

# SOUTHERN JEWISH HISTORY

Journal of the Southern Jewish Historical Society

Mark K. Bauman, *Editor*

Rachel Heimovics Braun, *Managing Editor*

Eric L. Goldstein, *Book Review Editor*

2005

Volume 8



# Southern Jewish History

Mark K. Bauman, *Editor*

Rachel Heimovics Braun, *Managing Editor*

Eric L. Goldstein, *Book Review Editor*

## Editorial Board

Elliott Ashkenazi    Phyllis Leffler

Canter Brown, Jr.    Martin Perlmutter

Eric L. Goldstein    Marc Lee Raphael

Cheryl Greenberg    Stuart Rockoff

Scott M. Langston    Bryan Edward Stone

George Wilkes

*Southern Jewish History* is a publication of the **Southern Jewish Historical Society** and is available by subscription and as a benefit of membership in the Society. The opinions and statements expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the journal or of the Southern Jewish Historical Society.

**Southern Jewish Historical Society** OFFICERS: Sumner Levine, *President*; Mark K. Bauman, *Vice President*; Scott M. Langston, *Secretary*; Bernard Wax, *Treasurer*. BOARD OF TRUSTEES: Marcie Cohen Ferris, Eric L. Goldstein, Phyllis Leffler, Stuart Rockoff, Robert N. Rosen, Jack Rosensweig, Jim Schuyler, Stephen J. Whitfield. EX-OFFICIO: Minette Cooper, Jay Tanenbaum.

Correspondence concerning authors' guidelines, contributions, and all editorial matters should be addressed to the Editor, *Southern Jewish History*, 2517 Hartford Dr., Ellenwood, GA 30294; email: Markkbauman@aol.com. The journal is interested in unpublished articles pertaining to the Jewish experience in the American South. Publishers who wish to submit books for review should email egoldst@emory.edu. For journal subscriptions and advertising, write Rachel Heimovics Braun, *SJH* managing editor, 954 Stonewood Lane, Maitland, FL 32751; email: journal@jewishsouth.org; or visit [www.jewishsouth.org](http://www.jewishsouth.org).

Articles appearing in *Southern Jewish History* are abstracted and/or indexed in *Historical Abstracts*, *America: History and Life*, *Index to Jewish Periodicals*, *Journal of American History*, and *Journal of Southern History*.

*Southern Jewish History* acknowledges with deep appreciation grants from the Lucius N. Littauer Foundation of New York and the Gale Foundation of Beaumont, Texas.

Copyright © 2005 by the Southern Jewish Historical Society.

ISSN 1521-4206

## PERMISSION STATEMENT

Consent by the Southern Jewish Historical Society is given for private use of articles and images that have appeared in *Southern Jewish History*. Copying or distributing any journal, article, image, or portion thereof, for any use other than private, is forbidden without the written permission of *Southern Jewish History*. To obtain that permission, contact the editor, Mark K. Bauman, at [MarkKBauman@aol.com](mailto:MarkKBauman@aol.com) or the managing editor, Bryan Edward Stone, at [bstone@delmar.edu](mailto:bstone@delmar.edu).



Macey Kronsberg:  
Institution Builder of Conservative Judaism  
in Charleston, S.C., and the Southeast

by

Peggy Kronsberg Pearlstein

**A**fternoon and evening thunderstorms on July 16, 1947, left the city of Charleston, South Carolina, rain soaked. Nearby Sullivan's Island, where many of the city's residents summered, did not escape the heavy downpour either. In spite of the inclement weather, a group of men and women, most of whom were members of Orthodox congregation Brith Sholom, gathered at the beach home of Moses and Florence Mendelsohn for a meeting convened by Macey Kronsberg to discuss "furthering the Conservative Judaism movement in Charleston."<sup>1</sup>

Across the United States, young people in similar communities met to start synagogues, fueling the dramatic growth of new congregations in the decades following World War II. In concert with an increased interest in Judaism, this expansion reflected the acculturation and suburbanization of numerous second-generation Jews. Many also felt a heightened sense of responsibility to maintain Judaism as the mantle of Jewish culture and leadership shifted to the United States with the destruction of much of European Jewry in the Holocaust. The second-generation children of immigrants who were coming of age looked to synthesize their new sense of being fully American with their old sense of a traditional Jewish religious upbringing. They wanted a Judaism consonant with their current lifestyle; one in which they could fit in with their non-Jewish neighbors. Although Reform and even Orthodox Judaism gained new

affiliates, the Conservative movement grew most rapidly in this period.<sup>2</sup>

Jack Wertheimer, historian of Conservative Judaism, has noted that the decisive factor in the establishment of a Conservative congregation was often the initiative of key individuals. It was, he says, "the determination and forcefulness of a few strong-willed and wealthy laymen who convinced others of the need to modernize a traditional synagogue or establish a new congregation that would better serve the needs of the community." At the same time, rabbis played critical roles in helping to "transform their congregants' vague impulse for change into specific new programs," and fostering "institutional allegiance to the national bodies of the Conservative movement."<sup>3</sup> Such was the case in Charleston.

Macey Kronsberg and his brothers, along with the Steinberg and Lesser families and others, initiated efforts in the 1940s to modernize their Orthodox congregation. They engaged a rabbi ordained by the Conservative Jewish Theological Seminary of America (JTS) in the hopes that he would lead the congregants in modifying worship and in making other changes that would benefit the entire family, a central focus of Conservative Judaism. When they were unsuccessful in achieving the desired modifications, these families founded a Conservative congregation.

#### *Conservative Judaism Takes Root in the United States*

Conservative Judaism, whose leaders perceived the movement as deriving from the "positive-historical" school of Rabbi Zacharias Frankel in nineteenth-century Europe, took root in the United States with the establishment of JTS in 1886. The leadership's goal was to "conserve" tradition in response to what it believed was the radicalization of American Reform Judaism, embodied in that movement's Pittsburgh Platform of the previous year. JTS was reorganized in 1902 and invited Rabbi Solomon Schechter of Cambridge, England, to serve as president. Under his guidance, Conservatism began a period of expansion, especially appealing to eastern European immigrants and their Americanized children. Yet he and others were reluctant to start a separate

*The four Kronsberg brothers, c. 1930.*

*Macey is top left. Clockwise from Macey are Milton, Meyer, and Edward.*

*(Courtesy of Peggy Kronsberg Pearlstein.)*

movement. These people thought of themselves as preserving traditional Judaism and working with the Orthodox community.<sup>4</sup>

The tri-fold institutional framework of Conservative Judaism that they nonetheless established in New York City consisted of JTS, the Rabbinical Assembly (RA), and the United Synagogue consortium of congregations. The movement espoused a middle-of-the-road message, a part of which emphasized adapting traditional Jewish worship with accommodations to modern American practices. Innovations that attracted younger Jews included late Friday evening services, English responsive readings, mixed seating during religious services, greater participation of women in

the synagogue, youth programming, and emphasis on modern educational methods.<sup>5</sup>

Many Conservative rabbis and laymen were involved in Zionist activities at the same time that they were creating institutions to sustain American Jewry. These individuals were drawn to Zionism, a modern movement that also began at the end of the nineteenth century in Europe partly in response to antisemitism and the rise of nationalism. Its followers worked for the building of the ancient homeland of Palestine for Jews. As Samuel Halperin observes, "The American Zionist movement derived its most unanimously enthusiastic and dedicated supporters from the ranks of Conservative Judaism."<sup>6</sup>

During the interwar era, it was difficult to distinguish between modern Orthodox and Conservative congregations in their religious practices. For example, mixed seating for men and women during services was sometimes found in sanctuaries of both. Some congregations offered worshipers both separate seating and mixed pews. In one case, Chizuk Amuno Congregation in Baltimore, Maryland, one of the twenty-two founding members of the Conservative United Synagogue of America (USA) in 1913, did not vote to have mixed seating until 1947. Even then, a few rows in the sanctuary remained for separate seating.<sup>7</sup>

In their quest to accommodate this changing religious landscape of acculturation, some Orthodox congregations engaged rabbis ordained by JTS, many of whom had an Orthodox upbringing, had attended yeshivot, and were native-born English speakers. These were important qualities to have in reaching out to the young people in increasingly Americanized communities. A number of congregations whose rabbis were JTS graduates gradually moved from membership in the Orthodox Union to affiliation with the Conservative USA.<sup>8</sup>

The migration of Americans from city centers to outlying areas that occurred following the Second World War included Jewish families. A housing shortage spurred the creation of developments in the suburbs. Government-assisted mortgages, coupled with increasing affluence and the growth of the highway system helped newly married men and women move to tract



developments and purchase automobiles for traveling to and from work and the city. For many Jews, this suburban lifestyle conveyed a sense of belonging in America. Another way in which the sense manifested itself was in the new congregations Jewish families formed and the new synagogues they erected, alongside the churches of their Protestant and Catholic neighbors.<sup>9</sup>

This article is an exploration of these changes and how they led to the emergence of Conservative Judaism in the Jewish community of Charleston during the 1940s. The experiences of Macey (1911–2001) and Adele Jules Kronsberg (1909–2002), who resided in Charleston from 1936 until 1950 and were important figures in these developments and in the establishment of the Southeastern Region of the USA, provide a glimpse into the processes of Americanization, suburbanization, religious transformation, and institution building.<sup>10</sup> This essay examines their attempts to achieve a balance between maintaining their Jewish identity and acculturating into the larger American culture.

#### *Shifting Loyalties in Charleston's Jewish Community*

Mirroring other Jewish communities, Charleston's congregations experienced transformations as the community matured, its members adapted to the surrounding American culture, and newcomers arrived in the city in successive generations. These transformations led to frequent congregational splits and mergers. The eventual acculturation of immigrants may have minimized religious differences, but the continued small size of the community has also limited the ability of its religious institutions to sustain extensive diversity.

Jewish merchants and traders founded Kahal Kadosh (K. K.) Beth Elohim, the fourth synagogue established in America, in Charleston in 1749. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, Charleston was the premier port in the country and was home to the largest Jewish population. The metropolis had not only provided the "port Jews" with economic opportunity, but had offered them religious tolerance as well. According to historian James Hagy, "From the first arrival of Jews in Charleston, they had adopted the ways of life of the other inhabitants, including, on the

part of some, the modification of their religious practice and beliefs."<sup>11</sup> The promise of America and its commitment to religious liberty in a free society became deeply rooted in Charleston, as did the processes of adjustment and change.

