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Illuminated Haggadot, Passover Artifacts and History . . . by Leonid Saharovici

One of the important objectives of the Jewish Historical Society of Memphis and the Mid-South is to "promote pride in our heritage" and to "preserve the past for the future". During its fifteen years of existence the Society in its quest to accomplish these goals has organized numerous educational programs. Recently, in collaboration with the Memphis Jewish Community Center, the Society presented, in the Shainberg Gallery, March 11-18, 2001, an exhibition of illuminated Haggadot and Passover artifacts, selections from the Judaica Collections of three Memphis families: Marilyn and Jack Belz, Friderica and Leonid Saharovici and Enid and Barry Weiser. The theme of the exhibition was the festival of Passover that commemorates the Jewish people's redemption from slavery and the story of the exodus reflected in beautiful collections of illuminated and commented Haggadot.

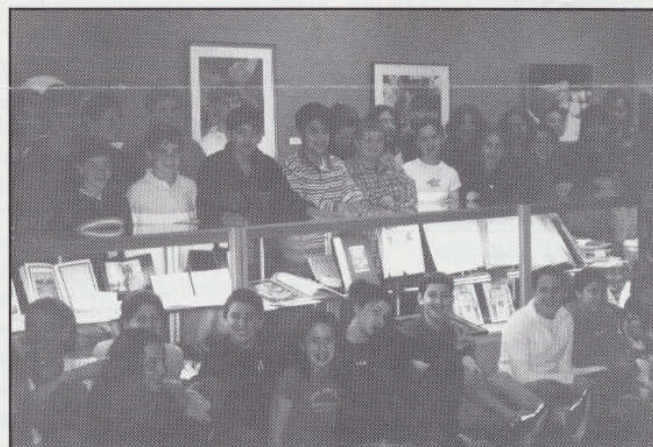
Passover has remained one of the most celebrated Jewish holidays, deeply rooted in the tradition of our people. In Jewish homes all over the world, evening Seders are observed, elaborate festive meals filled with many rituals, special prayers, symbolic foods, songs, discussions and dialogs between parents and children. All these are reunited in a special book called the Haggadah. Generations of Jewish scholars, artists and scribes, have contributed throughout Jewish history to this text. The Haggadah was the core of this exhibit.

The illumination of Jewish books and manuscripts is an ancient art. The very old illustrations have been lost. It is only from the beginning of medieval time that illuminations came to us from Spain, Germany, France and Italy. The Haggadot is considered one of the most outstanding examples of art manuscript illumination. It is also one of the

most popular Jewish books. Almost 3,000 editions of Haggadot were printed in approximately 2,000 places. The edition princeps (the first printed edition) was published in Guadalajara, Spain in 1482, and the next edition, four years later, in Soncino, Italy. The first American edition was published by S.H. Jackson in New York in 1837. Commentaries to the texts have been written by such Torah luminaries as Amram Gaon (9th century), Rashi (1040-1105), Issak Ben Judah Abarbanel (15th and 16th century), the Maharal of Prague (16th century), Elija Gaon of Vilna (18th century), etc. In order to make the Hagaddah available to more people it was translated into more than 20 languages.

The City of Memphis is fortunate to have fine private collectors of Judaica. Also, some of our Synagogues and Temple Israel,

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The Bomblum Solomon Schechter students and teachers, receiving a guided tour of the exhibition.

Annual Election Meeting Commemorates Historical Society's 15th Anniversary

Prominent community leader Peggy Jalenak is the nominee for president of the Jewish Historical Society of Memphis and the Mid-South for the 2001-2 term according to Sumner Levine, chairman of the nominating committee. Elections will be held during the Society's annual meeting at 2:00 p.m., Sunday, May 20th at the Jewish Community Center. Additional nominees include: Vice Presidents: Max Notowitz, membership, Dr. David Patterson, programming. Board Members: 3-year term-Madelyn Daneman, Edward M. Kaplan, Dr. Jack Rosensweig, Eileen Segal. 2-year term-Lynnie Mirvis. Carry over: Vice Presidents-Alan Cohen, Dr. Abe Kriegel. Treasurer: Arthur Buring. Secretary: Dr. Robert

Kalin. Historian: Shirley Feibelman

This meeting will also commemorate the fifteenth anniversary of the Society in Memphis. The program will feature 6th grade students from the Memphis Jewish community Sunday and Day Schools describing what they learned from the first annual Jewish Historical Society sponsored Genealogy Project. These students will be named Selma Lewis Scholars and will receive a copy of the film based on Lewis' book, *A Biblical People in the Bible Belt*, The Jewish Community of Memphis, Tennessee, 1840's-1960's. In the near future, Irwin Kaufman, chairman of this program, will announce those participating.

