

**SOUTHERN
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HISTORY**

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Journal of the Southern Jewish Historical Society

Mark K. Bauman, *Editor*

Rachel B. Heimovics, *Managing Editor*

Eric L. Goldstein, *Book Review Editor*

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From the Editor . . .

A year ago Rachel Heimovics inquired about doing something special to commemorate the 350th anniversary of Jewish settlement in America. Shortly thereafter, Saul Viener raised the same issue. After polling the editorial board, it was decided to feature historians who have had a major impact on the field. The choice of subjects was difficult. Eli Evans, for example, would be logically included. Yet these articles were designed to expose readers not only to the authors' records but especially to the ways in which their backgrounds influenced their careers and interpretations, an area that Evans has commented on extensively. Rather than ignoring individuals deserving recognition, this new Historian Profiles feature is designed so that others can be highlighted in future issues.

The articles by Harlan Greene and Dale Rosengarten on Sol Breibart, Clive Webb on Leonard Dinnerstein, and Deb Weiner on Steve Whitfield provide fascinating insights into the historian's craft, the minds of historians, and key issues that remain bones of contention. They describe both early and late influences, many of which appear totally serendipitous but also fortuitous for the individuals and, because of their significant contributions, for the profession. Each has pursued an unusual research trajectory. Breibart's tremendous productivity may set a record among secondary school educators. Besides southern Jewish history, Dinnerstein has written on subjects from the Holocaust to anti-semitism and politics, and Whitfield has done the same with works on totalitarianism, the lynching of Emmett Till, and American music and culture, among other subjects. These are truly Renaissance people.

Bryan Stone's work first appeared on these pages in volume 1 (1998) when he discussed Kinky Freedman. His study of Edgar Goldberg and the *Texas Jewish Herald* complements Rosalind

Benjet's piece on the Ku Klux Klan in Dallas, in volume 6 (2003), and especially Janice Rothschild Blumberg's on Rabbi Browne and the *Jewish South*, in volume 5 (2002).

In Stone's first article and this one, he concentrates on the issue of multiple identities, a subject dear to Whitfield's heart as well. In 1996 in a controversial brochure, I wrote, "All of these contentions [relating to southern Jewish folkways and a distinctive identity] are true to a greater or lesser extent, and should be recognized as variations. Nonetheless, they are superficial and are not sufficient evidence of a separate regional identity."¹ I wish I had not made the last phrase so sweeping. As many have correctly pointed out, if someone thinks of himself or herself as being different or having a different identity, shouldn't we recognize that perception? Yet in defense, the force of my statement was in no small part a reaction against what I perceived then, and continue now, to be an exaggerated emphasis on southern Jewish distinctiveness on the part of some historians to the neglect of vast areas of similarity for Jews in similar local environments elsewhere. Unfortunately, although my intention was to encourage greater complexity, the counterattack, with a few notable exceptions,² has not gone much beyond rejection of my position and re-statements supporting the regionalist approach. Here Stone effectively takes the discussion to the next level. He asks how and why identity can be used for different motives, how and why it changes in response to different situations over time, and how much significance identity should be given. What does it mean when Jews in Texas viewed themselves as both southern and western, but more importantly, as Texans and as Jews (a concept also with multiple and changing meanings and influence)?

Canter Brown, Jr., returns the reader to Florida, the location of this journal's first Notes and Documents feature in volume 4 (2001). Bertha Dzialynski's memoir raises questions about memory and perceptions, the changing roles of women, and the trials and tribulations of life along a mental and physical frontier. Dzialynski enjoyed an immigrant's dream but also experienced the ups and downs of her husband's business career.

Through the years a number of individuals have broached the subject of book reviews. I have always favored including them but recognized this as a labor intensive task requiring a willing and capable volunteer. At the 2003 SJHS board meeting in Memphis, Robert Rosen and others again raised the issue. Happily Eric L. Goldstein of Emory University expressed willingness to serve as book review editor. Four reviews in this volume provide the debut of this section under Eric's guidance.

Thanks to the editorial board, outside peer reviewers Cathy Kahn, Deborah Dash Moore, and Hollace Weiner, and the financial contributors, copyeditors, and others who make this journal possible.

Mark K. Bauman

¹ Mark K. Bauman, *The Southerner as American: Jewish Style* (Cincinnati, 1996), 19.

² See, for example, Leonard Rogoff, *Homelands: Southern Jewish Identity in Durham and Chapel Hill, North Carolina* (Tuscaloosa, 2001).

HISTORIAN PROFILE

In Distinguished Company:
A Profile of Solomon Breibart

by

Harlan Greene and Dale Rosengarten

It is well known that Charleston, South Carolina, has had a distinctive Jewish history and has contributed much to the evolution of American Judaism. Less well known are the individuals who have researched and written that history. The mantle of "Historian of Charleston Jewry" today rests squarely on the shoulders of Solomon Breibart, who continues a tradition of gifted lay scholarship that began before the Civil War. A brief examination of those who came before will help put Sol Breibart and his contributions into perspective.

Historians of Charleston Jewry

The first historian of note was Nathaniel Levin (1816–1899). Levin spent his days working as an import inspector and collections clerk in the customs house of Charleston. In his spare time he performed in amateur theatricals and wrote about the history of the city's first congregation, Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim (KKBE). As a member of KKBE, Levin was a consummate insider. According to Breibart, he "knew many of the old-timers and their immediate descendants" and was privy to early congregational records that survived the great Charleston fire of 1838 but are unknown today.¹ Levin's essay on "The Jewish Congregation of Charleston" ran in four parts between October 1843 and January 1844 in Isaac Leiser's new publication, *The Occident*. This was a period of extreme discord among Charleston's Jews. KKBE had split in two and the famous "Organ Case" was under way. Levin

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had seceded along with the traditionalists to form a new congregation, Shearit Israel. Alarmed by the woeful state of affairs, he began his discourse with the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E., progressed quickly to the founding of KKBE in 1749, and ended with a lament for “the present situation of our congregations,” which he described as “a disjointed tribe, rent asunder by fierce party strife, and arrayed in hostile position against each other.”² Levin’s history was reprinted with revisions and addenda in Charleston’s centennial *Year Book* of 1883.³

The next important historian of South Carolina Jewry was not only a member of KKBE, but its rabbi. A native of the German town of Eydkuhnen, Barnett Abraham Elzas (1867–1936) had trained for the “Jewish ministry” at Jews’ College, London, and studied secular subjects and Semitic languages at the University of London and the University of Toronto. During his tenure as KKBE’s rabbi (1894–1910), Elzas earned degrees in medicine and pharmacy from the Medical College of South Carolina, in Charleston, and an honorary doctorate of law from South Carolina College, in Columbia, all the while churning out monographs and histories on the Jewish settlers of his adopted home state.⁴ But before Elzas became undisputed master of the field with his 1905 publication, *The Jews of South Carolina*, he had to battle a competing scholar, Leon Huhner, a non-South Carolinian.⁵

In 1899, Huhner had delivered a lecture on South Carolina Jewry to the American Jewish Historical Society that reached circulation in its *Publications*, and he subsequently contributed an essay to *The Jewish Encyclopedia*. Reading the encyclopedia entry, Elzas found it “without parallel in the number of errors that it contains.” Not content simply to note the fact, he wrote to the Charleston newspapers about it. No fading violet himself, Huhner answered back. Elzas fired off a rebuttal and had the newspaper articles on both sides published in pamphlet form. “Who on earth but Mr. Huhner,” Elzas asked with biting sarcasm, “would ever dream of writing the history of the Jews of Charleston in New York?” He stopped just short of accusing Huhner of plagiarism, declaring, “he appropriated my silver and forgot to rub off the hallmark.”⁶ The war of words raged on for several months in 1903,

until Elzas claimed victory by publishing comments of South Carolina historians who sided with his views. He went on to produce numerous pamphlets on topics of Jewish interest, reprinting them from the newspapers where they first appeared (a tactic Breibart, too, would follow) before publishing his magnum opus.⁷

Elzas left Charleston in 1910, and, although he complained bitterly that South Carolinians failed to appreciate (or buy) his book,⁸ the volume remained the standard work in the field until 1950. From a modern perspective Elzas's approach to history seems Victorian and tending toward ancestor worship, yet even today the work is frequently consulted and considered a classic.⁹ The publication that came next did not supplant Elzas but amplified his work, bringing the story forward four decades. Focusing only on the city, *The Jews of Charleston* by Charles Reznikoff and Uriah K. Engleman was commissioned to celebrate KKBE's two hundredth anniversary. While the occasion conflated the founding of the congregation with the history of Charleston's Jews, this work was the first to take into account the city's Ashkenazic Orthodox community. (In a footnote, Elzas had dismissed the "Polish congregation" Brith Sholom as having "no history, communal or otherwise, worth recording."¹⁰) Elzas might have criticized the poet Reznikoff and the historian Engelman for being outsiders (both writers were from New York), but surely he would have approved of the assistance they received from KKBE's Rabbi Allan Tarshish and its president, T. J. Tobias (1906–1970), who would become the congregation's next historian and Breibart's immediate predecessor.¹¹

Descendant of a dozen first families of Charleston and great-great-great-great-grandson of KKBE's first president, Joseph Tobias (1684–1761), T. J. Tobias was an avid collector of genealogical material. He maintained a correspondence with two of America's great rabbi-historians, Jacob Rader Marcus and Malcolm H. Stern, and during the 1950s and 1960s published slim hardback volumes on Charleston's Hebrew Orphan Society and Hebrew Benevolent Society, numerous pamphlets and articles about KKBE and its Coming Street cemetery, and profiles of notable early Jewish settlers, such as Revolutionary War patriot Francis Salvador, Joseph

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Tobias, a “linguister” or interpreter, and “The Many-Sided Dr. [Jacob] De La Motta.”¹² T. J. Tobias also helped bring the American Jewish Historical Society to Charleston in 1964. To commemorate the occasion he assisted Helen McCormack, director of the Gibbes Art Gallery, in mounting a landmark exhibition on southern Jewish history and art. Tobias saw to the restoration of KKBE’s historic burial ground, setting the stage for Sol Breibart, who would become keeper of the Coming Street cemetery and would complete a number of research projects that Tobias had begun.

Writing at the same time as Breibart, College of Charleston professor James W. Hagy brought to Charleston’s Jewish history the full force of modern scholarship. For his 1993 work, *This Happy Land: The Jews of Colonial and Antebellum Charleston*, Hagy conducted an exhaustive search of primary materials. Approaching the subject as an outsider, he drew upon new sources, including five articles by Sol Breibart, employed quantitative analyses, and addressed new questions, examining, for example, the roles of Jewish women and the controversial issue of Jews and slavery. He constructed thirty-six tables that detailed the origins of Charleston’s Jews, their occupations, legal disputes, and allegiance to the traditionalist and reform factions of KKBE. Hailed by Malcolm Stern as “the definitive history of America’s largest colonial-federal-period Jewish community,” *This Happy Land* concludes just short of the Civil War. Hagy left Charleston a few years after the book’s publication, while Sol Breibart, with a master’s degree in history, long membership in KKBE, and a dedication to his chosen avocation, continued to mine the field.¹³

A Journey to Scholarship

Born in Charleston in 1914, Breibart did not “cross the dividing line” that brought him to Charleston Jewish history until 1976. Before then he taught high school, served on the boards of a variety of educational agencies, historical societies, and civic and religious groups, and raised a family.

Sol’s father, Sam Breibart, had been born in Russia in 1892 and had come to the United States about 1906 or 1907, not long

Sol Breibart at the Coming Street Cemetery, Charleston, October 2000

*(Photo by Bill Aron,
courtesy of the Jewish Heritage Collection,
College of Charleston Library)*

Beth Elohim acquired its first cemetery in 1764 when Isaac Da Costa conveyed to the congregation his family burial ground on Coming Street for 70 pounds, "for the use of Jews residing in Charles Town or elsewhere within the province of South Carolina." The oldest surviving Jewish cemetery in the South, it is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The burial ground contains over 500 graves, many unmarked. The oldest identifiable grave is that of Moses D. Cohen, first religious leader of Beth Elohim, who died in 1762.

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after his bar mitzvah. Sam lived in New York with his father, Beryl Breitbard, and his stepmother. His mother, Zlate Friedman, had died in Europe. As a young boy, Sol visited his father's family in a typical, crowded tenement on Cherry Street in New York's Lower East Side. Sam worked in this area as a tailor. On December 20, 1913, Sam married Ida Goldberg, who had been born in 1894. Both most likely came from the area near Minsk.

Ida's brother, Harry Goldberg, left New York for Charleston, where a growing Jewish population, the promise of economic opportunity, and his relatives, the Doobrows, awaited. Goldberg started a grocery store and, a short time later, his brother-in-law, Sam Breibart, and Ida, pregnant with their first child, joined him. The Breibarts were living with the Goldbergs on Alexander Street when Sol was born. He was delivered at home by Kivy Pearlstine, the only Jewish doctor in town, and was followed over the next seventeen years by four siblings, George (1917), Mildred (or Mickey) (1923), Sidney (1928), and Jack (1931).¹⁴ The Breibart children were raised in the midst of a large extended family. Like many immigrant families, *mishpocha* followed *mishpocha*, and for a time the Goldberg grandparents, Ida's sister and two brothers, and more than a dozen of their offspring lived in Charleston.¹⁵ One of Sol's cousins, Harry Goldberg's son, Ben, became an attorney and also studied and wrote about Charleston's Jewish history.

Growing up in the city, young Sol often crossed Wragg Mall where he would be greeted by KKBE's rabbi, Dr. Jacob Raisen, who lived on the north side of the mall in Aiken's Row in a house that his wife's family had inhabited for six generations.¹⁶ Recent arrivals, the Goldbergs and Breibarts worshipped in the newest of Charleston's three congregations, Beth Israel, also known as the "Little Shul" or "Kaluszyner Shul," after the hometown of a core group of Polish immigrants. Beth Israel was founded in 1911 by members of Brith Sholom who broke away from the older Orthodox synagogue, which they did not consider Orthodox enough. The more established congregants of Brith Sholom, for their part, looked down on the greenhorns as social inferiors.¹⁷

Sol's Bar Mitzvah, Beth Israel, Charleston, South Carolina, 1927
(*Gift of Solomon Breibart, Jewish Heritage Collection,*
College of Charleston Library)

Sol's family were members in good standing of Beth Israel and kept strictly kosher at home. However, Ida opened the grocery store on Maple and Meeting streets on the Sabbath and on lesser Jewish holidays, while Sam went to shul. On the High Holidays the whole family walked the mile-and-a-half or two miles to Beth Israel. Sol remembers his new shoes raising blisters on his feet. Catering to a largely African American clientele, the grocery carried such *treyf* items as pickled pigs feet.¹⁸

In 1916, the Breibarts settled into a recently developed neighborhood near a new Standard Oil refinery. The residents, black and white, tended to be working class, a world apart from inhabitants of the lower peninsula, where most of KKBE's membership lived, and distant even from the immigrant households of Upper King Street. Consequently, most of Sol's childhood friends were not Jewish and, although he became a bar mitzvah at Beth Israel, he was not thoroughly grounded in Hebrew, Jewish customs, rituals, or Torah. He attended James Simons Elementary School, the High School of Charleston, and the College of Charleston. While in college, he played saxophone in a band to make extra money.

In his sophomore year Sol joined an organization that he now recalls changed his life. "That was where my Jewish education began," Breibart noted in a recent interview. Rather than pledge a fraternity on campus, he chose to join the local AZA chapter, many of whose members were not in school. AZA had a "Five-fold and Full Program," which emphasized personal improvement and community involvement. Working with AZA strengthened Sol's ties to Judaism and reinforced his commitment to social service. "We did charitable work. We did athletics. . . . That's how I got involved in Jewish organizations. . . . Rabbis would come and teach . . . and men in the community would come and talk to us and things of that kind." Breibart traveled to national AZA conventions and met such leaders as Sam Beber, regarded as the founder of the organization, and Julius Bisno, its executive secretary. At age twenty-one, Breibart became AZA's southeastern field secretary, covering the newly organized district from Washington, D.C., to Florida. As secretary he helped launch

several chapters and continued to expand his range of acquaintances across the South.¹⁹

After finishing college, Breibart knew he wanted to teach. His brother George stayed in the family business while Sol pursued a graduate degree in history at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He wrote his master's thesis on the South Carolina constitution of 1868. Analyzing the membership of the convention which had an African American majority, Breibart concluded that the constitution was the most democratic the state had ever had.²⁰ At the College of Charleston, historian J. Harold Easterby impressed Breibart with the value of writing monographs on local organizations and of conducting primary research. (Easterby wrote about the college itself and the St. Andrews Society.) At the University of North Carolina, Fletcher Green, a distinguished historian, deepened Breibart's interest in southern history and stressed the importance of accuracy and clear expression.

"When I left Charleston to go to North Carolina, I was very provincial. I mean, in all meanings of the word," Sol recalls. He had spent his youth in the "narrow environment" of South Carolina. The College of Charleston "was . . . no great liberal institution. When I went to North Carolina, I had an eye-opener, a real eye-opener. . . . I knew I had latent liberal tendencies because . . . I didn't mind shaking hands with a black man. But when I went up there, I really blossomed forth liberally. My ideas changed a great deal, almost radically."

Vocation and Avocation

In 1938, Breibart returned to Charleston with a master's degree and a teaching certificate. He soon landed a job at the High School of Charleston, where he worked for eighteen years as a social studies teacher, guidance counselor, and student council advisor. Toward the end of his tenure he published an essay in the bulletin of the Charleston County Teachers Association titled "Why do I teach?" "As a breadwinner in this time of inflationary trends," Breibart wrote, "I've asked myself this question." Teaching was the best way he knew to help his "fellowman," to influence boys and girls to become good citizens and "reach for

the stars." No matter how difficult it was "to provide . . . those things that would give my family a full life," Breibart remained committed to the profession. "I have faith in education. . . . I am in large measure, for better or for worse, one of its products."²¹

"Yes," Breibart, confessed, "I am altruistic." But he also needed to support his family. At an AZA function Sol met Sara Bolgla, a young woman who was born in Poland in 1920 and raised in Augusta, Georgia. They were married on October 8, 1942. Their children, Carol and Mark, were born in 1947 and 1950, respectively. In 1956, Breibart moved to James Simons Elementary as assistant principal. A year later he returned to teaching at Rivers High School. There, in the 1960s, he counted among his students the future attorney and historian Robert Rosen, who credits Breibart with inspiring his own passion for history.²² At Rivers Breibart taught social studies, worked as a guidance counselor and student council advisor, and served seven years as department head and seven as assistant principal. He augmented his income by lecturing in secondary education at the College of Charleston and by directing youth and camp activities at the Jewish Community Center.

As a teacher of American history, he did not need to look far to find lessons in civics and civil rights. Rivers was the first high school in Charleston County to be racially integrated. In 1963, in response to a court injunction, two African American students enrolled in the high school, while nine other youngsters integrated four elementary schools.²³ Breibart remembers being sought out for advice by Millicent Brown and Jackie Ford, the young women who broke the color barrier at Rivers that year. "My inclination was to do what I could to help them." He is still angry about the way school integration was handled. It would have succeeded, Breibart believes, if the courts had not enforced school attendance zones. With demographic shifts, suddenly whole schools went from white to black, overwhelming the process.

"What I'm saying here," Breibart insists, "is an indictment of the white community. The school system in Charleston would never have degraded as much as it did had there not been white flight. . . . That killed it; that killed the school system for a long

*Sol and Sara Bolgla Breibart at Union Station, corner of
Columbus and East Bay streets in Charleston, on their way to
Washington, D.C., for their honeymoon, October 1942
(Gift of Solomon Breibart. Jewish Heritage Collection,
College of Charleston Library)*

time." In 1976, he decided to take early retirement. "I walked out of Rivers High School, [out] the front door on the last day of June when I turned my records in . . . and I never looked back. Not one minute of regret."

The Scholar Activist

Breibart looked about for something else to do. Over the years he had held various offices including president of the Central Council of Charleston Teachers and served on the executive board of the Charleston County Education Association, and he had performed considerable volunteer work through AZA, B'nai Brith, and the Jewish Community Center. He and Sara were now affiliated with the Reform temple, KKBE. Earlier in their married life they had attended services there as well as at both Orthodox synagogues. They joined KKBE in 1943, Breibart explains, because "they were the first to ask me." The next week, Brith Sholom tried to recruit them, but the Breibarts had already become members of Rabbi Raisin's congregation. True to form, Sol soon was elected to the board of trustees and served for eleven years as its secretary. In fact, he quips, KKBE was the only organization in which he was active that did not elect him president. He ran unsuccessfully for the post one time, during the period when his friend Rabbi Burton Padoll was under fire, but Breibart claims not to regret his defeat. It was a job he really did not want, and, besides, he preferred to serve the congregation in other capacities.

After retirement, Breibart considered starting a new job. He vowed to say no to everyone who asked for help except for the synagogue and was weighing his options when Rabbi Padoll, then living in New York, suggested a project. "'You know,'" Sol recalls Padoll saying, "'Thomas Tobias was interested in writing something about Penina Moïse. . . . I think someone can write a biography . . . that the Jewish Publication Society might publish.' So, I said, 'that bears looking into.'"²⁴

Penina Moïse was KKBE's second Sunday school superintendent and a prolific writer of hymns for the congregation. She may have been the first American Jewish woman to publish a book of poems. "The first thing I had to do," Breibart realized, was to

“find Thomas Tobias’s materials.” When Tobias died in 1970, his widow, Rowena, boxed up his research and stored his papers above Jack Patla’s antiques store on King Street in downtown Charleston. “I went up there very frequently,” Breibart recounts, “and I began to make a catalog of all the things that were in those folders. So I really had, in effect, a listing of all T. J. Tobias’s writings.” Breibart found the material Tobias had gathered on Penina Moïse and another idea came to him as well. “I had the vision in my mind [that] one of these days . . . as soon as possible, we should get all that material from Thomas’s collection over to the synagogue.”

In 1976, America was celebrating its bicentennial and public interest in history was at an all-time high. In that year, at a meeting in Richmond, Virginia, a long inactive Southern Jewish Historical Society was reorganized. When word got out that Breibart was working on Penina Moïse, he was asked whether he could have a paper ready for the first conference following the society’s creation, to be held in Raleigh, North Carolina, the following year.

Breibart began the research in earnest. Determined to find every poem Moïse had written, he tracked down descendants of the family who had a few manuscript verses. He found a first edition of *Fancy’s Sketch Book* at Duke University and a memorial volume of Moïse’s poetry with a short biographical sketch published in 1911 by the Charleston Section of the National Council of Jewish Women.²⁵ Realizing that most of Moïse’s work had first appeared in Charleston newspapers, Breibart began the arduous task of scrolling through seemingly endless microfilms and perusing fragile pages of nineteenth-century newsprint to discover previously uncollected poems. He eventually amassed an inventory of her output, noting on index cards which pieces appeared where and when.

Breibart did present a paper on Moïse at the SJHS conference, taking no offense at being called an amateur historian. (His cousin Ben Goldberg was outraged for him, but Sol says the description never bothered him.) In 1984, the essay was published in the SJHS collection *Jews of the South*.²⁶ This set a pattern: he would develop a

subject for oral presentation, rework it over the years, and then commit it to print. Beginning with this first conference, Breibart also committed himself to the Southern Jewish Historical Society, serving on the board of directors from 1976 to 1990, as president in 1983 and 1984, and as editor of the newsletter from 1981 to 1990.

While Breibart was working on *Moïse*, he occasionally volunteered as a docent at KKBE, giving tours of the historic sanctuary. Prompted by questions he could not answer, he went back to surviving congregational records and to the Charleston Library Society, searching newspapers for data on how the temple changed over the years, especially after the 1886 earthquake. He even got on hands and knees, looking under pews, where patches revealed the footings of columns that once supported a balcony. His research led to a publication on the buildings where Jews had worshipped in Charleston. In the process he found evidence of a hitherto unknown congregational split between Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jews, a late eighteenth-century schism that Elzas and those who followed him had missed entirely. Breibart published his discovery in the quarterly of the American Jewish Historical Society and later reprinted it as a pamphlet, providing a new look at the city's early Jewish community, all from laborious digging in early newspapers and probate documents.²⁷

Breibart makes no great claims for his breakthrough. He is content to nail down the facts for others to analyze and interpret. Intent on getting the story right, he would correct not only others but himself as well. When an offprint of his "Synagogues of KKBE" was exhausted, and the congregation's sisterhood wanted to republish it,²⁸ Breibart went back to the drawing board and revised the text. He confirmed his suspicion that Cyrus Warner, credited as architect of the National Historic Landmark on Hasell Street, was not the building's designer but rather a draftsman who had developed work plans for contractor David Lopez. Agreeing with architectural historian Gene Waddell, Breibart acknowledged that Tappan & Noble of New York were the true architects.²⁹ The unassuming historian cautions, while paraphrasing Jacob Rader Marcus, "there is never a final word on something."

Sol Breibart with his homeroom class at Charleston High School, 1940
(Photo courtesy of Solomon Breibart)

For twenty-five years Breibart has been investigating Charleston Jewish history, and with careful, patient sleuthing, he has unraveled many mysteries. In the 1980s he was a regular contributor to KKBE's bulletin, the Jewish Community Center's *Center Talk*, and the newsletter of the Southern Jewish Historical Society, where his interests ventured beyond state borders into Georgia and Florida.

Meanwhile, in reviewing Elzas's publications on Jewish cemeteries, Breibart found puzzling information that led him to conclude there was another unknown congregation in the city, Shari Emouna, also spelled Shaare Amouna, literally, Gates of Faith, but known locally as Perfect Faith. Its members had seceded from Brith Sholom circa 1886. Breibart unveiled this finding in the *Charleston Jewish Journal*, where between 1993 and 1996 he published a dozen articles on diverse subjects, including a five-part series, "Women Who Made a Difference." From his work on Penina Moïse to his 1984 article, "The Status of Women in KKBE to 1920," to these profiles of notable women, Breibart paid serious attention to women's history.

Breibart did not neglect the Orthodox community. For example, he profiled Louis M. Shimel, first president of Charleston's JCC and the first Jewish U.S. Assistant District Attorney in South Carolina, appointed by President Warren Harding in 1922. Breibart's writing is characterized by precise wording, clear references, and silent emendations that draw attention to the topic, never to himself. He revised Jeffrey Kaplan's history of Brith Sholom Beth Israel, carefully crediting the original author.

To compile a list of Charleston Jewish servicemen in World War II, he turned to the community for additional names and published the new information in subsequent issues. Once an elderly Jewish Charlestonian claimed there were no sites of Jewish interest in the city. To prove him wrong, Breibart undertook years of research on sites tied to specific Jewish people, societies, and events. The resulting list of Jewish historical sites and his one-page "Chronology of Jewish Congregations," first published in the *Charleston Jewish Journal*, have guided thousands of tourists who have visited Charleston and KKBE over the years.

Appalled that local synagogues kept few, if any, records of the vital statistics of their members, and anxious to update research on Charleston's Jewish cemeteries begun by Elzas, Tobias, and others, Breibart scoured old newspapers, genealogical publications, and county death records. He created an index card for each burial, noting, to the extent possible, name, date and place of birth, date and place of death, where buried, names of parents, and source of information. He also accumulated twenty-five years of obituaries, providing an invaluable resource for family research.

Breibart has written about nineteenth- and twentieth-century Charleston Jews in law enforcement, showing here and in other pieces his long view of history. He has focused on famous historical figures, writing biographical sketches of Revolutionary War hero Francis Salvador, David Lopez, builder of KKBE's second synagogue, and KKBE's Rev. Gustavus Posnanski, "First American Jewish Reform Minister." Often what started out as talks or as contributions to the temple bulletin were later expanded and published for wider distribution. Breibart also has served

as a compiler and bibliographer, producing a long list of articles on southern Jewish life that appeared in the American Jewish Historical Society and the American Jewish Archives journals through 1986. A movement to collect Breibart's work in a single volume is now under way, spearheaded by Sol's former student Robert Rosen and historian and journalist Jack Bass.

Asked how he decided what topic to pursue, Breibart responded, "I had no set goals. Every now and again, I'd get something to pique my curiosity. . . . This was purely at random." Once settled on an idea, "I began focusing on that—first of all, trying to think of all the sources, really the usual procedure. Where am I going to get the information on this? [I'd] follow the trail, gather as much information as I could, and when I felt that I had sort of exhausted [the topic] and couldn't find anything else to add to it, I would start to write. And I would write and I would write and rewrite and rewrite."

Breibart took every opportunity to conserve and collect historical materials, addressing various groups around town on Jewish topics and always encouraging individuals and community organizations to find their papers and save them. The primary materials would provide clues for later historians to add to the story. At the Jewish Community Center, he started an archives committee to solicit and collect materials, record oral history interviews, and create inventories of existing collections. He arranged for the transfer of three major manuscript archives to the College of Charleston Library and promised to donate his own voluminous research papers. Indeed, Sol Breibart might be called the godfather of the college's Jewish Heritage Collection, but titles are something he cares little about. Dubbed "Historian of Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim," he plays down the honor: "It's just something that they threw at me, and I accepted it." Titles aside, Breibart's contribution to the archival record of South Carolina's Jews is monumental. From the moment he first dove into T. J. Tobias's materials, Breibart has applied himself to two complementary tasks: researching and writing southern Jewish history, and conserving the archives that facilitate future research and writing. Anxious to assure the safety and accessibility of the

Tobias papers, Breibart prompted their removal from Patla's antique shop to KKBE's "archives room," set up under the auspices of Rabbi William A. Rosenthal, an avid print collector and art historian.³⁰ "Archives room" is somewhat of a misnomer, for the facility consisted of a small gallery lined with display cabinets downstairs, and an over-heated storage space upstairs. When scholars wanted access, it was Breibart who ferreted out the document they sought. When visitors wanted to see KKBE's historic Coming Street cemetery, Breibart brought the key and unlocked the gate.

Recognizing what sound archival principles mean to both the records and the historians, he began looking around for a suitable home for the archives of the three organizations to which he was most devoted: KKBE, the Jewish Community Center, and the Southern Jewish Historical Society. As an old, established, state-supported institution, open at no cost to researchers and students, the College of Charleston Library seemed a logical choice. First he encouraged SJHS to donate its archives to the college; then began the slow, painstaking process of transferring KKBE's papers. With this acquisition, clearly one of the most important collections of Jewish historical material in the South, it was a short step for the library to make its Jewish archives a major, permanent collection.

As project archivist and curator of the Jewish Heritage Collection, the authors of this essay owe a tremendous debt to Sol. In a scant decade, the acorn he planted has grown into a mighty oak. The collection has been processed and made accessible in record time, thanks to a Preservation and Access grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. With the remainder of the Tobias papers finally transferred to the college and into the hands of professional archivists, the rich treasure trove Breibart unearthed above Jack Patla's shop is now available to the public.

As this article goes to press, JHC staff members are publishing two essays based on papers Breibart brought into the library's Special Collections department: the annual reports of Moses Henry Nathans, chief of Charleston's fire department during the destructive 1861 blaze; and the diary of Joseph Lyons, a young man who witnessed the emergence of Reform Judaism in KKBE,

but did not live to see its establishment.³¹ The college library also has undertaken publication of a history of Brith Sholom Beth Israel that draws heavily on the recent acquisition of that congregation's archives.³² None of this would have been possible without the foresight and devotion of Sol Breibart.

Sol brushes aside praise for his accomplishments. Speaking of the Jewish Heritage Collection, surely one of his greatest legacies, he declares, "What's there . . . is there and I'm happy that it's there. Whether I get a credit for it or not, I don't care." He is not, he says, an emotional person. Is it a passion for history that drives him? "I don't think it's quite that strong," he demurs. "But it's in that neighborhood."

As for his own writing, he believes that his work "in connection with the history of the synagogue [KKBE] is probably the most important thing I've done." The booklet commemorating KKBE's 250th anniversary, which the congregation published in 1999, he regards as "an overview," "a skeleton" waiting "for somebody to put the flesh on the bones." The text to which he refers is a model of scholarship, clear, accessible, accurate, and beautifully illustrated, yet unsigned. That the publication does not bear Breibart's name is characteristic. "I really am not a professional historian," Breibart states. "Even though I have a degree in history, history is my avocation. I have never charged anybody for any services." Yet, as one cannot make bricks without straw, one cannot reconstruct history without making use of the building blocks assembled in archives and in print. With the patience and skill of a master artisan, Breibart has created and collected the blocks. Not content with resting on his laurels, he continues his research and writing as he approaches his ninetieth birthday. Sol Breibart has joined the distinguished company of Charleston's Jewish historians, despite his protestations to the contrary.

Appendix

Solomon Breibart: A Select Bibliography

Books and Pamphlets

- Articles on the Southern Jewish Experience in the Journals of the American Jewish Historical Society and the American Jewish Archives.* Valdosta, GA: Southern Jewish Historical Society, 1986.
- Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim Synagogue, 250th Anniversary: 1749–1999.* Charleston, Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim, 1999.
- The Rev. Mr. Gustavus Poznanski: First American Jewish Reform Minister.* Charleston: Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim, 1979.
- Some Places in Charleston, S.C. of Jewish Interest.* Rev. ed. Charleston: Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim, 2001. Original edition: 1995.
- Tombstones That Tell Stories: The Historic Coming Street Cemetery of Congregation Beth Elohim, Charleston, S.C.* Rev. ed. Charleston: Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim, 2000. Original edition by Thomas J. Tobias.

Book Chapters

- “The Inspiring Story of the Historic and Beloved Temple Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim.” In *Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim Synagogue Sesquicentennial Dedication (1841–1991), 150th Anniversary Commemorative Program, March 22–23, 1991.* Charleston: Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim, 1991.
- “An Overview – The First Fifty Years.” In *Golden Reflections: Looking Forward through the Past.* Fiftieth anniversary booklet, the Charleston Jewish Community Center, 1945–1995. Charleston: 1995.
- “Penina Moise, Southern Jewish Poetess.” In *Jews of the South: Selected Essays from the Southern Jewish Historical Society,* edited by Samuel Proctor and Louis Schmier with Malcolm Stern. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984.

Articles

- "Beth Elohim and the Earthquake." *Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim Bulletin* (October 1986): 4-5.
- "Beth Elohim's Second Organ." *Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim Bulletin* (January 1986): 3.
- "Isaac Harby of Charleston, 1788-1828." Book review. *SJHS Newsletter* (March 1995): 7-8.
- "BSBI Celebrates 140th Anniversary." Part 1 and part 2. *Charleston Jewish Journal* (April 1995): 17; (May 1995): 16.
- "Charleston Jewish Service Men in World War II." Part 1 and part 2. *Charleston Jewish Journal* (June 1995): 15; (August 1995): 16.
- "Charleston Jews and the Earthquake of 1886." *Charleston Jewish Journal* (March 1994): 18.
- "Chronology of the Jewish Congregations of Charleston, S.C." *Charleston Jewish Journal* (December 1993): 18.
- "The Community Reflector." *Charleston Jewish Journal* (September-October 1993): 32.
- "Correcting the Chronology of the Presidents of K. K. Beth Elohim." *Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim Bulletin* (June 1984): 3.
- "A Courageous Stand." *Charleston Jewish Journal* (November 1994): 18.
- "David Lopez, Builder." *Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim Bulletin* (March 1991): 8-9.
- "Early Jews of Augusta, Ga." *SJHS Newsletter* (October 1983): 3-4.
- "Forerunners of the Charleston Jewish Community Center," Parts 1 through 4. *Center Talk, Publication of the Jewish Community Center of Charleston* (January 15, 1980): 16; (April 15, 1980): 19; (May 15, 1980): 11, 23; and (June 15, 1980): 8.
- "Francis Salvador, Revolutionary War Martyr." *Charleston Jewish Journal* (July 1996): 18.
- "The Jewish Cemeteries of Charleston." *Charleston Jewish Journal* (January 1994): 18.
- "The Jewish Cemeteries of Charleston." *Carologue: A Publication of the South Carolina Historical Society* 9 (summer 1993): 8-9, 14-16.

