

Oral History Project Proposal

Title: Georgia History Diversity Project

Subjects to be interviewed:

People (regardless of current religious affiliation) who have family history, memorabilia and memories of Congregation Mickve Israel (CMI), Georgia's first (July 11, 1733) and United States's third oldest (charter granted by the State of Georgia 1790) Jewish congregation.

Project:

Multi Faceted, multi- generational digital media project with research and educational components appropriate for professional, student and community volunteer participants.

Immediate Goals:

1. To establish committed, collaborative partners before the 2010-2011 academic year and identify what aspect of the project has value for each organization and educational facility.
2. To capture on film, video or other digital media the first ten subjects identified as high risk due to age or health status and considered as primary to this research to be interviewed as soon as possible. Oral Histories could begin as soon as **August 10, 2010**.
3. To meet sometime the week of August 3rd to 7th, 2010 to discuss the proposal, to coordinate the task force of students, professionals and volunteers who will conduct background research and interviews, and come up with project assignments, a network for participants, contact lists and a timeline for each phase.

Phase II:

To teach the skills needed either through university coursework or offered workshops for students at different stages of their academic exploration of history, interview and research skills so that they will be able to competently participate in the project. Skills taught might include photo identification, microfilm, microfiche, print and computer media exploration, among other resource skills needed to prepare backgrounds and to develop cogent oral history questions and the communication skills to invite and prepare the subjects, many of whom might be elderly. Other components include the training to conduct and film the interviews.

Phase III: To create opportunities for group events that can help stimulate reminisces through conversation and to film both these events and the current docent-lead museum tour.

Phase IV: To create a mini-documentary from the footage that will be premiered at a publicized event, free and open to the public if possible, by the latest **July, 2012**.

Phase V: To design a computer program that identifies the people, the family trees and the significance to Georgia, Southeastern, American or Jewish history that is both interactive and accessible to students of Georgia history in time for the 280th anniversary at the annual Georgia Day Celebration (**February, 2013**).

Scope: This project could be used in history courses dealing with cultures, diversity, Georgia founding. It is a multi-generational project that lends itself to sociology, genealogy, communication and media courses. It has photography, digital and film components. Students of historical preservation, interviewing technique and library science might also find this of value.

Significance: Congregation Mickve Israel was founded within five months of the new colony by 41 settlers who brought with them a Torah scroll (first 5 books of the Bible) dating to the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisition making it one of the oldest religious texts in continuous use in the country. The three current Savannah Congregations can trace their origins to the original congregation. Savannah Jews have been prominent in all aspects of the commercial, cultural and political life of the community and still have an active community. Many Americans, both Jewish and non-Jewish can trace their ancestors to these settlers. Congregation Mickve Israel is an essential link to our Savannah and Georgia history.