

# SOUTHERN JEWISH HISTORY

Journal of the Southern Jewish Historical Society

Mark K. Bauman, *Editor*

Rachel B. Heimovics, *Managing Editor*

2002

Volume 5

With the Index to Volumes 1 through 5



# Southern Jewish History

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*Southern Jewish History (SJH)* is a publication of the Southern Jewish Historical Society. Subscriptions are a benefit of membership. Send memberships (\$15 [student] \$35, \$50, or \$100 a year, \$1000 for life) to PO Box 5024, Atlanta, GA 30302. More information at: <http://www.jewishsouth.org/>

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*Southern Jewish History* acknowledges with deep appreciation  
a grant from the Lucius N. Littauer Foundation  
and a grant for indexing the journal from the  
Gale Foundation of Beaumont, Texas.

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ISSN 1521-4206

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# James K. Gutheim as Southern Reform Rabbi, Community Leader, and Symbol

by

Scott M. Langston

In 1850 congregation Gates of Mercy, an Ashkenazic synagogue located in New Orleans, employed James K. Gutheim as its rabbi. Having never lived in the South, Gutheim possessed little firsthand knowledge about the region's customs and people. Nor was he well known to southerners. A relative newcomer to the United States, coming to its shores from the Prussian province of Westphalia in 1843, Gutheim spent a brief period in New York before moving to Cincinnati in the mid 1840s. There he served congregation Bene Yeshurun as lecturer.<sup>1</sup>

When he moved to the crescent city at the age of 33, he began a career that consumed the remainder of his life, except during his forced removal from New Orleans from 1862 to 1865 due to the federal occupation of the city and from 1868 to 1872 when he served New York City's Temple Emanu-El. By the time he died in 1886, Gutheim no longer was an anonymous figure in the South. During his life he became a leading advocate of Reform Judaism and a community leader, while also seeking to enhance understanding and relationships between Jews and Christians. These activities served as the foundation by which he was transformed into a symbol of an ideal person who successfully lived as a Jew in an American society imbued with Christianity.

*Advocate of Reform*

Well-known within the Jewish community, James K. Gutheim arguably had become the most important person in

southern Reform Judaism by the time of his death. His journey toward this distinction did not, however, take a direct path. During his childhood and education he was exposed to both traditional and non-traditional practices. His father worked as a Hebraist and Talmudic scholar and his grandfather served as a rabbinical authority in Westphalia's Warburg district. At the age of five, he entered a *Talmud Torah*, and by the time he was fourteen, he was sufficiently proficient in Hebrew to teach at Oberlistingen. He also studied classics with a Protestant minister. Two years later he moved to Munster, the capital of Westphalia where he studied under Abraham Sutro, the district's chief rabbi. Whether he studied individually with Sutro or simply attended a school under the rabbi's supervision is unclear. Sutro ardently opposed Reform and published a harsh critique, *Sefer Milhamot Adonai* (*Book of the Wars of the Lord*), while Gutheim was present in Munster. Although a strict adherent of traditional Judaism, Sutro did attempt some religious innovations by becoming one of the first rabbis to deliver sermons in German. Thus Gutheim received a traditional education that acknowledged at least some necessity for reform.<sup>2</sup>

When Gutheim came to the United States in 1843, his connection with Westphalian Judaism was not completely broken. While working as a bookkeeper in his brother's New York City business, he served as a correspondent for Isaac Leeser's *Occident and American Jewish Advocate*, a monthly journal designed to educate and inspire devotion to Judaism and Jewish life. Launched in April 1843, it eventually became "the most important record of American Jewish life in the middle decades of the nineteenth century." Leeser, a proponent of Jewish orthodoxy and Gutheim's elder by eleven years, had grown up in Westphalia and also had studied under Rabbi Sutro. Gutheim thus remained connected to his orthodox background through his relationship with Leeser.<sup>3</sup>

In spite of these strong traditional influences, the seeds for his gradual development into a champion of moderate Reform also came with him from Westphalia. Westphalian Judaism attempted religious reforms during the years just prior to Gutheim's birth when its consistory, a Jewish community governing body,

*1873 portrait of James Koppel Gutheim.  
(From the Collections of the Louisiana State Museum,  
New Orleans, Louisiana.)*

called for sermons in the vernacular, order during worship services, changes to the liturgy, and the holding of confirmation ceremonies. While these innovations were not widely practiced at that time, the consistory at least established an environment receptive to some change. As Westphalian Jewry continued to struggle with these issues, Gutheim completed his education and began his career, serving as a preacher and teacher in Sedenhorst from 1838 to 1842. Thus his exposure to religious reforms came directly through Rabbi Sutro's willingness to entertain minor changes and indirectly from his larger environment.<sup>4</sup>

Gutheim seems also to have been influenced by the controversy regarding the status of Jews as Prussians. Although Prussian Jews possessed a high degree of civic equality, the government viewed Judaism as "nothing more than a tolerated private religious association." In an article published in *Leeser's Occident* in 1844, Gutheim reflected on a letter that he received from a friend shortly after he left his homeland. At the time of Gutheim's departure, the Prussian government was debating a law that would have placed more restrictions on Jews. Gutheim's friend informed him that proponents of the law invoked Jewish "antiquity and nationality" as justification for the restrictions. In other words, because Jews were an ancient nation, they were not true Prussians. Gutheim encouraged his friend to embrace Jewish antiquity and nationality in the same way that other groups residing in Prussia did their own heritage. Jewish antiquity did not mean that Jews and Judaism were antiquated. He noted that some Jews were happy when their Jewish features went unnoticed in public assemblies, and admitted that he too had once felt the same way. His views, however, had changed. He did not comment on what had brought about the change. Perhaps the prejudice against Jews in Prussia motivated Gutheim to find a way to modernize Judaism and to distinguish between an ancient heritage and an antiquated one. The struggle then became how to keep the ancient heritage living and relevant. As he traveled to America, the possibilities and dangers inherent in this enterprise multiplied, but he came determined to solve the problem.<sup>5</sup>

Gutheim quickly began working out a practical and relevant expression of Judaism. He encouraged his various congregations to undertake certain reforms. In March 1851, shortly after becoming rabbi at Gates of Mercy in New Orleans, the congregation completed renovations that included the installation of a new pipe organ. Gutheim's influence in this bold decision is unclear. What is certain is that he had no problem accepting it. Although he left Gates of Mercy in 1853 to become rabbi at Dispersed of Judah, New Orleans' Sephardic congregation, he returned in 1866. Replacing a strong proponent of tradition, Dr. Bernard Illowy, Gutheim counseled his congregation that purchasing an organ or melodeon did not violate Ashkenazic custom. He asserted that a custom "suitable and full of meaning to one age may become absurd and obsolete in another . . . The efficiency of customs for any specified purpose depends entirely upon time and place." Two years later, he recommended several sweeping changes including the adoption of the triennial reading of the Torah, reading of the Haftorah in English, adoption of the *Minhag America* prayer book, and the abolition of secondary holidays. Concerning the latter, Gutheim remarked, "You know that I am an advocate of judicious progress, a friend of wholesome reform. It is my ardent wish that my congregation take equal rank with the prominent enlightened congregations that flourish in the country. The time for action has come. The public mind is prepared." By this time, Gutheim was aggressively pursuing Reform principles to make Judaism relevant. Although he faced some opposition, most congregants approved of his direction and supported him. They expressed their dismay upon learning of Gutheim's desire to resign in order to move to New York City's Temple Emanu-El, one of the leading Reform congregations in the nation. Seeking to keep him in New Orleans, the board of Gates of Mercy requested that Temple Emanu-El release Gutheim from his commitment. The board gave credit to Gutheim for the majority, if not all, of their progress toward Reform, asserting that "we require and absolutely depend upon his local influence to *perfect our reform*." Temple Emanu-El, however, refused to relinquish its claim, and he left to become that congregation's English preacher and to serve alongside the senior

rabbi, radical reformer, Samuel Adler. Gutheim cited the possibility of a larger field of influence as reason for his departure, although the congregation's reluctance to accept a few of his proposals may also have contributed to his decision. His actions at Gates of Mercy had, however, gained the attention of a prominent congregation and his move to New York also indicated his rising prominence as a Reform rabbi.<sup>6</sup>

