

# SOUTHERN JEWISH HISTORY

Journal of the Southern Jewish Historical Society

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## Book Reviews

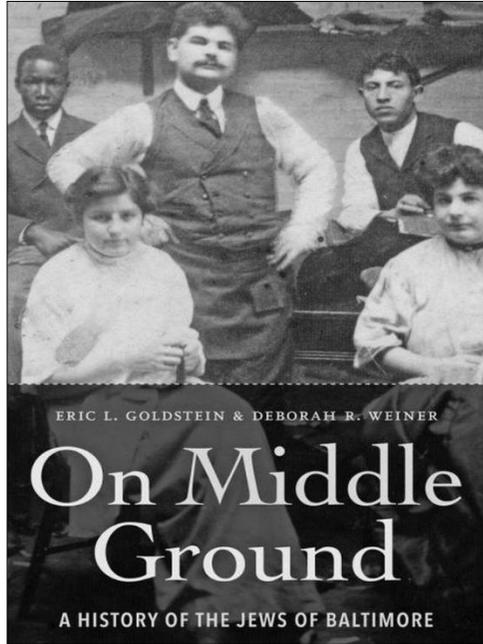
**On Middle Ground: A History of the Jews of Baltimore.** By Eric L. Goldstein and Deborah R. Weiner. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018. 400 pages.

In 1968 more than 90 percent of Baltimore Jews lived in the northwest corridor of the metropolitan area. Extensive postwar suburbanization produced this unprecedented degree of residential concentration. The extreme segregation of Baltimore Jews distinguished them from other Jewish communities in metropolitan areas with Jewish populations of roughly one hundred thousand. "Jews were not in the minority in their new locales and most did not join new synagogues since their old ones moved along with them," write Eric L. Goldstein and Deborah R. Weiner in their excellent new book (264).

In many ways, this transformation of Baltimore Jews from urban to suburban represented the culmination of processes of socioeconomic change that started at the turn of the twentieth century. Yet such extraordinary residential segregation hardly could have been anticipated based on the previous history of Baltimore's Jews. Rather, it was a product of the confluence of two forces: residential discrimination against the city's relatively large African American population and pervasive social antisemitism that flourished among the white population. As a result, Jewish social mobility translated into social segregation in the postwar decades. There did not seem to be any other choice for Jews if they did not want to live next door to African Americans and if white Christians did not want to live next door to Jews. Indeed, even Jewish builders ad-

hered to restrictive policies put in force after World War I and refused to open their housing to fellow Jews or African Americans.

A measure of irony accompanies this residential concentration. For much of Baltimore's history, Jews lived in diverse neighborhoods around the city. Their dispersion reflected the work they pursued, starting in commerce and trade, then turning to manufacturing. In the nineteenth century, Jews lived near their stores catering to the city's immigrant



and African American residents. With wealth, some Jews built impressive houses in the prestigious Eutaw Place neighborhood. New immigrants, by contrast, mostly lived in the run-down section of East Baltimore. At the same time, other sections of the city also housed Jews. However, by the postwar era, fewer and fewer Jews owned small businesses, and more and more Jews worked as professionals, in sales, or as executives. Prosperity did not erase economic distinctions among Jews, but economic gaps between them narrowed. Almost all could afford new homes in the northwest suburbs.

The history of Baltimore Jews, as Goldstein and Weiner so deftly show, often proves to be exceptional, challenging accepted narratives of American Jewish history. *On Middle Ground* persuasively demonstrates the value of a Jewish urban history that draws heavily on urban social, economic, and political studies of the past several decades. Most previous Jewish communal histories had employed a sociological community study model. By contrast, *On Middle Ground* raises questions about religious change, immigration, community development, socioeconomic patterns—including those of gender—and political activity within the urban context.

Several reinterpretations deserve recognition. First, Goldstein and Weiner argue for a new understanding of the Maryland Jew Bill of 1826. Rather than seeing it as a product of protest against discrimination toward Baltimore Jews, they contend that it actually reflected the acceptance and integration of several leading Jewish men in the city's political life. The struggle to rewrite the Maryland constitution occurred as part of a tussle among rural and urban political figures, Federalists and Democrats. Second, they urge historians to revisit the account of religious conflict that produced Baltimore's first Reform congregation. "In getting past the conventional view that the founding of Har Sinai represented a clear ideological rift between traditional Jews and a newly self-conscious liberal group," they write, "it is helpful to note that there was nothing approaching a 'traditional' consensus among Baltimore Jews before 1842" (78). In short, articulated religious differences emerged only gradually.

