

Reflections on Post-COVID-19 Judaism

American Jewish University's
Scholar Symposium

Edited by

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American
Jewish
University

Cover design by: Larry Yudelson
Set in Arno Pro by Raphaël Freeman MISTD, Renana Typesetting

ISBN 978-1-935110-28-6

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Paradise Valley, PA 18326
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Contents

Introduction	v
Triage in the Time of the Pandemic: The Sanctity of Saving as Many Lives as Possible	1
ELLIOT DORFF	
The The Future of the Synagogue Post-Pandemic	17
RONALD WOLFSON	
Creating Community in a Time of COVID-19	25
EDWARD FEINSTEIN	
School After COVID-19	29
BRUCE POWELL	
What Have We Missed?	35
ERICA ROTHBLUM	
Antisemitism Today	41
MICHAEL BERENBAUM	
Conspiracy Theories – What Happens After COVID-19?	67
SUSAN KAPITANOFF	
The Pandemic and the Ultra-Orthodox	79
PINCHAS GILLER, GILBERT KAHN	
“Is It Over Yet?”: Jewish Creativity During and Post COVID-19	89
ROTEM ROZENTAL	
Pikuach Nefesh: Community Memory and Working to Reconcile a Racial Terror Lynching during COVID-19 in Fort Worth, TX	97
ADAM W. MCKINNEY	
A Pandemic Higher Education: Applying Lessons Learned at AJU, including surveys	117
ROBBIE TOTTEN, DANIELLE SASSMAN, EMMETT SHOEMAKER	
About the Authors	169
Acknowledgments	177

Pikuach Nefesh/פיקוח נפש: Community Memory and Working to Reconcile a 1921 Racial Terror Lynching During COVID-19 in Fort Worth, TX

ADAM W. MCKINNEY, MA

Trigger warning: references to racial terror violence

Introduction

I am a QueerBlackNativeJew. I was born into and am a product of the American Civil Rights movement. My parents (one of African, Native American, and Northern European heritages and the other of Eastern European heritages, both of whom are Jewish) were married in July 1965 – two years before *Loving v. Virginia* when the Supreme Court of the United States struck down state laws banning interracial marriage, thirteen months after the signing of the Civil Rights Act, which outlawed discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, and national origin, and exactly one week before racial discrimination in voting was outlawed with the signing of the Voting Rights Act.

I was raised in an environment where being of mixed heritages was not an anomaly, nor a contradiction. Being “mixed” was and is, in fact, normalizing. Rather than a severed, percentage representation of not being “fully anything,” I was taught that I am 100% of all of my heritages, or, as is said in Lakota, *Mitákuye Oyás’i* – a reflection of “all my relatives.” My internal, multi-dimensional understanding of myself is externalized in the ways in which I see and engage the world and its people.

I attended an Orthodox Jewish Day School in Milwaukee, WI, and was taught by my *rebbe*s and teachers the importance of preserving life. The Jewish value of *Pikuach Nefesh*/פיקוח נפש teaches that Jews should prioritize

saving a life over most other commandments. An English translation of the Talmud states:

“Whoever destroys a soul, it is considered as if he destroyed an entire world.

And whoever saves a life, it is considered as if he saved an entire world.”

I understand this interpretation through the lens of community memory, in particular – that if we work to preserve by *remembering* a single soul or story, then we have the capacity to complete and right the world.

As a performing artist, educator, and activist, my interests lie in subverting the incessant urges of societal oppression and the structures that support them. I do this by confronting history and inviting people to remember and re-member – literally and figuratively putting back together the lost, fractured fragments of history in hopes of making sense of the past to make meaning in the present. In this way, I use performance in community settings to destabilize systems of power and oppression building cross-cultural bridges of listening, awareness, and understanding. I offer the arts as ways to question inaccurate, ahistorical perspectives of others and, in turn, ourselves, all the while dismantling traditional, hierarchical understandings of performance, what it is, who gets to do it, and where it happens.

Mr. Fred Rouse

Fort Worth, TX, where I now call “home,” reminds me of Milwaukee, WI – small-town feel, hard-working people, closely knit communities, mournfully segregated, and a place that is nostalgically committed to staying the same. I wonder why this might be and I realize that it must have everything to do with history.

