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Two Commemorations: Richmond Jews and the Lost Cause during the Civil Rights Era

by

David Weinfeld*

In 1954, Jewish communities across the United States celebrated the Tercentenary, the three-hundredth anniversary of the Jewish arrival in New Amsterdam. Although individual Jews had come before, when twenty-three Jews sailed from Recife, Brazil, into the New Amsterdam harbor in 1654, it marked the beginning of Jewish communal life in what became the United States, the largest diasporic Jewish community in the world.

Jews of Richmond, Virginia, were among those celebrating and felt they deserved a special pride of place. Richmond was not among the five colonial cities in America—New York, Philadelphia, Newport, Charleston, and Savannah—where Jews established congregations before 1776. However, it was the sixth community, the westernmost at the time, and the first after the creation of the United States of America. In 1789, a group of mostly Ashkenazic Jews founded the Sephardic congregation Kahal Kadosh Beth Shalome, the ancestor to Beth Ahabah, the largest Reform congregation in the city today.

Seven years after the Tercentenary, Richmond's Jewish community participated in a nonsectarian, nationwide commemoration, the Civil War Centennial. As the former capital of the Confederate States of America, Richmond had a special relationship with the Civil War, one honored by many of its citizens, Jews included. The same man spearheaded both celebrations on behalf of local Jewry: businessman and lay historian Saul Viener, a president of the American Jewish Historical Society (AJHS) and

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a founder and first president of the Southern Jewish Historical Society (SJHS).

The success of the Tercentenary inspired Viener to compose a letter in December 1956, sent to several interested parties: "In an effort to crystallize the interest in American Jewish history which has existed in the South for many years, and which was exhibited in the participation in the Tercentenary programs two years ago, I would like to invite your attention to the possible creation of a Southern Jewish Historical Society in Richmond."¹ Thus these commemorations led to the predecessor of the organization that sponsors this very journal, *Southern Jewish History*.

The larger Tercentenary and Centennial were national events. The Tercentenary organization was headquartered in New York, unofficial capital of American Jewry, and most scholarly attention has focused on Tercentenary events emanating from New York and other northern cities.² The Centennial had a strong presence in Richmond, but scholars have not investigated Jewish involvement there.

The Richmond Jewish community's commemoration of the two events demonstrated broad and implicit support for the Lost Cause narrative. Dominant in the South for at least a hundred years after the Civil War, the Lost Cause narrative celebrated the Confederacy. Although most American Jewish Tercentenary commemorations did not emphasize the Civil War, in Richmond the sectional conflict played front and center. The Civil War Centennial dealt directly with the Civil War, and the Lost Cause narrative was even more pronounced.

That Viener embraced the Lost Cause narrative is not surprising considering his unofficial status as chief lay historian of the Richmond Jewish community. Yet it is surprising given that Viener was originally from West Virginia, a southern state that had not seceded and had no connection to the Confederacy. His parents emigrated from Lithuania at the beginning of the twentieth century, and Viener was born and raised in Charles Town, West Virginia. In 1942, he enlisted in the army and served in Australia, where he married Jacqueline Wolman, the English-born daughter of a rabbi. After the war, he earned a master's degree in history from West Virginia University before moving to Richmond to oversee a branch of the family scrap metal business. Viener was undoubtedly aware that his home state had split from Virginia when the latter seceded from the Union in 1861 and entered the Union as a new state two years later.

Why would an American Jew obliquely connected to the Confederate South become so enamored of the region's history that he launched the first Southern Jewish Historical Society? Why would he focus so much on the Civil War to the point of celebrating Jewish involvement with the Confederacy? Why did he lead commemorations glorifying the Lost Cause?³ As shall be demonstrated, Viener's embrace of the Lost Cause echoed that of many Richmond Jews, reflecting broader attachment to the South.

Six former SJHS presidents, Alexandria, Virginia, 1991. Left to right: Sol Breibart, Sam Proctor, Jack Coleman, Saul Viener, Rachel Heimovics Braun, Janice Rothschild Blumberg. (Courtesy of Janice Rothschild Blumberg.)

The Richmond Jewish community's 1954 Tercentenary commemoration and its participation in the larger American Civil War Centennial from 1961 to 1965 demonstrate that for Richmond Jews, advancing the Lost Cause represented an assertion of whiteness, an entry into mainstream, "respectable" southern society. Through these commemorations, the Richmond Jewish community loudly and publicly performed whiteness, saying to the white Christian majority, "We're just like you; we're on the same team," an option unavailable to African Americans.

This was true not only for Jews with ancestors in the antebellum South, but also for descendants of recent immigrants, the foreign born, and northern transplants to Richmond, as well as West Virginian Saul Wiener. As Myron Berman notes, throughout postbellum Richmond Jewish history, "recent immigrants and their children adopted the legends and ceremonials of the confederacy as their own."⁴ Foremost among these legends was the Lost Cause, and Richmond Jews imbibed and performed it with gusto, particularly during the Tercentenary and Centennial commemorations.

These commemorations gave the appearance of Jewish comfort and belonging in Richmond. They involved museum displays, lavish pageants, synagogue services, graveside ceremonies, and popular publications. These commemorations represented an effort at integration while resisting complete acculturation. Richmond's Jews wanted to say they could be American, they could be southern, and still be proud Jews. But these commemorations were also about unspoken factors, about whiteness, about where Jews would live and work and send their children to school. Celebrating the Lost Cause signified loyalty to the white South.

During the 1954 Tercentenary, not long after the Rosenberg trial and with McCarthyism rampant, many Americans still associated Jews with communism. Proving their loyalty was paramount, and in the South, loyalty often meant loyalty to the Confederacy. Richmond Jews used the Tercentenary and Centennial to integrate into Richmond, Virginia, and southern society. For Jews, becoming southern was different from becoming American, and becoming a Richmonder meant embracing the Lost Cause and Confederate past, even if the connection to that past was shallow. This was especially true during the African American civil rights movement, from *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954 to the marches and protests that followed.

While northern Jews were disproportionately involved in civil rights activism, southern Jews kept a lower profile, muting their opposition to racism, and a few actively supported segregation. There were exceptions, including two outspoken Virginia rabbis, Malcolm Stern in Norfolk and Emmet Frank of Alexandria, who opposed segregation.⁵ But Jewish opposition to segregation in Richmond was personal and private, whereas the Richmond Jewish celebration of the Lost Cause was communal and public. It may have felt almost obligatory, like adhering to a civil religion.

Charles Reagan Wilson calls the Lost Cause the “civil religion” of the South, arguing “the Lost Cause was a mythic construct that helped white southerners define a cultural identity in the aftermath of Confederate defeat.” At the same time, he asserts that “evangelical Protestantism lay at the heart of southern identity and was central to southern efforts to wage a cultural war against northern influences after the war.”⁶ By the 1950s, however, the ecumenical era of Judeo-Christianity had begun. With religious barriers falling, Richmond Jews could perform the Lost Cause at the Tercentenary and Centennial to claim whiteness, solidifying their standing in white southern society while maintaining their Jewish heritage.

The Jews and Lost Cause Ideology

Caroline E. Janney defines the Lost Cause as “an interpretation of the American Civil War that seeks to present the war, from the perspective of the Confederates, in the best possible terms.” Developed by white southerners including many Confederate veterans, “the Lost Cause created and romanticized the ‘Old South’ and the Confederate War effort, often distorting history in the process.” The Lost Cause initially held sway in some academic circles, but today is rightly rejected by scholars as an inaccurate, racist myth used to uphold white supremacy. Nonetheless, it remains “an important part of how the Civil War is commemorated in the South and remembered in American popular culture.” There were three major tenets of Lost Cause mythology. First, the Civil War was a conflict over states’ rights, not slavery. Second, slavery was a benign institution, and African Americans were “content in their station” and “loyal to their masters.” And third, the Confederate war effort was noble, heroic, and tragic, with southern military icons like Robert E. Lee practically canonized.⁷

The Tercentenary and Civil War Centennial commemorations in Richmond show a Jewish community that had embraced the Lost Cause, but not in toto. They did not adhere to the second tenet, that slavery was benign. Insofar as they mentioned slavery, they condemned it. They did, however, implicitly adhere to the first tenet, namely, that the Civil War was primarily about states’ rights, and thus they did not emphasize slavery in any of their commemorations. Following that premise, they wholeheartedly endorsed the third tenet, that the Confederate war effort was noble and heroic. They added their own list of southern Jewish

heroes, including Judah P. Benjamin, who held three offices in the Confederate cabinet, and Maximillian Michelbacher, the Civil War-era rabbi of Richmond's Beth Ahabah congregation.

This partial but enthusiastic embrace of the Lost Cause allowed the Jews of Richmond in the 1950s and 1960s to appear moderate on the issue of African American civil rights, privately supporting integration while saying little on the matter publicly. Simultaneously, it enabled them to loudly and proudly assert their southernness and, by extension, their whiteness. As David Blight notes, the Lost Cause was primarily an effort to uphold white supremacy that "reverberated as part of the very heartbeat of the Jim Crow South." The idea's "very existence depended on dehumanizing a group of people."⁸ When Richmond Jews performed the Lost Cause at the Tercentenary and Centennial commemorations, they solidified their membership in the civil-rights era white southern community and, intentionally or not, buttressed the reigning notion of white supremacy.

The Broader Tercentenary

The Tercentenary was designed to commemorate all of American Jewish history, not just the 1654 arrival in New Amsterdam. In early plans for the commemoration, however, the South was largely absent. Revolutionary War heroes like Haym Salomon, figures such as Emma Lazarus and Louis Brandeis (ignoring his Kentucky roots), and the eastern European immigrant experience featured much more prominently. The Civil War, slavery, and Jim Crow were not major points of emphasis. Most Jews lived in the North, and most arrived long after the Civil War. Organizers of the Tercentenary seemed more concerned with conflict among Zionists, non-Zionists, and anti-Zionists than they did between North and South.

Some radical Jews felt that the official American Jewish Tercentenary Committee did not adequately represent Jewish life or values. Morris Schappes, the communist editor of *Jewish Currents*, excoriated an organizer for including a "reactionary" biography of Judah P. Benjamin on the Tercentenary reading list. It was likely Schappes, or at least his influence, that led to an unsigned call for the Tercentenary written in June 1953.⁹ It noted the arrival in New Amsterdam and the restrictions and antisemitism that American Jews faced before taking a radical turn:

*Tercentenary medallion, designed
by Nancy Dryfoos, 1954.
(Library of Congress.)*

The social system that marked out and sought to enforce restrictions against the Jews also marked other groups, notably the Negro people, for oppression and persecution. In the fight of such groups for the extension of democracy to them, Jews have played a part from the days of the resistance to the Fugitive Slave Law of the 1850s to the legal lynchings of Willie McGee and the Martinsville Seven in the 1950s.¹⁰

Jews "put their shoulders to the wheel of progress," particularly the "mass Jewish working class," and they continued to do so "despite McCarthyism." The author celebrated Yiddish writers who "expressed the aspirations of the Jewish workers and progressive masses."¹¹ Rather than liberal anticommunism, here was an expression of anti-McCarthyism. If the Tercentenary was originally imagined as a Cold War celebration of Americanism, at least some American Jews had other ideas.

