



# Branches

**News From the Program in Jewish Studies at Rice University**

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Photograph by Ken Kosub

While this year has been a time of expansion and achievement for the Program in Jewish Studies, it has also been a tumultuous time on campus. Since the beginning of the calendar year, there have been a few troubling occurrences of vandalism, including a swastika chalked on the plinth of the William Marsh Rice statue and a book in Fondren library that also had been defaced with a swastika. In conjunction with Rabbi Kenny Weiss, Rice's Police Department and administration, the Program in Jewish Studies worked to ensure that these incidents were properly reported and handled.

Luckily, the Rice community has been proactive in dealing with these incidents, as well as responding to recent political developments. After the Trump administration's first executive order banning travel and immigration from seven countries, Rice President David Leebron issued a strongly worded statement to the Rice community reiterating the university's support for its students, faculty and staff, regardless of their citizenship or immigration status. President Leebron noted that the university's commitment to the freedom of its students, faculty and staff to travel and work in the United States and abroad stems from the fundamental values of the university, which include "robust international engagement in many forms, and our desire to reach out around the world to attract extraordinarily talented students and researchers who will have a positive impact on our community and contribute to knowledge and progress in the future."

Likewise, the Program in Jewish Studies issued our own statement on our website, stating our objection to the travel ban on the grounds that the ban "violates the core values of the academic community and its dedication to critical thinking, evidence-based practices and scholarly exchange." Furthermore, we wrote, "As scholars of Jewish studies, we are keenly

aware of the damage that exclusionary practices based on race, religion or national origin can do. On the other hand, our work has shown us that immigrants have immeasurably enriched the American economy, culture and society, as well as the university." At a moment when the American public appears to be more divided than ever, we feel it is particularly important to maintain an open-minded, inclusive approach. It is part of the mission of the Program in Jewish Studies to foster this mindset in our students and encourage it throughout the university.

Our current initiatives work toward the goal of broadening student minds, supporting diversity in the university community and furthering critical research. This spring, the Program in Jewish Studies sponsored two courses that incorporated a travel component over spring break: *Becoming Americans: The Jewish Immigrant Experience in the United States*, taught by Joshua Furman, and *Jerusalem*, taught by Melissa Weininger and me. Professor Furman took his students, who were learning about the history of Jewish immigration and Jewish immigrant culture in the United States, to both New York City and Galveston, where they visited museums, neighborhoods and archives that enriched their understanding of the immigrant experience. We took our group of students to Jerusalem, where they visited the ancient and modern sites they studied in class and met with Jerusalemites from various sectors of Israeli society.

At the same time, the program has been hard at work on two important initiatives in conjunction with the Admission Office to recruit more Jewish students and those interested in Jewish studies to Rice. For the second year, we offered travel vouchers to admitted students to facilitate their visits to campus during Admit Days and Owl Days. In addition, this year we are beginning a program to fly in college counselors from Jewish day schools and schools with significant Jewish populations for special programming designed to introduce them to the breadth of Jewish life on campus and the opportunities offered by the Program in Jewish Studies.

By facilitating student travel, campus programming, faculty research and student recruitment, we continue to remain true to our mission of diversity and inclusion and to further the values of the university at large.

Sincerely,

Matthias Henze  
Founding director, Program in Jewish Studies  
Isla Carroll and Percy E. Turner Professor of  
Biblical Studies



**WATCH OUR NEW VIDEO WITH PRESIDENT DAVID LEEBRON**  
at [jewishstudies.rice.edu](http://jewishstudies.rice.edu).

# Comedy Duo YidLife Crisis Performs at Rice

By Melissa Weininger, Anna Smith  
Fine Senior Lecturer in Jewish  
Studies

Two Canadians walk into Willy's Pub  
*tsu mahkn a lekhayim ...*

This is either the beginning of a great joke or a description of an event sponsored by the Program in Jewish Studies in February, when the comedy duo, YidLife Crisis, came to the Rice campus to perform.

YidLife Crisis, made up of Montrealers Jamie Elman (Chaime) and Eli Batalion (Leyzer), creates short comedic internet episodes in Yiddish, available on YouTube. Their skits are a mashup of tradition and modernity, addressing topics as varied as dating, kashrut and modern religious observance all in the 1,000-year-old language of Ashkenazi Jews.



