



# Jewish life in North Carolina, a multimedia project

A groundbreaking, four-part, multimedia project has produced several interesting ways for people to learn about Jewish life in North Carolina.

The project, called “Down Home: Jewish Life in North Carolina” features a traveling, free museum exhibit, a documentary film, a companion book, and fourth- and eighth-grade curriculum guides with DVDs for North Carolina public schools. Former governor James B. Hunt Jr. is the project’s honorary chairman.

It’s the first major effort to document and present more than 400 years of Jewish life in North Carolina, and was organized and produced by the Jewish Heritage Foundation of North Carolina in Durham.



*Shofar blowing for Rosh Hashanah, Mount Mitchell, 2000. Courtesy of Warren Gentry.*

## Museum exhibit

The same-named traveling exhibit is currently at the N.C. Museum of History in Raleigh. It chronicles how Jews have blended into Tar Heel life while preserving their ethnic and religious traditions.

“The exhibit brings to life Jewish values—family, faith, work and study,” says Leonard Rogoff, exhibit curator, historian and the companion book’s author. “It challenges stereotypes both Southern and Jewish.”

The exhibit presents a historical overview of Jewish immigration and acculturation and shows how Jews, through struggle and negotiation, became integrated and helped build a New South.


## Documentary film

This 60-minute documentary brings history to life with re-enactments, archival photographs, vintage films and entertaining oral histories. Produced by Emmy Award-winning filmmaker and historian Steve Channing, it sells for \$19.95.

## Companion book

The illustrated volume presents a sweeping chronicle of Jewish life in the Tar Heel State, from colonial times to the present. The book includes more than 125 historic and contemporary photographs and incorporates oral histories, profiles of individuals and historical narrative. Readers learn about forward-thinking entrepreneur Karl Robbins, who purchased farmland for Research Triangle Park, as well as expressive Fannye Marks, whose dress shop in Roanoke Rapids outfitted the wives of governors. Written by Rogoff, it was published by the University of North Carolina Press in Chapel Hill in association with JHfnc. Hardcover, 432 pages, \$35. The book and documentary are sold in the N.C. Museum of History’s gift shop, and online at [www.jhfn.org](http://www.jhfn.org).

## Educational DVDs and teacher resource guides

The DVDs will be available for use in “Peoples of North Carolina,” the curriculum required for fourth and eighth grades. Teacher guides are available now for download on the N.C. Museum of History’s “Down Home” section on [www.ncmuseumofhistory.org](http://www.ncmuseumofhistory.org). For updates, visit [www.jhfn.org](http://www.jhfn.org) or call (919) 668-5839. 

—Karen Olson House



## Traveling museum exhibit

Four re-created settings at the free exhibit focus on these Jewish values:

“A Love of Learning” focuses on the intellectual and cultural accomplishments of Tar Heel Jews. The setting re-creates the study from the Charlotte home of civil rights activist Harry Golden, who published the newspaper Carolina Israelite from 1942 to 1966.

“Keeping the Faith” features a reconstructed synagogue sanctuary with religious ritual objects from a synagogue in Winston-Salem such as a Torah, Mezuzahs and spice boxes.

“Building Businesses: Creating Communities” includes an authentic dry-goods store stocked with vintage merchandise and artifacts from family stores in Whitakers, Lincolnton and Greensboro. Since Southern Jews found the doors closed to many professions, they depended on the retail trade for survival. Some merchants became leading philanthropists, helping to build hospitals, art museums and more.

“Family Comes First” centers around a multimedia dining table set for a Friday night Sabbath dinner, allowing exhibit visitors to experience a Jewish Sabbath.

“Down Home: Jewish Life in North Carolina” is at the N.C. Museum of History through March 7, 2011. The museum’s phone is (919) 807-7900 or visit [www.ncmuseumofhistory.org](http://www.ncmuseumofhistory.org). After that, it will travel to these dates and locations:

**April 2011** Greensboro Historical Museum, Greensboro

**October 2011** Cape Fear Museum, Wilmington

**January 2012** Levine Museum of the New South, Charlotte

**Future location (not dated yet)** Asheville



*Joseph and Celia Lipman wedding, New Bern, 1911. Courtesy of Elbert Lipman.*

*Top left: House of Jacob Sunday school, Raleigh, 1928. Courtesy of Francis Penslar.*