they weren't nice to me. They were. Then there was another family who had a son and daughter. This was the mother and father of Jenny Lurie Young who turned out to be one of my best friends and who really was a very nice person. The boy was Mr. Herman Lurie with whom I am still very friendly with. These people were nice to me although they were selfish to the extent that they were looking for payrolls and things like that in town. I think this is what they were interested in.

The first few years of our existence in Florala they operated what they called the "NRA", National Recovery Administration. This was an effort on the part of President Roosevelt to change the economy of not only the north but the South especially where people were very much underpaid.

There was no integration yet and it was a very difficult period for me to understand having been brought up in New York City forgetting about the religious differences, the social economic and other standards of life that were so different.

I lived in a little apartment of an old house owned by Mrs. R. L. Miller who was a doctor's wife. She had a little upright piano. I practiced there. I owned quite a few good pieces of music. Later on I rented a small apartment from her, put a Steinway piano there, believe it or not, which I bought in New York from a warehouse. I paid $350.00 for this piano. It was a beautiful grand. I remember the number 40860 so you know it was one of the early Steinway Grands made in the United States. I played pretty well. The action on the old Steinway, of course was awful.

Years 1932 through I guess, 1936 or 1937 were very hard work and very little results.

We couldn't afford to put in good equipment and our competition which then was only Alatex in Andalusia had put in new equipment such

Seymour Gitenstein, "Early Thoughts," p. 1.
(Courtesy of R. Barbara Gitenstein.)

as the famous 9560 and we didn't have the funds or the know how to realize that this was the fancy deal.

My father believed only in old equipment and of course this was very negative for the company.

The business with the NRA came and went. We were sued. We gave our employees some money back then it was discovered to be unconstitutional. Some people returned the money, very few did and that was the end of that. Those years 1932 through 1936, I guess, I was between 17 and 21 or 22.

My brother stayed in New York and he did help my father. He had his law degree already and he did the best he could.

Annette, I believe, was married already to Dr. Carl Zelson.

Little Rhoda was still in high school. She then went to where she later met my future wife, Anna Green. This was the most wonderful thing that ever happened to me.

Here is another experience I'd like to mention and it is the germ for my later building the hospital. I had no idea of the morality or immorality of our people. Our little household was very strictly constructed. I can't be critical because later on these people taught me an awful lot and gave me a better understanding of life really than I got at home. To get to the point very often a girl would come in and evidently she had tremors or some nervous disorder or had been out too late or what have you and we would take her to our little pitiful restroom which had a bed in it, I remember it was in the back of the first floor over the Florala Fair. Mrs. George has very helpful to try to be good to these people.

We tried to get a doctor. Would you believe we couldn't get a doctor to come up to see these people? We had at that time almost 6 doctors in town. We finally did get one of the lesser people to come. He was very nice though. We even had a girl to poison herself in the plant and later to die all connected to some of her activities at night which were not approved on at that time. You must realize this was 50 years ago. The standard of morality was entirely different.

I'm certainly not criticizing these people because they later became so close to me, all of them. It was then I decided somehow or another I would either build a clinic or certainly a hospital because you see in 1964 that came to past but that was 30 years later, earlier than that in the late 40's I did build a clinic with Dr. C. N. Matthews and later Dr. O'Neal. It

wasn't operated properly but we did a good job. It's been a long draw but it has been very interesting and I must say that the people working with me always were appreciative of whatever we started.

This was the germ for the little hospital my wife and I really did build. It was built entirely with personal funds and not money from what they called the Hill Burton Administration and of course spending all this personal money was a terrific strain. I spent my entire savings and even got my family to allow some of the funds to come from the company assets. My Mother and Father had both passed away by that time, Mother was only 56 years old when we lost her to cancer. My Father stayed on until he was 86 years old and was a wonderful person and managed to instill all these good deeds into myself and my wife. Meanwhile, my Father and Mother-in-law both came down from New York and lived on the lake in a beautiful house there. The building of the hospital was the highlight of the period 1962 thru 1964. The front of the hospital had a beautiful set of 7 stained glass windows and were constantly admired by all people. The hospital had the most modern equipment and also 26 beds plus a fully equipped lab and fully equipped x-ray department with the latest equipment there was in 1964 which of course today has since become outmoded.

Anna Green Gitenstein and Seymour Gitenstein, "The Franklin Ferguson Company 1932–1970" (c. 1970)

The Franklin Ferguson Company was founded in 1932 by Israel Gitenstein, father of the present partners, Milton and Seymour Gitenstein. Mr. Gitenstein moved to Florala from Geneva, Alabama in 1932. Purchasing and financial operations have always been conducted in New York City under the direction of Israel Gitenstein, and later under Milton Gitenstein. In 1946, Bernard Sumberg joined the corporation and is now in charge of all sales and customer relations. However, some sales are made in Florala. The factory has been the primary responsibility of Seymour Gitenstein, who has resided in Florala since 1932.

From a small beginning, of about 40 operators, the factory has grown to a present employment of approximately 800. During the early years the factory operated in four rented spaces above store buildings in the center of the business district. These spaces were gradually released in the early

1940's when the main plant was built. A branch operation in Crestview was closed at this time and all machinery was moved to Florala.

During the 10 year period from 1932-1942, employment rose to 250. Buildings were added periodically. Specially adapted machinery was introduced, such as the electronic button-holer, and the positioning single needle machines. Air conditioning installations were begun in 1944. Franklin Ferguson was one of the first factories in the area to make this step towards the comfort of the employee. Other recent modern improvements include electronically controlled spreading machinery and the latest developments in electronic cutting machines.

Employee benefits include free life insurance and retirement. A free loan service is available. A medical service plan is offered for a very small fee. A scholarship program is offered to the community, with many of the awards going to employee's children. The company has financed a cancer fund which takes care of medical expenses for any participating employee who suffers from a malignancy. Preventative medicine has been carried out throughout the year. Flu shots, chest x-rays, Red Cross blood programs and other preventative measures have been offered at no cost to the employees. Recently, a full time registered nurse, Mrs. Willie Rae O'Neal, has been employed to supervise the health care of the employees. Mrs. O'Neal works under the supervision of Dr. A. G. Williams, Dr. C. N. Matthews, Dr. Eugene Celano and Dr. Joseph Harper.

The employees of Franklin Ferguson come not only from Florala, but also from the outlying areas. Approximately 500 people come from Florala and Lockhart; 100 or more from Opp, Samson and Wing; 100 from Crestview, DeFuniak Springs; another 100 from Baker, Laurel Hill, Coffee Springs, Kinston, Ponce de Leon, Darlington and Lakewood.

The payroll of the company was $25,000.00 in 1932. Today it exceeds $3,000,000.00. In spite of the threats and inroads of competitive imports, the company has managed to retain it's employment level, by diversifying it's products. New and different items, such as ladies shirts, neckties, childrens' and mens' novelty shirts, have been added to the standard shirt product.

The character of a company is more than it's financial and productive structure. The personality of it's management and it's employees define the kind of operation any company is. Franklin Ferguson has 40 employees who have been with the company for 30 years; 300 have been

with the company for 20 or more years. There are many others who have been employed for over 10 years. This, in itself, is an indication of the employer-employee relationship in this operation. There has been a history of mutual concern since 1932. Personal contact and communication between management and employee have been a continuing policy. Warm personal memories keep alive the tradition of concern in the company. Men like Israel Gitenstein, Samuel Green and John W. Miles, now deceased, have left their mark. There are not many corporate organizations today that can boast of assets such as warmth and friendship. Yet, these qualities are undeniably part of the net worth of Franklin Ferguson company. The heritage of earlier management and the continuing personal involvement of Seymour and Milton Gitenstein have set a pattern of well-being for employees, factory and community.

Franklin Ferguson is proud of the relatively new people in the management program. Top management personnel include Colonel W. G. McKoy, Wade Phillips, Ivan Parker, Edgar Kyser, Robert Whitaker, Wilbur Buckelew, Alphus Henderson, John Chandler, Charlie Welch, George Scroggins, Glen W. Manning, James Wise, Roland DeFranco, Jewell Ludlam, Aubrey Hart, Lamar Mitchell and many, many others.

The management of Franklin Ferguson has complete confidence in the future stability and growth of the company in Florala.

A.G. G.

Anna Green Gitenstein and Seymour Gitenstein, "The Florala Memorial Hospital" (1970)

The Florala Memorial Hospital was founded in 1963 as a non-profit corporation. The building was completed in 1964 and it was formally opened to the public on July 9th, 1964. The open house was attended by approximately 3,000 visitors and physicians from Pensacola, Opp, Geneva, Andalusia and DeFuniak Springs.

The inspiration for a modern fully equipped and stafted hospital came about when a close relative of Mr. & Mr. Seymour Gitenstein had to be rushed to Pensacola in a critical condition. Mr. J. W. Bancroft came to Florala during the planning and building stage of the hospital. Mr. John W. Miles was also helpful in the financial planning. Mr. Bancroft had been

administrator of Escambia General Hospital in Pensacola and was prepared to help with the specifications for the hospital. Before he left Florala in 1966 he helped to train the present administrator, Mr. James N. York, a Florala native.

The hospital is unique in many ways. No state or federal assistance of any kind was furnished towards the building of this facility. All funds came through gifts from interested citizens and friends, in Florala and elsewhere and through the Anna and Seymour Gitenstein Foundation. Gifts have been generous, not only in the building of the hospital but in the continuing of it's operation and improvement.

The hospital is a completely modern facility with a 23 bed capacity. It is equipped with the latest scientific medical equipment. The building is completely air conditioned and heated by heat pumps. The building was constructed by C. E. Buffalow. The furnishings are comfortable and attractive. The operating room is modern in every respect; it features a defibrilator, pace maker and a cardiac monitoring system. Several of the rooms are also equipped with cardiac monitoring equipment. All rooms are equipped with built in oxygen and suction outlets.

*"In the operating room, Mrs. Bessie Wagner, R.N. (left) and Mrs. Sarah Manwaring, R.N., have placed electrocardiograph and electronic machines in place where they would be used with a patient." Operating room at Florala Memorial Hospital, 1965. (*Powergrams*, March 1965.)*

Jean Ziglar R.N. is the supervisor of a fine nursing service. Nurses employed by the hospital are: Sue Zorn R.N.; Grace Clenny R.N.; Florence Foster R.N.; Cassie Rogers R.N.; Annie Evans R.N.; Bernice Hall L.P.N.; Patricia Goolsby L.P.N.; Mildred Thompson L.P.N.; Mary Jane York L.P.N.; Mamie Ingram, Nurses-Aide; Nellie O-Pry Nurses-Aide; Martha Turberville Nurses-Aide; Irene Whitley Nurses-Aide; Chalmers Barnes—Orderly; James W. Butts—Orderly; Archie McDougald Orderly; William Wallace—Orderly.

Lenore Glass is the full time anesthetist. Bessie Wagner is in charge of the operating room and central supply. Mageline Crosby is an assistant operating room nurse, as well as assistant lab technician.

The efficient laboratory and x-ray department are supervised by Ed Thomas. Lillian Strickland is in charge of an excellent dietary department. A new dining room was added in 1968 and the kitchen was enlarged and remodeled. Dietary helpers under Mrs. Strickland are: Jenny Flowers, cook; Dora M. Hobbs, cook; Effie L. Roberts, cook; Beatrice Rowe, cook; Shirley Barnes, cook; Jeannette Barnes, cook.

Gertha Smith is the housekeeping supervisor. Working with her are Connie Hobdy, Arthur L. Miller, Lillie Smith and Linda Stone.

The business office is managed by Eloise George and a dedicated staff including: Elva M. Posey, Linda Harrison, Hilda Hoover, and Delatha Dearing, who is in charge of medical records.

James York is the administrator of the entire hospital complex and personnel. He is in the process of receiving further education in hospital management at the University of Alabama.

