

Eloquent Champion for the Jews

Largely Forgotten NC Historical Figure Gave a Famous Lecture on a Remarkable People

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By *Rolf Neill, Publisher*

The air is sullen, swollen with July's humid turpor. One unnecessary move generates a rain of sweat. Discovery's appetite is dulled because: who wants to stir?

Unexpectedly, a treasure is laid on my desk. It is attorney Maurice Weinstein's new book, "Zebulon B. Vance and 'The Scattered Nation.'"

The book is really two stories. One is that of Zeb Vance, a major historical figure largely forgotten in this, his home state. The other is a reprinting of Vance's remarkable lecture of the history of the Jews, the most famous ever made in this country and written while he lived in Charlotte after the Civil War. It is a recitation of their wondrous accomplishments, the indebtedness of Christians to them and a call for tolerance. Said Vance in the lengthy, informative lecture

given dozens of times in nearly 20 years all over America:

"All Christian churches are but off-shoots from or grafts upon the old Jewish stock. Strike out all of Judaism from the Christian church and there remains nothing but an unmeaning superstition."

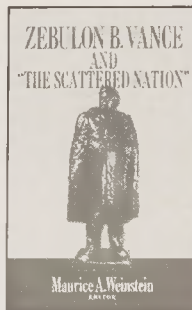
Maurice Weinstein had a scholar's and a lawyer's zest for facts. He grew up in New Jersey, went off to Duke University and came to Charlotte when he graduated in 1940 from Duke Law School. Like Vance, who practiced law here for 10 years, Weinstein thought Charlotte was a city of opportunities. One of Weinstein's happiest recollections was "to be on the winning end of a meritorious law suit - emphasize meritorious."

Weinstein was a student of international affairs and Jewish history. He served world Jewry in various capacities. His biographical subject Vance was three times this state's governor, elected first

at age 32 during the Civil War. Vance was a noted stump speaker with a rollicking wit and a rapier oratorical thrust. He served three terms as a US senator and died in office in 1894, a beloved figure.

The Lonely River

"The Scattered Nation" begins referring to the Gulf Stream in the ocean. Vance majestically likens the people of Israel to the Gulf Stream: "There is a lonely river in the midst of the ocean of mankind. The mightiest floods of human temptation have never caused it to overflow the fiercest fires of human cruelty, though seven times heated in the furnace



of religious bigotry, have never caused it to dry up, although its waves for 2,000 years have rolled crimson with the blood of its martyrs.

"Its foundation is in the gray dawn of the world's history, and its mouth is somewhere in the shadows of eternity. It too refuses to mingle with the surrounding waves, and the line which divides its restless billows from the common wastes of humanity is also plainly visible to the eye. It is the Jewish race.

"The Jew is beyond doubt the most remarkable man of this world - past or present. Of all the stories

of the sons of men, there is none so wild, so wonderful, so full of extreme mutation, so replete with suffering and horror, so abounding in extraordinary providences, so overflowing with scenic romance. There is no man who approaches him in the extent and character of the influence which he has exercised over the human family. His history is the history of our civilization and progress in this world, and our faith and hope in that which is to come. From him have we derived the form and pattern of all that is excellent on earth or in heaven."

Vance outlined their many contributions to mankind and to religion and then observed of the prejudice against Jews, "Never before

(Continued on page 21)

Heritage Jubilee Celebrates Regional History

Residents (and visitors) of the Charlotte region during the month of May will not want to miss Heritage Jubilee, a month-long celebration sponsored by the Charlotte Regional History Consortium featuring events and exhibitions highlighting the historical tapestry of the area. The Charlotte Jewish Historical Society, a CAJE project, is one among more than 30 area history organizations that will be participating. The exhibit Seventh Street to Shalom Park in the Speizman

Galleries, and the lecture program and DVD-ROM demonstration on May 22 are featured. The Jubilee will appeal to a wide audience with something of interest for children, adults and families.

Heritage Jubilee will kick off at "Taste of Charlotte," May 3-5 in uptown. Brochures with a complete listing of all the events and locations will be available all over town, including here at Shalom Park in the JCC, at the Temples and in the CAJE Resource Center. Many events are free, with May 18, International Museum Day offering free admission to most heritage museums and sites across the entire region. The exhibit and lecture at Shalom Park are, of course, free.

Heritage Jubilee is a coopera-

tive effort of the Charlotte Regional History Consortium. The Consortium promotes cooperation among and interest in the region's history organizations and resources, and includes members from historical organizations in Anson, Cabarrus, Catawba, Cleveland, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Rowan, Stanley and Union Counties in North Carolina, and Lancaster and York Counties in South Carolina. The Charlotte Jewish Historical Society has been a member of the Consortium since it began almost a decade ago.

Heritage Jubilee is funded in part by a Community Cultural Connections Grassroots Grant from the Arts & Science Council of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. ☆


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Carolina Agency for Jewish Education and the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte cordially invite you to

Celebrate and Learn About Heritage: Civilization and the Jews

And participate in a demonstration workshop of the new Heritage interactive DVD-ROM and its resource guide.

In addition, join us for a very special lecture program featuring **Dr. David Goldfield, Robert Lee Bailey Professor of History at the University of North Carolina-Charlotte.** Lecture topic: "Pride of Place: Jews in Southern Life"

Wednesday, May 22, at 7:30 PM

in **Gorelick Hall at the Jewish Community Center, Shalom Park, Charlotte.**

This program is brought to you by a generous grant from WNET-Thirteen, NYC and the Educational Broadcasting Corporation. Media assistance from WTVI, Charlotte's PBS station.

For more information, contact Lenora Stein at CAJE, 704-944-6780 or email lsstein@vnet.net or Marnie Moskowitz at the Federation, 704-944-6764 or email mmoskowitz@shalomcharlotte.org

הַאֵם אַתֶּם זֹכְרִים מֵתִי? Do You Remember When?



Schiff & Co. at 26 E. Trade Street (now the Omni Hotel) was first a tannery and then a grocery store. The Schiffs were at this location by 1884. Louis N. Schiff and his wife Carrie Rosenthal Schiff, owned Schiff & Co., pictured here. The Rosenthal family was one of nine Jewish families listed in the 1850 Charlotte census. Continue your walk down Jewish Charlotte's memory lane this month in the Speizman Galleries of the JCC at Shalom Park. Seventh Street to Shalom Park: Celebrating Our Jewish Heritage, an exhibit which features 31 historical photos that narrate the story of the growth of the Jewish community in Charlotte from the 1860's up through the 1980's will be on display during May. This exhibit was developed in cooperation with the Carolina Room of the Public Library of Charlotte-Mecklenburg in 1993-94. Did you know? May is the first annual Heritage Jubilee Month in Charlotte, sponsored by the Charlotte Regional History Consortium. There will be events going on at museums and historic sites around the county throughout May. Pick up a brochure in the lobby of the JCC, at one of the temples, or in the Carolina Agency for Jewish Education Resource Center to find out more about the month's happenings. Many are free and very family-friendly. This image, which is featured from the exhibit now showing in the Galleries at the JCC, is from the digital image archives of the Charlotte Jewish Historical Society, a project of CAJE, at Shalom Park.