In the 1820s, young, American-born members of Beth Elohim agitated for modifications in synagogue practices. They believed, for example, that changes in the services including the addition of a Sabbath sermon and shorter ceremonies would enhance decorum, attract more members, and, most important, preserve Jewish life and Judaism in America. Unable to win concessions from the elders of K. K. Beth Elohim, the "Reformed Society of Israelites for Promoting True Principles of Judaism According to Its Purity and Spirit" worshiped together as a separate group until the late 1830s. In doing so, Gary Zola, biographer of Isaac Harby, a reformed society leader, notes, "Harby and his colleagues were the first in American Jewish history to grapple with the clash of values they confronted as Jews living in an open society."<sup>12</sup>

Gustav Poznanski, Beth Elohim's minister starting in 1840, permitted the installation of an organ in the congregation's new sanctuary, rebuilt after a fire destroyed the original building in 1838. This signaled the beginning of permanent reforms and the return of the dissidents as their society declined and dispersed. At the dedication of the building, Poznanski proclaimed, "This country is our Palestine, this city our Jerusalem, this house of God our temple."<sup>13</sup> For these Jews, Charleston was their Zion, America their promised land. A century after its founding, the traditional synagogue had become the first Reform congregation in the United States.

Unwilling to accept the changes, the traditionalists broke away and organized Shearith Israel, which also followed the Sephardic rite. There were not enough members to support both congregations, however, and they merged after the Civil War.<sup>14</sup>

In 1852, under the leadership of Polish-born Rabbi Hirsch Zvi Margolis Levy, more than two dozen Yiddish-speaking Polish and German immigrants organized Brith Sholom as an Orthodox synagogue and the first Ashkenazic congregation in South Carolina. A breakaway of more observant Jews

formed Shari Emouna in 1886. Eleven years later, its members folded their congregation and rejoined Brith Sholom. Historian Jeffrey Gurock argues that there were too few Jews in Charleston to maintain multiple religious institutions and that, as the immigrants became more Americanized, they too became less observant.<sup>15</sup>

Brith Sholom, called the Polish synagogue because of the background of its founders, grew to over two hundred members as more Jews from eastern Europe came to the city in the early twentieth century. A split in the congregation occurred once more in 1911, when a group of about sixty men, most of them originally from the Polish town of Kaluszyn, formed Beth Israel. Its constituency, like that of Shari Emouna earlier, may have considered itself more pious than those who worshiped at Brith Sholom and who were likely earlier, more acculturated residents.<sup>16</sup> Although membership increased, Beth Israel could not afford a spiritual leader. Congregants finally turned to Brith Sholom in 1933 and sought the help of Benjamin Axelman, its rabbi since 1927, to officiate at their lifecycle events and in the Jewish education of the school children.<sup>17</sup>

In the period between the world wars, Charleston's three synagogues maintained auxiliaries that aided educational, social, and religious programs. Community-wide organizations included the Hebrew Benevolent Society (1784), Hebrew Orphan Society (1801), local chapters of B'nai B'rith (1867), the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) (1897), the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) (1906), and Hadassah (1921). The Jewish Community Center, begun in the 1920s, also crossed denominational boundaries. The organizations provided venues for synagogue members to meet in a nonreligious setting, mix socially, and expand their horizons. They provided additional opportunities for community members to develop leadership skills. As a reflection of their acculturation, the Jews of Charleston also participated in an array of civic groups.<sup>18</sup>

In addition to increased acculturation, economic, demographic, and political changes had an impact on Jews throughout the country and in Charleston.

*Economy and War Reshape Charleston and Its Jewish Community*

The economic downturn and stagnation in the years following the 1929 Depression affected Charleston and its Jews, especially those engaged in retail trade. Some younger members of the Orthodox congregations, to the dismay of their immigrant parents, even began to open their stores for business on the Sabbath.<sup>19</sup> Although the Depression was on the wane by the mid-thirties, it was the entry of the United States into World War II and mobilization that refueled America's economy.

In 1937, the U. S. Census of Religious Bodies estimated Charleston's Jewish population to be about twenty-five hundred. Then war brought increased work at Charleston's navy yard and port. By 1944, the greater metropolitan area grew to about 157,000 people. The upturn in the economy and the jobs created, coupled with the arrival of Jewish service personnel stationed in the area, temporarily expanded the Jewish community too. The city continued to prosper and grow in the post-war era. While some soldiers never came back from the war, others returned, married local women, and created families. However, the 1948 census taken by the Jewish Community Center enumerated fewer than two thousand Jews clustered in 589 family units. The Jewish population decrease may have been due to the fact that younger, more acculturated Jews tended to have smaller families. Charleston's Jewish population then ranked 132nd in size, or just .004 percent of the Jews in the United States.<sup>20</sup>

*Kronsberg Family Background*

It was during this period in the 1930s and 1940s that the Kronsberg family grew and deepened its involvement in the religious, business, social, and cultural life of Charleston. When Macey and Adele Kronsberg arrived in 1936, they quickly immersed themselves in the community. Macey's upbringing in a traditional Conservative congregation and his forceful leadership led him to agitate for change at Orthodox Brith Sholom, change that eventually led to the establishment of a new Conservative congregation.

*Seaman Macey Kronsberg during World War II.  
(Courtesy of Peggy Kronsberg Pearlstein.)*

Macey's parents, Abraham and Lena Kronsberg, eastern European immigrants who arrived in the United States in the 1880s, later met and were married in 1901 in Portsmouth, Virginia. Their oldest son, Edward, was born there in 1903. The Kronsbergs moved to Tilghman Island on the eastern shore of Maryland to become the proprietors of a general store and the island's only Jewish family. There Lena gave birth to three other sons, Meyer, Milton, and the youngest, Macey, who was born on August 11, 1911.

When Abraham died unexpectedly at the end of 1918, his widow moved with her children to east Baltimore to be near relatives. The family became involved in Conservative Judaism and Zionism when they joined Chizuk Amuno, which as previously noted, was a pioneer Conservative congregation. Beth El in Norfolk, Virginia, was the only other Conservative congregation in the region. The Conservative movement was slowly getting established in the South. Macey attended the Hebrew school of Chizuk Amuno, worshipped regularly, and had his bar mitzvah there.<sup>21</sup>

At fifteen, Edward moved to Charleston, South Carolina, where he worked in the clothing store of his uncle, Joseph Bluestein. In 1926, the young man started his own retail enterprise, Edward's 5¢-10¢ and \$1.00 Store. Meyer and Milton joined him in the business. Over the next half century, the store grew into a chain of thirty-one variety stores in South Carolina and two in Georgia. The Kronsberg family sold the business in 1977 to Kuhn Brothers of Tennessee. Edward married native Charlestonian Hattie Barshay, daughter of eastern European immigrants. Like his father-in-law Emanuel Barshay who served as president of Brith Sholom in 1924-1925, Edward would serve as president in 1939-1940 and again in 1945-1946. In addition to his extensive involvement in Jewish organizations, Edward Kronsberg was also a major participant in every segment of community life during the more than sixty years that he lived in the city. His strong civic leadership demonstrated that one could maintain a Jewish identity and also earn acceptance and respect from non-Jews. His activism also laid the roots for further involvement by the rest of the family in the business and religious life of the city. Hattie, Edward's wife, was on the board of directors of the Florence Crittenden Home. Milton, the third brother, became president of the Jewish Community Center. His wife, Frederica (Freddie), was also active in Jewish organizations.<sup>22</sup>

Until he moved to Charleston and entered the family business, Macey Kronsberg lived in Baltimore and continued his interests in Conservative Judaism and Zionism. These early encounters later led him to the forefront of change in major movements in the Jewish community, and he became a principal

player in the founding of several Jewish organizations including the local American Zionist Emergency Committee (AZEC), Conservative Synagogue Emanu-El, and the Southeastern Region of the USA.

In 1933, Macey graduated from the Johns Hopkins University. At the Associated Jewish Charities he found employment as a social worker and met Adele Jules, his future wife. Born August 6, 1909, Adele was a native Baltimorean, whose maternal ancestors had come to the United States by the 1850s. She grew up in a family that was active in the Reform Baltimore Hebrew Congregation. The couple eloped on September 19, 1935, and were wed by Morris Goodblatt, rabbi of Conservative Congregation Beth Am Israel in Philadelphia.<sup>23</sup> The marriage lasted over sixty-five years.<sup>24</sup>

Soon after Macey's arrival in Charleston in 1936, Adele drove down to join him. Pregnant with the first of their three daughters, she brought her mother-in-law, Lena Kronsberg, to live with them.<sup>25</sup> The young couple joined Brith Sholom where the other brothers were already members and quickly became involved in numerous civic groups and in local, regional, and national Jewish communal affairs.

In addition to his interest in the Orthodox synagogue, Macey was active in ZOA, AZEC, Masons (he became master of the Friendship Lodge in 1948), Rotary, Chamber of Commerce, Retail Merchants Association, and Red Cross.<sup>26</sup> He developed skills in these organizations and, as an officer in some of them, was able to provide leadership and vision.

Adele, a well-organized, tireless worker, crackerjack stenographer, typist and secretary, was involved in Jewish causes all of her life, most often alongside her husband. When she arrived in Charleston, her efforts focused on Brith Sholom, its Daughters of Israel sisterhood, the Sunday schools of Brith Sholom and Beth Elohim, the Milk Committee, SOS (Supplies for Overseas), Hadasah, and the NCJW. In 1948, Senior Hadassah appointed her to the Bicentennial Advisory Council, a community-wide effort to plan for the two hundredth anniversary of the Charleston Jewish community to be celebrated in 1950.<sup>27</sup> Like Macey, Adele enjoyed

opportunities to broaden her interaction with members of the Jewish and non-Jewish communities and to develop leadership qualities through communal activism. This demonstrated that the young couple and others like them could successfully be both modern Americans and committed Jews simultaneously.

Boundaries between the elite members of Reform Beth Elohim, who were involved in the NCJW, and eastern European Jewish women, who belonged primarily to the Orthodox congregations, may have already loosened in Charleston due to the fact that many of the first generation women had already acculturated by the 1930s and were needed by the NCJW section in its efforts to help refugees. When Adele arrived, three women, one from an Orthodox synagogue and two from the Reform congregation, called on her at home and invited her to join both the local section of the NCJW and the Reform sisterhood. The former may have been especially eager for Adele, as a member of the active Kronsberg family, and as an individual who had grown up in a Reform congregation, to join its organization. In 1941, Adele and Claire Givner were sent as delegates from the Charleston section to the NCJW's Southern Interstate Conference in Tampa, Florida. This was the first time Adele had attended a conference in an official capacity. She reported to the Charleston section, "I have gained much in experience, much in knowledge and information beyond the workings of the individual sections, and much in pleasant contacts, acquaintances and friendships."<sup>28</sup>

From 1943 to 1945, Adele served two terms as president of the Charleston section of NCJW. She traveled to other conferences including the national convention held in Chicago in 1943. Under her leadership, the local section sought to educate its members through programs that, for example, focused on women in national defense and on the legislative process. Knowledgeable women, NCJW leaders believed, would be better able to make informed decisions as Americans and as Jews. During Adele's presidency, the chapter participated in relief and welfare activities with the Charleston Federation of Women's Clubs and became a member of the newly formed Charleston Welfare Council.<sup>29</sup> In 1943, Governor Olin D. Johnston appointed Adele to the South



Carolina State War Fund. In 1947, she was elected to the National Council of the Jewish Joint Distribution Committee as a regional participant in its activities.<sup>30</sup> Her involvement in multiple Jewish organizations signaled that all Jewish women, regardless of their synagogue affiliation, could work together for the betterment of the Jewish community. Invitations to join and participate in general organizations indicated the acceptance of Jewish women into the larger sphere of Charleston society.