Dr. A. G. Williams, Jr. is chief of staff, a position which he alternates with Dr. C. N. Matthews. Dr. Williams, a native of Florala, returned to our community in 1965, after many years of practice in Niceville, Florida, where he managed his own hospital. Dr. Matthews, also a native of Florala, came home to practice medicine in 1947, after serving in the Second World War. In order to ease the burdens on Dr. Matthews and Dr. Williams, of an overwhelming practice, the hospital has been able to obtain the services of Dr. Joseph Harper and Dr. Eugene Celano. The doctors practice under the auspices of the Florala Memorial Hospital Out Patient Clinic. These doctors have office hours Monday, Thursday and Friday and Saturday in Paxton, Florida. In addition, there are also doctors in residence during the middle of the week and on the weekends, in order to relieve

Dr. Williams and Dr. Matthews. There is a physician on duty continuously to handle any emergencies that may arise.

Dr. Andrew Giesen and Dr. James Huddleston are the x-ray specialists for the hospital. Dr. P. B. Jones and Dr. F. G. Stevens serve the hospital as staff pathologists.

An outstanding attraction of the hospital is the beauty of the European stained glass biblical windows. Over the past six years, the windows have stimulated a great deal of favorable comment by travelers as well as out of town visitors.

Future plans for the hospital include additional rooms and improved medical equipment. The hospital is destined to grow into a larger complex over the years. Local citizens are not the only ones who appreciate the fine medical, surgical and nursing care available at Florala Memorial Hospital. Out of state visitors, who have had occasion to use the hospital are lavish in their praise of the personal attention they receive here. Visiting doctors from Pensacola, Ft. Walton, Boston, New York and elsewhere, have complimented the hospital services and facilities. Mr. York, the administrator, has been told many times how unusual it is to find such facilities in so small a hospital.

A.G. G.

Seymour Gitenstein to Anna Green, December 31, 1942

Dear Anna—

Just got home and ate supper—Am listening to Grieg Concerto—Very Inspiring—All of a sudden—

I don't know if it's the real you or the Soul that I really like—(Love—as you like)—What you see in me—I still can't make out.—

Did it really happen to me (us)!

Please Listen !!

I will try my best to make you happy—wherever we may live whether it be here (Florala) or elsewhere———Please try and understand that Florala is no Bed of Roses—I explained to you how these people—are narrow, Selfish, Likeable, charming, hateful, Antisemitic, honest and Dishonest—I could go on—But you can grow to like it and broaden—with your Experience.

Seymour Gitenstein to Anna Green, December 31, 1942, p. 1.
(Courtesy of R. Barbara Gitenstein.)

I am selfish I guess in asking you to give up your family, friends, to devote yourself to me—but maybe you will not be so lonesome here—You will have much new experience—

Please give all these things a thought and prepare yourself for them—

Mother will help explain things to you—Thats why I wanted you to spend some time with her.

Be sure to see Annette too She's so kind and understanding—reasonable thoughtful

Please think of me (Selfish again)—or should I be saying these things?

Best regards to all at home

Devotedly

Seymour G

Florala Ala

Remember

Please Say hello to Mother & Dad—Green—Florence Aunt Tillie

Milton Gitenstein to Seymour Gitenstein, August 17, 1960

Dear Seymour:

In line with our conversation this morning, we have time to think about this. I don't want to rush into anything but we should start looking for a superintendent fromthis end or do you want to from that end? Actually it all depends on where you want to move to.

If to Montgomery, we probably can get along with one of our own local men and build him up and give him title of Superintendent, temporarily to Miles as plant manager or plan superintendent and the man you have in mind as assistant. After all, John is61 years old. I looked it up.

It is not worth your getting upset and Anne upset and the kids involved to have to live in Florala.

As a matter of fact, if you want you can move to Montgomery right away by renting a furnished house. There is nothing that is impossible as long as the kids feel well and you have no health problems. The other matters can all be solved.

This page and next: *Rose Barbara Gitenstein to Seymour Gitenstein, April 7, 1967, p.1. (Courtesy of R. Barbara Gitenstein.)*

If you live in Montgomery, actually the commuting twice a week or 3 times a week is comparable to living in New York, where I spend almost 3 hours a day commuting. I know you are giving this consideration with Anne.

Then of course there is the possibility of your coming back to New York. Very few factories are run by families. Most of them are run by hired help so it is not as though we are doing something out of the ordinary.

Very truly yours,
Milt

Rose Barbara Gitenstein to Seymour Gitenstein, April 7, 1967

Durham, North Carolina

Dear Daddy,

I know that you instructed us not to write you any more on the subject of Aunt Flo's and Uncle Mel's leaving: But I feel like I should say some thing. That last letter you wrote us really hurt Mark. I don't know what he said to ya'll word for word, but I do know the gist of what he said. To be more frank than I should, I don't see what you could have resented. Anything that he said or that either of us think is merely meant as an observation not as a condemnation of anyone's actions, most especially not yours. Don't you realize that Mark and I are intelligent enough kids to realize the reason we have gotten all the opportunities we have (i.e. schooling) is that you DID live in Florala. The fact that you succeeded in Florala and then stayed to make it more successful has sent Mark to Indian Springs, me Holton-Arms, and us both to Duke (not to mention all the years for both of us at camps, etc.). But to both of us all of this is obvious, we couldn't and wouldn't ever condemn it. . . . . how could we?[58] The fact remains that the path you took and the path you set for Mom and us was not easy. You might have accomplished the same monetary success in some metropolitan community; but due to, at first, your family's need and then your own choice you stayed in Florala, choosing the really more difficult method. Because you chose this, we (Mom, Mark, Susie andI) in affect had our situation chosen for us. We were all put in a very difficult situation. This is a fact. The question of this choice being the best decision

or not is a subjective opinion. I think that it was, and so does Mark. The fact that we lived in Florala with all its limitations and policies which are foreign to our religion and spirits (Especially segregation) made better people of us. Thank-you, we appreciate the amount that you and Mom had to give up to make us what we are and how much more work and worry was involved in bringing us up in Florala. I only hope that I will be able to live up to what should be Anna and Seymour Gitenstein's daughter. Mark has already lived up to that standard, I believe.

I hope that you understand Mark and my opinions now. And I also hope that you don't resent this letter. I don't mean it as anything which requires resentment, it was written for the sake of explanation. Please don't feel that you ever have to explain to us your actions previous to now. They need no explanation. Not to us anyway. We know the "why" for many of your actions . . . more than you will give us credit for.

Will speak to ya'll on Sunday . . . . . .

Love ya',
Bobby

NOTES

[1] The typescripts of the primary documents reproduced below attempt to replicate the original documents exactly, complete with grammatical and typographical errors that are particularly evident in "First Chapter," "Early Thoughts About My Life in Florala," and Seymour Gitenstein's letter to Anna Green dated December 31, 1942. These documents, all in the author's possession, give insight into a complex individual who was on the one hand tremendously insecure and on the other hand aware of his important impact on his local community. As discussed below, some people viewed him with great affection and others with some suspicion.

[2] Edward Cohen, *The Peddler's Grandson: Growing Up Jewish in Mississippi* (New York, 2002); Stella Suberman, *The Jew Store: A Family Memoir* (Chapel Hill, 1998).

[3] The literature on Jews in the small-town South is extensive. See, for example, Ira M. Sheskin, "The Dixie Diaspora: The 'Loss' of Small Southern Jewish Community," in *Dixie Diaspora: An Anthology of Southern Jewish History,* ed. Mark K. Bauman (Tuscaloosa, 2006), 165–90; Lee Shai Weissbach, "East European Immigrants and the Image of Jews in the Small-Town South," in Bauman, *Dixie Diaspora*, 108–42; Lee Shai Weissbach, *Jewish Life in Small-Town America: A History* (New Haven, 2005).

[4] Eli N. Evans, *The Provincials: A Personal History of Jews in the South* (Chapel Hill, 2005).

[5] Louis D. Rubin, Jr., *My Father's People: A Family of Southern Jews* (Baton Rouge, 2002). Memoirs of southern Jews have become a regular genre of primary literature. For other examples, see Janice Rothschild Blumberg, *One Voice: Rabbi Jacob Rothschild and the Troubled South* (Macon, GA, 1985); Harriet Keyserling, *Against the Tide: One Woman's Political Struggle* (Columbia, SC, 1998); Herbert Keyserling, *Doctor K: A Personal Memoir* (Beaufort, SC, 1999); Stella Suberman, *When it Was Our War: A Soldier's Wife on the Home Front* (Chapel Hill, 2003); Charles H. Banov, *Office Upstairs: A Doctor's Journey* (Charleston, SC, 2007); Stella Suberman, *The GI Bill Boys: A Memoir* (Knoxville, TN, 2013); Lee Shai Weissbach, ed., *A Jewish Life on Three Continents: The Memoir of Menachem Mendel Frieden* (Palo Alto, CA, 2013); Alexander Z. Gurwitz, *Memories of Two Generations: A Yiddish Life in Russia and Texas*, ed. Bryan Edward Stone (Tuscaloosa, 2016).

[6] Three family members provided information through electronic communication regarding the Bralower family: Judy Gitenstein, daughter of Milton Gitenstein; Robert Sumberg, son of Rhoda Gitenstein Sumberg; and Allen Kurtz, husband to Dr. Linda Rosenbaum Kurtz, who is Sarah Bralower Begecher's granddaughter. Sarah was Louis Bralower's sister. Mr. Kurtz is an amateur genealogist, whose information is carefully documented by citations to primary documents including marriage licenses, death certificates, census data, and ship manifests. There were multiple e-mails during January 2021 from Judy Gitenstein and Robert Sumberg. Of particular significance is a January 29, 2021, e-mail from Kurtz that attached a fifteen-page genealogical study of the Bralower family focusing on Louis and Celia.

[7] Seymour Gitenstein, "First Chapter," 1. Seymour had three siblings who survived infancy: Annette Gitenstein Zelson (February 23, 1911–January 1, 2008), Milton Perceval Gitenstein (May 13, 1912–October 7, 1999), and Rhoda Gitenstein Sumberg (July 1, 1919–April 3, 2020).

[8] "First Chapter," 1.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

[11] The Gitenstein family decisions about the garment industry and the relocation of their factory were somewhat typical. Baltimore, North Carolina, and South Carolina witnessed the same phenomenon for Jewish and non-Jewish factory owners. See Leonard Rogoff, *Down Home: Jewish Life in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill, 2010); Eric L. Goldstein and Deborah R. Weiner, *On Middle Ground: A History of the Jews of Baltimore* (Baltimore, 2018); and research in progress by Diane C. Vecchio on Jews and the garment industry in Upcountry South Carolina.

[12] Robert Sumberg, e-mail to author, January 25, 2021.

[13] Seymour Gitenstein and Anna Green Gitenstein, "The Franklin Ferguson Company 1932–1970," 1. Robert Sumberg maintains that the move was not from Geneva, Alabama, but from DeFuniak Springs, Florida. In any event, the "move" to Florala was a move of the operation and not of Israel Gitenstein, who lived in New York City for his entire life. Of the leadership of the company, only Seymour Gitenstein moved to or lived in Alabama.

[14] Terry Barr, "A Shtetl Grew in Bessemer: Temple Beth-El and Jewish Life in Small Town Alabama," *Southern Jewish History* 3 (2000): 7.

[15] "First Chapter," 1.

[16] Lionel Trilling was a world-renowned writer and professor, considered one of the most important literary critics of the twentieth century. He was the first tenured Jewish professor in Columbia University's English department.

[17] *New York Times*, March 19, 1948. Judy Gitenstein alerted me to this article.

[18] "First Chapter," 1. For background see Jeffrey S. Gurock, *The Jews of Harlem: The Rise, Decline, and Revival of a Jewish Community* (New York, 2016).

[19] Seymour Gitenstein, "Early Thoughts About My Life in Florala," 1.

