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The Charlotte JEWISH news

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What Are Five Jewish Boys Doing in Local Cemeteries as Confederate Army Veterans?



Confederate honor guard salutes the grave of Phillip Schiff at the Hebrew cemetery.

by Walter J. Klein

The Charlotte Jewish Historical Society knows all about our Civil War dead. It is part of their mission to keep alive the vital part Charlotte Jews played in the 1861-1865 war that maimed the South for a century.

Here on these pages of the Charlotte Jewish News you can discover the innermost thoughts of a lowly Jewish soldier who kept a remarkable war diary, including: "October—We have got the smallpox in prison, and from six to twelve are taken out dead daily. We can buy from prisoners rats, 25 cents each, killed and dressed..."

Here you can read the words of one of our Society members to more than 1,000 who gathered to honor Confederate Christian and Jewish dead at both Elmwood and Hebrew cemeteries.

You can sense the respect Charlotte still holds for Sam Wittkowsky, the leading local Jewish citizen of the 19th century, and for five Confederate Jewish veterans. You can feel the gratitude for a Jewish grocer who sheltered Ms. Jefferson Davis after the last meeting of the Confederate cabinet here. And for a Jew who stood up to preserve the honor of Governor Zeb Vance as he was led to prison.

Charlotte Jewry has a valid Confederate heritage. It is not in conflict with the Jewish spirit of freedom from slavery that brought other fearless Jews to march—and die—in Alabama supporting the civil rights cause. Both movements testify to the Jew's willingness to lay his life on the line for social action causes more important to him than his own fate.

For the first time since the Civil War, Charlotte Confederate descendants honored their Jewish

dead in Confederate Memorial Day ceremonies April 21.

A thousand people from Charlotte and most Southern states gathered to remember Jewish soldiers along with Christian patriots who died during and following the Civil War.

One speaker was Walter J. Klein, a member of the Charlotte Jewish Historical Society headed by Ben Jaffa, Jr., who addressed the assembly at Elmwood cemetery following a parade from uptown Charlotte.

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Phil Turner drove from Augusta to recite poems at the Hebrew cemetery grave of Cpl. Louis Leon. Leon was a store clerk in Charlotte when he enlisted. He was elected by the United Confederate Veterans to command a large reunion in Charlotte May 20, 1898, to unveil the Mec-Dec monument.

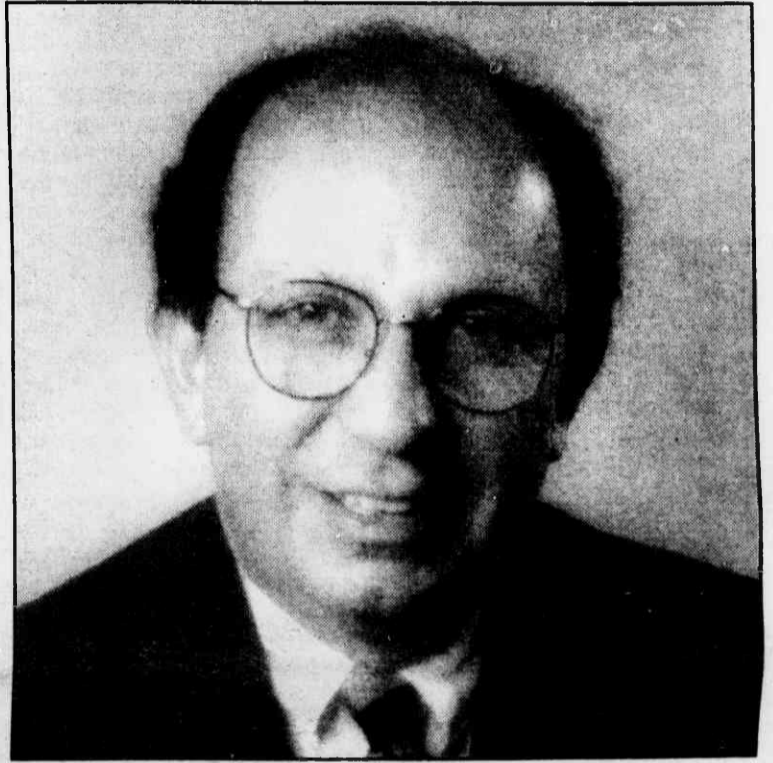
Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte Annual Meeting Welcomes New Executive Director: Marvin Goldberg

The new Executive Director of the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte, Marvin Goldberg, was officially welcomed to Charlotte at the Federation's Annual Meeting held on Sunday, April 28, in Gorelick Hall at Shalom Park.

The event, which was chaired by Donna Lerner and Judie Van Glish, featured D'var Torahs by the Presidents of the three institutions at Shalom Park; Eric Sklut, President of the Jewish Community Center, Mitch Rivkin, President of Temple Beth El and David Miller, President of Temple Israel. Each spoke eloquently of the symbolism of the occasion and graciously welcomed Mr. Goldberg to the Jewish community in Charlotte.

Bill Gorelick, 1996 Campaign Chair, reported on the status of the Federation annual campaign and stated that the community was only \$40,000 away from achieving the campaign goal of \$1.4 million.

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Marvin Goldberg

Family Entertainer Tom Chapin In Concert For JCC Inaugural "Celebrate The Children" Huge Success

It was the concert that almost didn't happen. After a disappointing cancellation when the "Blizzard of '96" hit Charlotte in January, Tom Chapin returned on April 14 for the inaugural "Celebrate the Children" event presented by the Jewish Community Center and co-sponsored by Royal Insurance.

A sold-out crowd sang and swayed through Chapin's infectious performance at Spirit Square Center for Arts and Education. A real crowd pleaser, Chapin is best known for his folksong style and music that appeals to a broad range of children as well as their parents and grandparents. His songs always involve the audience. Imagine an audience standing with their hands in the air or using sign-language to sing the chorus of one of his most well-loved tunes:

"We're a family, and we're a tree,
Our roots go deep down in history.
From my great, great grand-daddy,
reaching up to me,
We're a green and growing family tree."

-From "A Family Tree" written by John Forster and Tom Chapin

Adding to the festivities were Chapin's fellow performers, Michael Mark and Jon Cobert. These musicians helped make the



Celebrate the Children Chairperson Jane Weaver Sobel and JCC President Eric Sklut greet Tom Chapin

concert a memorable one for hundreds of children.

Prior to the concert, a sponsor reception honored all the event's major donors, including Royal Insurance, Blumenthal Foundation, The Lance Foundation and Target Stores. In addition, Patty & Bill Gorelick, Sandra & Leon Levine and Lori & Eric Sklut and all the Family Tree Sponsors were feted.

"Celebrate the Children 1996" raised \$25,000 for family and children programs at the Jewish Community Center. A variety of programs will benefit from these funds including afterschool enrichment courses, infant-toddler day

care facilities, parenting workshops and day camp scholarships.

"Celebrate the Children" chairperson Jane Weaver Sobel suggests the Jewish Community Center is a place that focuses on children and the family. She says "we wanted to do an event that would bring quality children's programming to all the families of Charlotte and at the same time highlight the JCC." In addition to Sobel, an executive committee of volunteers including Vicki Derderian, Larry Farber, Janni Fishbein-Slotkiss, Robin Heiden, Lisa Placock, Melissa Raphael and Bruce Schwartz spearheaded the event planning.