Third, they emphasize that the rise of social discrimination toward wealthy Jews accompanied their integration into city and state politics. Jews received positive public recognition for their contribution to civic affairs and won election to important political offices in Baltimore and Maryland. Nonetheless, they could not overcome white gentile social exclusivity. Finally, Goldstein and Weiner detail the economic history of Jewish involvement in Baltimore's growth as a city. In the early nineteenth century, Baltimore rivaled New York and Philadelphia as a burgeoning port. Jewish entrepreneurial activities, including efforts to construct the Baltimore and Ohio railroad as well as commercial trade with the South, helped Baltimore overcome the economic upheavals after the War of 1812.

Goldstein and Weiner pay attention to slavery and race relations and the effect of a large free black population on city politics prior to the Civil War. In fact, that population influenced the language of the Jew Bill, because white politicians did not want to empower African Americans. The authors chose the title *On Middle Ground* in order to situate Baltimore as part of both southern and northern history. As a slave state that did not join the Confederacy, Maryland faced south for trading partners and in its politics, but Baltimore also shared features with northern industrialized immigrant cities. Thus Baltimore Jews complicate southern Jewish history.

The authors avoid apologetics when they discuss racial conflict over civil rights in the twentieth century. For example, they mention the refusal of Jewish department store owners to treat blacks equally with whites. They also discuss Democratic Jewish politicians who supported black disenfranchisement at the turn of the twentieth century. However, immigrant Jews helped to defeat this proposed constitutional change. How much prejudice, discrimination, and racism did these Jewish immigrants and their children absorb as part of the American way of life? What did it mean to become American in Baltimore? On the one hand, Jews were legally considered "white"; on the other hand, antisemitism categorized them as undesirable.

Baltimore attracted a substantial number of Orthodox Jews. Goldstein and Weiner credit several innovative rabbis who established yeshivas in the interwar years. These institutions laid a foundation for the growth of an ultra-Orthodox community in the late twentieth century. Their leaders managed to rescue several hundred young Jews from the onslaught of Nazism by providing them opportunities to study in Baltimore. Subsequently, another generation of rabbis similarly helped Iranian Jewish youth.

Goldstein and Weiner begin their book with the story of Gus Brunn, a Jewish immigrant from Germany. Brunn achieved local renown when he invented and marketed Old Bay, a spice that became popular among Marylanders who used it to flavor steamed crabs. Brunn's story is a distinctively Baltimore one, especially since steamed crabs are a favorite dish. At the same time, his tale can be seen as a classic Jewish immigrant saga. Brunn came to Baltimore as part of a chain migration; he experienced antisemitism when he tried to obtain employment; he received help from fellow Jews; and finally, he established a successful family business. Goldstein and Weiner use Brunn's narrative to emphasize their approach: they consider the history of Baltimore Jews relevant equally to Baltimore and American Jews. Throughout the book, they juggle these two intersecting trajectories. The result proves stimulating and rewarding.

The book is lavishly illustrated with portraits, both formal and informal, as well as pictures of architecture, secular and religious. Missing, however, is a map or two that would help those unfamiliar with Baltimore navigate the many place names and streets that are referenced.

Two of the more amazing aspects of this book are its index and footnotes. The latter are detailed and dense, revealing a wide range of secondary sources along with an enormous collection of primary documents. The former is dotted with many, many names, a tribute to Goldstein and Weiner's skill in personalizing their history. Countless individual accounts illustrate the authors' larger arguments and help to transform the history of Baltimore Jews into a readable narrative.

Goldstein and Weiner set out to provide a fresh perspective on Baltimore as a multiethnic city. They contend that it is impossible to grasp the city's growth without considering Jewish entrepreneurs and their trading networks. Their new Jewish urban history should inspire others to revisit this important genre for understanding American Jewish history.

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**Play It Again, Sam: The Notable Life of Sam Massell, Atlanta's First Minority Mayor.** By Charles McNair. Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 2017. 218 pages.