His New York sojourn did not last long. Gutheim returned to New Orleans four years later after individuals primarily from Gates of Mercy formed New Orleans' first Reform congregation, Temple Sinai. From this setting, he would become arguably the most influential Reform rabbi in the South. Why he left the New York congregation is unclear, but the opportunity to be the senior rabbi of an avowedly Reform congregation proved attractive. While at Temple Emanu-El, he had not lost touch with the Jewish community in New Orleans. In fact, the founders of Temple Sinai invited him to preach the sermon at the laying of the synagogue's cornerstone in November 1871. In this message, Gutheim praised the principles of Reform in general, but found particular satisfaction in the establishment of the new congregation. He reflected, "It affords me a holy satisfaction, to witness the substantial evidences on your part, that the seeds, which your former teacher and guide (i.e., Gutheim) has sown in singleness of purpose and purity of motive, have not fallen on barren soil." He used this new pulpit as a platform to advocate Reform principles within his congregation and throughout the South.<sup>7</sup>

During the last year of his life, his influence on behalf of Reform reached its pinnacle. In 1885, largely through Gutheim's efforts, the Conference of Rabbis of Southern Congregations was formed. Calls for a national association of rabbis had been made for some time without success. Several months prior to the organization of the southern rabbis, a group of rabbis had met in New York City and formed a regional association often referred to as the Eastern Conference of Rabbis. This group held its second meeting at the same time the southern group organized. The significance, if any, of the simultaneous meetings is unclear. Since Gutheim was the one southerner known by most of the eastern

conference rabbis, perhaps the two groups hoped to cooperate in order to achieve national goals. At the inaugural meeting in New Orleans, fifteen rabbis from Louisiana, Tennessee, Texas, Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, and Arkansas brought the new southern organization into existence; four other rabbis (including one from South Carolina) could not attend, but asked to be enrolled as members. The group immediately elected Gutheim its president. During the conference, the members identified four objectives for the new organization: the exchange of ideas related to responsibilities of the rabbinic office, promotion of literature relating to Judaism and its history, promotion of fraternal feelings among the members, and the organization and administration of congregational religious schools "in accordance with approved methods." Although these goals did not explicitly reflect Reform ideas, the conference took a decided turn in this direction at its second meeting.<sup>8</sup>

That meeting was held in New Orleans in December 1885. In the president's report, Gutheim made several suggestions that were acted on by the collective body. A committee was formed to study whether and how uniformity in textbooks and prayer books could be achieved in synagogues and schools. The conference pledged its support to the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and Hebrew Union College. The rabbis also unanimously declared the principles enumerated in the Pittsburgh Platform to be "in harmony with the spirit of progressive Judaism and must be regarded as the inferences made by Jewish teachers from the oldest conceptions of our faith." In addition, they affirmed that Sabbath observance and circumcision were "as binding today upon Israel as they ever were." Additional committees were formed to study marriage, confirmation, and burial rituals, as well as school courses, and to gather all available material dealing with the history of Jews in the southern states. Reports were to be given at the next year's meeting, expected to be in Atlanta, Georgia. (However, it did not convene until November 1887, nearly two years later, and it took place in Montgomery, Alabama.)<sup>9</sup>

The conference voted to publish Gutheim's presidential address, "Cause, Development and Scope of Reform." In it he laid

the foundation for, aim of, and challenges confronting Reform. According to him, "[Reform's] great object is to vitalize Judaism, to gain for it the exalted position which it deserves, to vindicate its world-redeeming truths and principles, and constitute it a living agent of progressive culture." In order to accomplish this, the "whole religious structure" must function in harmony. This structure consisted of "temple and house, inward and outward life." By this he meant that "religion and actual life" must be reconciled.<sup>10</sup>

As its leading spokesperson and through his theological, oratorical, and organizational abilities, Gutheim had brought organization and the beginnings of cohesion to the Reform movement in the South. When he died in June 1886, the executive committee of the conference acknowledged his influence as the "impelling and controlling spirit of all its aims and activities" and credited "the advancement of the Jewish cause in the South" primarily to his efforts. When the conference convened again in November 1887, the new president, Rabbi Max Samfield, likened his succession of Gutheim to Joshua's replacement of Moses. Gutheim's successor at Temple Sinai, Max Heller, did not overestimate Gutheim's influence when in 1922 he called him "easily the dean of Southern rabbis."<sup>11</sup>

#### *Community Leader*

Gutheim's significance was not confined to his Reform efforts. While in New Orleans, he was involved in a multitude of issues and organizations. He served as the secretary, treasurer, and first vice-president of the Association for the Relief of Jewish Widows and Orphans, and he held the position of first vice-president of Touro Infirmary from 1854 until his death. He was a member of the board and president of the Hebrew Benevolent Association and participated in the New Orleans Conference of Charities, the Auxiliary Sanitary Association, and the Louisiana Educational Society. He was also vice-president of the Rabbinical Literary Association, an organization founded by Max Lilienthal and designed to give rabbis a forum for discussion and exchange of ideas.

*Temple Sinai, New Orleans, Louisiana.*

*“This graceful and most imposing structure is situated on Carondelet between Delord and Calliope streets, and is, without doubt, the most beautiful edifice of the kind in the United States...”*

*{New Orleans Illustrated Visitor’s Guide, 1880,  
Courtesy of Touro Infirmary Archives, New Orleans, Louisiana.}*

While his involvement in a number of organizations brought him into contact with a wide variety of people, his actions during the Civil War won him widespread acclaim. When federal troops occupied New Orleans in 1862, Gutheim refused to sign an oath of allegiance and was forced to leave the city. He spent the remainder of the war in Alabama and Georgia. Prior to his departure, Clara Solomon, a sixteen-year old Jewish girl living in New Orleans, noted in her diary entry for May 4, 1862, just days after the

Union capture of New Orleans, that he had “prayed earnestly for the S. Confederacy.” Perhaps that prayer was similar to one he gave on May 16 in Montgomery, Alabama, at the dedication of a Montgomery synagogue. There he entreated God to bestow his “abundant favor and benevolence (on) our beloved country, the Confederate States of America” and to “judge between us and our enemies, who have forced upon us this unholy and unnatural war.” He hoped that the Union would soon realize its error in waging war and therefore, “relinquish their cruel designs of subjugation, their lust of gain and dominion.” The South had engaged in a just and sacred cause, “the defense of our liberties and rights and independence, under just and equitable laws.” In defense of these actions, he hoped that the “unrighteous invaders” would be repulsed. Although Gutheim did not own slaves, he defended his adopted region and considered the actions of the North to be an unjust attack on the South.<sup>12</sup>

