

## About Us

### THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MEMPHIS AND THE MID-SOUTH IS GOING BACK TO THE FUTURE

And we'd love to have you join us.

Our ancestors knew that knowledge of the past is critical for success in the present and the future.

One of the heroes of the Hebrew Bible emphasizes this point. As the Children of Israel prepare to cross the River Jordan to enter the land promised to them by the Almighty, as they prepare to embark upon their future, Moses advises them not to forget their history\*.

Remember the days of old,  
Consider the years of many generations;  
Ask thy father, and he will declare unto thee,  
Thine elders, and they will tell thee."  
—Deuteronomy 32:7

Moses does not wish to hamper the Israelites' journey. He wants the Children of Israel to go forth, to progress, to take on new tasks and challenges. He wants them to do as the Lord commanded Abraham, to go forth. But he suggests that the path to strength and prosperity, to success in the future, lies in understanding the past. He advises them to know their origins, to study the achievements of the generations before them, and to benefit from the wisdom of their ancestors.



**May Lynn Mansbach**

The Jewish Historical Society of Memphis and the Mid-South will help you fulfill the counsel of Moses. We will help you “remember the days of old” so that you might be better equipped to go forth and flourish in the place where you choose to live. Our oral history and Selma Lewis Scholars projects will help you “ask your father.” Our genealogy and archives projects will help you “consider the many generations.” Our newsletter, our technology projects, our book and videos, and our exciting programs and speakers will “tell thee” the achievements of the Jewish people – our people – and the rich Jewish history of our city and our region.

George Santayana, philosopher and poet, famously said “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” Tellingly, and chillingly, William L. Shirer used these words as the epigraph for his celebrated book, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*. The message is clear. In order to say confidently “never again,” we must be equipped with the knowledge that will help us recognize the signs of impending catastrophe. Equally, we must be equipped with the knowledge that will allow us to experience the joy of our heritage. Please let the Jewish Historical Society of Memphis and the Mid-South help you remember, so that together, we can move forward confidently.

As we grow, as we flourish, and even when we encounter the inevitable rough patch, let us celebrate our origins, let us connect ourselves to those who came before us, who laid much of the groundwork for our success, who bequeathed to us a legacy rich in accomplishment, pride, and service. As we travel BACK TO THE FUTURE, let us recognize that the past is often NOT behind us. In fact, said one modern commentator, it isn't even past!

Please join us for our exciting season of programs as we preserve – and enjoy – the rich history of our own families and of Jews in Memphis and the Mid-South.

\* Appreciation to former SJHS president, Dr. Bruce Beeber, for the reference to Moses' advice.