YidLife Crisis on stage at Willy's Pub

On Feb. 22, YidLife Crisis brought their unique brand of comedy to Rice, with a free show sponsored by the Program in Jewish Studies and Hillel, with the cooperation of the Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center (ERJCC). Jamie and Eli offered their commentary on the dilemmas of modern life through the lens of *yiddishkayt*, interspersed with clips from their web series.

On their website, a “yidlife crisis” is defined as, “the identity crisis one has reconciling their old world inheritance with their new world lifestyle.” The duo encouraged students to share their own “yidlife crises” on stage, and one student stood up to talk about his Catholic upbringing and his crisis around observing Lent.

Although their message is delivered with humor, the rationale behind the

group is very serious: “Behind the comedy of YidLife Crisis lies a robust strategy: in a world of unaffiliated ‘Pew Jews,’ YidLife is meant to impact through the scale of the internet to engage a digital generation in the discussion of Jewish identity through storytelling and content with style and authenticity, not advertising or persuasion, with an open-mind and a collaborative spirit.”

In fact, the show at Rice was a collaboration, a cooperative effort between the ERJCC and the Program in Jewish Studies to bring exciting and cutting-edge programming to Houston. In addition to the show at Rice, YidLife Crisis performed for the Houston Rabbinical Association, the Federation and at the JCC during their five-day stay in Houston. ■



Jamie Elman and Eli Batalion

## Faculty Spotlight: Brian Ogren



Brian Ogren

I am the Anna Smith Fine Assistant Professor of Judaic Studies in the Department of Religion, and I have been active in the Program in Jewish Studies since arriving at

Rice in 2012. Before coming to Rice, I spent 13 years living and studying in Israel, completing my Ph.D. at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The focus of my work is Jewish thought and philosophy, particularly in the late medieval and early modern periods. My first book, “Renaissance and Rebirth” (Brill, 2009),

was a study of notions of reincarnation in Italian Renaissance Jewish thought; my second book, “The Beginning of the World in Renaissance Jewish Thought” (Brill, 2016), treats early modern ideas of the creation of the world and the beginning of time. More recently, I have begun to study a very different area: Jewish thought in colonial America.

At Rice, I teach a variety of courses on Jewish thought and religion, from Introduction to Judaism to advanced courses in Kabbalah and Jewish philosophy, and I particularly enjoy working with the motivated and incisive students

at Rice. Almost every course I teach is part of the rich curriculum of the Program in Jewish Studies, and I'm very pleased to be able to contribute to Jewish intellectual life on campus. The program provides a wonderful and integral forum in which faculty from diverse areas of Rice who may not otherwise encounter each other in the day-to-day life of the university can come together. This serves not only to enrich the curriculum, but it also creates a real sense of community and collegiality that is perhaps just as important to the university as to a vibrant program in Jewish studies. ■



# Tales of the City: JWST 238 Goes to New York

By Amber Tong '17

“The Yiddish Forward!,” we shouted in excitement while snapping pictures of the building that once housed the popular Jewish newspaper, as our professor watched in amusement.

Considering the progressive, socialist agenda of the paper under the editorship of Abraham Cahan, whose columns we read in class, it is a strange twist of history that the building has since been converted into luxury condominiums. Sadly, the New Yorkers shoving us out of their way didn't seem to share our happy time travels.

These moments, at times joyous, at times difficult, became characteristic of our spring break trip to New York City. We were in New York as part of a course, JWST 238 — Becoming Americans: The Jewish Immigrant Experience in the United States, taught by Stanford and Joan Alexander Postdoctoral Fellow Joshua Furman. After nine weeks in the classroom learning about the history and culture of Jewish immigrants, we spent a week in New York City visiting immigrant communities, museums and cultural landmarks. Once in New York,

my nine classmates and I connected with the city in surprising ways. We engaged with the material we had studied in the classroom not only at arranged sites but also on the streets, which were shaped by generations of immigrants.