[20] "First Chapter," 1.

[21] "Early Thoughts," 2.

[22] Ibid.

[23] "Our History," Temple Beth Or, accessed March 13, 2021, https://templebethor.net/our-history.

[24] "Montgomery, Alabama," Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities, accessed March 13, 2021, https://www.isjl.org/alabama-montgomery-encyclopedia.html.

[25] A number of people provided information about the Covington County Jewish community through phone calls and e-mail communications: Lisa Young Donelly (Jenny Lurie Young's daughter), telephone call with author, December 3, 2020; Lynda Cohen Cassanos (Hilda Berman Cohen's daughter), telephone call with author, December 12, 2020; Rose Lynn Finkelstein (Leo and Muriel Finkelstein's daughter), e-mail to author, December 8, 2020; and a series of December 2020 e-mails to author from Florala contacts including Max Richburg, Jim Yeaman, David Williamson, Dick Cannon, and Chas Pelham.

[26] Seymour Gitenstein to Anna Green, December 31, 1942.

[27] Rose Barbara Gitenstein to Seymour Gitenstein, April 7, 1967.

[28] "Franklin Ferguson Company," 1.

[29] Ibid.

[30] "Early Thoughts," 2.

[31] Ibid., 3.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid., 5. The Hill-Burton Act is a 1946 federal law that provided resources for modernizing hospitals across the country with the understanding that patients would get free or low-cost care at the facility.

[34] According to an e-mail to the author dated February 1, 2021, from Ed Reifenberg, Seymour's accountant from the early 1980s until Seymour's death in 2010, the hospital was first sold in 1986 and resold a number of times since then. According to a history of the hospital published by the Alabama Power Company, in 2006 Robert Deverna and Hospital Holdings bought the hospital from United Florala Inc. Alabama Power Company, "Origin of a Hospital: Faith—and Seven Stained Glass Windows." *Powergrams: Alabama Power Company* (March 1965): 1–5, 24. In 2013, the hospital closed without notice, and in February 2020 the city of

Florala took ownership of its buildings. Christopher Smith, "Florala takes ownership of hospital buildings," *Andalusia Star News*, February 12, 2020.

[35] Seymour Gitenstein and Anna Green Gitenstein, "The Florala Memorial Hospital," 1. There is some disagreement as to actual number of beds in the facility over time with several documents indicating twenty-six beds.

[36] Ibid., 4.

[37] Temple Beth Or's first building was located on Church and Catoma Streets in Montgomery. This edifice, now a Church of Christ, is listed in the National Registry of Historic Places. In 1902, the congregation built a new synagogue on Sayre and Clayton. In 1961, when this building was abandoned, the congregation moved to Old Cloverdale on the outskirts of the city. "Our History," Temple Beth Or, accessed March 13, 2021, https://templebethor.net/our-history. When the 1902 building was abandoned, the windows were removed with other material from the site and discarded at the Montgomery dump. Seymour was not pleased that the plans for the new synagogue did not include the old windows, so he salvaged them for his hospital.

[38] Scott M. Langston, "Being Jewish in Columbus, Georgia: The Business, Politics and Religion of Jacob and Isaac Moses, 1828–1890," *Southern Jewish History* 18 (2015): 1–61.

[39] Marcie Cohen Ferris and Mark I. Greenberg, "Introduction," in *Jewish Roots in Southern Soil: A New History*, ed. Marcie Cohen Ferris and Mark I. Greenberg (Waltham, MA, 2006), 15.

[40] Clive Webb, "A Tangled Web: Black-Jewish Relations in the Twentieth Century South," in Ferris and Greenberg, eds., *Jewish Roots in Southern Soil*, 192. See also Clive Webb, *Fight Against Fear: Southern Jews and Black Civil Rights* (Athens, GA, 2001); Clive Webb, "Closing Ranks: Montgomery Jews and Civil Rights, 1954–1960," in Bauman, ed., *Dixie Diaspora*, 331–52. For an alternate interpretation, see Mark K. Bauman and Berkeley Kalin, eds., *The Quiet Voices: Southern Rabbis and Black Civil Rights, 1880s to 1990s* (Tuscaloosa, 1997); P. Allen Krause, *To Stand Aside or Stand Alone: Southern Reform Rabbis and the Civil Rights Movement*, ed. Mark K. Bauman with Stephen Krause (Tuscaloosa, 2016).

[41] Webb, "Tangled Web," 205.

[42] Dan J. Puckett, *In the Shadow of Hitler: Alabama's Jews, the Second World War, and the Holocaust* (Tuscaloosa, 2014), 222.

[43] Marvin Braiterman, "Mississippi Marranos," in *Jews in the South*, ed. Leonard Dinnerstein and Mary Dale Palsson (Baton Rouge, 1973), 355–56.

[44] Albert Vorspan, "The Dilemma of the Southern Jew," in Dinnerstein and Palsson, eds., *Jews in the South*, 334.

[45] Two other features helped the transition to desegregation remain peaceful. One was other white citizens of Florala who were supportive of a peaceful transition to desegregation and the second that in the small community, everyone knew each other—whether white or Black. Forrest "Shug" Cannon was on the city council at the time of the integration of the schools, and, as a liaison with the police department, he was in attendance when the first Black students entered the white county high school. His son, Dick Cannon informed the

author that "[t]he principal had all white students assemble in the auditorium. When they brought the few Black students in the auditorium, Dad said that Dennis Truman, who was the biggest player on the football team was heard to say 'Hey, that is just Angela there.' Dad said everyone laughed and all the new students sat down and that was it." Dick Cannon, e-mail to author, December 12, 2020.

[46] Electronic and telephone communications from Florala contacts informed this section: e-mails to the author in December 2020 from Dick Cannon, Kermit George, Max Richburg, Jim Yeaman, David Williamson, Chas Pelham, and Delbra Thompson Thrash and Hazel Bryant, telephone interview with author, December 19, 2020.

[47] Bryant interview.

[48] For antisemitism in the South see Howard N. Rabinowitz, "Nativism, Bigotry and Anti-Semitism in the South," *American Jewish History* 77 (March 1988): 437–51.

[49] Seymour Gitenstein to Anna Green, December 31, 1942.

[50] In 1949 several retired and active United States Navy admirals raised public objection to a reduction in federal financial support for the Navy. The objection was part of an internecine battle between the Navy and Air Force, jockeying for responsibilities in "strategic bombing" for the United States. See Jeffrey G. Barlow, *Revolt of the Admirals: The Fight for Naval Aviation, 1945–1950* (Washington, DC, 1994).

[51] Clive Webb, *Rabble Rousers: The American Far Right in the Civil Rights Era* (Athens, GA, 2010), 107.

[52] Ibid., 109-10.

[53] Ibid., 214.

[54] Ibid., 103.

[55] John Vick, "Crommelin Brother Had Storied Career in Navy," *Andalusia Star News*, May 29, 2020.

[56] "Franklin Ferguson Company," 3.

[57] Christopher Smith, "Florala takes ownership of hospital buildings," *Andalusia Star News*, February 12, 2020.

[58] Ellipses in original, here and below.

Book Reviews

The Jewish World of Elvis Presley. By Roselle Kline Chartock. McKinstry Place Publishers, 2020. 276 pages.

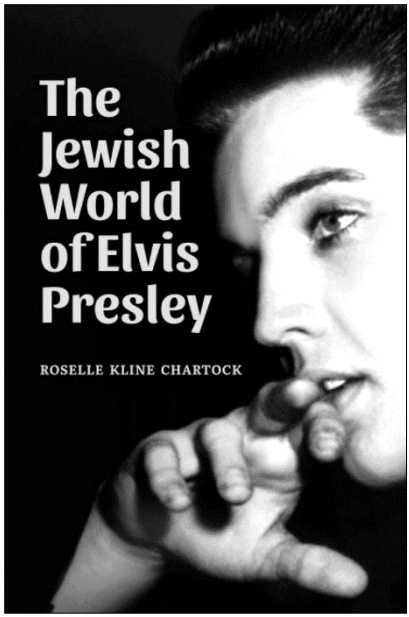
As someone who closely followed Elvis Presley's career from his seminal recordings for Sun Records through his climb to RCA Victor, and then to superstardom and beyond, I never realized how predominantly his career and personal life were impacted by friends and business associates who were Jews. In her illuminating study of Presley's life among Jews, Roselle Kline Chartock lays out an astonishing array of connections that led me to realize that his religious preferences were not, as I had long believed, fully couched in Christianity. "Elvis showed his love for all people," according to Memphis disc jockey and later blues icon B. B. King, whose early 1950s rise to blues fame mirrored the teenage Presley's absorption with post–World War II rhythm and blues that was so prominent in the South.

Indeed, *The Jewish World of Elvis Presley* cites evidence that Elvis's maternal great-great-grandmother was a Lithuanian Jewish immigrant who converted to Christianity upon arriving in the United States. Perhaps that accounts for the stunning fact that, for most of his life, he wore a medallion around his neck that bore a Star of David, a cross, and a *chai* as a symbol of life. Still, his manager, Colonel Tom Parker, tried to keep his association with Jews and Judaism a secret. "People don't like Jews," Parker told him. Presley's ancestry was decidedly mixed: French, Norman, Scotch-Irish, and Native American. But perhaps the Jewish part connected to what happened when his parents moved from Tupelo, Mississippi, to

the top floor of a two-story duplex in Memphis, where he was particularly drawn to Judaism. The ground floor tenants and landlords were Orthodox Jews: Rabbi Alfred Fruchter and his wife Jeanette. Presley helped them with various household chores, which included being their "Shabbos goy" when needed. The Fruchters invited the Presleys to Passover Seders and other holiday meals, and Elvis learned to love Jewish cooking. He even ate his favorite peanut butter and banana sandwiches on challah. Moreover, the rabbi's cantorial music, which came in through the duplex's open windows, enchanted and inspired Elvis. Rabbi Fruchter also owned a record player that Presley borrowed to play the early rhythm and blues sounds of Arthur "Big Boy" Crudup and Wynonie Harris, from which he learned and which he craved to perform.

Elvis's father Vernon was outspokenly antisemitic and had come from an area in Mississippi where it was commonly thought that Jews had horns. Yet the family attended a fundamentalist Assembly of God Church, which believed the Jews to be the chosen people. As a youth, Jeanette Fruchter recalled, Elvis was known as "the nicest boy you could ever hope to meet," one who, according to friends, "loved the Jewish religion." As such, and because he came from so poor a family, Elvis received a free membership to the Memphis Jewish Community Center. There he cultivated what became a lifelong obsession with racquetball and a hearty appreciation of the center's generosity. Years later he donated $150,000 to one of its fundraising campaigns.

In Chartock's telling, the Jewish merchants on Beale Street served a primarily Black clientele that heavily influenced the young Presley's style and performances. The Lansky Brothers clothing store, whose owners descended from eastern Europe, intrigued an Elvis who sought an original look that became known as "cat clothes." That style went far beyond the teenage norm of the day: tee shirts and jeans. His lifelong friendship with Hal Lansky, the son of store founder Bernard, ensured that Elvis maintained a distinctive fashion look throughout his life. He frequently shopped at other Jewish-owned stores on Beale Street, including Schwab's Department Store, Lowenstein and Brothers, and Goldsmith's. A huge movie fan, Elvis patronized Jewish-owned Malco Theatres. A jeweler named Harry Levitch was another longtime friend. Elvis hung out at and bought records from the Home of the Blues Record Store on Beale Street and befriended its owner, Ruben Cherry, whose store was the first in town



to sell Elvis's initial hit, "That's All Right, Mama." Years earlier Cherry had encouraged Elvis's musical aspirations and had even lent him money so that he could attend concerts and thus broaden his experience of music in performance.