- "KKBE: The Transition from Orthodox to Reform." *Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina* newsletter (fall 1999): 3-6.
- "Levy not a Yulee: Moses Elias Levy." *SJHS Newsletter* (October 1986): 3-4.
- "A Long-Unknown Congregation." *Charleston Jewish Journal* (February 1994): 18.
- "Louis M. Shimel, First JCC President." *Charleston Jewish Journal* (February 1995): 18.
- "Some Charleston Jews in Law Enforcement." *Charleston Jewish Journal* (April 1996): 22.
- "The Status of Women in KKBE to 1920." *Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim Bulletin* (April 1984): 3-4.
- "The Synagogues of Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim, Charleston." *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 80 (July 1979): 215-235. Revised as *The Synagogues of Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim*. Charleston: Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim, 1999.
- "This Synagogue Is Our Temple." Parts 1 through 4. *Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim Bulletin* (March 1980): 3; (April 1980): 3; (May 1980): 3; (June 1980): 4-5.
- "A Timeline of Charleston's Jewish History," on the Charleston Jewish Federation website, http://www.jewishcharleston.org/content_display.html?ArticleID=81048 (accessed July 17, 2004.)
- "Two Jewish Congregations in Charleston, S.C., before 1791: A New Conclusion." *American Jewish History* 69 (March 1980): 360-363.
- "Women Who Made a Difference," Parts 1 through 5. *Charleston Jewish Journal* (April 1994): 28; (June 1994): 22; (July 1994): 21-22; (October 1994): 18.

NOTES

¹ Solomon Breibart, "Correcting the Chronology of the Presidents of K. K. Beth Elohim," *Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim Bulletin* (June 1984): 3. For a list of Breibart's publications, see the Appendix on pages 20–22.

² N[athaniel]. L[evin]., "The Jewish Congregation of Charleston," *The Occident and American Jewish Advocate* 1 (October 1843–January 1844): 7–10. Available at <http://www.jewish-history.com/Occident/> [accessed May 7, 2004].

³ Nathaniel Levin, "Historic Sketch of the Congregation 'Beth Elohim' of Charleston, S.C., established 1750," prepared by Levin "at the request of the Mayor," and published in *Year Book: 1883: City of Charleston, So Ca.* (Charleston, n.d.), 301–316. On the errata pages (579–580), Levin notes, "The writer of the article on The Congregation 'Beth Elohim,' of Charleston, S.C., has had since its publication, and consequently too late for correction in the body of the article, some errors pointed out to him by a friend, which he desires to correct." Seven points are listed.

⁴ "Barnett Abraham Elzas" in *Men of Mark in South Carolina II*, ed. J. C. Hemphill (Washington, DC, 1908), 128.

⁵ Leon Huhner, a Berlin-born New York City lawyer, wrote and lectured on subjects of American Jewish history. John Simons, ed., *Who's Who in American Jewry: A Biographical Dictionary of Living Jews in the United States and Canada III 1938–1939* (New York, 1938), s. v. "Leon Huhner." Huhner was a curator of the American Jewish Historical Society for half a century. Jeffrey Gurock calls Huhner the "most prolific contributor" to the journal during this era. Jeffrey S. Gurock, "From *Publications* to *American Jewish History*: The Journal of the American Jewish Historical Society and the Writing of American Jewish History," *American Jewish History* 81 (winter 1993–1994): 173.

⁶ Elzas published his debate with Huhner in *The Jews of Charleston: A Review of the Article 'Charleston' in Vol. 3, of the Jewish Encyclopedia* (Charleston, n.d.), reprinted from the *Charleston News and Courier*, December 1902, (first quotation); *Huhner vs. Elzas: The New Yorker Objects to Dr. Elzas's Criticism* (Charleston, n.d.), 11 (second and third quotations); and *Elzas vs. Huhner: A Final Word in the Jewish Encyclopedia Controversy* (Charleston, n.d.). Photocopies of these pamphlets are available in the South Carolina Room of the Charleston County Public Library. See also Leon Huhner, "The Jews of South Carolina from the Earliest Settlement to the End of the American Revolution," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 12 (1904): 39–61 (this paper was read before the society in 1899); L. Huhner, *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (1902–1903), s. v. "Charleston, S.C."

⁷ Barnett A. Elzas, *The Jews of South Carolina* (Philadelphia, 1905; reprint: Spartanburg, SC, 1983). Elzas's other publications from this period include *A Century of Judaism in South Carolina* (Charleston, 1904), originally published in the Centennial Edition of the *Charleston News and Courier* (May 1904); [*The 1820*] *Constitution of the Hebrew Congregation of Ka'al Kadosh Beth-Elohim or House of God. Charleston, S.C. MDCCCXX* (Charleston, 1904); *Documents Relative to a Proposed Settlement of Jews in South Carolina in 1748* (Charleston, 1903); *A History*

of *Congregation Beth Elohim of Charleston, S.C., 1800–1810* (Charleston, 1902); *Jewish Cemeteries at Columbia, S.C.* (Charleston, 1910); *Jewish Cemeteries of Congregation Berith Shalome at Charleston, S.C.* (Charleston, 1910); *Jewish Cemetery at Camden, S.C.* (Charleston, 1910); *Jewish Cemetery at Georgetown, S.C.* (Charleston, 1910); *Jewish Marriage Notices from the Newspaper Press of Charleston, 1775–1906* (New York, 1917); "Jewish Merchants in Charleston in the Revolutionary Era," *Charleston News and Courier* (c. 1903); *The Jews of South Carolina: A Record of the First Naturalization in the Province* (Charleston, [1903]); *Joseph Salvador: Jewish Merchant Prince who Came to South Carolina* (Charleston, [1903?]); *Leaves from My Historical Scrapbook* (Charleston, 1907); *New Jewish Cemetery of K. K. Beth Elohim at Charleston, S.C.* (Charleston, 1910); *Old Jewish Cemeteries of Charleston, S.C. A Transcript of the Inscriptions on Their Tombstones, 1762–1903* (Charleston, 1903); "New Material on the First Reform Movement in America," *American Hebrew* (literary supplement) 80 (December 7, 1906): iv; *The Organ in the Synagogue: An Interesting Chapter in the History of Reform Judaism in America* (Charleston, 1902); *The Sabbath Service and Miscellaneous Prayers Adopted by the Reformed Society of Israelites* (Charleston, 1830; reprint by Elzas, New York, 1916); "A Triumph of Tolerance," *Charleston News and Courier* (c. 1902).

⁸ In a letter to Jacob S. Raisin, rabbi of KKBE from 1915 to 1944, Elzas complained that his expanded edition of *The Jews of South Carolina* (1917) had cost him two hundred dollars, while the Charleston community had purchased only sixteen dollars' worth of books. "If anyone had done for the Jews of any other place what I have done for these people," he grumbled, "he would have made a fortune out of it." Letter from Barnett A. Elzas to Jacob S. Raisin, February 19, 1917, Barnett A. Elzas papers, New-York Historical Society.

⁹ In "Jews and the American South, 1858–1905" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1999), ix–x, Leah E. Hagedorn identifies Elzas's 1905 study as the beginning of the field of southern Jewish history and notes that, like local histories produced by other southern rabbis such as Henry Cohen of Galveston, Texas, and Alfred G. Moses of Mobile, Alabama, Elzas's scholarship was filiopietistic and tended to celebrate "Jewish notables and achievements," rather than focus on the differences that set Jews apart from the dominant society. Cited in "Southern Jewish Foodways: A Report on Research in Progress," a talk given by Marcie Cohen Ferris to the Culinary Historians of Washington, DC, March 10, 2002, unpublished manuscript available at Jewish Heritage Collection, College of Charleston Library, Charleston, South Carolina. [hereafter, JHC].

¹⁰ "A Polish congregation," Elzas noted, "was organized in Charleston as early as 1857. Though this element of the community now far outnumbered the older element, it has no history, communal or otherwise, worth recording. It has never had a leader and bids fair to continue in its present condition." Elzas, *The Jews of South Carolina*, 261, n. 1.

¹¹ Tarshish contributed significantly to Charleston Jewish historiography with the publication of his essay, "The Charleston Organ Case," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 54 (June 1965): 411–449.

¹² Thomas J. Tobias, *The Hebrew Benevolent Society of Charleston, S.C. Founded 1784, the Oldest Jewish Charitable Society in the United States: An Historical Sketch* (Charleston, 1965);

The Hebrew Orphan Society of Charleston, S.C. Founded 1801: An Historical Sketch (Charleston, 1957); "A Congregation 200 Years Old: An Old Charlestonian Looks At His Community," *The National Jewish Monthly* (December 1950): 116, 138, published in conjunction with Allan Tarshish, "A Congregation 200 Years Old: A Newcomer Looks At Historic Old Charleston," *The National Jewish Monthly* (December 1950): 117, 138-139; *Since 1749 – The Story of K. K. Beth Elohim of Charleston, S.C.: American Judaism Through More Than Two Centuries* (Charleston, 1976); *Tombstones That Tell Stories: The Historic Coming Street Cemetery of Congregation Beth Elohim, Charleston, S.C.* (1958[?]); revised by Solomon Breibart, (Charleston, 2000); "This Cemetery We Rededicate," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 53 (June 1964): 352-370; "Charles Town in 1764," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 67 (April 1966): 63-74; *Historical Diorama: Francis Salvador (1747-1776)*, (Washington, DC, [1970]); "Joseph Tobias of Charleston: Linguist," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 49 (September 1959): 33-38; "The Many-Sided Dr. De La Motta," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 52 (March 1963): 200-219.

¹³ James W. Hagy, *This Happy Land: The Jews of Colonial and Antebellum Charleston* (Tuscaloosa, AL, 1993). Meanwhile, Richard and Belinda Gergel were pursuing the history of Jewish settlement in Columbia, South Carolina, and the Tree of Life congregation. They followed in the footsteps of Helen Kohn Hennig, who had published a fiftieth anniversary history of the congregation in 1945. Gergel and Gergel, *In Pursuit of the Tree of Life: A History of the Early Jews of Columbia and the Tree of Life Congregation* (Columbia, 1996); Hennig, *The Tree of Life* (Columbia, 1945).

¹⁴ Interview with Solomon Breibart, April 18, 1995, conducted by Dale Rosengarten, JHC. Biographical material contained in Solomon Breibart Papers, JHC.

¹⁵ Solomon Breibart to Dale Rosengarten, personal communication, May 6, 2004.

¹⁶ Built after 1832 by Governor William Aiken, Aiken's Row consisted of seven identical houses; rent from each was supposed to pay Aiken's expenses one day a week. Interview with Mordenai Lazarus Raisin Hirsch and Rachel Marla Raisin, July 16, 1996, conducted by Dale Rosengarten, JHC.

¹⁷ Breibart interview, April 18, 1995.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Interview with Solomon Breibart, March 16, 2004, conducted by Harlan Greene, Dale Rosengarten, and Carol Breibart, JHC. Unless otherwise noted, all subsequent quotes from Breibart come from this interview.

²⁰ Solomon Breibart, "The South Carolina Constitutional Convention of 1868" (master's thesis, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC, 1938). Photocopies are available at JHC and the South Carolina Room of the Charleston County Public Library.

²¹ Solomon Breibart, "Why Do I Teach?" *The News Bulletin*, Official Publication of Charleston County Teachers Association, Charleston, S.C., February 1953, Solomon Breibart Papers, JHC.

²² Works by Robert N. Rosen include *Confederate Charleston: An Illustrated History of the City and the People during the Civil War* (Columbia, 1994); *The Jewish Confederates* (Columbia, 2000); *A Short History of Charleston* (1982; rev. ed., Columbia, 1997).

²³ Millicent Ellison Brown, "Civil Rights Activism in Charleston, South Carolina, 1940–1970" (Ph.D. dissertation, Florida State University, 1997), 90–91; tape recorded phone interview with Millicent Ellison Brown, April 20, 1998, by Kirk Heidenreich, JHC.

²⁴ Breibart interview, March 16, 2004; interview with Rabbi Burton Lee Padoll and Solomon Breibart, October 21, 1999, conducted by Dale Rosengarten, JHC.

²⁵ Penina Moïse, *Fancy's Sketch Book* (Charleston, 1833); *Secular and Religious Works of Penina Moïse, with Brief Sketch of Her Life* (Charleston, 1911).

²⁶ Solomon Breibart, "Penina Moïse, Southern Jewish Poetess" in *Jews of the South: Selected Essays from the Southern Jewish Historical Society*, ed. Samuel Proctor, Louis Schmier, with Malcolm Stern (Macon, GA, 1984).

²⁷ "Two Jewish Congregations in Charleston, S.C., before 1791: A New Conclusion," *American Jewish History* 69 (March 1980): 360–363.

²⁸ "The Synagogues of Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim, Charleston," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 80 (July 1979): 215–235 (revised and published as *The Synagogues of Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim* [Charleston, 1999]).

²⁹ Gene Waddell, "An Architectural History of Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim, Charleston," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 98 (January 1997), 24–25; Waddell, (24, n. 29) cites Mills Lane as first noting that Beth Elohim accepted the plan of Tappan & Noble. See Lane, *Architecture of the Old South: South Carolina* (New York, 1989), 207. In *Charleston Architecture 1670–1860 I* (Charleston, 2003), 209, n. 55, Waddell adds that Breibart originally pointed out "the complexity of the problem" and identified three of the architectural firms, including Tappan & Noble, that had submitted plans for the new synagogue.

³⁰ William A. Rosenthal, "Jewish Artists in Early Charleston," *Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim Bulletin* (September 1981) reprinted in *SJHS Newsletter* (October 1982): 2–3, and "Instrumental Music in the Synagogue," *Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim Bulletin* (January 1981).

³¹ Marie Ferrara, "Moses Henry Nathan and the Great Charleston Fire of 1861," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* (October 2003); "The Diary of Joseph Lyons (1833–1835)," edited, annotated, and introduced by Marie Ferrara, Harlan Greene, Dale Rosengarten, and Susan Wyssen, *American Jewish History* (forthcoming).

³² Jeffrey S. Gurock, *Orthodoxy in Charleston: Brith Sholom Beth Israel and American Jewish History* (Charleston, 2004).

HISTORIAN PROFILE

“What Was on Your Mind Was on Your Tongue”:
A Profile of Leonard Dinnerstein

by

Clive Webb

I doubt anyone who meets him ever forgets Leonard Dinnerstein. Forcefully opinionated and terrifically funny, he leaves as strong an impression as words etched into the bark of a tree. Dinnerstein is widely revered as one of the greatest historians of American Jewry. Much of his most significant research has focused on the southern Jewish experience. Indeed, he is one of the intellectual pioneers who first trod the path for other scholars to follow. I meet him in the sumptuous surroundings of the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Houston, Texas, where the Southern Historical Association is holding its annual meeting. Dinnerstein is here to present a paper on the Leo Frank case, the topic that first established his reputation within the historical profession more than thirty years ago. He greets me with a warm smile and a strong handshake, looking much younger than his sixty-nine years. “I have always looked very young,” he asserts. “When I was eighteen I looked fourteen and that’s very embarrassing.”¹

I first came across the name Leonard Dinnerstein when I was undertaking the preliminary research for my Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Cambridge. My interest in the role of white liberals within the civil rights movement had led to the discovery of a supposed political alliance between African Americans and Jews. I set out with the intention of examining the origins of this alliance during the interwar era. However, the focus of my research shifted when I came across a few casual references to the Jews of the American South. Initially, I simply had to come to

terms with my total ignorance of the subject. As I thought more about it, I became fascinated by the idea of a religious and ethnic minority that occupied an anomalous position within the biracial order of the South. How, I wondered, did southern Jews react to the civil rights crisis that consumed the region in the wake of World War II?

The wheels of my imagination had started to turn. What moved them into first gear was Dinnerstein's, "Southern Jewry and the Desegregation Crisis, 1954-1970."² The article depicted southern Jews as a people sympathetic to the civil rights cause but paralyzed by fear of retaliation from white segregationists. Such was the desire for self-protection, asserted Dinnerstein, that southern Jews turned on those within their own ranks who dared speak out in support of black civil rights. This anguished portrait of a community caught between the dictates of their conscience and the basic need for survival formed the basis of my research. I wrote to Dinnerstein asking for further advice and received an informative response full of bibliographic suggestions. Although I had not yet met him, Leonard Dinnerstein had become one of the formative influences on my academic career.

More than a decade has elapsed since I first read that article, and it is a strange sensation after all that time to find myself interviewing the man who wrote it. Dinnerstein proves to be an intriguing conversationalist who reflects candidly on his own career and the interpretation of southern Jewish history by other scholars.

From the Bronx to "Who was Leo Frank?"

Leonard Dinnerstein was born into a working-class community in the Bronx on May 5, 1934. His parents, Abraham and Lillian, were of eastern European descent. After receiving his B.A. from the City College of New York in 1955, he worked outside of academe for three years and then enrolled as a part-time graduate student at Columbia University. By his own measure, he made a less than auspicious start. As he puts it, "The prognosis for my career while I was a graduate student would not have been very good." Dinnerstein recalls a particular course taught by the great

Leonard Dinnerstein

(Photo courtesy of Leonard Dinnerstein)

New Deal historian William Leuchtenburg. "I would say in the seminar that I took with him, of the twelve people, if he would have had to rank them from one to twelve, I would have been ranked twelfth." Although Dinnerstein passed his major exams, he failed his minor in American government. When he retook the exam, "they passed me on the condition that I not do a political dissertation."

Dinnerstein received more positive advice from a number of sources. The first was his wife, Myra, who suggested that he research a dissertation on some aspect of civil rights. The second

source was a stranger he met in an elevator. Dinnerstein recalls leaving a meeting with Leuchtenburg at which they agreed on the broad focus of his dissertation, and being so excited, he started discussing his research with the first person he walked into. Rather than rushing out at the next floor, the woman in the elevator offered the young graduate student some shrewd advice. "Remember," she said, "the Jews were involved in civil rights." Enthused by this chance encounter, Dinnerstein then called a sociologist friend to ask for a more specific suggestion. The friend offered him a name. "And I said, 'Who's Leo Frank?'"

The Leo Frank case is one of the most infamous episodes in American Jewish history. On April 29, 1913, Frank was arrested for the murder of Mary Phagan, a thirteen-year-old who worked as his employee at a pencil factory in Atlanta, Georgia. The chief prosecution witness was a black janitor, Jim Conley, who claimed that he helped carry the body of the dead girl to the coal cellar where it was later found by police. It took the jury only four hours to find Frank guilty. News of his conviction was received ecstatically by the thousands of people who had assembled outside the courthouse. For the next two years Frank's fate remained uncertain as his defense team launched a series of appeals. Although the defense failed to establish the innocence of their client, they did eventually secure the intervention of Governor John Slaton, who commuted Frank's sentence to life imprisonment. Two months later, a band of men seized Frank from the state prison farm and hanged him from a tree near Mary Phagan's birthplace in Marietta.

Although other authors have written about the case both before and since, the study by Leonard Dinnerstein remains the best. The dissertation was completed in 1966 and published two years later by Columbia University Press. In more than thirty-five years, it has never been out of print.

Yet the book was almost never written. At the outset of his research, Dinnerstein contacted a number of people for advice. Among them was journalist and author Harry Golden, who informed Dinnerstein that he was working on a book about the

Progressive Era which would include a chapter on the Frank case. Dinnerstein was still working on the dissertation when Golden published *A Little Girl Is Dead*.³ The murder of Mary Phagan was no longer a solitary chapter, but the sole focus of the book. It was every graduate student's worst nightmare: to labor in obscurity for years on a research project only for a famous author to preemptively publish a book on the same subject. "I felt it was like a giant stepping on a cockroach," admits Dinnerstein. Had he known Golden would publish the book, he would have abandoned his own dissertation.

It is a blessing that he did not abandon it. *The Leo Frank Case* is a brilliant critical analysis of the causes and consequences of that notorious criminal trial. Dinnerstein situates the case within the broader context of the turbulent social and economic changes that beset the southern states in the early twentieth century. He demonstrates how the emergence of the factory system was seen by many southerners as a momentous threat to their traditional way of life. The rural laborers who migrated to Atlanta in search of employment suffered material deprivation and cultural dislocation. Urban life destabilized the traditional order of laborers' lives by weakening old family and community ties. Wages were low and working hours long. Laborers returned home after a twelve-hour shift to the overcrowded and unsanitary slums that bred crime and disease. Working people needed someone to blame for the appalling degradation they endured and, in the words of Dinnerstein, it was Leo Frank who was "chosen to stand trial for the tribulations of a changing society."⁴ In the minds of many ordinary Atlantans, the murder of Phagan was emblematic of the evils of urbanization. Southern society idealized the supposed innocence and virtue of white womanhood. Male laborers were thus tormented by guilt at their failure to protect their wives and daughters from the corruption and vice of city life and the physical hardships of the factory system. Leo Frank was a scapegoat for the shame and anger of the white working classes. Dinnerstein notes how southerners in times of crisis, such as the Civil War and the agricultural depression of the late nineteenth century, blamed Jews as the source of their troubles.

The Leo Frank case was therefore not an isolated incident, but part of a larger pattern of persecution against Jews. As a northern Jewish industrialist, Frank was seen as a cultural outsider who ran roughshod over southern sensibilities in his pursuit of wealth. The sexual assault and murder of Mary Phagan, therefore, symbolized the sense of victimhood that thousands of working class men and women felt at the hands of their rapacious employers.

Since the publication of the book in 1968, the Leo Frank case has become firmly embedded in the collective cultural memory. The story has been translated into almost every medium. There are several novels, most notably *The Old Religion* by David Mamet; a television miniseries, *The Murder of Mary Phagan*, starring Jack Lemmon; and even a musical, *Parade*, written by the author of *Driving Miss Daisy*, Alfred Uhry.⁵ The ghost of Leo Frank clearly still haunts Dinnerstein himself, as testified by the fact that he is presenting a paper on the case at the conference where we meet. That paper does not cut much new interpretative ground, but rather reiterates the same conclusions that Dinnerstein reached in the 1960s. When I ask him how he accounts for the almost iconic status that Frank has attained, he laughs disarmingly and admits, "God only knows."

Recent years have also witnessed the publication of two new case studies of the trial. In a book published in 2000, Jeffrey Melnick uses the affair as a lens through which to examine the relationship between African Americans and Jews in the South. Melnick takes issue with scholars, such as David Levering Lewis, who see the lynching of Frank as having shattered the security of the Jewish community and convinced its leaders to create a political alliance with their fellow victims of violent prejudice, African Americans. Instead, Melnick claims that the case inflamed bitter ethnic conflict between the two peoples. He emphasizes how the defense team sought to implicate Jim Conley for the murder of Mary Phagan by exploiting popular stereotypes of black rapists. The black press interpreted the tactics of the defense team as an assault on the reputation of all African American men and launched an indignant counterattack on Frank.⁶

Leonard and Myra Dinnerstein, 2002
 (Photo courtesy of Leonard Dinnerstein)

Dinnerstein is dismissive of this interpretation. He claims that Melnick “completely missed the boat” in reading the case as a struggle between two competing minority groups. It is nonetheless notable that, despite the implications of a black janitor being used as the chief prosecution witness against a Jewish defendant, Dinnerstein does not address the reaction of the African American community in his own study of the trial. Had he done so, he would have discovered that the black press did close ranks around Conley. The *Savannah Tribune*, for instance, dismissed the efforts of Governor Slaton to commute Frank’s sentence to life imprisonment, commenting that he would “have a hard time convincing the people of Georgia as to the innocence” of the condemned man.⁷ Although Dinnerstein constructs a much more coherent narrative of events, readers interested in the case should seek out Melnick for an important alternate perspective.

Dinnerstein is much more positive in his evaluation of *And the Dead Shall Rise* by Steve Oney.⁸ He is impressed both by the

“massive amount of detail” that Oney has uncovered and by his dramatic recreation of the trial, particularly the “mesmerizing effect of Jim Conley” on the courtroom. His one criticism of the book is that it does not convey the carefully calculated political strategy of Jewish organizations in mobilizing public support for Frank. Dinnerstein describes how Jews lobbied newspaper editors, political representatives, and other influential public figures to issue statements proclaiming Frank’s innocence. The use of these “Gentile fronts” was essential in such an incendiary political climate, safeguarding against accusations of a Jewish conspiracy to subvert the criminal justice system.

Contributions and Controversies

Although Dinnerstein will always be associated with his work on the Leo Frank case, it is by no means his only research on southern Jews. In 1970, Dinnerstein was appointed to a position at the University of Arizona, an institution to which he would eventually provide more than thirty years of service.⁹ During his tenure he made a number of additional contributions to the historiography on southern Jewry. In 1973, he and Mary Dale Palsson produced *Jews in the South*, an anthology of previously published work on the subject.¹⁰ Dinnerstein also wrote a series of important articles. In “A Note on Southern Attitudes Toward Jews” (1970), he took issue with such renowned scholars as Oscar Handlin, John Higham, and Richard Hofstadter over their interpretation of southern antisemitism. Dinnerstein accused these historians of basing their assertion that antisemitism was a weak political force within the region on unsubstantiated generalizations. More thorough research would, he argued, reveal that prejudice toward Jews was a more pervasive ideological and political force than had hitherto been realized. Dinnerstein also asserted that what little had been written on southern Jews purposely underestimated the strength of antisemitism. The scant community studies that did exist emphasized the civic virtue of southern Jews at the expense of a more rigorous critical study of the past. As Dinnerstein observed, “a good deal of the writing by Jews about themselves has been steeped in filio Pietism and

provincial pride." The article therefore established a new research agenda by encouraging greater analytical reflection on the history of southern Jews.¹¹

Dinnerstein further defined the field with the publication in 1971 of "A Neglected Aspect of Southern Jewish History." The article developed his revisionist analysis of southern antisemitism by arguing that "latent prejudices" toward Jews periodically rose to the surface in times of crisis. Dinnerstein cited the Civil War as one such example, as well as the social and economic tensions that surrounded the Leo Frank affair. The persistent threat of antisemitism had, according to Dinnerstein, circumscribed the public behavior of southern Jews in a manner unseen in other regions of the United States. Fear compelled uncritical conformity with the cultural mores of the South, including support of racial segregation and states' rights. In a clear refutation of earlier interpretations of southern attitudes toward Jews, Dinnerstein concluded that "The fear of anti-Semitism is pervasive among Jews in the twentieth century South. This sets the tone for a good deal of Jewish behavior in the region."¹²

This analysis was articulated in more detail in the 1973 article "Southern Jewry and the Desegregation Crisis, 1954-1970." Dinnerstein argued that the public position of southern Jews on the race issue was determined by the prevailing opinion of the white community. In his words, "Where the gentiles are cosmopolitan the Jews are likely to be also. Where the Christians are more conservative, one finds Jews similarly inclined." Although Dinnerstein offered some illustrations of Jews who had been able to speak out in public support of desegregation, his general portrait was of a people frightened into silence by the force of white racism. In most southern communities Jews dared not demonstrate racial nonconformity for fear of retaliation by the white gentile majority. They were at particular pains not to be tainted by the same brush as liberal northern Jews. "The Jew worries if another Jew is 'identified with a position that is extremely unpopular' because he feels that all Jews will then be visited with economic reprisals or social ostracism." Dinnerstein captured the paradox of southern Jewish reactions to the civil rights crisis.

Southern Jews believed that their social and economic security relied on public compliance with the forces of white massive resistance. Yet, by offering their tacit support to racist organizations, such as the White Citizens' Council, they sustained a climate of intolerance and hate in which they could never be truly safe.¹³

Dinnerstein consolidated his interpretation of southern Jews in one of the chapters of his outstanding study, *Antisemitism in America* (1994). The recurrent theme of his research is the tenuous social and economic status of southern Jews. According to Dinnerstein, Jews were never entirely welcome in the South, but rather they were tolerated on the condition they did not challenge the customs of the region. As he argues, "The almost total acculturation of Jews in the South allowed them to maintain a facile cordiality with Gentiles even though just beneath the surface lay a bed of prejudice ever ready to label Jews as Christ-killers and Shylocks."¹⁴

Some scholars have taken issue with this assessment of southern attitudes toward Jews, emphasizing the relative weakness of antisemitism in the region. Dinnerstein is nonetheless adamant that the defining characteristic of southern Jews has been their fear of incurring the wrath of the white Christian majority. His analysis appears to be based on his own upbringing in the Jewish neighborhoods of the Bronx. Dinnerstein claims that he was reared in a social climate that encouraged children to demonstrate intelligence and wit more than humility and respect for their elders. This was an environment in which children were both seen *and* heard. "Now, I grew up in the Bronx and whatever was on your mind was on your tongue," he asserts. "Good manners was nowhere on the list of socialization...I used to think confrontation was the normal way of talking with people." The assertiveness of Bronx Jews contrasts sharply with what Dinnerstein sees as the timidity and caution of their southern coreligionists. In the Bronx, he insists, Jews were never taught about "knowing your place." By contrast, "If you were born in Alabama, you never misbehaved in public. Never, ever. 'Cause you're a representative of the Jews, and what will people think of the Jews?"

Dinnerstein is therefore critical of the revisionist literature that has appeared in recent years, which emphasizes the strength of southern Jewish involvement in the civil rights movement. In 1997, Mark Bauman and Berkley Kalin published a collection of essays titled *The Quiet Voices* that demonstrated substantial southern rabbinical activism in support of racial integration. I pushed this analysis further in a book published four years later, *Fight Against Fear*, by arguing that a significant minority of southern Jews supported the assault on Jim Crow.¹⁵ Dinnerstein considers that neither book accurately captures the sheer sense of terror and panic that seized southern Jews during the civil rights crisis. As he bluntly expresses it, "Those rabbis were frightened."

The racial attitudes of southern Jews have been historically determined by their relationship with the white Christian majority. Much of the focus of Dinnerstein's study of southern antisemitism has therefore focused on white prejudice toward Jews. He has, nonetheless, addressed the issue of black hostility against Jews in one of the chapters of *Antisemitism in America*. Dinnerstein traces black antisemitism to the religious indoctrination of slaves in the antebellum South. The Protestant fundamentalism of their masters taught slaves to distrust Jews for having crucified Jesus and refusing to accept Christianity as the one true religion. "African Americans were continually instructed with the Christian gospel, and within their culture the word 'Jew' became synonymous with the enemy, lacking humility or gentleness, always the antagonist of Jesus."¹⁶ The secular stereotype of Jews as avaricious money-makers also penetrated the consciousness of African Americans, compounding the strength of their prejudice.

This interpretation of African American religion is, in my opinion, too reductionist. Black Christianity was more ambiguous toward Jews than Dinnerstein supposes. Slaves had a strong respect for Jews as God's chosen people. They drew explicit parallels between themselves and the ancient Israelites, predicting that they, too, would be led out of captivity and delivered to the Promised Land. Dinnerstein cites slave spirituals such as "De Jews done killed poor Jesus" in support of his analysis. However, there

Leonard Dinnerstein in Norway, 2002
(Photo courtesy of Leonard Dinnerstein)

are many other spirituals including “Daniel in the Lion’s Den” and “Go Down Moses” that offer an altogether different depiction of Jews.

Whether or not Dinnerstein will return to such issues is unclear. His scholarship has never focused exclusively on southern Jews. *Natives and Strangers*, a history of immigration and ethnicity in the United States written with Roger L. Nichols and David Reimers, is, arguably, the best classroom text on the subject. The book for which he is perhaps best known outside of the United States is not *The Leo Frank Case*, but his 1982 study, *America and the Survivors of the Holocaust*. Now retired from the University of Arizona, Dinnerstein is still an active participant in academic conferences and is currently completing a book on the Holocaust, “for people who have never heard of Adolf Hitler.”

More than thirty years ago, Dinnerstein wrote that “The major difficulty in understanding the nature of southern attitudes is

the lack of significant scholarly analysis of southern Jewry."¹⁷ Dinnerstein did more than simply identify the problem. No scholar arguably has done more to establish southern Jewish history as a distinct field of study. During the interview, Dinnerstein tells me that he suffers the occasional loss of memory, but it is I who forgets that we are supposed to meet later in the hotel lobby. I am nonetheless reassured that neither I nor anyone else has heard the last of him.

Appendix

Leonard Dinnerstein: A Select Bibliography

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 NOTES

¹ Annual meeting of the Southern Historical Association, where the author interviewed Leonard Dinnerstein, took place in Houston, November 6 to 9, 2003.

² Leonard Dinnerstein, "Southern Jewry and the Desegregation Crisis, 1954-1970," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 62 (1973): 231-241. For a list of Dinnerstein's publications, see the Appendix on pages 40-44.

³ Harry Golden, *A Little Girl Is Dead* (Cleveland, OH, 1965).

⁴ Leonard Dinnerstein, *The Leo Frank Case* (New York, 1968), xv.

⁵ David Mamet, *The Old Religion* (New York, 1997); *The Murder of Mary Phagan* (Orion Pictures, televised by NBC, 1988); Alfred Uhry (book) and Jason Robert Brown (score), *Parade* (1998).

⁶ Jeffrey Melnick, *Black-Jewish Relations on Trial: Leo Frank and Jim Conley in the New South* (Jackson, MS, 2000).

⁷ *Savannah Tribune*, August 30, 1913.

⁸ Steve Oney, *And the Dead Shall Rise: The Murder of Mary Phagan and the Lynching of Leo Frank* (New York, 2003).

⁹ Dinnerstein has been a Fulbright German Studies Seminar Participant (2002), and a recipient of several National Endowment for the Humanities fellowships and research grants from the Immigration History Research Center, the Harry S. Truman Library, Eleanor Roosevelt Institute, Herbert Hoover Library, American Philosophical Society, and American Jewish Archives. He was recognized with the Distinguished Humanist Award from Ohio State University and a University of Arizona Social and Behavioral Sciences Research Professorship (1990).

¹⁰ Leonard Dinnerstein and Mary Palsson, *Jews in the South* (Baton Rouge, 1973).

¹¹ Leonard Dinnerstein, "A Note on Southern Attitudes Toward Jews," in *Uneasy at Home: Antisemitism and the American Jewish Experience* (New York, 1987), 73-82 (quotation on 78).

¹² Leonard Dinnerstein, "A Neglected Aspect of Southern Jewish History," in *Uneasy at Home*, 83-102 (quotations on 87 and 94).

¹³ Dinnerstein, "Southern Jewry and the Desegregation Crisis," 232, 233.

¹⁴ Leonard Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America* (New York and Oxford, 1994), 177.

¹⁵ Mark K. Bauman and Berkley Kalin, eds., *Quiet Voices: Southern Rabbis and Black Civil Rights, 1880s to 1990s* (Tuscaloosa, 1997); Clive Webb, *Fight Against Fear: Southern Jews and Black Civil Rights* (Athens, GA, and London, 2001).

¹⁶ Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America*, 198.

¹⁷ "A Note on Southern Attitudes Toward Jews," 77.

HISTORIAN PROFILE

“A Sense of Connection to Others”:
A Profile of Stephen Whitfield

by

Deborah R. Weiner

In 350 years of American Jewish history, there is one issue that virtually all Jews have had to confront, one way or another. Historian Gerald Sorin calls it “the great American balancing act—the need for acculturation on the one side and the desire to retain something of a Jewish world on the other.”¹ For those of us who are not only American Jews but also historians of American Jewry, the tension between assimilation and Jewish identity manifests itself not only in our lives but also in our work, serving as a major theme to explore and coloring our interpretations of the past. While not all historians choose to explicitly address the theme, it often hovers in the background, whether the topic is Zionism or antisemitism, Jews in politics or Jews in Hollywood, economic mobility or religious mutability.