His ardent support of the South continued during Reconstruction. In 1866 he convened a meeting of many of New Orleans’ prominent Jews that resulted in the founding of the Hebrew Educational Society. This organization subsequently created a school for the teaching of religious and sacred subjects. The school functioned until 1881 and was attended primarily by Jewish children, but also by some gentiles. The society, however, may actually have been a reaction to efforts to desegregate the public schools in Louisiana. A few clues hint at this motive. When the cornerstone of the school was laid in 1868, Gutheim, as the founding father of the society, spoke at the public ceremony. Many items with symbolic significance were placed in the cornerstone. Among other things, it contained a collection of ancient and modern coins, including a United States coin from 1787, the year of the writing of the United States Constitution, with the mottos “Mind Your Own Business,” inscribed on one side, and “We Are One,” on the reverse, and a copy of the last edition of the *Daily Citizen*, a newspaper published at Vicksburg, Mississippi, before its surrender to Union forces. These items suggest resistance to federally imposed measures such as the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution and the Civil Rights Act of 1866 that

forbade discrimination on the basis of race. The Louisiana legislature had refused to ratify the Fourteenth Amendment. Since 1864 integration of Louisiana's public schools had been hotly debated especially in regard to the development of a new state constitution. The 1868 state constitution ultimately required desegregation. According to Joe Gray Taylor, "Education was probably the most strongly opposed section of the new constitution." The Hebrew Educational Society, therefore, represented both an effort to provide an education of Jewish children and likely a means to resist Reconstruction. Gutheim led in this resistance.<sup>13</sup>

Several years later, he and seven other political and religious leaders signed a public letter condemning the report of General Philip Sheridan regarding an attempted forcible takeover of the State House by Democratic politicians on January 4, 1875. While Sheridan concluded that "a spirit of defiance to all lawful authority" existed in the state, the letter also denounced "corrupt politicians" who endeavored to perpetuate their power over Louisiana. Two years later when Reconstruction ended in the state, Gutheim was placed on the New Orleans public school board, the first board in post-Reconstruction Louisiana. He served on the board until 1882, holding the position of vice-president, often leading meetings in the president's absence, and chairing influential committees. During his tenure, he voted with the majority to segregate the public schools, but also seconded a motion to lower the passing score required for African Americans on teacher exams to 60, ten points lower than that required for whites. On more than one occasion, he challenged policies and choices of textbooks that had decidedly Protestant or Christian biases. His actions opposing Reconstruction undoubtedly were well received in Louisiana and the South by most whites. Yet, he also challenged Christian ideas and still maintained widespread support. As an indicator of the esteem with which Gutheim was held by the general population, he was asked to address the Southern Historical Society during its annual meeting in New Orleans. He bluntly admitted that the Civil War had been lost by the Confederacy, but reflecting the more congenial atmosphere of the 1880s, he also

noted that “a better mutual understanding” was spreading between North and South. He encouraged and praised the efforts of the society to gather and preserve documents from the war that would enable an unbiased history to be written. Characterizing the obliteration of the Mason-Dixon line as “a great result” of the war, he hoped that “henceforward the only contention between the States be which shall excel the other in loyalty to the Constitution, attachment to the Union, and the zeal for establishing the fundamental rights of liberty.” While reflecting a more conciliatory tone, his address received loud applause probably due to his advocacy of the society’s aims.<sup>14</sup>

Rabbi Gutheim also led in the fostering of interfaith relations. Although he held strongly to the distinctions between Judaism and Christianity, he did not allow these differences to overshadow common points of contact. Indeed, he readily attacked prejudice and bias that favored Christianity and that were perpetrated by Christians. For example, in 1877 he protested an oration delivered in Lafayette Square and reprinted in a local paper that had characterized Jews involved in the crucifixion of Jesus as “heartless, cruel, and bloodthirsty.” Gutheim reasoned that had these sentiments been expressed in a Catholic church, he would not have protested. They, however, had been aired publicly, and this provoked his public response to the New Orleans *Times-Democrat*. He wrote:

as a Jew, who had no share in the killing of Jesus, I characterize them as an outburst of fanaticism calculated to resuscitate the blind prejudices and cruel hatred of the dark ages. I will not stop to inquire, what the spiritual status of McCaleb (the orator) and of his co-believers would be, if the killing of Jesus had *not* taken place, and why the reputed perpetrators of the deed should be held up to condemnation, when according to the Christian scheme of salvation the event was pre-ordained by God Himself; nor will I mull the proposition, that in view of the inestimable benefit bestowed upon the human race by that very event the Jews are entitled to the world’s everlasting gratitude, instead of the hatred and scorn to which they have been subjected.<sup>15</sup>

Regardless of this example, on the whole Gutheim was not combative with Christians, but rather sought common ground

from which to build positive relations. He demonstrated this characteristic when he participated in a largely Christian-led endeavor to establish a Sabbath observance league in New Orleans. Under the leadership of Benjamin Morgan Palmer, pastor of First Presbyterian Church and one of Gutheim's best friends among the Christian clergy, the league was formed after a series of meetings in March and April 1882. It aimed to encourage better Sabbath observance. Some within the group felt that the league should lobby for passage of a Sunday law that would close most businesses on the Christian Sabbath. Gutheim and others encouraged the league to use moral persuasion rather than legislative means to achieve better Sabbath observance. Gutheim, as well as Rabbi Isaac L. Leucht of Touro Synagogue, participated in and supported this essentially Christian movement, but did so as Jews with the hope of attaining better observance of the Jewish Sabbath.

Gutheim's activities in the community constantly involved him with Christians who came to appreciate his respect for Christianity, commitment to Judaism, and dedication to his country. The comments of Eva L. Rodenberg illustrate Christian attitudes toward him. Rodenberg taught for a missionary school administered by the Church Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews, an Episcopalian organization. The school sought the conversion of Jews. In the annual report for 1885-1886, Rodenberg commented on Gutheim's death:

I lost a friend in Rabbi G. He was so kindly disposed, not only to my school and self, but to the Church. The respect our Bishop and clergy showed his memory, proved how much he was thought of. I find the Jews all more favorably disposed to Christianity than ever . . . I am constantly asked about the doctrines of the Church by parents of our scholars, and they are all impressed with Rabbi G.'s idea, that there is but one step between them and Christianity.