As they increasingly fit in with their welcoming surroundings, the Kronsbergs and others in the Jewish community began to seek a Judaism that fit with their new lifestyle. They wanted to maintain a traditional Jewish upbringing for their children at the same time that they wanted to modernize aspects of the worship service. These young adults also wanted to include women more fully in synagogue life, just as women were more fully participating in other spheres within the population at large. As active lay leaders in Brith Sholom, they sought new rabbinic leadership that could help them extend democratic principles into the synagogue.

#### *Religious Adjustments and Rabbinic Alterations*

American-born Rabbi Benjamin Axelman was twenty-three years old when he assumed the pulpit of Brith Sholom in 1927. His youthfulness probably appealed to the younger, more acculturated generation. It was also financially advantageous to engage a newly ordained rabbi rather than someone experienced who earned a more substantial salary. Axelman had been ordained the year before by the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS), affiliated with Yeshiva College in New York. RIETS was developing into a mainstream Orthodox institution that could provide Americanized Orthodox congregations with the modern rabbis they were seeking.<sup>31</sup>

In Charleston, Axelman worked energetically in several areas. He created a joint Hebrew school for children of Brith Sholom and Beth Israel, started a successful junior congregation, and led a popular young adult study group. It seemed, however, that the synagogue leadership did not sufficiently appreciate his efforts.

For many years, the *hazan-shokhet* received higher compensation than the rabbi. In 1939, the board of trustees refused to grant Axelman the life contract he sought. Things came to a head in 1943 when the board denied his request for a more generous salary.<sup>32</sup>

According to historian Jeffrey Gurock, the congregants decided against retaining Axelman. Even Axelman's supporters were unhappy about sharing his rabbinic services with Beth Israel and their children in the Hebrew School. Nonetheless a special meeting was called and the congregation overwhelmingly reversed the first vote. Consequently, the congregation offered the rabbi a short-term contract with a small monetary increase. The situation was untenable for the rabbi, and he resigned from Brith Sholom in August 1943. He assumed the pulpit of Orthodox Congregation Petach Tikvah in Baltimore, serving as its spiritual leader from 1943 to 1976.<sup>33</sup>

Even prior to Axelman's resignation, the religious viewpoints of new leaders and younger members were changing and they looked for ways to bring people back to the synagogue. They were concerned about the poor attendance at services, the lack of engagement of congregants in Jewish life and observance, the lessening of youth involvement in the congregation, and the low quality of religious instruction in the Hebrew school. In 1940, President Edward Kronsberg called for the rabbi to introduce late Friday evening services following the regular sundown service that inaugurated the Sabbath. While this was already a practice of many Conservative and even some Orthodox synagogues elsewhere, it had not been tried in Charleston, although it is unknown whether Axelman had considered the additional service.<sup>34</sup>

With Axelman's departure, Brith Sholom established a "Rabbi Committee" to find his replacement. Could a new spiritual leader bring about changes in synagogue practices advocated by some congregants even as the congregation remained Orthodox? Nationally, without clear boundaries for mixed seating and late Friday night services, which would later separate the denominations, and with RIETS still attempting to become a mainstream organization, congregations like Brith

*Macey Kronsberg with his two older daughters,  
Rachel Rose (left) and Peggy Rebecca, December 1944.  
(Courtesy of Peggy Kronsberg Pearlstein.)*

Sholom remained within the Orthodox orbit but recruited rabbis from the Conservative JTS.

Macey Kronsberg, one of the younger and newer congregants, became chair of the rabbi's search committee, which appears to have had only one other member, Isadore Lesser, who was also in the retail business.<sup>35</sup> Macey immediately sent letters to the placement committees of Orthodox seminaries Yeshivath Torah Vodaath and Mesivta and the Rabbinical Seminary of New York, both in Brooklyn and both more traditional than RIETS, and the Hebrew Theological College in Chicago, Illinois, as well as to JTS. Graduates of the Chicago college were known to accept pulpits in congregations with mixed seating.<sup>36</sup> Perhaps these Orthodox seminaries were contacted in order to demonstrate to the members of Brith Sholom that the search committee was casting its net widely for candidates.

Just a few days after Axelman's resignation, Rabbi Emanuel Marcus, director of the Jewish Community Service Bureau of RIETS and Yeshiva College, wrote to Brith Sholom stating that Axelman had informed his alma mater that he was leaving Charleston. "Yeshiva" he stated, ". . . is ready and anxious to help you select a fitting successor."<sup>37</sup> But by early September, the congregation had not yet invited a candidate from RIETS to Charleston for an interview. Dr. Samuel Belkin, president of Yeshiva, sent a telegram personally urging that Brith Sholom interview one of its graduates before making a final selection.<sup>38</sup>

In June, prior to becoming chair of the Rabbi Committee, Macey met with Rabbi Moshe Davis, registrar of JTS, in New York City. At that time, he may have inquired about rabbis who were available and about procedures for engaging a JTS rabbi, indicating at least his own interest in placing a Conservative rabbi in Brith Sholom. When he officially contacted JTS on behalf of the congregation in early August, it presented a special opportunity for the seminary and the United Synagogue to pull an Orthodox congregation in the South into the fold of Conservative Judaism. According to historian David Starr, Solomon Schechter, president of JTS until his death in 1915, had failed to reach out to southern congregations during his tenure.<sup>39</sup>

The letters from Macey to Moshe Davis and to the seminary's placement committee provide insight into the selection of a JTS graduate for Brith Sholom over a rabbi ordained by one of the Orthodox yeshivot. To Davis, Macey wrote, "We have been instructed to communicate with other Yeshivas but you know my own personal inclination is toward a Seminary man. I believe our committee sufficiently liberal to be persuaded but cannot be positive. . . . Not only am I keen for our own sakes, but, for the Southeast as well. . . . If the Seminary is to properly disseminate its philosophy of the Jewish Way of Life, it seems to me that it is high time we have one of its Rabbis in this area. . . . I am not only thinking of the present but of the post war South as well. . . . When the war is over, many of the industries in this region . . . will all continue to operate and definitely establish the southeast as the last frontier in America to be exploited . . . many more of our coreligionists will infiltrate in and carry on their commercial livelihood . . . I believe Charleston would . . . be a logical city to welcome the first Seminary Rabbi since it is located on the periphery of this [postwar industrial frontier] region."<sup>40</sup>

Macey's letter to the JTS placement committee provided background on the congregation and the city's Jewish population of five hundred families, which was augmented by "an additional influx of at least one hundred families among war workers and members of the armed forces." Macey admitted that the rabbi, congregation, and Hebrew school leaders had been unhappy with Axelman's splitting time among so many groups and that "he could not do justice to the several tasks that confronted him." Brith Sholom needed a rabbi who would devote himself exclusively to the congregation and to supervise rather than teach in the school. The ideal candidate, he continued, "must be primarily a 'loyal adherent' to orthodoxy but can have a liberal approach to American Jewish problems. . . . [T]he type of Rabbi we shall need will be a man endowed with initiative and organizational capacities." Adolph Coblenz, the rabbi of Conservative Chizuk Amuno Congregation in Baltimore, where Macey belonged until he moved to Charleston, may have served as a role model for him in the search for a replacement for Axelman. His activism in

Zionist activities beyond Charleston provided Macey with opportunities to meet other Conservative Jews and rabbis from around the country. He also recognized that the rabbi selected had to be very traditional in order to be accepted by that faction of the membership. But he mentioned to the placement committee that the congregation was interested in late Friday evening services, "in order to re-attract our members and seat-holders to Shul more often." Finally, he expressed the hope that the candidate "shall be blessed with a wife who is endowed with charm and skill and can aid him in his work with the congregation and community."<sup>41</sup>

The Rabbi Committee did not invite for an interview any candidates who had been ordained by Orthodox seminaries. The only candidate brought down for a weekend was Solomon D. Goldfarb, a JTS graduate. Macey and Lesser had been introduced to Goldfarb and his wife Sophia ("Tuppy") by Rabbi Elias Margolis, chairman of the JTS placement committee, during a trip to New York, and the two men were impressed. The congregants selected him to replace Axelman. Goldfarb was born in Sokolow, Austria, in 1902, and brought to the United States at age two, so that by adulthood, he was clearly Americanized. In addition to studying at the Orthodox RIETS, Goldfarb received a teacher's license from the Tarbut School for Teachers in New York and a Bachelor of Science from New York University in 1929. He was ordained by JTS in 1932 and, three years later, studied at the Hebrew University and at Merkaz ha-Rav in Palestine, the yeshiva founded there by Abraham Isaac Kook, the first Ashkenazic chief rabbi of modern Israel.<sup>42</sup>

Goldfarb had served in pulpits in Westwood, New Jersey, and in Spring Valley, Albany, and Brooklyn, New York. In Albany, he was president of the Zionist district and, with his wife, had engaged in interfaith work. Goldfarb's knowledge of modern written and spoken Hebrew and his involvement with Zionism most likely resonated deeply with those congregants including Macey, who were active in the Charleston ZOA district.<sup>43</sup> For those ready to institute changes at Brith Sholom that would modernize traditional Judaism so that it would fit into their American

*Macey and Adele Kronsberg  
with their youngest daughter, Sandra Judith, 1949.  
(Courtesy of Peggy Kronsberg Pearlstein.)*

way of life, Goldfarb's affiliation with Conservative Judaism was of paramount importance.

In his introduction of Goldfarb when he came to be interviewed, Macey told the congregation that everyone owed a debt to the founders of JTS, which trained rabbis "who would adapt themselves and their people to the American Jewish scene." Because of them, he said, "*today* [emphasis in original] the Seminary is pre-eminently qualified to carry on Jewish tradition and civilization in America after the life line to Europe is now irretrievably destroyed." He noted that there were more than three hundred ordained rabbis "imbued with the philosophy of the Seminary which has consistently sought since its inception to rationalize our American civilization with a living and dynamic Judaism, which has seen the rebirth of Eretz Yisroel as a Gan Aden and the resurrection of the Hebrew tongue as more than a *lashon kodesh*."44

The congregation offered the rabbi a salary of \$5,000 per year, substantially more than Axelman had received. Goldfarb and his wife, Tuppy, returned to Charleston right before the High Holidays. In his letter of welcome to the new rabbi, Macey began, "It is the fruition of an idea for a seminary man cherished many years and I keenly look forward to associating myself with you in building up the Jewish life in our community. . . . [T]he Steinberg family is equally thrilled . . . Mr. Lesser is also very pleased."45 Relying on Macey Kronsberg's papers and the brief congregation minutes, it is unclear whether or not there was a consensus for engaging a JTS man as the next rabbinic leader for Brith Sholom. For Macey, however, the choice was right.