Sam Massell, Jr., played an important and transitional role in Atlanta's history as the city's first Jewish and last white mayor. Elected in 1969 for a four-year term, Massell was involved with major issues such as civil rights, transit expansion, city development, and diversity in city government. His life mirrored that of Atlanta in terms of business growth, political turmoil, and Sunbelt leadership. Charles McNair provides a full biography, beginning with Massell's early years, his family, schooling, entrepreneurship, and ambition. An affluent family deeply involved in the city's real estate business, the Massells were known throughout Atlanta, and Sam was well poised to eventually move into real estate.

The Massell family was also notable within the city's Jewish community, and Sam's presence was felt within this tight-knit group. His membership in the Standard Club, the most prominent Jewish social club in the city, and The Temple, the Reform synagogue of old Atlanta's Jewish families, illustrated the Massells' lofty position. Such ties to fellow

Jews and Judaism were important, but McNair does not emphasize this aspect of Sam's background, although it comes up at various points in the story: in college, early businesses, and politics.

Massell's business and his ambition, innovative ideas, and interpersonal skills are the book's central focus. He was destined for business success, ready-made for a growing city that idealized entrepreneurs. Starting in real estate, particularly in medical office buildings, Massell began to make his fortune and find his expertise. "If politics had not come along," the mayor once commented, "I would probably still be in real estate" (72).

McNair describes Massell as a natural politician who was easily likable. He exhibited a proclivity toward civic service, making important contacts and showing good leadership qualities, and he had—he admitted—a big ego. He also made friends in the black community when it was demanding political representation. Massell's involvement came with the end of the white Democratic Executive Committee, the reconstitution of that committee, and Massell's place on it. This position allowed him to help bring blacks into elected city jobs. His post also set the stage for later election as vice-mayor (officially called the president of the Atlanta Board of Aldermen) and mayor with strong black support. He took office after the mayoralty of Ivan Allen, Jr., who favored civil rights during the 1960s.

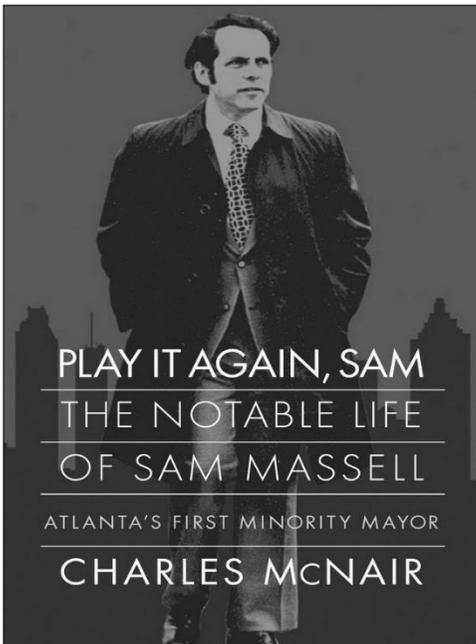
Massell's role in city politics and his service as mayor from 1970 to 1974 constitute the most important parts of *Play It Again, Sam*. The book provides a good summary of those years, during which he continued and expanded Allen's progressive racial politics. Relations between the two were not especially friendly; Massell did not represent the city's entrenched business elite. But their racial policies flowed smoothly from one to the other. Massell was responsible for strengthening the Community Relations Commission and for hiring more blacks in the city government—including the head of the city personnel board, the director of the Department of Public Works, the intergovernmental program coordinator, and the contract compliance officer. Such efforts in desegregating important jobs in city government earned him continued strong support from the black community.

By the time blacks became a majority of Atlanta's population, Massell faced opposition from those who thought that the moment had

arrived for a black mayor. The 1973 campaign between Massell and Maynard Jackson brought racial issues to the fore and put the mayor in a defensive stance. How to win reelection in a city with a black majority against a black candidate became Massell's dilemma. McNair hardly misses a beat in defending the mayor's actions. Massell's plans to expand the city's boundaries, ostensibly to grow the tax base, would also bring in more white voters. Under Massell's concept, Atlanta, with its newly annexed areas, would become 53 percent white. The author calls this proposal a misstep but only because it failed unexpectedly, as McNair relates, due to the segregationist governor Lester Maddox's opposition. With more research, the author would have understood the complex factors in the governor's decision, largely based on his being at odds with the plan's legislative supporters on other issues. However, the plan was mainly a failure due to the introduction of a clear racial factor into the campaign. A further indication of this tactic was a Massell ad that claimed that "Atlanta was too Young to Die" (162). Massell continued to assert that the ad was not meant to be racially inflected, but in the midst of a campaign pitting white and black candidates against one another and in the shadow of Atlanta's racist past, the ad was seen as making a