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JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MEMPHIS AND THE MID-SOUTH - FOUNDED IN 1986
P.O. BOX 17304, MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE 38187

President's Message



Marjean Kremmer

Serving as president of the Jewish Historical Society of Memphis and the Mid-South during the first half of its 15th year (1986-2001) and the beginning of the new millennium has proved to be truly exciting. From our own David Patterson with his learned—and provocative—address to such renowned scholars as Arthur Kurzweil, Gary Zola and Blu

Greenberg, the programs have been outstanding. Memphis-born Dana Sachs was a delight as the JHS-sponsored participant during the Center's Jewish Book Week. Malco's gift of a free showing of Sunshine made Dr. Ozsvath's speech to us even more meaningful.

I know all of us will be proud of our SELMA LEWIS SCHOLARS, 6th graders, to be featured at our annual meeting May 20th. They will discuss what they learned about their ancestors from the first (hopefully!) annual JHS-sponsored genealogy project.

I wish space allowed me to thank each and every one of you who have been so supportive. It will have to suffice to mention but two. Texas' Lyndon Johnson afforded his highest praise to those whom he could trust to accompany him "to the well". As a Memphis Jewish mother, I would substitute "to drive a good carpool" for "to the well." JHS President-elect Peggy Jalenak, I know from many years of experience, is as good a "carpooler" as there is!! B.F. Sumner Levin (and Phyllis with whom I've also shared a multitude of carpools): I'll be driving with you on the JHS trip to Nashville June 4th.

Thanks to all of you for sharing this past year with me,
Marjean

Annual Meeting

Continued from Page 1

Peggy, former secretary and vice-president of the Society, is a member of the Board of Directors of the Memphis Jewish Federation and serves as Co-Chair of the Lions of Judah. She is also on the Board of the National Foundation for Jewish Culture and the National Cultural Services and Community Cultural Services Committees. She is a Board member of the Tennessee State Museum Foundation, their Acquisitions Committee for West Tennessee, and the Management and Collections Committee for Memphis Brooks Museum of Art.

A former member of the Tennessee Arts Commission, she has served on the boards of Tennesseans for the Arts, Opera Memphis, Ballet Memphis, Memphis Arts Council, Carnival Memphis, Memphis Jewish Community Center, Jewish Service Agency, National Council of Jewish Women, among others, and coordinated the Temple Israel Museum which houses the Adler Collection of Judaica.

Although born and raised in Little Rock, Arkansas, Peggy's ties to Memphis stretch far back. Her great-great-grandfather, Samuel Lyons, came to Memphis to enlist and fight in the Civil War. Another great-great-grandfather and mother, Valentine and Theresa Cohn, lived in Memphis in the 1850's and are buried in Temple Israel Cemetery. Peggy and her husband, L.R. Jalenak, Jr., are the parents of four children and six grandchildren.

Jewish Historical Society of Memphis & The Mid-South

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Mr. & Mrs. Larry Mendelson
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From The Editor

In September 1987, the first issue of our Newsletter rolled off the memograph machine at National Mortgage Co. and suddenly I was an editor. Since that time I have been privileged to edit 30 additional issues for the Jewish Historical Society of Memphis and the Mid-South. From Newsletter to our renamed publication in January, 1990, "Southern Jewish Heritage", we have grown with each issue. I feel very honored to have been a part of this growth.

Now, after 14 years I must step down and pass this "labor of love" to someone else. As we read from the haggadat during our seders, "Diyaenu" - it is enough!

So, with one more issue on the drawing board, I must submit my resignation as your editor. With Hashem's blessings my health will stabilize and I will be able to continue to contribute some articles in the future.

I thank each of you for your support over these 14 years and for granting me this wonderful opportunity to serve the Jewish Historical Society of Memphis and the Mid-South.