Visiting reconstructed rooms where Jewish immigrants lived at the Tenement Museum felt like finally meeting a pen pal and realizing her life was a little different than I imagined. Walking through multiple stations at Ellis Island deepened our understanding of the tremendous confusion and anxiety immigrants experienced on one hand and the system's complex bureaucratic concerns on the other. Munching on corned beef and knishes taught us — well, that they were delicious. In just four days, our knowledge was simultaneously enriched, complicated and challenged.

Yet, perhaps more important than linking what we saw to what we thought we knew was being exposed to artifacts, narratives and even communities that we could never have imagined. Tours of Hasidic and Syrian neighborhoods in Brooklyn proved to be some of the most memorable parts of the trip, as we had an opportunity to interact with people who are living the Jewish history of tomorrow. The unique ways in which

they negotiated their religious, communal, and national identities inspired us to think about Jewish-Americans in all their unity and diversity.

Other remarkable experiences ranged from learning about Jewish traditions at various synagogues to perusing a special collection of archives where historians do research. Meanwhile, a serendipitous visit to the Museum of Chinese in America, located next to the historic Lower East Side, presented us with parallels between the experiences of different “outsiders,” which added a personal layer to our understanding of the immigrant experience. Such discoveries were potent not only in the emotions they invoked, but also in the questions about the intersection of Jewish and American history they opened up.

Those questions came with us to Galveston, Texas, the last stop of our excursion. As we strolled through a synagogue and later around the Seaport Museum, my mind went back to New York. Above all, we learned how subtly a rich history and culture could be woven into a place, whether in the hustle and bustle of a city or the waves of an island. If they have stories to tell, we are ready to hear them. ■

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Exploring the archives at the Center for Jewish History



## Student Profiles



Bialys and lox at Russ & Daughters



Students pose on Ellis Island



Playing in the snow in Central Park



### Sonia Hamer

Hometown: Houston, Texas

Major: English

Minor: Jewish Studies

“My first Jewish studies course at Rice was Holocaust Memory in Modern Germany, a class which focused on historical memory and memorialization of the

Holocaust. Currently, I am enrolled in my second semester of Israeli Language and Culture as well as Israeli Women Writers. All of these classes have been invaluable experiences, exposing me to a wide variety of concepts and knowledge which have intersected in interesting ways with the things I have learned in other areas of study. On a more personal note, the minor allows me to connect to my heritage in an academic way, which is well suited to my personality and interfaith upbringing. Studying a subject is, in my mind, one of the greatest forms of respect I can afford it. And I am thrilled to have the opportunity to do so.”

*Sonia is the recipient of the 2017 Morris and Shirley Rapoport Award in Jewish Studies, awarded to a student who has demonstrated exemplary achievement and dedication in Jewish studies courses.*



### Daniel Russell

Hometown: Stillwater, Okla.

Major: History

“I am a history student considering going on to law school. My primary interest is in the languages and cultures of the Middle East. Through the Program in Jewish Studies at Rice,

I've taken two semesters of Hebrew, and over spring break I went to Jerusalem with Professor Matthias Henze and Professor Melissa Weininger as part of their Jerusalem course. Learning Hebrew, in particular, has been a great experience for me. I find its unique history of renewal in the modern period fascinating. These classes have helped broaden my understanding of relations between the people living in the Middle East. As I hope to pursue a career in the region, understanding these relationships is crucial. I'm very grateful that I've been introduced to Hebrew, as well as Jewish culture and history, through the Program in Jewish Studies.”



# An Open Book: Glimpses Into the Lives of Early Jewish Students at Rice

By Melissa Kean

The earliest students at the Rice Institute were a hardy and enterprising bunch. Free to build a campus culture from scratch and with minimal adult supervision, they proceeded with a friendly, open, and eager spirit of self-reliance and democracy.

They quickly adapted to the university's strict academic requirements and began creating the organizations that still form the heart of student life today: the band, the Thresher, the Campanile, and all of the various social and intellectual clubs and organizations.