Enthusiastic about Goldfarb's election and eager for the rabbi to make changes that he hoped would bring many people to the synagogue, Macey offered the rabbi several suggestions, although Goldfarb's annual reports to the congregation do not indicate that he implemented them. For the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services Macey wrote that announcing page numbers, advising the congregation when to stand, when to sit, and when to read responsively or silently would be helpful. "By enabling the



congregation to have this detailed explanation of the prayers good decorum could be maintained among the women and intelligent following of the service be practiced." Macey also requested a prayer for the men in the armed services with a recitation of their names. He even suggested sermon topics including prayer, penitence, charity, and their meaning for the first day of Rosh Hashanah, and "All Israel" and plans for the betterment of the synagogue, the community, and beyond for the second day, with a limit on delivering each talk to about thirty or forty minutes!<sup>46</sup>

During his tenure at Brith Sholom, Goldfarb instituted late Friday evening services after the early Kabbalat Shabbat service, began a monthly congregational bulletin called *The Messenger*, brought the Daughters of Israel into the congregation as its sisterhood, organized Shabbat services for the children of the community, and with his wife, tried to keep the synagogue's Talmud Torah going in spite of teacher turnover. Community-wide, he was invited to speak about Judaism on WCSC and WMTA, the local radio stations, participated in chaplaincy work, and became a leader in the local chapters of the ZOA and AZEC.<sup>47</sup>

AZEC had been created to coordinate Zionist activity in the United States after the British White Paper limited Jewish immigration to Palestine in 1939. After it was reorganized into a lobby, its activities increased, especially between the end of World War II and the establishment of the state of Israel. Individual Jews worked at a local level to garner America's support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine.<sup>48</sup>

As head of the Charleston AZEC, Goldfarb brought South Carolina's Governor Olin D. Johnston to speak at Brith Sholom on Friday evening, March 31, 1944. Before five hundred people, the governor "made an urgent plea for an open door policy in Palestine." According to the article written by Macey for *The Messenger*, the Governor looked forward to the day "when the Jewish homeland shall again be Palestine, and when the Jews will have an opportunity of having their own nation and their own flag."<sup>49</sup>

While Goldfarb continued his community activism, he was interested in making additional modifications in congregational worship. In September 1944, he told the board that a new building was necessary to add women's seating. Louis Lesser, a member since his arrival in Charleston eight years earlier, wrote a formal letter of complaint to Brith Sholom the following year. "I for one am not going to stand for it any longer," he said about the cramped and hot upstairs section of the synagogue where the women sat during High Holiday services. A new, air-conditioned building "run conservatively," he believed, was what was needed. "This is 1945, not 1845, and if conservatism is good enough for such cities like Charlotte, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Washington, Richmond, and New York," he concluded, "it ought to be good for Charleston."<sup>50</sup> In June 1946, the issue of space rose again, when the minutes of the board stated that there was a lack of seating for women for the High Holidays. The overcrowding was the result of growth. The April 1947 congregational minutes had recorded a membership gain, mostly of families, from 258 to 289 in one year.<sup>51</sup>

However, as the end of his contract neared, Goldfarb realized that he would not be able to move forward with changes that would satisfy the more liberal members of the congregation. He resigned in February 1947 and secured a pulpit starting April 1 as rabbi of the Conservative Temple Israel in Long Beach, New York. Like his predecessor Rabbi Axelman, this was a position he held for the rest of his rabbinical career.<sup>52</sup>

In Charleston, neither rabbi had been able to please all of Brith Sholom's constituencies. In Axelman's case, the liberal elements pressed their rabbi to modernize worship practices. In the case of Goldfarb, the traditionalists prevented attempts by the rabbi and his followers to innovate, even though they were not necessarily observant themselves. That Goldfarb and Axelman each remained in their next pulpits until retirement points to the fact that they were capable and respected rabbis. It also signified that the religious philosophy, seminary allegiance, and initiatives of the rabbis were compatible with the members of later congregations as they

*Governor Olin D. Johnston (center) posing with  
Macey Kronsberg (left) and Rabbi Solomon Goldfarb.  
Governor Johnston gave a pro-Zionist speech at Brith Sholom in 1946.  
(Courtesy of Peggy Pearlstein Kronsberg.)*

had been with Kronsberg and like-minded members of Brith Sholom.

*A Conservative Synagogue Grows In Charleston*

In 1956, Goldfarb looked back on his years at Brith Sholom. To Milton Kronsberg he wrote that a decade earlier he had not been able to initiate certain changes in the synagogue. "Reverence for the past deteriorated into distrust of the vitality of Judaism," he said. "On all sides," he continued, "[a] handful of old guards preserved the status quo. I still shudder at the refrain that met the most moderate innovation: 'WE NEVER DID IT THAT WAY'." [Emphasis in original.] To Edward Kronsberg, the former two-term president of the congregation, Goldfarb said that "I came to Brith-Shalom not with the intention of dismembering it. . . . I intended to build an outstanding and influential Traditional

Congregation." He noted that he used the word Traditional and not Conservative, "because I do not go in for labels. It is the behavior of the congregants and their best interests that matter most."<sup>53</sup>

Goldfarb also acknowledged the struggle Edward Kronsberg had in trying to maintain loyalty to Brith Sholom, where he had been a part for a quarter century, and Goldfarb recognized the desires of some members to make changes in synagogue practices. He wrote, "You served it [Brith Sholom] with means, might and marrow for many years. I respect your loyalty to it, and appreciate the conflict that went on within you during 'the war of states.'"<sup>54</sup>

The Orthodox faction within the congregation stood its ground and refused to accept accommodations to modernize worship by either Goldfarb or his supporters. The conflict escalated to new heights as both sides campaigned for their positions. Some congregants, like Edward Kronsberg, struggled with the decision, torn by family ties, devotion to the synagogue, and the desire to bring about changes from within that could attract and keep the loyalty of a younger generation of Jews.

Rabbi Hyman A. Rabinowitz of Sioux City, Iowa, was brought to Charleston for an interview to be Goldfarb's successor. Like Goldfarb, he had studied at RIETS before graduation and was ordained by JTS. Simultaneously, Rabinowitz's backers moved to alter the wording of the congregation's constitution so that it would uphold "Traditional" rather than "Orthodox" ritual. In addition, the group circulated a petition signed by forty-five members declaring that future rabbis at Brith Sholom should be graduates of JTS or recognized by its rabbinical school.<sup>55</sup>

Macey Kronsberg reported to Goldfarb that his group continued to advocate for Conservative Judaism at Brith Sholom. A second parlor meeting, similar to one held while Goldfarb was still in Charleston, took place at the home of Dr. Matthew Steinberg. Rabbi Joel Geffen, whose father was Tobias Geffen of Atlanta's Shearith Israel, spoke about JTS and Conservative Judaism. He also conducted services at the synagogue. "I think he ably presented the Conservative viewpoint as the son of an orthodox rabbi," Macey wrote. "[A]s a Conservative Jew," he continued, "I

have no right to be an officer in an orthodox [*sic*] Shul. However, I have volunteered my services to be the first president of the first Conservative Shul." Macey also expressed his unhappiness with the situation at Brith Sholom since Goldfarb had taken another pulpit. "If you do not have an able Seminary successor," he wrote to Goldfarb, "I am doubtful if I will stay on here . . . I have plunged deeply into Zionist work but that is not enough."<sup>56</sup>

Determined to prevent Conservative Judaism from coming to Brith Sholom, longtime member Sam Berlin offered an alternative. He sent telegrams to his supporters and proposed a fresh platform of Orthodoxy. Among the items on his list was a new or remodeled synagogue on the present site that would permit women to be seated on elevated sides of the same floor of the sanctuary as men. He proposed a uniform prayer book with English translation and the introduction of English responsive readings. Finally, he suggested continuing the late Friday evening services initiated during Goldfarb's tenure.<sup>57</sup>

Berlin's campaign met with success. At a special meeting on July 13, 1947, after intense lobbying by both elements including a petition signed by 119 members seeking changes, the congregation voted 100 to 74 in favor of remaining Orthodox by not changing the constitution and by not engaging another JTS rabbi rather than continuing on the track of eventual Conservative affiliation. Some petitioners evidently were convinced that the changes Berlin put forth went far enough and, although they had signed the petition, changed their minds when the vote was taken. Nevertheless, ten officers and trustees immediately resigned their positions. A new board was selected and Sam Berlin became the new president.<sup>58</sup>

If Goldfarb and the advocates for change at Brith Sholom had moved more slowly in pressing for changes and had space been adequate, would the congregation have affiliated eventually with Conservative Judaism? Other congregations in the South did follow national models in this direction. Under the leadership of Abraham J. Mesch, an Orthodox rabbi who had been ordained in Palestine by Chief Rabbi Abraham I. Kook, Congregation Beth El in Birmingham, Alabama, could not decide whether it was "a

progressive Orthodox congregation or a traditional Conservative synagogue." But it then affiliated with the Conservative USA as early as 1944.<sup>59</sup> Mesch's colleague and friend, Rabbi Harry H. Epstein, also ordained as an Orthodox rabbi, led Congregation Ahavath Achim in Atlanta, Georgia, into membership in the Conservative USA in 1952.<sup>60</sup> But those determined to keep Orthodoxy at Brith Sholom realized that they needed to make some modifications to worship. When the changes did not go far enough, a second and determined segment of the laity at Brith Sholom left and created a new congregation. Thus the Charleston congregations illustrate a variation in the pattern of change.

As noted at the beginning of this essay, Macey Kronsberg convened a meeting on July 16 of people interested in forming a new Conservative congregation. The average age of the twenty-one men who attended the meeting was forty-two years and almost all were native-born Americans. In general, they were a decade younger than the officers and trustees of Brith Sholom and probably more eager for change. The average age of those men, who were in office when the Orthodox congregation engaged its next rabbi, was fifty-one years, while ten of the thirteen men were native born.<sup>61</sup> Some who came to the initial meeting on July 16 had families with older children and were concerned about providing them with a religious education since they would no longer be attending the Sunday and Hebrew schools at Brith Sholom. Many of the young couples founding Conservative congregations around the nation in emerging suburbs had little experience in running a synagogue. This certainly was not the case with this group that included five past presidents and officers of the parent congregation. Several members of Brith Sholom were already moving to the northwest section of Charleston, where the new Conservative congregation soon found land for a building.

