



# Jewish Historical Society of Memphis & The Mid-South

Founded in 1986

163 Beale Street

Memphis, TN 38103

NEWSLETTER  
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September 1987

Volume 1 Number 1

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Member,

Welcome and a special greeting to you. Our organization is new, but as Jews we have always been a people of history. To the newest members, we are so glad to have you. And to those who have served and directed the organization since its beginnings, a special word of thanks.

As you may know, the formation of this group was inspired by a conference of the Southern Jewish Historical Society, held in Memphis two years ago. We are now over 200 members strong, boast a modest bank account of some \$3000 and an enthusiastic board assisted by dedicated committees.

As we pursue our purposes of encouraging study and research, providing educational programs and establishing local archives, I appeal to each of you to become a committee of one. Please search your family attic, preserve the papers and documents that might otherwise be discarded or allowed to disintegrate, and encourage the older members of your family to write or tape family history for you.

You will note in the enclosed brochure the announcement of an oral history workshop to be held as a conference at M.S.U. in November. I hope many of you will take advantage of this opportunity to learn from the scheduled authorities in the field. In addition to these workshops, there may be other opportunities, particularly for those not available to attend during the day. Dr. Charles Crawford of the Oral History Program and M.S.U. has indicated his willingness to help us.

With this newsletter we are enclosing an interest questionnaire. Please return it to the appropriate committee chairperson. I hope you will take the time to indicate the area of your interest. We need your help, advice and participation in whatever form you can offer it.

History is like a garment - an endless weave of time and events and personalities...families, groups, institutions...joy and grief...always changing but in some measure always the same. I am extremely gratified to serve as president of this fledgling organization. With your help, the Jewish Historical Society of Memphis and the Mid-South can take wings and fly.

L'Shana Tova,

*Harriet*  
Harriet

## OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

### Officers 1986-88

President: Harriet Stern  
Vice-President: Leonid Saharovici  
Secretary: Eric Cornell  
Treasurer: Abe Schwab

### Directors

Rabbi James A. Wax  
Marx J. Borod  
Judy Peiser  
Elias Goldsmith, Jr.  
Lester Sewel  
Laura Spiegler  
Judge Irving M. Strauch  
Harry J. Jaffee

**FINANCIAL REPORT** - In 1986 the Jewish Federation gave the Society a start-up grant of \$300. This money was used as partial funding for the brochure we are using in our membership drive.

Allocations of our funds have gone toward brochures, stationary and postage. The Board recently voted for a contribution of \$100 toward the Memphis Jewry exhibition, for which we are one of the sponsoring organizations.

We have approximately \$3000 on hand, raised through membership dues.



## COMING UP



### COMMUNITY EVENTS

EXHIBITION ON MEMPHIS JEWRY  
October 20 - City Hall, Memphis

WOMEN OF COURAGE ORAL HISTORY CONFERENCE  
November 15-17 - Memphis State Univ.



## ARCHIVES AND ORAL HISTORY

Chairpersons: Judy Peiser (726-4205)  
Laura Spiegler (767-5924)

Shirley Feibelman  
Gloria Felsenthal  
Harry Jeffee (756-6202)  
Oral History Subcommittee Chairperson  
Ruth Kahn  
Lynn Mirvis  
Leo Goldberger

## RESOURCE ADVISORS

Rabbi James A. Wax  
Dr. Berekely Kalin  
Selma Lewis  
Marjean Kremer

## PROGRAM

Chairpersons: Dessie Sewel (452-2961)  
Leonard Saharovici (682-0103)

Frida Saharovici  
Madelyn Atkins  
David Schneider  
Ed Morris  
Marcus Katz  
Sandy Lewis  
Marsha Bicks  
Harriet Alperin

## MEMBERSHIP

Chairperson: Lester Sewel (452-2961)  
Abe Schwab  
Herschel Feibelman  
Nancy Sissman  
Ben Sissman

## NOMINATING

Chairperson: Elias Goldsmith, Jr.  
Lynn Mirvis  
Max Borod

## BUDGET AND FINANCE

Judge Irving M. Strauch  
Jack Lieberman  
Joseph Liebovitz  
Bob Goldsmith  
Aaron Shankman

A SPECIAL NOTE OF THANKS: To Tracy Cowles, who designed our logo of a Cotton Boll and Star of David and who generously gave us her time and talent to produce our brochure.