David Schneider



The Forgotten Jewish Community of Vicksburg

by Julius Herscovici

The Jewish community of Vicksburg, Mississippi has a long and interesting history. While the beginnings of this community have been lost in the midst of oral history, the documents that have been preserved establish a Jewish presence in Vicksburg at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Between 1820 and 1840, the Jewish population of Vicksburg was approximately 25 to 30 families. And, as was the custom, the handful of Jews who were in Vicksburg bought a piece of land and created the first Jewish cemetery.

In 1862, the Jewish congregation, Anshe Chesed of Vicksburg was formally incorporated. In time, the number of Jewish people in the area increased and most of the families were beginning to prosper. Building an infrastructure of the congregation became necessary and in March 1866, the congregation bought a lot on which to build the first Jewish house of worship which was dedicated May 15, 1870.

Three years after the Anshe Chesed Synagogue of Vicksburg was dedicated, a momentous event in the life of American Jewry took place. On March 30, 1873, five Jewish congregations circulated an appeal for a convention to organize a new model of Judaism, the beginnings of Reform Judaism in the United States. Rabbi B.H. Gotthelf and Nicolas Scharff, secretary of the congregation, were the Vicksburg delegates to the Cincinnati Conference, which dealt with the founding of Reform Judaism. On April 25, 1874, congregation Anshe Chesed of Vicksburg was officially admitted into the Union of American Hebrew Congregations as the twenty-fifth congregation to be admitted and has the distinction of being a founding member of U.A.H.C.

The decision to join the reform movement sparked a split in the Jewish community of Vicksburg. Primarily, the divide followed the origin of Jewish people, the length of time living in this country and their socio-economic situation. The emigrants that came from the German countries and had been in the United States for a longer period of time chose to become reform. At the time of admission into the reform

movement, the Vicksburg congregation numbered approximately 76 family members. Oral testimony, made to me is that about one-third of the people preferred to stay with the traditional orthodox way of worship and formed their own congregation. On September 17, 1906 a charter was approved for a Vicksburg Orthodox congregation.

In the American Jewish Year Book 5868 (1907-1908) there is a reference of the congregation Beth Israel located in Vicksburg on 224 Washington Street. Twenty-seven families were members of this congregation. In the same year the local Reform Congregation Anshe Chesed, had a membership of 180 families. According to this source, the Beth Israel congregation was organized in 1901 and Rabbi H. Hochberg was their spiritual leader. Three leaders of this congregation are mentioned. The leaders were S. Pildewasser (president), N. Newman (Treasurer) and Charles Ostrov (Secretary). In the same American Jewish Year Book, it shows that Beth Israel, had daily services in Hebrew. They list the Daughters of Zion as the Auxiliary Society for Beth Israel. So far no other local documents can be found of either the congregation or the members of this congregation. In the local Jewish cemetery, graves cannot be found for any connected with the Orthodox Beth Israel Congregation.

However, there are documents to support that a second orthodox congregation was organized in Vicksburg. On September 17, 1906, a charter was approved for a Vicksburg Orthodox congregation. The founders choose Ahavas Achim Anshei as the name of the new orthodox congregation. In English the name means the congregation of the brotherly love.

In the charter are listed fourteen names. Likely, these are the names of the leaders of the Jewish orthodox community. The fourteen names are Samuel Marcus, M. Borkin, Ike Pearlman, M. Marcus, Joe Borkin, I. Kaufman, Alexander Antrov, I. Shempert, Jacob Spiel, Jacob Cohn, Michael Sparr, I. Riegler, Leon Pogafsky and A. Apteker. Some of these families were related to each other. Morris Marcus was the father of Samuel Marcus

Charter Member Lester Sewel Dies



Lester Sewel

Lester Sewel, a Charter and Founding Member of the Jewish Historical Society of Memphis and the Mid-South, was a great student of local Jewish history. As a board member and honorary officer, Lester's suggestions and recommendations contributed greatly to the Society's early growth. As a historian, Lester was very helpful to Selma Lewis with suggestions and information while she was writing our book, "A Biblical People in the Bible Belt".

In 1949 Lester married Dessie Minnen from Cape Girardeau, MO. They had two children, a son, Perry, of Memphis and a daughter, Patricia Gruenberg, of Wynnewood, PA, and two grandchildren.