In the eighth grade, Elvis became friends with George Klein. Both were likely attracted to each other for being different. Elvis was the rural outsider, Klein the lone Jew in the class. Neither was particularly welcomed by their classmates. Klein remained a close friend and perhaps the first member of what became known as the "Memphis Mafia," a tightknit group of Elvis's pals, at least six of whom were Jewish. Elvis liked having people around him and offered his friends jobs that primarily hinged on keeping him company. They handled various tasks such as driving, travel arrangements, logistics, show production, and technical help. Chartock was fortunate to have interviewed many of these Memphis Mafiosi, and their tales of life with Elvis offer a plethora of compelling and intimate stories from the high school and army years through his death at Graceland in 1977.

Jewish songwriters, record label personnel, movie producers and directors touched almost every aspect of Presley's creative output. His earliest signature song, "Hound Dog," was written by Rock and Roll Hall of Fame songwriting partners Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller, originally for female blues shouter Willie Mae "Big Mama" Thornton. Her version was filled with sexual innuendo and the anguish of being exploited by a selfish man. Elvis's take was toned down and quite different—something about catching a rabbit. Leiber and Stoller actually hated Elvis's version but kept their opinions to themselves when the royalties started rolling in. "To this day I have no idea what that rabbit business is all about," Leiber said in the duo's autobiography, aptly named *Hound Dog*. The pair easily bonded with Elvis and were pleasantly surprised to discover his vast knowledge

of the rhythm and blues music that they cherished. They also wrote "Jailhouse Rock" "Don't," "Loving You," and numerous other hits for him. Another potent Jewish songwriting team, Doc Pomus and Mort Shuman, brought him hits like "Little Sister," "His Latest Flame," and "Surrender." Aaron Schroeder and his wife Abby came up with "I Was the One," "I Got Stung," and "A Big Hunk of Love," and turned the words from an Italian classic, "O Solo Mio," into Elvis's single biggest hit, "It's Now or Never."

In July 1956 Presley made his television debut on the Texaco Star Theater of Milton Berle (*né* Berlinger). Berle's contribution to the phenomenon that became Elvis is sometimes forgotten in the wake of later appearances that Ed Sullivan and Steve Allen hosted. Presley's highly rated 1968 comeback TV special was produced by Steve Binder, Bones Howe, Bob Finkel and Billy Goldenberg—all Jews. Colonel Parker was never enamored of Hollywood's numerous Jewish agents and producers, but he allowed for exceptions, particularly with the success of the comeback show.

The years that Elvis spent starring in Hollywood featured Jews at all levels of production and marketing. He aspired to be a legitimate, dramatic screen actor, like his idol James Dean. Elvis gave perhaps his most inspired and heartfelt performance in his fourth movie, *King Creole*, thanks to the direction of Michael Curtiz, who was born in Hungary as Mihalyt Kertesz. The director had escaped the Nazis but lost most of his family to the Holocaust. (Curtiz had earlier directed the most celebrated of Hollywood movies about refugees during World War II, *Casablanca*.) Most of Presley's films after King Creole were produced by Hal Wallis, aka Aaron Blum Wolowicz. But they had less bite, more songs, and no room for advancement in the craft of acting. So long as these movies made money, no one wanted to take chances on Elvis's acting aspirations.

The pages of *The Jewish World of Elvis Presley* are lined with memorable anecdotes, many of which cannot be found in the biographies that his singular career inspired. Chartock's book is a must-read for Elvis fans of all faiths and also for music historians seeking a closer look into the life of the entertainer known as "The King." The familiar phrase is applicable: Some of his best friends were indeed Jewish.

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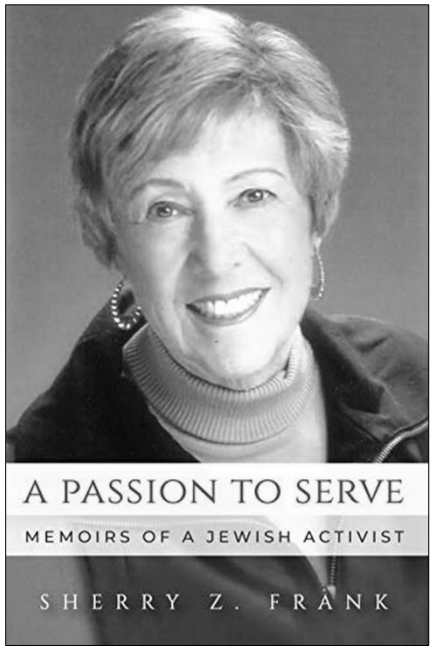
A Passion to Serve: Memoirs of a Jewish Activist. By Sherry Z. Frank. Alpharetta, GA: BookLogix, 2019. 408 pages plus appendix.

A community activist and bridge builder for over fifty years who was born and bred in Atlanta, Sherry Frank continues to make a difference in American Jewish life. She is perhaps best known for her work as president of the Atlanta Section of the National Council of Jewish Women, serving nonconsecutive terms beginning in the 1970s through today, and as the first woman to become southeast area director of the American Jewish Committee (AJC), a position she held from 1980 through September 2006. Frank's unwavering commitment to strengthening interreligious and interethnic relations, her tireless advocacy for Israel, ongoing fight against antisemitism and political extremism, and participation in the liberation movements of the 1980s and 1990s to help free Soviet Jewry and rescue the Jews of Ethiopia are only some of her many achievements. She also played a major role in creating the Atlanta Jewish Film Festival and, in the summer of 2003, helped establish and later served as president of Congregation Or Hadash in Sandy Springs, Georgia, a suburb of Atlanta. All of these are among the many subjects of her memoir's eighteen chapters.

Dividing *A Passion to Serve* into eighteen chapters was not accidental. As Frank writes in her introduction, "driven by a strong Jewish identity and pride in my community involvement," she "decided to make a link in this memoir between the Hebrew word, *chai*, which means both life and the number 18," by writing eighteen chapters about different aspects of her personal and professional life (viii). Having met Frank in Atlanta in the 1980s when I was teaching at Emory University, I was most interested in reading the chapter about her work for the AJC, as it was during her early years as executive director of the Atlanta chapter that our paths crossed. With readers invited in the book's introduction to either read the book straight through or choose chapters that "beckon" them, I decided to do the latter and, after reading the first chapter on "Women's Issues," turned to chapter four, which describes some of the early political issues in which Frank was engaged at AJC. These included efforts to help pass the Equal Rights Amendment, to renew the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and

to remove the Confederate battle emblem from the Georgia flag. Yet, as I quickly learned in reading this chapter, Frank's many passions—her feminism, love of Judaism and the Jewish community, long-standing commitment to social justice, etc.—are so deep and so intertwined that her chapters are not as different from one another as her introduction leads the reader to believe. The discussion of her advocacy work to renew the Voting Rights Act, for example, led to mention of the creation of the Atlanta Black/Jewish Coalition in Support of the Voting Rights Act, her involvement with this group, and the "close and life-long relationship" with Georgia Congressman and civil rights leader John Lewis that followed (67). More about the coalition, chapter four promised, would be covered in the chapter on "Jewish-Black Relations" (chapter nine). With great anticipation, I read that chapter next.

As with most of the chapters in this memoir, the chapter on Black-Jewish relations begins with a personal story. Here, Frank remembers her paternal uncle, Joe Zimmerman, who was one of the few white shop owners in downtown Atlanta who welcomed African Americans as customers. As a teenager in the late 1950s, she worked in his store on holidays and during the summers. At his funeral, held at Orthodox Congregation Shearith Israel, Martin Luther King, Sr. ("Daddy King") gave the eulogy. To the young Sherry Zimmerman, this "spoke volumes" about her uncle "and his relation to the [Black] community." I am certain, she continued, that "it played an indelible role in shaping me and my commitment to civil rights and Black-Jewish relations" (171). This story is followed by the fascinating anecdote that the King National Historic Site in Atlanta allows visitors to see not only the Nobel Peace Prize but also the shirt that King wore on the day he received the prize, with the Zimmerman's label inside the collar. Frank's memoir is



filled with many such wonderful anecdotes. It also provides an insider's view of major American Jewish concerns and coalitions during the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, while highlighting the professional and personal work of which Frank is proudest.

While I recognize that the focus of Frank's memoir, as evidenced by its title, is her life of service, I wish that the book had included more self-reflection. It includes mention of the many women and men who made a great impact on Frank, serving as role models and/or sources of inspiration. Yet the closest the reader comes to knowing Frank derives from the many wonderful photographs of her family, friends, colleagues, and fellow activists, often posing with her. In reading *A Passion to Serve*, I missed learning more about Frank's early years, including her memories of high school and college. When did she get married and what were the challenges and rewards of raising four children? How has being a grandmother of eleven enriched her life? During her years as AJC director, how was Frank able to handle the many personal and professional demands made upon her? These questions remain for me unanswered. Nonetheless, I highly recommend this engaging book to anyone interested in the Jewish community of Atlanta, the work of the American Jewish Committee, the National Council of Jewish Women, Black-Jewish relations in the United States, and the work of Sherry Frank. The lengthy appendix that further elucidates Frank's work in the Atlanta Black/Jewish Coalition, her programming and advocacy related to women's issues, and her long-standing efforts to build interethnic bridges, constitute a fine conclusion to a memoir that illuminates the many noteworthy achievements of a remarkable Jewish woman.

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Sharing Common Ground: Promises Unfulfilled but Not Forgotten. By Billy Keyserling with Mike Greenly. Self-published, 2020. 142 pages.

Billy Keyserling's book is what you need to read if you want a taste of local history, Black history, Jewish history, geography, business and

commerce, parks, and tourism. It is also a very readable memoir of an influential political leader in South Carolina and ultimately a look to the future and a call to activism. In this local history Keyserling includes all the people, not divvied up into slices of the pie but integrated throughout. He asserts that people want "the truth of our history," and that sharing that truth is our common ground.

Keyserling's local history examines the role of Reconstruction in that shared story. A command of the American past requires knowledge of the course of Reconstruction, the most progressive period in southern history. Sometimes schools fail to study and teach Reconstruction. It comes after the first semester, so it may not be squeezed into an already full curriculum. And then, at the beginning of the second semester, teachers and professors alike think the students have already covered that period. One of the fine points about this book is the encouragement and support that Keyserling brings to the many teachers who are now teaching what they were never taught. They realize that Reconstruction is the period of history that set the stage for the present.

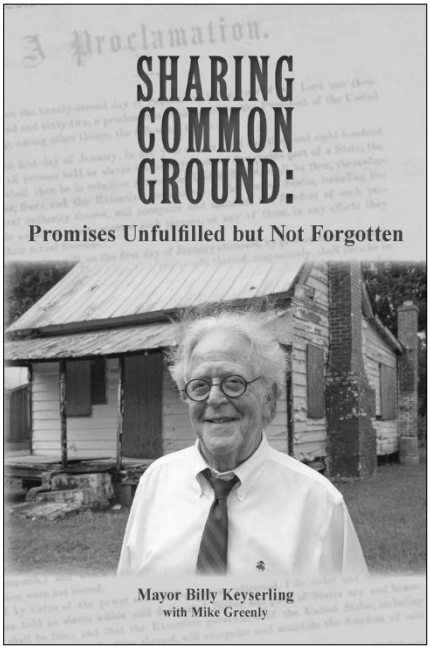
After the violent state-by-state overthrow of Reconstruction government came the national nadir of race relations. White supremacists wrote the history, distorting the problems and deleting the worthwhile accomplishments of interracial local governments and state assemblies. This went beyond the former Confederacy; it happened nationwide, as Asian, Italian, and other immigrants also suffered the consequences of the backlash. White historians, journalists, demographers, and intellectuals spouted racist thinking that became the standard of knowledge. Newly earned freedom for the formerly enslaved was subsumed by the white supremacy of the Lost Cause. How important it is, then, to hear the real story, such as what happened in Beaufort, South Carolina. How important it is, then, as white supremacy advances in our day, that we have books such as this.