The author concluded by delineating two traditional groups in American history: those who "place barricades on the road to progress" and those who "fought to clear the road." Then they further described these two groups as

the tradition of those who fought on the side of King George, and then of the slave owners, and then of the giant trusts, and the tradition of those who supported the American Revolution, and then the Union cause, and then the people against the trusts. These two traditions are also found in the Jewish life of our country. As the Tercentenary makes this conflict of values clear, the progressive-minded elements in the American Jewish population, continuing to be fired by the passion for progress will make the Tercentenary Celebrations the occasion for their rededication to the cause of peace, equality, and social progress.¹²

The Confederacy and slavery were thereby equated with the opponents of the American Revolution and the enemies of contemporary workers. This aggressively antisouthern document formed the ideological backbone for an alternative Tercentenary celebration, the Committee for the 300th Anniversary of Jewish Settlement in the USA, which celebrated American Jewish radicalism, labor activism, and Yiddish culture.¹³

Richmond Jews and the Lost Cause before the Tercentenary

The Tercentenary looked a lot different in Richmond, because Richmond Jews had adhered to the Lost Cause narrative for a long time. As Clive Webb observes, “Jews actively contributed to the Lost Cause.” This was true across the South, but the best example was the erection of the Confederate section in Richmond’s Hebrew Cemetery. The memorial ground was established shortly after the Civil War and overseen by the Hebrew Ladies Memorial Association, whose members decorated the graves with flowers every year. In addition, in 1893, Richmond printer Herbert Ezekiel, owner and editor of the weekly newspaper *The Jewish South*, compared Jews to Confederates: “Like Jews have often been, they have been crushed by irresistible odds, but the cause is still alive. . . . [W]e do not mean by this that a revival of the Southern cause is wished for or desirable, but nevertheless its sacredness will be inviolable so long as the sun shines in this fair land of ours.”¹⁴

Postcard of Monument Avenue, Richmond, Virginia.
(Wikimedia Commons.)

In his family history, Lewis Isaac Held, Jr., expressed similar sentiments. His father, Lewis Isaac Held, Sr., was a congregant at Beth Ahabah and a prominent member of the Jewish community. As a child in the interwar period, the senior Held strolled with his family to his grandmother's house on Monument Avenue, receiving friendly greetings from neighbors as they walked by. "Along this promenade are the monuments from which the avenue is named—majestic statues of the great Confederate generals R. E. Lee, J. E. B. Stuart, and 'Stonewall' Jackson." His son imagined that "those bronze giants must have had quite an impact upon boys like Lewis [Senior] who played nearby. Richmond had been the capital of the glorious Confederacy, and in those days the memories of the war were still fresh. As a boy Lewis used to visit the Confederate Soldiers' Home—wooden buildings on the Boulevard [where the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts now stands]—and the old men would tell him stories of the war."¹⁵ These stories undoubtedly depicted a sanitized version of the Confederate legacy, the Lost Cause that most Richmond Jews absorbed without reservation.

Another example came in 1942, when Richmond's new Conservative congregation, Temple Beth-El, began construction of a larger sanctuary next to its original building in the Museum District. The leaders of the project were all northerners or immigrants. Russian-born Isadore Richard Levet served as Beth-El president, while the chairmen of the Building Committee were Lithuanian-born Reuben Goldman and Herman November, a transplant from New York. During the dedication ceremony for the new synagogue, the leaders inserted three symbolic items into the cornerstone: a brief history of Beth-El, a list of congregants, and a prayer book donated by a non-Jewish friend that had belonged to that individual's grandfather, Confederate Colonel Kenton Harper, who served with Stonewall Jackson. As Myron Berman observes, even in 1942, in a synagogue dominated by Jews whose families came long after the Civil War, "a unique combination of Southern and Jewish tradition" dominated the ceremony, with southern in this case meaning respect for the Lost Cause.¹⁶

The 1954 Richmond Jewish Tercentenary Celebration

At first, when taking charge of Richmond's Tercentenary events, Saul Viener did not advance a Lost Cause narrative. When he appealed to the larger nationwide Tercentenary committee in October 1953 on behalf

*Saul Viener, right, and Irvin Markel holding Torah finials. They stand in front of a model of Beth Shalom Synagogue that was displayed as part of the Valentine Museum's 1954 exhibit "Salute to a Tercentenary."
(Courtesy of the Valentine, Richmond.)*

of the Richmond Jewish community, Viener told the story of the Jews of Richmond in a larger American context that took little note of the Civil War.¹⁷ He also took a broader approach as chair of the Tercentenary Committee of the Richmond Jewish Community Council.

On September 19, 1954, the Valentine Museum, an institution dedicated to Richmond history, launched an exhibit chronicling "Jewish involvement in the development of the city." The exhibit ran until November 7 and included "manuscripts, portraits, and ritual objects." The Tercentenary committee also published a commemorative booklet, "A Century and a Half of Civic Responsibility," that was distributed at local synagogues and schools.¹⁸

In addition to the exhibit and booklet, the committee sponsored "a rededication of the Jewish cemetery on East Franklin Street, the oldest Jewish burial ground in Virginia," purchased and inaugurated by Isaiah

Isaacs in 1791, and the final resting place of Revolutionary War veteran Jacob I. Cohen. This cemetery was inactive, having been replaced in 1816 by the larger Hebrew Cemetery, but the city finally marked it as a historic site, and New York rabbi David de Sola Pool spoke at the ceremony.¹⁹

Unlike these events, the main production of the Richmond Tercentenary committee placed the Civil War front and center. The most grandiose element of the Richmond's Tercentenary commemoration took place on October 14, 1954, at the large local theatre known as the Mosque. The Mosque, today called the Altria Theater, was owned by the city and was a segregated venue. Members of the Richmond Jewish community put on a play called "Under Freedom." To conclude the commemoration, on Saturday, November 27, a special Shabbat service was held. These two events reflect the schizophrenic nature of the local Tercentenary celebration.

*Postcard of the Mosque
Theater in Richmond, c. 1930.
(Digital Commonwealth,
Boston Public Library.)*

"Under Freedom" was produced by the Jewish Tercentenary Committee, sponsored by the Jewish Community Council and the local chapter of the Jewish War Veterans, and directed by the Richmond Department of Recreation and Parks, thus demonstrating municipal involvement and interaction between the city and Jewish organizations. Rose Kaufman Banks, a prominent member of Richmond's theater community and employee of the city's Department of Recreation and Parks, directed the play. Businessman Allan Creeger, born in Boston and raised on Long Island, wrote the script's historical narrative. Creeger received his BA from Columbia and MBA from Harvard before entering the military in 1943, where he was stationed at Camp Lee, Virginia. He moved to Richmond after the war. His wife, Richmond native Louise (Rosenthal) Creeger, conducted the historical research for the script.

Alongside Creeger's narration, Edith Lindeman Calisch, daughter-in-law of long-time Beth Ahabah rabbi Edward Nathan Calisch, wrote the dialogue. Rabbi Calisch was the de facto Jewish spiritual leader of Richmond from 1891 until his retirement in 1945 and death the following year. Edith Calisch was born in Pittsburgh, raised in Ohio, and graduated from Barnard College. She served as film and theater critic of the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, in addition to writing several Jewish books, including bible stories for children, a play titled *The Jews Who Stood by Washington*, and a biography of her father-in-law. She was also a songwriter, penning lyrics for Richmond composer Carl Stutz.²⁰

Thus two transplanted northerners wrote the play, which they called a "pageant," about Richmond Jewry. Creeger's narration commenced with saccharine paeans to freedom. The prologue began not with Richmond but with Emma Lazarus, a New Yorker born in 1849, whose poetry adorns the Statue of Liberty. The famous poet conversed with her father and her friend Ralph Waldo Emerson and then tied her famous words about "huddled masses" to the European settlers in North America in the 1600s. The next four scenes showed the history of the Jews of Richmond through the colonial era, the American Revolution, and the antebellum period, with references to George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Chief Justice John Marshall.²¹

Edith Lindeman Calisch, c. 1920.

(Photo contributed by Justin D.

Haren, Findagrave.com.)

After intermission, the chorus sang “Bonnie Blue Flag,” a popular Confederate song during the Civil War. The narrator began:

The war between the states was a tragic pause in the material and spiritual growth of America. Conceived in freedom and dedicated to liberty, the country by and large, for many years after the Revolution countenanced the bondage of one color of men to another. Most Revolutionary leaders, in the South as well as in the North, condemned slavery and many of those who owned slaves provided for their freedom in their wills.

But gradually the opponents of slavery changed from those merely opposed to its existence and hoping for its eventual abolition to those actively demanding its immediate and wholesale extirpation. Their violent and vitriolic attacks on the institution of slavery and its supporters in the South resulted in increasingly harsh and bitter feelings on both sides.²²

These passages criticized slavery, albeit in the language of moderates rather than abolitionists. This criticism continued as the narrator noted New York Rabbi Morris Raphall’s defense of biblical slavery and contrasted him with Reform rabbis Bernhard Felsenthal of Chicago and David Einhorn of Baltimore, adamant abolitionists. The script’s authors knew slavery was evil and that it caused the Civil War, yet they and the other pageant participants celebrated the Confederate war effort and Jewish participation in it. They honored the more than thirty Jewish men and boys who served in Richmond’s Light Infantry Blues during the Civil War. The narrator did not mention that Beth Shalome’s antebellum rabbi, George Jacobs, and Beth Ahabah’s Maximillian J. Michelbacher (who styled himself Reverend) owned slaves. He did mention that Michelbacher often traveled with Confederate troops to worship with them.²³

Scene 5 took place in 1862 on the battlefield and featured Reverend Michelbacher reciting a prayer to various soldiers—including Robert E. Lee—that implicitly defended slavery. The prayer, which Michelbacher wrote in 1861, spoke of the northern violation of the “rights, liberties, and freedom of this, our Confederacy,” and that the Union sought “to deprive us of the glorious inheritance which was left to us by the immortal fathers of this once great republic.” It called on God to defend the “natural rights” of the Confederates.²⁴

*Rev. Maximilian J. Michelbacher, c. 1850.
(Photo contributed by George Seitz,
Findagrave.com.)*

But the prayer did not explicitly defend slavery, as Michelbacher's sermon on March 27, 1863, following Confederate president Jefferson Davis's declaration of a day of national prayer for the Confederacy, did. In that sermon, Michelbacher denounced the Union's attempt to "enslave us." He referred directly to the enslavement of African Americans: "The man-servants and the maid-servants Thou hast given unto us, that we may be merciful to them in righteousness and bear rule over them, the enemy are attempting to seduce, that they too may turn against us, whom Thou hast appointed over them as instructors in Thy wise dispensation!" He blamed Union forces for inciting their "man-servants and maid-servants to insurrection," arming them and deceiving them from the path of duty, that they may waylay their masters."²⁵ Michelbacher's version of the peculiar institution depicted a benevolent, divinely ordained relationship between master and slave, a Lost Cause before it was lost.