From the very first class that en-

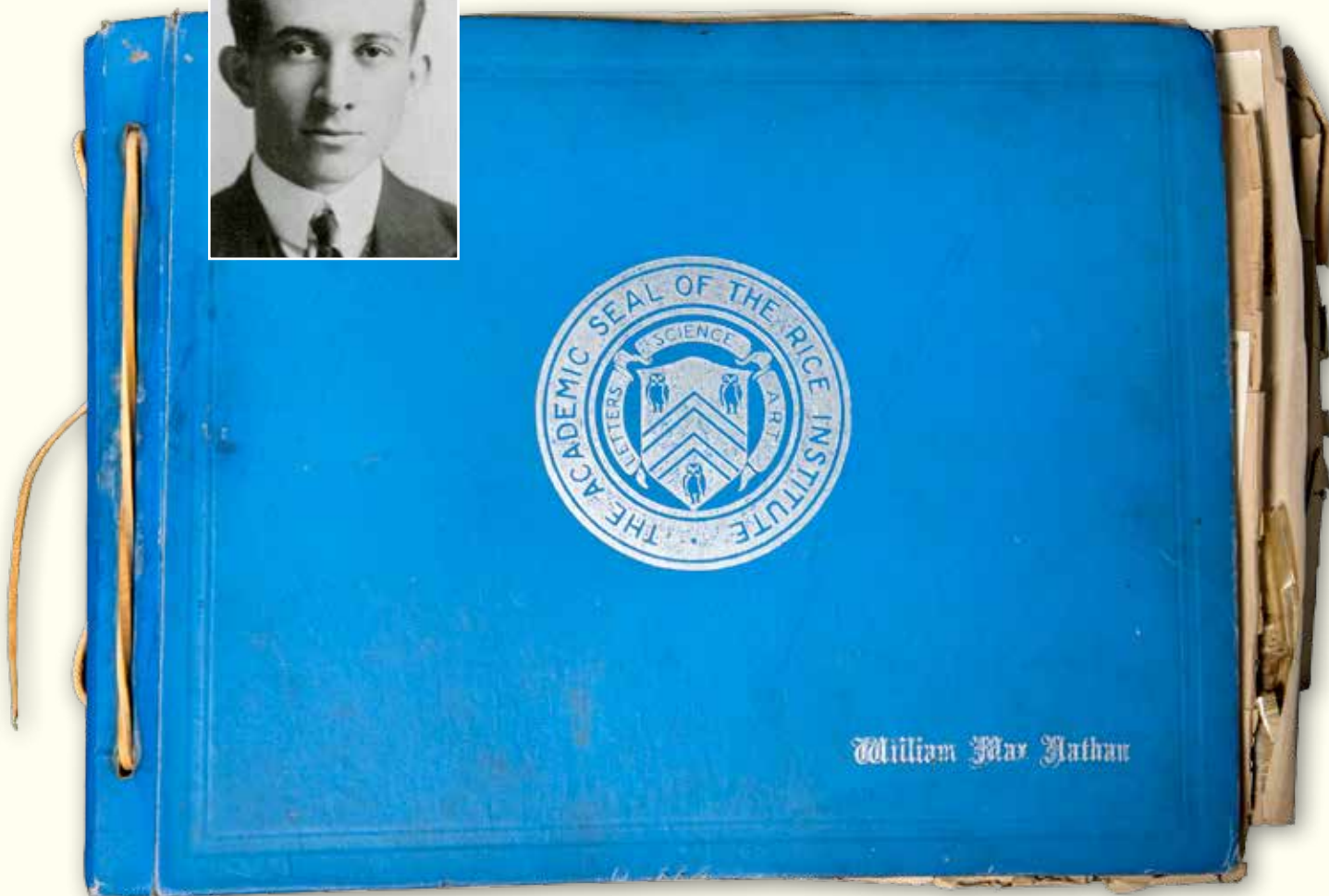
tered in 1912, Jewish students have been a part of this community. One of the most surprising things about the early Rice Institute is that in an era when private colleges were overwhelmingly denominational, it was secular. William Marsh Rice seems to have picked up this idea from the charter of Girard

College in Philadelphia, which was one of his early models for the Institute and which completely banned religious observations from its campus. Outside of Tulane, which was unusual in many respects because of its location in New Orleans, it's hard to think of another private college or university in the South that so readily admitted Jewish students into the heart of the campus life. Still, there is no question that the early Rice Institute, while carefully nonsectarian, was — like the rest of Houston — culturally Christian. The vast majority of students and faculty were Protestant society, which meant



**Left:** William Max Nathan in a 1916 Campanille photo.

**Below:** From the archives of Rice's Woodson Research Center — the scrapbook of William Max Nathan, a member of the first class of 1916.



that while Jewish students participated freely in the intellectual and public life of the Institute, there were lines drawn in private. This produced a sometimes complicated set of relationships, with Jewish students both part of and separate from the broader student community. In this rather ambiguous environment, Rice's earliest Jewish students banded together to create avenues for fellowship that were uniquely their own.