Stephen Whitfield has tackled the central issue of assimilation and identity directly, most notably in his recent book, *In Search of American Jewish Culture*. This work celebrates the exuberance with which Jewish creators from Irving Berlin to Bob Dylan embraced and transformed American popular culture, but acknowledges that America’s traditional openness now imperils Jewish identity and continuity more than ever. As long as a vibrant communal world existed as an anchor, Jews could delve into the secular world while maintaining a strong sense of their Jewish selves, Whitfield observes. The gradual disappearance of *Yiddishkeit* has increased the threat secularism poses to Jewish survival. “There is simply no longer a serious way of being Jewish

. . . without Judaism," he concludes. Yet Whitfield refuses to share the pessimism of those who fear the disappearance of Jewish life, noting that Jews have a long history of "dynamic receptivity" to surrounding cultures. They have managed to absorb outside influences and carry on, constantly transforming yet always retaining their Jewishness. With no such thing as a "fixed Jewish identity," American Jews face the same challenge they have always faced: to "reconcile the right to be equal with the option to be different," to "live creatively and durably with [the] ambivalence" that comes from being "suspended between . . . two alluring ideals."²

As a southern Jew and the son of immigrants who escaped Nazi Europe before the Holocaust, Whitfield is well-qualified to speak on the topic of creative ambivalence, not to mention the construction of identity. Yet, his background has served as a launching pad to probe all kinds of subjects. In fact, Whitfield's work defies categorization. In addition to exploring the intersection of Jewish and American culture, he has written on Hannah Arendt's theory of totalitarianism and southern Jewish businessmen, among other things. A deep personal relationship to these topics has not prevented him from presenting a complex and nuanced view of each. Cultural concerns generally come to the fore in his work, as perhaps befits an American Studies professor. For example, his essay on the southern Jew as businessman starts with Tocqueville and points out "how fully Southern Jews have embodied those traits which the French aristocrat concluded were characteristic of all Americans."³

Whitfield's interest in southern Jewish history, he says, stems from an impulse to "try to see my own life within a broader framework," as a way to "connect to . . . other people." It is the "sense of connection to others . . . that make[s] life itself meaningful." This impulse can be seen plainly in his work because making connections is what Whitfield does best and what he constantly does. He revels in linking seemingly disparate people, places, and events. (In the midst of a discussion of southern Jewish kin-based business networks, he notes that the initials of the movie company MGM "were said to stand for" Louis B. "Mayer's

Stephen J. Whitfield

(Photo courtesy of Brandeis University Photography Department)

ganze mishpoche."⁴) The effect is to broaden the reader's understanding of the phenomenon under investigation by presenting it in a new and refreshing light. These connections go by fast and furiously, often provocatively, adding to a breezy prose style that makes Whitfield one of the more readable academic historians.

Within the broad scope of his work, Whitfield's specific contribution to the study of southern Jewry has come in a series of essays published over twenty years. These essays pose a set of questions that challenge the reader to place the southern Jewish experience within the larger context of American Jewish life and,

indeed, the broad span of Jewish history. The South, after all, is just one more place where Jews have learned to accommodate and have struggled to maintain their heritage, Whitfield reminds us. "Probably none of the features of Jewish life in the South has been unique, unknown elsewhere in the United States, or for that matter, in the Diaspora; and assimilation is at least as ancient as the worship of the Golden Calf," he notes in one essay. "But the expression of Jewish identity was distinctive below the Mason-Dixon line . . . it did assume a discernibly different form."⁵ "But" is an important word to Whitfield: he tends to see and often to present more than one side of a particular question, not out of an unwillingness to take a stand, but out of a sense of the complexity of human beings and how that complexity multiplies when humans interact with each other.

As for what the "discernibly different form" of southern Jewish life has consisted of, Whitfield starts from the same place as many observers of the southern Jewish experience: the dynamic generated from the clash of two seemingly incompatible cultures; urban versus rural, entrepreneurial versus agrarian, and so on. But, beyond these axioms, Whitfield points out, are people with their own motivations and idiosyncrasies, not to mention the forces of historical change: the depiction of the South as strictly rural is simply "too rigid and ahistorical to make allowances for the forms of modernization familiar to the rest of the country," he writes.⁶ And modernization in the South has been something Jews have been deeply involved in, from the peddlers whose "packs and sample cases helped [southerners] cultivate a taste for the products of the modern world" to the retirees who helped make south Florida a distinctly non-rural locale.⁷

Whitfield eschews simple answers to complicated questions. The very titles of his essays on southern Jewry evoke his sense of irony and his belief that that point of view must be taken into account in coming to grips with southern Jewish history and identity: "The Braided Identity of Southern Jewry," "Jews and Other Southerners: Counterpoint and Paradox," "Strange Fruit." In "The Prism of Literature," he looks at Jews from the standpoint of the gentile southerner (in this case, novelists

William Styron, Walker Percy, and Thomas Wolfe), something few historians of southern Jewry are wont to do. Again he finds two sides of the issue: "Both Southerners and Jews have been haunted by the past and burdened by their histories. They have sensed that they were somehow special, different. But the lessons that they have absorbed from the past have been quite different."⁸

Such declarations are evocative rather than definitive. Whitfield's essays give us a starting point rather than a conclusion, and offer thoughtful considerations to keep in mind in pursuing our own investigations of southern Jewish history. His tendency to suggest rather than explain, to make connections rather than provide descriptions, might perhaps be related to the circumstances of his life as a Jew in the South, a southerner in the North, and an American son of Europeans. In a wide-ranging conversation last February, he discussed his background and influences, the meanings of southern Jewish history, and his thoughts on Jewish and southern Jewish identity. Here is a distillation of that conversation.

An Immigrants' Son in the South

Whitfield's upbringing reflected an unusual mixture of European and American southern influences. His German-born father and Rumanian-born mother met on the ship *Ile de France*, on their way to America in 1938. Unlike most of the Jewish refugees who arrived from Nazi-dominated Europe in the late 1930s, Whitfield's father headed west, having heard of a job in California. He got as far as Houston, where he began work as a door-to-door salesman for the Fuller Brush Company, the mid-twentieth century version of peddling, and an entry-level job for many German Jewish refugees in the United States. Whitfield's parents married in Houston in 1940. He was born there in 1942 and his only sibling, a brother, was born in 1945. The family moved to Florida in 1948 when his father was promoted to manager of the company's Jacksonville branch.

"I went through 12 years of the public school system, all in a single school," Whitfield relates. The school was lower-middle to

solidly middle class, “all white, of course.” Jacksonville at that time had 250,000 people, and the Whitfields did not live in the section where most of the city’s Jews congregated. “The overall Jewish population of Jacksonville was, in fact, very small. There were three synagogues. . . . The Jewish kids tended to go to a different high school than the one I went to.” In a graduating class of around 155, “there were no more than half a dozen Jews, although one of them was my future brother-in-law and was, in fact, the star fullback on the varsity football team.

“I certainly had a consciousness of being something of an outsider, on a number of grounds. Number one, I was very much aware of being the child of Jewish immigrants. My mother spoke with no accent whatever” (her own mother was an American citizen who had moved to Rumania), “but my father had a pronounced German accent, which was often the subject of amusement, and, on his part, often of self-deprecation. . . . When my father was speaking with strangers, I often felt a sense of shame, because his accent made him—and me—stand out. And, of course, now I am ashamed of being ashamed.

“I grew up with a sense of a certain degree of marginality, not only because of my family background, but also because I loved the academic part of school, had no athletic ability whatsoever, at a time at which, then as now, boys who had athletic ability were admired and enjoyed prestige, and boys like myself were, although the term was not used, ‘nerds.’ So the sense of being intellectually oriented, and Jewish, and somebody whose father spoke with a strong German accent, all those factors made me aware of somehow being different.”

This feeling was balanced by the family’s deep involvement in the Jewish community despite being somewhat geographically removed from other Jews. “We belonged to the Reform synagogue, and my parents often took us to temple. They were very active in the synagogue.” In common with many other southern congregations of the era, “the synagogue was fairly close to strongly classical Reform. My brother and I did have bar mitzvahs.” Jacksonville also had a Conservative synagogue and a small Orthodox shul, Whitfield notes, but “I don’t remember ever

*Young Steve Whitfield meeting Henry Ford II, in Detroit, 1958
(Photo courtesy of Stephen J. Whitfield)*

Whitfield was a high school junior and a member of a tour of high school newspaper editors from throughout the United States when the meeting with Ford took place. Whitfield says of their meeting that the subject of Ford's grandfather's antisemitism never arose.

knowing a single Orthodox person during the time that I was growing up.”

Influences and Role Models

Whitfield’s career as an historian was influenced by several people. The first was his family’s rabbi, Sidney Lefkowitz, who “had a great, great influence on my life. Rabbi Lefkowitz was the first intellectual I ever knew, an adult who genuinely loved study, and loved learning, and loved books, and was able to speak about what he had read with ease and assurance. In a sense, Rabbi Lefkowitz vindicated my own temperament, my own orientation, that one could go through life, one could be an adult, by cultivating reading and learning.

“The second influence was a more remote influence, and that was Sam Proctor. And I would say not so much Sam Proctor as the *idea* of Sam Proctor, because my parents told me about an historian at the University of Florida who was Jewish, who was from Jacksonville, and who was a scholar and a teacher, and not just a businessman or a professional person. The sheer fact of his existence enabled me to imagine that I could have a career which would not be devoted to making a living by simply making money.”

In his writing on southern Jewish history, Whitfield has shown great respect for, and interest in, the Jewish businessman and the important role of commerce in the Jewish experience. But this was not a life he wanted for himself. “In terms of my intellectual and professional development, Rabbi Lefkowitz and Sam Proctor enabled me to think about emancipating myself from a world devoted to commerce or to business, which I would have found terribly, terribly narrow and stultifying.”

While Whitfield had a distinct orientation toward intellectual pursuits from his earliest years, “where my particular interest in Jewish life and Jewish history comes from is a bit hard to specify. Certainly I was well aware that Rabbi Lefkowitz was a rabbi, devoted to Jewish life.” Yet his first interest was in European history, “perhaps because my parents had come from abroad and Europe was always a part of my consciousness. It was only afterwards

that I got interested in American history, and only after that that I became interested in American Jewish history and southern Jewish history in particular." He would have been "baffled" at age 17 to learn that he would spend much of his life studying American Jewry.

Nevertheless, Whitfield took his family's strong identification with the local Jewish community along with him to Tulane, where he spent his undergraduate years. He became the religious chairman and then president of Hillel. But perhaps more important, Tulane "quickenened my interest in Jewish affairs, because for the first time I was encountering large numbers of northern Jews, people for whom Judaism was something bred in them with a certain degree of, let's say, ethnic assertiveness, or at least confidence. It seemed to be something which was ingrained within them, in ways that were rarely encountered in Jacksonville. They struck me in their own way as a bit more authentic than I was."

Whitfield found himself drawn to these new acquaintances. "I loved them. They became friends for life." Their influence was reinforced by his reading of Sartre's *Anti-Semite and Jew*. "It told me that if this is who you are, you might as well cultivate that fact and try to make sense of it. The whole notion of authenticity that Sartre stresses, that is, you define yourself rather than being defined by others, or you give the datum of your existence meaning and purpose by trying to figure out what sense can be made of it, that is something I began to grasp as an undergraduate." His years at Tulane ended up providing "a terrific educational experience" in Jewish issues, even though academically, there was no Jewish content at all.

Yet Whitfield had a variety of academic preoccupations, which he pursued while completing his M.A. at Yale and his Ph.D. at Brandeis. Not only had he not yet engaged with Jewish history, he had not settled on America as an area of study, or on history as his primary academic field. "I went through phases with other things, whether it be literature, philosophy, religion." Fate stepped in to help determine an academic direction: "The only job I was offered when I was in the job market in 1972 was in American Studies. I had never taken an American

Rabbi Sidney Lefkowitz

Rabbi Lefkowitz and Sam Proctor (right) strongly influenced Stephen Whitfield

(Photo courtesy of Congregation Ahavath Chesed, Jacksonville, Florida)

Studies course." He joined the American Studies faculty at Brandeis, where he remains today as the Max Richter Professor of American Civilization and where he received an award for teaching excellence. Whitfield also has served in guest professorships at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, the Katholieke Universiteit in Leuven, Belgium, twice at the Sorbonne in Paris, and most recently as the Allianz guest professor of Jewish studies at Ludwig-Maximilian University in Munich.

As a young scholar, he says, "my interest was more, because of the impact of the 1960s, in issues of civil liberties, issues of civil rights and race, questions of radical possibility, and not anything particular about Jews." His dissertation (and first book)

Sam Proctor

*(Photo courtesy of the Samuel Proctor Oral History Program,
University of Florida, Gainesville)*

concerned the work of early-twentieth century radical economist Scott Nearing. Yet, he gradually began to turn to Jewish topics, first with his second book, on the work of philosopher Hannah Arendt. Like his parents, Arendt was a refugee from Nazism, "a fact that stirred my interest." He had read Arendt's *New Yorker* coverage of the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem; "the articles were drawn to my attention by my mother, who sent them to me." Later, he read *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. "It hit me like a thunderclap, and I would still say that it's the most important book that I've ever read in my life." The result was *Into the Dark: Hannah Arendt and Totalitarianism*.

Meanwhile, a group of scholars and enthusiasts were working to revive the Southern Jewish Historical Society, and this, too, stirred Whitfield's interest. "Saul Viener organized a conference in Richmond in 1976 which was actually the first scholarly conference in which I delivered a paper as an assistant professor." Why would a scholar immersed in Arendt travel from Boston to Richmond for a conference on southern Jewish history? "It just seemed to be something that would enable me to tap back into my past. I realized that it was something that was worth exploring for the deepest personal reasons and it seemed like a fun and challenging thing to do."

*More than a Personal Connection:
The Importance of Southern Jewish History*

"That conference made me permanently interested in the southern Jewish experience," says Whitfield. "It remains in my memory as one of the best conferences I've ever attended. There were some superb papers delivered there, and the level of analysis was matched by the congeniality and friendliness and hospitality of the occasion." Keynote speaker Eli Evans "had a tremendous impact by personifying the possibility of thinking and writing about the southern Jewish experience at the highest level of intelligence and articulateness. . . . In terms of my professional development, I will be forever grateful to Saul. That meeting in Richmond really invited me to imagine, stimulated me to imagine, that this was a worthy topic of research and analysis."

The conference not only turned Whitfield toward southern Jewish history, but also toward a consideration of the larger American Jewish experience. "It got me started in approaching American Jewish history through southern Jewish history, because I realized that this was something that I knew a little bit about. . . . Rightly or wrongly, my particular interest in the South has no doubt shaped the emphases that I have tried to give to whatever work I've done in American Jewish history more generally."

Every historian's engagement with his or her subject matter is influenced by personal experience, and Whitfield acknowledges

that growing up in the South has influenced his analysis. "I never really encountered antisemitism growing up, and as a result of that, I have tended, rightly or wrongly, to minimize the extent or scope or depth of antisemitism in the South, and as a consequence of *that*, rightly or wrongly, I have tended to minimize the scope and depth of antisemitism in the United States. Not, I hope, ignore it, but to downplay it, and that has probably affected my own sense of American Jewish history."

Whitfield sees southern Jewish history as having much to say about the American Jewish experience. "Contrary to expectations, it seems to me that Jews have felt very much integrated, an integral part of the South, in ways that I've increasingly come to appreciate, and that has encouraged me to believe that that's also true of America in general." When asked whether southern Jewish history should be seen more properly as a branch of southern history, or as a branch of American Jewish history, he replies, "I'm very hesitant to plunk down for one or the other option. There's certainly a lot about southern Jewish history that is deeply, deeply intertwined with southern history. And very, very many southern Jews wanted to believe that and acted on that belief. On the other hand, I want southern Jews to be a part of Jewish history because I want readers and audiences to be aware of the sheer diversity and plurality of the modern Jewish experience. I want people to realize that the South should not be ignored, if justice is to be done to the sheer range of possibilities of being Jews in America, or being Jews in the modern world.

"The South simply has to be reckoned with if you want to see how patterns of assimilation, or the development of Reform Judaism, or small town life took the forms that they did—and above all how, under circumstances that would not be especially promising, how amazingly enough, Jewish life was able to sustain itself and to show its resilience and its power. The South is a wonderful site for showing the tenacity and the force that Jewish life was able to achieve under circumstances in which it could easily have succumbed. And that's why I want the South to be integrated into Jewish history and Jewish studies more broadly even if the numbers don't necessarily warrant it."

The central issue of assimilation versus Jewish identity and continuity can be viewed in stark relief in the South, Whitfield observes. "It's an extreme version of what American Jews experience elsewhere. The South pushes close to its furthest limits, the challenge of how to sustain Jewish identity when the numbers do not exist to make it feasible to do so and when there are all sorts of conformist pressures, and all sorts of ways in which the majority culture is enormously appealing. So the South is a wonderful example of both the ease with which Jews could abandon distinctiveness, and it's also a tremendous place to see how that distinctiveness could somehow be preserved."

Southern Jewish history, especially recent history, also illuminates southern history. With the South going through a process of urbanization and growth, the Jewish experience in the region has changed. "In recent decades it's become increasingly difficult to separate southern history and southern Jewish history from American history and American Jewish history. There're still obviously important ways in which distinctiveness has to be reckoned with, but the generalizations that could once be made about the South are less and less likely to be tenable," Whitfield says. Trends in urbanization, industrialization, mobility, and modern life in general reveal "all the ways in which the South is resembling the rest of the country. Although that process is far from complete, it's clearly moving in that direction. What I'm increasingly struck by is how that forces us in a sense to rethink southern history and southern Jewish history, because it forces us to come to terms with the receptivity of the South to forces that were once seen as alien and threatening. The South was less rigid, less xenophobic, less opposed to instability than perhaps we might have recognized earlier. The tricky part is that in insisting upon that, I'm not arguing that we should ignore all the forms of rigidity and opposition to change that existed in the past, only that they obviously could not be effectively sustained."

However, despite recent trends that are causing the South to lose its distinctiveness and despite the important ways that southern Jewish history speaks to the larger American Jewish experience, Whitfield disagrees with the view held by some scholars

Steve and Lee Whitfield

*Lee Cone Whitfield traces her own
southern roots to antebellum Florida.*

(Photo courtesy of Stephen J. Whitfield)

that southern Jewish history is not all that different from American Jewish history in general, and that the impact of region has been overemphasized. "While small town Jews in the South probably have more in common with small town Jews, say, in Iowa than they do with Jews in Miami or Atlanta," he says, "I think that there's plenty of evidence" of distinctiveness. "The chief argument is that southern Jews themselves think that they are different, are conscious of being different. That subjective awareness of not be-

ing like other Jews is, it seems to me, a datum of history that in my opinion should be acknowledged. As long as you grant people the right to choose who they think they are, the degree to which they choose to think of themselves as southerners should not be dismissed by historians as simply a product of, say, false consciousness."

Nevertheless, it is important to see southern Jewish history in a broad context, not simply as a regional phenomenon. "It's still southern Jewish history but the links still have to be forged. Obviously in general one should never isolate a subject from anything else." In this case, "I would insist upon the need to reduce the isolation by moving in two directions, both Jewish history and, of course, southern history and, broadly speaking, American history."

The 350th Anniversary of Jews in America

Through a wide-ranging career, Stephen Whitfield has refused to restrict himself to a narrow field of specialization. As he became more involved in Jewish history, he also continued to pursue other interests in American and southern history, producing books on the culture of the Cold War and the death of Emmett Till. Even his work in Jewish history has covered seemingly unrelated topics. Yet, the connections have always been apparent. His concern with the tension between assimilation and identity, prominently addressed in *In Search of American Jewish Culture*, informs his thinking on southern Jewish history and, as well, his reflections on the 350th anniversary of Jews in America.

"The phrase that continues to occur to me is the title of the book that Oscar Handlin used for the 300th, which is *Adventure in Freedom*. Which, it seems to me, is both the joy and the challenge. Freedom can obviously be abused; it can even be scuttled, but it can also be an extraordinary challenge that can be met. And it seems to me the American Jewish experience and the southern Jewish experience in particular are both two-sided and open ended. You can't help but be aware of the extraordinary losses that have occurred through assimilation and through the choices that Jews have made to opt out of the Jewish faith by taking

advantage of the freedom that America provides. But the amazing thing, and the reason why I still remain basically affirmative, is that the capacity of the Jewish people to renew itself in the South is also quite heartening and impressive, and I think belies the pessimism that is certainly a feature of Jewish consciousness.

"I would say that the key to that sort of renewal, the key to that sort of optimism, if there is a single key, has got to be knowledge of Jewish destiny and the Jewish past, which journals like *Southern Jewish History* are designed to promote. . . . The connection between the Jewish future and the Jewish past is an extremely intimate and intricate one, and the 350th anniversary is an ideal moment to rededicate ourselves to that goal of knowledge of the past as the key to conserving the future."

Reflections on the Southern Jewish Historical Society

Whitfield's long association with the Southern Jewish Historical Society began at the 1976 Richmond conference. A key attraction, he says, is the distinctive mix of people who attend: professional historians as well as people who simply love southern Jewish history. "It represents a wonderful combination of an ideal of scholarly rigor and a natural effort to authenticate the meaning of one's own life and family and friends. The southern Jewish experience, as we all know, is sort of one vast kinship network and it seems to me that there's something both charming and noble about the effort to salvage it and do justice to it, whether by professionally-trained historians or by amateurs who do so out of love and an effort to honor one's family. And that, it seems to me, makes conferences of the Southern Jewish Historical Society at least as enjoyable and engaging as the more formal professional conferences I have attended.

"At its best, the two groups complement one another rather than engage in conflict. And, at its best, it means that one group can learn from the other and be energized by the other. I don't deny that there's a certain schizophrenic quality to the organization," and that tensions have resulted from the sometimes conflicting needs of lay people and professional historians. "But I prefer to see the positive features. The curse of academic

life is really the esoteric nature of it, and the inability or the lack of interest in making scholarship accessible and meaningful. And the presence of all sorts of lay people in the SJHS obliges scholars to figure out how their work can be made accessible to people besides other scholars.”

Appendix

Stephen Whitfield: A Select Bibliography

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NOTES

¹ Gerald Sorin, *A Time for Building: The Third Migration, 1880–1920* (Baltimore, 1992), 168.

² Stephen J. Whitfield, *In Search of American Jewish Culture* (Hanover, NH, 1999), 23, 246–247. For a list of Whitfield’s publications, see the Appendix on pages 65–69.

³ Stephen J. Whitfield, “Commercial Passions: Southern Jew as Businessman,” *American Jewish History* 71 (1981–1982): 342.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 351.

⁵ Stephen J. Whitfield, “The Braided Identity of Southern Jewry,” *American Jewish History* 77 (March 1988): 367.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 285.

⁷ Whitfield, “Commercial Passions,” 356, and “Blood and Sand: The Jewish Community of South Florida,” *American Jewish History* 82 (1994): 73–96.

⁸ Stephen J. Whitfield, “The Prism of Literature,” in *Voices of Jacob, Hands of Esau: Jews in American Life and Thought* (Hamden, CT, 1984), 248.

Edgar Goldberg and the *Texas Jewish Herald*: Changing Coverage and Blended Identity

by

Bryan Edward Stone

In March 1910, after a mob raided a Dallas courtroom and lynched the 68-year-old African American defendant, the founding editor and publisher of the *Jewish Herald* of Houston ran a brief comment about the controversy the event had generated. "Murder, yes, lynching," Edgar Goldberg wrote, "is a crime to be condemned in the most stringent manner, and nothing, absolutely nothing, can be said in its defense."¹ The victim, Allen Brooks, was standing trial in the Dallas County Courthouse when about two hundred whites stormed the court, overwhelmed the seventy armed policemen and sheriff's deputies who tried to stop them, seized the defendant, tied a rope around his neck, and hurled him from the courtroom's second-story window. As a crowd of more than two thousand looked on, assailants dragged Brooks through the street, beating him viciously, tearing most of the clothes from his body, and almost certainly killing him. Then, in full public view in the middle of the day at the downtown intersection of Main and Akard, as lunchtime customers of the Palace Drug Store peered out through the windows, they passed the end of the rope over a lamppost and hoisted the body up until it dangled about four feet over the street. Before the corpse could be cut down and taken to a hospital for examination, the crowd had stripped the last of Brooks's clothing for souvenirs.²

While it may not be surprising, given the brutality of the attack, that Goldberg would comment on it, it was in fact unusual for him to cover events, however momentous, that did not have a

clear Jewish relevance.³ The remainder of Goldberg's statement, however, in which he moderates his initial condemnation, provides the key to its appearance in the *Jewish Herald*. Although the story had no significance for his readers as Jews, it was a welcome opportunity for Goldberg to appeal to them as southerners. Noting that "[t]he press from all over the country" was "commenting unfavorably upon the actions of some of the citizens of Dallas of recent date," Goldberg offered an apologist statement that could have come from many southern papers of the day.⁴ Seeking to justify the mob's anger toward Brooks, who was accused of assaulting the three-year-old daughter of his white employer, Goldberg explained that "[t]he sanctity of the home to our Southern citizens . . . is superior to the law" and that "[t]he people make the laws and the people can suspend the laws." In any case, he claimed, lynchings occurred in the North at least as frequently as in the South. "Each section has conditions to contend with that can not be governed to suit the like or dislike of the other section," he wrote. "The South is well able to take care of its own notwithstanding the comments of our Northern contemporaries."⁵

Unlike many Jewish newspaper editors of the time, Goldberg was not a rabbi. The *Herald* was his profession and his sole livelihood, his "Pet Baby," as he called it, and he spared no effort to build its readership.⁶ In this, as in many other cases in his early career managing the *Herald*, Goldberg sought to win readers in Houston and throughout Texas by employing the regional rhetoric of the post-Civil War South. Even as the Jewish community he wrote for was growing rapidly and becoming increasingly integrated with Jews throughout the nation and the world, Goldberg regularly described Houston as a southern city, Texas as a southern state, and Texas Jews as distinct from other American Jews. While Jewish journals of national circulation, particularly the *American Israelite* of Cincinnati and several New York publications, offered a national perspective, often including news items from local communities across the country, Goldberg emphasized the particularly southern identity of his Texas readers and skewed his coverage of national events accordingly.

Edgar Goldberg

*Goldberg was the founding publisher and editor of
the Texas Jewish Herald, which he established in 1908
as the Jewish Herald and managed until his death in 1937.*

(Photo courtesy of Bryan Edward Stone)

While it is likely that Jewish immigrants in Houston read and subscribed to the *Herald*, Goldberg clearly imagined his readers as acculturated Americans. The *Herald* never published a non-English word, except for the occasional transliterated Hebrew liturgical term, and the issue of immigration was treated solely from the native point of view. A number of articles, for instance, sought to familiarize readers with the experiences of immigrants, conspicuously identified as "The Other Half," and advised them not to mock the immigrants' accents. In another item Goldberg explained that a Yiddish-language event in Houston was well-attended because the audience "wanted to listen to the language of their childhood."⁷ The *Herald's* readers, that is, may not have been born in America, but Goldberg assumed that they had become American and had therefore accommodated to the regional distinctions that had been so much a part of their adoptive nation's history. Thus, in 1909, he reprinted an article titled "The Southland" that celebrated the myths of the Old South and the Lost Cause without a single mention of Judaism, and the next year ran a story on Jewish statesmanship which included a lengthy account of Judah P. Benjamin, a South Carolinian and Louisiana senator who had held several cabinet posts in the Confederate government.⁸ While the *Herald* included, on balance, far more coverage of national and international Jewish issues than distinctly southern or Texan ones, Goldberg believed that Texas Jews identified themselves as southerners as well as Jews and that they would respond to an appeal on that basis.

Goldberg's hyperbolic regionalism sometimes approached chauvinism, as in one notable instance that will receive extensive treatment below, when he challenged the presumption of Jewish leaders in New York (whom he disparaged as a "syndicate") to speak on behalf of American Jewry as a whole and of southern Jews in particular.⁹ He imagined a line roughly midway through the country and saw Jews on the other side of that line, "them" as markedly different from the "us" on this side. Thus, in making his appeal to his readers' southern identity, Goldberg emphasized that Texas Jews, whatever they actually were, were *not* New

Yorkers, nor were they northerners or easterners, terms he tended to use interchangeably. He offered the *Herald* explicitly as a challenge to the national Jewish press and in direct competition for subscribers. "The Jews of Texas are interested in Texas just a little bit more than they are in Ohio or New York," he wrote in one early statement. "Matters of interest to the Jews of Texas can be more thoroughly disseminated through the columns of the Jewish Herald than any other medium."¹⁰ Thus, defining his audience in terms of what they were not, Goldberg wasted no effort trying to clarify whether Texas was in fact in the South or if it was rather a western state or even a region unto itself.¹¹ Goldberg envisioned his readers as southerners and Texans *and* westerners *and* southwesterners *and* Americans *and* Jews all at once or alternately as circumstances warranted.¹² He edited the *Herald*, he said, "in behalf of no particular faction of Jewry, but in the interest of the Jews of Texas as a unit. . . . 'Texas news for Texas Jews.'"¹³

An examination of how a newspaper editor like Edgar Goldberg exploited the presumed distinctiveness of Texas Jews, and how he deliberately drew lines marking off differences between Jews in one place and those in another, adds an important dimension to an ongoing scholarly debate about regional differences among American Jews.¹⁴ At issue is the question of whether such differences even exist or have ever existed. For every anecdote about kosher grits or drawling cantors, there is opposing evidence that Jewish communities in the South and the West have always been fully part of general currents affecting Jewish life throughout the nation. Goldberg's conspicuous use of southern regional rhetoric indicates that whether or not such distinctions can be confirmed through objective analysis of community activity, institutional behavior, or religious practice, they are quite real in the minds of individuals such as Goldberg and in the self-identification of groups like his readers. At the same time, Goldberg's approach suggests that regional differences were shifting from a real historical basis, as perhaps they had before the Civil War, toward one of pure rhetoric, a nostalgic marketing device that spokesmen like Goldberg could deploy at will to define their

group, to rally action around a shared sense of uniqueness or, indeed, to sell newspapers. Rather than trying to resolve the question of whether regional differences among Jews exist, then, this essay suggests some of the ways that community leaders have used the belief that they exist to a variety of possible ends. It also affirms the importance of the debate about Jewish regionalism for refining our understanding of American Jewry and of American identity in general.

Community Origins

Edgar Goldberg introduced the *Jewish Herald* on Rosh Hashanah, September 24, 1908, as the Jewish communities of both Houston and Texas were growing rapidly after a long, fitful beginning. The first Jews in the state, possibly the first Jews, in fact, anywhere in what is now the United States, were Sephardic fugitives from the sixteenth-century Mexican Inquisition, *conversos* whose forced conversion to Christianity may or may not have been sincere or lasting.¹⁵ A handful of central European and American Jews found their way into Mexican Texas, and at least one, Samuel Isaacks, was part of Stephen Austin's original "Old 300" settlers. A small number participated in the signal events of the Texas Revolution, including the siege of the Alamo, the Goliad massacre, and the battle of San Jacinto. With the establishment of the Anglo-Texas republic in 1836, followed by its 1846 annexation into the United States, larger numbers of Jews joined the streams of migration then bringing tens of thousands of white settlers and their slaves into the new state.¹⁶

Houston was a new city at the birth of the Texas Republic and a popular destination for immigrants with mercantile hopes because it served as the shipping and distribution center for goods arriving at the neighboring port of Galveston. It grew quickly: from its establishment in 1836, it claimed about two thousand inhabitants by 1850 and about ten thousand by the end of the Civil War. With the expanding population came a bustling business climate and great opportunities for peddlers and retail merchants, positions that an influx of Jewish entrepreneurs quickly filled. By 1850, possibly seventeen Jewish adults (eleven men and

The first offices of the Jewish Herald

The building still stands on the corner of San Jacinto and Prairie in downtown Houston. The Jewish Herald office faced Prairie Avenue.

*(Sketch prepared by the Jewish Herald-Voice,
courtesy of Bryan Edward Stone)*

six women) were included in Houston's total white population of 1,863.¹⁷ Following a respite during the Civil War, the Jewish population grew as the city boomed under Reconstruction, and by 1900 there were about 2,500 Jews in Houston, constituting nearly four percent of the total population.¹⁸ Congregation Beth Israel, which had been chartered in 1859 as the state's first synagogue, was joined by several other congregations following various degrees of traditionalism.¹⁹ Beth Israel itself began Orthodox but adopted a Reform service after the Civil War. Over the next twenty years, as Houston's general population swelled to 187,000, the number of Jews in the city more than doubled to between 5,000 and 7,000.²⁰

Many of Houston's new Jewish residents moved inland from Galveston after the 1900 hurricane that devastated the island and

its economy. Of the rest, about four hundred were direct immigrants from eastern Europe who arrived in the city through the auspices of the Galveston Movement (1907–1914), a program sponsored by Jacob Schiff, New York’s premier Jewish financier and philanthropist. The movement sought to redirect the flow of Jewish immigration from its center in New York to Galveston, from whence the immigrants could be distributed to towns and cities throughout the West, including Texas, where designated jobs were waiting for them. Houston received more of these immigrants than any other Texas city.²¹ Still others came from across the country seeking business opportunities related to the 1901 discovery of oil in Beaumont and the completion of the Houston Ship Channel in 1914, both of which promised to make Houston one of the nation’s busiest ports.