The Society has lost a true and wonderful friend. We thank Lester for his many contributions to the Jewish life of Memphis.

and great-grandfather of Richard Marcus. Mr. Richard Marcus is still active in the congregation. Ike Pearlman and Michael Sparr are related to the Marcus family by marriage. From all these names only three are buried in Vicksburg's Jewish cemetery. Samuel Marcus, Isidore Kaufman, and Isaac K. Riegler have their resting place in Vicksburg's Jewish cemetery. What happened to the other is not documented. From interviews with long time residents of Vicksburg, they told me that some Jews left for other places where there were opportunities to make a better living.

The legal charter is signed by Jas K.

Please see Vicksburg, Page 7

in its beautiful museum, are repositories of exclusive Art Judaica collections. The idea to share with the community of Memphis some of the beautiful illuminated Haggadot by three private collectors, the Belz, Weiser and Saharovici families, has generated interest among Jewish adults, but even more importantly, has found an echo in the hearts of the students from our day schools and Sunday schools, who came in large numbers and made very positive remarks.

Because of space restrictions, the collectors could present but a few of their Haggadot and Passover artifacts, including copies of limited editions of magnificent illuminated Haggadot from the 14th to the 19th century and limited editions of Haggadot from the 20th century, including a hand written illustrated Haggadah.

The exhibition presented some exquisite pieces from the collection of Marilyn and Jack Belz, one of the largest private collections of Judaica in Memphis. Among the Haggadot displayed were: The Barcelona Haggadah (Sephardic), from the mid to late 14th century; The Gates of Jerusalem by Yehoshua Freiman, a seventh generation Jerusalemite, printed with three dimension embellishments, and silver and gold stamping. Inspired by the celebration of Jerusalem's third millennium as the capital of Israel, this Haggadah is divided into gates, the reader passing from one gate to the next traversing through the walls of Jerusalem. A hand-written, hand-illustrated Haggadah by Shlomo Levi, an Israeli of Moroccan ancestry, a paraplegic who works only with one hand; a Haggadot illustrated by the internationally known artist, Yacov Agam. This masterpiece was produced in a limited edition of fine original serigraphs, under the artist's direct supervision.

The centerpiece from the Belz Passover artifacts was a beautiful silver plated Seder plate, with sterling silver and gold plated decorations, crafted and designed by Yossi S. Master's workshop in Jerusalem in 1987. It is number 23 of a signed and limited edition of 65 pieces. This unique design incorporates the main Seder utensils into one central unit. Also, shown were two pairs of silver candlesticks and an elaborate Omer counter in silver and gold plated silver by the prominent artist Mark Linden.

The selection from the collection of Friderica and Leonid



Haggadot and Passover Matzo Cover from Saharovici Collection



Exquisite pieces from the Belz collection

Saharovici included the following Haggadot: The Sarajevo Haggadah, one of the most beautifully illuminated manuscripts codex from medieval Spain (second part of the fourteenth century). The original is kept at the National Museum in Sarajevo, Yugoslavia. It is an important historic document for its dramatic survival. This is the first complete edition, published in Ljubiana in 1983; The Kaufman Haggadah, a fourteenth century Hebrew manuscript from Catalonia, belonging to the oriental collections of the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. It was written between 1360-1370. It was published in 1990 by Cultura International, Budapest, Hungary. Notes in Hungarian are provided by Gabrielle Sed Rajna. This numbered copy (No. 33) is bound in leather; The Ashkenazi Haggadah is a copy of the Hebrew manuscript of the fifteenth century that is kept at the British library. It was written and illuminated by Joel Ben Simeon, called Feibusch Ashkenazi, with commentary attributed to Eleazar Ben Judah of Worms; The Alexander Karl Floersheim Haggadah (The Moravian Haggadah) was written in 1737 as inscribed in Hebrew on the title page in "Amsterdam letters". The colored illuminations are based on Amsterdam engravings. This Haggadah was an art publication by Palphot LTD, Israel; The Haggadah was written and illustrated by the scribe Eliezer Seligman De Rosheim at Neckarsulm in 1779. The original manuscript, is kept by The Bibliotheque Nationale et Universitaire de Strasbourg, France. It was published by The Presse Universitaire de Strasbourg in 1998, with an introductory study by the Grand Rabin de Strasbourg, Rene Gutman. The commentary was done by Therese and Mendel Metzger; A Passover Haggadah from the Gurs Camp, France, Passover, 1941. This Haggadah was written in the Concentration Camp of Gurs from memory by Aryah Ludwig Zukermann, one of the 12,000 inmates from the Camp. It was etched on a hard material in Hebrew letters (except the songs at the end of the Haggadah, which were printed in Latin letters), and smuggled to Toulouse where it was printed in thousands of copies and brought back into the Camp before the Seder of Nissan 5701 (1941). This Haggadah and other meaningful and dramatic stories from the life in the Camp, along with several watercolor drawings by artist inmate Fritz Schliffer was published by Yad Vashem, Israel in 1993; A Survivors Haggadah, written and illustrated by Joseph Dov Sheinson, with original woodcuts by Miklos Adler, both Holocaust Survivors. The author and the artist illustrator paralleled the deliverance from Pharaoh's Egypt with the survival in Hitler's Europe. Originally published in Munich, Germany, in 1946 for the first Passover after the liberation, it

