A Century of Southern Jewish Historiography

Mark K. Bauman

The study of southern Jewish history is flourishing. As recently as twenty years ago, this seemed a neglected subfield attended to by few scholars. Now, however, it attracts numerous scholars from a variety of specialties. Graduate students are writing dissertations about the subject, and thousands are attending exhibits and conferences that draw speakers from throughout the United States, as well as Europe and the Middle East. From where have we come, where are we now, and what are some directions for future study?

I. Historians: The Early Decades

Overview

The study of southern Jewish history is as old as that of American Jewish history. Three out of the first sixteen presentations given at the first meeting of the American Jewish Historical Society (AJHS) in 1892 and subsequently printed in the first volume of its Publications treated southern subjects; a fourth article fully integrated southern examples, as did many of the general pieces.1 Several patterns appear surprising during the Publications’s early decades. First, although the quality is problematic, as discussed below, numerous articles were published on southern Jewish history, with at least one in almost every issue.2 Second, the subject is treated as mainstream. In fact, contrasts with experiences in the North and the concept of southern distinctiveness are not even issues, in sharp contrast to current research and scholarly debate.3 Third, after World War II, the stream of articles on southern Jewish history continues, although at a slower pace. What does change is that the southern experience is not as typically integrated into broader articles.4

How can one explain these phenomena? A few explanations are possible for the earlier period. From the beginning, the AJHS had officers from the South, and more than 40 percent of the original membership listed southern addresses. These included rabbis Herman M. Bien of Vicksburg (formerly of Dallas), Edward N. Calisch of Richmond, Henry Cohen of Galveston, Moses J. Gries of Chattanooga, Adolph Guttmacher of Baltimore, Max Heller of New Orleans, Joseph Hertz of Columbus, Mississippi, Issac L. Leucht of New Orleans, Max Samfield of Memphis, Alfred G. Moses of Mobile, and Aaron J. Messing, Jr., of Montgomery as well as Rev. Dr. R. Farber of Macon. Some of these men gave presentations that were published.5 Yet the most prolific authors on the subject were not rabbis—Benjamin H. Hartogensis, J.H. Hollander, Leon Huhner, and Max J. Kohler. That these were national figures leads to a second possible explanation. The men who established the society and who were
writing about American Jewish history were born prior to the influx of Jews from eastern Europe after 1881. Their central European backgrounds offered a different view of Jewish America than those who wrote fifty or seventy years hence. The story of the ancestors that they recorded was of dispersal throughout America. The sizes of the Jewish communities North and South were not that different, and the major enclaves in New York and other northern cities were just achieving a position of hegemony as the historians grew up. In short, the experiences of Jews across regional lines did not appear to be significantly different. This was particularly so because most of the articles were simple descriptions of the origins of Jewish communities designed to establish early Jewish roots in America. Finally, issues such as slavery, racism, antisemitism, and Zionism that later fueled the debates over distinctiveness were viewed either differently or less significantly than they were later, or writers avoided them because they were considered too divisive.

From the 1890s through the 1920s, in an era of national reconciliation and heightened discrimination against African-Americans, the few articles that touch on slavery and the Civil War recognize Jewish slaveholding in the South while glorifying the role of U.S. Senator and Confederate Cabinet member, Judah P. Benjamin. They also note southerners, including David Einhorn and Solomon Heydenfeldt, who opposed slavery, as well as northerners, such as New York rabbi Morris J. Raphall, who supported it. None of the articles treats racism. The articles on discrimination against Jews in colonial Georgia and the struggle to gain full political rights in Maryland and North Carolina do not view southern gentiles as any more or less tolerant than those in the North. Historical discussion of American Zionism awaited the future, and the men who were writing the history likely would not have perceived substantial differences among themselves. Thus, for this first generation, the needs for a separate Southern Jewish Historical Society and a regional journal, Southern Jewish History, would have been inconceivable.

The earliest articles on American and southern Jewish history are typically filiopietistic. Their authors illustrated early roots and emphasized Jewish contributions while ignoring divisions and negative activities in order to foster their roles in an America that questioned the presence of immigrants in general and Jews in particular. Although this was typical, not all of the authors and articles fit neatly into this framework. Moreover, as Ira Robinson finds, the early work should be viewed in relation to what was happening in American historical scholarship as a whole. In this light, it reflected the “scientific” research of the era that emphasized documents to the neglect of themes and, following genteel tradition, avoided controversy. Unfortunately, as the study of American history became professionalized, the students of American Jewry failed to keep pace.

Robinson notes that Cyrus Adler, the key founder of the AJHS, worked closely with Herbert Baxter Adams, a founder of the American Historical
A Century of Southern Jewish Historiography

Association (established 1884). Adams was a pioneer American history professor at Johns Hopkins University, and Adler—Arkansas-born founder of the Jewish Publication Society and the Smithsonian’s librarian—earned his doctorate in Assyriology at the same institution. As indicated below, two of the four most prolific authors in American and particularly southern Jewish history earned undergraduate degrees at Johns Hopkins, the premier graduate school in history during the period and a bridge between North and South. It is to the articles of these four that we now turn.

The Amateur Historians

Identifying patriot-heroes preoccupied these pioneer historians, who wanted to highlight the early and important Jewish loyalty to America. Leon Huhner’s article on Francis Salvador of South Carolina does this. His groundbreaking article on the test oath in North Carolina stands in vivid contrast to his filiopietistic pieces on Jewry in early South Carolina, Georgia, and Virginia. Although his article on early Georgia ends with a flourish highlighting Jewish contributions and quoting fellow contributor Charles C. Jones, who found that, “In the record of the Jews of the Colony of Georgia there is no stain,” Huhner uses the available primary and secondary sources in a critical fashion, disagrees with others, indicates where conclusions remained unclear, and emphasizes divisions between Sephardim and Ashkenazim. Essentially, Huhner’s article refutes and expands on the work of Jones, a gentile who was a respected historian of Georgia. While Jones claims that the Jews of colonial Georgia were never among the malcontents, Huhner documents Jewish support for slavery, which, he argues, was the reason many left for South Carolina, a slaveholding colony. Most contemporary historians have ignored Huhner’s lead and assumed that the Conversos of Iberian origin fled Georgia because of fear of returning under the Inquisition if Spain conquered the colony. Although some of his facts required correction, Huhner’s article remains a valuable contribution to the field. Articles like Huhner’s lack analytic themes and ignore comparative perspective, but they did provide descriptive backgrounds that could serve as foundations for future work. His article on David Levy Yulee pulls no punches and is only now being fleshed out. He refutes an earlier article by Yulee’s son, shows conflicts with Yulee and his father and with Yulee and Jefferson Davis, and elaborates on Yulee’s proslavery and pro-secessionist radicalism. Far from ignoring the tenuous ties with Judaism of this Florida state-builder and its first U.S. Senator, Huhner observes that “he can be regarded as a Jew by race only…” At least one contemporary was clearly aware of Huhner’s failings and took him to task for errors. Barnett A. Elzas questioned how someone writing in New York could access the appropriate sources in South Carolina and accused Huhner of plagiarizing Elzas’s work. While rabbi of Charleston’s K.K. Beth...
Elohim, Elzas wrote what became for half a century the standard history of South Carolina Jewry. That Elzas’s writings today seem as outmoded as those of his contemporaries does not detract from the fact that these historians were conscious of, and wanted to maintain standards of, what was then considered sound scholarship.17

J.H. Hollander’s work raises similar historiographic questions as Huhner’s. When describing de jure and de facto discrimination against Jews in Maryland, his writing style appears formal and stilted, and yet his diligent research unearthed substantial appropriate citations.18 Although he develops neither, Hollander’s documentary material on Jacob Lumbrozo of Maryland includes two main components. It begins with an analytic periodization scheme reflecting secular and Jewish themes and follows with a comparison of discrimination in Maryland in relation to other colonies. Although he utilizes primary records pre-dating the new social history of the 1960s, Hollander ultimately fails to deliver the sophisticated case study that the introduction promises and produces, instead, a basic narrative of an individual’s life in a highly sentimental style.19

Benjamin H. Hartogensis published descriptive articles based on primary sources. He wrote about a short-lived (1857–1860) Sephardic congregation, Beth Israel, in Baltimore and traced the influence of Isaac Leeser and of Richmond Jews on the congregation and the movement of the Sunday school from Rebecca Gratz’s Philadelphia south via Sarah N. Carvalho and Josephine Etting among others. These themes of central and peripheral Jewish communities and the movement of institutions and ideas remain important to historians today. He also discusses dissension within the congregation and the reasons for its decline. He looks at the important roles of women in an article on a night school for Jewish immigrants established by Henrietta Szold in 1889. Although not a modern demographer, he describes the students’ backgrounds. That Hartogensis had family and personal ties to both institutions (his father served as a reader of the congregation, his wife replaced Szold as superintendent, and he convinced the school superintendent to continue the program after the school’s demise) does not detract from the knowledge he imparts.20

Max J. Kohler wrote biographical pieces on Judah Touro, Judah P. Benjamin, and Isaac Harby, three important individuals significant for both southern and American Jewish history. Kohler’s florid prose, glorifying traits that Kohler and his contemporaries frequently described as “typical of what is best in the Jewish character,” and establishing a record of Jewish contributions ignored by gentile historians of the day place him in the filiopietists’ camp. One must also get past his characterization of Jews as a race, with unique racial characteristics, and his acceptance of slavery as a benign institution—all part of his milieu. His article on Benjamin has been partly refuted. Yet in it, he discusses Benjamin’s career before and after the Civil War and his roles especially in law, government, and diplomacy. Kohler recognizes Benjamin’s marriage to a Catholic, his lack of
association with Jewish institutions, and the failure of his policy toward England.\textsuperscript{21} Kohler’s article on Harby gives little insight into Reform Judaism in Charleston but instead refers readers to other published work on the subject. It does, however, describe the literary culture in Charleston and alludes to parallels with Mordecai M. Noah, both of which play a major part in the analytic biography of Harby written by Gary P. Zola sixty years later.\textsuperscript{22} Kohler, like most of these pioneers, integrates southern Jewry into his broader studies.\textsuperscript{23}

The usefulness of the articles written during the first fifty years of the AJHS is clearly limited, and one must always be aware of errors.\textsuperscript{24} Yet if these articles are ignored, historians run the risk of “discovering” history that is already part of the record.\textsuperscript{25} Moreover, unfortunately, too much of what has passed as southern Jewish history during the last fifty years has not surpassed the low level of sophistication of the earlier work. Still, we must return to the question of what prompted the early historians’ interest in the subject.

With Dutch roots, Benjamin Henry Hartogensis (1865–1939) graduated from Johns Hopkins and received a law degree from the University of Maryland. He served as associate editor of the Philadelphia \textit{Jewish Exponent}, founder and president of the Baltimore branch of the Alliance Israelite Universelle, and president of the Hebrew Education Society of Baltimore. Hartogensis stands out among the other historians in that he came from a long line of Jewish religious traditionalists. He served as honorary counsel of the Federation of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of Baltimore City and was a founder and president of the Baltimore branch of the Jewish Territorial Organization.\textsuperscript{26} As has been shown, his deep roots in Baltimore relate directly to his research interests.

Born in Baltimore, Jacob Henry Hollander (1871–1940) also attended Johns Hopkins, where he received his undergraduate degree and a doctorate degree in economics. A professor of political economy at Amherst and Johns Hopkins (1894–1940), Hollander served as an economist for the federal government and received presidential appointments as treasurer of Puerto Rico and financial advisor to the Dominican Republic. A member of Har Sinai of Baltimore and a founder of the American Jewish Committee, he also presided over the American Economics Association (1921–1922).\textsuperscript{27} An academic economist, Hollander can still be classified as an amateur in terms of history, his avocation.
Max James Kohler (1871–1934), born in Detroit, was the son of Reform rabbi and Hebrew Union College (HUC) president Kaufmann Kohler and grandson of radical Reform rabbi and abolitionist David Einhorn. He graduated from City College of New York (CCNY) and obtained masters and bachelor of law degrees from Columbia University before entering the New York Bar in 1893. After serving as an assistant U.S. attorney, Kohler entered private practice, where he specialized in immigration cases. He served as president of the Judaeans, vice president of the Jewish Academy of Arts and Sciences, curator and vice-president of the American Jewish Historical Society, and secretary of the Baron de Hirsch Fund (1905–1934). He also helped found the American Jewish Committee, serving as a member of its executive committee and chairing its committee on immigration, and edited the Americana section of the Standard Jewish Encyclopedia. With the rise of Hitler to power in Germany, he worked with the Joint Consultative Committee of the American Jewish Committee, the B’nai B’rith, and the American Jewish Congress in an attempt to alleviate the persecution faced by Germany’s Jews. In this regard, the secretary of labor appointed him to the Ellis Island and Immigrant Relief Committee in 1933. Huhner described him as “a distinguished jurist, an effective communal worker, a careful historian, a noted publicist, a scholar, a useful citizen and always a patriotic American.”

Leon Huhner (1871–1957) was born in Berlin but moved to New York with his family in 1876. Like Kohler, he graduated from CCNY, earned law degrees at Columbia, and was a member of the Jewish Academy of Arts and Sciences. A member of Shearith Israel in New York, he served as president of the North American Relief Society for the Indigent Jews of Palestine and, for half a century, as curator of the American Jewish Historical Society. In his thorough and insightful history of the society’s journal publications, Jeffrey Gurock calls Huhner the “most prolific contributor” to the journal during this apologetic era. Numerous individuals wrote articles on Jews in the South from the 1890s to World War II. Yet the four described here were the most prolific and were also representative. Several patterns emerge from their profiles. One that stands out is their dates of birth. All, along with Lee M. Friedman (1871–1957), an attorney, author, and society president, and Herbert Friedenwald (1870–1944), long-time recording and corresponding secretary of the AJHS, were born between 1865 and 1871. These men grew up during an era of sectional reconciliation when the Old South image was embellished, the New South creed blurred regional distinctions, and racism rose to a national zenith. Acknowledging Jews as slaveholders or supporters of the Confederacy would not tarnish the patriotic image these men worked to establish. Moreover, these men started the society while in their twenties, an age when documenting the beginnings of Jewish communities would have been exciting detective work. Most were attorneys and

8 • American Jewish Archives Journal
community activists for whom the study of discrimination against Jews came as naturally as their affiliation with the American Jewish Committee. Work on behalf of recent immigrants made the story of the eastern European Jews more current events than history. Affluent and well educated, these men, however unsuccessful in the eyes of a future generation, also attempted to attain the goals of then-acceptable “scientific” history. Either German or Dutch immigrants themselves or scions of older immigrant families, this generation of amateur historians found it logical to trace the roots of Judaism in America. For them, the role of Jews in the South was integral to that story. More remarkably, much of the history written during the mid-twentieth century and indeed today does not rise above their elementary level of analytic sophistication or that furthermore gradually the history of Jews in the South became marginalized or moved to the periphery.

II. Historians: Mid-Twentieth Century

When did the tide begin to turn in the quality of scholarship? Jacob R. Marcus points to the post-World War II era as the dividing line for American Jewish history. He offered the first graduate course in the field, founded the American Jewish Archives (AJA), and began the journal of the same name. Also, the National Jewish Welfare Board created Jewish History Week, a national conference on the subject was sponsored by Commentary, and PAJHS became the quarterly publication American Jewish History (AJH). Nathan Kaganoff traces the “watershed” in the AJHS and its publications to the presidency of Lee M. Friedman (1948–1952), who transformed the program and mission to include the study of the retention of tradition and identity along with adaptation and contributions. In so doing, the AJHS moved toward the mainstream of American historical scholarship. Friedman was followed by Salo Baron of Columbia University, David de Sola Pool, rabbi and historian of Shearith Israel in New York, Jacob R. Marcus, and Bertram W. Korn, all noted scholars.

After World War II and particularly after the AJHS and its journal were reorganized in 1954, interest in southern Jewry declined. Articles on the South, particularly those integrating southern into American Jewish history, appeared less frequently. Again, the historian searches for plausible explanations. Many of the early members of the society either died or grew older and were less involved. A new generation took their place including Baron, Marcus, Oscar Handlin of Harvard, and their students. As Jeffrey Gurock argues, a critical confrontation precipitated by Handlin also contributed to substantial change. Scholarship replaced defensive filiopietism, and expansive coverage began to fill numerous gaps.