When I moved to Fort Worth in August 2016, I began to research the city’s history of racism and instances of racial terror violence. In performing this research, I learned that, in the 1920s, Fort Worth had one of the largest Ku Klux Klan memberships in the United States; Klan members paraded openly and pridefully through downtown Fort Worth dressed in full regalia. I soon learned of the often-untold story of Mr. Fred Rouse, the only documented African American person lynched in the history of Fort Worth and Tarrant County, TX.¹

Mr. Fred Rouse was a non-union butcher for Swift & Company Meat-

1. “Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror.” Lynching in

packing Plant in the Niles City Stockyards (now the Fort Worth Stockyards). In 1921, a strike ensued between meatpacking companies and union workers from Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America. In response, Stockyards meatpacking companies hired Black and Hispanic people as well as new European immigrants to perform union workers' jobs for lower pay and longer hours. This, of course, created tension between union and non-union laborers. White union laborers blamed Black and Latino non-union laborers for stealing their jobs. This pressure led to fanatical outrage.

As Mr. Fred Rouse left work on Tuesday, December 6, 1921, at 4:30 p.m., he walked down Exchange Avenue's outdoor staircase through a throng of more than 200 white union strikers and agitators. Mr. Rouse was threatened and accosted by them. A white picketer yelled that Mr. Rouse would not return to work the next day. Mr. Rouse responded, "I'll bet you \$100 that I will be back in the morning at 7 o'clock."²

Mr. Rouse was shoved, then stabbed. As he defended himself from the crowd, a struggle ensued. Two white men were shot, and Mr. Rouse was accused of the shootings. A mob then began to beat and bludgeon Mr. Rouse with a streetcar guardrail. Mr. Rouse sustained several injuries, including skull fractures and internal wounds. Niles City police officers asked the mob to relinquish Mr. Rouse's lifeless body to law enforcement. The police placed Mr. Rouse's body in the back of a police car. On the way to the mortuary, discovering that he was still alive, they drove Mr. Rouse south to the City & County Hospital basement Negro Ward.

Five days later, on Sunday, December 11, 1921, at 11:00 p.m., while recovering from his injuries, another white mob of approximately 30 masked and unmasked white men arrived at the hospital in a caravan of cars. They threatened the hospital staff, forced their way into the Negro Ward, and kidnapped Mr. Rouse in his hospital gown. (He was identified by the mob who felt the back of his head because they knew it had been fractured.) With Mr. Rouse in tow, they drove north on Samuels Avenue to NE 12th Street to what had become known as the "Death Tree."³

America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror. Accessed November 5, 2021. <https://lynchinginamerica.eji.org/report/>.

2. Barry T. Sandlin, "The 1921 Butcher Workmen Strike in Fort Worth, TX," Master of Arts in History Thesis, (University of Texas at Arlington, 1988).

3. Almost exactly one year prior, Tom Vickery, a white man, was hanged from the same tree by a white mob, who kidnapped him from the county jail and hanged him

There the mob hanged Mr. Rouse from the “Death Tree” and, according to the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, his body “was riddled with bullets.”⁴ A bloody gun was discovered beneath his feet. Hundreds of people drove up and down Samuels Avenue to witness the result of the murder.

The next day, Mr. Fred Rouse was buried in New Trinity Cemetery in Haltom City, TX. Little is known about his burial, or even if he had a ceremony. No headstone for Mr. Rouse has been located.

A grand jury trial ensued, and six white men were charged in the murder of Mr. Rouse, one of whom was the Niles City Police Chief and two others who were law enforcement officers. All were released without indictments. No one was ever convicted in the murder of Mr. Fred Rouse.

After learning about Mr. Fred Rouse from century-old *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* articles, I charged myself with sharing this history with my community. I visited organizations, institutions, and individuals and asked, “What do you know about the story of Mr. Fred Rouse?”

Most often, the response was, “Who?” or, “Very little.” It soon became clear that this history was buried in the annals of Fort Worth’s civic, cultural memory. I understood that sharing Mr. Rouse’s story with historic authenticity, and for it to be included as part of the cultural archive that is Fort Worth, could be used as a tool to better understand its long-term, negative impacts. My priority began to research the story of Mr. Fred Rouse by looking back to history to put together its lost fragments.

Memories of past traumatic experiences of oppression are imprinted on social psyches.⁵ The image of Mr. George Floyd prone with his arms behind his back and a knee on his neck (and the manner in which the world responded) is forever seared into our national memory. Whether trauma occurs first-hand or tangentially, research suggests that there are inter- and intra-generational connections associated with exposure to short and long-term traumatic experiences.⁶ The effects land on groups of people whose ancestors have suffered historical traumas as well as on groups of

from the “Death Tree.” While the KKK never took responsibility for the murder of Tom Vickery, nor for the murder of Mr. Rouse, I surmise that they did, given the similar, iterative nature of the murders.

4. “Rouse Patient at Hospital Suffering from Injuries; Shot Two Strike Pickets,” *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, December 11, 1921.