Gutheim did indeed believe that Judaism and Christianity were intimately related, but he also understood the differences between the religions. He chose to focus on the similarities and, in doing so, built strong relations with Christians. However thin the line he drew for his congregants, Gutheim's remarks may have facilitated

Rodenberg's efforts, and she undoubtedly used them to evangelize Jews.<sup>16</sup>

*Symbol of an Ideal*

Gutheim's actions outside the Jewish community endeared him to a vast number of people. His death, therefore, was not simply a Jewish event, but one that also touched the lives of non-Jews and invited their participation. He died somewhat suddenly, having been sick for only a week before passing away during the Sabbath evening of June 11, 1886. After embalming, his body was placed in his home on St. Charles Avenue, where many came to express their sympathies the next day, Saturday. On Sunday, his body lay in state at Temple Sinai, where he had served as rabbi since the congregation's establishment in 1872. There, in spite of rain, throngs of people expressed their grief and sympathy until his funeral service was held on Monday afternoon.<sup>17</sup>

The service commenced at 3 p.m. with a choir composed of some of the city's leading voices singing the portion of Alois Kaiser's *Requiem for the Day of Atonement* beginning with, "What is man?" The answering of this question dominated the remainder of the service. After readings from Psalm 19 and Psalm 91 as well as portions of Job, a prayer was offered, followed by an aria for alto soloist from Mendelssohn's oratorio, *Elijah*, titled, "O Rest in the Lord." Then four speakers eulogized Gutheim.<sup>18</sup>

The four reflected Gutheim's local and regional influence. Isaac L. Leucht, rabbi of Touro Synagogue and also a former co-worker with Gutheim, spoke first. He had been assigned the task of reviewing Gutheim's life. Rabbi Henry Berkowitz, of congregation Gates of Heaven (Sha'arai Shomayim) in Mobile, Alabama, followed Leucht. Gutheim's wife, Emilie Jones, hailed from Mobile where the two had married in 1858. At the time of Gutheim's death, Berkowitz served on the executive committee of the Conference of Rabbis of Southern Congregations. In 1883, he had been a member of Hebrew Union College's first graduating class. Henceforth, he served as the rabbi of Congregation Rodeph Shalom in Philadelphia and was the first secretary of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR).<sup>19</sup> In his funeral oration, Berkowitz focused on Gutheim's charitable acts. Rabbi Max Sam-

field of congregation Children of Israel in Memphis, Tennessee, next addressed Gutheim's leadership in Reform Judaism. Samfield served as vice president of the Conference of Rabbis of Southern Congregations and succeeded Gutheim as its second president. He too was a founding member of the CCAR. The final speaker, the Reverend Benjamin Morgan Palmer, pastor of New Orleans' First Presbyterian Church, was one of the most respected clergy in the South having arrived in New Orleans in December 1856. The New Orleans *Times-Democrat* characterized the participation of a Christian minister in a Jewish funeral service as unusual and unprecedented, as well as beautiful and appropriate. Palmer and Gutheim had been friends for a long time, had served together in various organizations, and had confronted such events as yellow fever epidemics, the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the struggle to advance religion in the city. Palmer addressed Gutheim's relations with the non-Jewish community.

Each speaker paid tribute to the rabbi's life and career, while highlighting and exploring his humanity. Their funeral orations reflected characteristics of what these ministers, as well as many Americans, believed to be the image of an ideal person. In the midst of their efforts to comfort and memorialize, the traits they focused upon revealed their perceptions of this ideal. In the book, *The Sacred Remains*, Gary Laderman has noted the tremendous symbolic power of the dead. During the Civil War era, for example, John Brown's body became a symbol representing larger social conflicts. Similarly, the corpse of Abraham Lincoln came to symbolize national unity. A recent study of more than eight thousand newspaper obituaries, including those from the New Orleans *Picayune* from 1818 to 1930, concluded that, "Obituaries are powerful commemorations that focus on social values." They provide clues as to how individuals adhere to certain cultural norms. Furthermore, they "provide a truly intimate portrait of the 'ideal American' in any era," and reflect the values of the dominant culture.<sup>20</sup> The death of James K. Gutheim similarly provided potent symbolic power in expressing values regarding Jews and their relationship with American culture and society.

One might easily dismiss the rhetoric used by the funeral orators as Victorian sentimentality. They did resort to hyperbole in their praise of Gutheim. For example, they painted a picture of a man who never caused his wife “a sign of regret,” nor did he ever compromise. His zeal for helping the underprivileged never waned. Never did an emergency arise for which he was not prepared. Every act or word emanating from him reflected honesty, maturity, and strength. By using words such as “every,” “always,” and “never,” the eulogists did not necessarily mean that Gutheim never had a single instance where he violated these characteristics. Those who knew the rabbi could probably recall exceptions. One of the speakers, Rabbi Isaac L. Leucht, admitted that the living often showered the dead with platitudes and overlooked their faults. He stated that while alive, one often was subjected to criticism, but as soon as death came, “only our kind acts [and] benevolent deeds” were remembered. Leucht, however, noted that Gutheim “enjoyed the love and respect of all who knew him” even while alive. Indeed, Victorian sentimentalism pervaded the speeches, but the speakers expressed something more than grief and respect for the dead. Gutheim’s eulogists elevated traits of the rabbi they considered to be worthy of emulation by all Jews. This idealization of Gutheim, in turn, helped demonstrate to the gentile population that Jews could attain American standards of manhood and citizenship. In spite of religious differences, Jews were just as American as the Christian majority.<sup>21</sup>

In upholding Gutheim as an ideal, his eulogists focused on three aspects: domestic life, religion, and public life or citizenship. These corresponded to a triad of symbols used first by Protestants during the American Civil War to give meaning to death: Jesus, country, and home. While Jews in America did not constitute the dominant group, they reflected and embraced some of this group’s values. At the same time, the appropriation of these values demonstrated both their Jewish distinctiveness and their identification with values adopted by many Americans. Jews could potentially fulfill two of the three ideals, but the Christianity ideal precluded full acceptance. Those who eulogized Gutheim,

*Dedicated on November 13, 1872, two years after  
Temple Sinai was incorporated, the  
congregation remained here until 1928.  
The building was demolished in the late 1960s.  
(Courtesy of Temple Sinai, New Orleans, Louisiana.)*

however, employed these subjects to demonstrate how to be Jewish in America and to illustrate to gentiles the "Americanness" of Jews. They in essence presented a reconstruction of the ideals many associated with American culture and Jewish identity.<sup>22</sup>

*The Ideal Domestic Life*

As the eulogists sought to comfort the grieving and honor Rabbi Gutheim's life, they highlighted his roles as husband and father. While only Gutheim's wife and son directly experienced this aspect of the rabbi's life, it became an important point for all to consider. Here, the rabbi's private life was publicly displayed. Victorian-era Americans valued domestic life. As the nineteenth century progressed, the home became a sacred symbol, and domestic religion blossomed. Protestants and Catholics considered the Christian home to be the cornerstone of American society. Although differing over the nature of domestic religious rituals, Protestants and Catholics agreed on the necessity of these activities for creating a strong family, nation, and church.<sup>23</sup>

Eulogist Benjamin Morgan Palmer had written a treatise on the family in 1876. In it he argued that the family was "the original society from which the state emerges, and the church, and every other association known amongst men." In fact the state or the church could not exist without the family. The family constituted the "first stones in the social structure" and the "foundation of all government and law."<sup>24</sup>

Rabbi Gutheim's funeral reflected a similar attitude toward domestic life, but with a distinctively Jewish expression. Jewish domesticity also upheld the importance placed on the home by Christians while demonstrating that Jews could maintain their distinctiveness without threatening the stability of the home and therefore the nation. From a Jewish standpoint sharing with Christians a common domestic value did not mean surrendering one of the chief characteristics of Jewish identity, namely Jewish religious observance. Significantly, Rabbi Leucht began his explication of Gutheim's life with the domestic or private sphere, noting that "whenever we wish to fathom a man's character we must seek the

key to it in his own home," rather than in the person's public persona.<sup>25</sup>