However excellent the broader discussions of Gurock, Marcus, Kaganoff, and others, they ignore southern-specific issues. Student and faculty quotas aimed against Jews were becoming things of the past. Both the backgrounds
and interests of the historians shifted. Northern historians employed by northern universities predominated. Eastern European Jews and their descendents largely residing in northern industrial cities, especially New York, overwhelmed the descendents of the Jews from central Europe and those who lived outside of the northern metropolises. Concern now centered around the eastern European Jewish experience, labor unions, Zionism, and national organizations, all of which were situated in the North. The emphasis shifted away from the colonial era and nineteenth century to trace the origins of those now writing history. Jews in the South as well as the West did not seem to share this history. Those researching Jewish life in these regions generally concentrated on the period before 1881, to the neglect of eastern European Jewish history. Until the last thirty years and even more recently, one could read southern Jewish history virtually without being aware that eastern European Jews had entered the region and brought with them Zionism, socialism, Orthodoxy, and Yiddish culture.

Ironically, Marcus’s new publication, a competitor to the PAJHS and one of the catalysts for its improvement, did not neglect the region. When perusing the early pages of American Jewish Archives founded by Marcus in 1947, one is struck by the paucity of articles and the fact that their quality generally harkens back to the Dark Ages of the PAJHS. Primary sources without annotation and articles lacking authorship appeared regularly. Marcus may not have been at fault, however. Fred Krome, a recent managing editor, notes that Marcus complained of not having enough satisfactory manuscripts submitted. He published primary documents to encourage sound scholarship. The nature of the early journal conforms to Marcus’s stated mission for it. He wanted to use it to make people aware of the archive’s materials and to publish “at least one article of scientific caliber.” Marcus’s consciousness of mid-American Jewry had a positive impact on the coverage of southern Jewry, and articles and documents concerning it are numerous. Marcus integrated the South and West into his studies and apparently encouraged his protégés, including Bertram W. Korn, Stanley Chyet, and later Gary P. Zola, to do so as well. It is to Marcus, Korn, Chyet, and another of Marcus’s students and the fourth key historian/rabbi, Malcolm Stern, of this HUC nexus of midcentury that we now focus attention.

The Rabbi/Historians

Although the life of Jacob Rader Marcus (1896–1995), the acknowledged “Dean of American Jewish historians,” is well documented, his interest in the South has not been singled out. Besides this being reflected in his journal, Marcus’s documentary collections and monographs routinely integrated the southern experience into the field.

Because his vision was national and he stressed documents and descriptions, Marcus, like his predecessors, saw the South as part of the whole. Jews in the
South are frequently used as examples, and their experiences are not differentiated within his themes. Among his many contributions, Marcus pioneered social history. To him, the lives of women and the common people were pivotal to the understanding of an American Jewish past, one that included the South. Having said this, reading the southern documents in *Memoirs of American Jews*, along with Marcus’s fine introductions, one cannot avoid these people’s allegiance to slavery, the Confederacy, and the Lost Cause, even though—as Korn would do as well—he also pointed to defections on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line.

Marcus had several important ties to the South. He was from a small-town, Jewish family. His father, Aaron, moved from job to job and town to town after his emigration from Lithuania in 1889. In 1909, Aaron, his wife Jennie, and their children went from southwest Pennsylvania to Wheeling, West Virginia, where Aaron opened a small clothing store and became the president of an Orthodox congregation that he had helped establish. From 1909 to about 1926, Aaron Marcus ran a general store in Farmington, West Virginia.

The time in Wheeling was pivotal for Jacob. In the absence of an Orthodox congregation, he attended the Eoff Street Temple (Congregation LeShem Shomayim) Sunday school. There he became a protégé of Reform Rabbi Harry Levi. Levi offered young Marcus confirmation, then private lessons, and himself as a role model. Levi also suggested that he attend HUC, where he enrolled at the age of 15 in 1911. The college president was Kaufmann Kohler, Max Kohler’s father and one of the foremost spokespeople of Reform Judaism. Marcus’s studies were interrupted by service during World War I. After initial training, he was assigned to the base in Wetumka, near Montgomery, Alabama, before departure to France. Upon his return to college, Marcus was assigned a student pulpit in Lexington, Kentucky. He continued in this position for three years. In 1916, Marcus’s first published article, “America: The Spiritual Center of Jewry,” appeared in the Wheeling *Jewish Community Bulletin*. Soon after graduation and ordination in 1920, Marcus began his lifetime association with Hebrew Union College as a faculty member, only interrupted when he undertook four formative years of study in Berlin. He also resumed his functions in the Lexington congregation for four years.39

Marcus’s career is inexorably situated in the seminary of the Reform movement and in the archives he created in Cincinnati, located on the Ohio River.
directly across from Kentucky. From Cincinnati, Marcus’s students fanned out first as student rabbis and then in their own pulpits, as HUC students had been doing since the days of Isaac Mayer Wise. The college had always drawn donations and support from people in the heartland. Wise had traveled to the South and the Midwest encouraging the building and nurturance of congregations. His *American Israelite* sought circulation and printed stories of these far-flung communities, and his Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC) also brought them together. Wise’s dream of a unified American Jewry contributed to his remaining silent in relation to the Civil War and slavery, even though he opposed the latter. The same vantage point for Marcus fostered an image of a different sort. Marcus would create a national history to forge the identity of a national Jewish American community. Although both he and his wife were of eastern European Orthodox parentage, Marcus became the president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) in 1948 and historian of a national Reform movement.

One cannot understand colonial American Jewish history without knowledge of Savannah, Charleston, and the Southwest, nor the development of Reform Judaism in America without starting with Charleston and moving to Baltimore and New Orleans. No history of nineteenth-century American Jewry can be complete without adding Richmond and the other city and small-town experiences of the region. Moreover, Marcus and his AJA drew numerous collections from Reform congregations and organizations in the South as a result of the age and persistence of these communities and as a reflection of the influence of his graduates with pulpits there.40 Besides continuous association with these rabbis, Marcus’s students returned to Cincinnati from assignments as student rabbis in the South with information and stories of their experiences as well as greetings from the many laypeople Marcus knew in the area from his travels and speaking engagements.

Bertram Wallace Korn (1918–1979) was Marcus’s first associate editor and taught for a year at HUC before entering his pulpit career. Loyal to their mentor, Korn’s and Chyet’s articles in the early issues of *American Jewish Archives* stand out. When they began work as associate editors, the journal’s quality improved substantially, so that more and better articles supplemented the publication of the archive’s primary sources and records. Marcus was a legendary teacher, and students such as Korn and Chyet did justice to their mentor’s positive influence. As the correspondence between them demonstrates, Chyet reviewed Marcus’s manuscripts and Korn scouted for primary documents. Korn and his teacher corresponded frequently, with Korn always being addressed and signing his letters as “Pop,” the nickname Marcus had given him during his first class, and always addressing his mentor formally and with respect as “Dr. Marcus.” Stern, too, was an active and steady participant in the fellowship. The men constantly exchanged information and sources, and Stern’s interest in genealogy...
A Century of Southern Jewish Historiography  • 13

is reflected in the others’ work. Korn earns the claim as the first academically trained historian to concentrate his scholarly output on southern Jewish history and whose work is of lasting significance. A biographical sketch about Korn provides background to better understand his publications.

After his ordination at the college in 1943, Korn accepted the pulpit at congregation Sha’arai Shomayim in Mobile. Although he remained only a year before entering the Navy chaplaincy, this stay began his foray into southern Jewish history. Upon his return from World War II service, he pursued a Doctorate of Hebrew Letters under Marcus while at the same time serving Temple Emanuel in Mansfield, Ohio.

After a year as assistant professor and assistant to the president at HUC, Korn accepted the pulpit at Keneseth Israel in Elkins Park, Pennsylvania, a position he held until his death. He continued part-time teaching at the college’s New York campus for two decades and, in the 1970s, assumed the same duties at Dropsie College in Philadelphia. Like Marcus and the early practitioners of American Jewish history, he was active in numerous pursuits.41

Korn’s dissertation, published as American Jewry and the Civil War,42 remains a well-balanced, standard work. In it, he carefully explains the positions of Jews in the North and South and delineates a complex picture of split loyalties and varied divisions. Like Marcus, Korn set the record straight, in part, to redefine contemporary Jewish identity through history and to combat antisemitism in his midst.43 In the preface to his volume on New Orleans, Korn traces his interest to his friendship with Rabbi Julian Feibelman and to trips he took to the city while serving the Mobile congregation. Rather than analyzing, he takes a biographical approach partly because of his interest and because the New Orleans Jewish community took so long to materialize. He concludes that, with a few exceptions, the city’s Jewish community developed similarly to other American cities by the 1830s. His New Orleans research contributed to an article on Florida as well as other works. His short work on the early Jews of Mobile was dedicated to his father and to the president of Sha’arai Shomayim, who had brought Korn to the congregation. Again, this book is more a chronicle with descriptive lists of early individuals, their successes and failures, than an analytic history. Typically, he sets the record straight, for example, on dates of the congregation’s founding, its first leaders, and its Ashkenazic as opposed to previously claimed Sephardic origins. He finds tremendous mobility and interaction with other Jewish com-

Bertram Korn (1918-1979)
(Courtesy American Jewish Archives)
munities but fails to draw conclusions or to comment on the significance of information. Korn’s knowledge, his depth of research, and his placement of the Jewish material in context are formidable. Yet sometimes students display the negative as well as the positive traits of their mentors. Korn’s determination to provide every fact and tell history through endless anecdotes about individuals can read tendentiously. Like chronicles before and since, his city histories are more repositories of information than explications of themes, as exemplified by Korn’s section on the “The First Documented Jew in New Orleans.” This is also true of his inclination to identify every child and child’s age, a practice he clearly shared with his mentor and Malcolm Stern, and a practice reflected in their correspondence. Like the previous generation of historians, he was not above bestowing glittering praise on his subjects in flowery prose.44

A second Marcus student, Stanley Franklin Chyet (1931–2002), was born in Boston and received his bachelor’s degree in Near Eastern Civilizations and a Phi Beta Kappa key as a member of Brandeis University’s first graduating class in 1952. He followed this with a Bachelor’s of Hebrew Letters from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR), New York. The Cincinnati campus awarded him a Master’s of Hebrew Letters, his doctorate, and rabbinic ordination. He held the Frank Research Fellowship in American Jewish History while pursuing his doctorate. His dissertation, subsequently published, was titled, “A Merchant of Eminence: The Story of Aaron Lopez.”45 He served as Marcus’s second associate editor of *American Jewish Archives* and as assistant director of the AJA for many years. In 1969 he became associate professor at the Los Angeles campus, where he spent the remainder of his career and held several administrative posts, including director of the Magnin School of Graduate Studies and assistant to the president of the Skirball Cultural Center. Totally dedicated to Marcus and the college, he continued his roles at the archives after moving to Los Angeles and also wrote a history of the archives from 1947–1961.46 From Marcus, Chyet learned the value of careful documentation, analysis, and interest in social history. Chyet served congregations for short periods in Fort Wayne, Indiana; Bradford, Pennsylvania; Alton, Illinois; three towns in Ohio; Trinidad, Colorado; and, most important for our understanding, Texarkana, Texas; and Welch, West Virginia. Thus, although born and raised in Boston and spending much of his adult life in Los Angeles, he gained Marcus-type exposure to the heartland’s small towns.47

Chyet, a poet, short story writer, and translator of Jewish literature, was especially drawn to Ludwig Lewisohn, a German immigrant who spent difficult and formative years in Charleston before attaining literary heights and becoming a Zionist and advocate of Jewish tradition. Lewisohn, Chyet’s mentor while at Brandeis, became the subject of his rabbinic thesis as well as numerous articles. He and his wife even named their son Michael Lewisohn. Chyet ably describes the famous author’s Charleston years of alienation from Judaism, exposure to

---

14 • *American Jewish Archives Journal*
antisemitism, and isolation in a closed social environment. By the time he enrolled in the College of Charleston, Lewisohn was well on his way to ill-fated adjustment that only bred further isolation. This theme of marginality—even for Jews in the South who tried to associate with the majority, as Lewisohn did—is of major significance in the understanding of southern Jewish history.

Perhaps for Chyet, Lewisohn brought together the things dear to him: history and literature, and the redemptive powers of Zionism and Jewish tradition. Chyet’s interests in the arts and southern Jewry also brought Moses Jacob Ezekiel to his attention. Born in Richmond, Ezekiel attended the Virginia Military Academy and fought for the Confederacy. Ezekiel claimed exalted Sephardic ancestry, but, although family members owned and traded in slaves, he was brought up in poor circumstances. He maintained that he fought for state rights and not to defend slavery, a position of many southerners. His real claim to fame came as an expatriate sculptor. Chyet’s collection of documents, in keeping with Marcus’s schema, included memoirs by Texas rabbis Samuel L. Rosinger and G. George Fox.

Chyet did break from his mentor’s pattern in one important area. Marcus freely proclaimed his disdain for secondary literature. He concentrated on telling history from the sources instead of relating his findings to the arguments of other historians. Chyet wrote the first essay on the historiography of southern Jewry. In it, he refers to what he views as the highly distinctive experiences of Jews in the region, experiences he describes in tones of virtual dismissal. He gives credit to a new cadre of historians making major contributions but derides most of the contemporary studies as “episodic” and overly focused on the Old South. “What has resulted,” he writes, “is a certain provincialism in the presentation of Southern Jews and Southern Jewish history.”

Born in Philadelphia, Malcolm Stern (1915–1995) received his undergraduate degree at the University of Pennsylvania as well as three degrees and ordination at HUC and advanced training in Lausanne. He also took classes at Dropsie College for three semesters. While there, he took a course under Ismar Elbogen, one of Marcus’s teachers in Berlin. Stern had to search his family tree three
generations back for an immigrant stream in Germany as opposed to eastern Europe. On his mother’s side, he boasted two great uncles who were in HUC’s first graduating class. His mother helped establish the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom following World War I. As a child living on a suburban Philadelphia farm, he was exposed to antisemitism and racism, experiences reinforced in rabbinic student posts in West Point, Georgia, and Virginia. Stern became a chaplain in the Army Air Corps during World War II, spending time in Nashville and Montgomery. His military service interrupted his rabbinate at Congregation Keneseth Israel, where Korn later assumed the pulpit. Unlike the others, Stern spent substantial time in the South, serving as rabbi of Ohef Sholom Temple in Norfolk, Virginia, from 1947 to 1964. These were pivotal times for the rabbi and the region. Stern gained empathy for the people and the conditions in which they lived. He and many of his congregants were moderates with regard to civil rights for African-Americans in the face of massive resistance. These experiences influenced his writings.

From 1964 to 1980 he directed rabbinic placement for the CCAR, a position that then and later kept him in close contact with congregations and rabbis throughout the country. His work as staff genealogist (1949–1994) and his acquisition of primary documents for the AJA kept him in close contact with Marcus, Korn, and Chyet. As Stern was closer in age to Marcus, he addressed Marcus as “Jake” in correspondence, and Marcus in turn addressed Stern as “Mac.” Stern taught American Jewish history as an adjunct at the New York campus and supervised student pulpit work for almost fifteen years.52

Besides his direct contact with Virginia Jewry, Stern’s genealogical research drew him to the South. Jewish family ties from 1654 to 1840 knew no regional barriers. With so few Jewish mates available, the families intermarried with each other, or, as he also documented, individuals either chose to remain single or married out of the faith. These are patterns reinforced by recent genealogical studies cited below.53 From his experience and research, Stern wrote an important essay on the role of Reform rabbis in the South. This essay and important memoirs of his civil rights struggles in Norfolk
illustrate that Stern’s long-term residence in the South provided him with a more nuanced understanding than Chyet’s short-term assignments did. Steeped in documentation like his colleagues and, like Marcus, particularly interested in the Sheftall family, Stern also provided two critical articles concerning Savannah’s early history.54

Of the four rabbi/historians, some of Stern’s work stands up perhaps best. Korn and Marcus are noteworthy for impressive primary research and detail, but Stern offered more analysis. While Marcus’s use of waves of immigration was normative, it has required substantial revision in terms of variation and gradation.55 A good example is Stern’s “The 1820s: American Jewry Comes of Age,” appropriately published in a volume honoring Marcus and edited by Korn.56 Stern establishes the context in Europe and America and explains how emigration from England and Holland during the 1820s preceded the Germanic influx of the next decade. Making distinctions between Jews in small towns and cities, he develops the themes of acculturation, movement into the hinterland, and the changing relationship between Americanized Jews and the government. He concludes that the era witnessed a flowering for American Jewry with long-term consequences. Stern illustrates ties of business, interaction with the government, and the movement of religion unlimited by regional boundaries.