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The following article has been extracted from "Ben Balin-A Memoir" written by Bill C. Clifton on the occasion of his 90th birthday, January 9, 1994. I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to read and edit this article.
David Schneider

Continued from our last issue, Vol. 14, No. 1

Part II

Ben had almost abandoned all hope of ever joining his family, "It had been six long, cruel and painful years". In 1921, he received a missive from his father, postmarked New York six months earlier. "My daddy said in the letter that he wondered if I was still alive; they did not know I was still alive. They thought maybe I had been killed and was gone. The letter told me all about my family, my mother, my sisters—they were all okay." His father went on to say, "Maybe somehow or other they would be able to bring me to America. I had hope now." Thereafter, Mendel sent Ben a few dollars in a letter, but the money never reached him. Ben wrote to his father that the money was stolen before the letters were delivered to him. His father then sent packages containing clothes, the small amount of money hidden and sent family photographs with money hidden between the cardboard backing. Ben converted the dollars into gold.

In 1921, he received a large package with a suit, some shoes and concealed money. In 1922, Ben traveled to Vitebsk, the provincial capital and filled out the necessary paper work to secure a passport. Unfortunately, his passport was refused and Ben told his father about the turn down. Again, Ben felt he would never see his family. After several foiled attempts from crooks who took money from Ben's father but never helped him get out of Russia, another plan developed. In 1923, Ben was 19 years old when he left his Aunt and traveled to a peasant's home close to the border of Russia and Latvia. A guard had been bribed, but was not on duty when Ben arrived. So he spent the night in the agents home to await the bribed border guard's next shift. At about 6:00 AM, Ben, along with a group of men who he thought to be smugglers started for

the border. They moved slowly crossing what was a swamp in summer and covered by deep snow by November. Ben is emotional when he remembers, "In places, the drifts of snow was all the way up to my neck. I wore woolen boots; they were hard like a carpet. They kept my feet warm, but they did not fit closed to the leg, so the snow would fill 'em up."

We walked at least five hours, maybe more. I got separated from the group. I was alone when I got to the place I was to cross over. There was a fence in the middle of nowhere and a guard. When I saw the fence and the armed guard, I didn't care anymore. Even if I got shot. The guard saw me and hollered, 'Beshee! Beshee!, Run! Run!' He was afraid both of us would be killed. Guards had been shot when peasants got across.

Once I got over the border I fell on the ground and just laid there a long time, worn out, couldn't move. I was too tired to run or walk or do anything.

Ben was told to travel to Rezita, Latvia and contact another abettor who managed a lumber mill. While he worked in Rezita he lived in Riga, a busy seaport on the Baltic Sea, a twelve-hour train ride away. "He told me where he lived and I bought my ticket and got on the train. I was in great danger because I had no passport, no papers; I was in Latvia illegally."