Leucht portrayed a man who exuded love for his wife and child. He illustrated Gutheim's family life by describing the manner in which the deceased kept the Sabbath in the home. Surrounded by his wife, son, and friends, Gutheim appeared as "an old patriarch" greeting the Sabbath. Even in the last moments of his life, Gutheim joined with loved ones and admirers, and recited the Shema one last time. On that Sabbath evening, his wife noted that he had never caused her a moment of regret. Leucht interpreted this comment as "an epitaph of deep and endless conjugal affection."<sup>26</sup>

This portrayal of Gutheim's domestic life addressed two audiences. To Protestants who particularly valued family worship,<sup>27</sup> the picture of Gutheim welcoming the Sabbath with his wife and son demonstrated Jewish domestic values as well as the religious character of the Jewish home. In his treatise of 1876 Palmer had portrayed the family worshipping under the leadership of the pious father. In this state the family constituted a temple where God revealed his presence.<sup>28</sup> Leucht's depiction of Gutheim's family mirrored the ideal Christian family. Gutheim sat as "an old patriarch," surrounded by wife, child, and friends, leading his family in worship. Remarkably, Gutheim's funeral allowed Jews to demonstrate that the model home typically associated with Christianity was present among Jews. Here was Gutheim leading his family in domestic worship, just like the model Protestant father. The Jewish home in America, however, varied with its Christian counterpart in one important aspect. Leucht's recounting of Gutheim's final recitation of the Shema highlighted this difference. The Shema made clear that to Jews God was one being instead of the trinity asserted by Christian dogma. Yet this fundamental theological difference clearly did not harm the Jewish home. In fact it inspired Gutheim's wife to assert that he "has never caused me a sign of regret." This portrayal of the death scene linked Judaism with the American home, a picture not often considered by Christians. Christianity, therefore, could not claim exclusive ability to produce stable homes, an integral element of a

successful nation. Judaism could also contribute to the nation's success without being Christian. It did not degrade the home, but elevated it while nurturing the stability of American society. Leucht also asserted that Gutheim's public life was rooted in his private life. Just as the Christian home formed the foundation of society, so too did the love of home, wife, and child constitute the starting point for Gutheim's public activities. Jews, therefore, while differing with Christians theologically, could still affirm and participate in an important American institution, one that was not distinctively Christian.

Leucht's imagery delivered a different message to Jews. Portrayed as a "foremost reformer" within Judaism, Gutheim, however, continued "the old and beautiful custom of greeting the Sabbath-bride with prayer and a festive board." Gutheim's example upheld the need for Jews to observe the Sabbath. Neglect of the Sabbath had been a growing problem among Jews. In 1880 the *American Hebrew* lamented that Jewish youth ignored and were indifferent towards the practices of Judaism. It attributed much of this to the decline of the Jewish home and even asserted, "American Judaism has no Jewish home."<sup>29</sup>

This problem drew the attention of Kaufmann Kohler, rabbi of New York City's Temple Beth-El and a key Reform figure, during the rabbinical conference that produced the 1885 Pittsburgh Platform. Kohler asserted that, "Religion's fire has almost died out on the domestic altar." He attributed this largely to the antiquated customs observed in the home. Urging that domestic religion be reformed, Kohler proclaimed, "We need a system not of austere, but of joyous religious home training."<sup>30</sup> The population of New Orleans reflected this broader American neglect of the Sabbath as pointed out by the city's Sabbath observance league which Gutheim and Leucht had helped found in 1882. Thus, when Leucht wanted to illustrate Gutheim's character, he chose to do so by portraying him as a faithful Sabbath observer. This demonstrated his character and illustrated his love for his family thereby explicating the ideal domestic behavior of a Jew.

Leucht's portrayal of Gutheim's Sabbath observance is also significant in relation to the debates occurring within American

Judaism. Some Reformers including Kaufmann Kohler observed the Sabbath on Sunday. This provoked great dissension. The *American Hebrew* decried this move as “un-Jewish,” “destructive,” an adoption of “Christian methods,” and the “Christianization” of Judaism.<sup>31</sup>

In Kohler’s address at the 1885 Pittsburgh Rabbinical Conference, he asserted that the overwhelming majority of Jews paid little attention to the rabbinical laws including the kindling of lights on the Sabbath. He encouraged Sunday services because many Jews had to work Monday through Saturday. As the rabbis discussed Sunday services, most believed they were justified for practical reasons. The rabbis ultimately passed a resolution asserting that nothing in the spirit of Judaism prevented Sunday services.<sup>32</sup> Leucht, however, portrayed Gutheim’s Sabbath observance in traditional terms. Juxtaposing Gutheim’s tremendous influence in establishing Reform Judaism throughout the South with his traditional Sabbath observance, Leucht depicted a more moderate Reform. He also showed that Reform Judaism remained firmly within the realm of Judaism. Reform was not a departure from or perversion of Judaism. On the contrary, it faithfully adhered to Judaism’s core values.

What then is the image constructed by Leucht? Gutheim reflected a Jew who mirrored the domestic values of Christian Americans without giving up Jewish distinctions. Jews did not have to relinquish their Sabbath in order to be Americans. Nor did Christian Americans have to be wary of Jewish practices as a threat to societal stability. Jews, instead, should embrace Sabbath observance and contribute to the building of American society by practicing domestic religion. In Gutheim’s funeral service, however, one is confronted with the ideal and the real. In reality most Jews did not keep their Sabbath because they lived in a society built around the Christian Sabbath and they had to conduct business on Saturday. Those who did observe the Jewish Sabbath often disagreed on how it should be kept. Furthermore, many Christian Americans considered Jewish ceremonies and beliefs as out-of-step or in opposition to American values. Leucht’s idealization of Gutheim pointed to a way to resolve these conflicts.

*The Ideal Religious Life*

Max Samfield accepted the task of describing Gutheim's activities on behalf of Reform Judaism, with Leucht and Henry Berkowitz adding to the portrait. All three indicated the important role played by Gutheim, and advocated the legitimacy of the Reform movement. Their portrayal of Gutheim's religiosity also paralleled the value placed on religion by Christian Americans. Christian Americans believed that Christianity produced the ideal person, but the image of Gutheim challenged such notions.