In sum, Marcus, Chyet, and Korn were of eastern European ancestry. They, along with Stern, had military experience and held doctorates in history as well as rabbinic ordinations. The three did not come from wealthy families, and they all experienced life in communities with smaller Jewish populations in the South and Midwest. Like their amateur historian predecessors, they, as well as Stern, were Reform; but the Reform movement underwent substantial changes before and during their careers. Hitler and the Holocaust had shattered complacency. As Marcus stated, the United States emerged as the center of world Jewry. With the Columbus Platform of 1937, the Reform rabbinate accepted Zionism, a position solidified with the establishment of Israel. Children of eastern European immigrants filled HUC, and families of eastern European descent were well on the road to acculturation and affluence. Stern’s family background differentiated him from the others, yet he benefited from many multicultural and small-town experiences that tended to lessen the distinctions. Thus, like their predecessors, Marcus and his students viewed American Jewish history from a holistic as opposed to a New-York-centered lens, but they did so for very different reasons.

Korn and Chyet appear to be the first to clearly delineate distinctively southern Jewish characteristics. Yet Marcus had marked the path by illustrating the allegiance of Jews in the South to slavery, the Civil War, and the Lost Cause. He demonstrated interest in Jews on both sides of the Civil War, as did his students.57
First and Second Generation Historians Compared and Contrasted

How far had we come? To what extent had we remained the same? Both the first and second generation of American and southern Jewish historians stressed the “scientific” nature of their work. Nonetheless, both were influenced by their times and their personal experiences even to the point of writing about family members. Both strove to be accurate, to base their research on the sources, to use a biographical approach, and to publish everything on a topic they could find. Both published primary documents to encourage further discussion and research. The second generation was far more successful in these areas than the first, which it sought to correct. The first, although with warnings, identified Jews based on last names and described Jews in racial terms—practices eschewed by their successors. The historians of the mid-twentieth century claimed as a major distinction to be analytic. Yet, in the cases of Marcus and Korn, as well as Stern’s genealogical work, so much of their writing is episodic and given to individual biography that their record on this score is mixed. Chyet is known for his Lopez biography, but his southern work is often forgotten or, as is the case with the Lewisohn material, superseded by the two-volume biography written by Ralph Melnick. The first generation of historians used history to combat antisemitism and establish the identity of Jews as loyal Americans. The second generation continued the fight against persecution and sought the unity of American Jewry. The first generation concentrated on the earliest presence of Jews in America and the ways in which Jews demonstrated loyalty—particularly during wars—to document a Jewish claim to equal citizenship. Besides preserving and publishing documentary records, Marcus’s greatest effort may have been his three volumes on the Jews of early America. Stern traced the first families, and Korn described the early histories of Mobile, New Orleans, and West Florida. Starting with the colonial era and emanating from the Reform movement, these first two generations of historians integrated the southern experience into their work.

III. Historians: 1968 to 1984

The Civil Rights Movement, Alex Haley’s *Roots*, cultural and social history from the bottom up, women’s rights, and the consequent movement to multiculturalism and ethnic sensitivity freed those interested in American Jewish history to pursue scholarly study for larger and more receptive academic and lay audiences. Certainly those responsible for opening the field include Marcus; Oscar Handlin of Harvard; and John Higham, Johns Hopkins University professor and author of important works on anti-immigrant discrimination and, especially, antisemitism. Since the 1960s, the historians involved are too numerous to list. Among the subjects that have dominated are national Jewish organizations and movements, Jews and socialism, American Jewry and the Holocaust, Zionism, Israel, and studies of northern Jewish communities.
The rich flourishing of American Jewish history from the late 1960s and 1970s took time to sink roots in the South and is taking even longer to reintegrate southern Jewry into the national picture. Images of southern racism, religious fundamentalism, conservatism, poverty, and the seeming lack of southern Jewish participation on the national arena raised questions about why and how Jews could live in the region. Failure of historical memory contributed to questions as to the very existence of Jews in the South. The history of southern Jewry has seemed unknown (were there really Jews in the South?), exotic (they must have been different to live in the South), and peripheral (these provincials were more influenced by the South than they influenced it). The earliest historiographic essays lamented the paucity of historians and production in the field and castigated much of the work as filiopietistic.59

The historiographic patterns both benefited and limited the study of southern Jewry. They encouraged a renaissance of interest and ultimately the establishment of southern Jewish history as a recognized subfield worthy of serious and extensive analysis. Yet the vibrant image of New York’s eastern European Jewry made popular by Irving Howe’s *World of Our Fathers* and embedded in the liberalism of twentieth century northern Jews was juxtaposed to the stereotype of a South dominated by “German” Jewish Classical Reformers equally given to accommodation to southern mores and opposition to political Zionism. Ignorance of the eastern European Jewish experience in the South, a scarcity of research in southern Jewish dissent, and a lack of in-depth comparative research contributed to the vivid contrast made between regions. Northern Jewish history is not New York Jewish history writ large, nor is southern Jewish history monolithic. This is not to argue that there are no regional differences, but rather that the search for such distinctiveness has been exaggerated and tends to retard the emergence of a more complete, nuanced, and accurate understanding of what it was like for various Jewish subcommunities to live in the South over time.

Nonetheless, the gradual coming of age of modern southern Jewish history can be traced to the transitional period from 1968 to 1984, when the rabbi/historians were joined by a plethora of enthusiasts. In 1968, Columbia University’s press published Leonard Dinnerstein’s dissertation on the Leo Frank case. The book, highlighting a pivotal event in southern and American Jewish history, has remained in print for forty years. Dinnerstein followed with research on antisemitism that integrated southern Jewry into the national story; he also coedited an anthology on southern Jewry.60 In 1973, Eli N. Evans’s *The Provincials: A Personal History of the Jews in the South* appeared, a book so popular that it was reissued on its twenty-fifth anniversary and remains in print.61 His work, along with the award-winning plays by Alfred Uhry,62 several other publications, and institutional developments, deserve substantial credit for popularizing the history for a regional and national audience. Steven
Hertzberg’s revised University of Chicago dissertation, *Strangers Within the Gate City: The Jews of Atlanta, 1845–1915*, was published in 1978; it remains one of the two best city or state histories of Jews in the South, the other being Leonard Rogoff’s *Homelands*.63 Finally, in 1973 and 1983, *American Jewish History* published special issues on Jews in the South and in Georgia, respectively, and in 1979 the *Atlanta Historical Journal* printed a special volume on Georgia Jewish history.64 This record, impressive for the subfield, does not even take into account publication of individual articles and monographs.

Saul Viener, Louis Ginsberg, and Malcolm Stern, among others, established the Southern Jewish Historical Society (SJHS) during the mid-1950s. It published a journal irregularly between 1958 and 196365 but discontinued activities shortly thereafter. The society was reborn in 1976 at a meeting and subsequent conference in Richmond called by Viener, Melvin I. Urofsky, Bernard Wax, and others, and cosponsored by the American Jewish Historical Society. Since that date it has published two anthologies,66 held annual conferences, supported grants and awards programs, issued a newsletter, and sponsored a peer-reviewed journal, *Southern Jewish History*. In all of these activities it has encouraged scholarship and helped create a core community of academics and laypeople interested in the field.67

The anthologies and special issues of *American Jewish History* published during this era deserve attention. Both *Turn to the South*, edited by Kaganoff and Urofsky, and *Jews of the South*, edited by Proctor and Schmier with Stern, offer research first presented at SJHS conferences. Of the two, the first reflects better quality. It includes Chyet’s historiographical article and Stern’s piece on the role of the Reform rabbis as ambassadors to the gentiles, as well as analytic articles on the rabbinate by Gladys Rosen; on Arkansas politician Charles Jacobson by Raymond Arsenault; on African-American perceptions of Jews by Arnold Shankman; and on ethnicity, public policy, and values by John Shelton Reed, Alfred O. Hero, Jr., and Abraham D. Lavender, respectively. Novelist Ronald L. Bern added an article on literature, and Stephen J. Whitfield offered one of his many insightful essays. Prefatory remarks by Lawrence H. Fuchs and Urofsky and an overview by Evans established the framework of a distinctive southern Jewish history. With the exception of an article by Louis Schmier that demonstrates how eastern European Jews rejuvenated the Valdosta Jewish community after the departure of most of the earlier “German” Jews, all of the articles in the Proctor/Schmier anthology are biographical. These deal with Moses Elias Levy and his utopian community in Florida; Charleston poet Penina Moïse; Rabbi Bernard C. Ehrenreich of Montgomery; the Sheftalls of Savannah; Joseph Joel, whose memoir concentrates on his years in Richmond; Eugenia Levy Phillips and Philip Phillips, a politically influential couple with opposing views on the Confederacy; and Ludwig Lewisohn, the author with youthful ties to Charleston. A fourth anthology, edited by Abraham D. Lavender and
published in 1977, includes a section perceiving southern Jewry through the sociologist’s lens. These articles by Lavender, Theodore Lowi, Harold Mehling, and Jerome A. Wolfe are complemented by essays in a section devoted to Jews in small towns.68

Exemplars of the Transitional School of Historians

Most of those writing about southern Jewry during the transitional era, not unlike the earlier periods, did so as temporary departures from their broader interests. Two exemplars of this pattern are Leonard Dinnerstein and Stephen J. Whitfield. Born and raised in New York, Dinnerstein spent his academic career at the University of Arizona, where he spearheaded the creation of a Judaic studies program. Dinnerstein’s interests span from immigration to the study of antisemitism and the Holocaust. Of all of the scholars during this era, only Dinnerstein studied southern Jews as part of his graduate work—yet he did so in the form of his dissertation on the Leo Frank case, not as coursework.69 Whitfield was born in Houston and raised in Jacksonville, Florida, where Samuel Proctor was a role model. He has spent much of his career and adult life at Brandeis in Waltham, Massachusetts.70

Eli N. Evans, like the pioneer practitioners, has sought to record his roots, and, by so doing, those of southern Jews generally. He was born and raised in Durham, North Carolina, where his father was a department store owner, long-time mayor, and supporter of black civil rights, and his mother a Hadassah organizer. Evans graduated from the University of North Carolina, where he was president of the student body and was deeply involved in numerous activities. He headed the Charles Revson Foundation in New York until his retirement.

While Evans and Whitfield have spent their adult lives in the North partly chronicling their southern heritage, Louis Schmier, like Dinnerstein, relocated from the sidewalks of New York and has practiced history while teaching at Valdosta State University. His sojourn in the southern Georgia town of Valdosta led him to the study of peddling and other Jewish experiences in local communities, a far cry from his graduate work in European history. Although he has been inactive in the field for more than a decade, Schmier served as an important force in the SJHS.

How does one evaluate the work of one’s contemporaries, many of whom are friends and all of whom are at least friendly acquaintances, without ruffling some feathers? Let us start with Leonard Dinnerstein. Dinnerstein’s book on the Leo Frank case, as indicated previously, was a pivotal element in the modern transformation of southern Jewish historiography. His detailed and even-handed analysis describes the antisemitic elements without exaggeration by placing the case squarely in reference to the socioeconomic conflicts of the time and place. He demonstrates variations in newspaper coverage and public opinion and takes Frank’s legal team and northerners to task for their many miscalculations. By
highlighting the trial and Frank’s lynching as a turning point in national Jewish communal affairs and in the rise of prejudice, Dinnerstein also placed events in the South squarely in the national arena and worthy of national attention. Only in recent years have historians expanded on Dinnerstein’s interpretation by relating it more directly to local labor union unrest, racism and the Atlanta race riot of 1906, long-term political conflict and alignments, and even to gender. That Steven Oney’s recent book supersedes it in detail and investigation of new elements, including the role of Jim Conley’s lawyer and the backgrounds and future paths of the likely lynching party, does not unduly detract from Dinnerstein’s accomplishment.71

The anthology Dinnerstein coedited with Mary Dale Palsson ranks with the two anthologies discussed above and clearly helped mark the turning point in historiography. It mixes primary sources with both new and previously published articles. Although some of the selections have not stood the test of time, others—Bertram W. Korn’s essays on Jews, slavery, and Confederate anti-Semitism; Thomas D. Clark’s article on the post-Civil-War southern economy; and Dinnerstein’s essay on the Leo Frank case—are classics. The sections on the twentieth century and on Jews and desegregation set the tone for discussions of those subjects virtually to the present. Far from an apologetic tone, Dinnerstein brought attention to antisemitism as well as blemishes on the image of Jewish accommodation to southern mores.

Eli N. Evans deserves more credit than any other individual for popularizing southern Jewish history through his writings, frequent speaking engagements, and active participation in important organizations. Two of his key works are intended for popular audiences and are inspired by his experiences. Based on limited primary research and secondary reading, The Provincials nonetheless offers stimulating insights and makes the story of southern Jewry come alive through Evans’s personal reflections. His is the eye of the journalist, and this comes out clearly in The Lonely Days Were Sundays, a collection of essays. Evans’s biography of Judah P. Benjamin, his most scholarly volume, provides details of the close relationship between this New Orleans lawyer and plantation owner, who served in the U.S. Senate and later in the Confederate Cabinet, and Confederate president Jefferson Davis. Yet Evans’s observations concerning the influence of Judaism on Benjamin seem questionable. Although he did not convert out of the faith, Benjamin married a Catholic and did not practice Judaism as an adult. While never intended as such, The Provincials has taken the place of the detailed, scholarly history of southern Jewry that remains to be written.72

Stephen J. Whitfield’s research interests are perhaps broader than any of the other authors under review in this section. He brings to his work the keen perceptions of the American studies craft, and he writes vividly, using disparate cultural sources. His essays on southern Jewish literature and Tin Pan Alley
musical imagery of the South are striking in their creativity. Whitfield’s concept of the “braided identity” of southern, American, and Jewish has rightly entered the lexicon of the field. Nonetheless, like much of the rest of the historiography of this transition era, Whitfield’s work is more impressionistic than empirical. One comes away with a sense of southern Jewry rather than an in-depth analysis of real-life experiences. He contrasts the two prevailing perceptions of American Jewish life: the Classical Reform, “German” Jews in small southern towns, and the eastern European Jews in northern cities. Thus, he gives little recognition to the equally rich heritage, traditions, and institutions the eastern European Jews also nurtured in the South.

IV. The Historians: 1984 to the Present

Certainly many other historians deserve attention for their contributions during this period, but these four – Dinnerstein, Evans, Schmier, and Whitfield—stand out as probably the most significant exemplars. Nonetheless, the examples of Dinnerstein, Evans, and Whitfield point to a difficulty with this periodization schema because they and others remain active in the recent phase. Also problematic, many practitioners during the current breakthrough stage of historiography support the themes of the transitional school. Thus, two schools—the distinctiveness and the revisionist—currently coexist and frequently conflict.

