



# JHSD

## JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DELAWARE

Dear Friends,

If any holiday on our calendar represents the mission of the Jewish Historical Society of Delaware, it is undoubtedly Passover. With its admonition to "Tell your child(ren), 'this is what the Divine did for us when we were slaves in Egypt,'" we learn that the past is a great teacher. Our mission is to highlight the past, not just for the sake of nostalgia (though there's nothing wrong with reliving wonderful memories as so many have done through our photos and documents), but to inform us of the people and events instrumental in guiding us towards today.

Very soon there will be a new JHSD Board of Directors with new officers who are energized to take us into the near future. It is a future with a new home, and a new name for what was the historic Coxe House. It will be known as the Delaware Center for Jewish History. It will house our documents and those of the Halina Wind Preston Holocaust Education Committee.

There's another connection that ties the JHSD to Passover. Of the Four Children of the Haggadah, the wise one wants to know what his responsibilities are. That child is tied to the tradition. The other three are encouraged to take part in the ritual that gives meaning to the journey of our ancestors; they will hopefully embrace the experience. It is the wise child, however, who sees immediately that a strong and viable future depends on the commitment of everyone.

We look to you for that commitment by being a member of the JHSD, a part of our Delaware family. And we look to you to contribute to the ongoing work of the Delaware Center for Jewish History through a pledge of financial support.

May the near future see the end of the Covid pandemic, and may our descendants look back and see a glorious Jewish history in the First State.

It's been our pleasure to serve the community.

Your Co-Presidents,

Gerry Resnick and Peter Grumbacher

*My sincerest thanks to Gerry who took upon himself the yeoman's share of the Coxe House/Delaware Center for Jewish History project. Without his dedication we probably would not have progressed as quickly and thoroughly as we did. PHG*



### NEXT YEAR IN PERSON...

We miss having our annual meetings and seeing so many of our members, but there's still a great deal going on for the Jewish Historical Society of Delaware. We are taking care of business with a virtual annual meeting on Sunday, April 11, 2021, at 11 AM. Visit our website at <https://jhsdelaware.org/events/annual-meeting> to let us know you would like to participate.

We are pleased to announce the JHSD board of directors nominees for 2021-2022: John Elzufon, Joe Goldberg, Tina Heiman, Paul Lukoff, Donald Parsons, Robin Silver Zink (secretary), and Peter Zoll.

Current board members Diane Wolf and Paula Gordon are nominated for president of the board and treasurer, respectively.

We thank our wonderful retiring officers, Danna Levy, secretary, and Eleanor Weinglass, treasurer, and board members Ellen Meyer and Richard Margolin, who are stepping down after years of untiring service. We value your contributions and support.

Our retiring co-presidents deserve our boundless appreciation for the daunting task of navigating us through the challenges that we have faced during their tenure. With diligence and care they undertook an enormous task, kept board members and many other stakeholders moving forward and brought us through to a bright future in a new home. They had no expectation when they agreed to serve as co-presidents of the Jewish Historical Society of Delaware that the work would become at least a full-time job—without compensation or benefits. Thank you, Dr. Gerry Resnick and Rabbi Peter Grumbacher. We really could not have done it without you. And we look forward to your ongoing participation in the board meetings as past presidents.

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## QUITE A YEAR

GERRY RESNICK, CO-PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

People are going to look back at this time in our history and wonder how we did it... how we survived the COVID-19 pandemic and the explosive events that exposed the social injustices and divisive thinking present in our country. And then they'll wonder how the Jewish Historical Society of Delaware was able to move ahead with a new endeavor—to establish a new home for our organization and our archives: the Delaware Center for Jewish History at the Coxe House.

They will also be excited to see how well the partnership between the Jewish Historical Society of Delaware and the Delaware Historical Society developed and how well we cooperated with one another in this endeavor. Even with the major obstacle of the COVID-19 pandemic, the project to renovate the Coxe House and make it a welcoming venue for researchers and visitors has continued unabated.

We are grateful for the generosity of our partners who share our vision and unquestionably helped to make this possible—the Delaware Historical Society and the Jewish Federation of Delaware. We also wish to thank the Milton and Hattie Kutz Foundation for a capital grant and the Delaware Humanities for a CARES Act Recovery grant, as well as the many individual donors who helped make the dream of our founders become a reality. But the job is never done. We will continue to need help from our entire community to fulfill our mission.