In a variety of metaphors, Gutheim appeared as both the father of southern Reform and the savior of Judaism in the South. Biblical metaphors provided Rabbi Leucht with the images with which to portray the struggle in American Judaism. Just as the biblical prophets contended for "right, truth, and justice," so too did Gutheim, turning his pulpit into a battlefield. A war of words and ideas raged between traditional and Reform Judaism, but Gutheim, like Moses, revealed God's true nature by stripping away those notions which had obscured it. While not specifically invoking Moses, Samfield subtly conjured such associations when he mentioned Gutheim's coming "among us" forty years ago. Taken literally, the forty years reference hearkened back to Gutheim's arrival in Cincinnati. Samfield, however, seemed to have had in mind Gutheim's arrival in the South because he next characterized the state of southern Judaism at that time. This would have been in 1850 when Gutheim came to New Orleans. Clearly Samfield was estimating, but the use of the number forty conjured up reminiscences of Moses. Moses led the Israelites through the wilderness for forty years (Deuteronomy 2:7; 29:5). When he received the Torah on Mount Sinai, Moses remained on the mountain for forty days and nights (Deuteronomy 9:9). Just as Moses came to the Israelites when their survival was threatened, Gutheim had come south under similar circumstances. Samfield described the situation in the following terms: "Chaos reigned supreme and religious indifference and apathy threatened to stifle the true religious sentiment in the hearts of the Jews in the South." Gutheim proceeded to lay "the foundations to that noble edifice of pure religion"; so too did Moses as he led the Israelites through

*Portrait of Rabbi James K. Gutheim, painted in 1883,  
three years before his death.  
(Courtesy of Temple Sinai, New Orleans, Louisiana.)*

the desert wilderness and gave them the Torah. Moses, however, was not allowed to see the Israelites take possession of the Promised Land and died on its brink. Gutheim, on the other hand, "was spared to see yet the strides made by his people towards the realization of his ideal conceptions." As Moses founded Israel and as the prophets restored it, so did Gutheim in the guise of southern Reform. The Mosaic and prophetic parallels thus lent credibility to the Reform movement.

Berkowitz carried the private domestic image of Gutheim into the public sphere by characterizing him as a "revered father" and a "grand old patriarch" of southern Reform. As such, he founded congregations, dedicated synagogues, and established the Conference of Rabbis of Southern Congregations. As Gutheim aged, he gathered around him the younger rabbis in order to tutor them. Gutheim's death, therefore, had resulted in an "awful gap" around which Berkowitz called on the "priest-people of the Most High God" to rally. Accordingly, he urged, "Let the voice of strife be hushed in American Israel," a reference to the conflict between traditionalists and reformers. The death of Gutheim had given occasion for yet another rallying around the old patriarch and offered an opportunity for the Jewish family to unite under the banner of Reform Judaism thereby fulfilling its religious duty just as Gutheim's own family had gathered around him to observe the Sabbath.

The eulogists were not calling for Jews to gather around Gutheim as an individual as much as they were urging the embracing of the Reform principles he symbolized. Their portrayal of him as another Moses, a prophet, and a patriarch lent authority to their call. These images positioned Reform Judaism as the Judaism of the Bible. It was not simply another movement within Judaism; it represented authentic biblical religion. Leucht furthered this idea when he called attention to Gutheim's response to modern biblical scholars. Calling him a "disciple of the true old orthodox school," Leucht emphasized Gutheim's faithfulness to the Bible by contrasting Gutheim's ideas with those of Julius Wellhausen and Abraham Kuenen, two leading biblical critics. Kuenen, a Dutch scholar in agreement with much scholarship of the era, stressed

that Moses had not written all or part of the Torah. Attribution of the Torah's authorship to Moses, traditionally dated to the fifteenth century BCE was considered anachronistic. Kuenen contended that parts of the Torah were written as late as the post-exilic period of Israel's history, beginning during the sixth century BCE. Furthermore, these portions did not reflect "Mosaic" religious practices, but the practices of later periods. Wellhausen furthered these ideas when he portrayed the Torah as having been written in stages over a long period of time. Thus, the biblical portrayal of a Mosaic law that established ancient Israelite religious institutions gave way to a reconstruction of Israel's religious history along an evolutionary model. Instead of the Torah being Mosaic in origin, it was the product of centuries of development.

While critical scholars largely embraced this idea and still do with certain modifications, many within the synagogue and the church perceived it as an attack on the integrity and authority of the Bible. If the Bible's portrayal of the ancient Israelite religion was inaccurate, could it be trusted? Reform rabbis debated the benefits of biblical criticism, although several viewed it positively, and the 1885 Pittsburgh Platform expressed receptivity to it. Leucht's assertion that Gutheim knew well the works of Wellhausen and Kuenen, but "never preached Bible criticism," nor "used the text of the Bible to prove that the Bible was at fault," demonstrated Gutheim's faithfulness to the Bible. His moderate Reform principles could therefore be trusted as an accurate portrayal of biblical principles. Leucht furthered the Reform cause even more when he asserted that Gutheim knew the works of Wellhausen and Kuenen as well as those of the commentators of the Middle Ages. By coupling traditional and modern scholarship, Leucht subtly asserted the superiority of Reform Judaism and signaled that Jews, therefore, should embrace the principles of moderate Reform.<sup>33</sup>

The religious aspect of Gutheim's life also spoke to a second element of the triad used by American Christians to give meaning to death. The linking of death to Christianity reflected the importance placed on religion, at least as an ideal. While Christian Americans understood themselves and expressed their identity in

terms of God (Jesus), country, and home, the appeal to Christianity posed a problem for Jews. If ideal Americans embraced Christianity in some way, Jews could never be ideal Americans. Gutheim's eulogists presented a modified version of American identity by showing not only the religious aspects of the rabbi's life, but also the biblical nature of his religion. Gutheim's beliefs reflected the Bible. Just as many within the church perceived the ideas of Wellhausen and Kuenen as unbiblical, so too did Gutheim. The rabbi had defended the integrity of the Bible as a Jew. Not only had he defended it, but his religion was indeed biblical religion. While Christians might argue that Gutheim's religion was not completely biblical because it did not accept the New Testament, the eulogists sought to redefine the triad. Rather than focusing on Jesus, and therefore making an ideal American a Christian, Leucht, Samfield, and Berkowitz emphasized the biblical character of Judaism. In essence, their re-fashioned triad consisted of home, the Bible, and country. By defining an ideal American in these terms, Jews could achieve equal status.

The rabbis had offered a reconstruction of an ideal individual in terms of one who embraced the Bible. For Jews, this translated into the embracing of a biblical Reform Judaism. While Reform had made great strides, it still was attempting to gain a firmer footing among Jews. The Reform movement sought something that would bring unity to itself as well as to all American Judaism. Unity had been attempted previously. The Union of American Hebrew Congregations had been established in 1873 and, two years later, Hebrew Union College opened. Yet in 1883 when the school celebrated the ordination of its first graduates with the now famous "Trefa Banquet," hopes of unity were dashed. The 1885 Pittsburgh Platform marked another attempt to bring theological unity, but it too provoked dissension. Many felt liturgical unity also was necessary, but widespread agreement on a prayer book did not occur until the 1890s with the publication of the *Union Prayer Book*. The establishment of the Central Conference of American Rabbis in 1889 was yet another effort at unifying Reform.<sup>34</sup> The rabbis urged unity in the moderate Reform principles es-

poused by Gutheim, believing them to be principles that were true to the Bible and Judaism and that would allow them to build relationships with non-Jewish Americans while fulfilling "the majestic mission of Israel." Rabbi Berkowitz graphically portrayed the call for unity when he encouraged his audience to eagerly seize the Reform principles taught by Gutheim, and "let us bind his virtues as a sign upon our hands." Using the image of tefillin, an item associated with traditional practices, Berkowitz bound Reform with tradition in order to show Reform's legitimacy as an expression of Judaism and its necessity for functioning within the American environment.