5. Vamik Volkan. “Bosnia-Herzegovina: Ancient Fuel of a Modern Inferno,” *Mind and Human Interaction* 7 (1996): 110–127.

6. Arline T. Geronimus. “‘Weathering’ and Age Patterns of Allostatic Load Scores

people who have witnessed them. It is not only Black communities, nor communities of the Global Majority, who suffer the effects of historical and contemporary racism. All communities are affected by the mistreatment of another. Racism is pervasive and traumatic. No one is immune.

Fred Rouse Memorial Project

Fred Rouse Memorial Project is a collaborative, Fort Worth-based project of DNAWORKS, Tarrant County Coalition for Peace and Justice (TCCPJ), and Transform 1012 N. Main Street (DNAWORKS, TCCPJ, Opal Lee Foundation, Transform 1012 Youth Council, LGBTQ SAVES, SOL Ballet Folklórico, Window to Your World, and The Welman Project). With this project, we invite Fort Worth communities to exhume our collective history of racial terror violence and place Rouse family members, who still live in the area, at the center of this work. Fred Rouse Memorial Project builds capacities for the development of deeper community connections by transforming the relationships we have with the historical spaces associated with the 1921 racial terror lynching of Mr. Fred Rouse.

Fred Rouse Memorial Project is comprised of three, individual projects.

1. DNAWORKS's *Fort Worth Lynching Tour: Honoring the Memory of Mr. Fred Rouse* is a community bike and car tour to four of the five sites associated with the 1921 racial terror lynching of Mr. Fred Rouse. Created to generate community healing through memorial activism, *Fort Worth Lynching Tour: Honoring the Memory of Mr. Fred Rouse* invites participants to ask, "What, how, why, and whom do we remember?"⁷
2. TCCPJ received a generous grant from the Rainwater Charitable Foundation to purchase the site of the lynching of Mr. Fred Rouse and transform it into *The Mr. Fred Rouse Memorial*, a space of community, memory, and healing. The Mr. Fred Rouse Memorial had its groundbreaking ceremony on the centenary of the racial terror lynching of Mr. Fred Rouse. A dedication ceremony is planned for December 2022.⁸

among Blacks and Whites in the United States," *American Journal of Public Health* 96.5 (2006): 826–33.

7. For more information, visit: www.dnaworks.org/fwlt.

8. TCCPJ participates in and is a grantee of the Equal Justice Initiative's Community Remembrance Project (CRP). With the CRP, EJI collaborates with communities around the United States to memorialize victims of racial terror.

3. **Transform 1012 N. Main Street** is the project to acquire the former KKK Klavern No. 101 auditorium, said to be the only remaining purpose-built structure for Klan activity in the United States. In January 2022, Transform 1012 N. Main Street announced the purchase of the building. Once transformed, the building will be known as The Fred Rouse Center for Arts and Community Healing.⁹

For the purpose of this chapter, I will focus on DNAWORKS's *Fort Worth Lynching Tour: Honoring the Memory of Mr. Fred Rouse*.

Fort Worth Lynching Tour: Honoring the Memory of Mr. Fred Rouse

In 2006, my husband Daniel Banks and I co-founded DNAWORKS, an arts and service organization committed to healing through the arts and dialogue. DNAWORKS has brought our award-winning art and social justice work to communities in 17 countries, many times under the auspices of U.S. Consulates and Embassies. Our work, like the *Sankofa*, the West African Adinkra bird symbol that turns its head backward (in reverse) to place an egg on its back, teaches communities to “go back and get it.” By “it,” I think the ancestors mean the reclamation of “history” and “one another” together.

In December 2020 in honor the of the 99th year after the racial terror lynching of Mr. Fred Rouse, DNAWORKS, in collaboration with TCCPJ, co-produced a two-weekend run of *Fort Worth Lynching Tour: Honoring the Memory of Mr. Fred Rouse* (FWLT). FWLT returned with a seven-weekend run in March, April, May, and December of 2021.¹⁰ We created FWLT to invite Fort Worth to dismantle racism by:

1. Working to undo the effects of anti-Black racial terror violence through art and memorial activism;
2. Coming together as community groups in public spaces to physicalize liberation;
3. Using our bodies as sites of resistance by riding bicycles and driving cars openly to #RideAndDriveAgainstRacism; and

9. For more information, visit: www.transform1012.org.

10. FWLT was funded by Mid-America Arts Alliance, Asylum Arts, City of Fort Worth Diversity & Inclusion Department, DuBose Family Foundation, and an anonymous fund of the North TX Community Foundation. FWLT returned with tours in December 2021 and Spring 2022.