We are fortunate to have in Rice's Woodson Research Center (WRC) a rich resource that sheds light on the experiences of those early Jewish students both on campus and in the larger Jewish community of Houston. Up on a shelf in the back room of the archives, nestled among our collection of early student scrapbooks is one

We are fortunate to have in Rice's Woodson Research Center a rich resource that sheds light on the experiences of those early Jewish students both on campus and in the larger Jewish community of Houston.

particular book whose blue cover is jauntily emblazoned "William Max Nathan." A member of the first class of 1916, Nathan was the business manager for the first Campanile, a member of the Debate Society, vice president of the senior class, a member of the Honor Council and one of the founders of the

Rice chapter of the Menorah Society. He was also a careful saver of ephemera — his scrapbook is packed with random bits and pieces of life at Rice and around town in the mid- to late-teens. Among other things there are invitations, tickets, dance cards, receipts, exam papers, photographs, news clippings, programs and report cards. Some of these items are generically "Rice" but many others are particular to the social and intellectual life of the Jewish students.

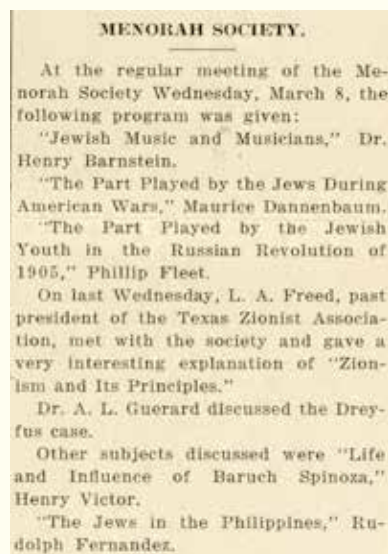
One of the most important groups for these students was the Menorah Society, a chapter of the Intercollegiate Menorah Association, which was organized at Rice in October 1915 with William Nathan as its first president. The aims of the society were less specifically religious than those of campus Christian groups, which often provided de-

William Max Nathan was a careful saver of ephemera — his scrapbook is packed with random bits and pieces of life at Rice and around town in the mid- to late-teens. Among other things there are invitations, tickets, dance cards, receipts, exam papers, photographs, news clippings, programs and report cards. Some of these items are generically "Rice" but many others are particular

to the social and intellectual life of the Jewish students.



**Above:** Will Nathan (left) is next to Maurice Dannenbaum '19. Both Nathan and Dannenbaum were from Houston families, although Nathan was born in Navasota. At right is Philip Fleet, who traveled a somewhat farther distance to reach the Rice Institute. He was a native of Berdichev in what was then Russia, now Ukraine. Already a graduate of the gymnasium at Vilnius when his family reached Fort Worth, Fleet entered Rice with such strong academic skills that he was granted credit for several courses by examination, a rare feat in those days.



nominational services to their student members. Rather, the stated goals of the Menorah Society were cultural and intellectual: "To spread the knowledge of Jewish ideals and culture among not only Jewish students but also to all who are interested in this line of study." The society also served more purely social needs, holding frequent receptions, outings and parties. Still, they were a serious group, spending most of their time preparing and hearing talks on Jewish history, literature and art, and current Jewish problems. Speakers came from the ranks of Rice faculty members, local rabbis, the students themselves and successful Jewish professionals. The Rice library eagerly cooperated in a program of acquiring books on Jewish topics to help them in the preparation of the talks.

Nathan's scrapbook also holds a great deal of evidence of the social life of young Jewish Houstonians after the turn of the century. They regularly attended religious events such as confirmation services as well as informal gatherings. An especially important social hub was the Concordia Club, a prominent Jewish literary and social organization. Organized in 1901, the club was housed in a handsome and well-appointed building and held an annual debutante ball as well as a grand New Year's Eve celebration in addition to a regular schedule of dances, parties and dinners.