Edgar Goldberg arrived in Houston with his young family in 1907, confident that the city, with its climate of expansion and commercial opportunity, could support a Jewish newspaper of its own. While not a native Texan, Goldberg was a southerner with a southern sensibility that may have been behind his effort to distinguish Texas Jews from their Yankee brethren. The future editor was born in Delta, Louisiana, a village suburb of Vicksburg, in 1876, the year that Democrats “redeemed” Mississippi from the Republican political dominance of Reconstruction. When Edgar was two, his mother died in a yellow fever epidemic, followed by his father five years later. The boy went to live briefly with his only remaining family, his father’s sister and her husband, a native Arkansan and Confederate veteran who had been wounded at the Battle of Fort Donelson in 1862.²² Unable to support an additional child, they sent him to live at the Jewish Children’s Home in New Orleans, where he stayed until he was nearly fifteen. The Jewish Children’s Home, originally the Association for the Relief of Widows and Orphans, took in needy Jewish children from many southern states, and its blend of civic and ethical education, general studies, and liberal Judaism had much to do with shaping several generations of southern Jewish children. Goldberg remained deeply grateful throughout his life for the opportunities that the home had given him, and he regularly used the pages of

the *Herald* to encourage his readers to support it financially. On one occasion he described it as “that dearly beloved institution over in New Orleans that cares for the Jewish orphans of our fair Southland.”²³ In the *Herald*’s first year, he committed the front page of six consecutive issues to an institutional history of the Jewish Children’s Home in celebration of its fifty-fifth anniversary.²⁴

After leaving New Orleans and reuniting with his family, Goldberg worked briefly as a jeweler’s apprentice in Jackson, Mississippi, learning the engraving techniques he would later apply to printer’s type.²⁵ The family moved to Memphis, where Edgar took a job at the *Spectator*, a local Jewish newspaper, laying out type on the printing press. In 1899, at twenty-three years of age, Goldberg left his family and traveled to St. Louis to work for the Sanders Engraving Company, where he remained for over five years, “locking up forms” and dreaming of opening his own print shop.²⁶ In St. Louis, he met Esther Ruppin, daughter of a successful cigar merchant and first cousin of European Zionist leader Arthur Ruppin. The couple married in 1900. The first of their three daughters was born the next year, and soon the family relocated to Texas, the southern state with the largest Jewish population.²⁷ After a few years as a reporter in the East Texas town of Lufkin, where they were frustrated by the lack of Jewish community, the couple moved to nearby Houston in 1907. With Esther’s help in the office, Edgar opened the Herald Printing Company to publish the new paper and to operate a contract printing business as a hedge against insolvency, and began soliciting advertisers and subscribers. A one-page trial issue in 1908 found a wide audience, and Goldberg prepared the first weekly issue of the *Jewish Herald* for introduction on the coming Rosh Hashanah. Still in operation today as the *Jewish Herald-Voice*, the *Herald* is the oldest Jewish publication in either the South or the West.²⁸

The Southern Jewish Press

The *Herald* was not the first Jewish paper published in the South, nor was it the first to address consciously its readers’ sense of themselves as southerners. The region’s first Jewish paper, the

Sinai, appeared in Baltimore in 1856, followed in the same city by the *Jewish Chronicle* in 1873, the *Jewish Comment* from 1895 to 1918, and the *Jewish Times*, established in 1919 and still in operation today. Precursors to the *Herald* include the *Jewish Spectator* of Memphis, published from 1888 to 1903, the *Jewish South*, published in Richmond, Virginia, from 1893 to 1899, the *Magnet* in Atlanta in 1894, the *Sabbath School Companion* in Charleston in 1895, the *Jewish Chronicle* in Mobile in 1899, and the New Orleans *Jewish Ledger*, which ran from 1895 to 1963.²⁹

A paper titled the *Jewish South*, however, a weekly edited first in Atlanta and later in New Orleans by Rabbi E. B. M. Browne, (and not to be confused with the Richmond paper of the same name), provides the most useful comparison to the *Jewish Herald's* regional approach. Browne billed his paper as "the only Jewish journal this side of 'Mason and Dixon's line'" and proclaimed in his first issue, in October 1877, that the paper would be "a Southern Jewish periodical preeminently." Browne observed that journals based on the east and west coasts had limited circulation, while the only Jewish paper in the middle part of the country, the *American Israelite*, had "too large a territory to oversee, and affairs nearer home will naturally obtain preference over items from the far South."³⁰ Browne considered Texas a southern state, and Texas readers responded enthusiastically. Correspondents in Corpus Christi, Denison, Dallas, Calvert, and other Texas cities wrote frequently to the *Jewish South*, and Rabbi Jacob Voorsanger of Houston contributed "Lone Star Flashes," a regular report of Jewish activities in Texas. In 1878, the leading Jews of more than twenty-five Texas cities welcomed the paper's associate editor, Charles Wessolowsky, as he toured the state drumming up new subscriptions, and from 1881 to 1883, Rabbi Voorsanger took the helm of the *Jewish South* and published it in Houston, making it Texas's first Jewish newspaper.³¹

When the *Jewish South* ceased publication in 1883, Texas was without a local or regional Jewish journal until 1901, when the *Southwestern Jewish Sentiment* went into publication for a single year in Dallas.³² During this time, although circulation data has proven impossible to find, it is safe to assume that many Texas

Jews subscribed to the *American Israelite*, which continued its tradition of reporting news and printing correspondence from Jews in every state. As an alternative, Goldberg envisioned the *Jewish Herald* as a regular "Anglo Jewish weekly which would chronicle the news affecting the Jews of Texas."³³ Eight pages long and four columns wide, Goldberg's first issue contained an introductory message in which he offered the paper "to the people of Houston" and asked the secretaries of local Jewish societies to pass on news of their activities for him to report. "The columns of the Herald will be open at all times," he promised, "to those who have anything to say that will be of benefit to our co-religionists or community."³⁴ Although, as Goldberg later noted, "we have not waxed rich" in the publication of the *Herald*, "and at times I wonder if the effort is really worth while," he succeeded in attracting a large enough readership to remain in operation through the difficult startup years and the subsequent three decades until his death in 1937.³⁵ In 1911, the *Herald* had an estimated 1,150 subscribers, which grew to 3,500 by 1920 and to a high of 6,600 in 1933. Circulation fell significantly during the Great Depression, forcing Goldberg to curtail the length of the paper, but it survived that and many other crises.³⁶

From his first issue, Goldberg offered a somewhat idealized picture of a Jewish community that was dynamic, prosperous, and harmonious. The first lead story was a detailed account of the consecration of a new synagogue for Adath Yeshurun, the city's largest Orthodox congregation, including a description of the dedication ceremony and speeches, a photograph of the congregation's rabbi, and a sketch of the new building.³⁷ A smaller article in the same issue described the construction of Reform Congregation Beth Israel's new temple. Two years later, he reiterated his commitment to making the *Herald* "a paper devoted to Jewish interests wherever found in general and to matters of interest to Jews in Texas in particular." It was not to be "the organ of any party within the creed and hence will give publicity to all matters of news appertaining to Orthodoxy, Reform, Zionism and Anti-Zionism, one as well as the other, regardless of whom it may suit or may not suit."³⁸ As one of the nation's few non-rabbinical

Jewish newspaper editors, Goldberg had no ideological axe to grind and could cover the “Jewish news” without partisanship.³⁹ “We have been accused of being anti-Zionistic—of being Zionist—of being too much in favor of reform—and of giving only Orthodox news,” he noted in 1910. “Well, at any rate, we have not been accused of being un-Jewish.”⁴⁰ When divisions in the community occurred, Goldberg was often a voice for reconciliation. In 1911, when Adath Yeshurun split into factions over a dispute regarding the confirmation ceremony, for instance, the *Herald* covered the conflict as it progressed through a failed arbitration proceeding and into the courts, and Goldberg urged the parties to avoid a trial because of the negative attention it could attract in the national Jewish press.⁴¹ This moderate, inclusive approach put Goldberg in a position to comment on all Jewish matters in the community, and not incidentally helped to guarantee the largest possible readership.

At first Goldberg struggled to find enough news of local interest to fill his pages. When short, he reprinted material from other Jewish newspapers, including features like “Jewish Women in New York,” “In Memory of Heine,” a sermon by a Baltimore rabbi, a feature story on the Baroness de Hirsch, and page after page of jokes and witty sayings. To honor his commitment to cover “matters of interest to Jews in Texas in particular,” however, the editor introduced a regular feature titled “Local Notes” in which Houston’s Jewish citizens shared important events in their lives, from marriages and births to changes of address and family vacations.⁴² Although columnists of national reputation were available for reprinting, Goldberg recruited local writers to contribute guest opinions. These included H. B. Lieberman, the cantor at Adath Yeshurun, who wrote many early opinions on matters of Jewish practice and identity, and Lena Lurie, a participant in Houston’s Jewish charities, who commented on social issues including intermarriage, parochial schools, and “Jewish ostentation,” as well as offering readers samples of her own short stories and poetry.⁴³ In later years, rabbis Samuel Rosinger of Beaumont and David Goldberg of Wichita Falls each wrote for the *Herald* on topics ranging from Jewish religious practice to

international politics. Rosinger, for example, appealed on behalf of Leo Frank, the Atlanta merchant who had been falsely accused of murdering a young girl in 1913, applauded Woodrow Wilson's appointment of Louis Brandeis to the United States Supreme Court, and mourned the displacement of European Jews during World War I; while Rabbi Goldberg wrote often about the lasting effects of World War I on world Jewry, particularly the possibility of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine.⁴⁴ Although these leaders rarely commented on local events (a notable exception was Rabbi Goldberg's passionate warnings about the resurgent Texas Klan in the 1920s), their participation demonstrated to the *Herald's* readers that Jewish thought and advocacy were alive and well in their state and that Jewish issues of global importance had repercussions at home in Texas.⁴⁵

Goldberg gave a great deal of attention to chronicling the growth of Texas Jewry's increasingly complex institutional structure. Rabbis came and went, Houston and other Texas cities formed new congregations and built synagogues, and a variety of clubs and communal organizations were established. The *Herald* promoted involvement in local charities like the Jewish Free Loan Society and the Jewish Women's Benevolent Society Charity Home, and Goldberg reported on local cultural organizations like the Jewish Literary Society.⁴⁶ By reprinting items from other papers, Goldberg provided news from Reform and Orthodox rabbinical conferences, from meetings of Zionists and B'nai B'rith, and from gatherings of the American Jewish Committee and the National Council of Jewish Women. But, while covering these organizations' national and international activities, Goldberg emphasized local and regional events: meetings of the Texas Federation of Zionists and the Texas Zionist Organization, the Houston Council of Jewish Women, and District 7 of B'nai B'rith, the regional body that included Texas and in which Goldberg personally participated as a member and an officer.

Goldberg's extensive coverage of the Galveston Movement further reveals his effort to find and emphasize the local interest in matters of national significance. Recognizing the economic benefit for Galveston and its inland sister city, Goldberg promoted the

project enthusiastically, reprinting positive articles from Jewish and non-Jewish newspapers and giving space to Galveston's rabbi, Henry Cohen, to report on his own activities in support of the program.⁴⁷ In January 1910, Oscar Leonard, identified as the superintendent of the Jewish Educational and Charitable Association in St. Louis, underscored the importance of diverting Jewish immigration from the big eastern cities, and he encouraged settling more of them in Texas. "It is well known," he remarked, "that Jews give an impetus to commerce and industry and for this reason they would be welcomed in many communities in this large state which waits for willing hands and alert minds to help it develop." He chastised Yiddish papers in New York that discouraged immigration to the interior on the grounds that "there were no synagogues there and [immigrants] would become estranged from the faith of their fathers." That, Leonard argued, "was an absurd thing to say and was dictated by selfishness and self interest." Leonard urged the *Herald's* readers to tell their fellow Jews about Texas and to encourage them to migrate there. "If we relieved the congregation in the large cities," he concluded, "we shall surely have no 'Jewish problem' in America."⁴⁸

Edgar Goldberg's comments on the movement were often touched with a note of skepticism about the New York sponsors. He believed firmly in the project's goals in theory, but, as actual immigrants began to arrive in Texas, he questioned whether the movement's implementation would really benefit his city and state. Goldberg chided Jacob Schiff, for example, for pretending to act entirely out of selflessness. "Jacob Schiff made two speeches in New York in the past week encouraging immigrants to come South," Goldberg wrote. "If the people he is urging to come South had any money we'd be tempted to ask what land company he had stock in." In a similar editorial in 1910, Goldberg reprimanded the movement's leaders for sending immigrants into the South who were unskilled or unprepared to work. "There is more room for the Jew in Texas than any other state in the Union," he pointed out. "But the immigrant can't live on room. There is absolutely no difficulty to find

work for those having occupations."⁴⁹ Despite these qualifications, Goldberg's support for the movement was steadfast, and throughout its duration, especially as it faced bureaucratic tangles and charges of inefficiency, Goldberg regularly came to its defense.

While his primary focus was always on Houston, even within his first year Goldberg set his sights on a larger, statewide readership. In December 1908, he ran an advertisement calling for representatives in other Texas cities to "take subscriptions and correspond for the *Jewish Herald*," and the following summer he introduced a "Texas News" page dedicated to items of Jewish interest from cities and towns around the state. By 1910, Goldberg could brag that the *Herald* had a statewide readership and "special correspondents at not less than fifteen [of the] most important points in the State."⁵⁰ Four years later, to reinforce his statewide appeal, he changed the paper's name from the *Jewish Herald* to the *Texas Jewish Herald*: "From the local publication which it was at its inception," he wrote, "[the *Herald*] has become the organ of all Jewry in Texas." He explained that he made the change on the advice of readers who had pointed out that the *Herald* was "as closely identified with Jewish interests in Dallas, Fort Worth, Waco, Austin, San Antonio, Galveston, El Paso, Beaumont, Corsicana, Tyler, Palestine and nearly all of the smaller towns in Texas as with Houston."⁵¹ The idea that Jews in Galveston and El Paso (which is geographically closer to Los Angeles than to many Texas cities) had anything in common was, at best, a questionable assumption, but for Goldberg it was a fundamental matter of marketing. The Jews of Texas were, as he had stated earlier, "a unit" and constituted a single readership best addressed by a Texas-based paper. The long list of towns reflects Goldberg's hope to appeal to a Texas Jewish community that filled the state's expansive boundaries.

The presence in New Orleans of the long-standing *Jewish Ledger* may explain why Goldberg did not seek to expand his readership into other parts of the Old South, even though his strong support of Louisiana institutions like the Jewish Children's Home and B'nai B'rith District 7 underscores his personal

identification with the area. Rather he promoted circulation in Texas communities that were not already served by a southern Jewish paper, choosing to compete with the *Israelite* and the national New York journals rather than with colleagues in the South. This strategy, however, did not prevent other editors from competing with him. It is likely, in fact, that the *Herald's* name change and Goldberg's urge to clarify his paper's statewide appeal were responses to the impending establishment of the *Jewish Monitor* in Fort Worth in 1915. The *Monitor's* founding editor, Rabbi G. George Fox, claimed later to have started the paper in an effort to "spread information about matters of Jewish interest and to bring about closer cooperation among Texas Jews," though presumably not between himself and Goldberg.⁵² Like the *Herald*, the *Monitor* was an English-language weekly that covered national and international Jewish news while emphasizing local issues with an almost personal specificity. Like Goldberg, Fox recruited Texas rabbis to provide guest editorials, promoted assimilation and economic achievement, and spoke to readers as fully acculturated Americans.⁵³ Whereas Goldberg saw the whole of Texas as his field, Fox seemed less concerned with drawing borderlines, covering news and encouraging circulation in Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Louisiana as well as in North Texas.

Fox was conscious that the *Monitor* was a southern periodical and even once described it as "a real force in the South," but he did not emphasize a regional approach to the same degree that Goldberg did.⁵⁴ If anything, Fox's outreach to communities outside Texas, particularly those in Oklahoma where an appeal to Dixie sensibility was largely irrelevant, indicates that Fox, stepping into an already occupied market, was more concerned with finding readers wherever he could than with abiding by traditional regional boundaries. Neither Fox nor Goldberg took as strongly regional a stance as Browne had done in the *Jewish South*, but Fox's decision to turn northward for readers indicates that the *Herald* was already dominant through much of the state and that Goldberg's effort to appeal to his readers as Texans and as southerners may have been effective.

The Jewish Civil War

As E. B. M. Browne had placed the *Jewish South* in opposition to the national leadership of Isaac Mayer Wise, Goldberg looked primarily to New York, emerging as the undisputed center of American Jewish life, as a foil. In one extended episode in particular, Goldberg relied heavily on regional rhetoric to assert that Jews in Texas and throughout the South stood outside the national structures that bound the American Jewish community together. As Browne had done before, Goldberg challenged the authority of national Jewish leaders and asserted his readers' right to speak on their own behalf and to pursue their own solutions to national Jewish problems. In the place of self-designated leaders in New York, Goldberg promoted his friend and editorialist, Houston lawyer Henry J. Dannenbaum, as a more suitable leader for American Jewry, publicity which Dannenbaum was more than happy to accept. The episode deserves to be described at length, if not for its own inherent importance then for the clarity in which it casts Goldberg's manipulation of minor events in order to promote to his readers a particular way of seeing themselves and their place within the larger context of American Jewry, and, thus, to affirm the need for a Texas Jewish newspaper to reflect Texas Jewish concerns.

The incident began in 1908 when the New York police commissioner, Theodore Bingham, published a report in the *North American Review* in which he associated criminality with foreignness. In New York neighborhoods where fewer native-born residents lived, he claimed, crime was more widespread. Russian Jews, for example, who dominated the city's Lower East Side, represented one-quarter of the city's population, according to Bingham, but accounted for "perhaps half of the criminals."⁵⁵ The following year, *McClure's Magazine* presented a typically lurid account of the growing problem of "white slavery" in which George K. Turner described how a system of corrupt procurers, mostly Jews, seduced young immigrant women, also mostly Jews, and sold them into a life of degradation.⁵⁶ The association both writers made between Jewish immigration and urban vice, while wildly

exaggerated, caught the attention of community leaders in New York and elsewhere who feared the damage it could do to the public perception of the nation's Jews.⁵⁷

While prominent Jewish New Yorkers like Louis Marshall and Jacob Schiff recognized a need to respond to such charges, the generally fractious state of New York Jewry prevented unified action. In particular, a deep rift existed between the Russian immigrant community and the "uptown" Jews of German background, including Marshall and Schiff, who had preceded them to the city and become prosperous and acculturated. The Yiddish press, speaking on behalf of the immigrant community, condemned the city's German Jews for their failure to address the white slavery charges and berated their approach as "assimilationist, timid, and disdainful of the immigrant Jews," even as they acknowledged their dependence upon these "men of influence" in the direction of the city's Jewish affairs. In response to such criticism, uptowners advanced a plan to organize the New York Kehillah as a collective voice for all the city's Jews. The idea of *Kehillah* derived from the shtetl tradition of representative community leadership. Its purpose, according to Schiff, was to "further the cause of Judaism . . . and to represent the Jews of this city," while president Judah Magnes claimed that the Kehillah's regular meetings would help to forge a "Jewish public opinion."⁵⁸ Over the years, the Kehillah was active in reforming Jewish education, arbitrating labor disputes, and bridging the denominational gap between the city's Reform and Orthodox Jews.

While the Kehillah represented a broad cross section of the city's Jewish factions and institutions, it was dominated by Reform German Jews of a particular social status. Wealthy, genteel, and acculturated, they were respected members of both Jewish and gentile society. Rabbis and community activists joined with the majority of lawyers and businessmen. When Bingham and Turner published their charges of Jewish involvement in organized prostitution, the Kehillah's central figures decided that the best approach was to downplay the problem rather than to attack the charges directly and visibly and to divert public attention to less unseemly areas of urban Jewish life. In a well-publicized

Esther (Ruppin) Goldberg, in Houston, circa 1940
(Photo courtesy of Edward and Barbara Stone)

Esther Ruppin married Edgar Goldberg in St. Louis in 1900. She traveled with him to Houston, where she raised their three daughters while managing the offices of the Herald Printing Company and the Texas Jewish Herald. Her father, an early financial backer of the Herald, moved with his wife and younger children to Houston in 1910 to join Goldberg in the operation of the paper.

address, Magnes denied that the problem even existed, and the Kehillah, in the estimation of historian Arthur Goren, “[broke] no new ground nor commanded wide public attention as communal spokesmen” on the white slavery issue. Forcing the matter underground “ended public embarrassment and permitted normal institutional work to continue undistracted.”⁵⁹ This approach was also favored by representatives of the immigrant community, who preferred that the whole matter disappear from public view as quickly as possible.

Far from the city where most of the alleged offenses were occurring, Henry J. Dannenbaum, an ambitious Jewish lawyer in Houston, saw an opportunity for self-promotion. An energetic and successful prosecutor, Dannenbaum had been active in gaining support in Texas for the Mann Act, which attacked white slavery by prohibiting the transport of women across state lines for “immoral purposes.” He had earned the respect of Jews and gentiles alike as a crusading crime fighter, and, in 1915, Governor Jim Ferguson would appoint him judge of the Sixty-first District Court, the first Jew to sit on the state bench in Texas.⁶⁰ A native Texan born to German immigrants, Dannenbaum was simultaneously rough and genteel, educated and mannered but with a frontiersman’s directness. In speech and writing he wrapped bold, often confrontational messages in a deliberately cultivated rhetoric that marked him as a true Houstonian, ambitious and capable but newly, somewhat uncomfortably, cosmopolitan.

In 1910, Dannenbaum wrote a brief letter to the *Jewish Herald* challenging the Kehillah to adopt a different approach to the white slavery problem. “As if Jews have not enough trouble to fight prejudice from without,” he wrote with typical flourish, “now comes a cancer from within to eat upon our morals and taint our good name.” Rather than trying to deny the existence of white slavery, Dannenbaum felt that the Kehillah should attack it directly through a concerted program of prosecution, intervention, and public education, and that the Kehillah only demonstrated its moral weakness by refusing to do so. “There is work to do for every decent man and woman in our ranks,” he wrote. “Only cowards will shrink from the contest.”⁶¹ Dannenbaum had already

inserted himself directly into the fight against white slavery before writing to the *Herald* by initiating a series of meetings with Samuel London, an El Paso lawyer who had represented prostitutes, pimps, and procurers throughout the Southwest. London claimed to know more about white slavery than anyone living and, in a sudden burst of lawyerly conscience, he approached federal investigators and offered to turn over his meticulous business records and make his services available to prosecutors for a substantial fee. Anxious to secure this evidence and to aggrandize himself, Dannenbaum sought a contribution of \$3,700 from B'nai B'rith District 7 to purchase London's records, including the names of at least 1,200 of his contacts, and to provide him a salary while he gathered further intelligence from his former clients.⁶² With London's records in hand, Dannenbaum approached the United States Justice Department and procured a position in New York as Special Assistant to the Attorney General charged with prosecuting violations of the Mann Act.

Dannenbaum's rapid ascent to national office enhanced his reputation among his fellow Jewish Texans and southerners. As a measure of their respect, the members of B'nai B'rith District 7 elected Dannenbaum district president in 1911, a post he ceremoniously accepted and then immediately resigned because of his commitments in New York. Edgar Goldberg praised Dannenbaum lavishly in the *Herald* as "a man whose ability is unquestioned, whose loyalty and faith in the future of our people is inspiring . . . [a] man without a blemish who is loved, honored and respected by all." In particular, the editor thrilled at the prospect of a local Jew, an officer in the regional B'nai B'rith, attaining national prominence. Dannenbaum's "acknowledged leadership of the district comprising the Southern States," the editor wrote, "is but the stepping stone to the leadership of American Jewry."⁶³ Implicit in the exaggerated praise is Goldberg's belief that the South could produce spokesmen capable of standing on a national platform, that Jews living far from power centers like New York were not bound to let northern administrators speak for them.⁶⁴

Hoping to encourage the Kehillah to greater assertiveness, Dannenbaum corresponded frequently with several of its

members while he was with the Justice Department in New York, but Judah Magnes explained to him that the Kehillah's members were "hard-headed men" who would not easily be moved to act.⁶⁵ Magnes declined to support Dannenbaum's idea to establish an office on the Lower East Side to serve as a center for prosecution and public education, and he refused Dannenbaum's offer of information and financial support should the Kehillah ever establish a committee to combat white slavery. Dannenbaum returned to Texas late in 1911, disappointed with Magnes's response but bearing a letter from the United States Attorney General stating that his official efforts had been responsible for at least a dozen convictions.⁶⁶

Soon after returning home, Dannenbaum spoke at a District 7 meeting in New Orleans. In a wide-ranging and provocative address, Dannenbaum challenged United States diplomatic policy, asserting that the government should preserve a Russian trade treaty despite the czar's crackdown on Jewish socialists. National Jewish leaders, including members of the Kehillah, had heartily advocated abrogation of the treaty as a protest against Russian antisemitism, and Dannenbaum's condemnation of the move, his apparent support of the czar's antisemitic behavior, outraged many of his listeners and others who later read the address. On the subject of white slavery, Dannenbaum insisted that the problem was only getting worse: "The business has spread like a prairie fire until this night," he explained with typical western imagery, "when in the woman's night court of New York City and on gilded Broadway the majority of streetwalkers bear Jewish names." America's Jews, he continued, especially their self-proclaimed national leaders, were most responsible for the crisis. The southerners of District 7 had distinguished themselves, he said, by their "brave and chivalrous and unselfish" purchase of Samuel London's business records, but their New York brethren had deserted them. "[P]leading, argument and threats," he said, "have all fallen impotent at the feet of our leaders in the North."⁶⁷

Goldberg immediately took Dannenbaum's side. Even as the *Herald* disagreed with Dannenbaum on the abrogation issue, the editor declared that "we do admire the courage and manliness of

Henry J. Dannenbaum

(Photo courtesy of Glen A. Rosenbaum)

This portrait now hangs in the 61st District Courtroom, Harris County Courthouse, Houston, Texas, where Dannenbaum served as state district court judge beginning in 1915. His portrait was the only one excluded in the 1938 judicial portrait project that so honored all the judges who had ever served the people of Harris County. His exclusion may have been because the chairman of the portrait committee was the former Imperial Dragon of the Houston Chapter of the KKK. This oversight was corrected on April 4, 1997, when Dannenbaum's portrait was unveiled in the courtroom in a ceremony presided over by 11th District Court Judge Mark Davidson, who had discovered the exclusion and ordered that it be remedied.

Mr. Dannenbaum in differing with what is supposed to be the great majority." Goldberg also reasserted the importance of southern Jewish leadership. "We admire him for upholding Southern Jewry and telling those of the East that we must be considered; that they cannot decide all questions and expect us to follow without regard to whether it is right or wrong." Dannenbaum was proof that the South, too, was capable of producing leaders of national quality. "Men of the type of Henry J. Dannenbaum are not only qualified to act and represent Southern Jewry," the *Herald* claimed, "but better qualified to act as leaders of all our people in the consideration of grave questions which confront us today."⁶⁸

Needless to say, northern Jewish leaders reacted differently to Dannenbaum's address, dismissing the parvenu out of hand. According to the *Herald*, B'nai B'rith international president Adolf Kraus referred to Dannenbaum in conversation as "a dangerous fool," and the Chicago headquarters issued a disclaimer stating that he held no official position in the order and did not speak on its behalf.⁶⁹ An article in the *American Hebrew*, a weekly journal published in New York by Kehillah member Cyrus Sulzberger, detailed Dannenbaum's futile attempt to raise money among New York leaders and ridiculed his association with Samuel London, a lawyer "who has so little sense of honor as to take such clients in the first place and then sell them out." Titled, with apparent irony, "A Gentleman from Texas," the statement expressed particular disdain for Dannenbaum's stated wish in his New Orleans address "to speak [his] own mind without regard to New York or Chicago." Translated, the *American Hebrew* explained, this statement "evidently means without regard to the American Jewish Committee or the B'nai B'rith." The writer worried about the consequences of the divisive speech, claiming that "if the Russian Government had secured the services of the gentleman from Texas, he would have earned his pay" and that B'nai B'rith District 7 should reconsider "whether it desires to retain a man of this kind in an official position in the Order."⁷⁰

The *American Hebrew* article played right into Goldberg's hands, and he reprinted large extracts from it without comment.

On the editorial page his rhetoric against the Kehillah became strident.⁷¹ "Our own beloved Henry J. Dannenbaum," one editorial proclaimed, "has caused the displeasure of the syndicate who for years has been in absolute control of the Jewish voice and without whose authority no man dare move." While previously Goldberg had simply defended Dannenbaum as a local hero, he now blasted New York leaders who "dare strike at [him] because he honors truth and detests hypocrisy." Because Dannenbaum had "put aside fear and told the truth," the *Herald* claimed, "he is made the victim of an assault by the American Hebrew which is not alone false but maliciously written for the sole purpose of destroying his value to American Jewry and preserving the syndicate that they might continue to rule." Finally, regarding the suggestion to strip Dannenbaum of his standing in B'nai B'rith, the *Herald* advised the *American Hebrew* that "District 7 will not need the advice or assistance of the syndicate in determining who shall lead in this district." The *Herald* emphasized that Dannenbaum was a native Texan, "and District 7 is proud of its leader."⁷²

The *Herald* covered this minor issue and peripheral conflict as if it were a national dispute of epic proportions. For four consecutive weeks Goldberg dedicated the newspaper's front page to reprinting the correspondence between Dannenbaum and Kehillah president Judah Magnes, advising his readers to preserve these pages "as an historical record of a phase of American Jewish history." Underscoring the regional animosities at play, Goldberg termed the crisis a "Jewish civil war between the South and the North" and urged that it be "averted before the hostilities assume serious proportions."⁷³ The *Herald's* attack on the Kehillah, however, was really a one-sided assault, with Goldberg and Dannenbaum flinging rhetorical grenades at an enemy that was scarcely aware it was at war. It is telling that the Galveston Movement, under the direction of Kehillah member Jacob Schiff, continued unabated throughout this "Jewish civil war."

In July 1912, the issue of Jewish crime resurfaced when, only a few months after the *Herald's* barrage against the Kehillah, a police officer killed a Jewish gangster named Herman Rosenthal

on a New York street in broad daylight, and the national mainstream press re-opened the issue of Jewish vice with renewed intensity. Faced with a massive public relations disaster, the Kehillah finally formed a committee to address the problem, and the coincidental timing gave the *Jewish Herald* a chance to gloat. Goldberg ran the story of the creation of the Kehillah's new Vigilance Committee on the front page, preceding it with extracts from Dannenbaum's New Orleans address and his correspondence with Magnes, implying that Dannenbaum had been right all along. In another front-page article, Dannenbaum took a final shot at the Kehillah's tardiness and claimed the high ground for himself and for the newspaper that had supported him. "In no spirit of censure or 'I told you so,' does the Jewish Herald now publish these words," he wrote. "The New York Kehillah, under the splendid leadership of Dr. J. L. Magnes, has been awakened and is on the right track. . . . May they win the fight."⁷⁴

What is most revealing in this story is the insistence of Goldberg and Dannenbaum that regional Jewish identity should matter even where it clearly did not. Dannenbaum's condemnation of "our leaders in the North" and Goldberg's invocation of "the Jewish civil war" inserted regionalism into an issue where it would not otherwise have been a factor. And there is an important underlying reality in this case which both men left unmentioned: regardless of their claim of a regional divide among American Jews, Goldberg and Dannenbaum were fully absorbed in national American Jewish life and were seeking solutions for distinctively Jewish, not distinctively southern, problems. Significantly, Dannenbaum targeted Jewish vice, turned for support to a Jewish fraternal organization, sought an audience in New York with Jewish leaders, and used a Jewish newspaper as his platform. Regional animosity, the legacy of the Civil War, only entered the picture when Dannenbaum played on it to secure the support of District 7 and when Goldberg employed it as a dramatic device on his front page. To be sure, their use of regional Jewish identity as a marketing tool does not preclude its existence, but does suggest that it was becoming more a matter of taste and style, a flavor of

American Jewish identification, than a profound and continuing reality.

Beyond Regionalism

With the outbreak of World War I, the political ground shifted radically beneath Goldberg's feet. The Great War ravaged sections of Europe where large numbers of Jews lived and displaced hundreds of thousands of them. Refugees fled westward into Germany and Austria, crowding into dismal shantytowns where they died in large numbers from starvation and disease. American Jews recognized a responsibility and organized charities to collect money for the relief of Jewish war victims. Many of these charities, representing a broad range of American Jewish ideologies and the national backgrounds of immigrants, merged into the American Joint Distribution Committee, or "the Joint," and, as stories of Jewish suffering proliferated, local agencies throughout the United States sprang up to gather donations for the cause. In many communities, this groundswell overwhelmed even the most rancorous differences that existed among American Jews before the war, and Zionist and anti-Zionist, Reform and Orthodox, German and Russian Jews eagerly joined the campaign. Their underlying differences, of course, remained intact, and factional squabbles continued to erupt in American Jewish institutions, but the war provided a common outlet for common energies. In the midst of such an international crisis, there was little enthusiasm for fabricated debates between southern and northern Jews, and Goldberg was now obliged to join a philanthropic effort of national scope.

At the same time, the resurgence of Zionism, especially following the 1917 Balfour Declaration in which Britain promised its support for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, contributed to a gradual transformation of the relationship between local and global Jewish identity. Zionism had never been popular in Texas, and Goldberg himself was avowedly opposed to it even as he gave it full coverage in the *Herald*. Nonetheless, its effects were felt, especially after his death. With the Holocaust, the establishment of Israel, and the arrival of refugees from Europe and

Jews from northern cities, Texas Zionist groups grew in membership, and Zionist beliefs took hold in every Jewish community and in congregations of every denomination.⁷⁵ Ultimately, as Zionism gained acceptance in Reform circles in Texas, its message of Jewish nationalism and universalism mitigated feelings of local distinctiveness.

Events originating closer to home had a similar effect. The brief rise to power in the 1920s of the Ku Klux Klan, whose Texas membership was among the most influential in the nation, served as a wake-up call to Texas Jews who had advocated full acculturation, a reminder that their identity as Jews was ultimately more important and more lasting than their status as Texans.⁷⁶ It became apparent that, as long as groups like the Klan remained active, there was no reason to think that the state's white Christian population would ever fully accept Jews as equal fellow citizens. With the rise of the Nazis in Germany, a sequence of events which Edgar Goldberg found deeply alarming and covered extensively, it became still clearer that divisions among Jews were superficial and meaningless in the face of genuine threats from outside.

Goldberg covered all of these issues as they developed through the 1920s and 1930s, acting as the *Herald's* editor until his death in 1937. His emphasis on Texas Jewry remained central, but in these later decades the *Herald* took a decidedly more universalist perspective. By the time of the transformative world crises of the 1940s, a new generation had taken the reins and the *Herald* became a different kind of newspaper. David White, who had worked briefly under Goldberg as an assistant editor but had left to start a competing paper, bought the *Herald* from Goldberg's widow, Esther, and combined it with his own, establishing the *Jewish Herald-Voice*. The new paper, which White billed as "The Jewish Herald's 31 Years Experience PLUS The Jewish Voice, The Vigor of Youth," was livelier, more modern, more politically liberal, and aimed at a younger readership than the gray lady that Goldberg's effort had become.⁷⁷ Like his predecessor, White aged in his stewardship of the paper, managing it for thirty years until his death in 1971. The *Jewish Herald-Voice* is published and edited today by Joe and Jeanne Samuels, who took it over from White,

and, at nearly one hundred years old, is one of the longest-running Jewish newspapers in the country.

Goldberg's success in establishing the *Herald*, and his reliance on regional language to make it a success, suggest the truth of a description by the sociologist Fredrik Barth of the ways that groups living in pluralistic societies define themselves in contrast to one another. In Barth's interpretation, intergroup relations force people to define more concretely the cultural boundaries that distinguish them from outsiders. "The critical focus of investigation from this point of view," he writes, "becomes the ethnic *boundary* that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses."⁷⁸ Groups define themselves, that is, in contrast to others, across imaginary lines of difference, rather than by positive determination of their own qualities. While Barth's emphasis was on ethnic differences, his observation is also illustrative for understanding perceived differences within groups. Thus, it was never necessary for Edgar Goldberg to demonstrate what Texas Jewry actually was or what made it unique, nor did he have to settle on a given set of criteria for defining southern, western, southwestern, or Texan Jewish identity. What mattered was that he differentiated Texas Jews from all other Jews, and by doing so he defined them as a distinct community. The particular coloration that this difference took depended on the circumstances and on whatever rhetorical approach would most effectively suit his purpose at the time. The southernness of Texas Jews was by no means the only identification available to Goldberg, but it was one with a particularly strong resonance among the Texans he saw as his potential audience, those who were either native to the state or who had accepted Texas history, real and mythical, as their own. Whether or not they really were southerners in any meaningful way could hardly have mattered to Goldberg, as his rapid shift after World War I to a less regional perspective demonstrates, as long as they thought they were southerners and would respond enthusiastically to a regional appeal.

Today, as many Texas Jews, not to mention non-Jewish Texans, continue to emphasize their difference from other (and lesser?) Americans, it is as important as ever to examine why and

how they do so, for, as the journalist John Bainbridge once observed, "Texas is a mirror in which Americans see themselves reflected, not life-sized but, as in a distorting mirror, bigger than life."⁷⁹ Lessons learned from Texas Jews about who and what they are, and, more importantly, who and what they are not, apply to the methods through which Jews in communities across the nation define themselves alongside and in opposition to other Jews and to non-Jews. They suggest that Jewish identity is a mutable and malleable creation of particular social circumstances, and that for all the profound importance of religious faith and historical experience, it is as susceptible to ideology and marketing as more superficial aspects of identity.

NOTES

¹ *Jewish Herald*, March 17, 1910.

² "Dallas Mob Hangs Negro from Pole at Elks' Arch," *Dallas Morning News*, March 4, 1910; Brian Anderson, "1910: Historical eyesore; Lynching turned downtown centerpiece into disgraceful reminder," Hidden History of Dallas (July 3, 2002) <http://www.dallasnews.com/s/dws/spe/2002/hiddenhistory/1901-1925/070002dnhharch.41b518d.html> [accessed March 22, 2004].