To David Schneider, now our editor, who put together this, our first Newsletter.

WE NEED YOUR HELP !!

OUR ARCHIVES COMMITTEE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW ABOUT ANY MATERIAL YOU HAVE RELATING TO EARLY JEWISH HISTORY IN MEMPHIS. PICTURES, BOOKS, SYNAGOGUE AND TEMPLE PUBLICATIONS, FAMILY HISTORIES AND EARLY DOCUMENTS.

PLEASE CALL - LAURA SPIEGLER 767 - 5924

IMPORTANT NOTE: TO THOSE ORGANIZATIONS THAT RECENTLY RECEIVED OUR QUESTIONNAIRE .....

PLEASE COMPLETE and RETURN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

INTEREST QUESTIONNAIRE

Yes, I'll serve on a Committee !

\_\_\_ Archives & Oral History

\_\_\_ Program

\_\_\_ Membership

\_\_\_ Budget & Finance

\_\_\_ Public Relations & Publicity

\_\_\_ Hebrew Watchman

\_\_\_ I would be interested in working on an Oral History project.

\_\_\_ I would like to offer some suggestions. Please attach and mail.

SIGN UP A NEW MEMBER - TODAY !

Become a member of the Society and help:

- ... Encourage research
- ... Create an archive
- ... Present educational programs
- ... Promote pride in our heritage

Sign me up for membership in the Jewish Historical Society of Memphis and the Mid-South.

I am enclosing my annual dues for the year 1987-88.

- ☐ \$15 Individual Member    ☐ \$25 Family Membership  
☐ \$50 Donor    ☐ \$100 Patron

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Detach and mail to:

Abe Schwab, Treasurer  
Jewish Historical Society of Memphis  
and the Mid-South  
163 Beale Street  
Memphis, TN 38103





## UPDATE

March 18, 1986: Membership meeting for signing of the Charter from the State of Tennessee establishing the Jewish Historical Society of Memphis and the Mid South.

Program: Speaker - Ramsey Fowler,

Dean of the University College, Memphis State University

"The Creation of the Jewish Studies Program  
at Memphis State"

Dr. Fowler, acting chairman of the Bornblum Judaic Studies Program, spoke about this curriculum newly established by a million dollar gift of brothers Bert and David Bornblum. He explained that a range of courses will be available to Memphis State students and to the general community, including Hebrew language, Jewish civilization and related electives. Dr. Fowler elaborated plans for additions to the library collection in the field of Judaic studies. He stated that lectures and conferences in the Bornblum Program will attract scholars of note.

May 12, 1986: Membership meeting (annual meeting) for the election of officers.

Presenter: David Schneider, Vice President  
National Insurance Agency, Inc.

"Pages of Jewish History Illustrated in Medallion Art"

Mr. Schneider who has a large and diverse collection of medals and coins of Jewish significance, shared a portion of his collection at this meeting. He presented several cases of coins and medals issued by the State of Israel, the Judaic Heritage Society, and independent artists. Many of these showed important moments in the history of the Jewish people.

May 20, 1987: Membership meeting (annual meeting) for the election of officers.

Program: Speaker - Jack Lieberman,

Emeritus Executive Director of the Jewish Federation and Jewish Family Service

The Development of the Memphis Jewish Community: 1850-1980

Mr. Lieberman gave us a sense of the continuity and vitality of the Memphis Jewish community by tracing our roots to the first known Jewish settler in 1848 and the first communal organization, the Hebrew Benevolent Society. He described the evolution of congregations, charities and other organizations. He detailed the responses of the community to the waves of settlement and to world events. In the discussion which followed, Regina and the Neighborhood House received particular mention, as they have just gone out of existence after having served community needs in the past.