At the initial meeting, Macey urged those gathered not to indulge in "recrimination, malice, or bitterness because of the failure to pass the amendments to Brith Sholom Constitution making it Conservative." He continued, "Conservative Jews are dignified," and those who wanted change had tried to amend the constitution

“by democratic means.” In addition, it was in the best interests of the group to retain interest and membership in Brith Sholom for the ties they had to other members and for the services of a *shokhet* and *mohel*. Macey stated that “each must determine if he was prepared to make the step toward Conservatism and willing to assume a share in it, financially and otherwise.”<sup>62</sup>

The “overwhelming opinion of those in attendance,” Macey wrote in the minutes which he had reconstructed from notes, “was in favor of carrying out this program to organize a Conservative Synagogue before the High Holydays.” In the discussion that followed, “several persons felt that one did not tear up deep family roots in a synagogue without making a last final effort to affect a reconciliation of conflicting views. Others present felt it was hopeless to change people whose convictions were so strong to keep Brith Sholom Orthodox.” The discussion also brought out the fact that Brith Sholom had formed ninety years earlier because of disagreement with Beth Elohim and that, twenty-odd years before, Beth Israel had formed as an offshoot because of disagreement among members of Brith Sholom. “Thus the formation of a Conservative Synagogue would be following a precedent previously established.”<sup>63</sup>

While Hyman Rephan, a former president of Brith Sholom (1937–1938) and owner of a dairy, and Alex Karesh, who owned a shoe store, supported the plans, they also suggested that a committee present a written statement to Brith Sholom so that the synagogue would be officially advised of the impending movement to form a new congregation. Rephan, Matthew Steinberg, and Nathan Goldberg were asked to constitute this committee. The proposed letter sent to the trustees of Brith Sholom stated, “In view of the large number of members who feel that Conservatism must be provided if attachment to Judaism is not to lessen more as time passes, we wish to resubmit this proposed objective to you with the hope that you may desire to reconsider your former action before steps are concluded for an independent Conservative Synagogue.” Finally, people in the group expressed the sentiment that young people were anxious to find a happy medium between Orthodox and Reform Judaism. As a result of the vote on the

previous Sunday, some of those young people “were prepared to join the Reformed [*sic*] ranks if no provision was made for dignified and Traditional services.”<sup>64</sup>

At a meeting on August 19 at the summer home of Moses and Retha Sharnoff, the group, which called itself the Committee for [*sic*] Conservative Synagogue, decided on the name Synagogue Emanu-El. At a meeting the following evening at the summer home of Edward and Dora Fleishman, Irving Steinberg reported that at a joint meeting between a group of leaders from Synagogue Emanu-El and another from Brith Sholom, the latter declined to engage a Conservative rabbi or to allow mixed seating. Unable to move Brith Sholom toward Conservative Judaism, the group elected officers and a board of trustees.<sup>65</sup>

As the new president, Macey worked with Rabbi Bernard Segal, Director of the Commission on Rabbinic Placement at JTS, to engage a full-time rabbi and a temporary cantor for the fledgling congregation. Isadore Lesser served as the co-chair of this “rabbi committee,” the same position he had held alongside Macey in 1943 when Brith Sholom sought a new spiritual leader.

Segal suggested that Emanu-El engage a rabbi just for the High Holidays.<sup>66</sup> But Macey and other members were eager to secure a permanent spiritual leader. With a fully operational school in a building with adequate space, the synagogue could draw additional members from Brith Sholom and deter others from joining the Reform Beth Elohim. “Our group,” Macey wrote to Segal, “has five past presidents of Congregation Brith Shalom [*sic*] actively working to our objectives. These men . . . are fully aware of the mechanics of operation of a synagogue and this ‘know-how’ possibly may qualify us to choose a full time Rabbi at once. . . . Our program envisages bold and positive action and, if we do not get thoroughly organized for the entire season as well as the High Holydays, our strength may decline.” Macey expressed his concern that if there were too many rabbinic candidates “coming and going” the congregation would flounder. Not only did parents need a Hebrew and a Sunday school, but also there were some children who were already of bar mitzvah age. “I believe



our situation is different from that of other newly formed Conservative synagogues and we may have to act accordingly," Macey stated.<sup>67</sup>

He wrote to Segal in another letter: "As a loyal believer in 'Seminary Judaism', even before I became a member of the United Synagogue National Board [1946], I am keenly anxious to have that type of Judaism firmly implanted in Charleston with a successful Rabbi and Conservative Congregation. This is . . . important for the development of the Seminary's program in the South as it will lay down the pattern in this area for the creation of other Conservative synagogues."<sup>68</sup>

Simultaneously, Macey was dedicated to getting the congregation well established while working to make Conservative Judaism a strong force in the South. The creation of a new region in the movement's constellation of affiliates would also strengthen Conservative Judaism nationally. On July 27, Macey wrote to Rabbi Albert I. Gordon, executive director of the USA, "As you know there are Seminary Rabbis in Augusta, Macon, Jacksonville, Savannah, and Nashville, which would be the nucleus for a regional group. If we are successful in forming a Conservative Synagogue here in Charleston four states could be represented."<sup>69</sup> Macey conceived of reaching out to congregations with JTS rabbis in the cities he noted that had not affiliated with the Conservative movement, to unaffiliated congregations without JTS rabbis, and to congregations already affiliated within the movement.

The first priority was to engage a rabbi from JTS. Rabbi Benjamin Englander was invited to come to Charleston where he spoke at a public meeting at the Francis Marion Hotel on August 10. Although there was discussion about the possibility of offering the position to him, the board of trustees decided to interview other candidates. Rabbi Lewis A. Weintraub was invited to speak on August 27 at the Jewish Community Center. On August 31, he was selected to be Emanu-El's first rabbi.<sup>70</sup>

Born in Poland in 1928, Weintraub grew up in Montreal, Canada. A graduate of Yeshiva College, he obtained ordination

from JTS in 1944. He enrolled in Yeshiva because there was no equivalent of a Jewish college in Canada and because it was then the only one of its kind in the United States. Always attracted to the rabbinate, Weintraub decided that if he were an Orthodox rabbi he would not be able to "tell a Jew who had to support his family, and work on shabbes that he was a sinner." In the meantime, he had heard about Dr. Mordecai Kaplan, a renowned JTS professor, and was attracted to him and "by what the Seminary stood for in general, a modern, traditional Judaism that was responsive to the needs of the American environment." Completing an accelerated program at JTS begun during World War II to provide rabbis for the armed forces, Weintraub enlisted as a chaplain in the Canadian military. He was discharged in 1946 and served for a year as assistant rabbi at the Conservative Beth Hamedrosh Hagodol congregation in Denver, Colorado, before coming to Charleston.<sup>71</sup> Macey wrote to the Goldfarbs, "Our Rabbi is a fine, young man (29), single . . . and very talented. . . . He is right wing Conservative, clean cut, and very personable. He preached well and was favorably received. So under Rabbi Weintraub I believe we shall go far."<sup>72</sup>

At the same time that they sought a full-time rabbi and other synagogue personnel, Emanu-El's leaders discovered a lot for sale on Gordon Street in the northwest section of the city where young families in need of more living space were moving. In correspondence with Rabbi Goldfarb, both Macey and Adele described the move of a number of Jews to that part of Charleston. They, too, purchased a home that fall that was located close to the synagogue site. As Adele wrote to the Goldfarbs, "Macey still insists on walking on Friday night and Saturday, leaving us no choice but to move up to the Northwest Section."<sup>73</sup>

In his 1955 interpretation of Conservative Judaism in America, Marshall Sklare noted that rapid mobility, then a reflection of post WWII prosperity that led to the move to the suburbs, was a group phenomenon among Jews that resulted in a high level of acculturation. The Jews in Charleston who founded Emanu-El, similar to others like them around the country, were ready to move physically from their Orthodox synagogue as well as

*Synagogue Emanu-El's first home,  
a former U.S. army air force chapel.  
(Courtesy of Peggy Kronsberg Pearlstein.)*

spiritually from its institutional rigidity. In the new residential neighborhood where they found homes, they established a congregation that would help them maintain their Jewish identity, but one that also made accommodations to their heightened sense of being fully American.<sup>74</sup>

A few days after the first meeting of the new congregation, fifteen members who were also veterans of World War II sent a letter to Major General Luther D. Miller, chief of chaplains of the U.S. Army, inquiring about purchasing a surplus army chapel. Based on the percentage of Jews serving in the military, twelve chapels had been set aside for purchase by Jewish congregations. At the time that Emanu-El received approval, only five congregations had been allocated chapels by the War Assets Administration. South Carolina Senator Olin D. Johnson's help had also been solicited.<sup>75</sup>

On September 23, 1947, a chapel from the air force base in Florence, South Carolina, was purchased for \$1,220. Included in

the sale were the benches, pulpits, ark, lighting and heating system. The chapel was able to accommodate 350 people for services. In eight weeks, the chapel was dismantled, moved one hundred miles in sections, and re-erected. Emanu-El leaders had it reconfigured to make space for offices, classrooms, and a kitchen. Macey noted in his letter to Ralph Jacobson, president of Congregation Beth El in Maplewood, New Jersey, who may have been inquiring about obtaining a surplus army chapel, "Although we have not received the final bill from the contractor, we expect the actual cost . . . will be \$20,000. We could not build today the same building and equip it for twice this amount so we feel we made a good purchase."<sup>76</sup>

With its newly purchased chapel not yet ready, Synagogue Emanu-El held High Holiday services at the Jewish Community Center. Regardless of the inability to reconcile with Brith Sholom, the Orthodox congregation lent Emanu-El two torahs while Beth Israel lent a menorah for the services.<sup>77</sup>

The new congregation applied for membership in the USA, placing it firmly within the Conservative movement.<sup>78</sup> Using a model constitution sent from the United Synagogue by Rabbi Albert I. Gordon, executive director, Synagogue Emanu-El's constitution was approved at a meeting on March 3, 1948. Louis Shimel, who had chaired the committee that revised Brith Sholom's constitution in 1945, chaired the committee that created Emanu-El's constitution.<sup>79</sup>

The object of the congregation, according to the constitution, "shall be to establish and maintain a synagogue and such additional religious, social and recreational activities as will strengthen Conservative Judaism." The section under membership stated that, "Any Israelite, by birth or conversion, man or woman, twenty-one years of age, of good character shall be eligible for membership."<sup>80</sup> Significantly, women were permitted to join as members in their own right, to vote, to hold office, and to sit with men in the sanctuary during services. At Orthodox Brith Sholom, these options were not available to women. As early as 1931, however, women could hold office at Reform Beth Elohim.<sup>81</sup>