So prevalent has the distinctiveness school been that it is easy to assume that it has always been the dominant paradigm. Yet a brief contrast between the conclusions of Bertram Korn, the rabbi/historian, with those of a prominent contemporary advocate, Mark I. Greenberg, highlights the differences. Korn points to southern Jewish distinctiveness without exaggerating its significance, whereas Greenberg tends to concentrate on it. In an article written while a graduate student at the University of Florida, where he earned his doctorate, Greenberg minimizes the impact of antisemitism in a Civil War incident in Georgia in which local Jews were branded as profiteers and ordered to leave. He found that few did so and that the outbreak was really a temporary aberration in the broader pattern of acceptance. Korn used the same example to document what he labeled southern Judeaophobia. While Korn stated that few Jews dueled in the South and that the vast majority was too busy making a living to give the practice even passing notice, Greenberg points to dueling as a key indicator of assimilation to southern mores and an important reason Jews gained political preferment during the last decades of the nineteenth century. Korn ended his book on New Orleans during the 1840s with a comment on how the city’s Jewish history was then entering the mainstream of historiography and showed little difference from other similar urban centers. Yet the next three decades were marked by proslavery and Confederate agitation in a city that would become a hotbed for southern Jewish Confederate sympathies, the most obvious
illustrations of Jewish adaptation to southern mores and institutions. Korn still visualized a national picture of economic, religious, and Jewish institutional progression as the dominant motif.74

These and other differences are small but telling. The distinctiveness paradigm emphasizes that Jews were more accepted in the South than in the North. The prevalence of racism and their image as people of the Bible to religious fundamentalists shielded Jews from prejudice. The Leo Frank case and lynching thus becomes the aberration that proves the rule. In response to such unprecedented acceptance and a desire to fit in so that they could succeed, Jews acculturated to southern mores. With acculturation came political preferment, dramatic economic and social ascent, and contributions to every aspect of southern improvement. But acculturation came at a high price. Southern Jews took the moral low road by owning, buying, and selling slaves; supporting slavery, secession, and the Confederacy; advocating the Lost Cause ideology; and remaining largely silent, if not segregationist, during the struggle for black civil rights. Striving to remain invisible, Jews in the South eschewed controversial issues. The toll impacted on religious practices as well. Southern Jews had a comparatively higher synagogue affiliation because churchgoing was the norm in the region, and their acceptance of the Classical Reform model was more widespread and long lasting than elsewhere. This included rejection of political Zionism and disproportionate support for the American Council for Judaism. According to this school, Zionism, Yiddish culture, and ethnic Judaism simply could not survive in this hostile environment. Jews did not so much influence the South as they were influenced by it. They got along by going along, and traditional Jewish values and identity were compromised. This was what survival and ascent in a convoluted region meant.75

Much of this interpretation can be documented and is correct. Where current scholars differ is in detail, emphasis, and comparative framework. Rather than concentrating on distinctiveness, the revisionist school attempts to gain what it sees as a more balanced understanding of experiences and institutions. Certainly there were regional differences, and at times Jews in the South identified as southerners. Yet such identification and influence masks the substantial amount of continuity and similarities between Jewish experiences in similar local environments. In terms of occupational structure and mobility patterns, educational and cultural values and attainments, and Jewish institutional development and identity with Jews elsewhere, what was remarkable, according to this interpretation, is not how much Jews acculturated but the surprising degree to which they fit Jewish national and even international norms as their Jewish identities evolved. One cannot compare the “German” Jewish experience in the South with that of eastern European Jews in New York as transition school advocates so frequently do, but one can and should compare the experiences of similar subcommunities in comparable local environments. Thus Wendy
Besmann, Leonard Rogoff, Deborah Weiner, Hollace Ava Weiner, and Lee Shai Weissbach find eastern European Jewish experiences in southern small towns and cities remarkably similar to those of Jews elsewhere. From these and other contemporary historians, as well as memoirists, knowledge of the lives of eastern European Jews in such towns and cities has grown exponentially. These immigrants emplaced Yiddish culture and Zionism as they did in similar environments throughout America. Clive Webb and others have observed differences between northern and southern Jewish reactions to the Civil Rights Movement but have also located far more similarities and activism than previously assumed. Currently, Webb is investigating antisemitism in the careers of John Kasper and others, concluding that prejudice was both more nuanced and endemic than previously thought. His conclusions are in accord with Melissa Fay Greene’s book, The TempleBombing. Deborah Dash Moore links Los Angeles and Miami to understand the Jewish experience along modern, urban frontiers. Hasia Diner’s multicountry research on peddling emphasizes similarity with minor local variation. Elliot Ashkenazi sees little difference between business people and financiers across regions, conclusions compatible with Canter Brown, Jr.’s study of Florida politicians, community builders, and business people. Brown and others believe that Jews impacted the South far more than they were influenced by it. Again, although identifying regional distinctions, I have drawn similar conclusions in terms of Jewish social service agencies and role patterns concerning community builders, ethnic brokers, and women. Jews in the South did speak out on controversial issues but, as in so many areas, more in-depth, local research must be undertaken to record their stories. Finally, there is not one Jewish South but many. Acculturation experiences differed so dramatically across locations that these may be at least as significant as region-wide patterns.

During the last decade, much of the discussion has taken on the false dichotomy of distinctiveness versus nondistinctiveness. This debate has been false because all agree that there were regional influences; it is rather a matter of the nature and extent of the influence. Conflict over the issue of identity provides a case in point. Distinctiveness school practitioners maintain that if Jews in the South thought of themselves as different and unique and if this identity was reflected in areas such as food ways, historians should not discount such perceptions. Yet should not historians note the differences between perceptions and reality? Because someone thinks he or she is unique does not make it so. Furthermore, to state that southern Jews identified as southerners is too simplified. It appears that once one asks what that identity meant/means, people either give a vague answer or respond in diverse ways. Identity changed over time and varied from place to place and according to the background of the individual (for example, recent arrivals versus native southerners). Finally, what is the nature and degree of impact exerted by identity with the South? The debate can seem
frustrating and counterproductive, but if it takes research to the next level by clarifying questions like these, it can serve a very useful purpose.

More than forty years ago, in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Thomas Kuhn analyzed the nature of paradigms, the difficulties of challenging them, and the moving on to new paradigms. His discussion sheds light on the debate over southern Jewish distinctiveness. We may be reaching the stage where the debate is nonproductive and participants on both sides are too caught up in partisanship. Perhaps the best work today and in the future will stress nuance, ambiguity, depth and breadth of coverage, and truly comparative analysis, ultimately exploring new subjects and themes. What is needed is a new synthesis.\(^7^9\) To help climb that plateau, let us explore the scholars and scholarship of recent decades.

**Historians Medley**

The number of individuals involved, including their backgrounds and interests during the transition and formative stages, defies the relatively easy categorization of the two earlier periods. During the last thirty-five years, laypeople have joined academics with backgrounds in southern and American history, literature, American studies, religion, political science, and sociology. Rabbi/historians mix with Protestant descendents of colonial Jews and students of the southern ethos. Many are trained in American or even European history. Today, a significant group of students is emerging from the proliferating Jewish studies programs and from history departments where they take courses in American Jewish history and write dissertations on southern Jewish history. Some authors are Jews and others Christian; some from the North who live in the South and others from the South who have been transplanted to the North. Still others come from Canada, Great Britain, France, Germany, Israel, and South Africa. During the 1970s and into the 1980s, many individuals wrote about southern Jewry while concentrating on other areas, but only a few viewed it as their major concentration. Today, many specialize in southern Jewish history, and those integrating elements of that history into their broader national research push the number much higher. Prior to 2006, it had been more than two decades since a new anthology on southern Jewish history had been published, but two appeared in 2006.\(^8^0\)

The apparent groundswell partly reflects growing interest in southern, ethnic, and American Jewish history in general. But again traversing from general to specific and using circular logic, growing interest and nurturance of the field is reflected in the writings of memoirists, novelists, Eli Evans, and playwright Alfred Uhry, as well as in the activities of historical societies and museums noted above. The historical societies offer networks for gifted lay and academic scholars, venues for presentations and publications, other patronage opportunities, and compilation of primary resources essential for sound research.
Whereas twenty-five years ago the University of Alabama Press was one of the few academic publishers open to the field, this new market has drawn numerous academic and commercial presses throughout the country to publication possibilities. With the emergence of a core of scholars engaged in exciting debates and uncovering fascinating new information and themes, graduate students naturally followed. Yet in a still wide-open field, their research also leads along the cutting edge. Courses in southern Jewish history have been taught at HUC-JIR, the College of Charleston, Duke, Emory, Georgia State, Stern College, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the University of North Texas, and the University of Virginia. As more Judaic studies programs and departments of history create positions in American Jewish history, one hopes the subfield of southern Jewish history will achieve the higher level of recognition it rightfully warrants.81

V. The State of the Field as Reflected in the Literature Since 1970

State, City, and Town

Histories of Jewish life on the state, city, and small-town level have emerged as key building blocks for the broader study of southern Jewry. Many of these have been written by dedicated laypeople whose work harks back to the filiopietism of the amateur phase of historiography. Typically, these begin with attempts to identify the first Jew in a location and continue with long lists of important people (usually men with women in a secondary role at best) and their contributions. They describe business successes, downplay conflicts both within and outside the community, and emulate genealogical logs. Rarely do they analyze key themes or place the information within historical context beyond adding paragraphs from secondary sources on general events in timeline-like mode. On the other hand, these accounts provide a wealth of factual material that readers can analyze and organize for synthesis.

Of the few state-level studies, exhibit catalogs written by trained historians and archivists are more analytic than the comprehensive volumes. Those on Florida, South Carolina, and Virginia emphasize the acceptance of Jews in these states, their disproportionate contributions, and examples of accommodation to southern mores.82 Only Arkansas and Texas boast full-scale chronicles. The most challenging of the state studies treats only the colonial period of Maryland’s history. Eric Goldstein relates his research to the earlier historiography, which he amends and corrects. He also develops themes of practical economic reality and adjustment and well-defined stages of community emergence. Eschewing filiopietism, Goldstein highlights the existence and roles of Jewish bonded laborers.83

City histories are more numerous and mixed in quality. Leonard Rogoff and Steven Hertzberg offer models. Hertzberg’s revised University of Chicago dissertation on Atlanta Jewry reflects the urban history issues of the 1970s.
Showing conflict and adjustment in a balanced fashion, it weaves census records, Dun and Company reports, city directories, and other statistical sources to develop patterns of geographic and economic mobility and occupation patterns in a comparative framework. This well-grounded social history treats interaction among Jewish subcommunities, black/Jewish relations, and the roles of women as part of an integrated picture. Rogoff’s study of Durham-Chapel Hill illustrates the same strengths as Hertzberg’s book but also focuses on recent questions. Besides delving into the issue of history and memory, Rogoff chooses as his theme mixed and constantly shifting identity. Whereas Hertzberg ends his study with the Leo Frank case in 1915, Rogoff opens new avenues of inquiry by bringing his story to the present. For city and small-town studies, historians will now deal with core and peripheral dynamics of religious dissemination and immigration and migration patterns since World War II; and they will relate these to factors such as military installations, the Civil Rights Movement, research/medical/educational centers, retirement communities, shopping centers, and the Walmartization of the hinterland.

Wendy Besmann’s study of Knoxville Jewry and Myron Berman’s book on Richmond are also noteworthy. Berman’s strength is with his description of the First Jewish Families of Virginia, as this elite may be described in similar terms to their Christian counterparts, and their tangled family/business connections with Jews throughout the country. His “German” Jews seem to dominate. Besmann, on the other hand, concentrates on the twentieth century, depicting vibrant eastern European Jewish communal life.

Hosting two out of the original five colonial congregations, the Savannah and Charleston Jewish communities have received substantial attention. Ending with the Civil War, James Hagy’s study of Charleston Jewry delves into conflict, divisions, and change, and does not blanch from documenting widespread slaveholding. He provides a well-balanced explanation of the differing interpretations of Reform Judaism. Saul Rubin’s volume on Savannah is largely a descriptive narrative of congregation K.K. Mickve Israel, where he served as rabbi. The materials on eastern European Jews and their congregations appear almost as an afterthought. A good social history of Savannah Jewry remains to be written, although Mark I. Greenberg’s dissertation offers promise of such a work. Charleston served as an incubator for Jewish communities elsewhere in the South and even the West, and some tantalizing lines of analysis are raised in the Theodore Rosengarten and Dale Rosengarten exhibit catalog of South Carolina that concentrates on Charleston. Still, a full-fledged history of Charleston since the Civil War should replace a dated chronicle.

Many articles have appeared treating short periods of time in a state’s or city’s Jewish history. My first article on southern Jewry starts where Hertzberg’s ends and describes the forces both unifying and dividing the Atlanta Jewish community for a decade and a half. Ronald Bayor analyzes Jewish ethnic population
clusters, a model true of most cities. Indeed, one of the patterns emerging is of neighborhoods where Jews and their institutions resided like those in northern cities. Such clusters moved yet persisted in southern cities through much of the twentieth century. Studies by Deborah Dash Moore examine the community of Miami as a suburban frontier. Hollace A. Weiner’s article on the genesis of the Fort Worth, Texas, Jewish community suggests that it illustrated a different type of frontier, that of the West. In so doing, the article implicitly challenges the very inclusion of at least parts of the Lone Star state in the mythical southern pantheon. The analytic insights of these specialized works should inform the writing of larger studies.

Although environmental diversity is the reality of southern and American Jewish history, small-town life dominates the image of the region’s Jewish history. Here, the historiography is rich, especially in terms of the rise and fall of such communities during the twentieth century. It becomes richer still with the publication of Lee Shai Weissbach’s history of small-town Jewish life in America, which integrates the southern story into the mainstream. Besides earlier essays, Weissbach contributed a chapter to We Call This Place Home: Jewish Life in Maryland’s Small Towns, edited by Karen Falk and Avi Y. Dector. This exhibit catalog also includes articles by Eric Goldstein and the editors. Goldstein makes distinctions between towns with relatively smaller and larger Jewish populations. Deborah Weiner’s studies of Jews in the Appalachian coalfields illustrate the ubiquitous presence of Jews throughout the region. These Jews of eastern European origin started the typical businesses and used various survival mechanisms to maintain Judaism and their identity as Jews. Although occasionally a Jewish community virtually disappeared only to be reborn later, most good studies illustrate patterns of population renewal characterized by conflicts between earlier and later inhabitants over power, methodology, and culture. Yet group survival, gradual acculturation of the newcomers, their regenerative influence on a community, and a sense of peoplehood often resulted in compromise and cooperation. Although some Jews moved to cities with larger Jewish enclaves and more religious, educational, cultural, and matchmaking opportunities, economics has been the driving force. Jews settled in small towns for economic opportunity. If the town prospered—something Jews were frequently a driving force behind—so did they. If it declined or Jews saw better opportunities elsewhere, then they departed. That each town had its own reasons for success or failure means that each new case study helps complete the picture.

Today the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life, among other institutions, seeks to preserve the memories and artifacts of dead and dying Jewish communities and encourages their continued existence. It is not unusual for people to look back with nostalgia at small-town images. Yet there are other sides to the account. In a pulpit talk before the SJHS in October 2003, rabbi/historian Micah Greenstein noted different ways that Jews from small
towns impacted positively on the urban communities to which they migrated. Leonard Rogoff has pointed out in informal discussions the contemporary growth of a Jewish presence and community vibrancy in small towns in North Carolina, even as other communities fade. These stories, too, must be documented and may reflect the ebb and flow to Jewish life in cities and towns related to migration trends.

The following is a synthesis to be tested further, keeping in mind that chain migration marked these successive phenomena. It is obvious that port city residency in the colonial era preceded the move into interior cities and towns during the revolutionary and early national period. Another community-building era occurred in the decade after the Civil War. As numerous local studies illustrate, the war only delayed such development temporarily, and Reconstruction brought many Jews from the North who helped accelerate growth. The period from roughly 1890 to the 1930s may have been marked by several patterns. In some small towns and cities such as Valdosta, Georgia, and Durham, North Carolina, many long-time Jewish residents moved to cities with larger Jewish populations and greater economic opportunity. Sometimes these people were replaced, and those who remained were augmented by an influx of Jews from eastern Europe. In relatively new or rising urban centers such as Fort Worth, Texas, and Anniston, Alabama, second-generation and acculturated first-generation Jews arrived who skipped the Orthodox/traditional phase of congregation building and launched Reform congregations. These may be viewed as second-tier communities. Repeating the experience of “German” Jewish immigrants of a previous generation, eastern European immigrants—some of whom had lived elsewhere in the United States—settled in small towns and cities, thereby creating new Jewish enclaves. The impact of the Depression, the New Deal, World War II and, with it, the burgeoning of military installations, and postwar suburbanization on Jewish geography must be gauged thoroughly. The decline of Jewish life in some small towns and cities during the last half of the twentieth century seems to have been more than offset by growth in cities ranging from Atlanta, Houston, and Dallas to Charlotte, Miami, and, for that matter, much of Florida. The decline of small-town life in western Tennessee and surrounding areas translated into continued vibrancy in Memphis.

As with urban history in general, numerous factors typically influenced the success or failure of towns and cities: financing, the health of hinterlands, and vehicles for transportation, including rivers, railroads, street railways, highways, and airports. Anecdotal evidence suggests the involvement of Jews as promoters of infrastructure, booster/developers, and financial intermediaries. Little has been written on these areas in a systematic fashion.

This brief synthesis is designed to facilitate the creation of a complex picture of Jewish residential patterns in towns and cities. Cross-regional and national
studies of ethnic clustering in towns and cities, how and why such clusters moved, why these phenomena were stronger in some locations than in others, and how and why such patterns changed over time would greatly augment our understanding.