4. Caravanning down the same Fort Worth streets that the KKK once paraded, but this time to memorialize Mr. Fred Rouse.

As part of FWLT, we visited four of the five sites associated with the 1921 racial terror lynching of Mr. Fred Rouse. As not to re-perform the atrocity of the murder, Daniel and I decided to reverse the order of events and move backward through time. This reversal signified, like the *Sankofa*, a retrograded examination of time and space. Rather than retraumatizing participants into inaction, our hope was to leave participants feeling hopeful and empowered to “upstand” to end anti-Black racism and, in turn, anti-Black racial violence.

FWLT accomplishes the goal of “truth-telling” by creating a public space for reflection, memorialization, and the reclamation of historical sites together as a city. As an organization, DNAWORKS’s interest lies in the possibility of performing what I call “the aesthetics of liberation.” In this way, we use the arts to bring people closer together to examine the problematic, transgenerational effects of historical oppressions, and, together, develop creative solutions for personal and communal healing and action.

In conjunction with FWLT and in collaboration with DigitalAnt Media (Santa Fe, NM), we created a free, downloadable app called the FWLT App. The FWLT App invites users to “RESEARCH” the history of Mr. Fred Rouse by accessing archival photographs, articles, and recorded narratives and, through augmented reality, to “DISCOVER” the sites associated with the 1921 racial terror lynching. We commissioned artists from around the United States to respond to each of the locations, including Troy Lambert, Third Wind Productions (Maritri Garrett and David Winder), Edykah Chilomé, Julienne Greer, Sedrick Huckaby, Jordan Jones, Opal L. Lee, and Pastor Kyev P. Tatum, Sr. The FWLT App is the most robust, standing document that tells the story of Mr. Fred Rouse. The app, in conjunction with the tour, enacts “embodied anti-racism.” By inviting users to “SWIPE UP ON THE GUN,” “SWIPE AWAY THE CARS,” and “SWIPE AWAY THE CROWD,” we provide opportunities to physically interrupt the repeated attacks on Mr. Fred Rouse.¹¹

11. To download the FWLT App from the Apple Store, go to: <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/fwlt/id1539251137>. To download the FWLT App from the Google Play Store, go to: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.DigitalAntMedia.FWLT>.



FWLT participant uses the FWLT App at the former City & County Hospital
PHOTO CREDIT: Tim Brestowski.

The FWLT Experience

During FWLT, we visit four of the five sites associated with the 1921 lynching of Mr. Fred Rouse to remember, pay homage, notice, learn, and activate justice. The five sites are:

1. New Trinity Cemetery, 2800 Beach Street, Haltom City, TX;
2. Former Swift & Company Meatpacking Plant Administrative Offices, 600 E. Exchange Avenue, Fort Worth, TX;
3. Site of the racial terror lynching of Mr. Fred Rouse, 1000 NE 12th Street, Fort Worth, TX;
4. Former City & County Hospital, 330 E. 4th Street, Fort Worth, TX; and
5. Former Ku Klux Klan Klavern No. 101 Auditorium, 1012 N. Main Street, Fort Worth, TX.

The account I share below took place in December 2020.

While FWLT begins physically in The Fort Worth Stockyards, FWLT begins virtually at New Trinity Cemetery in Haltom City, TX.

New Trinity Cemetery, 2800 Beach Street, Haltom City, TX

Mr. Fred Rouse was buried in New Trinity Cemetery, Haltom City, TX on Monday, December 12, 1921. Mr. Fred Rouse's father (I. Rouse), brother (William F. Rouse), and son (Jessie Lee Rouse) were all buried in New Trinity Cemetery. None of their headstones has been located. We do not know if a eulogy was given at Mr. Fred Rouse's funeral; thus, for the FWLT App, we commissioned Pastor Kyev P. Tatum, Sr. of New Mount Rose Missionary Baptist Church to create one.

Brother Fred Rouse was a good man. He loved his wife. He loved his children. We are here to mourn the loss of our dear Brother.

He was brutalized. He was kidnapped. And he was hung from a hackberry tree – all because he wanted to work and take care of his family.

Now, today, Brother Fred has gone on home. He did not leave us a lot of money or material things, but he left us a memory of a Black man who decided to challenge the system and go to work for his family. And it cost him his life. So, while we mourn Brother Fred, and it's alright for us to cry, we cannot sit by and allow the hatred to continue to fester in our hearts simply because of the color our skin.

No, no, Brother Fred was not a strikebreaker, but Brother Fred was a truth-maker.

Brother Fred, this is a hard Christmas for us. We do not feel like opening any presents. But, if we are to remember your legacy, your love, and your life, we want you to know that we're not gonna let anybody turn us around. But we still have to live in this time of deep-seated white supremacy, where it's so deep that it is indoctrinated into the very fabric of our police department.

And if it takes us 100 years to tell the story, we're gonna stand flat-footed and tell the story of Fred Rouse – the man who stood up and went to work for his family.

