



JHSD

JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DELAWARE

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

DIANE WOLF

JHSD's mission is to acquire, preserve, and publish material pertaining to the history of Jewish settlement and Jewish life in Delaware. With our experienced archivist, new quarters, and enthusiastic interns and volunteers, we have been furthering that mission in service to the community. We rely on membership contributions to continue that work and, after much deliberation, we are asking our members to help us meet increased costs so that we can continue fulfilling our mission.

The JHSD Board of Directors has kept the cost of membership low so we can include as many people as possible. A small increase three years ago was instituted during our first capital campaign to raise funds for renovation costs of our new home: the Delaware Center of Jewish History at the Coxe House.

From the start of the Coxe House campaign, the board recognized the need for an endowment to provide supplementary revenue to help cover increased operating costs associated with our new home. The Minyan Endowment Campaign followed. We are delighted with the generosity of

our community—with your help, we raised 136% of our initial endowment target of \$150,000.

We are still growing—with increased visibility comes increasing demands on our archivist and the volunteers who keep the organization running. We also dare to dream of new programs and activities to serve our community and you more effectively.

By contributing at or above the new membership levels, your household can help us ensure the JHSD attains the bright future we anticipate. Membership confers voting privileges and gives households a chance to participate in shaping the leadership of the organization, and members are eligible to serve on the board.

The new membership form, on page 6 of this newsletter, shows that it is easier than ever to become a Contributing Member. Please 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.

The JHSD Board of Directors joins me in wishing you a healthy and happy New Year.

Shana Tova

FAREWELL TO OUR PAST PRESIDENTS

The Jewish Historical Society of Delaware is saddened by the recent passing of two past presidents.

NANCY SHERR became involved with JHSD when Toni Young's book, *Becoming American, Remaining Jewish: The Story of Wilmington, Delaware's First Jewish Community, 1879-1924*, was published in 1999. Nancy served as secretary and, when Henry Galperin stepped down as president of JHSD, she and Dicey Sklut were elected to serve as co-presidents in 2002. During their tenure, JHSD hosted the airing of "It's a Mitzvah!", a documentary program aired on WHY-TV describing 75 years of Jewish immigration in the Delaware Valley. They planned the four-program series, "Delaware Jews and the Land of Israel," which featured Joseph Byer, Ruth and Bernard Siegel, Norman "Sunny" Schutzman, Ted Mattes, Faith and Lou Brown, Ruth and Dr. Albert Goodman, and Rabbi David Geffen. Nancy Sherr passed away on July 19 at her home in Boca Raton, Florida.

ROGER M. LEVY was an active member of the Jewish community, serving as a board member of the Jewish Federation of Delaware, treasurer of Congregation Beth Shalom, and contributor to numerous other organizations. Roger served as president of JHSD in 2009–2012. Under Roger's leadership, JHSD held notable and popular annual meeting events at the Siegel JCC and the Delaware Art Museum, including "Lincoln and the Jews," a presentation by Harold Holzer, in 2010, "The Jewish Contribution to Art in Delaware" by Dr. Danielle Rice, in 2011, and "The Jewish Musical Heritage in Delaware" in 2012. Roger Levy passed away on July 31.

We are grateful for their contributions to Delaware's Jewish community and extend our condolences to their families.

JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DELAWARE

DELAWARE CENTER for JEWISH HISTORY at the COXE HOUSE

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The Jewish Historical Society of Delaware, a non-profit corporation, publishes this newsletter twice a year. All contents © 2023, JHSD and the authors. Story ideas and submissions welcome—contact the editor to discuss.

General information: 302-655-6232, info@jhsdelaware.org

BOARD MEMBERS

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EVENTS OF INTEREST

INTRODUCTION TO JEWISH GENEALOGY—SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21 AT 10 AM—Rhoda Miller will speak to the Sussex County Genealogical Society. Attend in person at the Lewes library or by Zoom. Email programs@scgsdelaware.org by October 17 to register. The program is free.

DELAWARE JEWISH WAR VETERANS—SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12 AT 1 PM—Save the date for a ceremony at the Siegel Jewish Community Center to recognize Jewish War Veterans of Delaware.