Macey Kronsberg's report at the meeting held May 6, 1948, only ten months after the formation of the congregation, captures the achievements and challenges of Emanu-El's inaugural year as a Conservative synagogue. The congregation had engaged Rabbi Lewis A. Weintraub, Cantor Jacob Renzer, and Ms. Yaffa Bebergal, from Palestine, as full-time staff. It acquired property on Gordon Street, moved an army chapel to the premises, made renovations, and landscaped the area. A sisterhood was established, which affiliated immediately with the national Women's League for Conservative Judaism. Under the leadership of Anita Steinberg, whose husband Leon was a former president of Brith Sholom, it undertook the creation of a Sunday school starting in October as its main project. During the first year, Adele Kronsberg served as supervisor for the eighty children enrolled. The congregation developed a Hebrew School the following month that met initially at members' homes, offered adult education classes, invited prominent leaders of Conservative Judaism to address and educate the community, launched the *Emanu-Light*, the congregational bulletin, and acquired two torah scrolls.<sup>82</sup>

Macey remarked, "We have demonstrated that Conservative Judaism is a dynamic Judaism and makes its followers happy in our faith. The mixed pews, the facing of Rabbi and Cantor to Congregation, uniform prayer book, English responsive readings, and adjustment of prayers to time available for services, all within the framework of traditional Judaism have given us dignified and meaningful worship, appealing to young and old alike. . . . [W]e have tried to show that we can live happily and proudly as Jews and as Americans at the same time"<sup>83</sup>

For Macey, the founding of a Conservative congregation in Charleston confirmed that the modernization of synagogue worship would appeal to many people in the Jewish community. It presented Jews with a viable way to maintain Jewish identity even as they continued to acculturate in their surroundings. The synagogue offered a daily minyan, which boasted a nucleus of devoted members, yet the minyan required "consideration." Macey urged those present at the meeting to be prepared "to devote one week at least per year to supplement attendance by our 'regulars.'"

Sometimes Sabbath services also suffered from poor attendance. The president expressed hope that in the future both a junior congregation and a group of bar mitzvah age boys would come to services on a regular basis. "Mothers will encourage their children to participate in these services," he remarked, "if they will accompany their children to the Synagogue," creating a "whole generation of young people who will want to attend Sabbath services and will have a full knowledge and appreciation of those services."<sup>84</sup>

An additional source of concern was the need for a cemetery. None of the other three congregations would sell a portion of their properties to Emanu-El. In 1948, Leon Steinberg picked up the option on land in Maryville, an area of Charleston across the Ashley River, on the day the option was scheduled to expire. He and his wife, Anita, donated to Emanu-El a portion of that property, which, incidentally, adjoined the Brith Sholom cemetery.<sup>85</sup>

Macey concluded his report by pledging his "best efforts for the welfare of our Synagogue and Conservative Judaism in this community and the entire Southeast. May we continue to go forward with God's blessing, and may we soon see in our day the establishment of a democratic Jewish State in Palestine."<sup>86</sup>

Macey's role in the emergence of Conservative Judaism in Charleston and the southeastern region of the United States paralleled his involvement in strengthening Zionism on local, regional, and national levels as well. When he arrived in Charleston in 1936, he immediately became active in the local ZOA chapter and continued until April 1944, when he was drafted into the U.S. Navy. Macey served stateside until his discharge in March 1946. During this period, his zeal for Zionism grew stronger.<sup>87</sup> He began to think about visiting Palestine after the war, finding employment, and living there with his family. On July 28, 1946, Macey and fellow Charleston Zionist and Brith Sholom member, Max Kline, left for Palestine on a converted troopship.<sup>88</sup> Among the nine hundred shipboard passengers were many Zionists. "Foremost among these," Macey wrote to his wife, "was Dr. Benjamin Schwadran who became my guide and teacher on the trip." A native of Jerusalem, Schwadran was Director of Research for AZEC. When

Macey returned to the United States, he shared his experiences with the Charleston community in a talk before five hundred people. He plunged "with great zeal" into the activities of AZEC as local chair and maintained frequent contact with Schwadran. Macey expanded his role as a Zionist leader when he became a vice president of the Southeastern Region of the ZOA for South Carolina in 1947.<sup>89</sup>

### *Conclusion*

In the postwar period in the United States, American Jews identified strongly with Judaism, at a time when Judaism seemed to have achieved status as a major religion alongside Protestantism and Catholicism. These Jews joined new congregations and created the largest expansion in synagogue building in American Jewish history. Between 1945 and 1965, more congregations affiliated with the Conservative movement than with the Reform and Orthodox movements. The success of Conservative Judaism was, according to historian Jonathan Sarna, due to the movement's "middle-of-the-road message," which was "in touch with the times," as America itself moved to the center.<sup>90</sup> Charleston's Emanu-El both benefited from and exemplified this revival in American Judaism, one in which Conservative Judaism gained major ground.

Emanu-El's roots sank deeply into Charleston's soil after its establishment in 1947. Membership continued to grow as the congregation became an integral part of the Jewish and the general community. The congregation also fostered the growth of the Conservative movement in the South. On April 12, 1948, at a meeting in Jacksonville, Florida, Emanu-El joined with three other Conservative congregations to found the Southeastern Region of the United Synagogue of America. The organization grew with the addition of affiliates that were spread over more than a half dozen states. Macey was elected the region's first president. He also served as a national vice president of the USA, having been first appointed in 1946. This was recognition of his personal leadership abilities and of the importance of the region for the expansion of Conservative Judaism in the United States.<sup>91</sup>

In 1950, Macey traveled to Israel again, unsuccessfully looking for employment. On his return, he consulted with Benjamin Schwadran, whom he had met on his first trip to Palestine. He decided to leave Charleston in order to pursue a graduate degree in business administration in preparation for possible aliya.<sup>92</sup> Today, first, second, and third generation descendents of Macey and Adele Kronsberg belong to Synagogue Emanu-El. Macey's commitment to Conservative Judaism continued for more than a quarter of a century after leaving Charleston. In 1975, Macey and Adele retired and moved to Israel. They followed thousands of American Jews who made aliya in the period following the 1967 Six Day War. There, after participation in the founding of a Masorti congregation in East Talpiot, a suburb of Jerusalem, Macey eventually moved religiously to the right and embraced Orthodox Judaism. Additional research is needed to determine how much his personal actions foreshadowed or mirrored developments in the American Jewish community.

The involvement of Macey and Adele Kronsberg and their families in Jewish life in other communities in both America and Israel in the next half century also falls outside the parameters of this essay. However, the experience and skills they acquired through their activism during these years served them well in the leadership roles they assumed in Jewish communal organizations in other areas.

As in other Jewish communities across the United States, the prosperity and growth that came to Charleston in the postwar period enabled the congregations to modernize their physical structures in order to make them more functional and attractive to young and future members. Rabbi Allan Tarshish succeeded Rabbi Jacob Raisin (1878–1945) at Beth Elohim in 1947. Some members of the temple, in protest against Tarshish's earlier affiliation with the American Council for Judaism, joined Emanu-El. The new congregation offered them a viable alternative to Reform affiliation. In 1948, Beth Elohim began to enlarge its structure, partly to retain its members but also to coincide with the 1950 bicentennial celebration of the congregation's founding.<sup>93</sup> In 1948, Orthodox Beth Israel dedicated its new building, the first



air-conditioned synagogue in Charleston. Brith Sholom remodeled its quarters and brought women down from the balcony to sit separately on the side of the sanctuary. Together with other changes such as late Friday night services and added English prayers, this Orthodox congregation hoped to keep members from defecting to Emanu-El.<sup>94</sup>

More significantly, in February 1948, Brith Sholom engaged Gilbert Klaperman, a selection handpicked by Yeshiva University, to be its new spiritual leader in a move that went beyond retaining Orthodoxy at Brith Sholom. Macey noted in a letter to Rabbi Albert I. Gordon, that he was satisfied that Yeshiva had specially selected Klaperman "to stop Conservatism not only in Charleston but in the Southeast as well." He continued, "By now I think you will notice I always think in terms of the state or the region when I discuss our movement."<sup>95</sup> Like Emanu-El's Weintraub, Klaperman was twenty-nine and a veteran of the Canadian army when he arrived in Charleston. He was careful to steer clear of antagonizing the non-Sabbath observers of Brith Sholom, many of whom retained their ties to the congregation for family reasons or out of loyalty to the institution. Klaperman also argued for women's membership, began his own version of late Friday evening services, and with his wife, Libby, hosted a Young People's League in their home to attract newly married couples and young single people. The two Orthodox congregations cooperated once again in a joint Hebrew school that opened in 1948. This time, the school was free to all, enrolling about one hundred children. However, those who founded Emanu-El had also been the financial backbone of Brith Sholom. Jeffrey Gurock noted that Klaperman soon realized that "the future vitality of his synagogue required that all Orthodox-leaning elements in Charleston unite." But it would not be until 1956, six years after Klaperman's departure, that Beth Israel and Brith Sholom would put aside their differences and merge.<sup>96</sup>

Nearly two hundred years after Charleston's colonial-era "port Jews" attempted to reform Judaism in an effort to bring their young people back to the synagogue, a group of men and women established Conservative Synagogue Emanu-El. They, too,

sought to keep young Jews involved in Jewish life by Americanizing traditional Judaism. The changes that occurred more than a half century ago in Charleston's synagogues, including the formation of a new congregation, again attest to the ongoing diversity of American Judaism and its continuing contributions to the pluralistic nature of religious life in this country.

---

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> [Charleston, SC] *News and Courier*, July 17, 1947; Minutes, July 16, 1947, Emanu-El folder, Macey and Adele Jules Kronsberg Papers (all other folders are from this collection), in the author's possession. Present were Moses and Florence Mendelsohn, Irving and Florence Steinberg, Nathan and Lenora Goldberg, Irving and Yetta Levkoff, Charles and Mary Schiff, Harry and Dorothy Mendelsohn, Leon and Anita Steinberg, Macey and Adele Kronsberg, Milton Banov, Hyman Rephan, Alex Karesh, Isadore Lesser, Louis Shimel, Hyman Meddin, Edward Kronsberg, Manuel Barshay, Leon Bluestein, William Ackerman, M. Dumas, George Bogin, Matthew Steinberg, and visitors Max Poliakoff of Greenville, and Janet Bluestein (Marcus) Goldstein of Wilmington, NC. Macey Kronsberg noted, "These minutes have been reconstructed from notes since no secretary was appointed and an effort has been made to give as faithful a recording of the proceedings as possible under the circumstances."

<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Sarna, *American Judaism: A History* (New Haven, 2004), 274–275, 284; Jeffrey S. Gurock, *American Jewish Orthodoxy in Historical Perspective* (Hoboken, NJ, 1996), 299–312.

