

# Archiving Jewish Life at The University of Alabama: Objectives, Methods, and Initial Findings

ROBERT B. RITER, DANIEL J. LEVINE, AND KADENCE JACKSON

## Abstract

In this paper we introduce and discuss the initial findings of the *Archiving Jewish Life at UA* research initiative. University of Alabama President George Denny's (1912-36, 1941-42) efforts to recruit Jewish students and faculty in the 1920s-30s are well-known. Yet little has been done to survey the fruits of those efforts or to preserve a comprehensive record of Jewish life at the University of Alabama. The initiative activities are concerned with addressing this gap in UA's documentary memory. The project has four main aims: 1. To undertake a records and narrative survey, identifying existing archival resources and gaps. That survey will include identifying suitable interview candidates for an initial oral history project. 2. To contact those candidates and secure their consent for such recording and archiving such interviews. 3. To train students in conducting, editing/producing, transcribing, and cataloging these interviews, and create a platform for their dissemination. 4. To support ongoing scholarly publishing and conferencing by the project researchers and their students. This project contributes to broader concerted efforts to document the history of Jewish communities in the southeast.

## About the authors:

**Robert B. Riter** is Associate and Marie Drolet Bristol-EBSCO Endowed Professor in the University of Alabama School of Library & Information Studies. Riter teaches courses in archival studies, special collections, descriptive bibliography, and coordinates the School's archival studies program.

**Daniel J. Levine** is the Aaron Aronov Associate Professor of Judaic Studies at the University of Alabama, and holds appointments in the Departments of Political Science and Religious Studies. He is the author of *Recovering International Relations* (Oxford, 2012). He has published *Global Security Quarterly*, *AJS Review*, the *European Journal of International Relations*, the *Journal of International Political Theory*, and *Perspectives on Politics*; and has essays forthcoming in volumes with the University of Michigan Press, Cambridge University Press, and the University of Minnesota Press. More information on his work can be found at <https://daniel.j.levine.people.ua.edu>.

**Kadence Jackson**, a Decatur, AL native, is a rising junior at the University of Alabama. She is majoring in political science and religious studies and minoring in Judaic studies on the pre-law track. Her choice of academic pursuits stems from her passion for Holocaust research, and it is this passion which brought her to join the Jewish archival project we will discuss today. She aspires to become a family attorney with a hand in Holocaust research and/or education post-grad.