TRIBUTE DONATIONS

In honor of William & Mary Feinberg,	David Wilk
Dr. Howard & Judith Wilk, Roger Pernick:	Marianne Budin
In honor of Rebecca Wolfman Plum:	Gail Pietrzyk
In memory of Frances Blatman "Mutzie" Bellak:	Ruth Tomases Joffe
In memory of Dr. Ralph Tomases:	Susan and Stephen Herrmann,
In memory of Roger M. Levy:	Sandra Michel, Anne Parsons, Donald and Ethel Parsons

JHSD IS ONLINE!



Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/JHSDel/>



Website

<https://jhsdelaware.org>

L'CHAIM! JEWISH LIFE IN MIDDLETOWN

PAMELA AHERN

Before my research I knew very little about Jewish culture and the Jews who shaped this small Delaware town. I set off with a basic understanding of late 19th-century European pogroms that expelled Jews and the resulting surge of immigration into the U.S. I learned that many Jewish families chose to move to Middletown to find a quieter way of life after living in larger cities such as Wilmington and Philadelphia. Middletown was mostly welcoming to Jewish families, but there were still glaring instances of anti-Semitism, with even our local newspaper, *The Middletown Transcript*, warning of "A Jewish Invasion" in 1870. Despite their fear of anti-Semitism, Jewish immigrants came and brought with them skills that helped build a prosperous and family-friendly community. Jewish Middletonians ran our largest shops, supplied our town with medical and veterinary care, led our Volunteer Hose Company, introduced gas cooking, and served as elected officials.

It has been such a joy to uncover these important stories and share them with the public. This fascinating narrative has been supplemented by some of our collections items previously owned by the families featured in our exhibition, such as toys from the early 20th century and apothecary labels from our local veterinarian. Our largest collection is centered around the Berkman family, who owned one of our town's most prominent shops for one hundred years.

Please visit the Middletown Historical Society to learn more about Middletown's Jewish families and visit middletowndehistory.com to view a digital exhibition which further explores the contributions made by each individual family. The society is open the first Friday and third Saturday of each month from 1–4 pm and by appointment, which can be scheduled by emailing mhistoricalsociety@gmail.com.



Pamela Ahern, a University of Delaware PhD candidate in History, spent this summer working with the Middletown Historical Society in Middletown, Delaware, to create an exhibition titled "L'chaim! Jewish Life in Middletown."

THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DELAWARE
THANKS OUR MEMBERS AND GENERAL FUND DONORS OVER THE PAST YEAR
(1 JULY 2022–30 JUNE 2023)

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We don't want to leave anyone out! Donors between 1 July 2023 and our publication deadline (not already listed above)

Sandra Michel	Anne & Bastian Parsons	Judy & Bill Topkis
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WE THANK THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS FOR SUPPORTING OUR WORK IN 2022–2023

Jewish Federation of Delaware	Dr. Janice Selekman on behalf of the Frank and	Sharon B. Uping, Ph.D., and H Alan Young
Delaware Historical Society	Yetta Chaiken Foundation	Foundation, a Donor Advised Fund of U.S.
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We respect donor requests to remain anonymous. Understanding that these decisions might change over time, if you do not see your name and would like to be recognized, or vice-versa, please contact us at treasurer@jhsdelaware.org to make a correction (the same applies to your recognition name).

CAPITAL CAMPAIGNS NOVEMBER 2019–JULY 2023

COXE HOUSE RENOVATION FUND

JHSD has a home. Our archivist has an office, visiting researchers, student interns and volunteers have a reading room to work in, and the archives have room to grow: two full floors to accommodate our collections, which include family papers as well as acquisitions from Delaware synagogues, the Siegel JCC, the Jewish Federation of Delaware, the Halina Wind Preston Holocaust Education Committee, Jewish War Veterans of Delaware and other Jewish organizations from all three counties.

MINYAN ENDOWMENT CAMPAIGN

JHSD has an endowment. Special thanks go to the JHSD “Minyanaires” for their inspiring generosity. Minyanaires are donors whose combined support for the Coxe House renovation and the endowment campaign equals or exceeds \$15,000.

Below, please find the names of all our donors to these campaigns. We compiled one list from both campaigns to avoid repetition—so many of you made multiple contributions to both campaigns.