The organizers of the 1954 Tercentenary pageant chose the tamer 1861 version of Michelbacher's "Prayer for the Confederacy." The 1861 prayer was the better-known document, so it's unlikely the latter 1863 sermon was under consideration and similarly unlikely the pageant organizers would have chosen a text celebrating slavery so overtly. The Jewish Lost Cause downplayed the importance of slavery, and Richmond Jews comfortably celebrated the Lost Cause and their Confederate hero, Reverend Michelbacher. In the wake of *Brown v. Board of Education*, they ignored their Tercentenary commemoration's resonance with the Jim Crow present.

Including the "Prayer for the Confederacy" was Richmond Jewry's way of celebrating local history. It represented a genuinely Richmond contribution to the American and southern Jewish narrative. Although valuable historically, from today's vantage point the prayer for the Confederacy cannot be seen as something to celebrate. In 1954, it was. Nearly a century after the Civil War, the inclusion of Michelbacher's prayer emphasized the extent of the Richmond Jewish community's participation in the Confederate cause, but more importantly, their integration into Virginia society. In the South the idea of state's rights and state loyalty prevailed. The two northern Jewish writers of this play paid homage to that idea, but they failed to appreciate how that states' rights ideal buttressed white supremacy.

By 1954, the demography of the Richmond Jewish community had changed from half a century earlier, like other Jewish communities throughout the South. The old Jewish families who traced their roots to the antebellum period were now a "limited minority," although possessing outsized influence.²⁶ Richmond was embarking on what David and Adele Bernstein called a "slow revolution."²⁷ Writing in 1949 in *Commentary Magazine*, the Bernsteins offered a profile of the nearly eight thousand Jews living in Virginia's capital, a city of two hundred and fifty thousand people. Unsurprisingly, they emphasized the legacy of the Civil War:

For nearly two centuries [Jewish] history has woven itself into the Richmond story; their roots are deep, and all the myths and shibboleths of this stronghold of Southern romanticism are theirs. There were Jewish slaveholders, and Jewish warriors in the Confederate cause, and Jews who suffered during the Reconstruction years. These were the old Jewish

families, and it was quite natural that they should have dominated the Jewish community—as old families dominated the entire community—until the new Southern revolution began.²⁸

“The weight of the past hangs heavy over Richmond,” the Bernsteins wrote. They invoked the notion of historical memory, an idea that resonates with Jews, who each year tell the story of the Exodus from Egypt and imagine themselves as slaves liberated and ready to receive God’s commandments at Sinai. In Richmond, the strongest memory was “of the desperately romantic days of the Confederacy, when Richmond was the political headquarters of the violent struggle that pitted states’ rights, plantations, and slavery against the irresistible industrial revolution.” Simultaneously, among those who helped usher in “the new Southern revolution” were new Jewish arrivals from Europe and the North. Only “one Jewish family in ten” could trace their roots in Richmond to the antebellum period.²⁹

By 1954, Richmond’s Jewish community counted many descendants of eastern European Jews who arrived long after the Civil War like Saul Viener’s family: transplants from the North, blended Jewish families of old and new Richmonders, and refugees from Nazi Germany and Holocaust survivors. For all Richmonders, old and new, embracing the Lost Cause allowed for acceptance into Richmond’s white community.

The final scene of the Tercentenary play acknowledged the newer immigrants to Richmond. Set in 1900, it depicted a Jewish family celebrating their uncle Ben’s naturalization as a United States citizen. The story aligned with a broader narrative of Jews coming to the United States. The Tercentenary was an American celebration, not just a Richmond one. The script endorsed assimilation, as Ben announced that he and other new immigrants had to learn how to become Americans quickly, so they could “forget the old, unhappy things we used to know,” a reference to pogroms, but also in 1954, to the more recent Holocaust.³⁰

Then Ben pivoted back to the South, singing “Carry Me Back to Ole Virginny” while his family joined in. This was the official song of Virginia, a title held from 1940 to 1997, but it was not without baggage. Edwin Pearce Christy, a white Philadelphian and leader of Christy’s Minstrels, who performed in blackface, had copyrighted the original version in 1847. The song contained references to “coon” and “possum,” pejorative terms

for African Americans. In 1878, James A. Bland, a free-born African American from Flushing, New York, changed most of the lyrics and altered the melody entirely. Although Bland had graduated from Howard University, his version contained the same Uncle Remus dialect. Its use of the terms “darkie” and “massa” did not make it much better than the original in terms of sentimentalizing the old South with a benign view of slavery. This is likely the version that was used in “Under Freedom.” To depict a Jewish immigrant singing it exemplified the use of the Lost Cause to integrate into southern society. “Carry Me Back to Ole Virginny” seamlessly faded into “America the Beautiful,” emphasizing the Americanness of Virginia and honoring the totality of the Virginia experience. The finale reprised Emma Lazarus’s poem, “The New Colossus.” This was an American story, and the Jews in Virginia were part of that story.

After the pageant came the Tercentenary Shabbat in November 1954 held at Beth Ahabah, home to the city’s wealthy Jewish elite. Temple Beth-El, a Conservative synagogue founded during the 1930s and soon to become the city’s largest congregation; Beth Israel, a Modern Orthodox congregation now called Knesset Beth Israel (KBI); and Beth Torah, an Orthodox congregation (no longer in existence) also participated. Rabbi Ariel Goldburg of Beth Ahabah, born in St. Louis and raised in Illinois; Rabbi Jacob Milgrom of Beth-El, a Brooklyn native; and Cantor Morris Okun, also of Beth-El and a New Yorker, led the evening service.

After reciting traditional prayers, Milgrom led a responsive reading of an English prayer written by the Tercentenary committee in New York. The respondents called on God to help them “ponder the lessons our three centuries in this land have taught” and highlighted values of “liberty” and “justice and equality.” The prayer referred to major figures in American Jewish history. These included “Asser Levy and Jacob bar Simson, Haym Salomon and Mordecai Noah, Rebecca Gratz, Henrietta Szold, Touro and Schiff and Brandeis.” These were men and women, philanthropists and soldiers, Zionists and non-Zionists, lawyers and educators, Sephardic and Ashkenazic. Only two were connected to the South: Judah Touro, a Rhode Islander who lived in New York and Boston before settling in New Orleans, and Louis Brandeis, born and raised in Kentucky, although more closely associated with Harvard University and the U.S. Supreme Court. Southern content was nonexistent. This was a thoroughly American ceremony, not one focused on the South, Virginia, or Richmond.³¹

After the Tercentenary prayer and a moment of silent reflection, Rabbi Goldberg led a prayer for the United States. Cantor Okun followed with the kiddush, after which came the *birkat ha-mazon* and the national anthem. Finally, Saul Viener introduced the guest speaker, Dr. Salo Baron. The distinguished Columbia University professor of Jewish history spoke about Soviet Jewry, and his address was covered in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*. The service concluded with a final blessing from Rabbi Milgrom.

The Richmond Tercentenary celebrations mostly followed the pattern of the national celebrations, emphasizing American events and figures from the North, unrelated to slavery, the Civil War, the Confederacy, Reconstruction, or Jim Crow. Nonetheless, Richmonders with shallow roots in Virginia made a large effort to incorporate the Virginia story, including Jewish involvement in the Civil War. These Jews believed that to integrate into their community, they had to show themselves to be American, Virginian, and southern, with a special connection to Richmond. That meant embracing key elements of the Lost Cause.

*Context for the Commemorations: Brown v. Board of Education
and Massive Resistance*

The commemorations were moments of pride for the Richmond Jewish community. Both attracted positive attention from the wider non-Jewish public. Both also responded to their particular contexts. In May 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court handed down the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, ruling that segregation in schools was unconstitutional and opening the door for desegregation in many other realms of American life. Many white people in the South did not take kindly to the decision, and Virginians were no exception. Barely a month after the court decision, Virginia Senator Harry F. Byrd began his opposition to *Brown* and by August had joined with other Democrats to create the Gray Commission, ostensibly to study but really to overturn the court's ruling. Two years later, Byrd called for "massive resistance" to desegregation, and he and other politicians signed the "Southern Manifesto" against racial integration and in favor of states' rights.

Massive resistance proved a nightmare for African Americans in Virginia. Schools closed rather than integrate. In 1959, courts ruled the school closings in violation of *Brown* and thereby unconstitutional. This legally

mandated integration, but the process began slowly, as opponents of integration used other means to continue resistance including state-provided grants to white students for new private schools, as well as white flight to the suburbs.

The U.S. Supreme Court finally ended the state subsidizing of private schools in 1964, but many white Virginians still fought tooth and nail against desegregation, requiring the highest court again to speed up the process in 1968. By 1970, the city of Richmond began a limited busing program, which two years later extended to the suburbs. This busing extension met massive resistance and was overturned in local courts. Further white flight, which included many Jews, has left the Richmond school system overwhelmingly African American to this day.³²

Senator Harry F. Byrd, c. 1930.
(*Wikimedia Commons.*)

The Richmond Jewish community's experience was different from the Jewish experience elsewhere in Virginia. While Richmond Jews were quieter about Jim Crow and louder about their embrace of the Lost Cause, elsewhere in Virginia Jews offered greater opposition to segregation. In the late 1950s, two Reform rabbis, the Houston-born Emmet Frank in Alexandria and the Philadelphia native Malcolm Stern in Norfolk, strongly and publicly opposed massive resistance, putting themselves at risk.³³

The cases of Frank and Stern suggest that their Virginia Jewish communities were more supportive of desegregation than those in Richmond. No Richmond rabbi or prominent Jewish citizen stood up against Jim

Crow the way Frank and Stern did. As the Richmond Jewish community's Tercentenary and Civil War Centennial commemorations demonstrate, the Richmond Jewish community was particularly invested in celebrating the Lost Cause as a means to enmesh itself into white southern society.