A minidebate over the place of Florida and particularly Miami and the southeast area is underway that sheds light on the foregoing thesis. Highly urbanized, largely composed of Jews from other sections of the country, and less acculturated to southern mores—essentially more a “Jewish” New York suburb—Stuart Rockoff argues for its exclusion, whereas Stephen J. Whitfield concludes that one cannot eliminate the major portion of the Jewish South from consideration.90

To exclude Miami-area Jewry from southern Jewish history is to define that history narrowly. Variations abound in the region, as do similarities. Jewish history differed even among cities such as Atlanta, Baltimore, Charlotte, New Orleans, and Savannah. Conversely, the impact of military installations during World War II, air conditioners, transportation improvements, retirement, recreation, medical, and university facilities—perhaps exaggerated in relation to the Miami-area’s Jewish population growth and the nature of the community—are elements that influenced numerous other communities as well and must be considered in writing the history of the last sixty years. The majority of Jews on the southeast coast of Florida came from elsewhere. Yet, as previously noted, southern Jewish communities have been continuously rejuvenated and redefined by in-migration. Separating southeast Florida from the region is to reject information that contradicts a preconceived historical construct rather than revising the construct itself given the counteracting data.

Social Services and Women

State and local histories universally chronicle the early development of community, often ending with the creation of federations of Jewish charities. Local federations started in Boston in the 1880s and spread throughout the country by the early twentieth century. The few detailed studies on Jewish social service agencies in the South open important avenues of inquiry concerning evolving needs and ways to meet them, alternative modes of identity, and shifts of power.91

Studies of the changing roles of Jewish women, their relationship with non-Jewish counterparts, and their importance have burgeoned during the last thirty years. Works by Sherry Blanton and Deborah Weiner highlight the pivotal role of Jewish women in small communities. Weiner and others also trace women’s economic contributions.92 Many local histories note the roles of individual women and organizations, including the National Council of Jewish Women and sisterhoods. Yet, compared to histories of Philadelphia and Kansas City, those on southern communities fail to provide the same in-depth study of
both women and social services. Much has been written on Henrietta Szold, founder of Hadassah, who was from Baltimore. Other than Eli N. Evans’s discussion in *The Provincials* of his mother’s role as a Hadassah leader, however, almost nothing has been written concerning the influence of the South on that organization or the Women’s Organization for Rehabilitation and Therapy (ORT). All of these are voids that should be remedied.

During the twentieth century in states where Jewish communities were small, few, and far between, one survival mechanism was the creation of statewide agencies to take the place of organizations that normally appeared on the city level. These include the Texas Kallah of Rabbis, the Arkansas Jewish Assembly, and the North Carolina Association of Jewish Women, which led to a rabbinical organization and a less active men’s group. Although state histories of Arkansas and Texas and one of the articles on southern Jewish women describe these groups, future studies may find that they impacted on stronger statewide identities as Jews. Seeking information on similar experiments elsewhere may help to gain a comparative perspective.

**Congregations, the Rabbinate, Theology, and Related Issues**

Because so many southern Jewish communities had only one or two lasting congregations until the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries, congregational histories often amount to community histories. Like those, the quality varies dramatically. The insightful volume by Richard and Belinda Gergel traces the Columbia, South Carolina, Jewish community from its Charleston roots to destruction wrought by the Civil War. Matched with Gary P. Zola’s broad-ranging Harby biography, one can trace the existence and movement of a Jewish professional class during the Jacksonian era, including its involvement with slavery and secession. Marc Lee Raphael’s excellent history of the Washington Hebrew Congregation explores the demographic background of its members, the virtually hegemonic roles of its rabbis, and the problematic issue of what constituted Reform Judaism during much of the nineteenth century. Hollace A. Weiner’s study of Fort Worth’s Beth-El traces chain migration and occupational patterns and integrates the roles of women more analytically than most state and local histories. The earliest settlers to Fort Worth arrived from elsewhere in the United States already acculturated. Coming to this frontier environment, they showed little interest in congregation building. The Orthodox congregation preceded the Reform by a decade. Although the Jewish population has not grown in proportion to the general or Jewish populations in Houston or Dallas, the two congregations have demonstrated substantial stability. What other communities, and how many of them, followed similar paths? Gerry Cristol’s volume on Dallas’s Emanu-El again points to the frontier environment as a point of origin. She traces the movement of Jews and their businesses from railroad terminus to terminus. Following Weiner and others, Cristol observes
interconnected family and business ties. Leonard Rogoff’s article on congregational adaptation to small-town life in North Carolina illustrates still other patterns of adaptation and change and, with Hollace Weiner’s study, continues an underlying theme of variety in southern Jewish history. Like many works on small-town life and Besmann’s history of Knoxville, it also brings attention to the often-neglected subject of Orthodoxy in the South.

Southern Jewish theological history followed, but also led, national patterns. The colonial congregations in Savannah and Charleston had their share of divisions but ultimately accepted Sephardic ritual even though Ashkenazim were among the leaders and overtook the former in number. Thus, a pattern became familiar from the onset: a pattern of division fraught by socioeconomic class and division along national lines and lines of religious practice, followed by accommodation to the realities of survival as a small minority. Both Kahal Kadosh (K.K.) Mickve Israel of Savannah (established in 1735) and Charleston’s K.K. Beth Elohim (1749) also experienced stops and starts as the result of wars and population movement.

Charleston’s Jewish population was the largest in the country from 1800 to about 1830. Home to middle- and upper-class Jews, many of whom were professionals or businesspeople whose families went back generations, it became the first American community to experiment with Reform Judaism. As such, it has come under considerable scholarly scrutiny. Since studies of Reform Judaism by Leon Jick and Michael Meyer, debates have ranged from whether the Reformed Society of Israelites can be classified as truly Reform or just a harbinger of things to come; whether Reform Judaism was indigenous or imported from the Germanic states; and whether changes in Charleston exerted significant impact on Reform Judaism elsewhere in America. The work of Gary P. Zola and others place Charleston on the cutting edge and have highlighted many factors, including the radicalism and experimental nature of the prayer book and the pivotal roles of women. Although Beth Elohim initially rejected the Reformed Society’s overtures and the society gradually disintegrated, traditionalist rabbi Gustavus Poznanski ultimately brought Reform Judaism to the main congregation. Yet change was not without conflict, and the conflict led to the launching of Shearith Israel, the first traditional congregation formed in reaction to Reform Judaism. B'rith Sholom followed after another split in 1851. Jeffrey Gurock has written a 150th anniversary history of B'rith Sholom-Beth Israel, the congregation formed when the two offshoots united. He sees the story as a case study depicting national patterns.

As some of the sources cited above and others indicate, women were important players in these and future changes. Linked by ties of sisterhood and family, they followed Rebecca Gratz’s lead in forming Sunday schools and benevolent societies. They raised money to support synagogues and attended services. Penina Moïse of Charleston, the first female American Jewish poet,
composed hymns for Beth Elohim, and many of the reforms reflected the rising influence of women, even where they lacked power.96

New Orleans, the fifth-largest American Jewish community in 1860, and border city Baltimore were two critical centers of nineteenth-century Jewry. Baltimore served as an economic and religious entrepôt, while New Orleans was partly an outpost for Charleston Jewry. Besides Korn’s study of the former (which ends with the beginning of Jewish community building) and a dated chronicle and popular works on the latter, one must resort to specialized articles to piece together a picture of New Orleans Jewish history. Similarly only a dated chronicle, popular works, and congregational histories addressed the Baltimore Jewish story.97

Baltimore became a hotbed of innovation and division during the mid-nineteenth century. It served as the home of the first congregation begun as Reform in continued existence, Har Sinai Verein (1842), and it was the base of radical Reform rabbi, David Einhorn, on his arrival from the Germanic states. The first ordained rabbi to serve an American congregation, Abraham Rice, experienced a short-term, rocky career in the city. On the other hand, one of the first American-born ordained rabbis, Henry W. Schneeberger, enjoyed a successful career at Chizuk Amuno (1871), a traditional offshoot of Baltimore Hebrew Congregation when the latter turned Reform. A student of Israel Hildesheimer’s Positive Historicism Judaism, Schneeberger participated in the formation of the Jewish Theological Seminary. Schneeberger’s synagogue still trailed Oheb Shalom (1853), led for decades by the influential Benjamin Szold, as the first congregation organized with a quasi-Conservative stand.98

Listing initial occurrences can be reduced to an exercise in filiopietism. I do it here to introduce the questions of why Baltimore was the scene of so many “firsts” and the location of such denominational variety. Are the answers related to the movement of people in and out of the city because it served as an economic hub for peddlers and merchants elsewhere? And, if so, how?

Nonetheless, in some ways, Baltimore serves as a microcosm of what was happening elsewhere in America and specifically in the South. Historians of Richmond, Atlanta, and Birmingham Jewry recount the multiple story lines, and Atlanta also benefits from solid congregational histories. All of these writings depict conflicts and divisions within and between congregations over Reform Judaism and degrees of change, and between rabbinical figures (not all of whom were ordained) and congregations over power and policies. The writings also reflect the rise of rabbinical egos and competition. Views range from James K. Gutheim’s moderate Reform to traditionalist Bernard Illowy to quasi-Conservative E.B.M. Browne. Browne, like other contemporaries attempting to establish name recognition, a platform for their ideas, and supplementary income, edited a Jewish newspaper. Another source of income noted in numerous local and congregational studies but not studied in their
own right were English-Hebrew-German academies. Frequently founded under congregational auspices and welcoming non-Jews, these academies provided education until they were replaced by public schools. Their curricula reflected the multicultural background of their founders and supporters even as they eased acculturation into the mainstream.99

Charleston, Baltimore, and Richmond, like a few other cities, served as religious centers for numerous other communities. This concept of center/periphery has been touched on by a few scholars100 but begs for further research.

Two intriguing figures important in religious history who were not rabbis/ministers are Jacob Mordecai and Gershom Kursheedt. Much has been written on Mordecai and his family, partly because of the extensive holdings at the University of North Carolina. With family links throughout Virginia and to the North, Mordecai chose to settle in a small town where he and his children ran a girls’ academy. His descendants were important and fascinating because their stories enhance our knowledge of the Civil War, acculturation, and much else. Emily Bingham’s challenging study investigates the conversion experience of several Mordecai children and Jacob’s struggles with faith. By the 1820s, conversion was rampant among scions of colonial families. Acculturated, affluent, and well educated, they were viewed as worthy mates among Protestants of the same class and, eschewing marriage with new Jewish immigrants and lacking sufficient numbers of Jewish prospects from their own backgrounds, intermarriage was widespread. Yet Mordecai’s children chose conversion out of conviction and not as a consequence of marriage. Bingham identifies them as one American family. How typical or unique their behavior was remains to be tested. Studies of the Minis family of Savannah and of the Seixas-Kursheedt family reinforce Dianne Ashton’s findings for Rebecca Gratz’s family. In the decades before the Civil War, these people exercised a range of choices: They married fellow Jews if suitable partners were available, they intermarried, or they remained single. Although genealogical in nature, these works provide the grist for historians to trace cross-sectional networks that elucidate success and interaction.101

Gershom Kursheedt was from a family significant for its impact on New York Jewish religious history, yet he chose to settle in New Orleans and opened a successful business there. The book on his family is less analytic than Bingham’s study, and he would be an excellent candidate for a thorough biography. Both Kursheedt and Mordecai (later in life when he emerged as a key leader at Richmond’s Beth Ahabah) served as exemplars and spokespeople for traditional Judaism. Mordecai and others in Richmond exerted substantial influence on Isaac Leeser, who secured a Philadelphia pulpit and emerged as the key opponent of Reform Judaism. Leeser, along with Isaac Mayer Wise, traveled from community to community encouraging the building of congregations; they also created Jewish periodicals as media for national networking. Kursheedt
influenced Judah Touro to become the first major Jewish benefactor. In his will, Touro contributed to the building of Jewish institutions throughout the country. With a strong sense of peoplehood, Jews in the South joined with Jews from throughout America and overseas to fight antisemitism abroad. Kursheedt provided key leadership in response to the Mortara case, in which a young Jewish boy was taken by Vatican authorities to be raised as a Catholic after it was discovered that a maid had secretly had him baptized. Kursheedt represented numerous American congregations when he visited the Vatican to protest with Moses Montefiore, the great British leader whom he also accompanied to the Holy Land to administer part of Touro’s bequest.

A book by Bertram Korn and a documentary article by this author address the roles of southern Jews in the Mortara case. The lack of unified and effective response resulted in the creation of the Board of Delegates of American Israelites. Although Gutheim was deeply involved in this first, long-term national Jewish defense agency and one of its key issues was obtaining full political rights for Jews in North Carolina, no in-depth study relating the board to southern Jewry is available. On the other hand, southern Jewish influence in the creation of the CCAR through the Southern Rabbinical Association has received careful attention from Gary P. Zola.102

From 1850 to the 1890s, peripatetic rabbinical careers were somewhat typical. Browne, Illowy, Julius Eckman,103 and others traveled from congregation to congregation because of clashes over personality, power, and religious practices. But many of the rabbis entering Reform pulpits in the 1890s and thereafter served the same congregations for decades. Four overlapping characterizations have been offered to explain these men’s roles. Malcolm Stern views them as ambassadors who represented their congregants and religion to the broader gentile society; their outreach role far surpassing Jewish tradition and ritual in importance to their affluent, acculturated congregants. Hollace A. Weiner uses the term “mixers” for Texas frontier rabbis in much the same way. Arnold Shankman and I use them as examples of community builders and ethnic brokers who build Jewish institutions while bridging gaps within and outside of the Jewish community. Biographies of Max Heller of New Orleans and Morris Newfield by Bobbie S. Malone and Mark Cowett, respectively, and numerous articles on other individual rabbis, point to the influence of the Pittsburgh Platform on the prophetic social justice agenda of these men and how they relate to the Progressive movement. The local environment could have a somewhat limiting impact, as it did on Newfield, or it could empower, as it did David Marx in Atlanta. Nonetheless, the roles of rabbis and Jewish laypeople in creating and nurturing secular community chests (forerunner of the United Way) well into the twentieth century cannot be ignored. Although Heller espoused Zionism, most Reform rabbis were either non- or anti-Zionist. Following national trends, they viewed their home as America and feared
charges of dual loyalty. Besides local and congregational histories, numerous articles on individual rabbis support these patterns, and yet a unified history remains to be written.\textsuperscript{104}

The literature on Orthodox and, even more so, Conservative rabbis and congregations in the South is relatively new and sparse. As previously indicated, much of it is becoming available through the study of small towns and cities and through congregational histories. As eastern European immigrants entered the region due to the Russian pogroms of 1881 and thereafter, they started congregations and self-help institutions, as had earlier immigrants on their arrival. Where Jewish populations were small, Reform and Orthodox sometimes shared buildings and rabbis, and differences seemed less important than survival and identity as Jews. Larger size allowed greater diversity and division not only between Reform and Orthodox but also between Orthodox from different areas of Europe, who formed landslayt shuls. One of the more intriguing of the latter is Anshe Sfard congregations founded especially by Romanian Jews. These Ashkenazic congregations integrate elements of Sephardic liturgy to create the Orthodox/Hasidic ritual Nusach Sefard. The ritual is also known as Nusach Ari, after sixteenth-century Kabbalist Rabbi Isaac Luria (the Ari) of Safed, the first to mix Sephardic elements into Ashkenazic services. Some eastern European Hasidic congregations that followed the Baal Shem Tov adopted Nusach Sefard. Typically very small, most of these lack congregational histories.\textsuperscript{105} Because of the difficulties small congregations faced to survive, some merged with other Orthodox congregations. Southern cities such as Atlanta, Baltimore, Memphis, Knoxville, and New Orleans mirrored the national experience: urban areas with concentrated Jewish populations that supported multiple congregations, Yiddish culture, ethnic businesses, loan societies, Arbeiter Rings/Workmen’s Circles, Farbands, and Zionism. Since these people were not typically admitted into the “German” Reform concordia/harmony societies/standard clubs, they formed progressive clubs for social outlets. The few studies of Orthodox rabbis illustrated further division between earlier, more acculturated and established congregations and newer, poorer, and more traditional shuls. The rabbis serving the latter had to maintain a balancing act between tradition and modernity, Yiddish and English, that led many to Conservative ranks shortly before and after World War II, although in some cases even earlier.\textsuperscript{106} These are preliminary patterns requiring far more research. Factors to consider include the closing of America’s doors to immigration, socioeconomic changes, the Depression, the Holocaust, World War II, the creation of Israel, and the changing roles and influence of women.