There was another man who stood up and it cost him his life. And while we do not compare Brother Fred to Jesus, we can compare his sacrifice. He sacrificed his life, so that his family could live.

Farewell Brother Fred, farewell Brother Rouse. Sleep well, dear Fred. We'll see you in the morning.

**Former Swift & Company Meatpacking Plant Administrative Offices,
600 E. Exchange Avenue, Fort Worth, TX**

We began together in a community circle in the parking lot of the former Swift & Company Meatpacking Plant Administrative Offices. Built in 1902, the three-level red brick structure, now the tallest building in the area, sits at the top of the historical staircase down which Mr. Fred Rouse walked into a throng of white union strikers and agitators. Around the circle, participants shared their names, gender pronouns, where they were born, and why they choose to participate in FWLT. FWLT participants were young and old, LGBTQIA+ and straight, Black, Latinx, Asian, and white, immigrant, disabled, poor, rich, working class, and middle class – a plurality that does not often meet in the same Fort Worth, TX spaces. All came to learn and pay homage to Mr. Fred Rouse.

I encouraged participants to take care of their well-being by taking the tour at their own pace, participating in ways that made sense for them. I introduced the Black mental health care professionals whom we hired to support participants as we navigated the journey. FWLT is a “no drop tour.” No one is left behind.

After a warm-up stretch, we got on our bikes (some electric and provided by Fort Worth Bike Sharing) and turned right out of the parking lot. Traveling south, we passed the former slaughterhouses on our left where, I believe, Mr. Fred Rouse worked as a butcher. We turned left and traveled east on NE 23rd Street, the street down which the Niles City police car began to drive Mr. Rouse’s lifeless body to the morgue. We saw the gray painted-over “S” insignia on the southward-facing slaughterhouse staircase. The layer of paint seemed to be a fitting metaphor for the covering up of history.

We rode over two sets of steel railroad tracks that were built specifically for Stockyards meat production. We turned right to ride south on Samuels Avenue. We took the full lane and rode side-by-side expanding our reach. As we crested the bridge over the West Fork of the Trinity River, I noticed how exceptionally visible we were. (What a sight to see a group of mostly People of Color helmeted on bikes taking up space!) The incline provided physical resistance. Our bodies pushed and moved together as one. We accelerated on the descent and several exclaimed at the rush. Volunteers “corked” (blocked) the intersection, so that we could safely turn left (east) onto NE 12th Street.

**Site of the Racial Terror Lynching of Mr. Fred Rouse,
1000 NE 12th Street, Fort Worth, TX**

We got off our bikes and made a circle on the unassuming grass. As we stood there, I noticed that it was difficult to make eye contact with one another. The feeling of being overwhelmed was palpable and disorienting. The ground felt unsteady as though we were floating in between worlds. I shared that, in 1921, people traveled to Samuels Avenue to watch Mr. Rouse's broken, leaking body hang from the hackberry "Death Tree." The blood-letting through his City & County Hospital gown was a doleful libation to the long, inevitable future of Black bodies disoriented by white supremacist violence.^{12,13}

I played the mournful cello music composed and performed by Jordan Jones for "The Death Tree" page of the FWLT App. Soon a digital image of a hackberry tree and a gun, rendered by Troy Lambert, emerges on the screen in the augmented reality space. An invitation to "SWIPE UP ON THE GUN" appears. Once swiped, a flock of mourning doves is released from the bottom of the screen. A message fades in: "This land was purchased by Tarrant County Coalition for Peace and Justice on January 28, 2021, to build The Mr. Fred Rouse Memorial."

I continued:

"After Mr. Fred Rouse was hanged, the murderers placed a gun under his bloody feet. The weapon was held as evidence at Niles City Hall but went missing and has never been recovered. The 'Death Tree' was uprooted on Wednesday, December 14, 1921, by the owner of the land Mrs. Dingee, the daughter of Civil War veteran General H.C. Holloway."

Production Manager Jamelyn Ebelacker (Santa Clara Pueblo, NM) walked around the circle with a jar of soil bearing a sticker titled "Fred

12. In 2016, the City of Fort Worth created the Mayor's Race and Culture Task Force in response to the incident of excessive force caught on video between Jackie Craig, a Black Fort Worth mother, and white Fort Worth Police Department Officer William Martin. Martin was suspended for 10 days for using excessive force.

13. In the early morning of October 12, 2019, Atatiana Jefferson was fatally shot in her Fort Worth, TX home by white Fort Worth Police Department Officer Aaron Dean. In December 2019, Dean was indicted for murder. In September 2018 Botham Shem Jean was murdered by white Dallas Police Department Officer Amber Guyger in his Dallas, TX apartment.