racial appeal to whites: elect a black mayor and the city will die. Other issues, particularly Massell's 1971 aldermanic committee changes, which engendered conflict with black leaders, resulted in some loss of black support. McNair fails to mention these issues. Massell went on to lose this election.

*Play It Again, Sam* covers Massell's later business career in his travel agency years and in his leadership in the city's important Buckhead section, which McNair finds praiseworthy. Massell has



displayed many fine qualities, and McNair focuses sharply on every one. But such an emphasis is the book's problem and ultimate failure. The author is too uncritical. Massell is continually described in glowing terms. Some mistakes are noted but are always explained away. The book's theme is stated in the subtitle. Biographers need to be less partisan. McNair has written a hagiographic study which fails to provide a more nuanced presentation. This starts from the first page, where McNair writes: "Does anyone love Atlanta more than Sam Massell? Does any human being draw breath today who has worked harder, longer, and more productively at the betterment of the major city of the South than its 89-year-old former mayor?" (1).

And the same holds true for Atlanta. McNair is overly complimentary toward the city, partly because he fails to provide full details in depicting some events in the history of Atlanta. For example, the author very briefly writes about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Nobel Peace Prize award reception in Atlanta. McNair states that the dinner sold out, and that "whites and blacks stood together at the end of the night and sang 'We Shall Overcome'" (108). Left out of the story is the hostility from the white business elite, which opposed holding a dinner at all, until Paul Austin, president of Coca-Cola, with the backing of former president Robert Woodruff, whispered loudly into Mayor Ivan Allen's ear at a planning meeting that King had to be honored to protect Atlanta's reputation as a progressive city and not embarrass Coke. Austin also subtly warned that while Atlanta needed Coca-Cola, the soft drink empire did not need Atlanta. Only after that threat did the tickets sell out. McNair tends to fudge or obscure other episodes that cast doubt on Atlanta's progressive record as well.

The author's bibliography indicates that he depended largely on interviews, but he provides neither footnotes nor endnotes to enable readers to understand who said what, an omission that results in a book of limited value to future researchers. One of them should undertake to write a more impartial and a more comprehensive biography of this seminal figure in the history of Atlanta.

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**Just and Righteous Causes: Rabbi Ira Sanders and the Fight for Racial and Social Justice in Arkansas, 1926–1963.** By James L. Moses. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2018. 232 pages.

James L. Moses offers an important biography of Rabbi Ira Sanders, longtime religious leader of the Little Rock, Arkansas, Jewish community. His volume proves important for scholarship about Jews in the South, regionalism as an important lens for interpreting U.S. and American Jewish history, and the causal significance of identity markers such as religion, race, and class in our understanding of ethnic history. By integrating the particular story of his subject with the larger historical narratives that surrounded Little Rock's rabbi, Moses succeeds in dramatizing the complexities and nuance inherent in a study of movements for social justice in the mid-twentieth-century South. Although sometimes leaning towards hagiography, *Just and Righteous Causes* offers a critical lens to view the nearly impossible life choices of a southern rabbi seeking to take public stands against Jim Crow.

As Moses argues, the career of Rabbi Sanders helps fill a "curious absence in the extant literature on southern Jewry, southern rabbis, and their involvement (or lack thereof) in the fight for racial equality in America and in the modern civil rights movement" (6). Navigating a Jewish ethic demanding activism against the realities of racism, the story of Little Rock's rabbi animates the "precarious position" of a Jewish religious leader intent on engaging the quest for racial equality at a time and place where acts of violence proved all too common. Framed within the larger historiography of southern Jews and civil rights, Moses stresses "the particularity of Little Rock in comparison to the oft-studied communities of Birmingham, Montgomery, Nashville, and Jackson" (6).