Sephardim from the Ottoman Empire made their way to Atlanta and Montgomery early in the twentieth century. Speaking Ladino (a mixture of Spanish and Hebrew), following different liturgy, enjoying different foods and customs, and fewer in number, these people also founded congregations and
voluntary, self-help societies. The story of how Sephardim in the two cities worked with each other and their counterparts in the North and, at the same time, limited their interaction with other Jewish subcommunities has been documented. However, studies are needed concerning their roles as Zionists, their positions within federations of Jewish charities, and their rise and gradual integration. The latter would include discussion of Ashkenazim and Sephardim intermarrying beginning around World War II and the blurring of congregational membership, as well as the recent merger in Montgomery of Sephardic and Ashkenazic congregations.

Some of the local and congregational studies and a small number of the rabbinical biographies previously discussed bring the religious history to the present, but sporadically. Again, more such work and state- and region-wide patterns require documentation. What was the role of rabbinical students in keeping small-town congregations alive? How did the experiences influence the rabbis’ future careers? The flourishing of synagogue building after World War II reflected affluence and suburbanization. What did it reflect in terms of ritual, worship, and the changing position of the rabbi? During the 1950s and 1960s, some Reform congregations became more traditional and Conservative congregations less observant. In what ways did southern congregations conform or diverge from national patterns? Why? What influence did national ecclesiastical figures, institutions, and movements have on the region and vice versa? In Atlanta, a new Orthodox congregation, Beth Jacob, was founded during the mid-1940s. Did this happen in other southern cities? What void were such congregations attempting to fill? How did the rejuvenation of Orthodoxy in the South transpire, including the late-twentieth-century emergence of Young Israel and Chabad congregations? What about the growth and impact of Jewish day schools and havurot? From the late 1960s to the present, the establishment of congregations with and without affiliations to the national Jewish movements in metropolitan areas skyrocketed. How many of these emerged from older congregations that refused to move to new areas or expand membership? How many were created by young couples, many of whom were well-educated professionals, streaming from the North for economic opportunity in Sunbelt suburbs? What has been the impact of newer waves of immigrants from Iran, Russia, Cuba, Israel, South Africa, and other areas on congregation building and theology?

Holocaust memorials and centers have sprung up throughout the South as they have in the rest of the country. A very recent phenomenon has been the writing of Holocaust memoirs by individuals who moved to the South from Europe. Thus, these poignant studies also point to how the survivors adjusted to, and were received by, the region. A biography of Anne Levy, a survivor who settled in New Orleans, written by Lawrence Powell, makes the Holocaust experience of one individual and her family come alive. Powell’s research in
Europe and the scope of his analysis is exceptional. The book also discusses Levy’s experiences adjusting to life in Louisiana and especially her response and the responses of fellow survivors against first George Lincoln Rockwell’s visit to the city and then David Duke’s campaign for election. Powell illuminates the conflict between the views and reactions of the survivors to these hate-mongers with those of the established Jewish community.110

Economics, Governance, and Civic Affairs

As in numerous areas, local and congregational histories previously cited provide anecdotal and sometimes sophisticated coverage of Jewish participation in political, civic, and economic affairs. Typically, coverage involves basic descriptions of Jewish businesses and their owners and what amount to lists of Jewish officeholders and Jews who were involved in civic life through appointed positions and organizational activities promoting infrastructure, schools, symphonies, hospitals, and the like. Such descriptions illustrate acceptance of Jews and Jewish contributions to society. The better studies document occupational and mobility patterns and other quantifiable socioeconomic trends by using census returns, city directories, credit reports, and similar sources. They also analyzed perceptions Jews and gentiles had of each other. Coverage through specialized studies varies dramatically, from numerous economic works—albeit with large holes remaining to be filled—to almost nothing in terms of government and civic affairs.

The general outline in these areas is familiar and runs through the literature. During the colonial era, American Jews participated in an international economic network.111 With experiences in foreign languages and travel, and having served as intermediaries for business in their countries of origin, young Jewish men went from place to place trading goods. They settled in port cities such as Savannah, Charleston, New Orleans, and Mobile, or moved among those cities, the Caribbean islands, New York, and Philadelphia. Business, family, and religion extending from those areas to London and Amsterdam tied them together.112 A few traded with Native Americans and worked as translators for Native American agents. Some accounts point to bankruptcies, but far less is written about failure than success.

With some notable exceptions, especially in Rhode Island and New York, Jews in the British colonies overwhelmingly supported and actively participated in the American Revolution. They subsequently held numerous and varied political offices and joined elite charity societies and clubs. Scions of the early families became professionals, supported cultural and philanthropic endeavors, and organized private schools. They mirrored Jonathan Sarna’s portrayal of Jacksonian Jews in his biography of Mordecai Noah. Newcomers from the Germanic states, Alsace-Lorraine, and elsewhere in Europe began as peddlers and rose as small shopkeepers in partnership with or employing family mem-
bers and fellow countrymen. As they would do from generation to generation, Jews filled important economic niches left void by most other groups, made contacts who would provide them with goods and credit, and readily relocated for economic opportunity.

An article by Richard Hawkins indicates that some arrived with money and connections and so bypassed the peddler stage. Stories of the Monsantos, Sheftalls, Levy/Yulees, Lehmans and Seligmans, Levys and Phillips, and Judah P. Benjamin stand out. Works already cited by Bertram Korn trace the Monsanto business empire from Louisiana across the Gulf Coast to Florida. In articles and a biography that provides a model for depth of coverage and complex understanding, Chris Monaco brought Moses Elias Levy from the Caribbean to Florida, where he established the first Jewish agricultural utopian community in what subsequently became the United States. He experimented with sugar production, and he and his son David promoted land development and railroads. A firebrand for southern secession, David Levy/Yulee advocated Florida statehood and became the state’s first U.S. Senator. Among the first Jewish families of colonial Savannah, the Sheftalls advanced in business and trade, ran the British blockade and otherwise served the Revolutionary cause, entered the professions, helped start and maintain the third congregation in British colonial America, and joined the first elite charity society in Georgia. In the only published systematic, economic study of one of several southern subregions, Elliott Ashkenazi traces a complex network of trade and connections across political boundaries that facilitated Jewish business success. Philip Phillips, a successful attorney and congressman, helped negotiate the Kansas-Nebraska Act. He supported the Union while his wife, Eugenia Levy Phillips, was an ardent Confederate. Her sister, Phoebe Levy Yates Pember, gained fame as the matron of Chimborazo Hospital in Confederate Richmond.113

Beyond the sparse studies and local histories previously noted, few economic works have appeared in print for the era spanning Reconstruction into the twentieth century. Jewish involvement with the crop lien system, changes in land ownership, credit, and business cry for research. Hasia Diner’s transcontinental study of peddlers and their impact mixes economics with immigration and social history. Few books that concentrate on the building of department stores meet a similar standard.114 Depicting a family business empire, Harold Hyman’s study of the Kempners of Texas illustrates the creation of a conglomerate partly geared toward the varied strengths of family members. The Kempner interests extend from complex brokerage dealings to insurance, agricultural experimentation, and land development. Coupled with a study of the Ochs newspapers and a recent autobiography by Bernard Rapoport, the outlines of a picture emerge of generational continuity and change, networking within and between family businesses, and adaptation. Eastern European Jews replicated the patterns of their predecessors but were more likely to start grocery and
liquor stores, secondhand and cheap clothing establishments, pawn shops, and scrap metal businesses. They showed a willingness to bargain with customers and sell for low prices. Sephardim established grocery stores and delicatessens, shoe repair shops, and clothes- and hat-cleaning firms. Both east Europeans and Sephardim benefited from family ties, credit from Jewish wholesalers, free loan associations, and Morris Plan banks, from which an individual without collateral could obtain a loan if two people vouched for him or her. Investments in real estate helped move families into the middle class. Stories of Zales jewelers and Stein Marts show twentieth-century chain store success emanating over generations from small-town and small-store origins. Since the mid-1970s, large federations of stores have purchased many of the original department stores, and their names are disappearing. This has given rise to fertile areas for future study: the development and impact of such commercial giants and the changing roles of Jewish businesspeople in the new enterprises; the impact of retail chains, national credit card companies, and malls; and the tremendous economic diversity that has marked the last half century.115

Immigration restriction laws went into effect during the 1920s that essentially halted new arrivals until the coming of small numbers of refugees from Nazi oppression. Lacking a new influx, a Jewish lower middle class gradually disappeared. Beth Wenger’s study demonstrates that the Depression impacted New York Jews in different neighborhoods and from different socioeconomic backgrounds to varying degrees. The few references to the Depression on the Jewish South are generalized. It clearly hurt businesses, and many people had difficulty supporting Jewish institutions. Yet the impact on southern Jewish businesses may have been relatively minor and temporary. By the late 1930s, prosperity appears to have resumed in cities, only to be temporarily delayed again by World War II for those who went into military service. Yet the war also acted as a catalyst. The expansion of military bases throughout the South fostered jobs and business growth. Soldiers stationed at these bases during the war returned to spouses and economic opportunities afterward. Children of immigrants moved into new neighborhoods even before the war and started chain stores. With the preponderance of Jews in business and the professions, and with few in factory employment, an investigation using Wenger’s complex model could prove fruitful. Work should be done on Jews in the professions and their roles as leaders of professional organizations; on Jews in real estate and construction, such as Ben Massell, who is credited with revitalizing the Atlanta skyline during the 1940s and 1950s; and on Jews in chambers of commerce116 and other civic organizations.

In contrast to the regional norm, southern Jewish involvement in agriculture was limited, since most Jews went into business. Nonetheless, scattered evidence indicates that Jews played important roles in agribusiness innovation: from the sugar production of Moses E. Levy and the Kempners to Raphael J. Moses’s
commercialization of the peach industry in Georgia, from the herb trade of the Wallace brothers in North Carolina to the influence of Rosana Dyer Osterman on Gail Borden, Jr. and condensed milk production. Moses E. Levy’s short-lived agricultural utopia was the forerunner of many that sought to root poor, immigrant Jews in the soil and away from the cities. Few of these colonies are traced in articles. The Immigration Removal Office, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, and especially the Galveston Movement spread eastern European immigrants into the heartland to lessen antisemitism in New York and elsewhere in the North and to provide economic options for the newcomers. Yet Bernard Marinbach’s sound book on the Galveston Movement and Hollace Weiner’s specialized study on Fort Worth, which stresses chain migration patterns and local influence, are the only works directly concerned with these important organizations and programs.

Jewish women’s business activities have been barely discussed in local histories and in the few general studies of women in the South. Women filled roles as sole traders and took positions as buyers, salespeople, bookkeepers, shop owners, teachers, and academy heads. They also earned money by renting rooms and running boardinghouses. Benevolent activities helped expand women’s sphere and prepared them for entrance into social work and teaching in the twentieth century. Many women also became lawyers, specializing in workers’, children’s, and women’s issues before and after the passage of the nineteenth amendment. The few specialized articles show great potential for enhancing our understanding, but all of these areas require substantial additional research.

Jews held numerous state and national offices leading up to the Civil War, but beyond support for the Revolution, the South, and secession, there are few analyses of their policies or politics, even into the recent period. Sparse anecdotal references indicate that Jews were found on both sides of the Reconstruction and Redemption conflicts. During the late 1800s and early 1900s, Jews served as mayors, city aldermen, and school board members in numerous cities. Leonard Dinnerstein argues that in the aftermath of the lynching of Leo Frank such opportunities were greatly curtailed. When, why, and how did this change? Does Dinnerstein’s conclusion hold true in small towns, where Jews frequently were elected mayors? Hyman’s work on Isaac Kempner depicts him as a consummate businessman/reformer instrumental in creating the commission plan of urban government. Is it possible that Jews helped pioneer and lead progressive, good government reform in the South? Works by Canter Brown, Jr., and Mark I. Greenberg tentatively support this conclusion. Progressivism in the region was often marked by racism, as were the governments of the next several decades. Clive Webb and Raymond Arsenault show a complex picture but suggest that at least some Jewish politicians followed regional mores in this regard and even served demagogues. Yet numerous works—including Margaret Armbrester’s study of Samuel Ullman of Birmingham; Phillip J. Johnson’s article that touches
on Monroe, Louisiana mayor Arnold Bernstein, who opposed the Klan and supported black rights, and more contemporary autobiographies by Morris Abram, Harriet Keyserling, and Bernard Rapoport—argue that Jews broke from the norm. In a study of ethnic politics in Atlanta up to 1915, I found that Jews joined a faction of the Democratic Party and were welcomed because of their business success and civic contributions. Since they tended to cluster in residential patterns, their votes were also concentrated in a few wards. Consequently, certain seats on the school board, city council, and even World War I draft board became “Jewish seats.” Cristol’s study of the Reform congregation in Dallas describes a similar phenomenon. It is likely that comparable patterns emerged in New Orleans, Memphis, Baltimore, and other cities. Only further research will help transcend generalities concerning these issues. As in so many areas, cross-regional studies should prove to be particularly fruitful. Since there were numerous Jewish officeholders, including mayors, in the West, for example, acceptance and contributions can be viewed more as an American than a regional phenomenon. Analyses of actual policies, voting patterns, and alliances would determine whether the similarities are superficial or substantive.

Anecdotal evidence points to important Jewish contributions to music, culture, and education. Several of the rabbis from Hollace Weiner’s *Jewish Stars in Texas* introduced classical music into their communities; state and local histories often touch on this in passing. Jews have been involved in the country-music industry and have even commissioned important religious works. As previously indicated, Jewish women went into the teaching profession. But what about Jews such as David Mayer of Atlanta, who helped found the public school system? Or Annie Teitelbaum Wise, a noted high school principal?

**Interaction with Others**

Jews interacted with others in every area discussed thus far, and the interaction was bidirectional and symbiotic. As examples, Jews were governed by others but also participated actively in governance and influenced government decisions on issues such as school prayer and extension of the franchise to women. Reform Judaism borrowed from Christian models, while Reform rabbis effectively advocated prophetic social change and ecumenicism. Jewish businessmen were directly impacted by the nature and state of the local economy and transportation networks, but they also opened a national consumer culture and credit system to their clientele. This section will concentrate on the issues of antisemitism, or the relative lack thereof; interaction with other minority groups, particularly African-Americans; and image and identity.

**A. Antisemitism and Acceptance**

How much antisemitism was there in the South, and what was the nature of it? What has been its ebb and flow, and what factors influenced it? Much has been written on these questions, and the topic was the subject of a penetrating
historiographical essay by Howard Rabinowitz. The general classic studies on the subject with a bearing on the South include John Higham’s *Send These To Me: Jews and Other Immigrants in Urban America*, as well as his *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860–1925*; Leonard Dinnerstein’s *Uneasy at Home: Antisemitism and the American Jewish Experience* and *Antisemitism in America*; and Morton Borden’s, *Jews, Turks, and Infidels.*

Rabinowitz’s article offers a good starting point for discussion. His essay correctly begins with a comparative perspective. In contrast to antisemitism in European history and to treatment of African-Americans or Catholics in America (Native Americans and other immigrant groups should be added as well), Jews have found an extremely hospitable home in America. Following Higham and others, he notes that, although antisemitism existed in America virtually from the outset, “the birth of modern, systematic antisemitism in this country clearly dates to the late nineteenth century.” Although Dinnerstein is more sanguine in his view on antisemitism in the region and views the Leo Frank case as a turning point (an interpretation downplayed by Rabinowitz), Rabinowitz initially concurs with the literature that suggests that the South “did not depart from the national pattern.” Nonetheless, he quickly demurs: “[T]hose few historians who have looked at the subject and especially Southern Jews themselves, claim that in fact the South has been more receptive to Jews and has exhibited less antisemitism than the nation as a whole, certainly less than the East and Midwest … [A]side from the West, the South has been the least anti-Semitic region in the country.” He points to extensive officeholding, paucity of systematic economic discrimination, and relatively open social relations, especially in small towns and in college admissions. He then asks why this would be so. Contradicting Harry Golden, he argues that the region’s evangelical Protestantism could have led to antisemitism as easily as it did to philo-Semitism and that the small-town, rural environment could have bred “heightened parochialism and suspicion of outsiders.” Rabinowitz posits “three general reasons why the South, if not the least anti-Semitic region in the nation, can at least lay claim to being no worse than the norm.” First, he names structural factors that worked in Jews’ favor: the relatively small number of Jews in the region and their rural settlement pattern, their early arrival, the comparative stability of Jewish communities given a much smaller relative influx of eastern European immigrants, and, most important, the fact that Jews did not enter occupations or businesses in which they competed with “already entrenched Gentile interests.” Second, Rabinowitz reasons that southern hatreds of Catholics and, especially, African-Americans—“more threatening groups”—shielded Jews. Third, and most important, he maintains that Jews accepted southern mores and institutions, especially those dealing with race, and did their utmost to conform. With the modern Civil Rights Movement, Jews in the South behaved and thought differently than those in the North. Thus, southern Jews “are
classically marginal men … more liberal than Gentile white southerners but less so than northern Jews.” Fear partly caused this Jewish response, but the response also came at a price. Jews “had to know their place.”