The new Reconstruction Era National Historical Park (and in progress the network of associated sites) tells stories of Reconstruction. Keyserling shares his "sense of awe" when he relates the story of the formerly enslaved Robert Smalls, the Civil War hero and political leader in South Carolina and in the U.S. House of Representatives during Reconstruction. The author further notes how escaped slaves and newly freed slaves formed a regiment of the Union Army to free their brothers and

sisters. Keyserling also profiles Harriet Tubman, a conductor on the Underground Railroad and a Union spy during the Civil War. Few Americans may know that she was also an entrepreneur with a bakery and a laundry business to provide jobs for women in Reconstruction Beaufort. Keyserling also recounts the history of Penn Center on St. Helena Island, one of the first schools for African Americans. A century later Penn Center served as a meeting place for interracial groups working on civil rights and civic education and a peaceful retreat for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and his fellow activists. Now it preserves Gullah culture and Black-owned land that families tilled since the 1860s.

Sharing Common Ground is also a memoir and a family history, and Keyserling portrays his ancestors and relatives as role models. He credits them with his "moral compass." His grandfather, William Keyserling (Caeserzki), fled pogroms in the Lithuanian sector of tsarist Russia; his escape from oppression, at the age of nineteen, was very dramatic. After finding refuge in New York City, he traveled in 1888 to Beaufort, where he found a job at Macdonald-Wilkins, a cotton and mercantile business. With his business partner, Keyserling also became one of the first local members of the Penn School Board. Historians usually date the end of Reconstruction in 1876, when—after a deadlocked presidential election—the two political parties agreed to withdraw federal troops from the region. The story is much more nuanced, however. Reconstruction was still going strong in Beaufort in 1888. But even as the prejudice and conformism associated with Jim Crow was permeating the South, Billy Keyserling's grandfather played a very active role in Beaufort's civic life. He inspired the character known as "The Great Jew" in Pat Conroy's novel *Beach Music* (1995), which presents the horrifying background of the Holocaust. By contrast *Sharing Common Ground* has little to say of the experience of antisemitism in Beaufort.

In 1951, near the end of William Keyserling's life, he delivered a speech at a United Jewish Appeal event in New York in which he declared: "It's time for the young people to take over." He might have had his son and daughter-in-law in mind. Dr. Herbert Keyserling provided healthcare to neighbors who might otherwise have fallen through the cracks, and Billy Keyserling often accompanied his father on house calls and on the rounds he made at the local hospital. The filial admiration is evident. *Sharing Common Ground* also devotes a chapter to Harriet



Hirschfeld Keyserling, who published a memoir about her political endeavors, *Against the Tide: One Woman's Political Struggle* (1998), much as her husband did of his life, *Doctor K: A Personal Memoir* (1999). This "liberal Jewish woman from New York," her son writes, won election to the Beaufort County Council and then to the South Carolina legislature. He credits her, and others such as longtime U.S. Senator Fritz Hollings (D-SC), with teaching him to listen to others, to study issues carefully, and to respect differing points of view. Billy Keyserling's exploration of family values includes his parents' African American housekeeper, Maybelle Gardner Mack. She instructed him in "what is and is not important in life." She was his mentor in delineating "the human condition."

Keyserling takes pride in his Jewish faith. Martin Perlmutter, then director of the Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Center at the College of Charleston, told him that the Keyserlings belong in the ranks of "Prophetic Jews." They exhibit compassion; they seek to help people, whether local or elsewhere. For Keyserling, one of the pivotal ways of providing help is to educate Americans about their hidden history. Hence appendices to this book include the Emancipation Proclamation, the three Reconstruction Amendments to the Constitution, a map of the Reconstruction Era National Historical Park, and even the lyrics to "Common Ground," the song by Keyserling's coauthor Mike Greenly.

Uncovering that hidden history constituted the catalyst for this book. In championing the Reconstruction Era National Historical Park, Keyserling is engaged in more than boosterism and promoting Beaufort. He appears to be more driven by the urge to tell of history, a history that once vanished from our national consciousness. Keyserling is optimistic but not naïve. Adversaries of his sixteen-year struggle to uncover forgotten truths

about Reconstruction by building the park included the Sons of the Confederacy. But in inviting readers "to have you with me on this journey," Keyserling connects the search for common ground in a democracy to the strengthening of diversity itself.

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Changing Perspectives: Black-Jewish Relations in Houston during the Civil Rights Era. By Allison E. Schottenstein. Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2021. 415 pages.

The historic Black-Jewish alliance—rooted in the 1909 creation of the NAACP, strengthened during 1960s voter registration drives, then disparaged and scorned with the rise of Black militancy—never quite existed in Houston, a right-wing oil capital where affluent, insecure Jews feared antisemitism and the Black population lacked unity and leverage. The arc of Houston's interracial history is far different from most American urban settings, as Allison E. Schottenstein contends in her richly researched book, *Changing Perspectives: Black-Jewish Relations in Houston during the Civil Rights Era*. Few historians have simultaneously probed Black and Jewish narratives. Schottenstein does, embedding the reader in Houston's Black wards and in its Jewish universe as the two marginalized groups slowly inch toward collaboration. From within each camp, she presents a diversity of voices. Her sources range from radio broadcasts and news columns to memoirs, documentaries, recent oral histories, and archival material from the Communist Party of the United States to the Central Conference of American Rabbis. The Houston weekly *Jewish Herald-Voice* serves as a veritable diary.

For decades, Houston's most prominent Jews—the wealthy leaders at Beth Israel Congregation (Reform)—had asserted in their Basic Principles that their race was Caucasian, their nationality American. Fearing accusations of dual loyalty, they distanced themselves from Zionism and allied with the white Christian elite who perpetuated and condoned Jim Crow. Despite Jewish illusions of acculturation and acceptance, wealthy

neighborhoods were restricted to white Christians; Jewish political candidates were assailed as "Commies"; the Lord's Prayer persisted in public schools; and Arab oil embargos were blamed on Jews, who faced discrimination in the energy industry. Houston's Black and Jewish spheres were far from monolithic. Schottenstein portrays a spectrum of rabbis, from Beth Israel's Hyman Judah Schachtel, who initially embraced the Caucasian clause, to Brith Shalom's Moshe Cahana, who rattled the Ku Klux Klan and even his congregants when he marched with Martin Luther King, Jr. Holocaust survivors, some of whom became successful shopkeepers, spoke up for African Americans. Nonetheless, when people of color moved into a Jewish neighborhood, white flight followed.

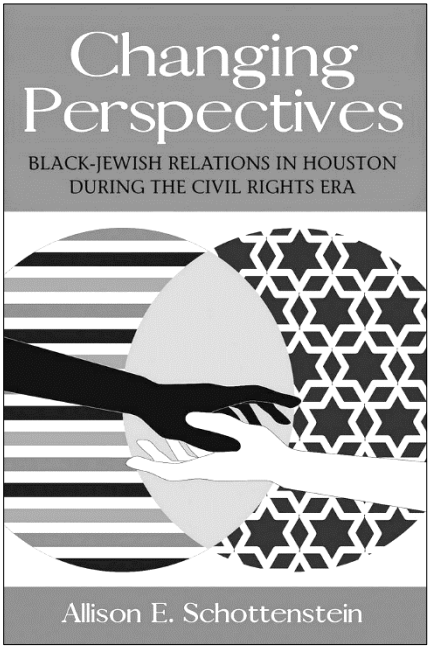
The book's organization—sometimes chronological, sometimes topical—begins with a prologue outlining the early history of the Jewish and Black communities. In 1850, four years after Texas statehood, Houston had seventeen Jews and 2,300 slaves—22 percent of the populace. The Black population today remains 22 percent, but of 2.3 million people, Jews are less than 2 percent. In 1854 Houston became home to the state's first and arguably most prestigious synagogue, Beth Israel. On a less illustrious note, Houston was the birthplace of the state's first and largest Ku Klux Klan klavern, a sign of the reactionary tide beneath the surface of placidity and progress.

Chapter One explores the rationale and ramifications of Beth Israel's Caucasian membership clause, codified in 1943 and rescinded in 1968. Schottenstein frames this as an "identity struggle" (40), a theme that runs throughout the book. The Cold War and the Communist witch hunts emerge in Chapter 2. Ironically, "at the height of the Red Scare in Houston . . . the city had no active Communist organizations" (76). Yet intimidation was so rife, and the right-wing Minute Women so menacing, that Jews kept their heads down. The *Informer*, the leading African American weekly, joined in the Red Scare by charging that Communists had even infiltrated the NAACP. Chapter 3 focuses on the school board's resistance to the Supreme Court's 1954 decision to integrate schools. Jews abstained from this struggle, comforted by local rabbi William Malev's assurance that "segregation was an American fight, and not a Jewish fight" (104). Instead the Jews complained that Christianity permeated the curriculum and that a Bible Belt mentality animated the school board. The city's Jews cringed in 1963 when, with news of the assassination of President John F.

Kennedy, many Houston students cheered and "kneeled to offer thanks" (215). In 1965, Jews finally began marching and working with African Americans to revamp the school board. They united under the slogan: "Space Age Houston—Stone Age Schools" (221). The calculus was changing as Jews realized that "to make change they could not stay quiet" (229).

Among the most riveting chapters in *Changing Perspectives* is "Exodus from Riverside to Meyerland," a narrative detailing flight from a neighborhood that had been home to four synagogues and the city's Jewish Community Center. In 1952, when a wealthy African American moved in, a white supremacist paid a Black handyman five hundred dollars to bomb the intruder's house. The explosion had a ripple effect with a cross burning, bricks thrown at homes, and realtors frightening residents into making rapid sales. Over the next eighteen years, Jews and their institutions left Riverside Terrace for Meyerland, a neighborhood where they mostly remain today.

In succeeding chapters, the economic sphere comes to the fore as *Changing Perspectives* examines the "Desegregation of Downtown Houston." At the forefront of the push for racial justice were students at Texas Southern University, a historically Black campus. In 1960, TSU students led six months of sit-ins, boycotts, and negotiations. By late summer the Retail Merchants Association, fearing negative headlines, agreed to quietly integrate seventy lunch counters—among them Jewish-owned Neiman Marcus, Sakowitz, and Battelstein's. The quid pro quo was that the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee consented to a weeklong news blackout during the transition. Newspapers and radio and television stations came on board. Desegregation arrived, the author concludes, "not because of . . . passion for civil rights but rather to protect the city's business image" (89).



Halfway around the globe, Israel's victory in the 1967 Six Day War stirred ethnic pride among Houston Jewry, even as the Black Power movement spurred antisemitism and support for Palestinians. Jews, swept up in what Schottenstein terms "self-interest politics" (230), turned to international concerns, mainly freedom for Soviet Jews, also known as refuseniks. Only in the late-1970s, with the push from two powerhouse Black politicians did Houston's Jews collaborate wholeheartedly with African Americans. One was U.S. congressman Mickey Leland, a power broker and former Black Panther, who realized that Blacks and Jews had "greater opportunities . . . together than apart" (87). He became an advocate for Israel following a 1977 visit to the Holy Land and in 1980 established the Mickey Leland Kibbutzim Internship, a foundation that annually sends up to ten inner-city teens to Israel. The exchange focuses on leadership and team building. On multiple levels, it continues to foster Black-Jewish interactions in Houston. Congresswoman Barbara Jordan, a commanding orator, compared the plight of refuseniks with the struggle for freedom among her people. Jordan's speeches fostered a rapport between Blacks and Jews across the city.

Schottenstein, who completed her undergraduate work at Brandeis University and earned a Ph.D. from the University of Texas at Austin, has produced a compelling, well-written, finely layered study of a complex dynamic. *Changing Perspectives* invites further comparative research into ethnic groups that coalesce to gain clout in the public sphere.

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Red Black White: The Alabama Communist Party, 1930–1950. By Mary Stanton. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2019. 199 pages.