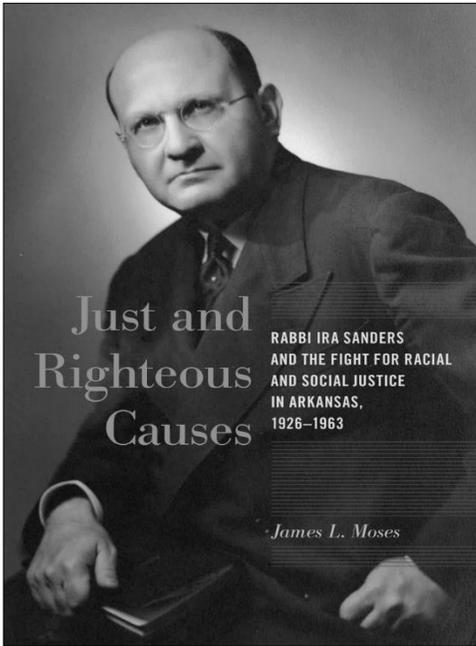
Moses opens his eight-chapter book by detailing Sanders's life before he took the pulpit in Little Rock. Born in 1894, Sanders grew up in Kansas City prior to enrolling at age seventeen at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. During his first appointment in Allentown, Pennsylvania, Sanders earned an advanced degree in sociology at Columbia University. Developing a theme that would resonate in chapters to come, Moses describes how Sanders, like so many of his Reform colleagues in this era, opposed Zionism and the creation of a Jewish state. During a failed, short-lived stint as a congregational rabbi in New York City, Sanders met

and partnered with Lillian Wald. This experience with the famed social worker informed much of his later work in Little Rock.

Chapter 2 describes his first years at Little Rock's Temple B'nai Israel, 1926 through 1934. Navigating the racial and religious dynamics of his newfound home, Sanders spent his first years learning local culture while simultaneously navigating ways to challenge it. When his unintentional decision to take a seat in the back of a streetcar led to an altercation with the conductor, the rabbi fashioned his first anti-Jim Crow sermon. After local police did nothing to investigate the lynching and public dismemberment of an African American, John Carter, Sanders joined the NAACP and agreed to sit on the advisory committee of the Arkansas council of the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching. In 1927, Sanders leveraged his training in sociology by creating the Little Rock School of Social Work, a platform he would later deploy to address larger social concerns in the city.

The Great Depression, covered in chapter 3, wreaked havoc on Little Rock. Not only did residents suffer unemployment and wage loss, they faced a severe drought and the rebuilding necessary after the Mississippi River flooded its banks in 1927. In a state that counted some eighty percent of its rural population in poverty, Sanders sought to serve both the religious needs of his congregants and the larger demands at the city and state levels. In Little Rock especially, he understood how systems of white supremacy denied most of the few resources available to African American citizens. This awareness led Sanders to cofound a local branch of the Urban League. In one of his career highlights, the rabbi engaged in a public debate on morality with famed attorney Clarence Darrow.

Moses complicates his narrative of Sanders in chapter 4, which describes the rise and popularity of the birth control and eugenics movements between 1931 and 1958. Sanders founded the predecessor organization to Planned Parenthood, as well as the Arkansas Eugenics Association, both fighting for the rights of the state's poor to gain access to birth control. While most of his early work focused on providing access to contraception across the city's population, Sanders later led efforts to provide voluntary sterilization to patients considered mentally ill, even as the very question of consent proved impossible for such individuals.



In chapter 5, we learn of Sanders's wartime work and especially his attitudes towards the Shoah, Zionism, and the Cold War. Faced with the challenges of Hitler's rise in Europe alongside worsening race relations at home, Sanders struggled to effect change. He continued his Urban League work to address racial inequality while also moderating his anti-Zionist position in order to rally in behalf of Jewish victims of Nazism. In the early postwar years, he joined others who embraced Cold

War liberal anti-Communism while accelerating the domestic movement for civil rights.

The most developed historiography centers on southern rabbis and their involvement in the postwar civil rights movement, the subject of chapter 6. Moses paints a sympathetic portrait of Sanders, arguing the rabbi's preference for "moral suasion rather than direct action protests" (115). Navigating a careful path between a desire to end segregation and the rabbinic obligation to protect the business, social, and physical safety of his congregants, Sanders stepped ahead of southern colleagues who often refused to take any sort of public position on civil rights. Surveying historical scholarship on other southern rabbis, Moses lauds his subject for staking out a stronger public stance.