³ For a survey of topics covered in the *Herald* during the Goldberg years, see Bryan Edward Stone, "'Texas News for Texas Jews': Edgar Goldberg and the *Texas Jewish Herald*," *The (Houston) Jewish Herald-Voice Rosh Hashanah Edition*, September 1995: 6-23, reprinted as "Edgar Goldberg and Forty Years of the *Texas Jewish Herald*," *Western States Jewish History* 30 (July 1998): 290-314.

⁴ In its own editorial the day after the lynching, the *Dallas Morning News* emphasized that the mob was not moved by "a lust for bloodshed nor by a desire to witness the torture of a fiend," but by "their contempt for the delays, reversals and failures of the courts." This despite the fact that Brooks's trial had only begun that day, just over one week from the date of his arrest. *Dallas Morning News*, March 4, 1910.

⁵ *Jewish Herald*, March 17, 1910.

⁶ Henry Jacob Horowitz, "Just a Reflection," *Western States Jewish History* 30 (July 1998): 316.

⁷ *Jewish Herald*, July 15, 1909; March 17, 1910; February 29, 1912.

⁸ Anna Bashear, "The Southland," *Jewish Herald*, March 5, 1909; "The American Jew as Statesman," *Jewish Herald*, February 17, 1910.

⁹ *Jewish Herald*, February 1, 1912. To be sure, suspicion of New York's dominant role within American Jewry was common in Jewish communities throughout the country, but Goldberg's regional rhetoric was unusual.

¹⁰ "About the Herald," *Jewish Herald*, July 1, 1909.

¹¹ Goldberg, a native southerner, rarely acknowledged the state's western character, though he regularly carried news from Fort Worth, El Paso, and other cities more generally aligned with the state's western than its southern aspect. He was not, however, oblivious to the state's regional complexity. In 1909, he published "The Last Trail of Jesse Bolande," an adventure story with no Jewish significance whatsoever, and, in 1912, he added a permanent heading on the front page identifying the *Herald* as "The Only Jewish Newspaper Published in the Southwest." Years later, as competition developed, he adjusted the heading to read, "The Oldest Jewish Newspaper Published in the Southwest." *Jewish Herald*, January 28, 1909; February 15, 1912; and May 22, 1924.

¹² A similar multiplicity appears in Romeo Alaeff's marvelous documentary film about his Dallas family, *Believe* (1994), when he describes his brother Gabe, the product of a mixed marriage, as "half Jewish, half Christian, and half Texan."

¹³ *Jewish Herald*, July 28, 1910. Goldberg was not the only figure to think of Texas Jewry as a unit. In the first published histories of the state's Jews, Rabbi Henry Cohen approached the subject with a statewide scope. The Texas Zionist Organization was established in 1905 to coordinate the activities of small Zionist groups in several Texas cities and, in 1927 Texas rabbis from across the state formed the Kallah of Texas Rabbis, which met regularly to share and discuss learned papers on Jewish topics. They all might have agreed with John Steinbeck's later observation that "Texas is one thing" and that "[f]or all its enormous range of space, climate, and physical appearance, and for all the internal squabbles, contentions, and strivings, Texas has a tight cohesiveness perhaps stronger than any other section of America." Henry Cohen, "Settlement of the Jews in Texas," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 2 (1894): 139-156; Henry Cohen, "The Jews in Texas," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 4 (1896): 9-19; Louis A. Freed, "Zionism in Texas Thirty-Five Years Ago," Texas Jewish Historical Society Records, box 3A174, Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin (hereafter, Center for American History); John Steinbeck, *Travels with Charley* (London, 1962), 203.

¹⁴ For the outlines of this debate, see Mark K. Bauman and Bobbie Malone, "Introduction: Directions in Southern Jewish History," *American Jewish History* 85 (September 1997): 191-193; and Mark K. Bauman, *The Southerner as American: Jewish Style* (Cincinnati, 1996). See also Stephen J. Whitfield, "The Braided Identity of Southern Jewry," *American Jewish History* 77 (March 1988): 363-387.

¹⁵ The earliest crypto-Jewish settlers in northern Mexico and South Texas were members of a settlement established under the direction of Luis de Carvajal, a descendant of Portuguese *conversos*. For the history of the Carvajal family and colony, see Martin A. Cohen, "The Autobiography of Luis De Carvajal, the Younger," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly*

55 (March 1966): 277–318; Seymour B. Liebman, *The Enlightened: The Writings Of Luis De Carvajal, El Mozo* (Coral Gables, FL, 1967); Martin A. Cohen, *The Martyr* (Philadelphia, 1973); and Harriet and Fred Rochlin, *Pioneer Jews: A New Life In The Far West* (Boston, 1984). For speculation about the ongoing presence of crypto-Jewish families in South Texas, see Carlos Montalvo Larralde, “Chicano Jews In South Texas” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California at Los Angeles, 1978) and Richard G. Santos, “Chicanos of Jewish Descent in Texas,” *Western States Jewish Historical Quarterly* 15 (July 1983): 327–333. For a treatment of similar issues in a neighboring state, see Henry J. Tobias, *A History of the Jews in New Mexico* (Albuquerque, 1990).

¹⁶ For coverage of Texas Jewry during the earliest years of Anglo settlement, see Henry Cohen’s articles cited above; David Lefkowitz and Ephraim Frisch, *One Hundred Years of Jewry in Texas* (Dallas, 1936); Phil Hewitt, *The Jewish Texans* (San Antonio, 1974); Natalie Ornish, *Pioneer Jewish Texans* (Dallas, 1989); Ruthe Winegarten and Cathy Schechter, *Deep in the Heart: The Lives and Legends of Texas Jews, a Photographic History* (Austin, 1990); and Bryan Edward Stone, “West of Center: Jews on the Real and Imagined Frontiers of Texas” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 2003).

¹⁷ Elaine Maas, “Jews,” in *The Ethnic Groups of Houston*, ed. Fred R. von der Mehden (Houston, 1984), 141. See also Helena Frenkil Schlam, “The Early Jews of Houston” (master’s thesis, Ohio State University, 1971), and Elaine Maas, “The Jews of Houston: An Ethnographic Study” (Ph.D. dissertation, Rice University, 1973).

¹⁸ U.S. Census as reported in “United States Historical Census Data Browser” <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/census> [accessed December 20, 2002]; *American Jewish Yearbook 1914–1915* (Philadelphia, 1915), 376.

¹⁹ There is some dispute about the founding dates of the first Jewish communal organizations in Houston. Rabbi Henry Cohen records that Houston Jews established a cemetery in 1844 and Congregation Beth Israel in 1854. Henry Barnston, Beth Israel’s longtime rabbi, confirms the 1854 establishment of the congregation and records that by 1859 it had 22 members. Anne Nathan Cohen, in the congregation’s official history, cautiously accepts its 1854 origin, but she notes suggestively that “[r]ecords of the first five years [1854–1859] apparently are non-existent,” and she reprints the congregation’s official charter dated 1859. Decades later, Helena Frenkil Schlam concluded that it was more likely the cemetery that was created in 1854 followed by the congregation in 1859. Ruthe Winegarten and Cathy Schechter accept these later dates. Henry Cohen, “Settlement of the Jews in Texas,” 152; Henry Barnston, “The History of the Jews of Houston,” Small Collection 5244, American Jewish Archives; Anne Nathan Cohen, *The Centenary History – Congregation Beth Israel of Houston, Texas, 1854–1954* (Houston, 1954), 1, vii; Maas, “Jews,” 141; Schlam, “Early Jews of Houston,” 38–46; Winegarten and Schechter, *Deep in the Heart*, 21.

Rabbi Cohen and his followers, including Anne Nathan Cohen in the *Centenary History*, were in error in dating the origins of these institutions, and Schlam’s revised dates are correct. In 1852, eight years after Rabbi Cohen’s date for the establishment of Houston’s cemetery, the *Occident* meticulously reported the dedication of a Jewish cemetery in Galveston, which the New Orleans rabbi performing the service praised as “the first public

assemblage" of Jews in the state, where they had met to "lay the foundation-stone . . . of the edifice of Judaism." The *Galveston News* described the service as "the first ever performed publicly by a Hebrew minister in Texas." As participants in this event would surely have been aware of the existence of an eight-year-old Jewish cemetery in nearby Houston, it can safely be assumed that none existed—or at the very least that it had not been consecrated by a rabbi nor had anyone yet been buried in it. Schlam's later dates, moreover—1854 for the cemetery and 1859 for the congregation—correspond to coverage of these events in the national Jewish press. In 1855, the *Occident* reported the creation of the Hebrew Benevolent Association of Houston, the first business of which was to collect "a sufficient amount of money to build a fence around their grave-yard," a fitting activity one year (but surely not eleven years) after its creation. *Die Deborah* recognized the establishment of Congregation Beth Israel in September 1859, two months before the congregation ran an advertisement in the *American Israelite* for a rabbi. The *Occident* also reprinted a letter from Houston in September 1859 describing the creation of the "Pioneer Congregation of Texas," which made no mention of any informal organization or worship services during the previous five years. "Ceremonial at Galveston," *Occident* 10 (August 29, 1852): 379–384; "Hebrew Burial Ground," *Galveston News*, August 31, 1852; "Houston, Texas, Hebrew Benevolent Association," *Occident* 13 (July 1855): 199–200; *Die Deborah* 5 (September 16, 1859); *American Israelite* (November 18, 1859); M. R. to the Editor, *Occident* 17 (September 8, 1859): 144. The reference to *Die Deborah* comes from the American Jewish Archives card file index, in English, of that German-language periodical.

²⁰ Houston figure is for Harris County. U.S. Census as reported in "United States Historical Census Data Browser," <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/census> [accessed February 4, 2003]; *American Jewish Yearbook*. The estimate of 7,000 comes from the director of the United Jewish Charities in Houston, reported in the *Jewish Herald*, November 12, 1914, so the actual number was probably higher by 1920.

²¹ "Statistics of Jewish Immigrants Who Arrived at the Port of Galveston, Texas, During the Years 1907–1913, Inclusive, Handled by 'Jewish Immigrants' Information Bureau' of Galveston, Texas," Henry Cohen Papers, Manuscript Collection 263, American Jewish Archives. Nationally, only Kansas City, St. Paul, and Omaha received more of the Galveston immigrants than Houston. The point of the program was to disperse the immigrants as broadly as possible, and, accordingly, Schiff initially discouraged immigrant settlement in Texas cities so close to their point of arrival, although he later changed his mind. The large number of immigrants that nevertheless remained in Houston attests to the city's great attractiveness both to the immigrants and to the movement's organizers.

While a handful of Schiff's immigrants had destinations in southern cities, the Galveston Movement generally discouraged such settlement. According to historian Bernard Marinbach, Israel Zangwill, the movement's European coordinator, recommended settling Jews in southern cities because "he had heard that more whites were needed, to diminish the influence of blacks," but Schiff rejected the idea precisely because "he did not want the Jews to be used as pawns in the poisoned racial politics of the South." Schiff had rejected Charleston, South Carolina, moreover, as a port of entry because it was reported to him to

be inhospitable to Jewish immigrants. Bernard Marinbach, *Galveston: Ellis Island of the West* (Albany, 1983), 11–12. See also Hollace Ava Weiner, “Removal Approval: The Industrial Removal Office Experience in Fort Worth, Texas,” *Southern Jewish History* 4 (2001): 1–44.

²² *Official Reports of Battles Embracing the Defence of Vicksburg* misidentifies Goldberg’s uncle, Isaac Aaron Gleitzman, as Avon Glitzman and lists him as “severely wounded” at Donelson. In *The Provincials*, Eli Evans notes Gleitzman as one of several Jews who fought for the Confederacy. “While the Confederacy awarded him its Cross of Honor for ‘conspicuous gallantry in the field,’” Evans writes, “he was proudest that he had never eaten any *tréfa* during his entire four years of military service. His family retains to this day the two mess kits he carried with him during the war, one for meat and one for milk.” *Official Reports of Battles Embracing the Defence of Vicksburg* (Richmond, 1863), 117; Eli Evans, *The Provincials: A Personal History of Jews in the South* (New York, 1980), 63–64.

²³ Edgar Goldberg, “EGO,” *Texas Jewish Herald*, January 6, 1927. “EGO” was a pseudonym Goldberg composed from his initials and under which he wrote a recurring column.

²⁴ *Jewish Herald*, December 10, 1908, through January 14, 1909.

²⁵ Due to a publication error, an earlier article by this author mistakenly described Goldberg as having been “a jailer’s apprentice,” clearly a significant difference. The error was preserved in republication. Bryan Edward Stone, “Texas News for Texas Jews: Edgar Goldberg and the *Texas Jewish Herald*,” *Jewish Herald-Voice*, September 1995, 6–23, reprinted as “Edgar Goldberg and Forty Years of the *Texas Jewish Herald*.” *Western States Jewish History* 30 (July 1998): 290–314.

²⁶ “Goldburgs [sic] Dream,” Typescript on Sanders Engraving Company Letterhead, [c. 1900], author’s collection.

²⁷ According to the *American Jewish Yearbook*, whose population estimates are notoriously inaccurate but nevertheless the best available, Texas had 16,000 Jewish residents in 1907. Louisiana had 12,000 and Virginia 10,000, though Virginia’s 1900 Jewish population was later reported at 15,000. *American Jewish Yearbook 1909–1910* (Philadelphia, 1910); *American Jewish Yearbook 1914–1915* (Philadelphia, 1915).

²⁸ Of southern Jewish papers only the *Baltimore Jewish Times*, founded in 1919, and of western papers only the *Intermountain Jewish News* of Denver (1915) rival the *Herald* in longevity.

²⁹ This list was compiled from *Jewish Newspapers and Periodicals on Microfilm* (Cincinnati, 1984) and “World Jewish Newspapers & Periodicals on Microfilm” <http://www.nypl.org/research/chss/jws/newspapers.html> [accessed April 13, 2004]. Because these directories are based respectively on the holdings of the American Jewish Periodical Center and the Dorot Jewish Division of the New York Public Library rather than on the actual histories of the papers they include, they do not necessarily provide the years of these papers’ complete runs, nor do they include the names of their editors. This data remains to be gathered and verified.

³⁰ “Salutatory,” *Jewish South*, October 14, 1877. For more on Browne, including his editorship of the *Jewish South*, see Janice Rothschild Blumberg, “Rabbi Alphabet Browne: The Atlanta Years,” *Southern Jewish History* 5 (2002): 1–42. For good, though aging, surveys

of the American Jewish press, see Robert Singerman, "The American Jewish Press, 1823–1983: A Bibliographic Survey of Research and Studies," *American Jewish History* 73 (June 1984): 422–444, and Arthur A. Goren, "The Jewish Press," in *The Ethnic Press in the United States: A Historical Analysis and Handbook*, ed. Sally M. Miller (New York, 1987), 203–228.

³¹ Browne published Wessolowsky's dispatches from cities throughout the South, including those from Texas, and the letters stand as one of the most detailed first-hand accounts of southern Jewry in the years after Reconstruction. They are reprinted in Louis Schmier, ed., *Reflections of Southern Jewry: The Letters of Charles Wessolowsky, 1878–1879* (Macon, 1982); Blumberg, "Rabbi Alphabet Browne," 28.

³² Hollace Ava Weiner also refers to a monthly, the *Texas Israelite*, which was published in Fort Worth from 1908 to 1912. Hollace Ava Weiner, *Jewish Stars in Texas: Rabbis and Their Work* (College Station, TX, 1999), 91n.45.

³³ Quoted in "Editorial Comment," *Jewish Herald-Voice, Passover Eightieth Anniversary Edition*, April 2, 1988, 4.

³⁴ "Salutatory," *Jewish Herald*, September 24, 1908.

³⁵ Edgar Goldberg to Henry Cohen, July 8, 1924, Henry Cohen Papers, box 3M241, Center for American History.

³⁶ *N. W. Ayer & Son's American Newspaper Annual*, volumes for 1910 through 1945.

³⁷ "Adath Yeshurun Synagogue Dedicated," *Jewish Herald*, September 24, 1908.

³⁸ *Jewish Herald*, June 9, 1910.

³⁹ Robert Singerman observes that nineteenth-century Jewish papers were generally edited by "feuding rabbis who seldom failed to abuse their theological rivals while preaching the necessity for Jewish unity." Goldberg's approach offers a notable contrast. Singerman, "The American Jewish Press," 423.

⁴⁰ *Jewish Herald*, February 10, 1910.

⁴¹ *Jewish Herald*, July 25, 1912.

⁴² "Local Notes," *Jewish Herald*, August 12, 1909.

⁴³ Mrs. B. Lurie, "Intermarriage," *Jewish Herald*, June 23, 1910; "Parochial Schools," *Jewish Herald*, August 18, 1910; "That Beaumont Ad for a Rabbi," *Jewish Herald*, May 26, 1910, and "Jewish Ostentation," *Jewish Herald*, July 28, 1910.

⁴⁴ Samuel Rosinger, "Do Your Duty By Leo Frank," *Jewish Herald*, December 17, 1914; "Louis D. Brandeis," *Jewish Herald*, February 3, 1916; and "Jews and the War," *Jewish Herald*, September 3, 1914. Also see, for example, David Goldberg, "Pertinent Questions," *Jewish Herald*, September 30, 1920, and "If We Were to Keep to the Point," *Jewish Herald*, July 26, 1923.

⁴⁵ David Goldberg, "Up in the Air," *Jewish Herald*, June 26, 1924, and "Should a Jew Oppose the Klan?" *Jewish Herald*, August 21, 1924. He answered positively to the latter question.

⁴⁶ Although such organizations were generally referred to as "Hebrew Free Loan" societies, the *Herald* nevertheless reported the establishment in Houston of a "Jewish Free Loan Society." *Jewish Herald*, January 14, 1909.

⁴⁷ See, for example, "The Galveston Movement: Movement to Divert Jewish Immigration from New York Is Interesting," *Jewish Herald*, November 12, 1908, original credited to "H. J. Haskell in Kansas City Star"; Henry Cohen, "The Galveston Immigration Movement," *Jewish Herald*, February 5, 1909.

⁴⁸ Oscar Leonard, "Come to Texas," *Jewish Herald*, January 6, 1910. Leonard's affiliation is provided in a later article, "The Settlement and the Immigrant," *Jewish Herald*, January 8, 1914.

⁴⁹ *Jewish Herald*, February 10, 1910.

⁵⁰ *Jewish Herald*, December 31, 1908; August 19, 1909; and July 28, 1910.

⁵¹ *Jewish Herald*, November 26, 1914. Palestine (pronounced PAL-a-steen) is a town in East Texas. Goldberg once joked cryptically that "Possibly the reason for Texas being such a hotbed for Zionists is the fact that Palestine is centrally and conveniently located." *Jewish Herald*, July 28, 1910. Like the rest of the South, Texas Jewry was predominantly Reform, and so Texas was far from a Zionist stronghold. Nonetheless, Goldberg, a staunch non-Zionist, may have exaggerated the opposition's strength, especially if doing so allowed him to make a good joke at their expense.

⁵² G. George Fox, "The End of an Era," in ed. Stanley F. Chyet, *Lives and Voices: A Collection of American Jewish Memoirs* (Philadelphia, 1972), 283. Hollace Weiner observes that the two papers "competed for readers, writers, and endorsements" and that they both "touted themselves as the Southwest's largest, oldest Jewish journal." Weiner, *Jewish Stars*, 91. The *Herald* undisputedly preceded the *Monitor*, but Fox nevertheless neglected to mention the older paper in his memoir, implying that his was the state's first Jewish paper.

⁵³ When the *Monitor's* editorial board opted in 1921 to add Yiddish-language material, the staunch acculturationist Fox resigned his position as editor. Weiner, *Jewish Stars*, 95.

⁵⁴ Fox, "The End of an Era," 283.

⁵⁵ Theodore A. Bingham, "Foreign Criminals in New York," *North American Review* 188 (September 1908): 383.

⁵⁶ George Kibbe Turner, "The Daughters of the Poor," *McClure's Magazine* 34 (November 1909): 45-61.

⁵⁷ In fact, there was a substantial amount of Jewish crime in New York and other American cities, and Jews were, indeed, active in organized prostitution at every level though not necessarily out of proportion to their numbers. Estimates were difficult to make and generally undependable, but one of the most reliable surveys, conducted in New York in 1910, showed Jews to represent nineteen percent of women arrested for prostitution, roughly the same proportion as the Jewish population at that time. Edward J. Bristow, *Prostitution and Prejudice: The Jewish Fight Against White Slavery, 1870-1939* (New York, 1983), 162.

⁵⁸ Arthur A. Goren, *New York Jews and the Quest for Community: The Kehillah Experiment, 1908-1922* (New York, 1970), 28, 51, 58.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 143-144.

⁶⁰ *American Hebrew*, October 15, 1915; *Houston Post*, August 24, 1940.

⁶¹ Henry J. Dannenbaum, "That White Slave Traffic," *Jewish Herald*, May 12, 1910.

⁶² Bristow, *Prostitution and Prejudice*, 271.

⁶³ "Henry J. Dannenbaum," *Jewish Herald*, May 4, 1911.

⁶⁴ As Goldberg was well aware, the South had already produced a number of Jewish leaders of national reputation, including former international B'nai B'rith president Leo N. Levi, a Victoria, Texas, native.

⁶⁵ J. L. Magnes to Henry J. Dannenbaum, August 25, 1911, printed in *Jewish Herald*, March 21, 1912.

⁶⁶ Bristow, *Prostitution and Prejudice*, 275.

⁶⁷ "That 'Big Problem': Extracts from New Orleans B'nai B'rith Day Address By Henry J. Dannenbaum," *Jewish Herald*, February 1, 1912.

⁶⁸ "Editorial," *Jewish Herald*, January 18, 1912. Part of Goldberg's point in claiming that Dannenbaum was "better qualified" as a national leader seems to have been that Texas was relatively free of urban vice, as indeed, in contrast to New York, it was relatively free of urban anything. In fact, Goldberg and Dannenbaum studiously ignored the existence of Jewish prostitution in Texas. Dannenbaum relied on lawyer Samuel London's evidence that Jewish prostitutes were being directed toward New York while overlooking the fact that London's legal clients were Texans. Houses of prostitution, many with Jewish residents, operated freely in Galveston, Houston, Fort Worth, El Paso, and probably in other Texas cities as well. Rabbi G. George Fox of Fort Worth noted that in the years of the Galveston Movement, "Galveston . . . became the distributing point for prostitutes from both the Old World and South America." Although inland, Fort Worth "was an important railroad center, so that in a comparatively short time we found a large number of Jewish prostitutes in the city." Their reputation spread, and soon "ranchmen were heard to make remarks in hotels and drugstores about the 'Jew whores.'" Fox, "The End of an Era," 280. See also Bristow, *Prostitution and Prejudice*, 179, who cites several reports of Texas vice inspectors.

⁶⁹ "We trust that all members of the order among our readers will take notice" of Kraus's observation, the *Herald* responded ironically, "and shape their attitude accordingly." "The B'nai B'rith and Henry J. Dannenbaum," *American Hebrew*, February 9, 1912; *Jewish Herald*, December 5, 1912. While Kraus may have been critical of Dannenbaum on the Russian trade treaty issue, Kraus, like Dannenbaum, was an outspoken activist against Jewish white slavers. As early as 1907 Kraus began a campaign on behalf of B'nai B'rith against Jews engaged in white slavery, working first to have an Illinois statute enacted against white slavery in general and then to have jailed every Jewish prostitute and every Jewish procurer in Chicago, even before their gentile counterparts. See *Adolf Kraus, Reminiscences and Comments* (Chicago, 1925), 177-178.

⁷⁰ "That 'Big Problem,'" *Jewish Herald*, February 1, 1912; "A Gentleman from Texas," *American Hebrew*, January 26, 1912. As the *Herald* later reported, District 7 soon passed a unanimous resolution of support for Dannenbaum. *Jewish Herald*, May 16, 1912.

⁷¹ *Jewish Herald*, February 1, 1912. Goldberg reprinted Sulzberger's editorial with its heading intact, and Dannenbaum seems to have delighted in the title Sulzberger had given him. In a rebuttal in the *Herald*, Dannenbaum referred to himself repeatedly as "A Gentleman from Texas." *Jewish Herald*, February 22, 1912.

⁷² *Jewish Herald*, February 1, 1912. Dannenbaum wrote regularly for the *Herald* during this period, and, judging from the style and tone of this unsigned editorial, it is possible that he wrote it himself.

⁷³ *Jewish Herald*, February 22, 1912; February 8, 1912.⁷⁴ *Jewish Herald*, August 29, 1912; September 11, 1912.

⁷⁵ The most conspicuous example of Zionism and anti-Zionism clashing in a Texas synagogue, as well as a later example of Texas Jews distancing themselves from national Jewish leadership, was the "Houston Controversy" of 1942–1943, during which the anti-Zionist leadership of Congregation Beth Israel, along with more than half of the members, supported a list of "Basic Principles" to which all new congregants were required to agree in order to receive full voting membership. Among these principles was a statement opposing the creation of a Jewish state. After the passage of the Basic Principles, more than 200 members left the temple and established Congregation Emanu-El, inviting Beth Israel's young Zionist assistant rabbi, Robert Kahn, who had resigned in protest of the principles, to serve as their rabbi. The event was widely covered in the national Jewish press, where the general sentiment was strongly against the principles. Rabbi Stephen Wise wrote that "the Jewish Grand Inquisition of Houston" had committed an "evil and self-damning deed" that was an expression of "their unwisdom and bigotry." Stephen Wise, "The Shame of Houston," *Opinion: A Journal of Jewish Life and Letters* (February 1944): 5. For details on the Houston Controversy, see Bryan Edward Stone, "West of Center," 290–312; and Howard R. Greenstein, *Turning Point: Zionism and Reform Judaism* (Chico, CA, 1981).

⁷⁶ Goldberg rarely covered activities of the Texas Klan in the *Herald*, nor did he respond to antisemitic charges in Klan newspapers. His opinion on the matter was ironically similar to the Kehillah's initial response to white slavery: press attention, even in a Jewish newspaper, would only draw further attention to a problem that would disappear on its own if ignored. In a letter to Rabbi Henry Cohen, who had complained of the *Herald's* silence about the Klan, Goldberg explained that "the Klan is a Protestant ailing and should be cured by the Protestant. Preachments in a Jewish Newspaper & Pulpit to Jews would not reach the people affected. Consequently the fight on the Klan should be made by the secular press." Edgar Goldberg to Henry Cohen, July 8, 1924, Henry Cohen Papers, box 3M241, Center for American History. For more on the Texas Klan, see Stone, "West of Center;" Rosalind Benjet, "The Ku Klux Klan and the Jewish Community of Dallas, 1921–1923," *Southern Jewish History* 6 (2003): 133–162.

⁷⁷ *Jewish Herald-Voice*, January 7, 1938.

⁷⁸ Fredrik Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (Boston, 1969), 15.

⁷⁹ John Bainbridge, *The Super-Americans*, reprint edition (New York, 1972), 6. For discussion of how Texas Jews have accommodated to the "Texas mystique," see Bryan Edward Stone, "'Ride 'Em, Jewboy': Kinky Friedman and the Texas Mystique," *Southern Jewish History* 1 (1998): 23–42.

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

A Prussian-born Jewish Woman on the
Florida Frontier: Excerpts from the
Memoir of Bertha Zadek Dzialynski

by

Canter Brown, Jr.

On July 10, 1944, Bertha Zadek Dzialynski relaxed on the sun porch of her cottage in Neptune Beach, Florida, during a birthday celebration. So engaged, she pondered a serious personal question: "What does one do at eighty, I ask myself, one who has led an active life, who is still active?" Bertha added, "The thought troubles me." Nearby, daughter Ruth Hope Leon heard the question spoken aloud and responded: "Do? Why, Mamma, one writes a book." Bertha recorded what then occurred. "I laugh, but a friend interrupts eagerly," she wrote. "You must write a book. It is said that one book is possible to every person and your experiences would make several. Today you must begin."¹

Fortunately for those interested in the history of southern Jewry, of the experiences of women, or of the saga of rugged frontier Florida in the late nineteenth century, Bertha Dzialynski (pronounced, Duh-LIN-ski) eagerly accepted the challenge. Eventually she produced a typed, double-spaced manuscript of nearly two hundred pages that related the details of a truly fascinating life; one lived in the face of tragedies of disastrous proportions as well as one sparkling with happiness, delight, and satisfaction. She recreated, as well, word pictures of times and places otherwise remote from our attention. Yet, in their telling, they resonate to the present day with insight and enduring meaning.

The product of Bertha Zadek Dzialynski's efforts in 1944 thus comes to us as an achievement of large proportions. The historian

Mark I. Greenberg, among others, has touched on the difficulties involved in opening up such a life and in understanding the impact of southern Jewish women generally during the nineteenth century. "Despite cultural obstacles in both Jewish and southern culture to their full equality, women empowered themselves by working within and at times stretching the boundaries of accepted gender roles," Greenberg observed. "By negotiating their dual identities as Jews and women, they sought to overcome limitations in Jewish and southern culture and to find avenues for advancement," he continued. As Greenberg discerned from his examination of Savannah, Georgia, "The history of . . . Jewish women speaks to the boundaries southern and Jewish culture set on gender norms, to women's ability to draw from past experience and present circumstance in order to alter these roles, and to the importance ethnic heritage played in women's evolving private and public lives."²

Bertha Dzialynski's written voice speaks vividly to the complexities inherent in determining those boundaries, assessing those abilities, and finding strength in that ethnic heritage. Here is a human example of an individual struggling to survive and thrive in a new and foreign culture, an example that puts flesh and blood on the skeleton of statistics and generalizations that often is all that is provided. She and those around her deal by the handful with cultural, religious, ethnic, and otherwise personal quandaries without clear solution and do so in the more-or-less practical and understandable ways that permitted life to proceed, sometimes sadly and sometimes happily, on a day-to-day basis. Oversimplification goes by the board. As a woman Bertha might boldly confront the men in her life one moment, while docilely and meekly accommodating them the next. On occasion she simply preferred escape. Always the same individual, she still finds words to express the multiple aspects of a life filled with boundaries but also with contradiction and uncertainty.

A note of caution should be sounded regarding Bertha's voice in relating these details of and insights about her life. Having lived eight decades by the 1940s, she necessarily wrote within the context of recent years even if she intended to tell the story of

*Bertha Zadek Dzialynski seated with her daughters
At the time of this picture, Ida Clare, on the left,
was married to William Coleman, and
Ruth Hope was married to David A. Leon.
(Photo courtesy of Carol Coleman Weil)*

earlier times. Society had changed markedly during that period, with women's roles especially coming in for revision and expansion. Might she intentionally or otherwise have written to fulfill the image of herself that she held in 1944, as opposed to the reality of the 1880s? The answer to that question remains unclear and, in any event, almost certainly ranges somewhere between yes and no. As the reader will discover, the facts as she recalled them generally proved to be so accurate as to suggest that she wrote with the benefit of a contemporary journal and, possibly, a collection of newspaper clippings. The tone, however, came from within her.

Whatever cultures circumscribed women's lives, nineteenth-century reminiscences from individuals of modest means remain hard to find, especially so for Florida. "The physical and social challenges of nineteenth-century Florida exacted a heavy toll on many pioneers," historians Raymond Arsenault and Gary R. Mormino recently noted in an introduction to a collection of one woman's letters. They then observed of the work's subject, "Florida emboldened her." Yet, in good part our understanding of the reality of such a life eludes us from lack of first-hand insight and description. Bertha Dzialynski's memoir, without doubt, will aid in filling that void.³

The void appears even greater regarding Florida's Jewish pioneers. The history of Jewish involvement in the state may run rich and deep, but, for the most part, it has not been set down in print. Several excellent works do help to lay a foundation for understanding, but they are few. Henry Alan Green and Marcia Kerstein Zerivitz's *Mosaic: Jewish Life in Florida*, for instance, offers the only general overview of the subject. An excellent work, it nonetheless aims only to provide contextual material for appreciation of a broadly conceived and popular museum exhibit. A reminiscence by Max White, a mobile businessman, covers four years of the nineteenth century at Tampa and Key West.⁴

Given that so little material on Florida's nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Jewish residents can be accessed easily, if at all, the Dzialynski memoir offers the promise of a meaningful step forward. It permits us, as was alluded to earlier, to immerse ourselves in the rarely glimpsed reality of a Jewish

woman's personal and private life within a still mostly rural and southern state at a time when the foundations of modern society had begun to settle. It details the hows and whys of day-to-day acceptance of a generally Protestant Christian world by a woman and a family deeply connected to Jewish roots. It, therefore, speaks to acculturation and to the preservation and appreciation of heritage and religious devotion. Life's complexities distilled to human experiences are laid bare, as witnessed and filtered by an articulate Jewish woman of intelligence and education.

Note should be taken that, when cross-connections possible between acculturation and deep commitment to Jewish faith and heritage are considered, the Dzialynski family stood out. Bertha's father-in-law, Philip, prided himself as a Hebrew scholar and attempted to bring Jewish culture and religious practice to those around him wherever he lived. He had helped to lead Savannah's Congregation B'nai B'rith Jacob and to organize the city's Hebrew Collegiate Institute.⁵ His brother, Morris, played a similar role in the affairs of Jacksonville's Ahavath Chesed synagogue. Philip missed its dedication in 1882 due to pressing business affairs but made his way there as soon as possible thereafter. He also traveled the state of Florida time and again to conduct observances, such as for Yom Kippur. Still, Philip and his relations relished Christmas celebrations and thought nothing of contributing to the construction of a local Methodist church.⁶

About Bertha Zadek Dzialynski

Bertha Zadek's life began in Newstadt, in what was about to become Germany, on July 10, 1864. She remembered the place as "a village in the section which once belonged to Poland but which in one of the partitions of that unhappy country in the late eighteenth century had fallen to Prussia." Concerning the town she added, "It was about four hours by train from Posen." Her parents, David Zadek and Caroline Braun Zadek, died when she was a child, and she came under the care of her aunt, Ernestine Braun, who saw to her education. The young woman eventually graduated from Marinen Seminary, by which time Ernestine and other family members had arranged for Bertha to join another aunt,

Pauline Braun (Bertha always called her “Tante”),⁷ and her family in Gainesville, Florida. She undertook the journey in 1880.⁸

In Florida, Bertha found a warm family welcome and, very quickly, love and marriage. In Gainesville, her Aunt Pauline’s husband, Tobias Brown (formerly Braun), prospered, and the couple made a happy home for their children, Benjamin, Max, Bertha, Tillie, and Joseph, as well as their newly arrived relation from Germany.⁹ They also welcomed friends and, in October 1880, included young Jennie Dzialynski Herzog¹⁰ and her daughter, Ida, within the household. The Dzialynskis ranked as one of the state’s premier Jewish families, with Jennie’s uncle, Morris Dzialynski,¹¹ a Duval County Democratic party leader, on the verge of election as Jacksonville’s mayor. Jennie’s father, Philip Dzialynski,¹² and his family then lived deep in the peninsula at Fort Meade. He, too, had earned respect for civic, business, and political accomplishments. Jennie understandably praised her brother George¹³ to Bertha. “He was,” Bertha recalled, “perhaps the greatest catch in south Florida.” Although the young woman shied away from commitment at so young an age, on May 7, 1882, the couple wed in Gainesville. Following a brief honeymoon, they set up house-keeping in Fort Meade and remained there for most of the next decade.¹⁴

Historical Setting

The excerpts that follow, constituting about one-fifth of Bertha’s memoir, survey the lives of Bertha and George Dzialynski and their friends and loved ones at Fort Meade, Florida, from 1882 to 1890. This period marked a time of remarkable change for peninsular Florida. Still remote and sparsely populated in 1880, the region was transformed at mid-decade, thanks to railroads built by mogul Henry Bradley Plant. The population of Polk County, in which Fort Meade lay, accordingly jumped from 3,181 in 1880 to 6,575 in 1885, 7,905 by 1890, and 12,472 by century’s end.¹⁵

Fort Meade likewise saw change, albeit not necessarily typical of neighboring towns. What one man in the 1870s called “an old settled place,” it sat on the western bank of the Peace River about fifty miles east-southeast of Tampa. Fort Meade traced its

*Fort Meade's Main Street business district in the early 1890s
(From the collection of George McClelland,
photo courtesy of Canter Brown, Jr.)*

origins to the 1849 establishment of a United States Army post at the river's principal crossing, one anchoring a military road that ran from Tampa on the Gulf to Fort Pierce on the Atlantic. Destroyed for the most part by locally raised Union forces during the Civil War, the town revived in the postwar years to emerge as the center of Florida's cattle kingdom and an important site for citrus cultivation. It existed thereafter almost as a well-to-do oasis on the frontier, offering excellent business prospects to merchants and entrepreneurs such as Philip and George Dzialynski. Beginning in the mid-1880s those prospects grew when numerous affluent English families adopted the town as their winter home. Fox hunts, cricket matches, jockey club races, and lawn tennis eventually competed with cattle drives, hunting, fishing, and boating for local attention.¹⁶

The Dzialynski family's involvement with Fort Meade and the southwest Florida frontier extended well over a decade when Bertha arrived in 1882. A cattle business boom growing in intensity by the late 1860s had drawn several merchants to the vicinity,

including the county seat of Bartow, ten miles to the north. Cattleman Julius C. Rockner¹⁷ had been a partner in several stores with Philip Dzialynski's brother-in-law Jacob R. Cohen,¹⁸ a merchant formerly of Savannah and operating at Palatka on the St. Johns River in northeast Florida. Philip took charge of the Bartow outlet. He and his family remained at that village until 1874, when they relocated to Orlando. After that community's economy stagnated in 1876, he retraced his steps to Polk, where he purchased Rockner's Fort Meade store. Other than a brief sojourn in Tampa during 1880-1881, the Dzialynskis stayed in Fort Meade, where they remained when son George brought his new wife Bertha to live with them.¹⁹

Bertha Zadek Dzialynski's Memoir
*Fort Meade, 1882-1890*²⁰

Our stay in Jacksonville having ended we started to our Ft. Meade home by way of the St. Johns River and Gainesville. Those who have not taken the boat trip from Jacksonville to Sanford have missed a great deal. The beautiful St. Johns, broadening out from time to time in a series of seemingly endless lakes, then narrowing down so that the large trees and tangled undergrowth on the banks, with their hundreds of mockingbirds, seem almost to close and unite their forces across the river channel, keeps one in a continuous state of surprise and expectancy. I have seen the Rhine of song and story, but except for the history associated with it and its ruined castles and interesting terraced banks, it does not compare in beauty with the St. Johns, that long winding stream the source of which is so difficult to locate and which on a map seems to be flowing up-hill.