During the Great Depression, the number of Communists in Alabama was miniscule. Yet incredibly, *Red Black White* constitutes the second scholarly monograph they have inspired, the first being Robin D. G. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe* (1990). The span of Mary Stanton's volume is ostensibly longer, covering two decades rather than one. But her subtitle

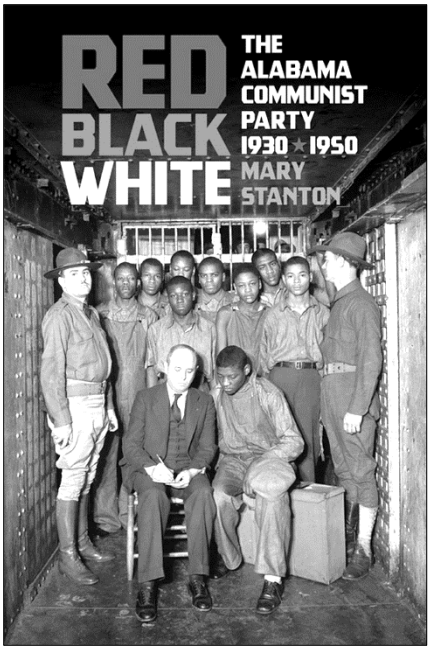
is misleading. This book is also set almost entirely during the Great Depression, the only decade of the twentieth century that the Communist Party nicked; and her final twenty pages read like an epilogue, or afterthought. Stanton covers a single branch of the Communist Party: District 17 in Birmingham. The writ of District 17 was not confined to "the Pittsburgh of the South" but ran to the rest of Alabama, and Georgia and Tennessee as well. Her vivid account of how the party's cadres engaged in political organizing during the Depression, the repression, and the Red Scare is inevitably punctuated with violence—"five lynchings, two riots, and two brutal labor strikes" (3). Radicals courted lethal risks in challenging the structures of race and class in Alabama, and nearly all of the brave white Communists whom Stanton depicts were Jews. Even though the author does not intend to make an explicit contribution to the historiography of southern Jewry, those portraits give *Red Black White* its pertinence.

Nor is this book parochial. During the first half of the twentieth century, no instance of racial injustice was more internationally notorious than the plight of the Scottsboro Nine, charged and convicted of rape in northern Alabama. Three of Stanton's nineteen chapters recount aspects of the case. Although she can hardly be expected to revise Dan T. Carter's *Scottsboro* (1969) or James Goodman's *Stories of Scottsboro* (1994), local antisemitism did target the Communists' International Labor Defense (ILD) as well as the crackerjack criminal defense attorney Samuel Leibowitz. "Many white Christians despised the Reds for their atheism or simply for being Jewish. The term *communist* covered both bases," as Stanton nicely puts it (45), although Leibowitz was not a communist. In one trial in 1933, the Morgan County prosecutor pointed to him and to the ILD's chief counsel, Joseph Brodsky (who is unmentioned in *Hammer and Hoe*), and urged the all-white jury to "show them that Alabama justice cannot be bought and sold with Jew money from New York" (94). In that era, leftists measured courtroom victories by how long southern jurors might take before deciding to convict an innocent Black defendant, and the ILD was correct in calling such perversions of justice a "legal lynching" (4). Yet counsel for the defense in the Scottsboro trials altered constitutional law when the Supreme Court was persuaded to require adequate counsel in state courts and to prohibit the exclusion of African Americans from jury rolls. The last of the Nine was not freed from prison until 1950, just under two decades after these youths had been convicted for a crime that they did not

commit. Montgomery's Reform synagogue, Temple Beth Or, risked collateral damage, because congregants like Sadie Franks and Bea and Louis Kaufman helped raise money for the Scottsboro Nine. The Kaufmans opened their home to ILD attorneys and to Communist organizers. Because Rabbi Benjamin Goldstein actively joined the Scottsboro defense, the trustees forced him to resign from the pulpit in spring 1933.

The lone indigenous figure among Alabama Jewry whom Stanton portrays at length is Sadie Franks's brother, Joe Gelders, a physicist who taught at the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa. The murder of Black strikers helped radicalize him, and Gelders joined the Communist Party. In 1935 he paid a high penalty, however, when he was kidnapped and clubbed with blackjacks. Suffering from broken ribs, Gelders was left to die fifty miles from Birmingham. At least two of his assailants whom Gelders could identify belonged to the Alabama National Guard and worked for U.S. Steel. Nonetheless, no one was ever indicted. Gelders persevered, as did his wife Esther, who taught English at Tuscaloosa. Although she did not share his politics, she endured the consequences—death threats, a burning cross on their front lawn, shots fired into their living room. Gelders later chaired the Standing Committee on Human Rights of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, and in 1940 founded a tabloid, the *Southern News Almanac*, which was published under secret party sponsorship. Only fifty-two years old when he died, the brutal beating on his chest fifteen years earlier was the probable cause of so early a passing, Stanton believes. The couple's daughter, Marge Frantz, also became a Communist. Although she left the party after the 1956 revelations of Stalin's systematic crimes, she described her upbringing in a collection of reminiscences, *Red Diapers* (1998), coedited by Judy Kaplan and Linn Shapiro. "I would not trade the passion for social and racial justice that I inherited from my father," Frantz asserted, "for any other way of life."

The task of realizing such sentiments was Sisyphean, and the role of Jews in that effort decisive. Before *Southern News Almanac* was founded, the Communist Party used the *Southern Worker* to promote the interracial organizing of miners, sharecroppers, and factory workers. James Allen (*né* Solomon Auerbach) and his journalist wife Helen Marcy (*née* Ida Kleinman) served as early editors. Also from District 17, Blaine Owen (*né* Boris Israel) wrote for the Communists' national magazine, the *New Masses*.



Jailed in Memphis for sedition, beaten in Selma, shot in Harlan County, Kentucky, Owen was taken for a ride in a black sedan after meeting with steelworkers in Birmingham. Badly beaten, he refused to reveal the names of his comrades and had his hair pulled out before getting flogged. He fled the South—not to abandon his political convictions, but instead to fight with the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in Spain, where Owen vanished—listed as "missing in action." Another organizer, Harry Simms, whose family name had been Hersch, was unlucky too. In 1932 a deputized mine guard named Arlie Miller murdered him, claiming self-defense. Simms had been unarmed, but Miller was exonerated. Hy Gordon, Amy Licht, the ILD's Allan Taub, and the London-born Amy Schechter, whose father was the celebrated scholar Rabbi Solomon Schechter of the Jewish Theological Seminary, are also cited in *Red Black White*. They struggled to release the region's Black citizens from the reign of terror that operated beneath the placid equanimity of southern society.

Two of the Communists assigned to District 17 sought to recruit Black sharecroppers in particular. A graduate of Columbia College, Nat Ross (*né* Rosenberg), later became the Communist Party's postwar southern director. Along with the Russian-born Sid Benson (*né* Solomon Bernstein), Ross confronted a beleaguered Black community in which its newspaper, the *Birmingham Reporter*, adopted the philosophy of Booker T. Washington of the Tuskegee Institute. "The rich white people of the South" were African America's true friends, one editorial opined, rather than "a bunch of foreigners paid by Moscow and Jewish gold to stir up trouble among the Negroes" (15–16). The Alabama Sharecroppers' Union was nevertheless formed in 1931. Theodore Rosengarten's classic venture into oral history, *All God's Dangers* (1974), portrays union member "Nate

Shaw" (Ned Cobb). Jailed during the organizing effort a year later, he secured the help of two white attorneys from the ILD. Who were they? *All God's Dangers* testifies to Shaw's prodigious memory, but exhibiting a lifetime's circumspection, Shaw said, "I disremember their names." Rosengarten calls the major defense attorney Stein. The local white men in authority "hated his guts," Shaw observed. That was fine with him. Given the misery and vulnerability of Black life in rural Alabama, he had few other white allies.

That white Communists in the 1930s were very likely to be Jews may be a truism that Stanton fails to explain. But the reasons should be suggested here. Some radicals become middle-aged and even elderly apparatchiks, but activism—especially dangerous activism—is usually a monopoly of the young. During the Depression decade, the Jews whose ages ranged from their twenties to their thirties would most commonly have been born to impoverished immigrants from eastern Europe. Their lives were insecure under capitalism, which after 1929 seemed to be on the skids, to be replaced by a system that promised to end not only misery but ancient hatreds as well. Moreover, the theoretical aura of Communism offered special appeal to intellectuals; textual analysis was central to Judaic tradition. The confidence that ideological fervor instills, the yearning for social justice emblematic of the Prophets, plus a certain recklessness that was oblivious to the peril of the Deep South, brought these young Communists to District 17. There they were easily crushed, and the question inevitably lingers whether their organizing efforts left any traces.

Red Black White answers in the affirmative. The ILD and District 17 served as "working models" for the next generation of liberal and radical activists who would galvanize the struggle for civil rights. The ILD saved the lives of the Scottsboro Nine and others, exposing the cruelty of Jim Crow. "Without the Reds' tenacity," Stanton concludes, "much injustice in the United States would have gone unreported" (160). Without the risks that the young Jewish Communists assumed to challenge the exploitation and discrimination that pervaded Alabama and other southern states, the generation that later fought against segregation would have been obliged to start from scratch. Stanton is, after all, also the author of *Hand of Esau* (2006), a study of the response of Montgomery's Jews to the 1955 bus boycott. Stanton's case is not utterly implausible; history is not replete with movements that begin ex nihilo.

But vestiges of the struggles of the 1930s were quite limited, and she apparently found few real links—either personal or institutional—to suggest that such a lineage was on anything other than life support. The most famous American Communist of the second half of the twentieth century, Angela Davis, was born in 1944 and raised in Birmingham, the daughter of activists. But she is unmentioned in *Red Black White*, and one takeaway from this disturbing book is the length of the odds in making Alabama's political economy more decent. The contest between the Communist Party and the state's power structure was utterly asymmetrical. The Reds could not open the sluice gates to let their crimson tide wash across Alabama so that both races might benefit. Common class interests were supposed to catalyze change; but three decades after the ILD arrived, the state's politics remained an irreducible either/or. As John Patterson, who served as governor from 1959 to 1963, explained to journalist Marshall Frady (*Wallace*, 1968): "You were either for the white folks or the nigras. If you didn't appeal to prejudice, you'd get beat."

Stephen J. Whitfield, Brandeis University
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Website Review

L'dor V'dor/From Generation to Generation: Jewish Women and their Impact on New Orleans. Curated by Rosalind Hinton, Susan Tucker, Bobbie Malone, and Lenora Costa. NOLA Jewish Women. https://nolajewish-women.tulane.edu. Reviewed May 2021.

Back in the late 1990s, the founders of the Jewish Women's Archive sought to document the lives and experiences of Jewish women in a way that would not only benefit scholars, but also bring these rich histories to the general public. Although the Internet had yet to reach a mainstream audience, the architects of the archive nonetheless opted to draw on the possibilities of a medium that had the potential, according to founder Gail Twersky Reimer in her remarks at the 2014 Biennial Scholar's Conference of the American Jewish Historical Society, to make it "impossible for anyone to justify leaving women out of the story because there was no place to go to find out about Jewish women." In the process, they developed a resource that transformed how the general public would come to conceptualize the Jewish past on a national, transnational, and global scale.

Over a quarter of a century later, the virtual exhibit *L'dor V'dor/From Generation to Generation: Jewish Women and their Impact on New Orleans* does an excellent job of harnessing the strategies developed by the Jewish Women's Archive for audiences interested in the local and regional history of the Crescent City. The project introduces visitors to fifty-two Jewish women who shaped the artistic, civic, educational, and activist dimensions of the New Orleans region. In spite of the transformative impact

(https://nolajewishwomen.tulane.edu)

these women had on their local context, most of them are not highlighted in other online histories of Jews in New Orleans, which tend to focus on institutions and the contributions of great men. Much as the Jewish Women's Archive made it impossible for Internet researchers to write women out of the national or global Jewish past based on the excuse that the information was just too difficult to access, *L'dor V'dor* does the same for the Jewish history of New Orleans as it provides ample and easily accessible documentation of the Jewish women who shaped the city.