Rouse, Fort Worth, TX, December 11, 1921.” On December 11, 2019, as part of TCCPJ’s Mr. Fred Rouse Community Remembrance Soil Collection Ceremony, Fort Worth community members filled two jars of soil from the site of the racial terror lynching of Mr. Fred Rouse. The event was, most likely, the first time in history a group came together to publicly mourn the death of Mr. Fred Rouse. The jar Jamelyn held remains in Fort Worth to educate locals and visitors about this history. The other jar is included in the Equal Justice Initiative’s The Legacy Museum: From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration in a library of jars of soil from racial terror lynching sites from across the United States.



FWLT youth participant holds a jar of soil from the site of the racial terror lynching of Mr. Fred Rouse.

PHOTO CREDIT: Tim Brestowski

We began the slow, reversed ride south and uphill on Samuels Avenue, the same road down which the white mob drove from City & County Hospital to the “Death Tree.” We waved at families barbecuing and at young people playing basketball. On our left we passed Pioneer’s Rest Cemetery, the oldest (whites-only) public cemetery in Fort Worth. Prominently adorned family names seemed to peek at us as we rode by – Arnold, Ellis, Holloway, Daggett, Tarrant, no Rouse. On our right, we passed Charles E. Nash Elementary School, which was built in 1927 with a later addition

designed and constructed by Earl T. Glasgow, who also designed the former KKK Klavern No. 101 auditorium.¹⁴

We traversed east and west around a bend, then south again on Elm Street, and eventually landed at Allen Chapel African Methodist Episcopalian (A.M.E.) Church. Founded in 1870 and dedicated in 1914, the church's proximity to Interstate 35 was particularly noticeable. There we discussed the physical and mental impacts of 1950s federally funded national highway systems that were designed and built to divide Black communities from themselves and everyone else.¹⁵

We kept moving north. We turned left on Pecan Street, made a right on E. 3rd Street, and then a left on S. Jones Street. We noticed how the entrance and exit to a spur of Interstate 35 bumped right up against Mount Gilead Baptist Church (est. 1875) – *the* Black Baptist Church of Black Baptist Texas Churches in the early 1920s. We walked our bicycles on the sidewalk and came upon the former City & County Hospital from where Mr. Fred Rouse was kidnapped at 11 p.m. on December 11, 1921.

Former City & County Hospital, 330 E. 4th Street, Fort Worth, TX

We arrived in a line and placed our bikes in a nook created by the parking garage that sits across the street from the former hospital. We looked up and saw “City & County Hospital” etched into the building’s façade.¹⁶ We huddled together, and I played “Nurse Slaton’s Monologue” performed by Julienne Greer in the FWLT App.

Several young men, they looked like boys ranging from 18 to 25 years of age, appeared at the hospital as I answered a call at the door. They stated they wanted “no trouble,” but were after the Negro who had shot the two White boys. I was so surprised I hesitated and, finally, called their attention to the

14. “The ‘Other’ Main Streets: From Pep Boys to Doughboys (Part 4).” Hometown by Handlebar. Accessed November 5, 2021. <https://hometownbyhandlebar.com/?p=6251>.

15. Richard Rothstein. *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*. New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, a division of W.W. Norton & Company, 2018.

16. The building is now Maddox-Muse Center, part of the Bass Performance Hall complex. TCCPJ, in collaboration with Performing Arts Fort Worth, Inc. and the Fort Worth Chamber, placed a Mr. Fred Rouse Historical Marker at this site on December 11, 2021.

fact that it was awful to come to the hospital like that, “and besides, there are other patients at the hospital to be considered.”

I said to them, “Why don’t you wait until he is well.” They would not listen to that and, finally, I said I would call the superintendent.

They told me they had come after the Negro, and “were going to have him,” but that they were “willing to do it quietly.”

It was obvious that I was helpless, and I led them to the basement to the colored ward and showed the men where Fred Rouse was being treated.

I said, “He is the one in the corner,” but overlooked the fact that there were two in the corner and the men went to the wrong corner. They nearly took the wrong patient! They began to feel the back of the head of the other Negro who was awfully scared and began to shout that he was not the one wanted.

I had told them before that for just two of them to go in and not all of them, stating that the Negro was weak and could not offer resistance.

I then came on back upstairs. I called their attention to the fact that he had no clothes and they replied that he would not need any. Pretty soon they came bringing out the Negro Rouse almost in a run. The Negro offered no resistance but was groaning very much.