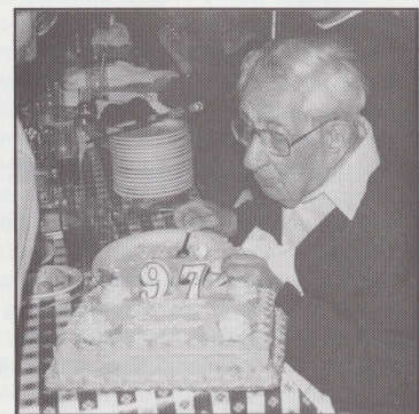
Ben had been instructed that there would be a ticket waiting for him at the White Star Line office in Riga. When he arrived, he was told his papers were no good, there was a \$150 fine for being in Latvia illegally. They wired his father with instructions to send the money to pay the fine. Finally receiving his ticket on a ship bound for Liverpool, then found that there was an additional 30 days quarantine before he would receive his visa from the American Consulate. Finally, Ben got to England and while waiting for the ship to America, he was told the quota is closed in America and when you land in New York, you will not be allowed to get off the boat. "I decided I had been through so much I am going to take a chance and whatever is going to happen is going to happen. I'm going to go anyway. After a brief stop in Halifax, the ship sailed down the eastern coast to New York and as it approached New



Ben Balin and his friend, Philip Belz both at ages 92.

York harbor, the Statue of Liberty came into view. Ben had made an American friend who tried to entice him out on deck to see the Statue of Liberty. However, Ben was strangely depressed. He would not look at the Statue of Liberty. His only feeling was a heavy, sodden dullness. "All I had in my mind, here I am and I'm going to have to go back. I didn't have much hope." Once the ship docked, Ben had to be declared fit by a public official before he could disembark. After the examination he walked out on deck and looked below at the dock. He took a quick breath of utter astonishment to see his father, his mother, his brother and his sisters. Ben could not find the gangplank at first and when he did and started down, his brothers came running and and grabbed him.

"I stayed up all night long talking to my Mama." ☆



Ben Balin's 97th Birthday

was printed by the U.S. Army of Occupation and used by those in the Displaced Persons Camps in the Passover Seder in 1946 in Munich, Germany. This special edition was reprinted by The American Jewish Historical Society in 1998. It is a collectors' item and has the number 334 of the special edition limited to 500 copies and it is a gift received by the Saharovici family from Mr. Ira Lipman. The Jewish men in the Armed Forces in the U.S.A. used this Haggadah during the Second World War. It was edited by David and Tamar De Sola Poole and published by the Jewish Welfare Board in 5703 (1943) in New York. The Haggadah of the Jubilee of Israel, published in 1998, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the creation of the State of Israel was illustrated and decorated on a parchment in colors and graphic techniques used in the old ages. Avi Sharvit and Itzch Jacobovic are the initiators of this Haggadah. Ilan and Ester Lepf did the illustration. Zwi Feldman is the artistic advisor and author of this Jubilee Haggadah; The Haggadah executed by Arthur Szyk and edited by Cecil Roth was published by Massadah (Jerusalem) and Alumoith (Tel Aviv) in 1967. The Haggadah is bound and engraved in a silver plated case and has ornamental colorful stones; A Passover Haggadah commented by Nobel Prize winner Elie Wiesel, and illustrated by Mark Podval with English commentaries edited by Marion Wiesel, a Touchstone Book, published in 1993 by Simon and Shuster, Inc.

A centerpiece in the Saharovici collection was a Passover matzo cover dating from 1881, Targul Neamtz, Roumania. It was embroidered by Leah Beck, grandmother of Friderica Beck Saharovici and it was used by the Beck and Saharovici family, in Roumania and until recently in the U.S.A.

The Saharovici family also presented a selection from an original limited edition of numbered and signed Passover greeting cards, by artist Ruth Roberts from Monrovia, California. Mrs. Ruth Roberts is an artist and psychologist. She specializes in Jewish holiday greeting cards and continues a tradition that originated hundreds of years ago in Eastern Europe. She does not sell her work. It is printed in a very limited (140-1800) copyright edition, which she shares with friends. Her creative cards have been exhibited in galleries, featured in lectures, articles and TV programs. The visitors to the exhibition admired the card collection.