Best known to most students of the civil rights era, the Central High School crisis pushed Little Rock into the national spotlight when Governor Orval Faubus opposed the desegregation of the city's white public high school. Engaging what Moses described as "dramatic leadership," Sanders stood out as the only Jew to make public his opposition to the governor's resistance to the law of the land (127). Henceforth Sanders enjoyed strong support from African American cler-

gy in Little Rock's Ministry of Reconciliation. Moses closes his book with reflections on Sanders in the years after his retirement until his death in 1985.

*Just and Righteous Causes* succeeds in presenting an activist whose story needs to be added to the historiography of the region's Jewry. While much scholarly attention has focused on the deep South, where so many high-profile confrontations occurred, Sanders's career in Little Rock offers important nuance. With such a long tenure at Temple B'nai Israel, a career that spanned some of the most important issues and debates of the century, and a Classical Reform rabbinate that emphasized the reconciliation of one's religious background with the complexities of the modern world, Sanders makes an excellent subject illustrative of numerous significant trends.

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**A Story of Jewish Experience in Mississippi.** By Leon Waldoff. Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2018. 218 pages.

**A** *Story of Jewish Experience in Mississippi* begins with the author's effort to trace his family's migrations from eastern Europe, through New York and Baltimore, to Hattiesburg, Mississippi. As Leon Waldoff wrote that story and considered how it had been transmitted in family memories, he felt compelled to situate his parents' experiences in relation to Jewish histories, from transnational migrations to local and regional encounters with white supremacy. As a result, the book addresses several topics and themes: it is an immigration story based largely on his parents' early correspondence; a family history and memoir based on personal experiences and conversations with relatives; an exploration of narrative and memory; and an attempt to reckon with Jewish responses to racism and the civil rights movement in and around Hattiesburg. Trained as a literary scholar rather than a historian, Waldoff achieves greater success in some of his tasks than others, but *A Story of Jewish Experience in Mississippi* ultimately serves as a useful contribution to the field of southern Jewish history.

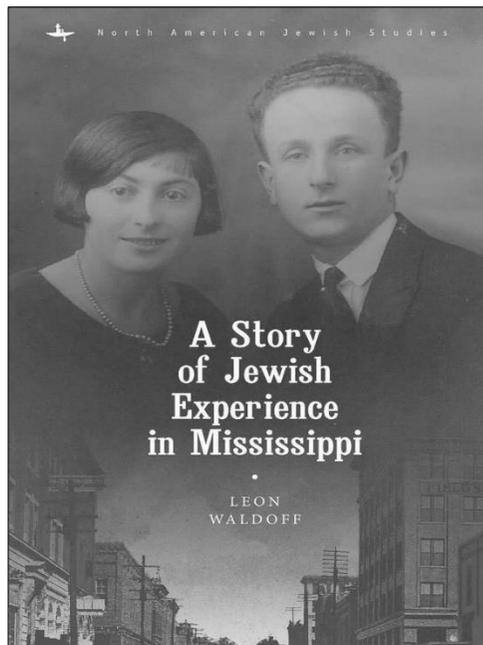
The book begins with Waldoff's parents' courtship. His father and mother, Paul Waldoff and Eva Stolin, both grew up in the small, majority-Jewish city of Belaya Tserkov, not far from Kiev. But they met in Bucharest in 1921 after both left the Soviet Union to make their way to the United States. The book chronicles their separate migrations—Paul to New York City and Eva, afterward, to Baltimore—through letters that the pair exchanged during subsequent periods of separation. Paul and Eva's correspondence reflects the precarious state of Jewish migrants in the early 1920s, as Eva's circuitous route to the United States took her from Romania to Germany and then to Turkey before she crossed the Atlantic. The letters also reveal the chance connections and personal motivations that led newcomers like the Waldoffs to settle in a relatively remote town like Hattiesburg. Eva's uncle, Abe Stein, had immigrated through Galveston prior to World War I, lived for a time in Hattiesburg, and returned there after living in Baltimore for a few years. Eva was drawn to the small southern city by family connections, while Paul desired space from his parents and a new start. The couple's detailed story, as outlined by their son, adds another rich account to our collective knowledge of Jewish immigration to the South. Additionally, Waldoff's attention to their ongoing communications with overseas relatives in subsequent years underscores the fact that southern Jews maintained strong connections to transnational Jewish networks well after settling in such seemingly unlikely locales as Hattiesburg.