Many Jews had difficulty rallying around moderate Reform. Many Christians would find it hard to think of an ideal person in any other than Christian terms. The situation was further complicated by the dominance of Protestant Christianity in America. Catholics, much less Jews, often were excluded from portrayals of ideal Americans. Gutheim's eulogists, however, offered the image of an American that could possibly unify Jews and foster acceptance by Christians.

### *The Ideal Citizen*

The eulogists concluded that through his traits Gutheim embodied the ideal citizen. Palmer addressed this aspect the most, but the three rabbis also commented on it. They portrayed a man who held strong distinguishing beliefs, but who did not allow these beliefs to hinder his positive participation and contribution in the public arena.

Palmer praised Gutheim for overcoming those things that created divisions in society, while simultaneously holding ferociously to his distinctive beliefs. Describing the ideal person, or what Palmer called the "good man," he portrayed this type of individual as the "incarnation of virtue and religion" who then became an agent for the renewal and blessing of humanity. This was the kind of "gospel" that all could easily grasp while perhaps being unable to understand the creeds and dogmas of the various religious philosophies. He then proclaimed, "Such a man has fallen in our midst today; and it is not strange that a whole

community is drawn together here, under the pressure of a common sorrow." The secret of Gutheim's greatness was that, "He was a man, and thought nothing human foreign to himself." Palmer described this man as "honest in all his convictions, mature in all his judgments, and strong in all the force which belongs to character." Honesty, maturity, and strength combined to express themselves in a man who held strong convictions as a Jew, yet who did not allow these ideas to restrict or prejudice his actions. Palmer invoked two common Reform ideas, the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of humanity, to explain how a man could act in this way. In these two ideas, as Gutheim had demonstrated, all humanity could unify.

Leucht, Berkowitz, and Samfield knew this as well. Leucht attributed the fraternal feeling among the Jews and Christians of New Orleans largely to the efforts of Gutheim. Samfield characterized him as "the high priest of humanity." Berkowitz pointed to his charitable deeds dispensed to all humans, regardless of sect or creed.

Historian Gail Bederman has demonstrated how American society from 1880 to 1917 constructed, defined, and used the concepts of manliness and civilization. While all men were male in gender, not all possessed intrinsically manly traits. In her words, "Manliness was a standard to live up to, an ideal of male perfectibility to be achieved." Manliness, in turn, was linked to civilization so that, "Just as manliness was the highest form of manhood, so civilization was the highest form of humanity. Manliness was the achievement of a perfect man, just as civilization was the achievement of a perfect race."<sup>35</sup> Read against this framework, the words of Palmer take on added significance:

After all, my friends, it is manhood that prevails in life: it is manhood that rules; and he is the mightiest monarch of us all, and sways the loftiest sceptre, who reigns through the honesty of his own nature and by the majesty of his superior will. It is the loss of such a king among men we are called now to mourn.

Palmer had crowned Gutheim with the highest title he could bestow, ultimate manhood. Leucht had showered similar praise on Gutheim, saying that, "Wherever he stood there stood a man in

*Tombstone of James K. Gutheim, Jewish Section, Metairie Cemetery.  
(Photograph by Fred Kahn, New Orleans, Louisiana.)*

the most beautiful and honest sense of the term." Yet, Palmer's praise was magnified by the fact that a leading southern Christian had conferred it on a Jew and had done so using such Christian terms as "gospel" and "incarnation."

Palmer characterized Gutheim as the ultimate man based on the rabbi's ability to maintain distinctive beliefs without allowing them to hinder his public service to the community. This description marked a value placed on those who could successfully combine the private and public. This success manifested itself in religious demonstrations in the public arena not through creed or dogma, but rather via human service. Although important, the former best remained in the private sphere. Thus, the eulogists demonstrated how Jews could participate in American society. Religion comprised a central part of their idea of the ideal person, but they did not predicate Americans being united through the abolition of religious differences.

Although Christian Americans continued to associate citizenship with Christianity, particularly as expressed in Protestantism, they liked to think that all Americans could or should be unified. The community of New Orleans was no exception. The day after Gutheim's funeral, a New Orleans *Times-Democrat* editorial writer stated that thousands of people "representing every creed and every nationality—people of every class of society—the high and the low, the aged and the young" assembled to honor Gutheim. Calling Gutheim the "model citizen," the editorialist noted that he had left an example "which men of every creed may well emulate." The death and funeral of James K. Gutheim gave the people of New Orleans an opportunity to illustrate what the ideal community might be. Gutheim was buried in Metairie Cemetery, the first Jew to be interred in these exclusive grounds. The resting place of many of New Orleans' social elite, Metairie was adorned with beautiful and expensive monuments. In 1884, members of Temple Sinai bought forty plots in the cemetery over the opposition of other congregants. Gutheim was given a plot for himself and his family.<sup>36</sup> His interment in what had been up to that point a gentile cemetery symbolized the unity New Orleans either desired or wanted to portray.<sup>37</sup> With the interior of Temple Sinai having

been heavily draped in black and “converted into a vast sepulchre [*sic*] for the temporary abode of a Prince of Israel,”<sup>38</sup> the Jewish community invited the gentile community to share its grief. At the end of the service, the gentile community then received Gutheim, the first representative of the Jewish community, into their most prestigious place of rest. As one final symbol of unity, words spoken by Palmer during the funeral service were placed on the monument adorning Gutheim’s grave. The Presbyterian minister’s words described Gutheim as “a man always to be found when wanted, always to be trusted when found.” The epitaph served as a reminder that Gutheim represented an ideal man, now reconstructed by the eulogists as one who embodied the value placed on family life, biblical religion, and citizenship.

Noting that death was the end of all humans, Rabbi Leucht pointed to its equalizing and unifying power. Perhaps more so in death than in life could the Jewish and Christian communities of New Orleans be united and an ideal American Jew be realized. The depiction of such an ideal highlighted the realities of life in New Orleans and the United States. New Orleans remained a divided community, particularly along racial lines. The fact that Jews and Christians participating together in the funeral was universally heralded indicated that religious divisions had created communal disunity. Had unity prevailed, it would not have been worthy of comment. American Jews continued to face many challenges within the Jewish community and American society. In dealing with these realities, the eulogists embraced Christian American ideals without accepting them wholesale. They even contested them at certain points, not by assaulting them, but by suggesting redefinitions. This strategy helped them simultaneously assert their “Americanness” and prompt reconsiderations of American identity. At the same time, they could address Jewishness within an American context. This was their answer to the question asked at the beginning of the funeral by Kaiser’s *Requiem*, “What is man?” Seen in this light, the funeral of James K. Gutheim reflected more than grief and admiration for one of the most important figures in southern Reform Judaism up to that time. For

both Christians and Jews, it reflected a reconstruction of the ideal American Jew.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Karla Goldman, "In Search of an American Judaism: Rivalry and Reform in the Growth of the Two Cincinnati Synagogues," in *American Society of Church History Papers* (1995): 3-4. Further biographical information on Gutheim can be found in Gary P. Zola, "Gutheim, James Koppel," in John H. Garrity and Mark C. Carnes, eds., *American National Biography* (New York, 1999), 736-738.