Enid and Barrie Weiser selected for the exhibition the following Haggadat: The Shalom of Safed Passover Haggadah. The internationally renowned artist from Israel has lived for over 70 years high in the hills of Galilee. An humble watchmaker, he was discovered in the late fifties and within a short time has attained a worldwide reputation. The paintings for the Shalom of Safed Haggadah reemerged into public view at a 1985 Sotheby's auction after 26 years in a private collection. The paintings reproduced in this Haggadah are mostly from this first Shalom Haggadah. Some paintings from a second Haggadah done by Shalom in the mid-1960's are also included; Yossi Rosenstein's Passover Haggadah has added a new dimension to Jewish culture. The "painted interpretation" gives the beholder a new insight into the comprehension of the spiritual interpretation of the Torah. The method used by Rabbi Yossi



Passover greeting cards-limited editions-created by artist Ruth Roberts, from Monrovia, California

Rosenstein is symbolic art. Each character and concept is transformed into a visual symbol, which expresses the inner meaning of the Torah text without purporting to actually depict its "reality". This is the "painted dimension"; The Haggadah From The Four Corners Of The Earth, is an interesting book in English, Russian, French, Spanish and Hebrew; Saul Raskin's Haggadah for Passover was always used by Berry Weiser's father, Yonah Weiser, at the family Seder. This 1941 edition of the Raskin Haggadah brought back memories from past family Seders spent by the Weiser family' Chagall's Passover Haggadah is a beautiful illustration of the entire story of the Exodus, a unique creative work by the internationally renowned artist; Abecassis' Haggadah, brings an innate understanding of the Sephardic experience. Raphael Abecassis was born in Morocco and lives in a predominantly Sephardic small town in Israel. He has developed a strikingly unique style, combining Jewish symbols and motifs and modern composition into a well-harmonized bold celebration of color. Abecassis has created a work of the finest aesthetic harmonies and formal perfections; The Golden Haggadah of Jerusalem was published in 1988 in Herzlyia, Israel. The illustrations were done by Yossi Stern, who depicts Hasidic families on joyous occasions; The Seelig Haggadah contained elegant and charming illustrations by Heinz Seelig in brilliant colors.

A remarkable piece in the Weiser collection was an Ethiopian hand made matzo cover entitled, "Fleeing Egypt". Embroidered in the NACOEJ compound in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where cotton thread was spun, fabric was woven and the design was lovingly stitched by hand. This extraordinary work of art depicts and Ethiopian Jewish woman with a water jug on her back making her exodus to Israel. The pyramids of Egypt she leaves behind imply the solidarity that all Jews felt for those who first crossed the Red Sea from bondage to freedom.

The exhibition was attended and admired by many visitors. The success was reflected in the large participation of students from The Margolin Hebrew Academy/Feinstone Yeshiva of the South, The Bornblum Solomon Schechter School and religious schools from Memphis. They came with their teachers and received guided tours and enjoyed seeing these beautiful illuminated Haggadot and the Passover artifacts.



Vardaman, the Governor of the State of Mississippi and R.V. Fletcher, Assistant Attorney General who signed the charter of incorporation for Wm. Williams, Attorney General. On September 29, 1906, the charter of incorporation was recorded and signed by Joseph W. Power, Secretary of State.

At a later date, the orthodox congregation used the local Masonic Temple on the corner of Washington and Grove Street as a place of worship. This building was later demolished.

In volume seven of The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia (1942), page 587, I found incorrect information about this congregation. According to the entry in this encyclopedia this congregation went out of existence in 1906. All my efforts to find any documents about the cessation of the operation of this congregation were unsuccessful.

The orthodox traditions were very entrenched in the life of many Jewish families of Vicksburg. Rabbi Sol Korry z"l served the Anshe Chesed Congregation from 1903-1936. Under his ministry, he made great effort to welcome the orthodox Jews in the reform congregation. Rabbi Korry z"l accepted that orthodox people attending the service have their head covered. From

1937 to 1948, Rabbi Stanley R. Brav, z"l, took over as the spiritual leader of the Vicksburg reform congregation. In his book Dawn of Reckoning, Rabbi Brav, z"l, recalls his life as a liberal rabbi. About Vicksburg he remembered: "Soon found myself attending minyan services in home where Orthodox leaning still obtained—often helping to arrange for the services where they were required. On one occasion, when pidyan haben ceremony—virtually unheard-of in Reform circles—was called for, I not only provided the necessary Kohen but, since he could not read a word of Hebrew, literally put the right words in his mouth for him."