This summary does not do justice to Rabinowitz’s nuances. Yet questions must be raised concerning the conclusions he drew from the literature. As noted, Rabinowitz was not sure if antisemitism in the South was slightly less or the same as elsewhere. The conundrum created a problem in his argument. If antisemitism did not differ markedly from area to area, then can it be argued logically that real or assumed regional differences had a measurable impact? Perhaps instead, the seemingly regional differences had at least parallels elsewhere. For example, anti-Asian prejudice likely shielded Jews in California, and anti-Latino discrimination deflected hatred of Jews in the Southwest.

What about the assumed differences? Although Jews were always a tiny minority, they were disproportionately visible because of their business and civic activities. They did not typically compete with southern Christians (in some cases, such as in certain banking locations, this may have been the result of discrimination), yet the economic niches they filled could have sparked antagonism. As peddlers and merchants often catering to rural folk, including African-Americans, Jews were vulnerable to charges of excessive profiteering—charges that Rabinowitz noted—which clearly took place during the Civil War. Perceptions of such activities could also breed hatred and even violence. Department stores that bore Jewish names and lined downtown shopping avenues could have been viewed as monopolistic. Factory ownership during the early twentieth century and the association with capitalist exploitation of rural, poor whites obviously formed the backdrop of the Leo Frank case. Strikes against Jacob Elsas’s Fulton Bag and Cotton Mill had antisemitic overtones and contributed to the climate in Atlanta fomenting the case. By catering to African-Americans, Jews also bent if not broke racial taboos. A Jew was murdered in Tennessee and another in Florida after the Civil War at least partly due to their business/racial positions. If Jews obtained land as merchant/lenders during Reconstruction, it seems likely that this would have created antagonism. What about Jewish ownership of rental property? Although Jews resided in specific locations for long periods of time, this was also true in other regions. How much was officeholding and civic involvement really different in the South? Is it just that historians have asked and answered different questions across regional lines? Can similar patterns of officeholding be found in comparative communities elsewhere?

Since Rabinowitz’s untimely death, numerous studies have demonstrated the greater presence and impact of eastern European Jewish immigrants on communities in the South. Even among earlier immigrants, there was substantial internal migration so that seemingly stable Jewish enclaves were actually transformed repeatedly by both internal and external population movements.
How did this impact on regional identity, and what does it say about the nature and significance of that identity? And what of Rabinowitz’s assertion that persecution of Catholics and African-Americans shielded Jews? Why, then, did times of great racism coincide with times of heightened antisemitism? Even the high degree of conformity among southern Jews is now being questioned. Jews were active in the drive to obtain voting rights for women, and researchers have documented an even deeper and larger role in the modern Civil Rights Movement since publication of Rabinowitz’s article. Jews opposed Prohibition, advocated separation of religion and state in the public schools, and opposed the war in Vietnam, among other areas in which they confronted the southern mainstream. From another perspective, the argument for conformity as a counteraction to persecution implies that the actions of the victim can negate or, conversely, instigate the actions of the perpetrator. However, this was not the case. Some synagogues where rabbis did not speak out on behalf of civil rights were bombed, while others where Jews were outspoken were left alone. If southern Jews conformed so well and were so well accepted, why did antisemitism rise? In fact, regardless of how much Jews assimilated, as indicated by the cases of Judah P. Benjamin and David Levy/Yulee, they were always viewed as Jews and could always be castigated as such.

The questions raised here are not so much a challenge to Rabinowitz, the messenger, but to the underlying historiography that he summarized. My gut reaction coincides with his. There are always variations that should not be ignored, but the similarities concerning both acceptance and persecution in similar locations far outweigh the differences. Obviously, Jews in the South gained a great degree of tolerance if not acceptance, and they flourished. Nonetheless, they were always vulnerable and subject to real and imagined persecution. They could be admired as “our Jews” as opposed to the alien Jews elsewhere, but even that concept set them apart. In the end, many of the current assumptions concerning the relatively high degree of acceptance and acculturation among southern Jews may be documented. Yet, at this stage, what is needed is a new look at assumptions and evidence.

B. Interaction, Identity, and Black/Jewish Relations

The few studies of theological discourse between Jews and Christians reveal exciting potential for understanding interaction. Scott Langston explores the ways rabbis and Protestant clergy defined themselves and each other in nineteenth-century New Orleans. Some Reform Jews during the early twentieth century sought spirituality in Christian Science. Ellen Umansky shows how Rabbi Alfred Geiger Moses of Mobile reacted by developing a Jewish Science alternative that generated offshoots in New York. Eliza McGraw explains that Southern Baptists partly defined themselves through a changing message for missions to convert Jews. Little has been done on rabbis’ using the National
Council of Christians and Jews as an agency to explain Judaism to Christians and thereby attempt to overcome prejudice. Rabbis used radio broadcasts, newspaper columns, and college classes, among other media, to accomplish the same purpose. They also joined local ministerial associations and held leadership positions. In addition to fostering understanding, the associations also became venues to advocate for social reform.133

Langston raises the issue of the rabbis’ identities as Jews and Americans. Here the debate begins with Steven J. Whitfield’s essay on the braided identity of southern Jews that overlaps with the discussion of southern distinctiveness as analyzed previously. Virtually everywhere in America, Jews identify with their location to a greater or lesser degree, and Jews in the South were no exception. But the more nuanced questions include how and why the identity changed over time and what impact did the identity have on decision-making. How important are identity and sense of place if Jews relocate so readily? Leonard Rogoff leads the discussion of the changing identity of Jews in Durham and Chapel Hill, North Carolina, in *Homelands*, and Bryan E. Stone and Seth L. Wolitz deal with these questions as they relate to Texas Jews. In Stone’s article on Edgar Goldberg, he discusses a conflict over leadership and power in which the New York Jewish elite apparently remained unaware and unconcerned that they were being confronted. Texas Jews were defining themselves in relation to this hegemonic “other.” Did Jews in other locations outside of the South react in the same fashion? If so, this may elucidate American Jewish history and start to confront the notion that New York has really been the unique area of Jewish residence since the era of eastern European Jewish immigration. To complicate matters further, Jewish Texans identified with both the West and the South, and Jews in parts of Oklahoma thought of themselves as southerners. Students in the future should confront these questions, account for the complexity of the issue, and thereby avoid the broad, brushstroke approach.134

Different people at different times have defined Jewish identity beyond religion, nationality, location, or association with Israel. The amateur historians of a century ago and their contemporaries defined Jews, in part, as a race. Leonard Rogoff has traced this concept in the South, finding little difference with the concept’s use elsewhere in America. Eric L. Goldstein, on the other hand, sees a change toward the use of race as a category in the late nineteenth century, especially among Jewish men—even as they struggled to be identified as “white.” Goldstein finds similarities and differences between the North and South and emphasizes the differences. Despite the awards his book has received, one wonders if his evidence warrants his broad conclusions.135 Identity has also been expressed as a shared sense of peoplehood, common historical experience, socializing via sectarian clubs, philanthropy, and even food ways.136 Historians will continue to debate the importance and impact of each of these.
Jews interacted with numerous immigrant/minority groups in the South. Often these groups came from the same country of origin and thus reflected national identity. This was especially true of the French and Germans during the nineteenth century, and Cuban refugees since Castro’s rise to power in 1959. First-generation eastern European and Sephardic immigrants tended to live near other immigrants in the cities. Little has appeared concerning these phenomena.137

Although the historiography harks back to early descriptions of Jewish involvement in slavery, conflicts between African-Americans and Jews since the mid-1960s served as the catalyst for extensive attention to black/Jewish relations. The southern historiography is a subcategory of the larger literature. Clive Webb’s award-winning *Fight Against Fear: Southern Jews and Black Civil Rights* and the anthology I edited with Berkley Kalin, *Quiet Voices: Southern Rabbis and Black Civil Rights, 1880s to 1990s*, provide complete introductions to the subject and discussions of the literature. In virtually every instance, Jewish involvement in blacks’ rights represented a broader commitment to social reform.138 Nonetheless, the relationship between African-Americans and Jews was not always rosy. Individuals in both groups harbored prejudices against the other, and some Jews were ardent segregationists. Indeed, perhaps the best case for southern Jewish distinctiveness can be made in the area of African-American civil rights.139 Few Jews in the region marched or demonstrated, and most discouraged the national Jewish organizations from doing so. Except for a minority of rabbis, most of whom were either pushed out or voluntarily separated from their congregations, most rabbis—even the larger number of outspoken ones—preferred working behind the scenes through ministerial associations. Additional material has appeared since the publications of these works. Jonathan Bass augments Terry Barr’s chapter in *Quiet Voices* on Rabbi Milton Grafman. Bass and others offer an understanding portrait of those in Birmingham who believed that the city was on the brink of change. Bass argues that King used the city and relatively moderate clergy in a strategic maneuver to reinvigorate the Civil Rights Movement. Debra L. Schultz’s *Going South* discusses the motivation and experiences of mostly northern Jewish women who fought for black civil rights in the region. Raymond Mohl provides primary sources from two Jewish women activists in Miami and places their efforts in perspective.140

Appropriately, much of the research has stressed the grass-roots level, and each new study illustrates the tremendous variety of experiences and responses. Rabbis and women have fared relatively well with the appraisal and Jewish business leaders less so. Few business people spoke out because they feared retribution, because they played more conservative roles in society, and because they were often on the front line in confrontations with sit-in protestors. Little has been written on black/Jewish relations in the South since 1970. Did Jewish and black reactions in the region differ from their northern counterparts as conflicts
arose in the late 1960s and 1970s? What about black/Jewish coalitions formed in many cities in the 1980s? What about black/Jewish political interaction as officeholding for both groups expanded? Turning back in time, more studies should be undertaken for the period from the Civil War through the 1940s. At least some Jews took moderate and even relatively outspoken positions in favor of black rights during the era. How widespread was this, and what forms did they take?

At the Sixth Biennial Scholars Conference on American Jewish History in Charleston in June 2006, sociologist John Sheldon Reed noted that in the 1968 presidential election, 80 percent of northern Jews voted for Hubert Humphrey, while only 60 percent of southern Jews did so. This indicates that southern Jews were more conservative than their northern counterparts. Yet only 3 percent of southern Jews voted for George Wallace, which was a voting pattern closer to that of southern blacks than any other group. These statistics are clearly not a litmus test for southern Jewish attitudes toward integration since they date to 1968—not when the civil rights movement was in its heyday during the mid 1950s and early 1960s—but they may come as close to a comparative statistical reflection of Jewish relations to southern mores on the issue of integration as historians are likely to get.

VI. Conclusion

Having studied southern Jewish history for thirty years, I am still struck by how much remains to be done. Beyond a few state, local, and congregational histories, little has been written, for example, on southern Jewry during the last fifty years. Only recently have cross-regional articles and books appeared harking back to the integration of the amateur historian phase.141 Research of a truly comparative perspective has been undertaken with some success, but this has not been done sufficiently.142 Historians in the field must read about Jewish history elsewhere in the United States, in Europe, and in other countries that drew Jewish immigrants. They also must integrate secular history into their understanding to transcend parochialism. More comparisons must be made with other minority groups as well as with the majority. Questions and findings from urban, social, economic, religious, women’s, immigrant/ethnic, and other fields must be applied and compared and contrasted with southern Jewish history. Other immigrant/ethnic groups, for example, apparently went from peddling to dry-goods store ownership. Exploring their history may shed a different perspective on what is viewed within the field as a Jewish success story. Besides African-Americans, other groups experienced varying degrees of acceptance and persecution. Some rabbis and Jewish women openly opposed lynching and the later closing of public schools, but they always worked with non-Jews. Full recognition of such comparisons and interaction could put Jewish activities in a different perspective, one in which they might be both more and less unique.
Although historians of American Jewry are gaining greater exposure to the southern Jewish past, it remains a _terra incognita_ to most historians of southern and American history. A chapter on southern Jews is becoming a more regular feature of regional anthologies, as are panels at history and religion conferences, but these represent tokenism rather than real integration. Cross-pollination would be healthy for both directions.

After reviewing the literature and suggesting numerous areas ripe for research, I am equally struck by the output of so many scholars during these three decades. We have a long way to go, but we have also traveled far.

Mark K. Bauman retired early as professor of history from Atlanta Metropolitan College. He has written biographies of Southern Methodist bishop Warren Candler, and Rabbi Harry Epstein; co-edited _Quiet Voices: Southern Rabbis and Black Civil Rights_ (1997, paperback 2007), and edited _Dixie Diaspora: An Anthology of Southern Jewish History_ (2006). The most recent of his more than fifty articles appeared in Marc Lee Raphael, ed., _The Columbia History of Jews and Judaism in America_ (2008). He guest edited three special issues of _American Jewish History_ and is founding and current editor of _Southern Jewish History_.

The idea for this essay was first broached in 1999 by Fred Krome, then managing editor of _The American Jewish Archives Journal_, when I applied for my first fellowship at the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives. I undertook the project four years later when Gary Zola and Kevin Proffitt, on behalf of the archives, generously provided a director’s fellowship. Kevin brought the correspondence between Jacob Rader Marcus and Bertram W. Korn, Stanley Chyet, and Malcolm Stern to my attention, as well as other materials. I benefited greatly from discussions with Fred as I hashed out ideas. Dana Herman, Fred’s successor, greatly facilitated final publication. The staff at the archives is always friendly and helpful. I also benefited greatly from insightful critiques by David Geffen, Leonard Rogoff, Bryan E. Stone, Hollace A. Weiner, and Stephen J. Whitfield. To all I give sincere thanks.

Readers should realize that as complete as I have attempted to make this article, it is not inclusive; this is true especially of congregational and local histories and memoirs. Many of these can be found in the bibliographies of the volumes cited herein.

Besides being an observer, I have been an active participant in the field. Although many of my publications are listed in citations and occasionally referred to specifically in the text, it is left to other historians to judge my role and contributions for whatever they have been worth.
Notes


3 Ira Robinson, “Invention of American Jewish History,” discusses the concept of American Jewish history as a cultural construct invented by the early members of the AJHS as a source of identity to counteract antisemitism. Jacob R. Marcus links a Columbia College commencement address given in 1800, the first discussion of the seventeenth-century origins of American Jewry, to the beginning of “communal self-consciousness among American Jews.” A major critic of the early AJHS “apologetic” authors, Marcus dated the creation of American Jewish history to the post-World War II decade. Jacob R. Marcus, “The Quintessential American Jew,” *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 58 (September, 1968): 15–22 (journal hereafter cited as *AJHQ*). As discussed below, the same conceptualization of southern Jewish history as a construct apparently emerged only gradually beginning with the work of John Higham and Bertram W. Korn and coming into its own during the late 1960s and early 1970s.


The Jews of Mobile, Alabama, 1763–1841 (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College, 1970). The active participation of these rabbis is significant in that Appel points to early conflict over the roles of rabbis (“Hansen’s Third Generation Law,” 12–13, 17). The executive council of the original AJHS included Mendes Cohen and Henrietta Szold of Baltimore and Louis N. Dembitz of Louisville. Lay members from the South included Aaron Haas of Atlanta, Leo N. Levi of Galveston, Abraham Minis of Savannah, and William S. Rayner of Newport News, Virginia. Organized 7 June 1892, the society’s “first scientific meeting” took place on 15 December 1892. The constitution states, “The object of this Society is to collect and publish material bearing upon the history of our country.... The objects for which this Society was organized are not sectarian but American.” The constitution and membership information are in PAJHS 1 (1893). The first article published in PAJHS was Charles C. Jones, Jr., “The Settlement of the Jews in Georgia,” 5–12. The first issue also includes “Jewish Beginnings in Kentucky,” by Lewis N. Dembitz (99–102), and “Some Unpublished Material Relating to Dr. Jacob Lumbrozo, of Maryland,” by J.H. Hollander (25–40). Herbert Friedenwald, “Jews Mentioned in the Journal of the Continental Congress” (65–89), mentions Philip Minis (67), Cohen (67), and Mordecai Sheftall (86–87), all of Georgia. The four papers cite sources to varying degrees and seem relatively capable for the era. The exception is the Dembitz article, which discusses first Jewish individuals in relation to people’s names, although he does note that this is not necessarily accurate and that all of the first Jewish men married out of the faith, an admission that did not glorify the past. With reference to John I. Jacob, Dembitz explains in a comment reflecting the racial images of the times, “Down to his great-grandchildren, Jewish features, of the finest type, are strongly marked” (100). Four of nineteen papers delivered 28 December 1893 (PAJHS 2 [1893]) treated southern Jewry.