After he graduated from Rice in 1916, Nathan enrolled in Harvard's law school but soon left to join the military during World War I. When the war was over he came back to Texas and earned

his law degree from the University of Texas College of Law in 1921. He spent the rest of his life in Houston, devoting time to his family, a successful law practice and active participation in the city's Jewish community. He was one of the founders of the Congregation Emanu El in 1943 and served as the first secretary of its board. Nathan remained steadfastly devoted to Rice for his entire life. A stalwart of the Association of Rice Alumni, he worked at fundraising and the general promotion of the Institute and he proudly spoke at Rice's first-ever Golden Anniversary Reunion in 1962. Even today his legacy and relationship to the university lives quietly on — many books in Fondren Library's Judaica Collection bear a bookplate with his name.

During the celebration of Rice's

This photograph, taken during the 1915–16 school year, shows William Nathan with several of the Jewish girls who studied at Rice that year. Judging from their location near the front gate and their arms full of books, they likely have just arrived together on the streetcar that brought students from town to campus.

At far left is Elizabeth Morgenstern '19, whose family arrived in Houston from Brooklyn. The young woman second from left is Zillah Longfellow Willner '17, vice president of the Menorah Society from 1915 until she graduated in 1917. Zillah was the daughter of Rabbi Wolff Willner, who served Houston's Orthodox Congregation Adath Yeshurun from 1907 until 1924. Rabbi Willner, himself a graduate of Yale, (B.A. 1885 and an M.A. in Oriental languages in 1887) was a strong supporter of higher education for women.

Next to Zillah is Fannie Eldridge '19 who came to Rice from Texarkana. On Nathan's right is Rose Levin '19. Rose grew up in Brenham, which was then home to a large Jewish population. In Houston, Rose lived with the family of Rabbi Willner and went back and forth from home to campus with Zillah on the streetcar.



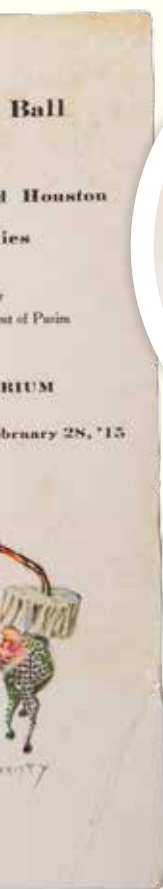
One of the most interesting items in the collection is this invitation to the Purim Ball in 1915, with a surprising attachment pinned inside.





Centennial in 2012, two of William Nathan's grandchildren visited Woodson Research Center and spent some time looking through his scrapbook and helping us puzzle out some minor mysteries. It would be hard to overstate the importance of memorabilia like this in understanding the history of the university and the Jewish community in Houston. ■

**If you have something that would help this effort, please contact Melissa Kean at [kean@rice.edu](mailto:kean@rice.edu). I'd love to talk to you!**



An invitation to the Leap Year Ball at the Concordia Club, a prominent Jewish literary and social organization.

One of the most unusual things in William Nathan's scrapbook is a photograph taken 24 years after he graduated. It captures a remarkable group at the 1940 commencement ceremony: (left to right) Edmund M. Dupree, the first student to enroll at the Rice Institute; Capt. James A. Baker, the first chairman of the Rice board; Charles Nathan, the first child of an alumnus to graduate from Rice; and his father, William Max Nathan, one of the first students to graduate from Rice with distinction. (Charles Nathan graduated with distinction as well.)

Like his father, Charles Nathan attended San Jacinto High School in Houston, where he was an outstanding student (and the state Latin champ in 1933). After he left Rice, he studied chemistry at the University of Pittsburgh, earning his Ph.D. in 1948. He served in the Navy during World War II, participating in the atomic bomb test at Bikini Atoll in 1946. After the war, he worked for many years as a chemical engineer in industrial laboratories, then became a professor of petroleum engineering at New Mexico Tech. He too displayed a deep commitment to the life of the Jewish community everywhere he lived. After he retired in 1989, he returned to Houston, where he died in 2001.