<sup>3</sup> Jack Wertheimer, "The Conservative Synagogue," in *The American Synagogue: A Sanctuary Transformed*, ed. Jack Wertheimer (Cambridge, England, 1987), 117.

<sup>4</sup> On Conservative Judaism see Moshe Davis, *The Emergence of Conservative Judaism: The Historical School in Nineteenth-Century America* (Philadelphia, 1965); Pamela S. Nadell, *Conservative Judaism in America: A Biographical Dictionary and Sourcebook* (New York, 1988); Herbert Rosenblum, *Conservative Judaism: A Contemporary History* (New York, 1983); Marshall Sklare, *Conservative Judaism: An American Religious Movement* (Glencoe, IL, [1955]); and Jack Wertheimer, ed., *Tradition Renewed: A History of the Jewish Theological Seminary*, 2 vols. (New York, 1997).

<sup>5</sup> Sarna, *American Judaism*, 285–287.

<sup>6</sup> Samuel Halperin, *The Political World of American Zionism* (Detroit, 1961), 101, quoted in Naomi Cohen, "'Diaspora plus Palestine, Religion plus Nationalism,' The Seminary and Zionism, 1902–1948," Wertheimer, *Tradition Renewed*, II, 115. Cohen notes that "Zionism in the synagogue filled an ideological void in Conservative Judaism," 136. See also, Gurock, *American Jewish Orthodoxy*, 7–33.

<sup>7</sup> Edward Fleischer, letter to membership [of Chizuk Amuno], January 13, 1947, Emanuel folder; Sarna, *American Judaism*, 241–242. See also Jan Bernhardt Schein, *On Three Pillars: The History of Chizuk Amuno Congregation, 1871–1996* (Baltimore, 2000). The list of twenty-two founding congregations appears in Abraham J. Karp, *A History of the United Synagogue of America, 1913–1963* (New York, 1964). On contemporary Orthodox and Conservative Judaism in America, see also Jeffrey S. Gurock, “The Orthodox Synagogue,” in Wertheimer, *The American Synagogue*, 61–63; Wertheimer, “The Conservative Synagogue,” in Wertheimer, *The American Synagogue*, 115; Jeffrey S. Gurock, *From Fluidity to Rigidity: The Religious Worlds of Conservative and Orthodox Jews in Twentieth Century America* (lecture reprinted as booklet) (Ann Arbor, 1988), 21; Jeffrey S. Gurock, “Resistors and Accommodators: Varieties of Orthodox Rabbis in America, 1886–1983,” *American Jewish Archives* 35 (November, 1983): 100–187.

<sup>8</sup> Jeffrey S. Gurock, *Orthodoxy in Charleston* (Charleston, SC, 2004), 26, n. 28; Sarna, *American Judaism*, 231–237.

<sup>9</sup> Sarna, *American Judaism*, 283–284. For the concept of the “port Jew” see David Sorkin, “The Port Jew: Notes Toward a Social Type,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 50 (spring 1999): 86–97.

<sup>10</sup> Obituary, “Macey Kronsberg, 89,” *Washington Jewish Week*, February 1, 2001, 46; obituary, “Adele Jules Kronsberg, 92,” *Washington Jewish Week*, January 24, 2002, 38; obituary, “Kronsberg, Adele,” *The [Charleston, SC] Post and Courier*, January 23, 2002, 5B.

<sup>11</sup> James Hagy, *This Happy Land: The Jews of Colonial and Antebellum Charleston* (Tuscaloosa, 1993); Theodore Rosengarten and Dale Rosengarten, eds., *A Portion of the People: Three Hundred Years of Southern Jewish Life* (Columbia, SC, 2002), 275; Charles Resnikoff, *The Jews of Charleston: A History of an American Jewish Community* (Philadelphia, 1950), 19.

<sup>12</sup> Gary P. Zola, *Isaac Harby of Charleston, 1788–1828: Jewish Reformer and Intellectual* (Tuscaloosa, 1994), 174; Sarna, *American Judaism*, 58–60.

<sup>13</sup> [Charleston, SC] *Courier*, March 20, 1841, quoted in Hagy, *This Happy Land*, 236; David Philipson, *The Reform Movement in Judaism*, rev. ed. (New York, 1931), 334, quoted in Henry L. Feingold, *Zion in America: The Jewish Experience from Colonial Times to the Present*, rev. ed. (New York, 1981), 99.

<sup>14</sup> Rosengarten and Rosengarten, *A Portion of the People*, 99.

<sup>15</sup> Gurock, *Orthodoxy in Charleston*, 1–7, 12–13; Rosengarten and Rosengarten, *A Portion of the People*, 166.

<sup>16</sup> Resnikoff, *Jews of Charleston*, 188–189, 229–230; Gurock, *Orthodoxy in Charleston*, 14–18; Lewis A. Weintraub interview conducted by Dale Rosengarten and Michael Samuel Grossman, January 26, 1997, 9, Jewish Heritage Collection, College of Charleston, SC (hereafter cited as JHC); Rosengarten and Rosengarten, *A Portion of the People*, 158. The records of the Kalushiner Society (1947–1970) are at the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati; Henry Yaschik, *From Kaluszyn to Charleston: the Yaschik Family in Poland, Argentina, and South Carolina* (Charleston, SC, 1990).

<sup>17</sup> Gurock, *Orthodoxy in Charleston*, 17–18.

<sup>18</sup> Resnikoff, *Jews of Charleston*, 312–314, notes 58–65.

<sup>19</sup> Gurock, *Orthodoxy in Charleston*, 24–25, 26, and n. 24.

<sup>20</sup> Resnikoff, *Jews of Charleston*, 174, 186–189; Rosengarten and Rosengarten, *A Portion of the People*, 179; Jacob Rader Marcus, *To Count a People: American Jewish Population Data, 1585–1984* (Lanham, MD, 1990), 204.

<sup>21</sup> Macey Kronsberg, undated talk [1979?], 1, hereafter cited as Kronsberg [1979?]

<sup>22</sup> “Charleston’s Industrious Goodwill Builder,” *The Southern Israelite*, July 20, 1956, 35. A picture of Edward Kronsberg appears on the cover. “Edward Kronsberg Is Man Who Saw Dream Come True,” *The News and Courier*, September 16, 1959, 1C; *The News and Courier*, February 12, 1985, 14A; “Hospital Honors Kronsberg,” *The News and Courier-The Evening Post*, July 11, 1982, 1–2, all in Edward Kronsberg folder; Resnikoff, *Jews of Charleston*, n. 62, 314. On the Kronsberg family and Jewish life in Charleston, see also interviews with William Ackerman, Avram Kronsberg, and Frederica Kronsberg, all in JHC. Others in Charleston related to the Kronsbergs include the Bluestein, Horowitz, and Mendelsohn families.

<sup>23</sup> “Goodblatt, Morris Solomon (1901–1978),” in Nadell, *Conservative Judaism in America*, 210–212.

<sup>24</sup> Macey died on January 16, 2001; Adele died on January 17, 2002.

<sup>25</sup> Rachel Rose was born in 1937, Peggy Rebecca in 1942, and Sandra Judith in 1949.

<sup>26</sup> Minutes, Board of Directors, May 24, 1949, Masonic Lodge folder; Chamber of Commerce folder.

<sup>27</sup> [Charleston, SC] *Center Talk* September 25, 1946. The SOS was an emergency campaign to assist survivors of the Holocaust sponsored by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee in cooperation with sixteen national Jewish organizations. The Daughters of Israel, a local organization of Orthodox Jewish women, was founded by Lena Brickman in 1910. At the suggestion of Solomon D. Goldfarb, rabbi of Brith Sholom, the group became an auxiliary to the congregation in 1945. “Daughters of Israel Sisterhood-Brith Shalom [*sic*] Congregation, Annual Report-Sunday School, May 22, 1947,” Adele Kronsberg folder; Thomas J. Tobias, chairman, Bicentennial Planning Committee to Adele Jules Kronsberg, February 18, 1948, *ibid.*; Resnikoff, *Jews of Charleston*, 222.

<sup>28</sup> “Charleston-Fourteen Years,” n.d., 2, Adele Kronsberg folder; “Report of Delegate to Fifteenth Annual Convention of the Southern Interstate Conference, National Council of Jewish Women, Tampa, Florida – November 9, 1941,” 1, National Council of Jewish Women folder.

<sup>29</sup> [NCJW, Charleston, SC] *Council Bulletin*, February 1942; see for example, “President’s Report, Charleston section, National Council of Jewish Women, 1943–1944, May 1, 1944,” “Report of Delegates from Charleston Section to the Seventeenth Triennial Convention of the National Council of Jewish Women, November 7–11, 1943,” “President’s Report, Charleston Section, National Council of Jewish Women, 1944–1945, May 7, 1945,” and “Report to City Federation of Women’s Clubs, Charleston, S.C. of Charleston Section, National Council of Jewish Women, May 16, 1945,” all in National Council of Jewish Women folder.

<sup>30</sup> Olin D. Johnston to Adele Kronsberg, May 19, 1943, Adele Kronsberg folder; Moses A. Leavitt to Adele Kronsberg, January 16, 1947.

<sup>31</sup> Gurock, *Orthodoxy in Charleston*, 26.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>35</sup> Minutes, Brith Sholom, May 6 and August 4, 1943, JHC; Macey Kronsberg, "Remarks on the Occasion of the 25th Anniversary of Synagogue Emanu-El," December 15, 1972, Synagogue Emanu-El folder.

<sup>36</sup> Committee for Rabbi folder. There is no copy of a letter that might have been sent to the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary from which Rabbi Axelman had received ordination.

<sup>37</sup> Emanuel Marcus to Max Turteltaub, August 12, 1943, Committee for Rabbi folder.

<sup>38</sup> Emanuel Marcus telegram to Macey Kronsberg, September 11, 1943, Committee for Rabbi folder.

<sup>39</sup> The congregation may have briefly sustained membership in the USA. Upon submission of a statement of dues from that organization, "the secretary was instructed to notify them that some few years back we had notified them of our discontinuance of paid membership," minutes, Brith Sholom, February 7, 1937, 47. David Starr, "Solomon Schechter and the Conservative Movement in the South," a paper presented at the joint conference of the Southern Jewish Historical Society and the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina, Charleston, S.C., October 30, 2004.

<sup>40</sup> Macey Kronsberg to Moshe Davis, August 5, 1943, Committee for Rabbi folder. Macey's information about the lack of JTS graduates in the South came from Adelbert Freedman, executive director, Southeastern Region of the ZOA. See Zionist Organization of America Records, 1937-1985, Ida Pearle and Joseph Cuba Archives and Genealogical Center, William Bremen Jewish Heritage Museum, Atlanta, GA.

<sup>41</sup> Macey Kronsberg to Moshe Davis, August 5, 1943, Committee for Rabbi folder.