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Larry & Joyce Zutz

ARCHIVIST'S REPORT

GAIL PIETRZYK

I was looking through past newsletters and found my first archivist's report from 20 years ago. So much has changed, but so much remains the same. The archives are still kept at a chilly 68° and I still bring a sweater to work. I am still impressed with the warm, friendly people I meet throughout the Delaware Jewish community and I still believe that our most essential mission is to promote the use of and research into these collections.

After all the building and moving and physical changes we've been through in recent years, that goal of fostering more research in our collections is being met in new and exciting ways.

We hosted two sets of UD interns this spring and summer. The Chaiken internships through the UD Jewish Studies program this spring brought Hope Kabura '25 and Shay Bloom '23 to JHSD to conduct oral history interviews. Although Shay has graduated, her interest in our oral history program inspired her to continue working with us remotely to transcribe earlier interviews with Jewish Delawareans.

The UD Stewart Summer Internship Program brought us Emily Collopy, a UD graduate student in History, and Rebecca Volk, returning for a second

summer as a Stewart intern. It's so rewarding to have students returning to use and study our collections.

We are not the only Delaware institution to explore the stories of Jewish Delawareans. See the article by UD graduate student Pamela Ahern about the Jewish community in Middletown, Delaware, on page 2.

We have also seen many visitors from the community this summer. They came to research family history, explore the history of organizations such as Hadassah, and discover the scope of our diverse collections. Our increased visibility in the Delaware Center for Jewish History at the Coxe House has even brought us some out-of-town guests. John Fleckner, Senior Archivist at the Archives Center of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History, dropped by in July. He toured our new home with interest and learned about some of our notable collections.

The coming months promise more exciting changes and progress toward making our collections more accessible. But it's good to see that the warmth and welcome I first found 20 years ago is still an enduring quality of the Delaware Jewish community.

PLANNING FOR THE JHSD 50TH ANNIVERSARY

JHSD was founded in December 1974 and incorporated in January 1975. We invite you to join with us in planning for our celebratory year, 2025.

The JHSD Membership and Marketing Committee has been talking about possible activities and programs. We would like to see wider participation in planning efforts and would love to hear your ideas.

Participation would be time-limited and planning sessions will be conducted online.

For more information, email Diane Wolf at president@jhsdelaware.org or our archivist, Gail Pietrzyk, at info@jhsdelaware.org or contact us by phone at (302) 655-6232. We look forward to hearing from you!

ORAL HISTORY PRESERVATION GRANT AWARDED TO JHSD

JHSD is pleased to announce a significant grant award from Delaware Humanities to support our efforts to update and improve our oral history program and the publication of oral history records on our website.

With support from Delaware Humanities, the Jewish Federation of Delaware, and the Milton and Hattie Kutz Foundation, JHSD will bring our oral history collection into compliance with best practices for modern archival and library collections and make the recordings and transcriptions more accessible to the public.

Given the importance of oral histories in bringing history to life, the project also involves preparing resources (how-to guides) for individuals throughout the state wishing to conduct oral history interviews. We believe this will enrich the understanding of history and forge connections within and between communities in the state.

Creating guidance for conducting future interviews that comply with current best practices will smooth the way for all of us to make our new recordings accessible for future generations.

The Oral History Initiative is partially funded by Delaware Humanities, a state program of the National Endowment for the Humanities.





JHSD
JEWISH HISTORICAL
SOCIETY OF DELAWARE

515 NORTH MARKET STREET
WILMINGTON, DE 19801



I want to 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).

Household membership covers all members of the household and confers one vote at JHSD's annual meeting.

Regular household: \$50.00

Senior household: \$36.00

(all members age 65 or older)

Contributing member (amounts listed below include household membership at either level):

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Number of people in your regular or senior household: _____

(for JHSD grantseeking and reporting purposes)

Other donation amount

(every contribution is deeply appreciated)

\$ _____

JHSD Endowment Fund

\$ _____

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☐ Add me to your mailing list (for those not able to donate now but who would like to stay in touch through mailings and newsletters).

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City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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I/We would like to be acknowledged as follows in JHSD publications _____

☐ Please do not publicize my contribution.

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