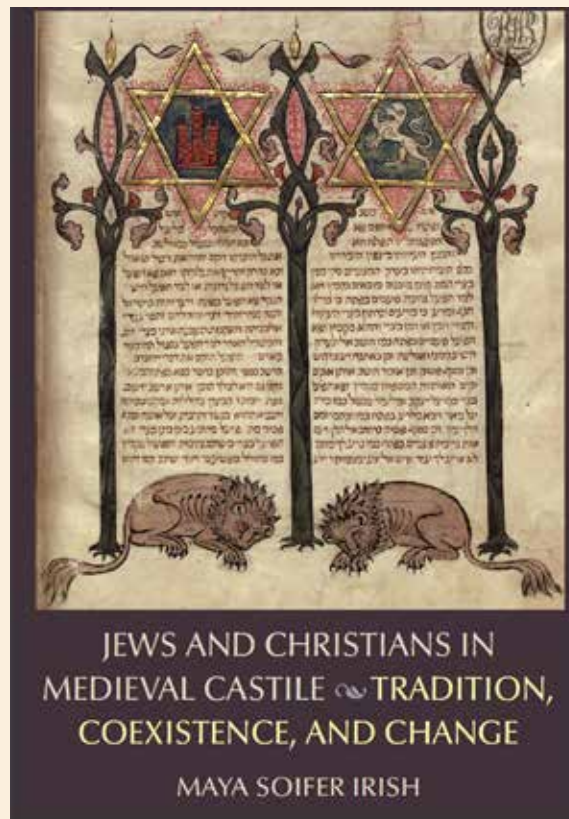
# Book Excerpt: 'Jews and Christians in Medieval Castile: Tradition, Coexistence and Change'

by **Maya Soifer Irish, Assistant Professor of History**

Surveying the state of Jewish-Christian relations along the Camino de Santiago at the end of the Middle Ages, Francisco Cantera Burgos, renowned scholar of Castilian Jews, tries to imagine what it was like for the pilgrims from northern Europe to encounter Castilian interfaith coexistence first-hand. He envisions the pilgrims experiencing a strong culture shock: "How greatly would such state of toleration between Christians, Jews, and *conversos* surprise the foreign pilgrims in whose own countries it had become highly unusual!" Cantera's enthusiasm is contagious, but his conjecture about the pilgrims' reaction is probably wrong. Rather than contemplate the wonders of the Jews' presence in Castile at the time they had been expelled from much of northern Europe, a pilgrim from abroad would be too focused on the rigors of the journey to pay such matters much attention. The section of the Camino running through the Northern Castilian plateau could put a traveler's mental and physical health to a severe test. As one modern study of the medieval pilgrimage to Compostela puts it, "those long, arid stretches and rocky defiles" seemed "not only metaphorically a 'return to the desert' but literally such." Seemingly endless, harsh winters and short, hot summers provided an appropriate stage for the journey "to the end of the world." Northern Castilian meseta was a barren and forbidding land. If the pilgrims were indeed surprised by the Jews' presence, it was probably because they were wondering why the Jews came here at all.

And yet the Jews came, in fairly large numbers, to settle in this region and form numerous *aljamas* [communities] along this stretch of the Camino, from Logroño (the Rioja) to Astorga (León). Many of them came from al-Andalus, where the intolerant policies of the

Almoravids in the late eleventh century, and of the Almohads in the second half of the twelfth century made the distant northern Castilian lands seem like a safe haven for refugees. An economic and urban boom along the Camino in the early twelfth century provided another strong incentive. The Camino beckoned to the Jews, even if they were not destined to achieve much success in the region's long-distance trade. It is telling that



most of the largest Castilian-Leonese *juderías* [Jewish settlements] north of Duero – in Burgos, Carrión, León, Sahagún, Nájera, and Logroño, with the notable exceptions of Palencia and (farther south) Valladolid – were located directly on the Camino. Two other large and prosperous *juderías* – in Briviesca and Pancorbo – lay on a subsidiary route that ran from Vitoria to Burgos. It would not be an exaggeration to say that without the Camino and a variety of other roads, major and secondary, Jewish life in the region would be unimaginable.