<sup>42</sup> For more on Goldfarb see Committee for Rabbi folder and Rabbi Goldfarb folder; also Gurock, *Orthodoxy in Charleston*, 35-38; *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, s.v. "Kook (Kuk), Abraham Isaac." Macey Kronsberg to Elias Margolis, September 5, 1943, Committee for Rabbi folder.

<sup>43</sup> Solomon D. Goldfarb, curriculum vitae, Committee for Rabbi folder; Gurock, *Orthodoxy in Charleston*, 35-38. In later years, in addition to two volumes of his English sermons that were published (a common practice among American rabbis) Goldfarb also published three books of sermons in Hebrew. The Goldfarbs and the Kronsbergs remained lifelong friends even after both families departed Charleston.

<sup>44</sup> Macey Kronsberg, untitled speech, n.d., Committee for Rabbi folder.

<sup>45</sup> Macey Kronsberg to Solomon Goldfarb, September 16, 1943, Committee for Rabbi folder. Members of the Steinberg family owned a scrap metal business.

<sup>46</sup> Macey Kronsberg to Solomon Goldfarb, September 16, 1943, Committee for Rabbi folder.

<sup>47</sup> Solomon Goldfarb, "Brief Report," April 23, 1944, and "Rabbi's Annual Report," April 28, 1946, Brith Shalom [sic] folder.

<sup>48</sup> Doreen Bierbrier, "The American Zionist Emergency Council: An Analysis of a Pressure Group," Jeffrey S. Gurock, ed., *American Zionism: Mission and Politics* (New York, 1998), 395-397, 413, 414. AZEC was originally the Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs.

<sup>49</sup> *The [Charleston, SC] Messenger*, April 6, 1944, Brith Shalom-Emanu-El Petition folder.

<sup>50</sup> Louis Lesser to Brith Shalom, September 20, 1945, reproduced in Gurock, *Orthodoxy in Charleston*, 34.

<sup>51</sup> Minutes, Brith Shalom, November 23, 1944, 277; January 7, 1945, 279; June 2, 1946, 305; April 27, 1947, 323.

<sup>52</sup> Minutes, Brith Shalom, February 23, 1947, 315; Gurock, *Orthodoxy in Charleston*, 37-38.

<sup>53</sup> Solomon Goldfarb to Milton Kronsberg, September 17, 1956, and Solomon Goldfarb to Edward Kronsberg, September 17, 1956, both in Rabbi Goldfarb folder. The letters were written because the brothers had each sent Goldfarb the dedication booklet occasioned by the merger of Brith Shalom and Beth Israel. On the merger, see Gurock, *Orthodoxy in Charleston*, 48-58.

<sup>54</sup> Solomon Goldfarb to Edward Kronsberg, September 17, 1956, Rabbi Goldfarb folder.

<sup>55</sup> On these documents see Gurock, *Orthodoxy in Charleston*, 38-44, and 101, n. 44.

<sup>56</sup> Macey Kronsberg to Solomon Goldfarb, April 17, 1947, Rabbi Goldfarb folder.

<sup>57</sup> Gurock, *Orthodoxy in Charleston*, 40-41; letter from Sam Berlin to members of Brith Shalom, July 11, 1947, Rabbi Goldfarb folder.

<sup>58</sup> Minutes, Brith Shalom, July 13, 1947, 327; Gurock, *Orthodoxy in Charleston*, 42.

<sup>59</sup> Marc H. Elovitz, *A Century of Jewish Life in Dixie: The Birmingham Experience* (University, AL, 1974), 163-164.

<sup>60</sup> Mark K. Bauman, *Harry H. Epstein and the Rabbinate as Conduit for Change* (Rutherford, NJ, 1994), 53-57.

<sup>61</sup> Minutes, July 16, 1947, Emanu-El folder. The attendees at the July 16th meeting are listed in n. 1. Ages of both groups were compiled by checking the names against the Social Security Death Index. The list of officers and trustees of Brith Shalom appeared in *Installation of Rabbi Gilbert Klaperman Program, Brith Shalom Congregation, February 15, 1948*, Brith Shalom folder.

<sup>62</sup> Minutes, July 16, 1947, Emanu-El folder.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., August 19, 1947, and August 20, 1947.

<sup>66</sup> Bernard Segal to Macey Kronsberg, July 22, 1947, Emanu-El Minutes folder.

<sup>67</sup> Macey Kronsberg to Bernard Segal, July 24, 1947, Brith Shalom-Emanu-El Petition folder.

<sup>68</sup> Macey Kronsberg to Bernard Segal, July 14, 1947, Emanu-El Minutes folder; Macey Kronsberg to Samuel Rothstein, June 22, 1946, (for Macey's invitation to become a national board member of USA), United Synagogue, S.E. Regional Convention folder.

<sup>69</sup> Macey Kronsberg to Albert I. Gordon, July 27, 1947, Brith Shalom-Emanu-El Petition folder.

<sup>70</sup> Minutes, August 24, 1947, Emanu-El Minutes folder; *Emanu-Light*, September 15, 1947, Synagogue Emanu-El folder.

<sup>71</sup> Lewis A. Weintraub interview; "Brief History of Synagogue Emanu-El," and "Rabbi Lewis A. Weintraub," Synagogue Emanu-El folder.

<sup>72</sup> Macey Kronsberg to Rabbi and Mrs. Goldfarb, September 17, 1947, Rabbi Goldfarb folder. In 1951, Weintraub married Charlestonian Fanny Goldberg. After serving as Emanu-El's rabbi for seven years, he moved with his family to Silver Spring, Maryland to be rabbi of Temple Israel, a pulpit he served until his retirement. The need for a more intense Jewish education for their children prompted the move. Lewis A. Weintraub interview. As with the Goldfarbs, Macey and Adele Kronsberg maintained a lifelong friendship with this rabbinic couple.

<sup>73</sup> Adele Kronsberg to Rabbi and Mrs. Goldfarb, November 6, 1947, Rabbi Goldfarb folder. Adele and Macey mention the following members of the new Synagogue Emanu-El who either purchased or were looking to purchase homes in 1947: Meyer Horowitz, Melvin Lesser, Bill Ackerman, Lou Tannenbaum, Gus Pearlman, and Milton Kronsberg.

<sup>74</sup> Marshall Sklare, *Conservative Judaism*, 27–28, 73.

<sup>75</sup> Macey Kronsberg to Major General Luther D. Miller, July 21, 1947, and September 1, 1947; Macey Kronsberg to Olin D. Johnston, August 25, 1947; Macey Kronsberg to Ralph H. Jacobson, December 25, 1947; Macey Kronsberg to Solomon and Tuppy Goldfarb, August 10, 1947, Synagogue Emanu-El Correspondence folder. The veterans who signed the letter to Major General Luther D. Miller on July 21st were Macey Kronsberg, William Ackerman, Irving Levkoff, I. D. Karesh, Melvin Jacobs, David Feinstein, Manuel Natelson, David Goldberg, Melvin Lesser, Louis Toporek, Joe Dumas, H. Fechter, Jack Kirshtein, Leon Bluestein, and Charles Schiff.

<sup>76</sup> Macey Kronsberg to Ralph H. Jacobson, December 25, 1947, Synagogue Emanu-El Correspondence folder; "A Brief History of Synagogue Emanu-El," Synagogue Emanu-El folder.

<sup>77</sup> Gurock, *Orthodoxy in Charleston*, 42; Resnikoff, *Jews of Charleston*, 218.

<sup>78</sup> "Synagogue Emanu-El Joins The United Synagogue of America," *Emanu-Light*, September 15, 1947, Synagogue Emanu-El folder.

<sup>79</sup> "Constitution and By-Laws of Brith Sholom Congregation of Charleston, S.C." (1945), Brith Sholom folder; "Constitution and By-Laws of Synagogue Emanu-El," "Notes from the Fifth Gathering of Steering Committee for a Conservative Synagogue," August 19, 1947, both Synagogue Emanu-El folder.

<sup>80</sup> "Constitution and By-Laws of Synagogue Emanu-El, Synagogue Emanu-El folder.

<sup>81</sup> Resnikoff, *Jews of Charleston*, 320–321, n. 94.

<sup>82</sup> "Annual Report of Macey Kronsberg, President, Synagogue Emanu-El First Annual Meeting, May 6, 1948" (hereafter cited as Annual Report of Macey Kronsberg); Minutes, Officers and Board of Trustees, Emanu-El, January 4 and February 1, 1948; *Emanu-Light*, September 15, 1947, all Synagogue Emanu-El folder; "Remarks on the Occasion of the 25th Anniversary of Synagogue Emanu-El," Synagogue Emanu-El 25th Anniversary folder.

<sup>83</sup> "Annual Report of Macey Kronsberg"

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Photocopy of Certificate, "Honorable Discharge from the United States Navy," and "Notice of Separation from U.S. Naval Service," both in JWV folder; Photograph of "Seaman Macey Kronsberg" appears with a list of "Jewish Soldiers in the Armed Services," in *American Jewish Times*, Yom Kippur, October 1944, 13 and Macey Kronsberg to Adele Kronsberg, January 11, 1946, both in Navy folder.

<sup>88</sup> Kronsberg [1979], 2–3.

<sup>89</sup> Macey Kronsberg to Adele Kronsberg, July 31, 1946, Palestine trip folder; untitled speech, October 8, 1946, Palestine trip folder; Macey Kronsberg to Harry L. Shapiro, executive director, AZEC, May 22, 1947, AZEC folder.

<sup>90</sup> Sarna, *American Judaism*, 279, 284.

<sup>91</sup> "Annual Report of Macey Kronsberg, President, Southeast Region, The United Synagogue of America, Presented at Second Annual Convention-Miami Beach, FLA—May 15, [1949]," United Synagogue S.E. Regional Convention folder.

<sup>92</sup> Kronsberg [1979?]. Macey and Adele lived in Florida from 1950 to 1953, where Macey earned his M.B.A. They lived in New York from 1954 to 1975. In 1975, they moved to Israel. They returned to the U.S. in 1986 to live in Rockville, Maryland, near all three daughters. On aliya to Israel and the dynamic growth of Orthodoxy see Chaim I. Waxman, *American Aliya: Portrait of an Innovative Migration Movement* (Detroit, 1989).

<sup>93</sup> Resnikoff, *Jews of Charleston*, 214, 219.

<sup>94</sup> Gurock, *Orthodoxy in Charleston*, 48–58.

<sup>95</sup> Macey Kronsberg to Albert I. Gordon, October 31, 1948, United Synagogue S.E. Region folder; Gurock, *Orthodoxy in Charleston*, 44.

<sup>96</sup> Gurock, *Orthodoxy in Charleston*, 43, 48, 51; Resnikoff, *Jews of Charleston*, 222. For the most up-to-date information on Jewish congregational life in Charleston, see Gurock, *Orthodoxy in Charleston*.