Our website ([jhsdelaware.org](https://jhsdelaware.org)) provides a major resource for exploring Delaware's Jewish history. For instance, our 2004 exhibit, "Half a Chance: Stories of Jewish Delawareans," is now available online. We also encourage members and potential new members to visit us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#) to learn more about our Society and the rich history of Delaware's Jewish community.

And once we can again open to the public, those interested in Delaware Jewish history will find a treasure trove of information in our new home.

We wish all the best to you and yours—and good health and reduced anxiety during these difficult times.

Your continued support is always welcomed. Donate at <https://coxehouse.org/> to help us build an endowment fund to cover the operating expenses of The Delaware Center for Jewish History at the Coxe House.

## AKSE TRANSLATIONS

In the Fall 2018 issue of our newsletter, member Steve Ross wrote about undertaking a project to translate the handwritten minutes of Adas Kodesch congregation from 1890–1895. We are delighted to announce that the translation is now completed and available for researchers. Ross's very generous sponsorship of this translation effort has added a wonderful resource to our collections. Additional documents written in German and English have also been translated and transcribed. In his article, "Treasure Hunt," Ross tells the story of his family's connections with Adas Kodesch in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. There are certain to be many entries in these records that tell many other stories of the early years of the Delaware Jewish community. Take a look and discover your own treasure.



## HANUKKAH DISPLAY

While stay-at-home orders and chilly weather kept many people indoors over the winter months, for those who ventured out there was a light on Market Street in December. With President Biden's transition team gathered at The Queen next door, Secret Service agents on the roof and work underway in the Coxe House across the street, passersby on Market Street paused to learn about Hanukkah traditions. The JHSD was invited to decorate a window of the Delaware History Museum for Hanukkah. With the generous help of board members Harriet Ainbinder and Diane Wolf, and with items from Beth Shalom Congregation and Delaware Gratz Hebrew High School, we filled the window with Hanukkiyot, books, chocolate "gelt" and dreidels. We couldn't put latkes in the window, but we did include a kitchen display ready to prepare a holiday treat.

## JHSD IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

In recent years, the exponential increase in data available through the Internet has been a boon to historians and genealogists. For the Jewish Historical Society of Delaware, this is an opportunity to increase the breadth, depth and accuracy of the information that is already in our records and publications. Two of our most active local researchers have been collaborating to take advantage of these new opportunities.

For the past 30 or more years, Toni Young and Charles (Chazz) Salkin have been an upstate/downstate tag team to research and report on Delaware Jewish history. Toni's work is widely known through her two books *Becoming American*, *Remaining Jewish* and *Delaware and the Jews* (editor), and her contributions to many of the major exhibits and publications of JHSD. Chazz has focused on the early Jews who settled below the Canal. He is best known for telling the story of the Jewish Agricultural Society in Kent County and the origins of Dover's organized Jewish community and Congregation Beth Shalom.

Nearly all of this work predated the Internet and our now-convenient digital access to original sources. Of course, they both have collected a lot of information that has itself not been digitized or easily shared.

With the luxury of retirement and pandemic down-time, Chazz has taken a deep dive into the story of Jewish settlement in downstate Delaware in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Data that he has been collecting in files for years can now be combined with easily accessible sources like Ancestry.com and Newspapers.com to embellish what we already

knew and to locate dozens of new individuals and families who were "not on our radar."

This new information is being cross-referenced with Toni's extensive files. The results have already been very productive and exciting. We now know so much more about family and business connections among the downstate settlers and relationships with family in Wilmington and other nearby cities. They have confirmed what we surmised—that there were Jews in nearly every small town in Delaware before 1900. Wonderful information is emerging about family histories, business ventures and civic and Jewish life. Examples are a Jewish candidate for Sheriff in Smyrna in 1878; a Sergeant-at-Arms of the Delaware General Assembly; resort hotels in Kitts Hummock and Bowers Beach; and Jewish-owned businesses that were their communities' largest employers.

As this project unfolds, there will be lots of stories and history to share. Many of you may have family or business information which would be a missing piece in this historical puzzle. We hope that the JHSD will soon be able to provide a platform for Toni and Chazz and many others to share information digitally and to expand the circle of participants who are carrying out our organization's mission.