Perhaps in the future, a plaque will be a good way to memorialize these two long forgotten Orthodox Jewish Congregations of Vicksburg. It would be a terrible mistake to lose these pieces of southern Jewish history.

Julius Herscovici, a native of Romania where he received his BS degree in chemistry, moved to Mississippi 22 years ago. He worked as a concrete engineer and superintendent for Grand Gulf Nuclear Station until his retirement from the Bechtel Power Corp.

Herscovici is an amateur historian and has published several articles on religion in the Vicksburg Post, a local newspaper. His hobby is photography.

Nashville Bus Trip Planned for May

The Jewish Historical Society of Memphis and the Mid-South announce a forthcoming trip to NASHVILLE. The trip will leave the Jewish Community Center at 8:00 a.m. on Sunday, June 3, 2001. Those going on the trip will bring their own lunches and eat on the bus.

Gil Fox, local Nashville historian will meet the bus and provide a tour of the Jewish Community Center and meeting with local members of the community. Gill will lead a tour of the West End Area, which will include visits to The Temple and other Synagogues. The group will then tour historic Jewish sites in downtown Nashville with Mr. Fox. Depending on available time, other interesting locations will be visited. Gill Fox recently conducted a similar tour for the Southern Jewish Historical Society, and the tour was thoroughly enjoyed by those who were at the meeting in Nashville.

The bus will be leaving Nashville at approximately 5:00 pm and a Box Supper will be provided. Kosher meals will be available on request. The cost of the trip is \$15.00 for members and \$30.00 for non-members. If you would like to be included, send your check to Sumner Levine, 33 East Yates South, Memphis, TN 38120.

A Magnificent Historical Project

What a wonderful learning project and historical mission these young people have created. Their project is a study and remembrance that will have an impact on them and other communities for years to come.

Let's show our thanks and appreciation by contributing paper clips to the Whitewell Middle School Paper Clip Project.

Bring your paper clips, a box or a handful, as many as you can. Also, any letters, notes or comments you would like to send to these young people.

We will package them and ship them in one group on behalf of

The Jewish Historical Society of Memphis and the Mid-South

Holocaust Project Continues to Grow

(Please see page 7)

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*appointed position

March 23, 2001

Whitwell Middle School in Whitwell, TN has a student body of 425. Only five students in the entire school are non-white. There are no Jews or others from religious minorities. Yet this school is committed to a unique mission. It plans to receive and display six million paper clips, one for each of the "Jewish lives or souls" destroyed during the Holocaust.

Two years ago teacher Sandra Roberts and Vice Principal David Smith launched an after school Holocaust group of eighth graders who volunteer to learn about the Holocaust and "how prejudice and power in the wrong hands can be catastrophic." As the class evolved, they discovered that Norwegians wore paper clips on their clothing as a silent protest against Nazism and antisemitism. The students transformed this piece of historical information into a mission: they would collect six million paper clips as a visible reminder to their small, rural school of the enormity of hate crimes. This project gives students something tangible to count and to see.

As of mid-March two years later, the count continues. The students have issued appeals to people around the world to send their school paper clips. To date, they have collected 2,106,622. The student group reads every letter it receives and stores the paperclips in giant plastic barrels.

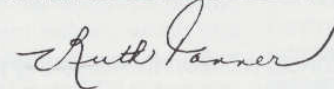
According to an interview with David Smith on National Public Radio, their goal is to "find an authentic railroad car that was used to transport prisoners to death camps. We would like to place glass walls on either side of the doors creating a walkway through the middle of the train car. Both ends of the car will be filled with paperclips and visible behind the glass to visitors walking through it."

Roberts and Smith hope to realize that goal by the time the first group of eighth grade students, now high school sophomores, graduate as high school seniors.

Meanwhile, the students will be reading and writing about the Holocaust and discussing what they learn. The current class is finishing Elie Wiesel's memoir *Night* and preparing to see the film *Schindler's List*.

They also are counting paperclips. You can help Whitwell students achieve their goal by sending paper clips to Whitwell Middle School, Paper Clip Project, 1130 Main Street, Whitwell, TN 37397. You also can check on their progress by going to their web site

www.marionschools.org/holocaust/



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