We spent a day each at Palatka and Sanford and drove through the citrus groves, all in full bloom with some of the previous year's fruit peeping out beneath blossom and leaf. I had never before seen a grove and I was enchanted. And to think that my new home at Ft. Meade was set in the midst of such beauty! I could scarcely wait to get there.

George Dzialynski

(From Perry Coleman, Jacksonville, photo courtesy of Canter Brown, Jr.)

We left the river at Palatka and traveled by rail to Gainesville where I packed my clothes and said goodbye. Tante cried and so did I. Our boat at Cedar Keys was in charge of Captain McKay²¹ whom George had known for a number of years. Learning that we were bride and groom he invited us to be his guests and occupy his stateroom. Unfortunately I was seasick all the way. In Tampa we spent the night at the Collins House, the only hotel in town, where Ben, George's faithful negro man, was waiting us with a

comfortable carriage. We drove through Plant city,²² stopped at Lakeland²³ for luncheon, arrived at Ft. Meade about sundown, and went straight to our cottage. Father's family had not yet returned from their visit to New York.

The sight of our home in its rural setting, so thrilled me that I forgot the fatigue and discomforts of the trip. It was a low, rambling house with a wing on each side, surrounded with orange, grapefruit, and lemon trees, all in full bloom. I had never seen anything so wonderfully beautiful! The private road to the house was nicely kept and in front of the house was the large garden of flowers which George had tended so carefully, now in full bloom. Beyond the house, in the rear, was a field of growing corn. Those who have not seen south Florida homes in their semi-tropical settings cannot picture what it was like. It was so attractive, so restful, so idyllic, that I almost wept. Here at last was home, my and George's home! I was a long ways from relatives in Germany. I was really a long ways from my relatives in Gainesville, considering the difficulty of travel between the two places, but I was satisfied, happy.

The next day Charlie Wilson,²⁴ George's best friend, came bearing a huge wedding cake and a bottle of wine. Ben prepared an excellent dinner which we invited Charlie to share. After dinner many of George's friends called and we served as refreshments Charlie's cake and wine, to which we added the few bottles of champagne left over from the case sent to us for our wedding. One bottle I saved for sentimental reasons but it was broken when our house burned in Jacksonville in 1901.²⁵

George and I settled down to the quiet routine of life in a citrus grove and each of us loved it. He worked in the flower garden each morning while Ben and I prepared breakfast, and then with his lunch, which he carried from home, while his father's family was away, he left for his business in Ft. Meade.²⁶

Mrs. Roberson²⁷ proved to be all George had assured me she would be. From her I learned much in the matter of housekeeping and from her I purchased my vegetables and poultry, going over to her house daily to select the vegetables that they might always be fresh. Ben knew what dishes George liked best and our meals

were nice and appetizing. Ben kept the house in perfect order and I filled the vases each day with fresh flowers. Minnie Roberson²⁸ lived with her brother²⁹ and his wife³⁰ and spent much of her time with me, so that with my household duties and Minnie as a frequent companion I was never lonely as I might otherwise have been during those first months in my new home.

In the autumn my father-in-law's family returned bringing George and me numerous gifts from New York. I now had the opportunity really to become acquainted with them. Fannie³¹ was three years younger than I, but we became warm friends and she spent much of her time with me. I loved George's father very dearly and felt very happy to know that he was held in high esteem in the community. Many of the natives named their children for him and he was godfather to them and many others. Whenever anyone stood in need of advice or financial assistance he appealed to "Uncle Philip" and was never refused.

In the period in which Philip grew up it was fashionable for young men to write love sonnets to their lady-loves and the man who could not do this acceptably was considered beyond the pale. For years one of our most treasured possessions was the love sonnets which Philip had written to George's mother before they were married and which George had bound into a beautiful volume. It was destroyed in the great fire in Jacksonville.

Philip loved company and his home in Ft. Meade often resembled a hotel.³² There were always several guests to midday dinner or for the weekend. Indeed, it could hardly have been otherwise, for in addition to Philip's open-handed hospitality and love of people, he was the political boss of that end of Polk County.³³ Among his guests were William D. Bloxham,³⁴ who was at the time Governor of Florida, the first Democrat to be elected after Reconstruction³⁵; H. L. Mitchell, who was later elected to that office³⁶; Father Peterman³⁷ of Tampa; Mr. Henderson of Tampa, his former partner³⁸; and Ziba King,³⁹ the "cattle king" of south Florida. Philip provided his guests with saddle horses for day-time pleasure and in the evening they played cards or talked. Governor Bloxham was an especially good judge and lover of horses and when he was inaugurated on January 4, 1881, George

Philip Dzialynski

(Photo courtesy of the Jewish Museum of Florida, Miami Beach)

rode a splendid horse to Tallahassee for the event and presented it to him, with its handsome saddle and bridle.

My mother-in-law was an excellent hostess in a quiet, dignified way, and with her large, comfortable home and staff of well trained servants, entertainment was more or less easy for her. She was a brilliant and cultured woman and a student of national and international affairs, but I was always somewhat afraid of her austerity.

Ft. Meade was as I have said a frontier town. It is on Peace River [ten] miles south of Bartow and had been established as a military post in the Second Seminole War and named for the general of Gettysburg fame.⁴⁰ In 1851 Stonewall Jackson was for a time stationed there.⁴¹ The Dzialynski development made it boom and it became an important trading post. Alligator skins

were one of the articles of commerce and in 1881 a trapper of the community contracted to supply 5000 skins to a Paris leather firm.⁴²

At the time I went there to live the houses were widely scattered and only Main Street was named. The town had previously had a great deal of lawlessness. Philip Dzialynski's friends delighted to tell the story of why in their judgment he moved to this town. One day Captain John T. Leslie,⁴³ an ex-Confederate soldier and political boss of Hillsborough County, got into a quarrel over politics with a customer in Philip's store in Tampa and shot him dead. Leslie was freed by a jury whereupon, the story went, Philip said that Tampa, with its lawlessness, was no place for him, so he moved to Ft. Meade where there was no law at all!⁴⁴ However, except for trouble with cattle rustlers, Ft. Meade was a quiet and orderly place when we lived there and no one ever locked his doors. Cattle rustlers were dealt with very promptly by enraged citizens. One day, right in front of our home, Mr. Rockner and Ben Willoughby had some trouble over cattle and Rockner was shot dead from his horse. Willoughby, however, was punished, being sent to the penitentiary for life.⁴⁵

Some of our neighbors in and around Ft. Meade were Frank Clark,⁴⁶ afterwards a Congressman; Dallas Tillis, sheriff⁴⁷; Mr. Schnediker,⁴⁸ a retired Chicago capitalist; Cab Langford,⁴⁹ citrus grower and cattleman; Mr. Evans, who married Dr. Weems' widow⁵⁰; Charlie Wilson and his brother Tom,⁵¹ lawyers, and their several brothers.

There were two churches in the town, Methodist and Episcopal. The latter had a large congregation because of the many English families in the community. Camp meetings were frequently held near by. . . .

One day George sent word from town for me to get Minnie Roberson to help me bake a nice cake as he was coming home to luncheon and bringing company. I was quite excited, feeling that the company might be some of my Gainesville relatives. We prepared a nice meal and at noon George came in with six Indians, three braves and three squaws.⁵² I had never seen an Indian before and I was frightened. George was amused and assured me that

they were civilized and harmless. I brought in the cake and passed it, but, as was their custom, they refused to eat until George and I had taken some, lest it be poisoned. They ate the whole cake and when they left presented me with a string of beads.

Indians were good customers at the store. They usually came in once a month when the moon was full and brought alligator skins to be shipped to France and made into traveling bags, belts, slippers, and pocketbooks. In exchange for skins they received groceries and dry goods. Sometimes they asked for credit and the debt was always paid at the time they promised.

The Dzialynski Family Expands

George and I were very happy when we learned that we were to have a baby. He told me to make a list of everything I would need and he would place an order with those for the store. Mrs. Roberson offered to order patterns for the baby clothes for of course it was impossible at that time to buy them ready made. My mother-in-law was most kind and asked to come frequently to her home to spend the day so that I need not be alone so much. I spent many happy hours at her home.

When the orders at the store had been filled George brought home a large package containing yards and yards of dainty handkerchief linen, beautiful embroidery, and laces. At that time babies were dressed in long petticoats and somewhat shorter dresses, with rows and rows of tucks, insertion, and edge of each garment, the shorter top dress making it possible for the trimming on the petticoat to be displayed. Mrs. Roberson and I set to work. She did the stitching, I the handwork, for by this time I had learned to embroider, do beautiful drawn work, and crochet. Soon we had stacks of dainty garments.

This was perhaps the happiest period of my life. I had had lessons in painting in Germany but had not cared very much for it. Now I took lessons from an English woman and painted several landscapes, flowers, etc., but my pictures were destroyed in the Jacksonville fire. I painted also china, plaques, lambequins,⁵³ and scarfs, which was at the time the popular thing for women of leisure to do.

I became very proud of my needlework, drawn work, and lace making, and resolved that if I should ever have any daughters some of my handwork should go into their trousseaus. It did. . . .

One day at Fort Meade at an unexpected hour George came in with Charlie Wilson. George had told him we were expecting a baby and Charlie insisted upon coming at once to offer his congratulations and himself as godfather. I told him I was planning to go to my aunt in Gainesville for confinement as I did not trust the young doctor in Fort Meade.⁵⁴ Charlie tried to dissuade me, saying that it would be perfectly safe to remain in Ft. Meade. He laughingly said that no one died in Ft. Meade and repeated the tall tale that a few years previously his grandfather had given a few acres of land to the town for a cemetery but as no one died they had to kill a man to get the cemetery started.⁵⁵ Charlie remarked that a few of the local women had a popular midwife, whom he mentioned, to attend them in confinement. I was horrified at the thought and became quite upset over Charlie's insistence that I not go to Gainesville. Charlie then said that he was only teasing, and George assured me that I should go to my aunt if I preferred to do so.

George and I wanted to be together at this the first Christmas in our own home and the anniversary of our engagement so I put off my visit to my aunt until after the holidays. My going to Gainesville for my confinement was entirely my own plan, for although George had complete confidence in the Ft. Meade doctor, he wanted me to do as I liked.

We decorated our little home for the holidays and it looked very festive. George's family was having an all-day party the day before Christmas and a tree in the evening and wanted us there. At first I hesitated about going where there were to be so many guests, but they insisted. We had a jolly time. When the gifts were distributed the servants came into the parlor for theirs along with the others. The next night George was Santa Claus at the church. We had a very happy Christmas.

Charlie Wilson tried once more in a teasing, jovial manner, but which I now believe was serious, to persuade me to remain in

Ft. Meade for my confinement. When I again grew upset over the matter Charlie switched to a string of jokes to divert me. I have often wondered whether George had not asked Charlie to dissuade me from my plan and I have wished many times that he had succeeded.

It is strange how one remembers after so many years trivial events or jokes. I recall that on this occasion Charlie said George grew his finest fruit on an Indian cemetery! I appealed to George who said it was true. The cemetery had been plowed over and all traces of the graves lost before George purchased the land and it was now partly in the town. Nevertheless I told George never to bring me any fruit from that particular grove.

Charlie also teased George about a piece of land George had planted with trees and spent large sums of money on without any returns, since the soil was evidently not suited to growing citrus fruits. Charlie called the tract "Hard Bargain". . . . Years afterwards I visited Ft. Meade and asked Cab Langford to show me the old grove, "Hard Bargain". To my surprise the depot was in the center of it and the city had spread over the tract in all directions.

It was arranged that George should stay at his father's home while I was in Gainesville, but at the last minute he changed his mind and decided to sleep and have his breakfast in our home. He would eat dinner and supper at his father's home.

George went with me to Gainesville. We took the same route in reverse over which we had come to our home to begin life together: Overland to Tampa, by boat to Cedar Keys, by rail to Gainesville.⁵⁶ Our life together had been happy. Adjustments had not been difficult and time had passed all too fast. But now we were looking to a still happier life together, to the arrival of our first born, to fulfillment. George had been all that a bride could wish. No husband could have been more affectionate and considerate, and when he knew that a baby was expected his consideration and affection for me were intensified.

Tante was happy to see me and I took my place again in the family as though I had never been away. George could stay only a week, as he had to return to Ft. Meade to get his business in order that he might come back and be with me in my confinement. He

accompanied me to Dr. N. D. Phillips'⁵⁷ office where we were assured that my condition was in every way normal. George remained with me a day longer than he had planned in order to be present at the party at which my cousin Bertha announced her engagement.

Parting with George was much more difficult than I had anticipated and I was tempted to return home with him. Had he stayed another day I feel sure I would have done so. When his first letter came telling me how he missed me and showing his anxiety for me, I was completely upset and told Tante that I felt I had made a mistake in leaving my home. She comforted me as best she could by assuring me that I had chosen the safest course and that she and Dr. Phillips could give me better attention than I would have received in my home. My relatives were cheerful and affectionate and did everything possible to divert me.

My baby was expected February 27, 1883, but George came earlier and it was lucky for the baby arrived on the 17th, a handsome, healthy boy, weighing eight pounds. George was so proud of him and kept repeating fondly, "And to think, Dearest, that he is ours, yours and mine! I can scarcely wait to show him off in Ft. Meade!" We named the baby Douglas.

Unfortunately I could not nurse my baby and none of the formulas agreed with him. In that day doctors did not know how to prescribe for bottle-fed babies and he cried all the time, from sheer hunger. And then a terrible thing happened—he took whooping cough! My poor, half-starved baby lay in his crib with a burning fever, his little body wracked with pain. The days and nights were a nightmare to George and me, as we sat beside our first-born and watched his life ebb away. On April 5th he died. We buried him in Gainesville.

I blamed myself bitterly for having come to Gainesville, feeling that in our own home my baby would not have been exposed to the epidemic. Our return was very sad. George's father met us in Tampa and insisted upon my resting there a day before completing the journey. The family had a room ready for us in their home where they insisted on our staying, so that I should not be

left alone with my sorrow. We never returned to our cottage to live.

Building a Home

To divert me George hurried up plans for building our new home, which was to be across the street from his father's and more convenient to George's work than was our cottage in the citrus grove. The family was very kind to me and Fanny became my constant companion, giving up practically all her social engagements to cheer me up. She read to me or insisted upon my reading to her and devised new patterns in needlework which she urged upon me for making articles to be used in our new home. I shall never forget the kindness of this lovable family to me in my sorrow, nor George's tenderness and understanding.

George and I remained in his father's home until our house was completed, for when summer approached and plans were being made for the family's annual visit to South Carolina and New York I offered to assume the responsibility of the home and keep the children. Mr. Scott and Miss Jones, the teachers, would of course go away for their vacations not to return until September 1. Father and Mother Dzialynski were well pleased with the plan and so was George, since it enabled him to be in town all the time and oversee the building of our house.

Fanny and I planned picnics for the younger children and went fishing with them in Peace River. Every morning the children rode their ponies out in the country with Ben as a companion. In the evening we played games or they invited their friends in to dance for which George played the piano. The children thoroughly enjoyed the summer and had no regrets that they had missed the visit north.

Just before Father and Mother returned I had the fall cleaning done. All the curtains were cleaned and everything put in order. On the evening of their arrival I had fresh flowers in every room and a sumptuous supper prepared. The house looked very inviting and they were very grateful, Mother in particular since she so much disliked the semi-annual house cleanings. The next morning packages were opened and gifts distributed. It was very exciting.

*Advertisement for "The Dzialynski House" in Fort Meade
from the 1883 book, Polk County, Florida: Its Lands and Products,
by George W. Hendry, published by Ashmead Brothers, Jacksonville, 1883
(Photo courtesy of the Florida Photographic Collection,
Florida State Library and Archives, Tallahassee)*

Shortly afterwards the teachers returned and school began. A few years later Miss Jones left us, having married Mr. Adams of Cincinnati, who was a traveling man selling buggies and surreys. Father's family provided her with trousseau and gave her a big wedding in their home.

Horseback riding was very popular in and around Ft. Meade and "catching rings" from a saddle was a popular sport. . . . All day "sings" were also popular. I never learned to ride horseback, so George bought me a phaeton, but one day when I was driving

alone the horse became frightened at a white and red silk embroidered shawl with long fringe which I was wearing and ran away with me. I was not hurt but I would never again drive alone.

George and I frequently took long drives in the country, which was very beautiful at all seasons of the year. Growing in the hammocks were large hardwood and pine trees and along the roads were masses of pink tar flowers. In the swampy places long, graceful cattails reared their heads above banks of feathery ferns. At that time the lovely blue iris and other water plants which today are such nuisances because they choke the drainage ditches had not made their appearance.

But again I have wandered from my subject.

Our house was now completed. Its setting was ideal, being in the center of a large square which was still an orange grove. Several trees had to be moved to make room for our flower garden. Our drugstore [eventually stood] on one corner of the square and in it Dr. Louis Oppenheimer had for several years an office while his brother served as prescription clerk. Dr. Oppenheimer [later] married a schoolteacher in the community and about this time moved to a larger practice in Tampa.⁵⁸

Long before the house was completed I had engaged an English cook and gardener. I considered myself very fortunate for hired help was very scarce. Negroes did not come to Ft. Meade both because of their fear of the Indians and because the settlement was largely English and did not like colored help.⁵⁹ In emergencies, so scarce were servants, friends and neighbors helped each other out.

I recall an amusing incident which occurred when once I was without help. The negro woman I had brought from Gainesville had left and I attempted to scrub the kitchen floor. Knowing little about such work I threw buckets of water on the floor and was then unable to get it off or out. I looked up to find Mr. Roberson looking on and nearly doubled up with laughter at my efforts.⁶⁰ "Let me do it," he said, and rolling up his trousers he stepped in and scrubbed the floor nicely.

In 1882 the population of Ft. Meade was about 1200, probably three-fourths of them English.⁶¹ During 1882 and 1883 there was great excitement about a railroad's coming to our town. Henry S. Plant was buying the various independent lines in the central peninsula and on the west coast and consolidating them into the Plant System. We could hardly wait for our little town to have rail connection with the outside world. And then, on February 13, 1884, the first train rolled into Tampa, the line being the narrow-gauge South Florida connecting Tampa with St. Johns River's passenger and freight traffic at Sanford. Two years later Ft. Meade, too, was on a railroad. I could thus visit my relatives rather easily by going by rail to Sanford, by boat to Palatka, and then by rail to Gainesville.

By 1885 or the following year the Jacksonville, Tampa & Key West Railroad reached from Jacksonville to Sanford and the narrow-gauge from Sanford to Tampa was broadened. The line began at Savannah and was a part of the Plant System. . . . Plant purchased the Florida Southern connecting Fitzgerald and Bartow, and built from Bartow to Ft. Meade and Punta Gorda. He also built from Gainesville to Fitzgerald and so made a continuous road now known as the Atlantic Coast Line. . . .

The problem of furniture for our new home was fortunately very easily solved. Father was called to Jacksonville on business and there heard that Ike Solomon,⁶² whose wife had just died, was anxious to dispose of his furniture which had been shipped from New York and never uncrated. Father saw the furniture, was pleased with it, and purchased it subject to our approval. It was really too nice for a country home, but we liked it. The living room suite was mahogany upholstered in rose brocade; the dining room suite was also in mahogany; the bedrooms were in walnut.

We were very proud of our home and to our first meal in it we invited Father's family and the three Robersons. Each one brought a gift for our new home. Father's gift was a large family Bible in leather binding with brass trimmings. In was inscribed in Father's beautiful writing, "To George and Bertha." It always lay on our living room table until the great fire in Jacksonville. At that time our little twelve-year old daughter Ruth carried this Bible

Bertha Zadek Dzialynski
(Photo courtesy of Carol Coleman Weil)

out. It was the only thing saved from our Fort Meade home and is now in Ruth's proud possession.

It was during this season that I witnessed a unique form of mass entertainment. It was the custom of the Dzialynski groves when the shipping season was over to have a big celebration with a sugar boiling and "stir off" and refreshments free to all who came. People came from miles around. The cane was ground with a machine with a long pole to which was hitched a blindfolded horse. As the horse walked round and round it supplied the power which turned the wheels of the grinding machine. Each man from the groves received a large jug of syrup to take home.

During the month of December there were numerous heavy rains which kept George indoors. He spent much of his time at the piano while I sat near fashioning little garments for the baby we expected in the spring.

As Christmas approached—my second as a wife—I felt very sad. I recalled the previous Christmas when we were all at Father’s for the day and so jolly and care-free, and especially George and I, for we were expecting our first-born. I felt that I could not possibly take part in the festivities this year, remembering our dear little baby Douglas who had, in my mind, been sacrificed because of my bad judgment in going to Gainesville for my confinement. George thought to cheer me up and take my mind off such sad thoughts by giving me an interest—that of entertaining the folks in our home at Christmas instead of going to Father’s home. My English cook had already departed and it was for the time impossible to obtain another, but Minnie Roberson was staying with me and she attended to all the preparations, even making the fruit cakes and dressing two large turkeys. Such was the friendship among the people of that little town. Mrs. Wilson⁶³ sent the largest mince pie I have ever seen. George and Minnie trimmed the Christmas tree. The dinner was a great success and we felt very important to have entertained so many guests in our own little home.

The next evening Mother entertained in her home for her mother and brother from South Carolina. Lotto was a game very much in vogue and I recall we played until a very late hour.

A Fearful Birth

After the holidays George and I settled down to a quiet, everyday life. He worked in the garden in his spare time and soon it was lovely with a hedge around it and flowers everywhere. People walking along the street would often stop to admire it.

I was made very happy at this time by the news from Gainesville that my cousin Bertha and her husband, Herman Glogowski, were moving to Tampa.⁶⁴ At last some of my relatives would be near me, or at least much nearer than they were in Gainesville.

My baby was born on April 8, 1884, in our home in Ft. Meade. Dr. Oppenheimer had moved to Tampa and Dr. F. F. Thomas⁶⁵ attended me. We named her Ida Clare, Ida having been

the name of George's mother, and Clare, or Clara, the name of my own mother.

I was frightened when I saw the baby, fearing that I would never be able to rear her. She was merely skin and bones, weighed only five pounds, and her long, black hair made her look even more weird and pitiful. Today such a baby would be put into an incubator. Then we simply put her on a pillow. I was not able to nurse her and as with my first baby the formula given me by the doctor—melted milk and corn meal gruel—did not agree with her. She did not grow and she cried all the time. When the baby was two months old my cousin Bertha came to visit us and upon seeing the baby for the first time laughingly exclaimed, "What a rat!" I was deeply offended.

Two months later I took my undernourished baby with me for a visit to Bertha and Herman in Tampa where I consulted Dr. John P. Wall.⁶⁶ He could prescribe nothing more than that I massage her with cocoa butter. I carried out his instructions faithfully every day without any perceptible results.

Bertha was expecting her first baby and was on the point of leaving for Gainesville to be with her mother during her confinement. I decided to go with her and see whether Dr. Phillips could do anything for Clare. George was more than willing for we were all worried about the baby. We went by boat to Cedar Keys and by rail from that point. I was so seasick that Bertha had the entire care of the baby.

Shortly after we reached Gainesville Bertha's baby was born—a ten-pound boy, strong and lusty—and larger than my two-months-old Clare. When Herman saw his son he remarked that he looked like a prize-fighter. I wanted to get even with Bertha for having called Clare a rat, so I laughingly told her that her baby was ugly and entirely too large. They named him Nathaniel, but we called him "Natty" during his boyhood, and "Nat" after he grew up.

Clare did not improve under Dr. Phillips' treatment and I felt that she was slowly dying of starvation. Then Bertha's nurse had an inspiration. Bertha had more milk than her own baby needed and the nurse suggested that Clare be given a share. We doubted

that she would take the breast at her age, but we were mistaken. She nursed greedily and with the most evident satisfaction, after which she would smile up into Bertha's face as though to say, "At last I have found real food. Thank you for a good dinner." I was positively jealous of Bertha! For the first time since her birth Clare slept at night and I at last could relax and get some needed rest.

My baby grew rapidly and as her stomach became stronger she could digest the food I gave her. Nevertheless we stayed several weeks with Bertha that Clare might continue at the breast. I felt that Bertha really saved my baby's life. We had of course thought of a wet nurse for the baby, but it had been impossible to find one in Ft. Meade, just like it had been impossible to find a wet nurse in Gainesville for my baby Douglass.

I was a proud and happy mother when at last I started back to Ft. Meade. George met me in Tampa and his delight over the transformation of our baby was very gratifying. He loved the child devotedly and spoiled her badly. It was good to be home again and to be free of anxiety about the baby. She grew rapidly and became strikingly beautiful.

Young Motherhood

George continued to work in our garden. Near the dining room window he built a grape arbor and he screened the chicken yard from view by planting roses along its fence which soon became a mass of gorgeous color.

The town had no garbage service and we had to bury our left-overs. A neighbor suggested that we get a pig. We acted upon the suggestion at once and had the pen ready when it arrived. Our garbage problem was solved and the pig grew fat. In fact, it grew to such proportions that I was worried and asked Ben to look at it to see whether it was healthy. He laughed a great deal and then talked it over with George and Father. They agreed not to enlighten me. A few days later I found in the pen a litter of five small pigs. Everyone teased me about the increase in my pig family and about my naivete. One pig was enough, six decidedly too many, so we sold them and went into the garbage business again until we could find a male pig.

There were of course many inconveniences in living in our small town. The lack of ice was one of them. We had to send [ten] miles to Bartow for our ice and we never seemed to have enough for our purposes. But necessity is the mother of invention and we soon hit upon the plan of using a well in our yard to chill a half dozen watermelons at a time. Our drinking water came from a cistern. It was difficult also to get fresh meat, but we really did not miss it. We depended in large part on poultry and on the birds, wild ducks, turkeys and venison which George brought home from his frequent hunting trips.

Preserves and jellies could not be bought in stores and each family put up its own. Every Saturday during berry time Miss Jones took her pupils for a picnic in the woods where they gathered berries which Mother and I made into jam and jelly or put into sealed jars for pies.

Mother's mother had been quite an addition to our little circle during the several months of her visit at this time, but she was now returning to South Carolina and taking Fanny with her. There was a young German jeweler in Buford whom she admired very much and she had her heart set upon a match between him and Fanny. The old lady's plans materialized and the engagement of Fanny to Mr. [Myer] Greenfield was soon announced.⁶⁷

Clare grew more beautiful all the time and more spoiled. Her father and grandfather in particular gratified her every wish. Even strangers walking or driving along the street and seeing her would exclaim on her beauty. She was petted and coddled by every one who came near her and she heard again and again remarks upon her beauty, her cuteness, her attractive clothes, her bright sayings. If I corrected her, George or Father sympathized with her and so destroyed whatever effect the discipline might otherwise have had. If she was denied anything, she wept and wailed and the coveted object was hers. As soon as she learned to talk she let us know emphatically what she did or did not want, what she would or would not do. I realized that this was a bad way in which to bring up a child, but I was powerless.

When she was two years old we were badly frightened by an accident which happened to her. She was sitting on the front

porch when my brother-in-law, Abe Dzialynski,⁶⁸ came along with a pet cat which he was teaching to perform tricks. To amuse Clare he had the cat jump through a hoop. The animal evidently became tired of the game and cross and it suddenly lighted on Clare's head, scratching and biting her badly. The child's screams and bloody head almost paralyzed me when at last I reached her. Abe was equally frightened. Fortunately the scratches healed and left no scars.

At four years of age Clare was the pride and joy of the household—and its tyrant as well. Just one month before her fourth birthday [March 1888] my second daughter was born, a big, strong, lovely baby, weighing eight pounds, and very good natured. We named her Ruth Hope, Ruth for my father-in-law's mother, and Hope for Hope Glenn, an opera singer whom George admired.

We naturally supposed that Clare would be delighted with a baby sister, but we were sadly mistaken. She resented the baby, refused even to look at it, and was impervious to the coaxing of her adored and adoring father. "I don't want that baby in the house," she told me, "and you must send it back." With that ultimatum she walked out of the house.

For two days I did not see her and then in reply to my inquiries the nurse told me that Clare had taken her clothes and toys and moved over to her grandfather's home, announcing that she did not intend to return as long as the baby remained. I was distressed by the situation, but George thought that if left to herself Clare would become homesick and return.

When I was able to be up I had her brought home. I shall never forget the look of determination on her face as she walked in. I took her on my lap and tried to make her understand what a little sister should mean to her. She maintained a stubborn silence until I finished and then she stated in her most arrogant manner just what she had previously maintained—that the baby had to go. I was exasperated and gave her a good spanking, with many more to follow, but neither spanking nor coaxing had the least effect. One day when my back was turned she tried to kill the baby with one of her toys.

We were reaping the harvest of our careless sowing in the matter of her upbringing. Told over and over that she was the most adorable and beautiful child in the world, given her own way about everything as her whims dictated, she felt herself mistress of a kingdom which she saw no reason to share with a sister. Her resentment and jealousy, which continued through the childhood of the two girls, changed after a while to indifference, which was almost equally distressing. Perhaps George and I were to blame in not preparing her more carefully for the baby's coming. Her attitude was a great trial and grief to me, and it made both herself and her little sister unhappy.

Frozen Fortunes and Yellow Death

Ft. Meade was happy and prosperous and Father Dzialynski spent money freely not only on lavish and, to my mind, indiscriminate hospitality but also in good deeds. He contributed generously to the unfortunate and gave financial aid to those who needed a new start in business undertakings. He did a large credit business, carrying numerous families through the year and receiving payment when the citrus crops or cattle were marketed. I was young and inexperienced, but I frequently spoke to George about the danger inherent in the situation. Once I timidly voiced my fears to Father. He patted me on the head and told me not to worry, saying that the groves were prosperous and new ones were coming on, the people were hardworking and honest, and Ft. Meade already an important citrus and cattle center. I was made ashamed of my childish fears.

Our section of the country was jubilant over the election of Grover Cleveland [as President of the United States] in November, 1884, and Ft. Meade and other small towns joined with Tampa for a big celebration on March 4th [1885] to mark the inauguration.⁶⁹ But with the festivities came a calamity to the whole of south Florida.⁷⁰ The weather turned cold, snow fell, and the thermometer dropped to 14. The unprecedented cold lasted three or four days, with disastrous results to citrus fruits. There were no storage facilities then as are now and thousands of bushels of fruit froze on the trees. Nor was that all, for the young trees,

of which the Dzialynski groves had many, were killed. There would be no crop next year.

What the freeze did to the Dzialynski interests may easily be imagined. Aside from the direct loss of their fruit and young trees, those to whom they had extended credit were either ruined or their accounts would have to be carried over another year. The stores of course lost customers and the livery stable business declined. It became necessary for George and Father to borrow money at ruinous interest rates. At first bewildered, Father soon rallied and looked forward hopefully to the future. Now trees were planted and our little town adjusted itself as best it could to the changed conditions.

The loss of two fruit crops was a terrible disaster, but the people could have weathered it had not another calamity come upon them for two successive years. In 1887 a yellow fever epidemic hit south Florida and although it did not touch Ft. Meade, its economic effects upon the town as upon south Florida as a whole were almost as bad as the freeze. The outside world quarantined against Florida exports and also against its refugees. Citrus fruits rotted on the ground and business came to a standstill. The next year the epidemic reappeared with similar results.⁷¹

Our once prosperous little town was ruined. All who could get away did so, both because of the fear of the epidemic and for financial reasons. Hundreds of families in south Florida were bankrupt, the Dzialynski interests among the others, although with dogged determination George and Father tried to hold on and persistently refused to avail themselves of the bankrupt law.

Tampa received the full force of the epidemic. In the first one my cousin Bertha with her little sons and the Maas family⁷² came to Ft. Meade as refugees, but the inhabitants of our town were excited and demanded that they be moved out of the city limits. George found an old shack in the woods, far from other habitation, which we made as comfortable for them as possible. It was a terrible place but the best that could be found. After a few weeks they were allowed to leave. Bertha went to her father's house in Gainesville, the Maas family to Cincinnati.⁷³

My cousin Ben Brown was also a refugee from Tampa. He went to a distant orange grove for a time and after passing inspection at the county line came to us in Ft. Meade. He was in love with Ricka Maas⁷⁴ whom he afterwards married and no doubt he came in order to be near her in the sylvan retreat. The next year Ben was less fortunate. He was stricken with yellow fever in Tampa but was successfully treated by Dr. Weedon.⁷⁵

In 1888 the epidemic spread to Gainesville and Jacksonville. Bertha and her little son succeeded in getting to Greenville, South Carolina, and then to Atlanta. Her husband, Herman Glogowski, was Mayor of Tampa and remained at his post of duty.⁷⁶ . . .

It was in the midst of these trying circumstances that my baby Ruth Hope was born. Several months later I was taken very ill and Dr. Thomas diagnosed my case as gall bladder for which he recommended an operation. There was no surgeon or facilities in Ft. Meade for such an operation and Tante wrote for me to come to Gainesville to consult Dr. Phillips.

George and Mother begged me to leave the children at home but I could not bear to do so and with them and Katy, their nurse, I made the trip. I was utterly exhausted upon reaching Gainesville and Tante immediately put me to bed and summoned Dr. Phillips. He favored an operation but said that I would not be in condition until I had rested and regained some of my strength.