The origins of Jewish settlement near the Camino in Northern Castile and León are obscure. The earliest evidence indicates that Jews were already present in the Burgos area during the reign of Fernán González, count of Castile (923-970), and possessed stable settlements during the dominion over Castile of Sancho III Garcés, king of Navarre (1000-1035). Documentation from León indicates the Jews' presence there in the tenth century. The 1017 *fuero* [charter] granted by Alfonso V to the city of León mentions Jews in a way that suggests the existence of a Jewish community in the city. Significantly, some of the earliest evidence comes from sources that describe violent attacks on Jews. According to the *fuero* of Castrojeriz, upon the death of Sancho III in 1035, some "men" from the castle rose up in rebellion and killed four royal officials and sixty Jews at the nearby royal palace in Mercatello. The others were promptly removed to the castle. In the first two decades of the twelfth century, assaults on Jews occurred in several Castilian towns. In 1110 the walled *judería* in Toledo suffered an attack, with a number of Jews killed and some houses looted. Riots that simultaneously targeted royal property and the Jews occurred shortly thereafter in the diocese of Palencia. In 1127 king Alfonso VII issued a pardon to the inhabitants of Saldaña, Cea, Carrión, Cisneros, and several other towns, forgiving the perpetrators for killing Jews and taking their property, as well as for robbing the royal palaces and burning the king's hunting grounds. He accepted a fine of two silver coins from each perpetrator's household. The underlying causes of these events are difficult to ascertain. Religious hostility as well as dynastic struggles, temporary setbacks to the reconquest, and general political instability of these years might have contributed to outbursts of violence against Jews. ■



## Donor Spotlight: Melvin and Frieda Dow

By **Melissa Weininger, Anna Smith Fine Senior Lecturer in Jewish Studies**

For Melvin and Frieda Dow, their affiliation with Rice is a family affair: three generations of Dows have attended Rice. Melvin's father studied at Rice when part of Main Street was still unpaved and missing the bus meant slogging through the mud in bare feet to campus. Melvin graduated in the class of 1948, and the Dows' son, David, who also is the Rorschach Visiting Professor in the history department, graduated in 1981.

The Dows also are, in their words, "committed to Jewish education in its many forms." They see their support of education as connected to Jewish tradition. "Jewish tradition has the highest respect for teachers," Melvin and Frieda said. "It's why Moses is not referred to as Moses the liberator or Moses the lawgiver but *Moshe Rabbenu*, Moses our teacher. In our tradition, we're taught to respect teachers."

In fact, education is, in a sense, the family business. The Dows have five sons, and all of them are professional educators or involved in education administration and policy. Frieda herself seldom misses a Jewish educational program

in the community. An avid reader, she is simultaneously in three book clubs.

These deep personal connections to Rice, teaching, education and the Jewish community make the Program in Jewish Studies at Rice a natural fit for their support. "We think that the Program in Jewish Studies at Rice is invaluable and we are in favor of all the support the community can give it," the Dows said.

Their strong commitment to the program led Melvin and Frieda to host an early gathering in support of the new Program in Jewish Studies at Rice in 2009. They wanted to spread the word in the wider Houston Jewish community about the new program. And since its inception, Melvin has served on the program's advisory board.

In particular, the broad appeal of Jewish studies courses at Rice reinforces the Dows' support for the program. The Dows noted, "we treasure the opportunity to support the Program in Jewish Studies at Rice, where both Jewish and non-Jewish students can study the rich tradition of Jewish religious thought, Jewish history and Jewish culture in the academic environment of a world-class university." ■



Melvin and Frieda Dow

"We treasure the opportunity to support the Program in Jewish Studies at Rice, where both Jewish and non-Jewish students can study the rich tradition of Jewish religious thought, Jewish history and Jewish culture in the academic environment of a world-class university."

— Melvin and Frieda Dow

### Do you enjoy receiving the Branches newsletter?

We are hoping to offer Branches in an electronic form for those that would prefer to receive it that way. We also would like to know what you think about the newsletter. Provide your email address and we can send you a quick survey, which will enable us to make Branches even better and provide up-to-date information about the Program in Jewish Studies. Please send your email to [jewishstudies@rice.edu](mailto:jewishstudies@rice.edu) and thank you in advance for your valuable input. If you prefer not to receive Branches, please notify us at [jewishstudies@rice.edu](mailto:jewishstudies@rice.edu).



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