L'dor V'dor is quite forthcoming about the debt it owes to the Jewish Women's Archive as it continues and expands the mission of bringing Jewish women's history to the masses. Oral historian Rosalind Hinton, one of the curators of this exhibit, served as the lead historian for *Katrina's Jewish Voices*, an exhibit sponsored by the Jewish Women's Archive that documented Jewish women's responses to the devastating 2005 hurricane. Indeed, in some ways this exhibit feels like a companion piece to *Katrina's Jewish Voices*, offering a sense of the long-standing activities of the Jewish women of New Orleans that enabled their resilience in the wake of Katrina's destruction.

Visitors to the site have the option of exploring four overlapping areas in which Jewish women influenced New Orleans: the arts, education, social justice, and civic enrichment. They will have the pleasure of

(https://nolajewishwomen.tulane.edu/arts/ida-rittenberg-kohlmeyer)

learning about extraordinary Jewish women like painter and sculptor Ida Rittenberg Kohlmeyer, whose abstract expressionist paintings and colorful, pictographic sculptures made her Louisiana's most renowned artist. They will encounter social worker Clara Marx Schwarz, longtime head of the Port and Dock program of the National Council of Jewish Women that helped settle Holocaust survivors in New Orleans in the years just after World War II. They will also discover women like Nora Navra, who was not famous during her lifetime but who nonetheless contributed posthumously to her still-segregated city by sponsoring a library for African Americans in 1954.

Not only is this virtual exhibit a crucial resource for those interested in the Jewish history of New Orleans, but it also has the potential to be a valuable teaching tool for scholars of Jewish history, public history, and memory studies. Because of the accessible structure and manageable size of this site, I can see this website engendering important discussions about how public-facing, digital exhibits are constructed and the ways in which curators make their choices as they decide what to emphasize. For instance, I could see creating a classroom activity asking students to talk about what they noticed about the group of women the curators chose to commemorate. What deliberate choices or inadvertent assumptions may have led the curators to choose this particular subset of accomplished,

politically left or left-of-center, middle-class, white/Ashkenazic women who gained prominence for the most part in the twentieth century? Why might it include profiles of Jewish women leaders in the arts, education, social justice, and civic enrichment but not include a category honoring women rabbis and other religious leaders? Recognizing that no exhibit can include every story, whose stories might be missing?

The exhibit's interactive component may well be able to increase its scope, even as it provides another opportunity for education and engagement. The "Tell a Story" feature encourages visitors to share information about impactful mentors, colleagues, and experiences, with the understanding that this information may at some point be incorporated into the exhibit. This, too, provides a valuable tool through which instructors at all levels—higher education, K-12, and continuing/community education—might encourage students not only to share their personal stories, but also to think about what goes into the creation and expansion of a historical narrative.

As a final note, I would like to reflect on the exhibit's title, *L'dor V'dor: From Generation to Generation*—a title certainly more poetic than "NOLA Jewish Women," the descriptive URL. I will admit that the name initially gave me pause, since its generational rhetoric hints at the pronatalist discourse of Jewish continuity that has long implied that birthing and raising Jewish progeny was the most important contribution that Jewish women could hope to offer their communities. I was pleased to notice that the content of this exhibit does not reinforce this discourse. On the contrary, the website turns this rhetoric on its head, utilizing the generational framework not to emphasize Jewish women's capacity for biological reproduction, but rather to underscore the ways that Jewish women offered their younger counterparts the skills, training, and connections they needed to make the largest possible impact on their city.

In the end, scholars and the general public will be able to learn from, and think with, this exhibit. It will most certainly transform the way that Internet researchers will conceptualize New Orleans Jewish history. It is an exhibit that upholds the original spirit of the Jewish Women's Archive and surely makes its founders proud.

Rachel Kranson, University of Pittsburgh

Film Reviews

Reawakening. Directed and produced by Alexandra K. Horowitz. Voices Storytelling and Media, 2019. 8 minutes.

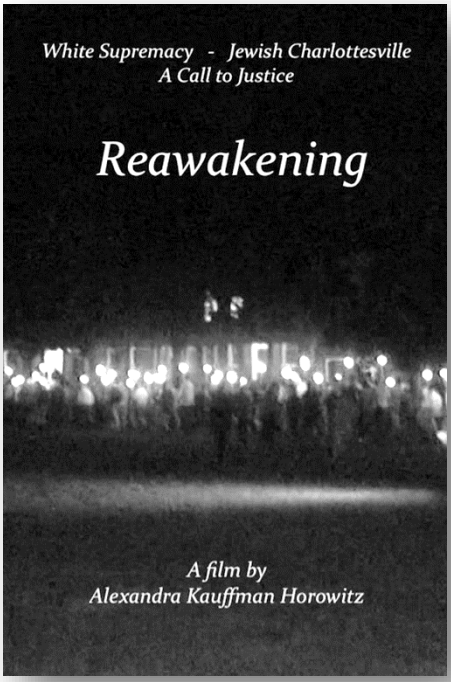
Alexandra K. Horowitz, the founder and executive producer of Voices Storytelling and Media, produced *Reawakening* in 2019. A grant from the Southern Jewish Historical Society (SJHS) partially funded the production, and it was first shown at the 2019 SJHS conference in Charlottesville, Virginia. Since then, there have been numerous showings (many of them now virtual) and discussions in all parts of the country. They include Jewish film festivals in Spokane, Minneapolis–St. Paul, and San Diego and public appearances to discuss the film in multiple American cities. (See https://www.voicesstorytelling.com/about).

Reawakening centers on Charlottesville, Virginia, the Unite the Right rally of August 2017, and the response of members of Charlottesville's Jewish community. This very short (eight-minute) film packs a punch. It focuses on community members' reactions to the antisemitism they witnessed, to larger issues of Jewish resistance in history, to the responses of African American colleagues in town, and to the knowledge, responsibility, and learning that grew out of those dark days.

Many, although not all, of the interviews are drawn from the larger Charlottesville Jewish Oral History project. I have been the director of that project, and, with the permission of those interviewed, I agreed to let Alexandra Horowitz have access to the materials. The scope of the oral history project covers far more than the UTR rally. Horowitz's use was narrowly focused on the response of Charlottesvillians to the shock,

trauma, and understanding that ensued from the events of August 2017. She also interviewed both rabbis of the city's only synagogue, Congregation Beth Israel. Both have invested themselves in Charlottesville's community organizations fighting for racial justice.

At the beginning of the film, Horowitz shows the chilling footage and sounds of the neo-Nazi white supremacists who descended on Charlottesville sowing hatred and violence. Those scenes are interspersed with the reactions of four individuals: two of them are more active members of the community, two are less so. One of those four is a Holocaust survivor (since deceased), and another is a man who had not been involved Jewishly. All interviewees comment on how disconcerting it was to realize the prevalence of antisemitism. But their reactions, and those of others interviewed, lead to a common conclusion: If "they" are going to hate us, "we" are going to stand up. Standing up means learning more about one's self-identity, becoming more knowledgeable, becoming more present. It



means resistance, as our sages tell us through the holidays of Purim and Passover. It means fighting back. Such responses have not always been Jewish responses in American history—it takes a certain amount of self-confidence to respond that way. And that, in part, is due to the leadership from within the community, as Horowitz shows very poignantly.

Reawakening foregrounds the voices of Rabbi Gutherz and Rabbi Schmelkin to broaden the scope of the film from individual responses of Jews to community awareness about larger issues of racial justice. As Charlottesville's African American community responded to the UTR rally with claims that this felt so familiar (in contrast to the Jewish responses), it led the Jewish community to reexamine its awareness of systemic racism. It meant that this small Jewish community felt a responsibility to face up to history, to explore how to be engaged in closing the existing racial gap, and to commit to ongoing conversation and action.

The message of this film is powerful. It calls attention to the best of Jewish sensibilities—the need for *tikun olam*—for repair of the world. Horowitz has masterfully created a short and focused film to raise consciousness about ways to combat hate speech and hate crime. The film suggests a proactive, community-oriented approach that allows minorities (whether religious, ethnic, or racial) to work together in defense of all.

Religious and cultural institutions across America should use this film broadly to spark conversation on issues of social and racial justice. From high school classes to adult education gatherings, this film will provoke meaningful discussion about the responsibilities of Jews nationally to help heal our country. In the process, we will also be combating white supremacy and antisemitism.

Alexandra Horowitz can be reached at alex@voicesstorytelling.com if communities are interested in viewing her film or having her engage in a broader discussion.

Phyllis K. Leffler, University of Virginia
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Atlanta: The City Too Busy To Wait. Directed by Adam Hirsch, Jason Ross, and Gabby Spatt, independent release, 2021. 59 minutes.

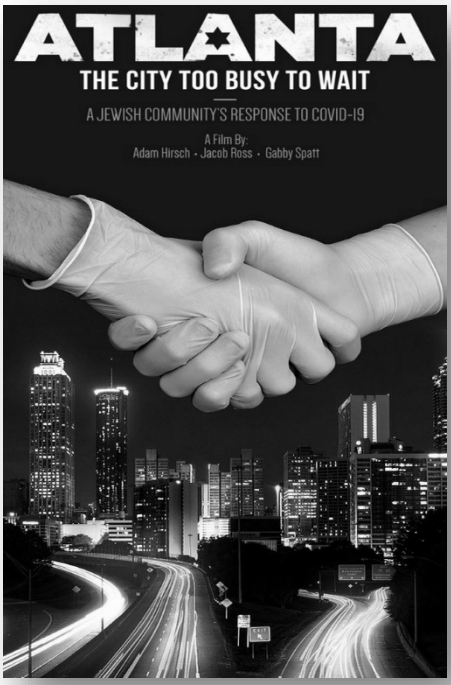
Atlanta: The City Too Busy to Wait chronicles the response of the Atlanta Jewish community to the COVID-19 pandemic. The film, which received a Southern Jewish Historical Society project completion grant, describes how Atlanta's Jewish institutions and many in the city's Jewish leadership quickly pivoted to a virtual environment beginning just before the Passover holiday in mid-March 2020.It premiered and was a featured selection at the 2021 Atlanta Jewish Film Festival.

Interspersed in the production are comments by many of the spiritual leaders of Atlanta's religious institutions and executives of important community organizations such as the philanthropic Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta and the Jewish Family and Career Services, which provided counseling, charitable social welfare aid, and food assistance to those in need. These organizations, along with the southeast regional office of the American Jewish Committee in Atlanta, quickly acted as resources on matters of community concern as well as liaising between the Jewish and other communities in the region.

Also highlighted are the efforts of individuals, particularly in the Jewish community concentrated in the neighborhood along Atlanta's La Vista Road near Emory University adjacent to several Orthodox synagogues. Because Jewish law forbids the use of technology on Shabbat and religious holidays, these traditional communities had to find other unique ways to stay connected.

As its title implies, the documentary energetically attempts to portray the Atlanta Jewish community as a resourceful and positive force that mobilized quickly during the pandemic to recreate a sense of community. Many were impacted by the considerable psychological challenges presented by physical isolation and economic change that accompanied the worldwide pandemic. The Jewish community did not escape these challenges and worked tirelessly to help those in need.

As the community's undertaker describes it, at one point the Atlanta Jewish community was losing as many as a half dozen residents to the disease each week. The community food bank at the Jewish Family and Career Services during the year quadrupled the amount of food it



provided from about 50 thousand pounds in 2019 to 250 thousand pounds in 2020. Psychological counselors at the agency wrestled with full appointment books.