In the meantime, if you have an interest in their topic, please feel free to join in the fun. We need lots more people who can do original research, analyze data, write articles and manage the systems necessary to fully realize the potential of this sort of collaborative work.

Stay tuned.

## DO MORE 24 FUNDRAISER

Our members and contributors are amazing! On March 4-5, 2021, the Jewish Historical Society of Delaware participated in the Do More 24 Delaware along with many other nonprofits serving Delaware. It is a unique 24-hour giving event that showcases the nonprofit organizations serving our state. The goal of the fundraising campaign is to inspire Delawareans to come together for 24 hours and contribute as much as they can financially to the causes and organizations they support. The project is similar to Giving Tuesday, which encourages donations to nonprofits on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving. The Do More 24 Delaware fundraiser raised \$1,970,829 for more than 400 organizations statewide and offers matching funds that will be distributed to every participating nonprofit earning more than \$5 in donations. We are still waiting to learn the amount of the matching funds we qualify to receive, but there's no doubt that the generous support from 13 donors who contributed \$771 in one day is really something to celebrate.







ABOVE: Oral History Class with (back row, left to right) Gail Pietrzyk, archivist for the Jewish Historical Society of Delaware, historian Roger Horowitz, and University of Delaware students Jordan Spencer, Fiona Sia, Jacob Budd, Benjamin Glazer and (front row, left to right) Dalia Handelman, Dale Weiss, Laura Mays and Megan Heston. Pre-pandemic photo by Evan Krape.

## ORAL HISTORY PROJECTS

We all love stories. We love to tell them and to hear them. And the stories about living in the Jewish community in Delaware are some of our favorites at JHSD. We've been collecting them for years. We don't want to lose them so we requested the support of the Jewish Federation of Delaware to help us preserve more than 100 audio recordings of oral histories by converting them to digital files which we will include on our website. The conversion project is underway and we are excited to be able to bring the voices and the stories recorded years ago into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and ultimately, into your home at the push of a button. We'll keep you posted about our progress and how you can listen to these interviews and many others.

Board member Roger Horowitz was recognized in the December issue of *University of Delaware*

*Research Online Magazine*, for his work with the oral history program in recent years. See <https://research.udel.edu/2020/12/01/jewish-oral-history/> to get the whole story. Roger Horowitz has been instrumental in helping connect JSJD to UD students interested in oral history and helped us obtain some of our most memorable and significant recent interviews. We know there are more people with stories to tell and many more interviews we need to undertake and we are looking forward to being able to do face-to-face interviews again. In the meantime, we hope to conduct some interviews with video conferencing technology like Zoom. Dalia Handelman, who conducted interviews in 2019, will be helping JHSD with this initiative. Please contact our archivist, Gail Pietrzyk, to schedule a Zoom interview this summer.

## OUR CENTENARIANS

Two of our members celebrated landmark birthdays in 2020. We are amazed, but not particularly surprised, that Rabbi Edward Zerín and Ruth Siegel have achieved this status. Both have been amazing us for years. Rabbi Zerín, who celebrated his birthday in May 2020, continues to write and publish. In 2014,

JHSD published *A Tribute to my Teacher: Rabbi Simon Krinsky: His poetry until 1936*, a dual language (Yiddish/English) edition of Zerín's translations.

Ruth Siegel has continued to support the Jewish community and the JSJD's efforts to preserve our history. The Siegel collection includes wonderful

photographs, memorabilia and other documentation of a long life of service and support for the community.

We are happy to award our centenarians with honorary memberships to the Jewish Historical Society of Delaware. Mazel Tov!

## SUMMER INTERNS

JHSD is pleased to announce that we will have E. Lyman Stewart Internships for summer 2021. These are competitive paid opportunities for history graduate and undergraduate students. The interview and selection process is still underway, so we are not yet able to introduce you to the UD student who will be working with the JHSD collections, but we will be sure to keep you informed. Working with the UD students is a pleasure. We love to watch the next generation of historians, museum curators, archivists and leaders who will preserve our cultural heritage discover the treasures in our collections.



Ettie and Nathan Levy, from the collections of the Jewish Historical Society of Delaware.