Just one week later Tante came to my bed in great excitement saying that yellow fever was in Gainesville and we must flee. The town was in a panic. Uncle Brown, Tante, Tillie, Max, Bertha and her two little sons, my two children, their nurse, and I boarded the train, already crowded with refugees, and started to Savannah. When we reached DuPont, Georgia, I was too ill to go further. A consultation was held and it was decided that Bertha and her sons should go to Greenville, South Carolina, while my uncle and his family remained with me.

Leaving us at the station Uncle and Tante went out in the town to find a place for us to stay. The small hotel and every rooming house were crowded with refugees. After hours of search they heard that Dr. DuPont⁷⁷ who lived outside the town had opened his home to refugees. His home was filled, but he

generously arranged for us to have a cottage. It had four rooms and a bath though we were eight in number we were very comfortable.

Dr. DuPont came at once to see me and in a little while relieved me of the terrible pain from which I was suffering. He, too, recommended an operation. I was in bed ten days. George was in Ft. Meade and frantic to reach us, but Georgia had now quarantined against Floridians. My relatives watched over me carefully and dear little Tillie Brown aided the nurse in taking care of my babies.

After I was able to sit up it was decided that Uncle Brown and Tante with Tillie in charge of Clare should go on to Savannah and make arrangements for a place for us to stay. Max, the nurse, and Ruth were left with me to follow when I was stronger. After a week I felt able to travel. When we were nearing Blackshear, Georgia, the conductor told me that a man from Savannah had reported us as yellow fever refugees and that we would have to get off the train and remain for a period before proceeding to Savannah. Max was dreadfully upset, but I told him we would go to a hotel and make ourselves comfortable. There was only one hotel, the Brown House, and there we found rooms. That evening a Mr. Cohen,⁷⁸ a merchant of the town, seeing the name Dzialynski on the register called on us explaining that he was my mother-in-law's uncle and invited us to be his guests. He insisted with such evident sincerity that we accepted his invitation and spent three weeks in his home.

When we reached Savannah Uncle Brown and Tante were at the station to meet us. . . . For a few days I relaxed, feeling that my troubles were over. I soon found out otherwise. Ruth was taken ill and Dr. T. J. Charlton,⁷⁹ the best physician in Savannah, pronounced it typhoid and sent a nurse to care for the child. "Dear God," I prayed, "will my troubles never end!"

Night after night I sat by my baby praying for her recovery and never taking off my clothes. George, at home, was beside himself with anxiety. Tillie came every afternoon and wrote him a letter for me. When finally my baby's fever abated and I felt that I could trust her with the two nurses I went to bed and slept ten

hours. When I awoke and went in to see my baby I was horror stricken. She had turned yellow! The nurse quickly reassured me, saying that the doctor had come while I slept and pronounced it a case of jaundice. He prescribed a few drops every four hours of a well beaten egg, water, and a pinch of salt. In a few days the jaundice had disappeared. . . .

Tillie and Tante had of course kept Clare away while Ruth was ill and I naturally supposed it was because of the typhoid. In fact, however, Clare had also been ill and under the doctor's care. She had picked up a germ from the sand which made her very uncomfortable for a time. It was good of my relatives to keep the knowledge from me. I think I could not have borne the anxiety had I known that both my children were ill.

One ray of brightness came to me at this time. Dr. Charlton diagnosed my case, put me on a diet, and declared emphatically that an operation was not necessary. He was right and I never had a recurrence of the trouble. . . .

In July of the next year (1889) I received a telegram from Gainesville which greatly shocked and grieved me. It told of the tragic death of Tillie Brown, the circumstances of which I have already related.⁸⁰ Dear Tillie, who had been so helpful and patient in the trying days of our flight from the yellow fever and who had been so pleased with my little gift to her in Savannah. Even today, after the lapse of more than fifty years, it saddens me to think of that lovely girl's untimely death.

Letters from home were far from reassuring. Overwhelmed with financial worries Father was ill and unable to look after his business. The groves were loaded with fruit but northern people were afraid to buy from yellow-fever-ridden Florida. George and Father were short of money. Under such circumstances I was restless and unhappy and begged to be allowed to come home. Not until December 20th did George think it safe for us to return.

Goodbye to Fort Meade

It was good to be back home where my children could play in the warm, winter sunshine. Ruth was learning to walk and talk

and adored her older sister. Clare, however, was four years older and considered the baby too young to play with her.

Father's family was in the midst of preparations for the marriage of Fanny to Mr. Greenfield of South Carolina. I thought a big wedding was very foolish under the circumstances and remarked to George that I did not understand how they could afford the expense of entertaining so many guests. He had already protested to his parents but they had seemed hurt, declaring that they could not deny to their daughter the satisfaction of the kind of wedding she had always expected to have.

Fanny's was the first Jewish wedding in Ft. Meade.⁸¹ Father rented the large Masonic Hall and invited all relatives, friends, and all the Florida "crackers" in the neighborhood. It was indeed a beautiful wedding.⁸² Fanny and Mr. Greenfield had two sons and two lovely daughters who, when they grew up, worked in the Treasury Department in Washington. One of them was appointed by the President to go to Europe in the interest of immigration. The other was sent to Miami on government business. Fanny today is a widow and lives in Miami.

After the excitement of the wedding was over George seemed to think that business conditions were improving. I could not see it that way. Every few days Father would come to me with papers to sign. In reply to my inquiry on one such occasion as to what I was signing he explained that since he and George were in business together it was necessary to have my signature.⁸³ He told me that in the last few years they had seen their life savings slip from them through no fault of their own and that while they had a small fortune on their books it was owed by friends who were unable to pay and he would not press them. He ended by saying that he was trying to save something from the wreck and that he was hopeful of better times. This was the only time I ever inquired about his business affairs.

In my judgment the financial condition of the Dzialynskis was growing worse and I urged George to get a position with some business concern. Father was now much improved in health and could look after affairs at Ft. Meade. I had first talked it over with Father, knowing how opposed he had always been to his

sons' working for other people and knowing, too, how dependent George was on his father's opinion in such matters. Father sadly admitted that he thought such a step might be wise and expressed regret that he had taught his boys that they should work only in their own business concerns.

About this time I saw in a Tampa newspaper an advertisement . . . for a wholesale grocery salesman and upon my urging him George applied for the position. . . . [After getting the job,] he decided we should move to Tampa which being more central for his territory would enable him to spend the week-ends at home. He began work in November, 1889. We rented a house in Tampa which Bertha found for us across the street from her own, and the owner, Mrs. Parslow,⁸⁴ promised to vacate it early in January.

Father was very much hurt to see his son go to work for strangers though he admitted that it was the best thing to do. . . .

It humiliated Father greatly to ask me for our Ft. Meade home as he was compelled to do, since he was selling his own for the benefit of his creditors.⁸⁵ I gave it to him gladly. It made me so sad to see such a grand and noble old man so broken in health and spirit.

As I have said, Father refused to avail himself of the bankrupt law, although many others did so and fared better. "I would rather have my good name than riches," he would reply when urged to save himself in that manner. Instead, he sold his stores and other businesses, his home, his silver and jewelry, and paid 100 cents on the dollar, having only some land left for which there was no market. . . .

Our Ft. Meade friends were sorry to have us leave and came to the house bringing us all kinds of nice parting gifts. I recall that Mrs. Roberson and Minnie gave us two beautiful patchwork quilts and that Mrs. Cab Langford⁸⁶ brought us a whole case of preserves.

It was arranged that we should have our last Christmas celebration with Father's family, in their home. George returned for the occasion and the children were happy, but it was sad for the rest of us. I found that leaving our home, my in-laws whom I had

Bertha Zadek Dzialynski

(Photo courtesy of the Jewish Museum of Florida, Miami Beach)

learned to love so much, and our many warm friends was very difficult.

On January 1, 1890, we went to our new home in Tampa.

Epilogue

When George and Bertha Dzialynski departed Fort Meade for Tampa as the 1890s commenced, more than half a century remained to her. The couple fared well in Tampa, then a bustling railroad, resort, and cigar town. As the nineteenth century's final decade drew to its close, however, they decided to relocate. On January 1, 1900, the couple purchased a home in Florida's largest and most vital city, Jacksonville. There they remained.

Their experiences ranged across a broad spectrum, as Bertha's memoir described at length, but they certainly included family. As Bertha recounted, a son Douglas died in infancy while daughters Ida Clare and Ruth Hope lived well into the twentieth century. Ruth ultimately wed David A. Leon. Clare married William Coleman; from their descendant, Perry Coleman, this writer first learned of Bertha's manuscript. For better or worse the Dzialynski marriage did not end in bliss. Bertha resided with Ruth, and George lived alone and apart for "as long as [granddaughter Carol Coleman Weil] can remember." George I. P. Dzialynski died in Jacksonville September 28, 1938. Bertha Zadek Dzialynski followed on May 4, 1947. They are buried in the Ahavath Chesed section of Evergreen Cemetery, Jacksonville.⁸⁷

NOTES

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¹ Bertha Zadek Dzialynski, "Within My Heart," 1-2 (typescript, 1944). This manuscript currently resides in the collection of the Jewish Museum of Florida, Miami Beach, thanks to the generosity of the late Perry Coleman and his family. Excerpts are reproduced here with the permission of the Jewish Museum of Florida, and the author expresses his appreciation to the museum and to the Coleman family for the opportunity to present them in this form. Readers should note that original spelling and punctuation have been retained throughout the excerpts.

² Mark I. Greenberg, "Savannah's Jewish Women and the Shaping of Ethnic and Gender Identity, 1830-1900," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 82 (winter, 1998): 774. See also Jacob R. Marcus, *The American Jewish Woman, 1654-1980* (New York, 1981); Charlotte Baum, Paula Hyman, and Sonya Michel, *The Jewish Woman in America* (New York, 1981); Jacob R. Marcus, ed., *The American Jewish Woman: A Documentary History* (New York, 1981); June Sochen, *Consecrate Every Day: The Public Lives of American Jewish Women, 1880-1980* (Albany, NY, 1981); Mark K. Bauman, "Southern Jewish Women and Their Social Service Organizations," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 22 (spring 2003): 34-78.

³ Julia Winifred Moseley and Betty Powers Crislip, eds., *"Come to My Sunland": Letters of Julia Daniels Moseley from the Florida Frontier, 1882-1886* (Gainesville, 1998), xii-xiii. For works based upon the correspondence of pioneer Florida women, see Kathryn Carlisle Schwartz, *Baptist Faith in Action: The Private Writings of Maria Baker Taylor, 1813-1895* (Columbia, SC, 2003); James M. Denham and Keith L. Huneycutt, *Echoes from a Distant Frontier: The Brown Sisters' Correspondence from Antebellum Florida* (Columbia, SC, 2004). See also Canter Brown, Jr., *Women on the Tampa Bay Frontier* (Tampa, 1997); and James M. Denham, "Cracker Women and Their Families in Nineteenth-Century Florida," 15-28, in *Florida's Heritage of Diversity: Essays in Honor of Samuel Proctor*, ed. Mark I. Greenberg, William Warren Rogers, and Canter Brown, Jr., (Tallahassee, 1997).

⁴ Henry Alan Green and Marcia Kerstein Zerivitz, *Mosaic: Jewish Life in Florida, A Documentary Exhibit From 1763 to the Present* (Coral Gables, 1991); Richard E. Sapon-White, "A Polish Jew on the Florida Frontier and in Occupied Tennessee: Excerpts from the Memoirs of Max White," *Southern Jewish History* 4 (2001): 92-122; Samuel Proctor, "Pioneer Jewish Settlement in Florida, 1764-1900, 116-131, in *Proceedings of the Conference on the Writing of Regional History in the South* (New York, 1956); Canter Brown, Jr., *Jewish Pioneers of the Tampa Bay Frontier* (Tampa, 1999); Brown, "Philip and Morris Dzialynski, Jewish Contributions to the Rebuilding of the South," *American Jewish Archives* 44 (fall/winter 1992): 517-539.

⁵ Saul Jacob Rubin, *Third to None: The Saga of Savannah Jewry 1733-1983* (Savannah, 1983), 148-149, 159.

⁶ See Brown, "Philip and Morris Dzialynski."

⁷ Pauline Braun was born c. 1837 in Prussia and died on March 1, 1908, in Tampa, Florida. Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, Alachua County, Florida (population schedule); Dzialynski, "Within My Heart," 61.

⁸ Dzialynski, "Within My Heart," 4-49; Ruth Hope Leon, "The History of the Dzialynski Family," 1 (typescript, 1954), Jacksonville Historical Society, Jacksonville, Florida.

⁹ Tobias Brown was born in 1824 in Prussia and died August 18, 1895, in Gainesville, Florida. At the time of Bertha's arrival in Gainesville, the Brown children were aged as follows: Benjamin, nineteen; Max, seventeen; Bertha, fourteen; Tillie, twelve; and Joseph, nine. 1880 Census, Alachua County; Dzialynski, "Within My Heart," 61.

¹⁰ Regina ("Jennie") Dzialynski Herzog, the daughter of Philip Dzialynski and Ida Ehrlich Dzialynski, was born in 1859 in Florida. She married Louis Herzog in Fort Meade, Florida, on October 31, 1877. Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Madison County, Florida (population schedule); *Tampa Sunland Tribune*, May 18, 1882; Dzialynski, "Within My Heart," 67.

¹¹ Morris Dzialynski, son of Abraham Samuel and Rachin Dzialynski, was born July 14, 1841, in Posen, Prussia. He died May 7, 1907, in Jacksonville, Florida. Leon, "History of the Dzialynski Family," 4-5; Brown, "Philip and Morris Dzialynski," 518-519, 532-533.

¹² Philip Dzialynski, son of Abraham Samuel and Rachin Dzialynski, was born June 15, 1833, in Posen, Prussia, and died January 16, 1896, in Jacksonville, Florida. Philip married twice. He wed first wife, Ida Ehrlich, on August 11, 1856, and they subsequently had two sons and a daughter: George, Regina ("Jennie"), and Rudolph. Ida Ehrlich Dzialynski, was

born March 15, 1834, in Neustadt, Prussia. She died August 11, 1856, in Suwannee Shoals, Florida. Following Ida's death, Philip married Mary Cohen on May 28, 1865. They had at least six girls and a son: Esther, Frances ("Fannie"), Helena, Miriam ("Minnie"), Gertrude, Abraham Samuel, and Etta. Mary Cohen Dzialynski was born c. 1848 in Prussian Poland. She died in Tallahassee in 1935. A child's grave with the name "Little Eva" lies next to Mary's Jacksonville grave and may be that of another of her children. Leon, "History of the Dzialynski Family," 1-2; Brown, "Philip and Morris Dzialynski," 518-519, 532-533, 539.

¹³ George I. P. Dzialynski was born June 8, 1857, in Jacksonville, Florida, to Philip and Ida Ehrlich Dzialynski. George I. P. Dzialynski biographical form, Dzialynski family file, State and Local History Collection, Jacksonville Public Library, Jacksonville, Florida; Dzialynski, "Within My Heart," 196-197.

¹⁴ Dzialynski, "Within My Heart," 49-77; *Tampa Sunland Tribune*, May 18, 1882; Brown, "Philip and Morris Dzialynski," 517-530; George I. P. Dzialynski biographical form.

¹⁵ James W. Covington, *The Story of Southwestern Florida: Family and Personal History I* (New York, 1957), 171-185; Canter Brown, Jr., *Florida's Peace River Frontier* (Orlando, 1991), 272-291; W. A. McRae, *The Fourth Census of the State of Florida Taken in the Year 1915* (Tallahassee, 1915), 17.

¹⁶ Canter Brown, Jr., *Fort Meade, 1849-1900* (Tuscaloosa, 1995), 1-132.

¹⁷ Julius C. Rockner was born December 26, 1839, in what became Germany and died from gunshot wounds on July 23, 1877, near Fort Meade, Florida. Kyle S. VanLandingham, "John Irving Hooker 1822-1862," *South Florida Pioneers* 15/16 (January/April 1978), 8; Brown, *Fort Meade*, 66-67.

¹⁸ Jacob R. Cohen was born in 1844 in Prussia and died November 5, 1901, in Tallahassee, Florida. A man of many business interests in Florida and the Southeast, he also served as an original incorporator of the city of Orlando. Ninth Census of the United States, 1870, Putnam County, Florida (population schedule); *Jacksonville Florida Times-Union and Citizen*, November 6, 1901; Eve Bacon, *Orlando: A Centennial History* (Chuluota, FL, 1975), 59.

¹⁹ Brown, *Jewish Pioneers of the Tampa Bay Frontier*, 34-36, 53-58; Brown, "Philip and Morris Dzialynski," 524-528.

²⁰ Chapter divisions contained in Bertha's manuscript have been deleted and headers added to facilitate the narrative's flow. Otherwise, the editor of this adaptation has attempted to minimize disruptions to the manuscript's integrity save for the deletion of material, as noted, where the narrative strayed from a tight focus on the Dzialynskis' lives while residents of Fort Meade.

²¹ James McKay, Jr., son of James and Matilda Call McKay, born November 27, 1842, in Mobile, Alabama, and died September 5, 1925, in Tampa, Florida. Donald B. McKay, *Pioneer Florida III* (Tampa, 1959), 27.

²² A development resulting from Henry B. Plant's construction of the South Florida Railroad from Kissimmee to Tampa during 1883-1884; Plant City did not exist when Bertha

first journeyed from Tampa to Fort Meade. Quintilla Geer Bruton and David E. Bailey, Jr., *Plant City: Its Origins and History* (Winston-Salem, NC, 1984), 71–86.

²³ Similarly, at the time of her first journey from Tampa to Fort Meade, Bertha could not have lunched at Lakeland since the town did not exist until railroad developments several years later prompted its creation. Nearby, on the principal road from Tampa to Fort Meade lay the much older rural community of Medulla, and the Dzialynskis likely took their meal with a family there. Canter Brown, Jr., *In the Midst of All That Makes Life Worth Living: Polk County, Florida, to 1940* (Tallahassee, 2001), 35, 48, 60, 136–138, 152.

²⁴ Charles Cooper Wilson, son of James T. and Adeline Hendry Wilson, was born in Manatee County, Florida, on December 28, 1858, and died November 30, 1907, at San Francisco, California. The scion of one of southwest Florida's major cattle grazing families, C. C. Wilson emerged as one of the area's leading attorneys in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. *Makers of America: Florida Edition I* (Atlanta, 1909), 390–391.

²⁵ On several occasions Bertha's memoir laments the destruction of prized personal possessions by Jacksonville's great fire of May 3, 1901. This unprecedented blaze in the state's principal city devastated 146 city blocks embracing 466 acres. Damages ran to \$15 million in value as of the time of the fire. "It was the largest fire, both in area and property loss," the city's historian declared, "ever experienced by any Southern city of the United States, to 1924." T. Frederick Davis, *History of Jacksonville, Florida and Vicinity, 1513 to 1924* (1924; reprinted Jacksonville, 1990), 219–227.

²⁶ At Fort Meade during the 1880s, the Dzialynskis first ran a dry goods store and then a drug store. The family business carried the name, "New York and Fort Meade Mercantile Company" at the time Bertha arrived in town. Brown, "Philip and Morris Dzialynski," 525–528, 532; George W. Hendry, *Polk County, Florida, Its Lands and Products* (Jacksonville, 1883), 50.

²⁷ Sarah Ann Evans Robeson, wife of Samuel Henry Robeson, was born September 24, 1825, in Chesterfield, South Carolina, and died April 30, 1896, in Bartow, Florida. Spessard Stone, "Profile of John Evans Robeson," *Polk County Historical Quarterly* 23 (December 1996): 2; *Polk County, Florida, Cemeteries II* (Lakeland, 2002), 48.

²⁸ Minnie Lee Robeson, daughter of Samuel Henry and Sarah Evans Robeson. Stone, "Profile of John Evans Robeson," 2.

²⁹ Minnie Robeson's brother was John Evans Robeson, born May 6, 1847, in Chesterfield, South Carolina, and died April 13, 1898, in Fort Meade, Florida. *Ibid.*

³⁰ John E. Robeson's wife was Fernandina D. Roberts, daughter of Sherod E. and Keziah Knight Roberts. She was born November 28, 1858, in Clinch County, Georgia, and died September 10, 1923, in Lakeland, Florida. Spessard Stone, "Profile of Sherod E. Roberts," *Polk County Historical Quarterly* 17 (December 1990): 6. Robeson family genealogical materials, collection of Elizabeth Springer, Phoenix, Arizona.

³¹ Frances ("Fannie") Dzialynski, daughter of Philip and Mary Cohen Dzialynski, was born in Savannah, Georgia, in 1868. Brown, "Philip and Morris Dzialynski," 539.

³² As of October 1, 1883, the Philip Dzialynski home at Fort Meade literally operated as a hotel, "The Dzialynski House." Philip served as general manager. Mary presided as "

proprietary," a not unusual situation in a region noted for economic ups and downs and for wives helping their husbands avoid the downs. Their advertisement boasted "first class accommodations guaranteed." It continued, "Terms for board and lodging per day \$2.00" and concluded: "A livery stable will be run in connection with the house. Patronage solicited." *Bartow Informant*, October 6, 1883. Mary's experience in running a hotel provided valuable background for later endeavors. After her husband's death in 1896, she moved to Gainesville where she managed the Commercial Hotel from 1896 to 1902. Rachel B. Heimovics and Marcia K. Zerivitz, *The Florida Jewish Heritage Trail* (Tallahassee 2000), 13.

³³ Although Philip Dzialynski did not hold power as "the political boss of that end of Polk County" in the 1880s, he nonetheless stood out as a man of serious influence. From 1872 to 1874 he had served as a Polk County commissioner. In the two years following Fort Meade's 1885 incorporation, he also held the position of alderman. Brown, *Jewish Pioneers of the Tampa Bay Frontier*, 34–36; Brown, *Fort Meade*, 166–167.

³⁴ William Dunnington Bloxham, the son of William and Martha Williams Bloxham, was born on July 9, 1835, in Leon County, Florida, and died March 15, 1911, in Tallahassee. He served as Florida's governor 1881–1885 and 1897–1901. Allen Morris, *The Florida Handbook 1991–1992* (Tallahassee, 1991), 330–331.

³⁵ Bloxham's immediate predecessor as governor, George Franklin Drew, who served from 1877 to 1881, was the first post-Reconstruction Democrat to preside over the state. This "redemption," as southerners called it, was made possible by the removal of the last Federal troops. *Ibid.*, 330.

³⁶ Henry Laurens Mitchell, the son of Thomas and Elizabeth Starns Mitchell, was born September 3, 1831, in Jefferson County, Alabama, and died October 14, 1903, in Tampa, Florida. He served as Florida's governor from 1893 to 1897. See George B. Church, Jr., *The Life of Henry Laurens Mitchell, Florida's 16th Governor* (Tampa, 1989).

³⁷ Father Charles Peterman served as pastor of Tampa's St. Louis Parish of the Roman Catholic Church beginning in 1883. Michael J. McNally, *Catholic Parish Life on Florida's West Coast, 1860–1968* (n.p., 1996), 32.

³⁸ William Benton Henderson, son of Andrew Hamilton and Margaret Collins Henderson, was born September 17, 1839, in Jackson County, Georgia, and died May 7, 1909, in Tampa, Florida. Among his business interests were a series of mercantile and hardware establishments, including the one he shared with the Dzialynskis. Charles E. Harrison, *Genealogical Records of the Pioneers of Tampa and of Some Who Came After Them* (Tampa, 1915), 31–32.

³⁹ Ziba King was born in Ware County, Georgia, on March 12, 1838, and died on March 7, 1901, in DeSoto County, Florida. A "cattle king" such as Ziba King typically owned tens of thousands of cattle. Spessard Stone, "Profile of Ziba King," *Wauchula (FL) Herald-Advocate*, November 10, 1998; Covington, *Story of Southwestern Florida*, II, 20–21.

⁴⁰ Fort Meade's creation came in December 1849, rather than during the Second Seminole War of 1835–1842. It lay, however, on ground that once had constituted the Seminole/Creek town of Talakchopko, destroyed in the war's opening months. Fort Meade was named for George Gordon Meade because he recommended the site for placement of

the military post to General David Twiggs. Brown, *Florida's Peace River Frontier*, 6, 14, 36–46; Brown, *Fort Meade, 1849–1900* (Tuscaloosa, 1995), 1–8. General Twiggs, incidentally, also named Fort Myers, Florida, for his future son-in-law, Abraham C. Myers, then chief quartermaster for Florida troops during the Second Seminole War. Myers was a great-grandson of Moses Cohen, who served as the first religious leader of Charleston, South Carolina's K. K. Beth Elohim. Heimovics and Zerivitz, *The Florida Jewish Heritage Trail*, 27.

⁴¹ Thomas Jonathan "Stonewall" Jackson indeed served at Fort Meade during 1850–1851. Due to problems arising there, the fort became his last active duty post as an officer of the United States Army. James I. Robertson, Jr., *Stonewall Jackson: The Man, The Soldier, and The Legend* (New York, 1997), 94–110

⁴² George I. P. Dzialynski numbered among those who pursued the alligators in the vicinity of the Caloosahatchee River from May to July 1881. *Tampa Sunland Tribune*, July 16, 1881.

⁴³ John Thomas Lesley, the son of Leroy G. and Indiana Childs Livingston Lesley, was born May 12, 1835, in Madison County, Florida, and died July 13, 1913, in Tampa, Florida. Donald J. Ivey, "John T. Lesley: Tampa's Pioneer Renaissance Man," *Sunland Tribune* 21 (November 1995): 3–20.

⁴⁴ John T. Lesley killed Dr. J. S. Hackney at Philip Dzialynski's Tampa store on June 8, 1880. *Tampa Sunland Tribune*, June 10, 1880.

⁴⁵ Cattleman William W. Willingham ambushed merchant and cattleman Julius C. Rockner just outside Fort Meade on July 23, 1877. The shots barely missed Philip Dzialynski, who was riding beside Rockner. Brown, *Fort Meade*, 66–67.

⁴⁶ Frank Clark, the son of John N. Clark, was born March 28, 1860, in Eufaula, Alabama, and died April 14, 1936, in Washington, D.C. He served as a United States Congressman from Florida from 1905 to 1925. *Jacksonville Florida Times-Union*, May 5, 1889, April 15, 1936.

⁴⁷ James Dallas Tillis, the son of Willoughby and Penny Smiley Tillis, was born August 22, 1849, in Columbia County, Florida, and died June 4, 1939, in Bartow, Florida. He served as Polk County sheriff from 1896 to 1904. Richard E. Livingston, "Willoughby Tillis 1808–1895," *South Florida Pioneers* 39/40 (January/April 1984): 4–7; *Bartow Polk County Democrat*, August 26, 1938; Tillis family historical materials, collection of John E. Brown, Fort Meade, Florida.

⁴⁸ Possibly Godfrey Snyderdacker, a pioneer Jew of Chicago. Born in Westphalia in 1826, he came to Chicago in 1853 where in 1859 he helped found the United Hebrew Relief Association, Chicago's first unified agency for Jewish social services. A few years later he served as president of Chicago Sinai Temple. Snyderdacker died in 1892. H. L. Meites, *History of the Jews of Chicago* (Chicago, 1924), 78.

⁴⁹ Richard Cabel Langford was born March 22, 1848, in Bradford County, Florida, and died March 14, 1922, in Fort Meade, Florida. *Fort Meade Leader*, March 16, 1922.

⁵⁰ Dr. William Loch Weems, born August 12, 1835, in Baltimore, Maryland, and died March 15, 1900, in Fort Meade, Florida, married Elizabeth Cochran in Missouri. She was born about 1845 in Missouri and remarried to William A. Evans in Fort Meade on

June 11, 1903. Weems family historical materials, collection of John E. Brown, Fort Meade; *Jacksonville Florida Times-Union*, March 20, 1900; June 14, 1903.

⁵¹ Thomas Lee Wilson, brother of Charles Cooper Wilson, was born January 30, 1863, in Polk County, Florida, and died October 17, 1927, in Bartow, Florida. Spessard Stone, *John and William, Sons of Robert Hendry* (Wauchula, FL, 1988), 167.

⁵² Creek, Seminole, and Mikasuki Indians often visited the Fort Meade vicinity. A small village of Creeks remained about thirty miles northeast from the town until the late 1880s. Brown, *Florida's Peace River Frontier*, 118–119.

⁵³ Lambrequins are short, decorative draperies for shelf edges or window valances.

⁵⁴ Seemingly a reference to Dr. M. O. Arnold, recently arrived from Iowa to take up the practice of Dr. Charles Lucian Mitchell, brother of Philip Dzialynski's friend and guest, Henry L. Mitchell, who had retired from medicine to pursue other interests. *Bartow Informant*, July 29, 1882, February 3, 1883; *Tampa Tribune* March 16, 1900; *Tampa Times*, September 5, 1935; E. Ashby Hammond, *The Medical Profession in 19th Century Florida: A Biographical Register* (Gainesville, 1996), 432–433.

⁵⁵ Sherod E. Roberts donated the land for Fort Meade's beautiful Evergreen Cemetery. Charles C. Wilson's point about killing men to fill the cemetery echoed sentiments expressed by a Fort Meade man to a Tampa newspaper in 1877. "Six men in the last six years have gone to the land of the dead in Polk County, Florida, killed by their fellow men," he declared. "Some would say jocularly," he continued, "when the unparalleled health of our country is spoken of, and the very few who died naturally; 'We have to kill men to recruit our grave yards.'" Brown, *Fort Meade*, 64; *Tampa Sunland Tribune*, September 5, 1877.

⁵⁶ The railroad from Cedar Key to Gainesville and on to Fernandina had been constructed from Fernandina in 1856 to Cedar Key in 1861 by David Levy Yulee as the Florida Railroad. It offered Florida its first connection between the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico. Yulee represented Florida in the United States Senate during 1845–1851 and 1855–1861, the first Jew to sit in that body. See Leon Huhner, "David L. Yulee, Florida's First Senator" in *Jews in the South*, ed. Leonard Dinnerstein and Mary Dale Palsson (Baton Rouge, 1973); Robert N. Rosen, *The Jewish Confederates* (Columbia, SC, 2000), 55–85.

⁵⁷ Dr. Newton D. Phillips, the son of James T. and Lydia Seale Phillips, was born May 30, 1835, in Hinds County, Mississippi. *Biographical Souvenir of the States of Georgia and Florida* (Chicago, 1889), 655.

⁵⁸ Dr. Louis Sims Oppenheimer was born January 24, 1854, in Louisville, Kentucky, and died June 12, 1939, in Tampa, Florida. In 1888 he married one-time Macon, Georgia, school-teacher Alberta Dozier, then a resident of Polk County, Florida. The couple relocated from Bartow, Florida, to Tampa in 1896. James M. Ingram, "Dr. Louis Sims Oppenheimer, Culture Among the Sandspurs," *Sunland Tribune* 3 (November 1977): 18–23.

⁵⁹ No information is available to suggest that African Americans living in Florida during the 1880s feared Indians or an Indian threat any more than did whites, although Bertha may have known some individual who did. Florida had stood out since at least the late 1600s as a refuge for runaway slaves, and hundreds of "maroons" or "Black Seminoles" had lived and fought cooperatively with Florida Seminoles and other Indian peoples.

Sampson Forrester, who lived at his Hillsborough County plantation only thirty miles or so from Fort Meade until his death in 1888, often welcomed visiting Indians to his home and afforded them his hospitality. If Fort Meade's English settlers expressed a preference for white over black servants, they likely did so mostly from that fact that so few blacks lived in the town. Kenneth W. Porter, *The Black Seminoles: History of a Freedom-Seeking People* (Gainesville, 1996); Canter Brown, Jr., and Barbara Gray Brown, *Family Records of the African American Pioneers of Tampa and Hillsborough County* (Tampa, 2003), 86–88.

⁶⁰ Samuel Henry Robeson, son of Peter Lord and Mary P. Spencer Robeson, was born March 14, 1822, in Chesterfield, South Carolina, and died November 21, 1884, in Fort Meade, Florida. Stone, "Profile of John Evans Robeson," 4.

⁶¹ The influx of English "remittance men" and their families to Fort Meade began about 1885–1886, rather than 1882–1883 as remembered by Bertha Dzialynski. These individuals generally were younger sons of well-to-do families whose patriarchs preferred that they not enter business and, so, supported them by remittances. In their wake, numerous other English men and women settled at what became a fashionable, if rustic, winter resort locale. Brown, *Fort Meade*, 107–119.

⁶² Isaac Solomon, who operated a millinery store at Jacksonville, was born 1854 in New York. 1880 Census, Duval County, Florida.

⁶³ Adeline Hendry Wilson, daughter of James Edward and Lydia Carlton Hendry and wife of James Thomas Wilson, was born February 4, 1832, in Thomas County, Georgia, and died November 8, 1895, in Homeland, Florida. Stone, *John and William, Sons of Robert Hendry*, 152, 155, 161–167.

⁶⁴ Herman Glogowski was born April 29, 1854, in the German town of Wilhelmsbruck. Arriving in the United States at age fifteen, he settled in Gainesville, Florida, by the late 1870s. There, during summer 1883, he married Bertha Brown, daughter of Tobias and Pauline Brown. Herman Glogowski died in Tampa, Florida, December 3, 1909, having served that community in numerous capacities including mayor. Mark I. Greenberg, "Tampa Mayor Herman Glogowski: Jewish Leadership in Gilded Age Florida," in *Florida's Heritage of Diversity*, ed. Greenberg, Rogers, and Brown, 55–58.

⁶⁵ Bertha likely meant Dr. James C. Thompson when she referred to Dr. F. F. Thomas. Thompson, then aged forty-three, arrived in Fort Meade from Montana in 1884 "for the climate and health." *Bartow Advance Courier*, March 14, 1888.

⁶⁶ Dr. John P. Wall, son of Perry G. and Nancy H. Wall, was born September 17, 1836, in Hamilton County, Florida, and died April 19, 1885, in Gainesville, Florida. Larry O. Rivers, "'They . . . exalt humbug at the expense of science and truth': Dr. John P. Wall and the Fight Against Yellow Fever in Late-Nineteenth Century Florida," *Sunland Tribune* 25 (1999): 9–18; Hammond, *Medical Profession*, 651–664.

⁶⁷ Celebrating Christmas did not mean that Philip was indifferent about his children marrying non-Jews. On the contrary, he appears to have worked hard to find eligible Jewish husbands for his daughters, doubtlessly utilizing his broad network of family, friends, and commercial contacts in the process. As mentioned earlier for the match of George and Bertha, Philip could count on his own children (in that case Jennie) for assistance.

⁶⁸ Abraham Samuel Dzialynski, son of Philip and Mary Cohen Dzialynski, was born during 1877 in Fort Meade, Florida. Brown, "Philip and Morris Dzialynski," 539.

⁶⁹ Grover Cleveland's 1884 election to the presidency marked the first time since before the Civil War that a Democrat had held the office. Southern Democrats accordingly took to the streets in celebration. Edward L. Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life After Reconstruction* (New York, 1992), 47.

⁷⁰ Bertha's memory mistakenly attributed the disastrous freeze of January 1886 to March 1885. Brown, *In the Midst of All That Makes Life Worth Living*, 158-162.

⁷¹ On the yellow fever outbreaks of 1887-1888, see Eirlys Barker, "'A Sneaky, Cowardly Enemy': Tampa's Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1887-88," *Tampa Bay History* 8 (fall/winter 1986): 4-22.

⁷² Abe Maas, born in what would become Germany, on May 29, 1855, relocated to Tampa in 1886 from Cochran, Georgia, to open a "Dry Goods Palace." With him were his wife, Bena, son, Sol, and daughter, Frederica. When Abe's brother Isaac, born October 14, 1861, in a German state joined him from Ocala, Florida, in 1887, the establishment of the famed Maas Brothers Department Store ensued. In 1895 Abe Maas served as the first president of Tampa's Congregation Schaarai Zedek, and remained in that capacity until 1927. He died in Tampa on June 7, 1941. Isaac passed away on March 8, 1935. *Tampa Guardian*, December 1, 1886; *Tampa Journal*, June 23, 1887; *Tampa Tribune*, September 22, 1887; Karl H. Grismer, *Tampa: A History of the City of Tampa and the Tampa Bay Region of Florida* (St. Petersburg, 1950), 344-345; Elaine Fantle Shimberg, comp., *Congregation Schaarai Zedek: 1894-1994, 5655-5755* (Tampa, 1994), 11.