Nonetheless, southern Jewish embrace of the Lost Cause did not necessarily mean support for segregation. Jews were more likely than non-Jews to oppose segregation, but they did so quietly, as moderates and not as radicals. The Jews of Richmond seem to have decoupled the Lost Cause from the struggle over black civil rights, a decoupling still common to many Americans today. Celebrating the Confederacy, for most Jewish Richmonders, was a means to fit in. Perhaps they did not appreciate how enmeshed the Confederate past was in the Jim Crow present. Or perhaps they enjoyed economic stability and did not want to rock the boat.

The Tightrope Theory and White Rage

Two theories help us understand the southern Jewish reaction to desegregation. The first, the tightrope theory, has been advanced by scholars such as Leonard Dinnerstein, Seth Forman, Mark Bauman, and Clive Webb. This theory suggests that Jews in the South were engaging in a balancing act, as if they were walking on a tightrope, when it came to black civil rights. Southern Jews privately supported integration but tended not to express that sympathy publicly to avoid an antisemitic backlash from the white Christian majority. Southern Jewish silence on civil rights was the result of fear. Those who wanted to intervene in support of black civil rights had to balance ethical principles with the precarious Jewish place in the broader white community and the real danger of antisemitic violence, including synagogue bombings and other such attacks, across the South. As Dinnerstein notes, while northern Jews celebrated *Brown*, "Southern Jews met it with fear and trepidation." Or to quote Seth Forman, "Southern Jews remained cautious on the issue of desegregation," often appealing to national Jewish organizations to "soft-pedal the issue" and disassociate Jews from civil rights and pro-integration activism.³⁴

Bauman builds upon this argument, accepting that most southern Jews were silent on civil rights, but demonstrating that certain rabbis resisted the status quo. Webb expands upon Bauman's work, showing that some southern Jews publicly opposed segregation whereas a few openly

and passionately endorsed white supremacy—though none of the latter in Virginia. As Webb writes, “although most southern Jews were inherently sympathetic toward the black struggle for racial equality, their actions were constrained by political circumstance. . . . [T]hose who dared to protest against racial prejudice risked serious personal injury. As a result, many southern Jews had explicitly rejected the notion that they had any particular responsibility to support the civil rights movement.”³⁵

The tightrope thesis appeared in newspapers of the time. In an October 1958 article in the *Southern Israelite*, “Virginia Jews Discuss Coordination with National Organizations,” tensions between southern and northern Jews surrounding segregation were laid bare. Hundreds of Jewish children in Norfolk were affected when Virginia governor Lindsay Almond closed schools to combat integration. Jews throughout the state were on edge. The unsigned article did not identify the national Jewish organizations mentioned, but representatives of one group met with Jewish communal leaders from ten Virginia cities “to discuss the impact of the school integration crisis on the Jewish population in the state.” Regional offices of these organizations had the final say in the messaging from Virginia, superseding the authority of the national office. They agreed that the national organizations could publicly protest segregation, “provided statements are made outside the South.”³⁶

Virginia Jews faced a dilemma. They were “acting to ensure their own safety” by lying low on segregation and moderating their voices. One Virginia Jewish leader insisted on the “perilous position of Jews in Virginia and the need for prudence.”³⁷ A Virginia-based segregationist group known as the Defenders of State Sovereignty had identified local Jewish donors to the NAACP and harassed them for their assistance to African Americans.

Two days after that article appeared, the Reform temple in Atlanta was bombed. The tightrope argument intensified. Rabbi and historian Bertram W. Korn, the leading expert on Jews in the Civil War, wrote “most Southern Jews are nervous: they do not want to be caught in the crossfire between segregationists and integrationists, between Negroes and whites.” The many Jews working in retail would face “absolute boycott” if they were associated with integrationists. “The lot of the Southern Jew has never been an easy one. . . . [T]hese Jews have always felt like their

behavior had to be exemplary, that they had to prove themselves again and again.”³⁸ Here was the tightrope thesis expressed perfectly in 1958.

Korn understood that most southern Jews, rabbis included, did not want to rock the boat. While some “worked patiently, behind the scenes,” to help African Americans, many others “wholeheartedly adopted the attitude of their neighbors towards the Negro problem.”³⁹ Many southern Jews held the same white supremacist prejudices as southern white non-Jews and understood themselves to be in the white camp. Korn opposed segregation but seemed to prefer the quiet approach.

Yet in that same issue of the *Southern Israelite*, another article both affirmed and added nuance to this tightrope argument. In the wake of the Atlanta bombing, with southern Jews on high alert, Lindsay Almond insisted that those fostering antisemitism in southern states “are not friends of the South” and are harming the cause of states’ rights.⁴⁰ Coming down hard on antisemitism, the Virginia governor sought to decouple antisemitism and support for segregation, implying that one could easily oppose the former and endorse the latter.

Almond was outraged that the group behind the Atlanta synagogue bombing called itself the "Confederate Underground." To Almond, the use of the name "Confederate Underground" by antisemites was "a desecration of the Confederacy and could only emanate from a polluted mind." He added that "no philosophy of the true South could support" antisemitism or synagogue bombings, and that nothing in the history of the Confederacy, in which Jewish southerners participated, "could ever lend encouragement to acts or even thoughts" like those of the synagogue attackers.⁴¹

Almond believed that southern Jews could celebrate their Confederate past and was horrified that the Confederacy was being conflated with antisemitism. The Confederacy was thought to be a safe space for Jews. If southern Jews felt, as Korn suggested, that they had to "prove themselves again and again," what better way than through Confederate commemoration? Rather than fly quietly under the radar, Jews avoided rocking the boat by loudly proclaiming their southernness and Confederate heritage. The Lost Cause provided a balancing pole for their tightrope walking between integrationists and segregationists, a loud celebration of the Jewish Confederate past that facilitated relative silence on African American rights.

Understanding the Lost Cause as a balancing pole that assisted southern Jews across the tightrope is especially relevant when placed alongside a general theory about white southern reaction to integration, although this theory does not deal explicitly with Jews. Carol Anderson argues that American history since the Civil War has been defined by "white rage" against any efforts among African Americans to achieve equal rights. Whites fought angrily and viciously against Reconstruction, the Great Migration, desegregation, the civil rights movement, and the election of Barack Obama. Virginia's massive resistance to *Brown v. Board of Education* was a prime example of white rage. According to Anderson:

[W]hite rage is not about visible violence, but rather works its way through the courts, the legislatures, and a range of government bureaucracy. It wreaks havoc subtly, almost imperceptibly. . . . It's not the Klan. White rage doesn't have to wear sheets, burn crosses, or take to the streets. Working the halls of power, it can achieve ends far more effectively, far more destructively.⁴²

Most southern Jews did not respond to the *Brown* decision with white rage, and Jews were not the prime movers behind the efforts to oppose integration. Yet the tightrope argument does not quite capture the Jewish response either: Southern Jews did not, for the most part, take public stances for or against segregation, but they were not exactly silent. In performing the Lost Cause narrative through public commemorations like the Tercentenary and the Civil War Centennial, southern Jews loudly declared themselves southern and implicitly declared themselves white. They could do this without taking a strong stance for or against *Brown*. This suggested a specific strategy, not of silence, but of active, public effort at fitting in.

Many Jews identified as southern, even Jews not originally from the South. Jews in Richmond took the opportunity to celebrate and participate in a regional identity – southern – in addition to their state and city identities. One means of taking advantage of this opportunity was commemorating the Lost Cause. But by identifying as southern, Jews were partaking in an identity defined by whiteness that specifically excluded African Americans.

Richmond Jewry during the Civil Rights Era

Richmond Jews, living outside the Deep South, with a history of good relations with Christian neighbors, and benefitting from a nationwide decline in antisemitism after World War II, did not want to see their secure position jeopardized. This dynamic became apparent to Murray Friedman, a liberal from New York, who went to work in Richmond for the Virginia chapter of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) in July 1954. After his time in Richmond ended some five years later, he observed, “though Virginia Jews accept the idea of desegregation in principle, in practice their viewpoint is not far different from that of the general white population.” Jewish merchants regularly interacted with African American customers and witnessed “first hand the poverty, disease, and lower cultural standards that are the lot of the poor Negro.” Although he recognizes “the responsibility of the white man” in relegating black people to a reduced social status, “he does not want the sins of the past visited on his own children.” This led Friedman to conclude that since the *Brown* decision, most Virginia Jews, like other southern Jews and even liberal white Protestants, had “retreated into positions of silence.”⁴³

The silence was partly out of fear. Although antisemitism nationwide was declining, northern Jews had become associated with civil rights activism, and southern Jews paid the price. Virginia Jews practiced silence with the increase of right-wing antisemitism throughout the South including in the Old Dominion. While Virginia Jews did not suffer synagogue bombings, antisemitic pamphlets circulated through the commonwealth, blaming communist Jews for spearheading school integration with African Americans.

In the face of this bigotry, Friedman recalled Richmond Jewish business elites demanding that the Virginia ADL "confine its role to combating anti-Semitism and to positive programming in the field of interfaith understanding." In 1958, prominent journalist and segregationist James J. Kilpatrick wrote an editorial in the *Richmond News Leader* warning Jews against supporting integration. Although many considered the article antisemitic, Richmond Jewish business leaders Sam Binswanger, Harry Schwarzschild, and Irving May "sought to assure Kilpatrick that they were not integrationists."⁴⁴ These men advocated avoidance of the civil rights movement. They sought to appease the racists, not combat them. Perhaps they were racists themselves.

Ascertaining how Richmond Jews felt about segregation is difficult. Rabbi Myron Berman, who came to Richmond's Temple Beth-El in 1965, described a "a bedrock of feeling within the Jewish community of Richmond opposing busing and integration." At the same time, he identified "a cadre of southern Jews supporting civil rights either through individual efforts or through the Anti-Defamation League." In a memoir, he observed that some local Jews had assisted the sit-in at Thalhimers, and others supported the NAACP and Urban League. He asserted, without citation, that "Richmond's Jewish merchants maintained a friendly relationship with the Black community, extending credit to them when others had refused."⁴⁵

In his history of Richmond Jewry published in 1979, Berman wrote about how tensions over *Brown* "affected the complacency of Richmond Jewry." He summarized: "Although Jews had a natural tendency to be more liberal on the racial issue because of their own minority status, fear of an outbreak of antisemitism in Richmond, as in other areas, coupled with the historic identification between the establishment Jew and Gentile, influenced the reactions of many a Richmond Jew. Evidently, the majority

of the city's Jewish population was not involved with or affected by the turmoil in the blacks' struggle within the community."⁴⁶ For the Richmond Jewish community, silence remained the order of the day when it came to the civil rights movement, but not when it came to celebrating the Confederacy and the Lost Cause.