Chapters two through five draw from family stories and the author's personal experiences, supplemented by archival research. Waldoff writes about his father's business, family and Jewish communal life in the 1930s and 1940s, and the effects of national and international events on local Jews. His research shows, for instance, that the world-renowned cantor Yossele (Josef) Rosenblatt performed in Hattiesburg in 1933. Although there is no evidence that Paul and Eva Waldoff attended the concert, it seems unlikely that they would miss such an event, especially because Rosenblatt was born in the same Ukrainian city from which they came. Personal memories and reflections include details about his parents' differing uses of and relationships to Yiddish, which Eva tended to use more often in the course of her domestic work. In a later chapter on Rabbi Charles Mantinband, the author's memories of visiting with Man-

tinband as a curious teenager frame the rabbi's well-known civil rights activities and give a stronger sense of the spiritual leader's humanity.

In addition to providing new first-person material, Waldoff attends to questions of narrative and memory, not only reporting family stories, but noting omissions, inaccuracies, and discrepancies in and between various accounts. This tendency reflects the author's background in literary studies, and it enriches the text, especially in the chapter on Paul Wexler, a young Jew convicted as an accessory to murder in 1932. He died in prison before the state could carry out the death sentence. Waldoff not only provides details of the crime and its aftermath based on newspaper and court records but also notes its significance for the psychological life of local Jews. He recalls, for instance, how his father had misremembered aspects of the story—placing Wexler's young, Jewish girlfriend at the scene and omitting the actions of Wexler's African American accomplice—and how a cousin recalled seeing Wexler brandish a knife years before the murder. Waldoff argues convincingly that the murder and Wexler's trial caused heightened anxiety for Hattiesburg Jews even as the events were largely suppressed from collective memory in later decades. Both Waldoff's version of this history and his interpretation suggest new material and directions for southern Jewish history, which might benefit from a closer look at exceptions to Jewish upward mobility and from greater attention to issues of memory and commemoration.

The final two chapters center on Mantinband and Adolphe Ira Botnick, known as "B," significant figures among progressive Deep South Jews whose activism drew mixed responses from the local Jewish community as well as condemnation, intimidation, and outright



threats from ardent segregationists. Mantinband served as spiritual leader of Hattiesburg's Temple B'nai Israel from 1951 to 1963, and Waldoff knew him personally as a high school student. Botnick, on the other hand, was married to Waldoff's sister, Fay, and served as the regional director of the Anti-Defamation League for Louisiana, Mississippi, and Arkansas from 1964 to 1992. Waldoff bases his Mantinband chapter largely on the Rabbi Charles Mantinband papers, now held by the Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience, so some of the material there will be new to historians of southern Jews and civil rights. The Botnick chapter offers Waldoff's personal reflections on his relationship with "B," which are interesting to read. Overall, this discussion of southern Jews and black civil rights does not significantly rethink prior scholarship, but it does add some new information. As Waldoff notes, the story of his family's history in Hattiesburg would not be complete without sustained attention to the broader relationship between local Jews and the ever-present issue of race.

As a whole, *A Story of Jewish Experience in Mississippi* succeeds as a blended family history and memoir. Waldoff competently retells a specific, multigenerational story that speaks at once to the local conditions of Jewish life in Hattiesburg and to regional, national, and transnational developments in Jewish life and culture. Passages are rich and detailed, and his emphasis on memory and narrative suggests the possibilities of a more interdisciplinary approach to the Jewish South. (The text also offers a few tantalizing leads that scholars in the field may wish to pursue.) At times, however, readers deeply familiar with this and related fields may notice Waldoff's lack of formal training in either history or Jewish studies. For example: the book often shifts focus from its specific and local narrative to broader trends and events, and, while the added context will likely prove useful for lay readers, the exposition of such topics as the Galveston Plan or Jewish responses to the civil rights movement is sometimes awkward. Still, Waldoff's task is to piece together a coherent story with the information at hand. He deserves credit for incorporating a wide range of material—personal, familial, and scholarly—and for sharing aspects of that process with the reader.

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