⁷³ The reliability of Bertha's recollection of the 1887 yellow fever outbreak and the subsequent visit of the Maas family to Fort Meade may have suffered from the passage of time. Persons coming from Tampa into Polk County endured quarantine until a December freeze ended fears, a fact that probably furnished the need for George Dzialynski to find the Maases "an old shack in the woods." As one local man put it, "Quarantine stations are as thick in South Florida as new county lines." By January 1888, though, the Maas family either lived in town or else visited frequently from Tampa. A surviving account of a "Leap Year Ball," for example, noted the presence of Miss Frederica Maas, [dressed in] white embroidered muslin, pale blue sash, with Mr. [Max] Reif." Frederica's mother chose to wear "ecru embroidered muslin," while Fannie and Minnie Dzialynski selected white embroidered muslin. *Bartow Advance Courier*, January 18, 1888; Brown, *In the Midst of All That Makes Life Worth Living*, 162-163.

⁷⁴ Frederica Maas, daughter of Abe and Bena Maas.

⁷⁵ Dr. Leslie Washington Weedon, the son of W. H. and Anna Augusta Renfroe Weedon, was born April 27, 1860, in Sandersville, Georgia, and died November 12, 1937, in Tampa. On February 14, 1889, he married L. Blanche Henderson, daughter of Philip Dzialynski's one-time business partner William B. Henderson. Dr. Weedon earned national recognition for his yellow fever research. *Tampa Journal*, January 3, February 21, 1889; Grismer, *Tampa*, 342-343.

⁷⁶ Greenberg, "Tampa Mayor Herman Glogowski," 62-63.

⁷⁷ Bertha may be referring to John Peter Augustus DuPont, Jr., son of J. P. A. and Eliza G. Nichols DuPont. He was born September 17, 1856, in Savannah, Georgia, and died February 27, 1913, in the same city. Folks Huxford, *History of Clinch County, Georgia* (Macon, GA, 1916), 246–247.

⁷⁸ Blackshear, Georgia, merchant Morris M. Cohen was born in 1833 in Prussia. 1880 Census, Pierce County, Georgia.

⁷⁹ Dr. Thomas J. Charlton was born in 1833 in Georgia. 1880 Census, Chatham County, Georgia.

⁸⁰ "It was during one of Bertha [Brown]'s visits home to Gainesville that her sister, Tillie, now grown to a lovely young lady, met with tragic death. One Sunday afternoon she went buggy riding with a young man, their destination being a lake near Gainesville where there was to be a sailboat race. . . . One of the contestants in the boat race was Albert Endel, who had long been in love with Tillie and who urged her to sail in his boat for good luck. Others on the boat were Mr. and Mrs. Louis Burkheim, their baby Roy, and little daughter, Ida. The boat capsized, the clothes of the women became entangled in it, and Tillie, Mrs. Burkeim, and the baby were drowned." Dzialynski, "Within My Heart," 59–60. The Endels were among the pioneer Jews of Gainesville. Moses Endel, the patriarch, came to Gainesville in 1865 with the Torah that is still used in B'nai Israel Congregation. Albert Endel, born in 1867, in Charleston, South Carolina, was the eldest child of Moses and his second wife, Matilda Philips Endel. Albert died in Jacksonville in 1908. Biographical information from Sheri J. Lagin, email messages to Rachel Heimovics, June 20 and June 21, 1999.

⁸¹ Actually, the marriage of Fannie Dzialynski's sister Jennie to Louis Herzog of Baltimore, Maryland, took honors as Fort Meade's first Jewish wedding. The event occurred October 31, 1877, at the Dzialynski home. According to reports, "Mr. P. Dzialynski . . . performed the Jewish part of the ceremony" while Justice of the Peace Benjamin F. Blount fulfilled civil requirements. Since no rabbi lived in central or south Florida at the time, Philip made do as best he could, ensuring the marriage's legality by the justice of the peace's participation. *Tampa Sunland Tribune*, November 24, 1877.

⁸² The marriage of Fannie Dzialynski and Myer Greenfield took place at Fort Meade's "opera house hall" on Wednesday, May 23, 1888. Mayor William Thompson assisted Fannie's father Philip in performing the ceremony. Bertha's daughter Clare served as a flower girl. Governor Edward A. Perry and former governor William D. Bloxham sent words of congratulation. *Bartow Advance Courier*, May 30, 1888.

⁸³ Pursuant to Florida's Married Woman's Property Act, a husband could not alienate any property in which his wife held an interest without her written consent properly executed. Walter W. Manley II, Canter Brown, Jr., and Eric W. Rise, *The Supreme Court of Florida and its Predecessor Courts, 1821–1917* (Gainesville, 1997), 104.

⁸⁴ Josephine Ghira Parslow, wife of architect Alfred H. Parslow. Grismer, *Tampa*, 336–337.

⁸⁵ It was not unusual for a wife to hold title to her home, thus protecting it from her husband's debts, thanks to the protections of the Florida Married Woman's Property Act, as mentioned above.

⁸⁶ Meddie Elizabeth Lightsey Langford, daughter of Cornelius B. and Sarah Carter Lightsey and wife of Richard Cabel Langford, was born November 2, 1860, in Lowndes County, Georgia, and died August 9, 1911, in Tampa, Florida. For the story of her marriage at age fourteen, see Canter Brown, Jr., ed., *Reminiscences of Judge Charles E. Harrison: Pictures from the Past, 1867-1893* (Tampa, 1997), 58-59.

⁸⁷ Telephone interview of Carol Coleman Weil conducted by Mark K. Bauman, June 11, 2004; Dzialynski, "Within My Heart"; Leon, "History of the Dzialynski Family," 3.

Book Reviews

Mordecai: An Early American Family. By Emily Bingham. New York: Hill and Wang, 2003. 346 pages.

Emily Bingham's *Mordecai: An Early American Family* approaches the antebellum South differently than traditional narratives. This is not a historical work that centers on the "peculiar institution," sectional hostilities, or the stratified social systems of the "Old South." In fact, these traditional frameworks and factors are barely visible in Bingham's work. The author seems quite aware that numerous scholars have and will analyze these issues. Instead, Bingham employs a narrower framework, preferring to focus on the assimilation of three generations of an antebellum southern Jewish family. In doing so, she offers a new approach to scholars of the American South and of American Jewish history. For American Jewish scholars this is not a triumphalist narrative solely about antisemitism or one that privileges assimilation. Bingham correctly states that focusing solely on American Jewish struggles with spirituality is historically inaccurate since antebellum southern Jews endured private and public struggles common to other historical individuals of the era. In this family biography, Bingham examines how one early American family navigated these obstacles and negotiated their roles as respectable Jews, southerners, and Americans.

To situate the Mordecai family experience within the larger regional and national ideological context, Bingham employs the framework of "enlightened domesticity." Combining reigning early nineteenth-century religious and secular philosophies, this "family covenant" emphasized reason, liberal concepts of religion, virtue, intellectual cultivation, and individualism within the context of family and communal responsibility and stressed the home

as the site of material and spiritual support (5–6). Bingham argues that this philosophy profoundly shaped Mordecai family members' personal and public goals, their relations with each other, and the way they positioned themselves in their private and public lives.

Introduced to these ideals as children by the matriarch and patriarch of the Mordecai clan, Judith and Jacob, Mordecai family members redefined the family code as they matured to adulthood, constructing relevant secular and religious identities that appropriately fit in the larger antebellum southern and national contexts. These redefinitions caused both pride and conflict among and across the generations of the Mordecai clan. Confirming other scholarly findings on men during this period, Bingham argues that the Mordecai men created their public and private identities according to the developing individualist ethos, pursuing their public and private goals while only negligibly considering family wishes. In many ways, the Mordecai men fulfilled the expectations of their parents and grandparents and distinguished themselves in their chosen fields of law, medicine, and trade. Against family wishes, however, many used the philosophy and its foundational ideology of reason to justify unpopular choices such as rejecting certain career paths, engaging in exogamy, or supporting the Union.

Gender philosophies and coverture laws provided the Mordecai women with less freedom. For them, filial duty often conflicted with individual wishes, although they sometimes managed to exercise their own agency through persuasion and secretive strategies. Rachel Mordecai Lazarus publicly defended her Judaism, taught in her father's school, and was a dutiful daughter and wife, but after her own private spiritual conversion, she tried to influence her children's religious identities. Her sister, Ellen Mordecai, devoted her life to the family's well-being but also converted and made a rather successful living by publishing a book about her conversion experiences. Bingham highlights the Mordecai women's struggle with personal religious fulfillment and conflicting family beliefs. Clearly, the Mordecai men expected women to fulfill the tenets of enlightened

domesticity, to subordinate their ambitions to those of their male relatives, and to protect the family's reputation.

Reflective of the turbulent 1830s, 1840s and 1850s, enlightened domesticity proved to have an even more interesting effect on the third generation. One of Jacob and Judith's grandchildren, Marx Edgeworth Mordecai, often wrestled with his enlightened upbringing and its emphasis on reason as he worked toward self-actualization. He ultimately became a well-known speaker and writer on alternative medicine and an advocate of free love and abolitionism. His sister, Ellen Lazarus, matured into a radicalized feminist and was intent on becoming a hydropath, although her efforts were derailed by strong family objections. Spiritual wrestling, filial duty, and respectability routinely punctuated individual stories across the generations.

In creating such a descriptive family biography, the author mined through thousands of the Mordecai family's private and public documents. While strictly focused on tracing the events and experiences of the Mordecai family, this work is especially revealing about changing ideas about religion, race, economics, urbanization, medicine, sexuality, and gender norms. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of Bingham's work is the way in which she approaches assimilation, a topic often treated by scholars of the American Jewish experience. For Bingham, enlightened domesticity was an effective strategy of assimilation that still preserved fidelity to Judaism. Her framework provides nuance and offers plausible reasons for the high rates of exogamy and conversion during this period. Additionally, her approach compellingly suggests that assimilation for antebellum southern Jews was not direct or immediate, nor can it be traced through simple factors such as social anxiety or a desire to conform. Bingham depicts assimilation as a complex, uneven, and a very individualized experience affected by a host of external and internal pressures and goals. Scholars will do well to follow her lead and expand their understanding of assimilation as a process that is, among other things, inextricably linked to particular events, ideologies, family situations, geographical settings, class formations, and individual psyches.

The genre of biography presents its own problems, providing detailed focus on historical actors while sacrificing context. While Bingham's work is not comprehensively situated in the larger historical contexts of the Second Great Awakening, the economic turbulence of the Jacksonian Era, western migration, slavery, or the Civil War, knowledgeable readers will quickly recognize the events and reigning philosophies that affected the economic and social lives of the Mordecais. Bingham anticipates this problem and provides an extensive bibliographic essay whereby readers might consult other sources to learn more about specific events, ideologies, and issues raised by the Mordecai family experience. In some cases, the focus on the Mordecais leads to conclusions that contradict the findings of scholars writing more broadly about the social context of the antebellum South. The private sources utilized by Bingham, for example, suggest that antisemitism was virtually non-existent, although scholars of southern Jewry have argued that antisemitism did in fact exist in the nineteenth-century South in day-to-day exchanges, trading practices, and in politics. These shortcomings, however, are minor. *Mordecai: An Early American Family* will prove a compelling read for scholars and would make an excellent undergraduate selection to better illuminate the era for students.

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Goldberger's War: The Life and Work of a Public Health Crusader. By Alan M. Kraut. New York: Hill and Wang, 2003. 312 pages.

A commitment to healthcare and healing has been integral to American Jewish communal life from its beginnings. Among the first associations established in the nascent Jewish communities of the nineteenth century were those providing aid to the sick,

elderly, and pregnant women. The mass migration of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries began soon after the professionalization of medicine in the United States, and the medical profession proved a popular career choice for immigrant and second-generation American Jewish men and some women. Despite anti-Jewish quotas in medical schools in the 1920s to 1940s, the number of Jewish physicians in the United States grew disproportionately to the number of Jews in the general population. Young American Jews found medicine to be an accessible, socially desirable, and culturally honorable profession.

Dr. Joseph Goldberger was one of the young American Jews who found success in medicine. In fact, in a field of great importance for American Jews' social and economic standing, Goldberger achieved national recognition for his medical research. In *Goldberger's War*, Alan Kraut thoroughly documents the life and achievements of Goldberger, an officer of the U.S. Public Health Service who identified the general nutritional cause of pellagra and pioneered a cure for the disease, which ravaged the American South in the early twentieth century. Kraut is known to American Jewish historians, and to American historians in general, for his important study of immigrants, disease, and nativism, *Silent Travelers: Germs, Genes, and the Immigrant Menace* (1994). In *Goldberger's War*, Kraut extends his analysis of the nexus between medical and social history, providing a fascinating examination of the impact and limitations of one individual's efforts to effect social and scientific change. Of special interest to American Jewish historians, the book provides a snapshot of the important role of profession in modern Jewish identity, while also examining Goldberger's understanding of his own Jewishness. Jewish and southern historians alike will appreciate the insight Kraut provides into one American Jewish professional's observations about the socio-economic structures of the New South.

Kraut places Joseph Goldberger's early years firmly in the context of turn-of-the-century immigrant Jewish life. Goldberger was born in 1874 in a village near the base of the Carpathian Mountains. His family immigrated to the United States when he was nine years old, prompted by his father's financial ruin. The

Goldbergers settled on Manhattan's Lower East Side, where Joseph's father followed a well-trod economic path from peddler to grocer. Joseph graduated from public high school, attended City College, and earned his M.D. at Bellevue Hospital Medical College. At the outbreak of the Spanish-American War in 1898, Goldberger, anxious to leave his private practice and combine his medical expertise with national service, applied for a position with the Naval Medical Corps. Turned down for military duty, he joined what would soon become the U.S. Public Health Service. His work there supported the refinement of his epidemiological skills through assignments working on malaria, yellow fever, and typhoid in Mexico, Puerto Rico, Louisiana, and Washington, D.C.

Kraut documents the importance of these experiences to the task that would consume Goldberger's attention for the rest of his career and life: fighting the yearly invasion of the South by the pellagra epidemic. Before Goldberger began the study of pellagra, national conferences bemoaned this scourge of the South. Physicians debated whether pellagra was a germ-born disease or the product of a mysterious nutritional deficiency. As part of their efforts to buoy the New South's reputation and economy, southern politicians and business leaders actively urged pellagra's study and eradication. Goldberger conducted his study of pellagra with prisoners, hospital patients, mill families, and others in Georgia and South Carolina, as well as in the Washington facilities of the National Hygienic Laboratory over several years. Kraut portrays him as skilled in library, lab, and field research, and as a crusader concerned as much about social reform as about individual sufferers. Opposition to Goldberger's work came from two corners. Some physicians dismissed Goldberger's conclusions about the nature of pellagra as a nutritional deficiency, considering his arguments a violation of what they knew from germ theory. In addition, southern elites did not always appreciate his indictment of lower-class southerners' poor diet and the socio-economic forces that encouraged it. They saw in his critique northern prejudice against the southern way of life and the possibility of negative economic repercussions for the fragile New South. In general, though, Joseph Goldberger's research and cure

recommendations impressed his colleagues and inspired later biographers, including Kraut, to lionize him and commemorate his work.

For historians of American Jewry, *Goldberger's War* offers a fascinating case study in modern Jewish identity, although this seems not to have been Kraut's primary concern. Contrary to historiographical observations about Jewish identity that stress conflict and negotiation, evidence Kraut provides suggests that Goldberger was generally unconflicted about his own Jewishness. He was entirely devoted first to his medical career and then to his family (although Kraut argues that Goldberger's family came first); he paid little attention to Judaism or Jewish communal matters. Goldberger's role as a physician and public health crusader, not as an American Jew, seems to have been his primary identity. Goldberger's is a story of easy integration not only into the medical profession, but also into American civil service, a field generally closed to Jews in other western countries. The ethos of medicine in the United States provided the open space that made it possible for Goldberger to pursue his vocation. Public health medicine replaced Judaism as the Most High to which Goldberger devoted his life.

This is not to say that Goldberger did not contemplate Judaism or his relation to it. Kraut mines courtship letters from Goldberger to his future bride, Mary Farrar, the daughter of a prominent Episcopalian family from New Orleans, which show him thinking through his views about Judaism and about religion in general. Though concerned over his Orthodox parents' feelings about intermarriage, Goldberger expressed a thoughtful, even philosophical, understanding that while Judaism was naturally a part of him, it was not a barrier to marrying his intended. Goldberger defies the mold of the thoroughly networked early twentieth-century American Jew, lacking affiliation not only with a synagogue (or other Jewish institutions), but also with clubs or other social institutions outside of work. This is in contrast to his wife, Mary, who was active in non-Jewish women's clubs in the Washington area. Goldberger's sense of his own Jewishness, in fact, seems remarkably postmodern: he was interested neither in

religion nor in ethnicity, but always considered himself Jewish. His funeral in 1929 perfectly encapsulates this unconflicted, thoroughly nontraditional quality of Goldberger's modern Jewishness: at a service presided over by the prominent Washington Reform Rabbi Abram Simon, his wife and colleagues scattered his cremated ashes over the Potomac River. While Kraut offers such evidence about Goldberger's relationship to Jewishness, he does not thoroughly pursue its implications for our understanding of American Jewish society as a whole. It will be the job of future historians to determine how Goldberger's life story might shape our understanding of American Jewish identity and communal life.

Kraut amply fulfills his charge as a biographer by offering a convincing case for Goldberger as public health crusader and pioneer. He presents Goldberger's triumphs and warts: his passionate and detailed study of pellagra from both human and biochemical perspectives, as well as his untroubled use of convicts and mental patients as human subjects. Goldberger truly can be, as Kraut desires, an historical case study for today's public health crusaders battling AIDS, another disease significantly affected by socio-economic forces. This book will certainly be of interest to American Jewish and southern historians, as well as to its primary audience of medical historians.

Jane Rothstein

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South of the South: Jewish Activists and the Civil Rights Movement in Miami, 1945-1960. By Raymond A. Mohl with Matilda "Bobbi" Graff and Shirley M. Zoloth. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004. 263 pages.

Raymond Mohl has written an exemplary case study of the civil rights movement in Miami that reverberates beyond its

boundaries. With its booming tourist industry and rapidly growing Jewish population, Miami was far from a typical southern city in the post World War II decades. Yet, those who struggled for civil rights faced most of the obstacles encountered elsewhere in the South, including violence, intimidation, legal harassment, and deception. Still, there were important differences, and Mohl frames his account by focusing on perhaps the most significant one: the interracial alliance of local African Americans and Jews, especially Jewish women, to overturn segregation in schools and public accommodations.

Mohl argues that Jewish women radicals who moved to Miami from the North, especially Matilda "Bobbi" Graff and Shirley Zoloth, made vital contributions to the civil rights movement through their activism and willingness to work with blacks for common goals of equality. He notes that both women grew up in left-wing immigrant households and came to civil rights through previous commitments to progressive causes. Both supported the presidential campaign of Henry Wallace. Graff joined the Communist Party and quickly linked up with labor organizers and other communists when she settled in Miami after the war. Zoloth's activism grew out of Zionist involvement and women's movement work for peace, and she found partners on the progressive, noncommunist left among Miami's Jews when she arrived in the mid-1950s. Both women were mothers, who shared their dedication to interracial causes with their husbands. Apart from their zeal for politics and integration, they resembled many other middle-class Jewish women in Miami and other cities in the postwar period. But, as Mohl reveals, radical politics occupied the center of their consciousness, and they threw themselves into efforts to change Miami's southern segregated society.

As white women, Graff and Zoloth represented the majority population in Miami and they used their whiteness to further the cause of integration. In the late 1940s this meant joining the Civil Rights Congress (CRC) for a communist like Graff; in the late 1950s this meant joining the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) for Zoloth. As Mohl points out, these organizations' grass-roots approach to civil rights issues often conflicted with the more elite

policies of the NAACP. Nevertheless, Florida's anticommunist investigations as well as the House Un-American Activities Committee disrupted the NAACP and decimated the CRC. Graff fled to Canada after being served with a subpoena four days after giving birth to her third child. "Our biggest crime," she later reflected "was bringing blacks and whites together" (47). Zoloth, arriving in Miami around the time that Graff was driven out, did not suffer such persecution. Her activities in CORE, designed to integrate lunch counters, anticipated by a year the more famous student efforts that propelled the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee into the limelight of civil rights activism. Zoloth remained in Miami, dedicated to dismantling segregation and creating a more just society.

Graff and Zoloth were not only white, but also Jewish. Both identified as Jews and considered their activism part of their Jewish heritage. They drew upon networks of other Jews in Miami and pursued their interracial politics largely with other Jews. Mohl recognizes the Jewish dimensions of their story and pays attention to where these civil rights activists differed from established Jewish organizations, which tended to be more fearful about advocating integration or expressing support for individuals accused of being communists. He also explores reasons for fear among Jews as bombs exploded in synagogues in Miami and other southern cities. Although he does not focus upon rabbinical leadership, he does mention the involvement of local branches of such national Jewish organizations as the American Jewish Congress and the American Jewish Committee.

Mohl largely confines his history to a long essay that contextualizes the Miami experience with civil rights within several frameworks. He looks at how the Miami story contributes to the extensive scholarship on the relationship of Jews and blacks in the civil rights movement. He compares the Miami situation with developments in other southern cities. He indicates how the participation of the two women activists and their female friends strengthens recent reinterpretations regarding mothers' roles in the postwar decades. And he highlights the critical impact of the alliance of segregationists and anticommunists, especially the

importance of government investigations in dismantling left-wing interracial coalitions of Jews and blacks. Then he stops and lets the reader meet Bobbi Graff and Shirley Zoloth in their own words.

Two thirds of the book consists of Graff's memoir of her years as an activist in civil rights and Zoloth's reports and letters describing the CORE sit-ins in 1959. Reading their accounts provides alternative perspectives to Mohl. I was struck by several of Zoloth's letters to the National Council of Jewish Women from 1960. Both address the question of political support and activism. Zoloth writes to inquire about participating with NOW to work for desegregation of Miami public schools and then to request help in opposing antisemitic attacks on a Jew running for the school board. The letters suggest that Zoloth had not despaired of involvement by mainstream Jewish women's groups although much of her civil rights work occurred outside of Jewish organizations. Graff's memoir shows how her friendships cut across lines of religion, race, and class as well as revealing how she coped with FBI surveillance and informers. She also reflects upon the tensions in her roles as mother and activist, and the occasionally painful choices she made.

South of the South would make a marvelous teaching book since it includes two very different types of primary sources (a memoir and letters), as well as Mohl's essay. There is also an extensive bibliography and detailed notes. One could start reading from the back of the book, beginning with Zoloth's contemporary accounts, then moving on to Graff's memoir, and finally reaching the historical analysis. Issues of interpretation, memory, and history as well as race, class, gender, region, and Jewish political culture provide intersecting conceptual tools with which to understand a complex drama set in Miami but extending far beyond in its significance.

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And the Dead Shall Rise: The Murder of Mary Phagan and the Lynching of Leo Frank. By Steve Oney. New York: Pantheon Books, 2003. 742 pages.

Thoroughly researched and absorbingly written, Steve Oney's *And the Dead Shall Rise* sets a new standard for those who study the lynching of Leo Frank. Oney's contribution to the field is primarily a matter of dilation and detail. Minor characters get more attention from Oney than they have from other writers, and all of the players are given histories and contexts that help to explain their motives. Passing incidents, too, are inspected more closely and are given more weight than elsewhere. All of these details are harnessed to serve a well-told story; Oney is a journalist, but he has a novelist's ear for dramatic narrative.

The level of detail has been a source of some criticism of the book, and indeed it is difficult (and probably unnecessary) for the reader to keep track of all the *dramatis personae*. But, criticizing *And the Dead Shall Rise* as too long or overly detailed misses the point entirely: these details enrich our understanding. The depth of his examination of the Atlanta press, for instance—its tendency toward sensationalistic reportage, and the impact of William Randolph Hearst's ownership of the *Georgian*—helps the reader comprehend the public's almost hysterical interest in the case. Preexisting local fears about child labor and industrial capitalism exacerbated that hysteria, which mobilized the sale of newspapers and advanced careers. That a Jew became its object terrified members of Atlanta's Jewish community, and Oney critically and compassionately portrays their unwavering defense of Frank, and then their increasing dread as his fate darkened.

The action begins in April 1913 when thirteen-year-old Mary Phagan was brutally murdered in Atlanta, Georgia. Her battered corpse was found in the basement of the pencil factory where she worked, and police examiners suggested that she might have been raped. The search for her killer galvanized the city, and Frank, the factory's superintendent and a German Jew born in Texas but raised in Brooklyn, quickly became one of the prime suspects, as he was the last person to admit to seeing her alive. He was put on

trial for murder that summer, and Frank became, Oney writes, “a pawn in a battle between divergent factions at war over Atlanta’s future” (104).

The prosecution’s case against him rested on unreliable sources and mostly circumstantial evidence. The Atlanta police department decided upon Frank’s guilt early in the investigation, and Oney’s description of their shameless corruption and general ineptitude is particularly disturbing. The testimony of Jim Conley, a black sweeper at the pencil factory and the pivotal witness, was riddled with inconsistencies and admitted perjuries. The lead attorney for the state also made a number of inadmissible insinuations about Frank’s Jewishness, playing upon stereotypes of the Jew as a bankrolled outsider and sexual deviant. Even still, and perhaps due to several miscalculations on his lawyers’ part, Frank was found guilty and sentenced to be executed, much to the delight of the local crowd in and around the courthouse. Popular opinion had turned against Frank over the course of the trial, partly due to Tom Watson’s viciously antisemitic and increasingly popular newspaper, the *Jeffersonian*.

For the next two years, several influential northern institutions, the *New York Times* and the American Jewish Committee especially, worked on Frank’s behalf, raising funds for his defense and engineering a nationwide publicity campaign. John Slaton, Georgia’s governor, was persuaded both by the lobbyists and the evidence to commute Frank’s sentence to life imprisonment in June 1915. Outraged by what they considered the imposition of northern power and Jewish money on Georgia politics, a group of twenty-five men from Marietta, Georgia, where Mary Phagan’s family had once lived, decided to avenge the girl’s murder by means of vigilante justice. That August, they kidnapped Frank from the prison farm where he was incarcerated, drove him to Marietta, and lynched him from a tree near the Phagans’ old property.

Oney’s recounting of the Mariettans’ lynching conspiracy is his most significant contribution to Leo Frank studies. Until recently, southern lynching parties in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were assumed to have come from the lower

socio-economic strata of white society and to have used racial violence as an expression of their class resentment. Oney's research, however, corroborates what more recent scholars have written about lynchers, and, it turns out, what everyone in Marietta knew about Frank's lynchers all along. The group that murdered Frank was made up of some of Marietta's most well-known and respected citizens. Legislators, a judge, and a former Cobb County sheriff participated in the lynching and then conspired with much of Marietta's population to keep the identities of all involved an open secret. Oney describes the particulars of these men's habits, their environment, and their political aspirations. In doing so, he shines brighter light on the nature of their hostility to Frank (and Jews in general), as well as their resentment toward "outsiders" (especially northerners) who "meddled" in local affairs.

Lynchings were not uncommon at the time; Oney points out that Frank's was one of twenty-two such deaths in 1915 in Georgia alone (513). But the events surrounding Frank's death have enduring resonance and stand as a particularly notorious example of American bigotry. The lynching of Leo Frank has been the subject of more analysis than any other single lynching in American history, a fact which, considering that African American men were almost always lynching's victims, deserves to be the subject of its own study. *And the Dead Shall Rise* joins a historiography that spans ninety years and includes historical studies of American antisemitism, polemics by Frank's outraged defenders, literary deconstructions of race and gender, novels, and movies, and even a Broadway musical. While Oney offers no original theoretical insights, he has provided the most complete version of the story. The sheer depth and detail of his work will make it the authoritative account of Frank's murder, as well as a vital resource for any study of the American South or American Jewish history during the Progressive Era.

Marni Davis

Emory University

Glossary

Bar Mitzvah ~ traditional coming-of-age ritual for Jewish males usually reaching age thirteen

Conversos ~ Spanish and Portuguese Jews who were forced to convert to Christianity because of the Inquisition but whose conversion may or may not have been sincere or lasting; unlike the term *Marranos*, *Conversos* does not have derogatory implications

Crypto Jews ~ Persons remaining faithful to Judaism in secret while practicing another religion that they or their ancestors were forced to accept

Ganze mishpocha ~whole family

High Holidays ~ Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur; the two most important holidays on the Jewish calendar

Kallah ~ meeting of scholars for religious study and discussion

Kehillah ~ New York Kehillah; derived from the shtetl tradition of representative community leadership

Mishpocha ~ family.

Shtetl ~ small town or village in Europe often associated with Jewish residence

Shul ~ synagogue

Trefa, trefy ~ non-kosher food

Yiddishkeit - Yiddish culture

Note on Authors

Canter Brown, Jr., professor of history at Florida A & M University, received his J.D. and Ph.D. degrees from Florida State University. The author of numerous works on Florida and southern history, he won the American Association for State and Local History's Certificate of Commendation for *Ossian Bingley Hart, Florida's Loyalist Reconstruction Governor*. His essay, "Philip and Morris Dzialynski: Jewish Contributions to the Rebuilding of the South," won the Southern Jewish Historical Society's B. H. Levy Prize and appeared in *American Jewish Archives*. Other prizes awarded for his work include the Florida Historical Society's Rembert W. Patrick Book Award, the Governor LeRoy Collins Prize, and the Harry T. and Harriette V. Moore Book Award.

Marni Davis is a Ph.D. candidate in history at Emory University where she is currently writing her dissertation, "'The Homebrew and the Hebrew': Jewish Americans as Purveyors of Alcohol, 1870-1936." She is the recipient of a Southern Jewish Historical Society Dissertation Grant and a Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship from the National Foundation for Jewish Culture.

Harlan Greene is manager of Special Collections, Charleston County Public Library in Charleston, South Carolina. He was project archivist for the NEH-funded program to catalogue the Jewish Heritage Collection at the College of Charleston. He is an award winning novelist and author of *Slave Badges and the Slave Hire System in Charleston, 1783-1865*, *Mr. Skylark: John Bennett and the Charleston Renaissance*, and other works on Charleston history as well as a forthcoming book on Herschel Grynszpan, whose assassination of a German official in Paris in 1938 triggered Kristallnacht.

Deborah Dash Moore is William R. Kenan, Jr., Professor of Religion at Vassar College and director of its Jewish Studies Program. A historian of American Jews, she focuses on the twentieth century experience. Her most recent book, *GI Jews: How World War II Changed a Generation*, appeared in 2004.

Dale Rosengarten is director of the Jewish Heritage Collection at the College of Charleston. Curator of the recent museum exhibition "A Portion of the People: Three Hundred Years of Southern Jewish Life," she co-edited the book by the same name. *Row upon Row: Sea Grass Baskets of the South Carolina Lowcountry*, an exhibit catalogue Rosengarten produced for the University of South Carolina's McKissick Museum, remains the definitive work on the subject. She holds undergraduate and graduate degrees from Harvard University.

Jane Rothstein is a visiting lecturer in Jewish Studies at Texas Christian University and a Ph.D. candidate at New York University in the Department of History and the Skirball Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies. She is completing her dissertation, "Pure Women and Sacred Baths: Family Purity, Sexuality, and American Jews, 1900-1945."

Jennifer A. Stollman is an assistant professor at Salem College in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. She is currently revising her manuscript on the construction of Jewish and southern identity in the antebellum and Civil War South.

Bryan Edward Stone completed a Ph.D. in American Studies in 2003 at the University of Texas at Austin. His dissertation, "West of Center: Jews on the Real and Imagined Frontiers of Texas," which explores the many ways that Texas Jews have negotiated lines of difference among themselves, non-Jewish Texans, and non-Texan Jews, is under advance contract with the University of Texas Press. He is currently an Assistant Professor of Social Sciences at Del Mar College in Corpus Christi, Texas. A fifth-generation Texan, he is the great-grandson of Edgar Goldberg.

Clive Webb is a Lecturer in North American History at the University of Sussex in Brighton, England. He received his B.A. degree from the University of Warwick, his M.A. from the University of Sheffield, and his Ph.D. from Cambridge University. Webb is the author of *Fight Against Fear: Southern Jews and Black Civil Rights* (2001) which won the inaugural Southern Jewish Historical Society book prize, and editor of *Massive Resistance: Southern Opposition to the Second Reconstruction* (forthcoming). He

is currently working on a study of the lynching of Mexicans in the United States with William Carrigan of Rowan University. An article based on this research was awarded the 2003-2004 Arthur Miller Prize.

Deborah R. Weiner serves as Research Historian and Family History Coordinator at the Jewish Museum of Maryland in Baltimore. She received a Ph.D. in History from West Virginia University in 2002. Her dissertation, "A History of Jewish Life in the Central Appalachian Coalfields, 1870s to 1970s," explores nine small Jewish communities in the coal mining regions of Kentucky, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Errata for Volume 6 (2003)

Two changes should be made to Mark K. Bauman, "Articles Relating to Southern Jewish History Published in *American Jewish History*, *American Jewish Archives Journal*, their predecessors, and *Southern Jewish History*." Saul Viener noted that Sabato Morais' first name was incorrectly spelled on page 177. Stephen Whitfield noted an error on page 185, that he, not Gary Zola, is the author of "Strange Fruit: The Career of Samuel Zemurray," *AJH* 73 (March 1984): 307-323. Bauman thanks both individuals for bringing these errors to his attention.

Errata for Volume 3 (2000)

In Appendix 1, page 69, of Richard A. Hawkins' "Lynchburg's Swabian Jewish Entrepreneurs in War and Peace", those listed as the children of Joachim were in fact his grandchildren. Their father was Seligmann (Sigmund) Guggenheimer, Joachim's son. In footnote 79, page 77, based on Malcolm Stern's genealogy, it is stated that Seligmann's wife's maiden name was Landauer. Research by Ralph Bloch, a great-great-great-grandson of Seligmann, shows that the maiden name was Neumann, not Landauer. Hawkins expresses his appreciation to Professor Ralph Bloch for drawing his attention to these errors. In addition, Hawkins says that the statement on page 56 that Randolph Guggenheimer read law at the College of the City of New York is incorrect. In fact, he graduated with a law degree from New York University in 1869.

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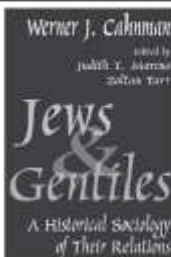
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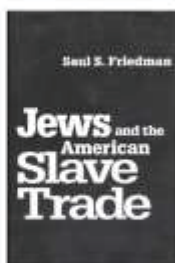
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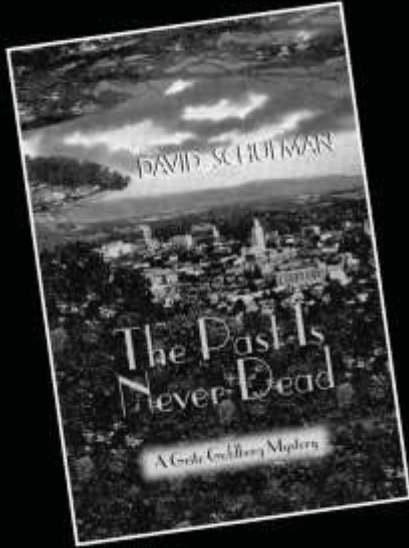
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