The Tercentenary, the Centennial, and the Lost Cause Beyond Richmond

The Richmond Tercentenary celebration was not the only one to invoke the Lost Cause. In September 1954, the Atlanta Jewish community kicked off its Tercentenary program with the presentation of "a portrait of Judah P. Benjamin, Secretary of War for the Confederacy," to Mayor William Hartsfield. The portrait was placed in Atlanta's Cyclorama Collection, which contained pictures of "Confederacy notables" and "Confederate Heroes and Statesmen." Harry Madison, national commander of the Jewish War Veterans (JWV), presented the painting of "the beloved Confederate hero" on behalf of Georgia's section of the JWV.⁴⁷

Atlanta mayor William Hartsfield receives a portrait of Judah P. Benjamin from Harry Madison of the Jewish War Veterans, September 1954. (Atlanta Constitution, September 13, 1954).

As the Atlanta-based *Southern Israelite* reported, "Benjamin's part in behalf of the Confederacy was spectacular. As Secretary of War, his record was brilliant" but hampered by Confederate supply shortages. "Legend has it" that Benjamin once personally took the blame for a Confederate defeat rather than let news of the supply shortage leak. Although he "resigned as Secretary of War," Confederate president Jefferson Davis "demonstrated his confidence in Benjamin" by appointing him Secretary of State.⁴⁸

In August, when the portrait presentation was announced, the *Southern Israelite* featured a lengthy article on Benjamin's career. Noting that he was "the acknowledged 'brains of the Confederacy,'" the newspaper called him "a man of courage, determination, intelligence, vigor, and valor, who unfortunately chose to fight for a cause that was lost from the start."⁴⁹ This invocation of the Lost Cause is especially notable because Benjamin was born in the Caribbean, raised in Charleston, educated at Yale, represented Louisiana (where he practiced law in New Orleans and owned a sugarcane plantation) in the U.S. Senate, and served the Confederacy in Richmond. His connection to Georgia was limited. Similarly, in 1955 at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Columbia, South Carolina, Benjamin was the subject of a talk by attorney Dave Baker, part of a Tercentenary panel on "American Jews who have excelled in the field of law."⁵⁰

To Jews across the South, Benjamin, traitor to the Union, was a hero of American Jewish history, to be celebrated through the Tercentenary. He served as a staple of Jewish Lost Cause commemoration before the Tercentenary and continued to be one afterwards. As Adam Mendelsohn writes on the Civil War Centennial, "in Alabama the state B'nai B'rith invoked Judah P. Benjamin to fight its cause." The organization's 1962 convention featured a session dedicated to the "commemoration of the Jewish contribution to the War between the States." Hudson Strode, a biographer of Jefferson Davis, spoke on "Jefferson Davis and his Jewish Confederates," of whom Benjamin featured prominently. The convention began with a themed dinner and dance called "Judah P. Benjamin Nite." The event became known as the "Covenant Confederacy Annual Convention." The Alabama B'nai B'rith chapter even offered to sponsor the building of a monument at the state capitol, "in honor of the 'merits of Judah P. Benjamin, as a son of the Jewish people.'"⁵¹

Benjamin had no significant connection to Alabama either. He provided a means for southern Jews to prove their southernness regardless of what former Confederate state they resided in. In Richmond, however, Jews had an even stronger connection to the Confederacy, as their city was the wartime capital where Benjamin lived and worked. That Civil War and Confederate legacy dominated Richmond's celebration of the 1954 American Jewish Tercentenary and set the stage for even more elaborate commemorations at the Civil War Centennial several years later.

*Virginia Civil War Centennial Center, Richmond, 1954.
(Courtesy of the Valentine, Richmond.)*

The Jewish Civil War Centennial in Richmond

In December 1960, Robert W. Waitt, Jr., the executive secretary of the Richmond Civil War Centennial Committee (RCWCC), wrote to Richmond mayor Claude Woodward that "Mr. [Saul] Viener will make a scholarly addition to our committee."⁵² Although Viener was not a professional scholar, his reputation as a layhistorian and respected citizen of Richmond had grown significantly since his arrival in the city in the late 1940s. He could hardly have seen himself as an outsider in assuming this role, nor did other Jews involved in the nationwide commemoration see him as such.

Between 1961 and 1965, a national effort took place to commemorate the centennial of the American Civil War. The effort was first led by conservative northerners like Major General Ulysses Grant III, grandson of the Union general and former president, as well as southerners dedicated to the Lost Cause. Numerous American Jews expressed outrage in 1959 when Grant distributed a pamphlet for the Loyal Legion of the United States, a group of descendants of Union army officers. The pamphlet contained an antisemitic article, "Abraham Lincoln and the Rothschilds," which blamed "Jew financiers" for the Civil War. In an editorial, Grant

praised the article, calling it “illuminating.” First published in 1940 by Father Charles Coughlin, the article had appeared “in Nazi publications.” The ADL publicly criticized him, and the *Southern Israelite* called for his resignation.⁵³ Grant apologized, but the episode was reminiscent of his grandfather’s 1862 order to ban “Jews as a class” from newly occupied Union territory.⁵⁴ This got the Centennial off to a rocky start, particularly for those Jews involved.

As Robert J. Cook documents in his 2007 book, *Troubled Commemoration*, the 1960s Civil War Centennial was a combination of Cold War unity propaganda and Lost Cause nostalgia, largely excluding African Americans and relegating slavery to the margins of the conflict. Eventually, the commemoration was eclipsed by the civil rights movement and altered its tone accordingly. Although unacceptable by today’s standards, it moved in a progressive direction, including more African Americans and bringing slavery closer to the center of the narrative. In Richmond, Jews like Saul Viener played key roles in making the commemoration more inclusive yet nevertheless maintained their commitment to the Lost Cause.

The Centennial flopped throughout most of the country, but not in Virginia. As Cook notes, “Virginia was in the vanguard of preparing” for the Centennial, which made sense for boosting tourism as it contained “the lion’s share of major Civil War sites.” Virginia established a Centennial commission before any other southern state, and the legislature designated a whopping 1.75 million dollars for the commemoration, including building a new visitor’s center in Richmond. Whereas “most Americans lost interest” in Civil War commemoration after the initial buildup in 1961, Virginians led the way, along with commissions from Mississippi, Alabama, and Tennessee, “to sponsor a range of Centennial events between 1962 and 1965.”⁵⁵

Although many Virginians were excited about the Centennial, at least one prominent Jewish Richmonder was not. Edith Lindeman Calisch, journalist and Pittsburgh native who had coauthored the script for the Tercentenary pageant, wrote an article in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* in January 1961 about the Centennial. She began her piece, “[W]hile Richmond still fights the Civil War—Centennial Commemoration Division, that is . . .”⁵⁶ RCWCC Secretary Waitt took offense at this remark and wrote Calisch for clarification.

In response, Calisch made her disdain for the Centennial clear. She felt "the whole idea of a Civil War Centennial is ill-advised and, considering the tenor of the times, just about the worst thing that could be emphasized throughout the country." She grew "weary of the emphasis on dignity and the dedication . . . to past glories." She believed "the Civil War could be best commemorated [by] showing the world that Richmond has achieved considerable greatness in the past hundred years, rather than rehashing an era of disaster and defeat."⁵⁷ Although she elided the century of Jim Crow, her response reflected the nature of Richmond's Jewish community by 1961, with more twentieth-century arrivals who were less invested in the Civil War and the Lost Cause, and hinted at the inappropriateness of the Centennial taking place alongside the civil rights movement.

What role did Jews play in the Centennial commemoration? Initially, Jewish involvement was based mostly in the North. Northern Jews prepared a traveling exhibit on the Civil War that opened in New York in 1961 before heading to Washington, D.C., the following year. The exhibit came to Richmond in May 1962. Several hundred Jewish and non-Jewish notables attended the opening. This was not the identical exhibit that had appeared in Washington. RCWCC secretary Robert Waitt noted that in Richmond he "wanted to put particular emphasis on people like Dr. Simon Baruch, Judah Benjamin, and David Yulee," and so used some different display items in the exhibit. He also noted that part of the exhibit would be on display "in the window of Thalhimers department store, including the Lincoln panel."⁵⁸

The display in Thalhimers was especially important given the store's history. Founded as a dry goods store in Richmond by German Jewish immigrant William Thalhimer in 1842, Thalhimers became a successful regional department store chain. Like many stores across the Jim Crow South, Thalhimers had a segregated lunch counter. On February 1, 1960, a group of black students sat-in and protested at a Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina. Three weeks later, inspired by the Woolworth's sit-in, students from the historically black institution, Virginia Union University, conducted a sit-in and picketed at Thalhimers flagship store in downtown Richmond. Thirty-four of them, known as the Richmond 34, were arrested. Responding to pressure, William B. Thalhimer, Jr., integrated his stores in 1961. That a year later the store's

TOP: *Thalhimers department store, Richmond, 1914. (Wikimedia Commons.)*

BOTTOM: *Members of the Richmond 34 protesting inside Thalhimers,
February 22, 1960. (Courtesy of the Valentine, Richmond.)*

management agreed to display an image of Abraham Lincoln in their window proved symbolic of the way the winds were blowing across the country and in Richmond. In 1963, President John F. Kennedy invited Thalhimer to consult on his civil rights bill.⁵⁹

Despite Thalhimer's shift, the Richmond Jewish community had not given up on the Lost Cause. The highlight of Jewish participation in Richmond's Civil War Centennial came on October 20, 1963, amid a pivotal era in the civil rights movement. Martin Luther King, Jr., had delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech that August. Massive resistance to segregation in Virginia had begun to unravel. George Lincoln Rockwell, leader of the American Nazi movement, had spoken on the steps of Richmond's city hall on the Fourth of July 1963. The dual Cold War messages of unifying against the Soviets while downplaying American racial problems remained. Some Jews in Richmond, still hoping for security in whiteness, must have felt uneasy that autumn, fearing the antisemitic violence that plagued other southern states.

Yet prominent Richmond Jews certainly did not appear uneasy. They were welcomed into the Civil War Centennial by the broader white community. The flagship ceremony for Richmond Jewry was spearheaded by a non-Jew, J. Ambler Johnston, Richmond architect and Civil War historian, who served as the chairman of the RCWCC. In conjunction with Viener, Johnston arranged a memorial service for Private Henry Gintzberger, a German-born Jewish peddler who had fought and died for the Confederacy.