While the community and its leaders were challenged, the documentary attempts to make the point that life went on with its usual urgency. The title of the film, *Atlanta: A City Too Busy To Wait* is a play on words taken from the slogan, "Atlanta: The City Too Busy To Hate," that politicians and business leaders in Atlanta adopted during the civil rights era of the 1960s and 1970s. It signified that Atlanta was a better choice for national companies considering a regional or national office in the racially divided South.

The film's focus shifts halfway through production to the civil unrest and social justice protests that occurred during the pandemic. It touches on Atlanta's history of civil rights activism and Black-Jewish relations

past, present, and future. Just as they have done so often in the past, many in Atlanta's Jewish community banded together to support marginalized communities that experienced injustice.

Although the film covers a lot of territory, it fails to mention the 2020 campaign for the United States Senate. A look at the 2020 election, particularly the narrow victories of Jon Ossoff, Georgia's first Jewish senator, and Raphael Warnock, Georgia's first Black senator, would have added more depth to the film. It is possible that bypassing the role that politics played during a highly partisan election year was an editorial decision by the filmmakers to enhance the film's appeal to a wider audience.

Overall, the film does a capable job of capturing the Atlanta Jewish community's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As the filmmakers point out at the beginning of the film, it will be a significant resource for future generations looking for local insight into a pivotal moment in history. The Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta supported the film, and it is the first project to be aided by the Atlanta Jewish Film Festival's newly created Filmmaker Fund.

Bob Bahr, The Center for Media and the Moving Image, Atlanta.
The reviewer can be reached at www.facebook.com/CMMImage.

Glossary

Ark (or **Aron Kodesh**, *Holy Ark*) ~ the cabinet at the front of a synagogue where the Torah scrolls are kept

Bar mitzvah (*plural*: **b'nai mitzvah**) ~ traditional coming-of-age ritual for Jewish males reaching the age of thirteen

Bikur holim ~ visitation and relief of the sick and indigent

Chai ~ literally, *life*; its written symbol formed by the Hebrew letters *het* and *yud* often adorns jewelry as a pendant worn on a chain around the neck; the letters' numerical value gave rise to a tradition of making monetary gifts and donations in multiples of eighteen

Challah ~ braided bread eaten on Shabbat and on most Jewish holidays

Etz Hayim ~ "*Tree of Life*," a song performed in synagogues when the ark is closed during Sabbath services, also often sung by children

High Holidays ~ Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the two most important holidays on the Jewish calendar

Kosher or **Kashrut/Kashruth** ~ Jewish laws governing food; the system of Jewish dietary laws

Passover ~ spring holiday commemorating the deliverance of the ancient Hebrews from Egyptian bondage

Pogrom ~ organized violent attack, a massacre, against Jews

Refuseniks ~ Jews in the Soviet Union who were denied permission to leave the country. Many were granted exit visas beginning in the 1970s following worldwide protest and behind-the-scenes intervention

Rosh Hashanah ~ literally, *head of the year*; the new year on the Hebrew calendar; one of holiest days of the Jewish year

Schlemiel ~ loser, awkward, consistently unlucky, object of pity

Seder ~ ceremonial meal, usually held on the first and second evenings of Passover, commemorating the exodus from Egypt

Sh'ma ~ Jewish confession of faith in the oneness of God, frequently recited during religious services

Shabbat (*also* **Shabbos**) ~ Jewish Sabbath; Friday night to Saturday night at the appearance of the first stars

Shabbos goy ~ a non-Jew who is hired to perform certain tasks that are forbidden to observant Jews on the Sabbath

Talmud (*adj.*, **Talmudic**) ~ collection of postbiblical writings explaining Jewish law and texts; compilation of *Mishna* (code of Jewish religious and legal norms) and *Gemara* (discussions and explanations of *Mishna*)

Tikun olam ~ literally, *repairing the world*; the Jewish ideal that each individual acts in partnership with God in behalf of social justice to improve the world

Torah ~ Five Books of Moses; first five books of the Bible; the body of Jewish law and ritual tradition

Tzedekah ~ righteous giving; charity

Yom Kippur ~ Day of Atonement; holiest day of the Jewish year

Note on Authors

Bob Bahr holds an M.S. from Syracuse University in public communication. He was the managing editor of CNN's documentary unit and a reporter, producer, and news executive at CBS News. He is executive producer of the Center for Media and the Moving Image in Atlanta and regularly writes columns for the *Atlanta Jewish Times* including "Bernstein and Bahr's Best Bets at the Atlanta Jewish Film Festival," a public review of the festival with Matthew Bernstein of Emory University.

Orville Vernon Burton is the Judge Matthew J. Perry, Jr., Distinguished Professor of History at Clemson University and author or editor of twenty books including *The Age of Lincoln*; *Penn Center: A History Preserved*; *Justice Deferred: Race and the Supreme Court*; and *In My Father's House Are Many Mansions: Family and Community in Edgefield, South Carolina*. Burton served as president of the Southern Historical Association from 2011 to 2012.

Eric Eisner earned his M.Phil. degree in American history from the University of Cambridge and is currently a J.D. candidate at Yale Law School. Author of "'Suffer Not the Evil One': Unitarianism and the 1826 Maryland Jew Bill," *Journal of Religious History* 44 (2020), Eisner is interested in American, Jewish, and legal history.

R. Barbara Gitenstein, president emerita of the College of New Jersey (TCNJ), was named president of TCNJ after six and a half years at Drake University, where she served as provost and executive vice president. She was the first woman provost at Drake and the first as president of TCNJ. Gitenstein chaired the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and was a member of the executive committee of the American Council of Education. She currently serves as a senior fellow and consultant for the Association of Governing Boards, where she focuses on board governance, shared governance, and presidential mentorship. She has published widely on Jewish American literature (with a special emphasis on poetry), higher education leadership, and institutional transformation.

Rachel Kranson, associate professor of religious studies at the University of Pittsburgh, is the author of *Ambivalent Embrace: Jewish Upward Mobility in Postwar America* (2017) and the coeditor of *A Jewish Feminine Mystique: Jewish Women in Postwar America* (2010). Her current research focuses on American Jewish engagement in reproductive politics.

Phyllis K. Leffler earned her Ph.D. in history from Ohio State University. She is currently professor emerita from the University of Virginia, where she served on the faculty from 1986 to 2015. She has published books and essays in the fields of public history, the history of women at the University of Virginia, southern Jewish history, and African American history. *Black Leaders on Leadership: Conversations with Julian Bond* (2015) synthesized a twenty-year oral history project that she directed with Bond. Most recently, her essay "Insiders or Outsiders: Charlottesville's Jews, White Supremacy, and Antisemitism" was published in *Southern Jewish History* 21 (2018). Immediate past president of the Southern Jewish Historical Society, Leffler continues to work on an extensive oral history project on Charlottesville's Jewish community.

Augustine Meaher is an associate professor of national security studies at the Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. His published works include *The Australian Road to Singapore: The Myth of British Betrayal*. He is presently researching the Air Force's "occupation" of Miami Beach in the Second World War, and he discovered the correspondence highlighted in his article while researching the "occupation." Meaher graduated *cum laude* from Georgetown University, received his M.A. in history from Tulane University, and his Ph.D. in history from the University of Melbourne. He is the former dean of the Baltic Defence College.

Michael Rothschild owns Landslide Records, an independent record label established in 1981 that specializes in roots-oriented southern music and releases albums from mostly blues and Americana recording artists. He earned a B.A. in history from Tulane University. Dozens of his music articles about the Amelia Island Jazz Festival have been printed in the *Fernandina Beach News-Leader*.

Andrew Sperling is a Ph.D. candidate at American University. He earned his M.A. in history from North Carolina State University in 2019. His research interests include twentieth-century southern Jewish history, Jewish refugees in America, and the history of antisemitism in America.

Ellen M. Umansky is the Carl and Dorothy Bennett Professor of Judaic Studies at Fairfield University and founding director of the university's Bennett Center for Judaic Studies, positions she has held since 1994. She is an active member of the Association for Jewish Studies, the American Academy of Religion, and the Southern Jewish Historical Society, of which she is a past president and currently a member of its board of directors. Author of many essays, book chapters, encyclopedia articles, and books, including *From Christian Science to Jewish Science: Spiritual Healing and American Jews* (2005) and *Four Centuries of Jewish Women's Spirituality* (coedited with Dianne Ashton, 2009), she is currently working on a book that focuses on Judaism, feminism, liberalism, and God.

Hollace Ava Weiner, who served as president of the Southern Jewish Historical Society from 2000 to 2002, is the author of five books, most recently her family history, *From Lithuania to Lorain: A Jewish Journey*. As volunteer director of the Fort Worth Jewish Archives, she curates exhibits and writes a monthly local history column for the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*. In 2021 she received the Extraordinary Preservation of Texas Jewish History Award from the Texas Jewish Historical Society.

Stephen J. Whitfield is professor emeritus of American studies at Brandeis University and serves as the book review editor of *Southern Jewish History*. He is the author of nine books including, most recently, *Learning on the Left: Political Profiles of Brandeis University*.

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SOUTHERN JEWISH
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The Southern Jewish Historical Society awards annual grants to support research in southern Jewish history. The application deadline for each year's awards is in June. Information is available at http://www.jewishsouth.org/sjhs-grants-applications.

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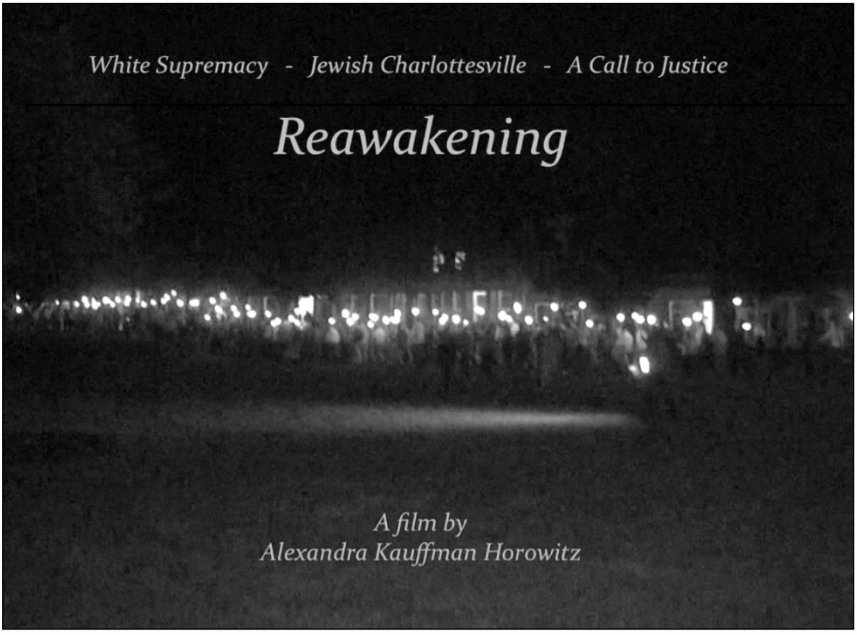
Digital Resources: Past, Present, and Future

Mapping Jewish Charleston has entered the 21st century. Our recently launched 2020 page shows how the city's Jewish population has jumped across both rivers and established footholds west of the Ashley and east of the Cooper. Now, thanks to the Nimble Design Team, visitors can carry Charleston's Jewish history around in their pockets. See for yourself! Find us on your portable device at *mappingjewishcharleston.cofc.edu*.

The William A. Rosenthall Judaica Collection, gifted to the Jewish Heritage Collection (JHC) in 2007, has proved to be a digital goldmine. With two rounds of grants from the Council on Library and Information Resources, JHC was able to catalog and digitize the collection, mount 5,420 items on the Lowcountry Digital Library, and create *Life of the Synagogue,* curated by architectural historian Samuel D. Gruber.

We are now completing a sequel, *Synagogues of the South,* also curated by Dr. Gruber. Showcasing vintage postcards from the Rosenthall collection and providing a bird's-eye view of the built environment of the Jewish South, the long-awaited site will go live in 2022. Stay tuned.



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