They went out the door with him and said, “Good night.” to me. As soon as they left, I phoned the police station. I was so excited I did not get a chance to recognize any of the men.¹⁷

At this point in the FWLT App, renderings of Model T Fords enter the screen with an instruction to “SWIPE AWAY THE CARS.” As participants swipe the cars right and left, a tintype photograph of a figure holding the back of his head in a hospital gown appears. This image is from a series of contemporary tintype photographs entitled “SCAB.” In collaboration with photographer Will Wilson (Diné), I stand as Mr. Rouse in the five sites associated with the racial terror lynching. We use the aesthetic nature of tintype photography as a way to conflate a century, connecting the anti-Black racial violence that occurred on the body of Mr. Fred Rouse to the ways in which my own body is targeted for contemporary anti-Black racial violence. With “SCAB,” I use my body as the canvas on which we remember him.

17. “Rouse Patient at Hospital Suffering From Injuries; Shot Two Strike Pickets,” *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, December 11, 1921.

In this moment, I asked participants to share one word as to how they were feeling. Words and phrases people shared included:

Cold. Angry. Scared. Not surprised. Exhausted. Still happening today. Fear. Ambushed. Bamboozled. Apprehensive. Violent. Abhorrent. Tired. Numb. Nothing new. Silent.

We rode east on E. 4th Street, turned right on Throckmorton Street (with a glimpse of Tarrant County Courthouse, which was built in 1893 and in which the KKK met prior to the construction of their auditorium on Main Street), turned left on Belknap Street, made a quick right on Taylor Street, and an immediate steep descent north to meet the Trinity River.

Along its body we carved the curves like eddies, winding in and out of one another. At many moments we rode in silence, mimicking its harbor of calm serenity. Up an embankment we rode, finding ourselves on a bluff at the rear of the former KKK Klavern No. 101 auditorium.



Adam W. McKinney speaks about the importance of community memory at the rear of the former KKK Klavern No. 101 auditorium.

PHOTO CREDIT: Tim Brestowski

**Former KKK Klavern No. 101 Auditorium,
1012 N. Main Street, Fort Worth, TX**

I shared:

“In the 1920s, Fort Worth had one of the largest KKK memberships in the United States. So much so that, in 1921, they began construction of an auditorium for meetings, initiations, speakers, and performances. The first auditorium suffered a fire in 1924 – either due to faulty electrical wires or a firebombing from above.¹⁸ (Personally, I much prefer the second version.)

“Performance is a powerful tool to keep ideologies intact. It makes me think about the 1994 Rwandan Genocide against the Tutsi and the way in which repetitive, performative dehumanizing language was used to incite the murders of hundreds of thousands of people. The KKK practiced and performed their own set of choreographies in this building in preparation for public marches. On their proscenium stage, members also performed in blackface minstrel shows.

“Harry Houdini even performed magic in the building. I am sure that they had no idea that he was Jewish! During his performance, he asked, ‘Can the dead speak to the living?’¹⁹

“The building was in use by the KKK until 1931 when KKK membership dwindled due to a series of sex scandals, newspaper exposés, and internal battles over power, which quickly reduced the Klan’s influence. The building was then used as a department store warehouse and, later, as a dance marathon auditorium, a wrestling arena, and the Ellis Pecan Company shelling factory.

“In 1999, the building was left derelict and, in 2004, was purchased by Sugarplum Holdings, L.P. to be used as the rehearsal studios for Texas Ballet Theater. The building, however, was never occupied and has remained empty since then, except as provisional, unofficial shelter for some of Fort Worth’s houseless population.”

I divided participants into small groups, led by TCCPJ volunteers, to process the experience of being at the location. Many participants, some of

18. “The ‘Other’ Main Streets: From Pep Boys to Doughboys (Part 4).” Hometown by Handlebar. Accessed November 5, 2021. <https://hometownbyhandlebar.com/?p=6251>.

19. “Good Deeds by Day, Dark Deeds by Night: The Ku Klux Klan...” Accessed November 5, 2021. <https://hometownbyhandlebar.com/?p=12678>.

whom live in the area, had driven past the building many times, even daily, and never knew its history. After the conversations, we rode down the hill, back to the former Swift & Co. Meatpacking Plant Administrative Offices.

While FWLT ended physically when participants returned to The Fort Worth Stockyards, FWLT continued virtually on the FWLT App.

**Former Swift & Company Meatpacking Plant Administrative Offices,
600 E. Exchange Avenue, Fort Worth, TX**

When one clicks “DISCOVER” on the FWLT App “The Stockyards” page, one hears “Wound” a song composed and performed by Maritri Garrett.

*Into the wound the light goes igniting the
flame to burn the darkness down*

The viewer sees artist Sedrick Huckaby’s right arm creating an oversized charcoal drawing of the head and shoulder of a man wearing a butcher’s apron.

