

**Sept. 30 7pm, Austin Coke**

**“Lost History: Uncovering Lexington’s Early Jewish Community 1867-1924”**

Jewish history often becomes lost within a dominantly Christian community’s narrative, such as the case in Lexington, Kentucky. While the Jewish community grew significantly enough to build a synagogue in 1904, the synagogue itself has retained very little of its early history. Jewish families had inhabited the city of Lexington throughout the latter half of the 19th century, operating businesses and contributing to local government. Further archival research conducted at the University of Kentucky Special Collections Research Center enabled me to learn more about the individuals who operated Lexington’s Jewish businesses, as well as the network of people those businesses served within the period 1873-1924. Specifically, by looking closely at the Moses Kaufman papers, which discuss Jewish cultural life in Lexington, Sanborn Maps, Lexington city directories, and Temple Adath Israel records, I uncovered the depth of Lexington’s Jewish business sector and wanted to effectively share it with a broader, public audience. Qualitative analysis of these archival collections established a list of different Jewish-owned/operated businesses, Jewish businessmen, and the types of businesses they owned. This project intends on generating an interactive digital map, utilizing tools such as HistoryPin, which details geographic locations of Jewish businesses or places of employment and offers details concerning each business and the Jewish individuals who operated them. This talk will first explain how I became interested in and familiar with the Moses Kaufman papers as a junior pursuing a dual degree in history and anthropology, then I will discuss how further research enabled me to better understand his local context, and finally, I will demonstrate the interactive digital map which showcases more than a year of undergraduate research and highlights the commercial and civic networks with which Kaufman was involved and contributed to from 1867-1924 in Lexington, KY.

Austin Coke is an undergraduate double majoring in history/anthropology, JHFE scholar, SURF recipient, who spent all last year and summer conducting archival research on Moses Kaufman and his turn of the century Lexington Jewish community.

\*Please click here to [register](#) and receive the Zoom link to attend

**Oct. 7, 7pm**

**Ann Allen, Professor emerita, History, University of Louisville**

**"Jewish Women in Social Reform and Suffrage Movements, Louisville 1890-1920."**

When Kentucky’s Equal Rights Association was founded in the 1880s, it was centered in small-town and rural areas and composed chiefly of a religiously and socially homogeneous group, the friends of Laura Clay. By 1918, a generation later, woman suffrage had gained the support of a much larger and more diverse constituency centered in the state’s only industrial city and headed by a coalition of progressive reformers. Louisville’s Jewish community—by far the state’s largest—played a key role in this transformation. The presentation will trace Jewish women’s reasons for supporting woman suffrage, the coalitions that they formed with their Christian colleagues, and their contributions to the movement’s diversity and to its success.

\*Please click here to [register](#)

**Oct. 18 7pm**

**The Cholera Wedding: East European Jews' Magical Ritual to End an Epidemic**

**Natan M. Meir**

Lorry I. Lokey Professor of Judaic Studies and Academic Director

The Harold Schnitzer Family Program in Judaic Studies, Portland State University

The talk explores the history and meaning of a peculiar ritual that emerged among East European Jews in the 19th century: to stop the spread of an epidemic, the community would marry its most vulnerable and marginalized members—orphans, beggars, and the disabled—to each other in a wedding held in the cemetery. Drawing on various approaches from the fields of social and cultural history, anthropology, folklore, and cultural studies, Natan Meir will explain why this ritual held such lasting appeal to ordinary Jews in Eastern Europe, to the extent that it spread to Ottoman Palestine and endured into the period of the Holocaust.

(co-sponsored with Centre and Transylvania Universities and Year of Cultures Without Borders) , Zoom link information forthcoming

**Nov. 4 7pm**

**Henry Sapoznik**

**“The Lost World of African-American Cantors 1915-1953”**

The history of Black-Jewish cultural interaction primarily focuses on how Jews adopted and adapted Black vernacular music — ragtime, jazz, swing, R&B and blues, etc. —as performers, promoters, managers, club owners and record labels. However, what has never before been explored were the African-Americans who performed Yiddish and cantorial music in and for the Jewish community, in theaters on record, radio and in concert between the World Wars. The talk will honor the memory of now forgotten Black cantors – Mendele der Shvartzer Khazn, Reb Dovid Kalistrita, Abraham Ben Benjamin Franklin, Thomas LaRue Jones and Goldye di Shvartze Khaznte the first – and only — Black woman cantor. The talk will feature dozens of historic graphics and translations of period Yiddish newspaper previews, ads and reviews and the playing of the one known 1923 Yiddish and Hebrew recording of Thomas Jones LaRue.

Co-sponsored with Year of Cultures Without Borders

\*Please click here to [register](#)

**Nov. 18 7pm**

Laura Yares and Sharon Avni

**“Shtisel - Let’s Talk About It”**

Abstract:

The Facebook Group “Shtisel - Let’s Talk About it” was founded in 2019 by three women in Detroit, MI to discuss their mutual interest in a new Israeli television show recently added to Netflix. As of August 2021, the group has over 33,000 followers. Members use the group to post questions and insights about a broad range of topics related to the television show, including the

Hebrew and Yiddish languages, the practices of ultra-Orthodox Jews, and life in contemporary Israel. Drawing on surveys, ethnographic interviews, linguistic analysis of social media postings, and audio diaries of members as they watch the show recorded via a specially created app, this talk explores how members of the group learn about Judaism from watching and discussing Shtisel. It highlights the capacity of digital media tools like television and social media to create opportunities for a broad range of participants to engage in collective Jewish conversations forged across religious, cultural and international boundaries, and performed through social media.

**Bios:**

Laura Yares is Assistant Professor in the Department of Religious Studies at Michigan State University. Her work explores Jewish education as a site for understanding the ways that Jews have constructed and continue to construct understandings of self, community and other. Her current research includes a book project exploring the growth of Jewish Sunday Schools in 19<sup>th</sup> century America a contemporary ethnographic study analyzing Jewish learning in cultural arts spaces.

Sharon Avni is Professor of Academic Literacy and Linguistics at BMCC at the City University of New York (CUNY). She is the co-author of *Hebrew Infusion: Language and Community and American Jewish Summer Camps*, and is a research affiliate at the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Center for Studies in Jewish Education at Brandeis. Her current work includes modern day Hebraists in the United States.

Co-sponsored with Year of Cultures Without Borders and Writing, Rhetoric, and Digital Studies

\*Please click here to [register](#)