<sup>2</sup> [New Orleans] *Daily Picayune*, June 12, 1886; Zola, "Gutheim," 736-738; Lance J. Sussman, *Isaac Leeser and the Making of American Judaism* (Detroit, 1995), 23-24; Michael A. Meyer, *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism* (Detroit, 1988), 28-43, 405, 420.

<sup>3</sup> Sussman, *Leeser*, 20-21, 139-140, 161-163.

<sup>4</sup> Zola, "Gutheim," 736-738.

<sup>5</sup> Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, 109; James K. Gutheim, "Jewish Antiquity and Nationality," *Occident* 2 (February 1844).

<sup>6</sup> Touro Synagogue Collection 224, v. 56, Board of Officers of Shangarai Chassed Minutes, April 22 and May 6, 1866, May 6 and June 14, 1868, Special Collections, Tulane University Library, New Orleans, Louisiana; Irwin Lachoff, "A Historical Introduction," in Lester Sullivan, ed., *Jews of New Orleans: An Archival Guide* (New Orleans, 1988), 16-18.

<sup>7</sup> James K. Gutheim, "Address delivered at the Laying of the Corner-Stone of Temple Sinai in New Orleans, Nov. 19, 1871," in *The Temple Pulpit* (New York, 1872), 60.

<sup>8</sup> Conference of Rabbis of Southern Congregations, Minutes, April 14, 1885, small collections, Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, (hereafter cited as AJA). See also, Gary P. Zola, "Southern Rabbis and the Founding of the First National Association of Rabbis," *American Jewish History* 85 (1998): 353-372.

<sup>9</sup> Conference of Rabbis of Southern Congregations, Minutes, December 29, 30, and 31, 1885, June 15, 1886, November 29, 1887.

<sup>10</sup> James K. Gutheim, *Cause, Development and Scope of Reform* (Cincinnati, 1886), 19.

<sup>11</sup> Max Heller, *Jubilee Souvenir of Temple Sinai, 1872-1922* (New Orleans, 1922), 48.

<sup>12</sup> [New Orleans] *Times-Democrat* and [New Orleans] *Daily Picayune*, June 12, 1886; Jacob Rader Marcus, *United States Jewry, 1776-1985*, II (Detroit, 1992), 529-530; Elliott Ashkenazi, ed., *The Civil War Diary of Clara Solomon* (Baton Rouge, 1995), 350; James K. Gutheim, "Eloquent Prayer," small collections-miscellaneous (SC-4414), AJA. See also, Bertram Wallace Korn, *American Jewry and the Civil War* (Philadelphia, 1951), 47-51.

<sup>13</sup> [New Orleans] *Daily Picayune*, October 16 and December 4, 1866; *New Orleans Daily Bee* and [New Orleans] *Daily Picayune*, May 21, 1868; Scott Langston, "Race, Politics, Education, and Judaism: Rabbi James K. Gutheim and New Orleans," Louisiana Historical Society Annual Meeting, March 16, 2001; Joe Gray Taylor, *Louisiana Reconstructed, 1863-1877* (Baton Rouge, 1974), 154.

<sup>14</sup> *The Morning Star and Catholic Messenger*, January 10, 1875; Orleans Parish School Board Minutes, April 4, April 6, June 22, September 7, October 11, October 13, November 7,

1877, September 9, 1879, Earl K. Long Library, University of New Orleans; *New Orleans Weekly Louisianian*, October 20, 1877; Gutheim, "Address of Rabbi J. K. Gutheim," *Southern Historical Society Papers* 10 (June 1882): 248–250.

<sup>15</sup> "James Gutheim," box 1, James K. Gutheim collection, AJA.

<sup>16</sup> For a fuller description of Jewish-Christian relations in New Orleans, see Scott Langston, "Interaction and Identity: Jews and Christians in Nineteenth Century New Orleans," *Southern Jewish History* 3 (2000): 83–124; *Eighth Annual Report of the Church Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews, 1885–86*, Episcopal Church Archives, Austin, Texas. The school had been established in 1882. In the seventh annual report (1884–1885), Rodenberg noted, "One of the rabbis has been very kindly, and on one occasion he told an older scholar that there was but a step between Judaism and Christianity."

<sup>17</sup> [New Orleans] *Times-Democrat*, June 12, 13, 14, 1886.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Sefton D. Temkin, "Berkowitz, Henry," *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 634–635.

<sup>20</sup> Gary Laderman, *The Sacred Remains: American Attitudes Toward Death, 1799–1833* (New Haven, CT, 1996), 91, 158, 169; Janice Hume, *Obituaries in American Culture* (Jackson, MS 2000), 151, 154.

<sup>21</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all accounts of Gutheim's funeral service come from the [New Orleans] *Times-Democrat*, June 15, 1886.

<sup>22</sup> Laderman, *Sacred Remains*, 134–135, 143.

<sup>23</sup> Colleen McDannell, *The Christian Home in Victorian America, 1840–1900* (Bloomington, IN, 1986), 45–51, 77.

<sup>24</sup> Benjamin Morgan Palmer, *The Family, in its Civil and Churchly Aspects* (n.p., 1876; reprint, Harrisonburg, Virginia, 1991), 9–10, (page citations are from the reprint edition).

<sup>25</sup> [New Orleans] *Times-Democrat*, June 15, 1886.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> McDannell, *Christian Home*, 77–85.

<sup>28</sup> Palmer, *The Family*, 290.

<sup>29</sup> *American Hebrew*, September 3, 1880.

<sup>30</sup> Kaufmann Kohler, "Conference Paper of Dr. K. Kohler," in Walter Jacob, ed., *The Pittsburgh Platform in Retrospect*, (Pittsburgh, 1985), 102. Kohler had begun Sunday services in 1874 while at Congregation Sinai in Chicago. By the 1890s, however, he had changed his opinion and concluded that the move to Sunday services had been an error. Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, 290–291.

<sup>31</sup> *American Hebrew*, November 3, 1882.

<sup>32</sup> Kohler, "Conference Paper," 94–95, 115–119.

<sup>33</sup> Kuenen was best known for his two volume, *De Godsdiens van Israel*, published in 1869–1870 and translated into English in the three volume, *The Religion of Israel to the Fall of the Jewish State* (1874–1875). In 1878 Wellhausen wrote the exceedingly influential, *Geschichte Israel I (History of Israel I)*, revised and reprinted as *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels* (1883), and then translated into English as *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* (1885). For further discussion of Kuenen and Wellhausen, see Ronald E. Clements, *A Century of Old Testament Study* (rev. ed.: Guildford, Surrey, 1983) and Herbert F. Hahn, *The Old Testament in Modern Research* (Philadelphia, 1966); Naomi W. Cohen, "The Challenges of Darwinism and Biblical Criticism to American Judaism," *Modern Judaism* 4 (October 1984): 124–125.

<sup>34</sup> Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, 260–279.

<sup>35</sup> Gail Bederman, *Manliness & Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago, 1995), 27.

<sup>36</sup> *History of the Jews of Louisiana* (New Orleans, 1903), 65; Heller, *Jubilee Souvenir*, 71-72.

<sup>37</sup> James J. Farrell notes "sometimes social mobility occurred not only after death but also after burial." See his *Inventing the American Way of Death, 1830-1920* (Philadelphia, 1980), 125.

<sup>38</sup> [New Orleans] *Times-Democrat*, June 14, 1886.