Hitherto lost to history, Gintzberger had befriended Johnston's father, also a Confederate veteran. Gintzberger was killed at Cold Harbor in 1864 and buried in Richmond's Hebrew Cemetery, in the Confederate Soldiers Section. His grave was mislabeled Henry *Gersberg*. In the 1950s, the individual gravestones were replaced by a single granite marker with a bronze plaque listing the Jewish Confederates buried there, including the so-called *Gersberg*. The 1963 event, open to the public and well-attended, marked the addition of a small plaque with Gintzberger's name below the original, righting the historical record.

After Viener, the master of ceremonies, called the crowd to attention, Beth Ahabah's Rabbi Ariel Goldberg opened the ceremony with a prayer. Viener then explained that the purpose of this ceremony, like that of the Civil War Centennial, "was to establish a better understanding of the

*Monument placed by the Hebrew Ladies Memorial Association of Richmond
in honor of Jewish soldiers who died for the Confederacy. The small
plate beneath it corrects the spelling of Henry Gintzberger's name.
(Photo contributed by Greg Lavalley, Findagrave.com.)*

forces which resulted in the tragedy a century ago.”⁶⁰ In 1963, the Lost Cause narrative was still dominant, especially in the South. But as Robert Cook notes, the Lost Cause was not hegemonic, and the notion that slavery was an absolute evil and the central reason for the conflict had begun to gain greater prominence.⁶¹ As a non-professional historian, Viener may not have been privy to the ins and outs of these debates, but his comments suggested the desire for more objective analysis of the past.

Following Viener’s introductory remarks, Bernard H. Strause, a representative of Hebrew Cemetery, spoke about the burial ground. Viener then introduced his “good friend” J. Ambler Johnston, describing his efforts to uncover the identity of Henry Gintzberger as a “labor of love.”

After Johnston spoke about Gintzberger, Viener introduced the mayor, Eleanor Sheppard, “a very attractive and gracious lady,” whom he praised for her “sensitivity” toward those who cared about Richmond history.⁶²

Perhaps due to Mayor Sheppard’s presence, the local Richmond press covered the event. Sheppard wrote to Viener later, thanking him for the invitation to speak:

The Centennial Committee tops itself each time; although no event can be said to be like another in interest and appeal. The one on Sunday had such human value. I shall never forget the story, so simply told, so heart-breaking, yet finally reaching happy fulfillment with the unveiling. The day was golden glory, and if there had been a poet in the assemblage he or she is now immortalizing Pvt. G. [Gintzberger]. Thank you for inviting me to share such an experience.⁶³

Her friendly tone with Viener and respect for the Jewish community suggests that Richmond Jews felt comfortable in the former capital of the Confederacy.

After the mayor spoke, Viener offered concluding remarks on behalf of the Centennial Committee:

Our role is not to glorify war but to renew the past for the benefit — we hope — of the present and the future. Our role has been to rescue those records and documents which perhaps otherwise would have been relegated to oblivion. Our role has further been to tell the story of how the average man or woman — the you or I — of 100 years ago was affected by the War. And thus, we gave pause in the procession of years to memorialize a lone Jewish youth who met his death on a field of battle near this City, far from home and family, . . . and through this ceremony remember all who fell. Many were the parents who gave their sons to the Confederate cause. Among them was Meyer Angle who had six sons in the army — and one of these young men was the first Richmonder to die for the Stars and Bars. Their brother-in-law was Maximilian Michelbacher, the rabbi and teacher of Congregation Beth Ahabah, then in its twentieth year. It was the Reverend Michelbacher who became the unofficial Jewish chaplain for the Confederate forces in and around Richmond. His prayer for the Confederate soldiers still lives on. It is our good fortune this afternoon to have his great-great-granddaughter, Kate Bendheim, with us to unveil the marker to Henry Gintzberger.⁶⁴

Viener’s rhetoric included the language of the social historian, showing concern for “the average man or woman.” He did what the Passover story does: invited modern-day Jews to imagine themselves in a historical era.

However, instead of placing themselves during the exodus from Egypt, at the base of Mount Sinai, or entering the Promised Land, he asked his audience to imagine themselves as Jews fighting for the Confederacy, or as the parents of those who fought. With the statement that Michelbacher's "prayer for the Confederate soldiers still lives on," Viener placed himself and other southern Jews in the Confederate narrative and asserted Richmond Jewry's sense of feeling at home.

After Viener's remarks and Bendheim's unveiling of the marker with the additional plaque, Rabbi Goldberg led a concluding prayer. Born in St. Louis and raised in Quincy, Illinois, Goldberg received his ordination at Hebrew Union College, earned a B.A. from the University of Cincinnati, and did graduate work at the University of Chicago, Harvard, and Oxford. His first rabbinical appointment was in Charleston, West Virginia, in 1926. He came to Beth Ahabah in 1945, replacing the venerable Rabbi Edward Calisch, and remained at the pulpit until his retirement in 1971. Goldberg, like his predecessor, was active in interfaith efforts. In his first year, he started an ecumenical Thanksgiving service for Beth Ahabah's neighborhood that included local Protestant and Catholic churches. Before retiring, he proclaimed, "Jews and Christians in Richmond are on a friendlier basis than in any other city in the country."⁶⁵ Well-respected in Richmond, he did not display any discomfort in presiding over a Confederate soldier's memorial.

The RCWCC had invited Jewish notables from outside of Richmond, including historian rabbis and Pennsylvanians Bertram W. Korn and Jacob Rader Marcus. Neither made it to Richmond for the ceremony, but Korn asked for copies of the speeches, and Marcus sent secretary Waitt his kind regrets, noting that Gintzberger's memorial "is a wonderful mark of tribute to those who died defending their conception of American life." The implication is that Marcus did not share the southern "conception of American life" based on slave labor but was able to respect those who did. This mutual respect among white northerners and southerners, Jews and gentiles, was a hallmark of the Lost Cause, which served as a tool for reconciliation between North and South.⁶⁶

Waitt contributed the introduction for the special issue of the *Journal of the Southern Jewish Historical Society* in 1963 that covered the ceremony at Hebrew Cemetery and contained an article by J. Amber Johnston about

Gintzberger. Waitt's page-length essay was mostly about the war in general, though he noted that American Jews could "draw inspiring sustenance for the leadership, on both sides, that was Jewish." He celebrated "the 7,000 Jews who donned the Gray" including "the Seligmans" and "the Benjamins" and the "countless other contributions made by your people in this challenging test of democracy."⁶⁷

Clearly embracing a Lost Cause narrative, Waitt, although not Jewish, advanced a particularly Jewish strain of the Lost Cause in claiming that seven thousand Jews fought for the Confederacy. Modern Civil War historian Robert Rosen estimates that about two thousand Jews served as

Confederate soldiers. This number was known to the public by 1963: in a December 1959 article in the *Southern Israelite*, Robert Shostek, an organizer of the JCWCC, referred to "some 2000" Jews who served with the Confederacy.⁶⁸ Waitt's error may not have been intentional, but it reflected a desire to communicate the magnitude of Jewish participation in the Confederate war effort, and thus a sense that Jews belonged in the South. This would not be the last time Richmonders exaggerated Jewish participation in the Confederate army.

The Final Pageant

The final act of Jewish participation in the Richmond Civil War Centennial came in June 1965. By this late date, the civil rights movement had already seen great successes with the passage of the Civil Rights Act in July 1964 and President Lyndon B. Johnson winning a landslide reelection on a civil rights platform that fall. Earlier in 1965, the march from Selma to Montgomery, including Martin Luther King, Jr., and Abraham Joshua Heschel among many others, acted as a catalyst to put the Voting Rights Act on its way to passage. June 1965 was also a late date by the standards of the Civil War Centennial. In some states the commemoration had fizzled, and others had concluded their festivities in conjunction with the anniversary of Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox, which had occurred on April 9, 1865.

In Virginia, the Centennial soldiered on. For four days from June 16 to 19, 1965, the Centennial Committee put on a pageant, which they called a "cavalcade." Originally intended for The Mosque, it was performed at the new outdoor theatre, Dogwood Dell, in Byrd Park. "Richmond Under Two Flags" told the story of the Confederate capital during the Civil War. Viener served as the general chair of the production. Rose Kaufman Banks, a prominent member of the Richmond theater community who worked for the city's Department of Recreation and Parks, and Stanley Markel, a successful businessman and amateur playwright, collaborated on the script. Banks directed "Richmond Under Two Flags," as she had directed "Under Freedom" for the Tercentenary Committee a decade prior. Both Banks and Markel were prominent members of the Richmond Jewish community.⁶⁹

"Richmond Under Two Flags" was mostly Lost Cause nostalgia, including a reconciliation scene with Lincoln at the end. The script barely

mentioned slavery and mostly ignored African Americans. Some of the organizers, however, did attempt to include members of Richmond's black population. As early as April 1963, in a meeting at J. Ambler Johnston's house to discuss the play, Banks suggested, "How about Negro servants at this time. Some were still serving in the good homes of the city, often without pay. Could be used in party scene. How about making this a Christmas party, using an old-fashioned tree?"⁷⁰

The fact that Banks, a Jewish woman, suggested a Christmas party is not surprising. She was married to a non-Jew, Leslie Banks, an accomplished set designer in Richmond. Although she used an appalling euphemism for slavery, "often without pay," her suggestion of African American participation in "Richmond Under Two Flags," even before the March on Washington, placed her among the more progressive people organizing the play. When fellow committee member Betty Bacon noted "there were six companies of negro troops from Richmond in the Confederate army—very well disciplined and drilled," however, it became clear than any depiction of African Americans in "Richmond Under Two Flags" would feed into Lost Cause propaganda, if it were to be included at all.⁷¹

The dynamics of the Centennial Committee shifted when Waitt was convicted of statutory rape of a fourteen-year-old girl in 1964 and subsequently was dismissed from the committee.⁷² Betty Bacon, his assistant, assumed his position, and Saul Viener took on a more prominent role as well. Part of this role involved outreach to the black community for the concluding pageant. B. A. Cephas, a politically moderate African American who had been elected to city council the previous year, suggested that Viener meet with Harry Williams, principal of Maggie Walker High School, then a segregated African American school in Richmond.