## LEVY DECENDANT TO DONATE RECORDS

It took months of playing phone tag, but we finally connected. Donor Harriette Chandler was persistent in getting in touch with archivist Gail Pietrzyk to talk about family papers she'd like to donate to the JHSD. Ms. Chandler is a descendant of Nathan Levy (1838–1927), a Civil War veteran, and Ettie Levy, his wife. The Levy family were members of Congregation Beth Emeth. Ms. Chandler hopes to visit us at our new home at the Delaware Center for Jewish History at the Coxe House in the fall and we look forward to welcoming her—and all of our researchers, donors and visitors.

**VISIT US ON FACEBOOK AT**  
<https://facebook.com/JHSDel/>

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Our past presidents are a special group and a wonderful source of advice, support, dedication and inspiration. We are saddened by the passing of past president Henry Galperin in 2020 and remember all who have left us—may their memory be for blessing.

## MACHZIKEY HADAS

The past year has moved many to remember beloved moments with family members who are gone and so perhaps it was not so surprising to have multiple inquiries from those who remember the Mackzikey Hadas congregation and cemetery. We hope to invite those who are interested in the history of the congregation to join with us to tell its story. If your family has ties to Mackzikey Hadas and you would like to participate in this initiative, please let our archivist, Gail Pietrzyk, know. Call her at 302 655-6232, or send an email to [jhsdel@yahoo.com](mailto:jhsdel@yahoo.com).

## GIFTS

JHSD welcomes all donations and is happy to discuss with you how your contributions may do the most good. Please contact us with your questions.

JHSD is grateful for the support of our generous members and donors. Since our last newsletter, we have received the following gifts:

## IN MEMORY

Frances “Mutzie” Blatman Bellak	Gail Pietrzyk
Isaac David Cooper	Steven Ross
Rita Geffen	Toni Young
	Robert and Ellen Meyer
Lois Resnick Sacks	David and Marianne Sacks
Harry and Laura Schagrin	Karen Kegelman
Dr. Ralph Tomases	Ruth Tomases Joffe

## IN HONOR OF

JHSD Co-Presidents, Dr. Gerald Resnick and Rabbi Peter Grumbacher	Paula Gordon
Richard & Marilyn Levin's 50th Anniversary	Robert and Ellen Meyer
Gerry Resnick, Co-President	David and Marianne Sacks
Hannukah membership gifts	Gerald and Ellen Resnick

## FOUNDATIONS

Pollyanna Foundation  
Frank and Yetta Chaiken Foundation  
Isador and Ida Schutzman Fund

## GRANTING ORGANIZATIONS

Delaware Humanities  
Milton and Hattie Kutz Foundation  
Jewish Federation of Delaware



**JHSD**  
JEWISH HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY OF DELAWARE  
505 NORTH MARKET STREET  
WILMINGTON, DE 19801

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

JHSD archivist, Gail Pietrzyk, is looking for a volunteer to help prepare a list of our deceased Jewish Veterans. We hope to update the memorial at the JCC and want to make sure that our list of Jewish War Veterans is correct.

The JHSD is honored to house the collections of the Jewish War Veterans and to help keep their memorial up-to-date. Please contact Gail at (302) 655-6232 or [jhsdel@yahoo.com](mailto:jhsdel@yahoo.com), if you would like to help.



**Help preserve the link between the past, present and future of the Jewish community in Delaware by becoming a member of the Jewish Historical Society of Delaware (JHSD).** A household membership covers all in the household and confers one vote at the JHSD annual meeting.

Regular household: \$36.00 or  
Senior household: (all members age 65 or older) \$18.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Please consider becoming a contributing member with an additional donation:  
Member Pillar of Society (minimum \$1,000) \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Member Benefactor (minimum \$500) \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Member Patron (minimum \$250) \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Member Sponsor (minimum \$100) \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Coxe House Endowment Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Other amount (every contribution is deeply appreciated) \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
TOTAL: MEMBERSHIP & CONTRIBUTIONS \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Number of people in your regular or senior household: \_\_\_\_\_  
(for internal purposes, does not affect dues amount).

Students: JHSD offers complimentary, non-voting membership to full-time students under age 25.

Please indicate your school and class here:

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Class (year): \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ We are interested in automatic renewal.
- ☐ We are interested in supporting the JHSD endowment.
- ☐ We are interested in making a monthly donation.
- ☐ We are interested in volunteer opportunities.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Please acknowledge my/our household as follows in publications:

☐ Please do not publicize my contribution.

Please make check payable to Jewish Historical Society of Delaware. Your contribution is fully tax-deductible under IRS guidelines.