## Trend of Events

Current Projects of Our Society: We are engaged in assisting the Hebrew Watchman in obtaining a complete microfilming of all its issues. During the past year, several of our members helped to prepare a weekly "25 Years Ago" squib in the WATCHMAN. We will resume publication of this historical item if we have some VOLUNTEER HELP!

INVENTORY of the history and documentary holdings of local congregations and Jewish organizations. For the purpose of future archiving, we are involved in obtaining the histories of these groups and finding out what materials they possess.

EXPLORATION of the possibility of creating a community Jewish archive. Using the Nashville model, we are looking into what we can do here.

COOPERATION with the City of Memphis as one of the sponsoring organizations of the exhibit, "The Memphis Jewish Community: 1840 to the Present", to be displayed in City Hall from October 21 - November 20.

FAMILY HISTORY PROJECT - We are beginning to work on family histories of notable families in the Memphis Jewish community. It is our hope to present them in a program or more in the future.

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE - ongoing

WHY NOT IN MEMPHIS ...?????

## AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL Tulsa Museum Goes Back 4,000 Years

One of the world's most unusual museums has religious artifacts that go back 4,000 years. What's more, these priceless objects are displayed for public viewing free of charge.

Founded in 1966 by a private endowment, the Gershon and Rebecca Fenster Gallery of Jewish Art in Tulsa, OK, contains one of the three outstanding collections of Judaica to be found in the United States, and the largest in the Southwest. The Gallery fosters understanding of Judaism and the Jewish people through items that symbolize the synagogue, holidays and life cycle events.

Historical artifacts, clothing and implements associated with daily activity, the Jewish home and ritual observances have been collected from such countries as Poland, Germany, Spain, Russia, Morocco, India and Persia, reflecting ethnic and national traditions.

As its collection has grown, the Fenster Gallery has attracted large numbers of visitors representing all religious faiths. It has regularly offered tours of its exhibits with trained lecturers for civic organizations, church groups and school classes, and periodically offers special programs for the public.

## Personal Notes

We mourn the passing of Joe Rothschild, an early supporter of the Society with a special interest in the history of his home town of Brownsville. His loss is too great.

With regret, we have accepted the resignation of Vice President Sherry Schwartz, hoping that in the near future she can resume her fine work with us.



# לשנה טובה תכתבו

FROM

Jewish Historical Society  
of  
Memphis & The Mid-South

PRESIDENT, OFFICERS and DIRECTORS

*Wishing All A Healthy, Happy  
and Prosperous New Year*

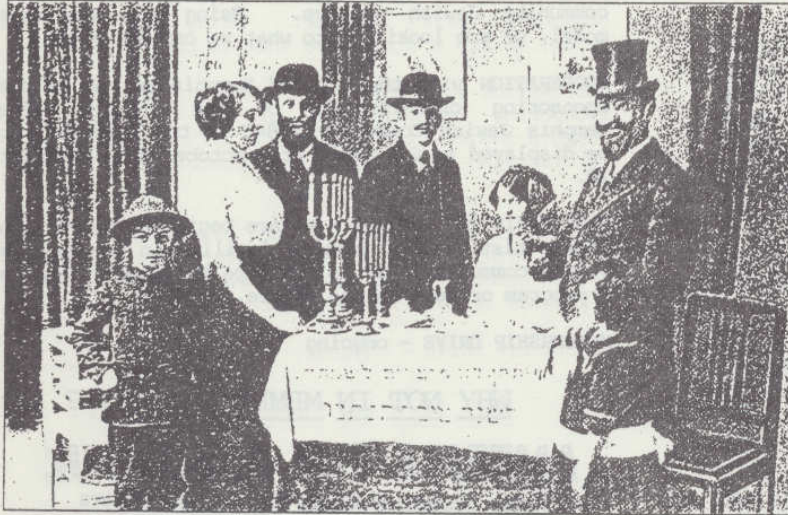


AND FROM THE PAST

GREETINGS

with a

TOUCH OF HISTORY



"For the New Year may God bring you  
A thousand blessings and good fortune."