Viener, along with Rose Kaufman Banks, met twice with Williams to discuss black representation in the pageant. They wanted African American students to be involved, and the second meeting included Ira Styles, English teacher at Maggie Walker, and Joseph Rodman Ransome, principal of Randolph Junior High and knowledgeable in African American history. They agreed that Styles, along with Harry Savage, chair of the music department at Armstrong High School and director of the Monroe Chorus, would "work with the casting committee on Negro participation."⁷³

In a letter to Williams, Banks called this committee “informative and helpful” and affirmed the decisions made at these meetings. “We understand in inviting Negro participation in the RCWCC’s production of ‘Richmond Under Two Flags,’ we will use no Negro dialect, no ‘Mammy’ or field hand type of costumes, no comedy at the expense of the Negro race and no mention of slavery.” While the casting report called for 139 performers, including “37 negro,” Banks’s letter to Williams asked for thirty black participants, “twenty men and ten women.” African Americans would appear in six of fourteen scenes, including the scene with Lincoln’s arrival in Richmond and the finale.⁷⁴

Whether African American performers in fact appeared in the play is another matter. As Brandon Butterworth notes, we only know the committee hoped they would participate, not whether they actually did.⁷⁵ Three days after writing to Williams, Banks sent a letter to Viener with disappointing news. Ira Kyles had called her, reporting that he and Harry Savage “could get no one for production” because the two African American high schools, Armstrong and Maggie Walker, were holding their graduation parties on dates that conflicted with the scheduled performances of “Richmond Under Two Flags.” Banks told Kyles that they “did not necessarily need high school students” and could use “adults from the community at large.” Kyles said he would discuss this with Savage and get back to her, but she had not yet heard from him.⁷⁶

This is the last instance where the matter is mentioned in the archives. The final program for “Richmond Under Two Flags” lists Ira Kyles and Harry Savage as members of the casting committee, as well as Harry Williams and Joseph [Rodman] Ransome as having served on the research committee.⁷⁷ It is unknown whether any advice Williams or Ransome might have given Banks made its way into the final script. The program did not list any African American characters with named or speaking roles. The nonspeaking cast included several categories, Young Ladies of Richmond, Women of Richmond, Young Men of Richmond, Children of Richmond, and Builders of Fortifications, although whether any of these performers were black cannot be determined.

That Viener and Banks, both Jews, reached out to the black community was likely no coincidence. Viener had a connection with the African American councilman Cephas, who suggested they talk to Harry Williams. Perhaps Viener and Banks were more sympathetic toward African

American involvement than non-Jewish members of the RCWCC and already had closer relations with the black community. Four decades later, Viener recalled: "There was a member of city council who was a prominent black citizen, and I went to him and told him what was going on. I felt there ought to be some sort of representation. He thought about it [and] said, 'Maybe we can get some young people involved from the high school.' It was a little effort to integrate."⁷⁸ Did they succeed? Available evidence provides no clear answer, but Viener's and Banks's efforts at outreach reflected greater sympathy for African Americans than most non-Jewish Richmonders felt at the time.

A similar sentiment came from *Thalhimers*, which sponsored the production, inscribing this message on the program: "*Thalhimers* salutes Richmond on the James for upholding the ideals of freedom and democracy since 100 years ago when this nation became an indivisible union united under one flag."⁷⁹ The message, reflecting William Thalhimers's increasingly progressive views, suggested that only after the Confederacy was defeated did Richmond begin to uphold ideals of freedom and democracy. The message ignored a century of segregation, lynching, and Jim Crow, but nonetheless reflected the changing times in June 1965.

In addition to Thalhimers' sponsorship, numerous Jews performed in the show, and the playwrights put Jews in the script. Two scenes involved Reverend Michelbacher, one of which was adapted from the 1954 Tercentenary and included the "Prayer for the Confederacy." The fictional Michelbacher claimed "there are more than 10,000 Jewish boys serving in the Confederate army." As mentioned earlier, by 1965 scholars knew that only about two thousand Jewish soldiers had served.⁸⁰ Markel and Banks either did not know or deliberately exaggerated the truth.

This exaggeration is important. In a pageant directed toward the general public, Jewish scriptwriters and organizers massively overemphasized Jewish participation in the Confederate cause. Michelbacher, a

Richmonder, is portrayed as a hero, bravely supporting his troops. He says to his wife, "you were born in Virginia, but this is my *adopted* country. I am proud of it, and proud of the religious, God-fearing men who lead it. I must do everything I can."⁸¹ The portrayals of Michelbacher as immigrant, as newcomer to Virginia, resonated with many Jewish Richmonders in 1954 and 1963, and, if not with them, with their parents.

This rhetoric affirmed: We Richmond Jews are southerners. We belong here. This history is our history. For Richmond Jews, pride in southern history was a path to more complete integration and acceptance. Jews in New York or Boston did not need to employ the Civil War to integrate, but for Richmond Jews the Lost Cause was a ticket of entry to full acceptance, before the civil rights movement allowed for that narrative to be challenged.

In Richmond today, as in most of the South, Jews have largely abandoned the Lost Cause. Like Jews across the United States, Jews in the South are more likely than gentiles to be urban and suburban, to have advanced degrees, and to have connections in the North. They are more likely to vote Democratic, now the party less associated with the Lost Cause. Most younger Jews in the South have left the Lost Cause behind. But these same Jews benefit from white privilege that was solidified by generations past through an embrace of the Lost Cause narrative.

One significant way Richmond Jews embraced the Lost Cause and reinforced the framework of whiteness was through performance of and attendance at the 1954 American Jewish Tercentenary and the Civil War Centennial from 1961 to 1965. Public performance of southern identity facilitated Jewish integration and acceptance. By loudly and proudly claiming that identity through Confederate commemoration, Richmond Jews could remain mostly silent on racial issues, although by 1965, occasionally nudging the community in a more progressive direction without jeopardizing their standing as white southerners.

NOTES

¹ Saul Viener to X (mass letter), December 28, 1956, section 2, folder 25, Saul Viener Papers, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond (hereafter Viener Papers).

² For example, see Arthur A. Goren, *The Politics and Public Culture of American Jews* (Bloomington, IN, 1999), 195–204; Judith Friedman Rosen, “In Search Of . . . Earlier American-Jewish Anniversary Celebrations: 1905 and 1954,” *American Jewish History*, 92 (December 2004): 481–97; Beth S. Wenger, *History Lessons: The Creation of American Jewish Heritage* (Princeton, 2010), 215–19.

³ For an example of an eastern European Jewish immigrant who became obsessed with the Civil War, see Tony Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War* (New York, 1998), 3–4.

⁴ Myron Berman, *Richmond's Jewry, 1796–1976: Shabbat in Shockoe* (Charlottesville, VA, 1979), 246. Also cited in part in Kathy Edwards, Esme Howard, and Toni Prawl, *Monument Avenue: History and Architecture* (Washington, DC, 1992), 94.

⁵ See Mark K. Bauman and Berkley Kalin, eds., *The Quiet Voices: Southern Rabbis and Black Civil Rights, 1880s to 1990s* (Tuscaloosa, 1997) and P. Allen Krause, *To Stand Aside or To Stand Alone: Southern Reform Rabbis and the Civil Rights Movement*, ed. Mark K. Bauman with Stephen Krause (Tuscaloosa, 2016). *Quiet Voices* includes “A Personal Memoir” by Myron Berman (pp. 311–22), who led Richmond’s Conservative Temple Beth-El after the commemorations from 1965 to 1993, and “The Year They Closed the Schools: The Norfolk Story” by Malcolm Stern (pp. 287–310), a Norfolk rabbi active in behalf of civil rights. *To Stand Aside* does not deal with Richmond but offers valuable insight on the activity of southern rabbis during the civil rights movement.

⁶ Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865–1920* (Athens, GA, 1980, rev. ed. 2009), ix–x.

⁷ Caroline E. Janney, “The Lost Cause,” *Encyclopedia Virginia*, Virginia Humanities Council, accessed December 20, 2019, https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/lost_cause_the. See also, Adam H. Domby, *The False Cause: Fraud, Fabrication, and White Supremacy in Confederate Memory* (Charlottesville, 2020), 4. The most important academic exponent of the Lost Cause narrative was William Archibald Dunning, a New Jersey native and professor at Columbia University. The “Dunning School” epitomized the Lost Cause sensibility. Richmond had its own academic progenitor of the Lost Cause. Douglas Southall Freeman, a Virginian born in 1886 and educated at Richmond College and Johns Hopkins University, wrote a four-volume biography glorifying Robert E. Lee that won the Pulitzer Prize in 1935.

⁸ David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA, 2001), 292, 299. See, especially, chapter 8, “The Lost Cause and Causes Not Lost,” 255–99.

⁹ Unknown author, “Draft of Call for Tercentenary Celebration,” June 30, 1953, box 1, folder 1, American Jewish Tercentenary Celebration Collection, Center for Jewish History, New York.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ For more discussion of the radical interpretation of the American Jewish Tercentenary, see Rosen, “In Search of,” 491–93; Wenger, *History Lessons*, 218–19; and Karla Goldman, “Along with All Other Americans’: Celebrating the 1954 American Jewish Tercentenary,” unpublished paper, 2020 (provided to me by the author).

¹⁴ Clive Webb, *Fight Against Fear: Southern Jews and Black Civil Rights* (Athens, GA, 2001), 14–15; Berman, *Richmond's Jewry*, 206; Herbert T. Ezekiel, "A Question Answered," *Jewish South*, September 15, 1893. For examples of Jewish embrace of the Lost Cause in Mobile, Alabama, see Arthur Remillard, *Southern Civil Religions: Imagining the Good Society in the Post-Reconstruction Era* (Athens, GA, 2011), 111, 122–24.

¹⁵ Lewis Isaac Held, Jr., *Held Family History*, vol. 2 (Richmond, 1993), 1–2.

¹⁶ Berman, *Richmond's Jewry*, 294–95.

¹⁷ Saul Viener, "Significance to the Jews of Richmond of the 300th Anniversary of the Jewish Settlement in the United States," October 11, 1953, section 2, folder 19, Viener Papers.

¹⁸ Quotes from documents promoting the exhibit, section 2, folder 19, Viener Papers.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ "Edith Lindeman Calisch, Critic and Lyricist, Dies," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, December 24, 1984.

²¹ Allan Creeger and Edith Lindeman Calisch, "Under Freedom," 1954, Beth Ahabah Museum and Archives, Richmond (hereafter BAMA). Thanks to Bonnie Eisenman for locating the script.

²² Creeger and Lindeman Calisch, "Under Freedom," 12.

²³ In 1841, Ashkenazic members of Beth Shalome broke away to form Beth Ahabah, which in 1875 embraced the Reform movement. In 1898, Beth Ahabah absorbed the remaining remnant of Beth Shalome.

²⁴ Maximilian J. Michelbacher, "Prayer for the Confederacy," 1861, quoted in Creeger and Lindeman Calisch, "Under Freedom," 13.

²⁵ Maximilian J. Michelbacher, "A Sermon Delivered on the Day of Prayer Recommended by the President of the C. S. of A., the 27th of March, 1863, at the German Hebrew Synagogue 'Bayth Ahabah,'" 15, Documenting the American South, accessed May 12, 2020, <https://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/michelbacher/michelba.html>.