6Appel among others argues that establishing early Jewish presence and contributions was designed to counteract antisemitism. This is reflected in a letter from Leo N. Levi, future B’nai B’rith International president from Galveston, Texas, published in The Menorah (August, 1888). This letter advocates accumulating information for the writing of an American Jewish history that served as an impetus to the formation of the AJHS (7). Until 1908, the society concentrated on the colonial era (16). See Appel, “Hansen’s Third Generation Law.” Levi presided over congregation B’nai Israel when Henry Cohen was elected its rabbi, and presumably the two worked together in promoting historical studies. See Hollace A. Weiner, Jewish Stars in Texas: Rabbis and Their Work (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1999), 61, 65.

7All of the works noted in this paragraph are cited below either in the sections concerning the specific authors or in those treating the subject matter.

8Jacob R. Marcus calls this “Victorian Filiopietism,” in “Major Trends in American Jewish Historical Research,” AJA 16 (April, 1964): 9–10. Concurring, Gurock concludes that the founders of the American Jewish Historical Society stressed communal objectives—defense of the status of American Jewry. Gurock, “Introduction” to “From Publications,” 157–158. See also the sources cited in n. 1, above, and Marcus, “Quintessential American Jew,” 15–22. Ironically, Marcus’s address at the dedication of the new building of the AJHS fails to rise much above the work he criticizes. He challenges historians, “Not to suffer history but to make history... Knowledge, meticulous, painfully accurate, all-embracing knowledge, brings with it the power to create, to mould, to survive.” He asked historians to “gird our loins and go out in quest of the new Jew of tomorrow, that individual who will somehow embody within himself the consensus of the people.” The third example he gives “was a man whom I knew intimately, whom I loved and revered.” Although he refused to provide this man’s last name, the audience likely would have been aware that he was talking about his father. See Jonathan D. Sarna, “Jacob Rader Marcus (1896–1995),” American Jewish Yearbook 97 (1997): 633–640 (hereafter cited as AJYB). Feingold’s excellent account of the conflicting forces on the founders of the society suggests that while the organizers of the AJHS sought legitimacy as Americans, by the 1980s the perceived need related to the continuity of Jewish community.


Robinson argues that, as the study of American history matured, the study of American Jewry lagged behind. Perhaps a critical reason for this was the change in presidential leadership in 1921 from Cyrus Adler to Abraham S.W. Rosenbach, who served until 1948. As Nathan M. Kaganoff explains, Adler represented a scholarly community with a broad image while Rosenbach, a collector of rare books, was more limited in his view and was satisfied with the reproduction of primary sources. By the late 1930s, financial support and interest clearly declined as a result of the death of the first-generation leaders, the Depression, and the demands of overseas Jewry. From 1937 to 1948, the society met every other year and, at times, every three years. Only two issues of the *Proceedings* appeared, and one of these was supported by the American Jewish Committee to document how the American government had assisted Jewish causes overseas in times of distress. Robinson, “Invention,” 309–320. Kaganoff also notes that several Jewish academicians as well as University of Pennsylvania professor John Bach McMaster were deeply involved at the beginning of the society. Kaganoff, “History of the AJHS.” See also Lewis S. Feuer, “The Stages in the Social History of Jewish Professors in American Colleges and Universities,” AJH 71 (1982): 432–465. Numerous ethnic groups established historical societies during the same era with much the same motivation and results. Yet when Marcus Lee Hansen and others began to raise the level of such scholarship, historians of American Jewry were slow to follow.


Kohler’s article on Touro provides a brief, glorified outline, with Touro’s will as an appendix. Max J. Kohler, “Judah Touro, Merchant and Philanthropist,” *PAJHS* 13 (1905): 93–112; “Judah P. Benjamin, Statesman and Jurist,” *PAJHS* 12 (1904): 63–85; “Isaac Harby, Jewish Religious Leader and Man of Letters,” *PAJHS* 32 (1931): 35–54; *The Life of Judah Touro* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1946). Appendices to the latter include excerpts from Harby’s Bible documenting his family history and his discourse on American Jewry. The inclusion of such primary materials is typical of these early authors and can be helpful to current historians seeking easy access to sources. See below for errors in Kohler’s article concerning Judah P. Benjamin.


Kaganoff also notes both the limitations and usefulness of these articles as a starting place. Kaganoff, “History of the AJHS,” 475.


35Gurock, “From Publications,” chapters five and six.


39Marcus, “Quintessential American Jew,” 19–21; Falk, *Bright Eminence*; Korn, “Preface”; Sarna, Marcus necrology. Falk (34) records that one of Marcus’s Cincinnati high school friends was Abraham Shinedling, who held the Wheeling pulpit and co-authored with Manuel Pinkus *History of the Jews of the Beckley Jewish Community* (1895–1955) (Beckley, WV: Biggs-

40Rabbi Allan Tarshish, a Marcus student and the first person to receive a doctorate in American Jewish history (1932) from an American institution, writes that “[o]f the two hundred or more fairly sizeable congregations that had grown up in the United States by 1880, and in which lay most of the source material of our past, all but about twenty have become Reform and consequently are manned by graduates of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion.” He adds that these were Marcus’s students and friends. Tarshish, “Dr. Jacob R. Marcus and His Work in American Jewish History,” delivered at the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) seminar, “New Approaches and Insights into Jewish History,” 24 June 1960 (Grand Rapids, MI: Rabbi’s Fund of Temple Emanuel, n.d.); Korn family tree, genealogies files, American Jewish Archives (AJA), Cincinnati, Ohio. While serving congregation Kahol Kadosh Beth Elohim in Charleston, Tarshish wrote “The Charleston Organ Case,” AJHQ 54 (June, 1965): 411–449; Since 1749—The Story of K.K. Beth Elohim of Charleston, S.C.: American Judaism through More Than Two Centuries (Charleston, SC: K.K. Beth Elohim, 1976).

41Korn served on the boards of the Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation, the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association, the Jewish Welfare Board, the Grand Lodge of B’nai B’rith, the Jewish Historical Society of Israel, and the American Antiquarian Society. He achieved the rank of Rear Admiral in the Naval Reserve Chaplain Corps and presided over Philadelphia’s Chamber Symphony, the AJHS, and the Association of Jewish Chaplains of the United States Armed Forces. He also served as contributing editor to the Philadelphia Jewish Exponent and was a member of the advisory council of the Civil War Centennial Commission. Information on Korn’s life is from Marc Lee Raphael, “Necrology: Bertram Wallace Korn (1918–1978),” AJH 59 (June, 1980): 506–508.

42Korn, American Jewry and the Civil War (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1951).

43For example, relating midnineteenth-century antisemitism to that of the midtwentieth century was a critical part of Korn’s analysis in “Judah P. Benjamin” and “Wise on the Civil War.” Both were republished in Korn, Eventful Years and Experiences: Studies in Nineteenth Century American Jewish History (Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives, 1954), a collection of previously published articles. These articles, as indicated earlier, largely debunked earlier myths and misconceptions, as did Korn’s Judah Touro: Friend of Man (New York: UAHC Commission on Education, 1953).

44Korn, Early Jews of New Orleans, xi–xii, 9–10, 12–13, 52. Besides overseas sources, Korn used R.G. Dun and Company reports (74), a major source for characterizations of Jews in business for historians today. Korn, “Jews in Eighteenth-Century West Florida,” in Eighteenth-Century Florida: Life on the Frontier, ed. Samuel Proctor (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1976), 50–59; The Jews of Mobile, 1763–1841 (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College, 1970). Korn also wrote Benjamin Levy, New Orleans Printer and Publisher (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College, 1960). Korn corrects some of Proctor’s work as he does for earlier authors. See, for example, Korn, Early Jews of New Orleans, 287 n. 166, as cited in Proctor, “Jewish Life in New Orleans, 1718-1860,” Louisiana Historical Quarterly 40 (1957): 110–132. Yet Korn’s treatment of Judah Touro is reminiscent of historians who have dealt with Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings. He provides substantial evidence linking Touro with Ellen Wilson, a biracial woman with whom Touro spent much of his adult life, but concludes, “If we were dealing with anyone other than Judah Touro we would suspect that Ellen was his mistress; but all of the insights we have been able to gain into his character contradict such a suggestion.” Early Jews of New Orleans, 88–89.

45Chyet, Lopez of Newport: Colonial American Merchant Prince (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1970). Lopez was an important slave trader among his other enterprises and thus a subject who could place the experiences of Jews in the South in a different perspective.

Society, 1972), brought Marcus’s Memoirs of American Jews up to the 1960s. Chyet also served as notes and documents department editor of the AJHQ. See, for example, AJHQ 58 (September, 1968): 136.

44 A lieutenant in the military reserves, Chyet worked with the Jewish Chautauqua Society, the Anti-Defamation League, the Labor Zionist Organization, the Jewish Community Relations Council, the CCAR, the AJHS, the Association of Jewish Studies, and the Jewish Publication Society. A social activist, he supported the NAACP, Americans for Peace Now, Amnesty International, and George McGovern’s presidential campaign. Typed biographical sketch, July 1962, genealogy files in Stanley F. Chyet Collection, box 1, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio; Chyet, “The Making of an American Jewish Historian,” typescript, June 1991, genealogy files in Stanley F. Chyet Collection, box 3, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio; “Dr. Chyet to discuss Hebrew poetry,” American Israelite (28 February 1974): 21; “Obituaries,” American Israelite (14 November 2002): 30. See also Chyet’s father’s memoir, Jacob Maurice Chyet, “From Kovno to Dorchester,” in Lives and Voices, 360–368.


46 Chyet, Lives and Voices, 114–153 (Rosinger), 274–309 (Fox).


48 Stern to Jacob R. Marcus, 24 February 1950, 87/84/Norfolk, Virginia—Rabbi Malcolm Stern—through Dec., 1952, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio. The exchange of letters, especially between Stern and Marcus, illustrates how Stern sought genealogical information, donations of documents for the archives from members of the families he investigated, and financial contributions for the archives.


58For a fuller discussion, see Mark K. Bauman, “The Flowering of Interest in *Southern Jewish History* and its Integration into the Mainstream,” in *Religion in the Contemporary South*, ed. Don Armentrout and Corrie Norman (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 2005), 159–190.


64*AJH* published two additional special issues on southern Jewry guest edited by Mark K. Bauman and Bobbie S. Malone in September and December 1997.


66Kaganoff and Urofsky, eds., *Turn to the South*; Proctor and Schmier, eds., with Stern, *Jews in the South*.

67See the special section on the history of the SJHS in *SJH* 10 (2007). As of 2006, there were at least fourteen Jewish historical societies in cities and states throughout the region. Those of Maryland, South Carolina, and Texas boast hundreds of members. The Goldring/Woldenberg
Institute of Southern Jewish Life sponsors exhibits, oral history and pictorial projects, and numerous other activities that encourage the preservation of southern Jewish communities and their memories. Important exhibits have been undertaken by the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Atlanta, which houses the Breman Jewish Heritage Museum; the Jewish Community Federation of Richmond in conjunction with the Virginia Historical Society; the Jewish Museum of Florida; the Jewish Museum of Maryland; and the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina in conjunction with the McKissick Museum and the College of Charleston. See, for example, Mark Bauman and Doris Goldstein, *The Jews of Atlanta: 150 Years of Creating Community* (Atlanta: Atlanta Jewish Federation, 1994).


61 For Dinnerstein’s background in relation to his work see Clive Webb, “‘What Was on Your Mind Was on Your Tongue’: A Profile of Leonard Dinnerstein,” *SJH* 7 (2004): 27–46.


75The most forceful and extensive recent exposition of this interpretation is Marcie C. Ferris and Mark I. Greenberg, eds., Jewish Roots in Southern Soil: A New History (Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 2006). Many of the authors of the articles in this anthology fall into pitfalls. They find causative relationships with little evidence or logic and ignore comparative information from other suitable locations that make regional distinctiveness questionable. Eastern European Jews, Orthodoxy, Conservatism, and Zionism barely, if at all, appear. In
somewhat contradictory fashion, the Jews in many of these essays respond to antisemitism often by doing everything possible to maintain religious practices, although the assumptions remain that the South has been relatively tolerant to Jews and that Jews strove to acculturate. See also the roundtable William R. Ferris, Deborah Dash Moore, John Shelton Reed, Theodore Rosengarten, and George Sanchez, “Regionalism: The Significance of Place in American Jewish Life,” AJH 93 (2007): 113–128.


78Citations of the works in this paragraph will appear in subsequent sections concerning the specific subject matter.

79I have attempted to explain why southern Jews were never provincials and how they were integrated into American Jewish history and, in so doing, offer a dynamic view of southern Jewish history. See Mark K. Bauman, “A Multithematic Approach to Southern Jewish History,” in The Columbia History of the Jewish People in America, ed. Marc Lee Raphael (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 263–290. In “Tongue Ties: The Emergence of the Anglophone Jewish Diaspora in the Mid-Nineteenth Century” (AJH 93 [June, 2007]: 177–209), Adam Mendelsohn suggests international movement, communications, interaction, and similarities with several southern examples.


81For a fuller discussion of reasons for increased interest in the field, see Bauman, “Flowering of Interest.”


As in all constructs, deviations appear. All of Texas’s mid-nineteenth-century congregations save the first began as Reform, thus creating continuity between the earlier period and the 1890s.


A Century of Southern Jewish Historiography • 67


96 Breibart, “Penina Moïse.”


105 Although he ignores the South, a capable article on these congregations is Ira Robinson, “Anshe Sfard: The Creation of the First Hasidic Congregations in North America,” *AJF* 57 (2005): 53–66.


112 See, for example, Holly Snyder, “A Sense of Place: Jews, Identity, and Social Status in Colonial British America, 1654–1830,” doctoral dissertation (Brandeis University, 2001), and the special issue of *Jewish History* 20 (June, 2006)(with articles by Snyder and others on the controversial concept of port Jews).


Gary R. Freeze, “Roots, Barks, Berries and Jews: The Herb Trade in Gilded-Age North Carolina,” *Essays in Economic and Business History* 13 (1995): 107–127. It was unusual for Jews to be members of the industrial working class in the South. In a self-selecting process, they left or avoided the northern industrial cities to escape such work, and the southern economy offered economic niches outside of the factory system. For one of the few examples of Jews as working class in the South see Leonard Rogoff, “Jewish Proletarians in the New South: The Durham Cigarette Rollers,” *AJH* 82 (1994): 141–158.

Gary R. Freeze, “Roots, Barks, Berries and Jews: The Herb Trade in Gilded-Age North Carolina,” *Essays in Economic and Business History* 13 (1995): 107–127. It was unusual for Jews to be members of the industrial working class in the South. In a self-selecting process, they left or avoided the northern industrial cities to escape such work, and the southern economy offered economic niches outside of the factory system. For one of the few examples of Jews as working class in the South see Leonard Rogoff, “Jewish Proletarians in the New South: The Durham Cigarette Rollers,” *AJH* 82 (1994): 141–158.


See, for example, David J. Goldberg, “The Administration of Herman Myers as Mayor of Savannah, Georgia, 1895–1897 and 1899–1907,” master’s thesis (UNC Chapel Hill, 1978).


Abraham J. Karp titles his history of American Jewry Haven and Home.


128 For quotations in sequence, Rabinowitz, “Nativism, Bigotry, and Anti-Semitism,” 440, 441, 443–45, 446 (fourth and fifth quotations), 447, 450.
129 The latter observations are influenced by the remarks of Ellen Eisenberg and George Sanchez in two panels on regionalism at the Sixth Biennial Scholars’ Conference on American Jewish History, Charleston, SC, June, 2006.
135 For quotations in sequence, Rabinowitz, “Nativism, Bigotry, and Anti-Semitism,” 440, 441, 443–45, 446 (fourth and fifth quotations), 447, 450.


141 These include a few of the studies cited above on Jews, civil rights, and race; on Jewish women; Lee Shai Weissbach’s work on Jews in small towns; and the work of William Toll, including “Jewish Families and the Intergenerational Transition in the American Hinterland,”