²⁶ Alfred O. Hero, Jr., "Southern Jews," in *Jews in the South*, ed. Leonard Dinnerstein and Mary Dale Palsson (Baton Rouge, LA, 1973), 219.

²⁷ David Bernstein and Adele Bernstein, "Slow Revolution in Richmond, VA: A New Pattern in the Making," *Commentary* (December 1949), rptd. in Dinnerstein and Palsson, eds., *Jews in the South*, 252.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 253.

³⁰ Creeger and Lindeman Calisch, "Under Freedom," 16.

³¹ Information of Tercentenary Sabbath service, section 2, folder 19, Viener Papers.

³² For an extensive treatment of massive resistance in Virginia, see Matthew D. Lassiter and Andrew B. Lewis, eds., *The Moderates' Dilemma: Massive Resistance to School Desegregation in Virginia* (Charlottesville, 1998). For a more concise treatment, see Virginia Museum of History & Culture, Civil Rights Movement in Virginia, in particular the subsections "Massive Resistance," "Ongoing Resistance to Desegregation," "The Closing of Prince Edward County's Schools," "The Green Decision of 1968," and "School Busing," accessed February 27, 2020, <https://www.virginiahistory.org/collections-and-resources/virginia-history-explorer/civil-rights-movement-virginia>. For a thorough study of massive resistance across the

United States, see John Kyle Day, *The Southern Manifesto: Massive Resistance and the Fight to Preserve Segregation* (Jackson, MS, 2014).

³³ Webb, *Fight Against Fear*, 182–83, 191; Malcolm Stern, “The Year They Closed the Schools: The Norfolk Story,” in Bauman and Kalin, eds., *Quiet Voices*, 286–310; Malcolm Stern to Lindsey Almond, January 27, 1959, quoted in Bauman and Kalin, eds., *Quiet Voices*, 310. See also Melvin I. Urofsky, *Commonwealth and Community: The Jewish Experience in Virginia* (Richmond, 1997), 173.

³⁴ Leonard Dinnerstein, “Southern Jewry and the Desegregation Crisis, 1954–1970,” *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 62 (March 1973): 231; Seth Forman, *Blacks in the Jewish Mind: A Crisis of Liberalism* (New York, 1998), 35–36.

³⁵ Webb, *Fight Against Fear*, xii, and ch. 6, “Jewish Segregationists,” 114–46. The three Jewish segregationists Webb examines were from South Carolina, Alabama, and Georgia. See also Bauman and Kalin, eds., *Quiet Voices*.

³⁶ JTA, “Virginia Jews Discuss Coordination with National Organizations,” *Southern Israelite*, October 10, 1958.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Bertram W. Korn, “Rabbis in the South,” *Southern Israelite*, November 7, 1958, originally published in the *Jewish Exponent* (Philadelphia).

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ JTA, “Governor Almond Says Virginia Will not Tolerate any Anti-Jewish Violence,” *Southern Israelite*, November 7, 1958.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Carol Anderson, *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide* (New York, 2016), 3.

⁴³ Murray Friedman, “Virginia Jewry in the School Crisis: Anti-Semitism and Desegregation,” *Commentary* (January 1959), reprinted in Dinnerstein and Pallson, eds., *Jews in the South*, 343, 349.

⁴⁴ Murray Friedman, “One Episode in Southern Jewry’s Response to Desegregation: An Historical Memoir,” *American Jewish Archives* 33 (1981): 176, 177, reprinted in Maurianne Adams and John Bracey, eds., *Strangers and Neighbors: Relations Between Blacks & Jews in the United States* (Amherst, MA, 1999).

⁴⁵ Myron Berman, “A Personal Memoir: Myron Berman in Richmond,” in Bauman and Kalin, eds., *Quiet Voices*, 315; Berman, *Richmond’s Jewry*, 317. In the personal memoir, Berman footnotes his historical monograph, but without page reference. The monograph contains no reference at all for his statements on black-Jewish relations in Richmond.

⁴⁶ Berman, *Richmond’s Jewry*, 317.

⁴⁷ “Ga. J. W. V. Present Benjamin Portrait as Part of Tercentenary Rally,” *Southern Israelite*, September 10, 1954. See also “Atlanta Jewry to Launch Tercentenary with Rally on September 12,” *Southern Israelite*, September 3, 1954. The quotation “Confederate Heroes and Statesmen” is from Adolph Rosenberg, “Atlanta [Tercentenary] Opener Honors War [Record] of American Jewry,” *Southern Israelite*, September 17, 1954. Some words in the headline are hidden in the electronic image, so I extrapolated them.

⁴⁸ “Ga. J. W. V. Present Benjamin Portrait.”

⁴⁹ "Jewish War Veterans Open Atlanta Tercentenary with Gift of Benjamin's Portrait to the City's Cyclorama," *Southern Israelite*, August 27, 1954.

⁵⁰ Saul Lavisky, "Columbia Column: Passover Hospitality," *Southern Israelite*, April 15, 1955.

⁵¹ Adam Mendelsohn, "'A Struggle Which Ended so Beneficently': A Century of Jewish Historical Writing about the American Civil War," *American Jewish History* 92 (December 2004): 454.

⁵² Robert W. Waitt, Jr., to Claude Woodward, December 16, 1960, box 12, folder 9, Richmond Civil War Centennial Committee Records, State Records Center – Archives Annex, Library of Virginia, Richmond (hereafter RCWCCR).

⁵³ JTA, "U.S. Civil War Centennial Body Spreads Anti-Jewish Literature," *Southern Israelite*, July 10, 1959. An editorial in the same issue, "Rake the Trash Off the Top," called for Grant's resignation. The *Southern Israelite* featured several more articles on the controversy in 1959 and later published a summary of the scandal from the ADL Bulletin written by Herman Edelsberg, "The Strange Campaigns of General Grant III," *Southern Israelite*, June 9, 1961.

⁵⁴ See Jonathan D. Sarna, *When General Grant Expelled the Jews* (New York, 2012).

⁵⁵ Robert J. Cook, *Troubled Commemoration: The American Civil War Centennial, 1961–1965* (Baton Rouge, 2007), 64, 193, 201. Some discussion of the Civil War Centennial occurs in David W. Blight, *American Oracle: The Civil War in the Civil Rights Era* (Cambridge, MA, 2011). Neither Blight nor Cook focuses on Richmond, on Virginia, or on Jewish involvement in the centennial.

⁵⁶ Edith Lindeman Calisch, "Civil War Events Are Commemorated," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, January 20, 1961.

⁵⁷ Edith Lindeman Calisch to Robert Waitt, January 27, 1961, box 7, folder L, RCWCCR. Two letters from Waitt to Calisch, dated January 23 and February 7, 1961, are in the same folder.

⁵⁸ Robert B. Waitt, Jr., to Justin G. Turner, May 15, 1962, box 11, folder 5, RCWCCR.

⁵⁹ See Karin Kapsidelis, "1960 Sit-in Put Richmond on the Road to Change," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, February 14, 2010; Elizabeth Thalhimer Smartt, *Finding Thalhimers: One Woman's Obsessive Quest for the True Story of her Family and Their Beloved Department Store* (Richmond, 2010), 157–66. The Richmond 34 were convicted and fined twenty dollars each, but the Supreme Court overturned their convictions in 1963.

⁶⁰ Saul Viener, remarks at Henry Gintzberger memorial ceremony, October 20, 1963, type-script with annotation, box 18, folder 16, RCWCCR.

⁶¹ See Cook, *Troubled Commemoration*, ch. 5 "African Americans and the Civil War Centennial," 155–92.

⁶² Viener, remarks at Henry Gintzberger memorial ceremony.

⁶³ Eleanor Sheppard to Saul Viener, October 22, 1963, section 2, folder 27, Viener Papers.

⁶⁴ Viener, remarks at Henry Gintzberger memorial ceremony.

⁶⁵ "Dr. Goldburg Retires," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, October 6, 1971.

⁶⁶ Jacob Rader Marcus to Bob Waitt, October 15, 1963, box 8, folder 1, RCWCCR.

⁶⁷ Robert W. Waitt, Jr., "The American Civil War," *Journal of the Southern Jewish Historical Society* (November 1963): 5.

⁶⁸ Stanley Markel and Rose Kaufman Banks, "Richmond Under Two Flags: A Dramatic Presentation of the Stirring War Years in the Confederate Capital," June 16–18, 1965, 22, BAMA; Robert N. Rosen, *The Jewish Confederates* (Columbia, SC, 2000), 162; Robert Shostek, "Heroes in Blue and Gray," *Southern Israelite*, December 25, 1959. Thanks to Beth Ahabah archivist Bonnie Eisenman for locating the script. Rosen thinks it "possible" there were as many as three thousand Jewish soldiers in the Confederate forces, but two thousand "is a good estimate."

⁶⁹ Markel and Banks, "Richmond Under Two Flags." Banks conducted the research for the script, basing it largely on the work of C. Hobson Goddin, a member of the Centennial Committee. Markel crafted the narrative of the script and the dialogue.

⁷⁰ Rose Kaufman Banks, quoted in RCWCC Meeting Minutes, April 1, 1963, record by executive secretary Robert Waitt, box 1, folder 2, RCWCCR.

⁷¹ Banks and Betty Bacon, quoted in *Ibid.*

⁷² See numerous stories in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* about Robert Waitt's rape trial, 1964–1966.

⁷³ Emma Gray Trigg, "Report of Casting Committee," undated (probably May 1965), box 22, folder "Script—Banks," RCWCCR.

⁷⁴ Rose Kaufman Banks to Harry Williams, May 10, 1965, Saul Viener Papers, BAMA. The "Report on Casting" mentions "no negro dialect, no comedy at expense of the Negro, and no costuming in the 'Mammy' or field-hand style," but does not state "no mention of slavery."

⁷⁵ Brandon Butterworth, "Interpreting the War Anew: An Appraisal of Richmond's Civil War Centennial Commemoration," (master's thesis, Virginia Commonwealth University, 2012), 58–59.

⁷⁶ Rose Kaufman Banks to Saul Viener, May 13, 1965, box 2, folder 1, RCWCCR.

⁷⁷ Program for "Richmond Under Two Flags," undated (probably June 1965), box 22, folder 13, Script Banks, RCWCCR.

⁷⁸ Eric L. Goldstein, "Making History: An Interview with Saul Viener," *Southern Jewish History* 10 (2007): 77. This interview was conducted in 2006, a few months before Viener died.

⁷⁹ Program for "Richmond Under Two Flags."

⁸⁰ Markel and Banks, "Richmond Under Two Flags," 22.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 23.