Into the wound the light goes igniting the flame

The man’s powerful gaze stares back at the witness.

Into the wound

The artist smudges the face away, and, like a palimpsest, imbues another face from the form of the previous one.

Into the wound

Another face appears, then another. Each one younger than the previous is smudged away.

Into the light

Time as the marker, the rendering of the images quickens.

Into the light

The butcher’s apron remains. “Contemplating Fred Rouse” is scored into the chests of the men.

Into the light

Another smudge, this time with a white highlight. The image becomes less and less human, almost ghostly.

Into the light

Layers of men and boys, who, in the end, become only a smudge.

Into the light

Into the light

The light...

As the video of the drawings melts away, a black and white image appears on the screen. A rendering of an angry throng of strikebreakers with picket signs in hand and arms raised gesture toward the center. At the top of the page, participants are instructed to “SWIPE AWAY THE CROWD.” Once swiped, an FWLT historical marker emerges and reads:

“In loving memory of Mr. Fred Rouse and all the people in Fort Worth, TX, who have been killed by extrajudicial and racially motivated violence.”

One then hears the strums of a guitar and a hopeful, though somber melody. “Out of the Darkness,” a song composed and performed by Maritri Garrett continues.

Out of the darkness into the light of a million dreams

Users see the video of a figure from the rear (me dressed as Mr. Rouse) walking west down Fort Worth Stockyards’s Exchange Avenue.

I was broken, but now I believe that joy comes in the morning

Midnight sometimes the afternoon

Joy is always coming soon

Dressed in a work shirt, pants, boots, and suspenders, the figure throws a blood-stained butcher’s apron over his shoulder.

And this is the moment this is the one we’ve waited for

Hoped for and walked through the door

We intend for users to realize that their swiping away of the crowd allowed Mr. Rouse to walk home to his family.

And this is the moment we are the ones we’ve waited for

Hoped for and opened the door

This interruptive intervention invites users to practice standing up against racism and anti-Black racial violence.

On the other side of the darkness lives the light

The light that shines in all of us connecting us one to the other

To all that is good and perfect

DNAWORKS Storycircles

Following all DNAWORKS events, we hold community story circles as ways for community members to process events and build relationships. These community story circles (based on the practice of John o’Neal [1941–2019] co-founder and former director of Free Southern Theater and founding artistic director of Junebug Productions) reveal the ability of beginning conversations about reconciling histories of oppression. Making connections between historical and contemporary anti-Black racial violence, FWLT participants processed the tour experience together sharing stories of resistance, resilience, and healing. In December 2020, participants participated in the community story circle virtually.

One participant shared:

“I didn’t know about this history, I am moved by this event, and I am devastated. In this time of great polarization, especially on the brink of the holidays, I feel that many people may be tempted to uproot their own trees – to forget about pain, trauma, and recent history. This event is a reminder that we need to be more open, honest, and willing to confront our collective tragedies. Forgetting things doesn’t fix it, it’s just easy and the work of equity isn’t easy. We all need to take personal responsibility to sit in discomfort if that means that my fellow humans find peace. I am reminded of a quote that I believe is attributed, in part, to Desmond Tutu: ‘My humanity is connected to the liberation of all humans; otherwise, I am not free.’ We owe it to Mr. Fred Rouse, all the victims of racialized violence, each other, and most importantly, ourselves to do the hard work. This tour was a step on that journey.”

Conclusion

Fort Worth Lynching Tour: Honoring the Memory of Mr. Fred Rouse (FWLT) is an example of working as a community to reconcile a history of anti-Black racial terror violence by embodying what we call “memorial activism.”

With FWLT, DNAWORKS offered a potential, practical, and pragmatic approach to restoring justice in Fort Worth, TX. In preserving his memory, we activated *Pikuach Nefesh*/פיקוח נפש – “watching over the soul” of Mr. Fred Rouse 100 years after the brutal murder. We created a choreography of healing anti-Black racism by mapping history, space, and time. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, FWLT is a public community performance of resistance and liberation in response to the global pandemic of racism.

This work is inspired by Attorney Sherrilyn A. Ifill, who, in her 2003 article entitled “Creating a Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Lynching,” urges communities to take lead in forming local truth and reconciliation commissions to resolve the consequences of racial terror lynchings. Attorney Ifill’s charge remains at the center of this civic, social justice work to reconcile the racial terror lynching of Mr. Fred Rouse in Fort Worth, TX, the place in which I live and work.²⁰

20. Sherrilyn A. Ifill. “Creating a Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Lynching,” *Minnesota Journal of Law & Inequality* 21.2 (2003): 263–311.

About The Authors

Dr. Michael Berenbaum is Distinguished Professor of Jewish Studies and Director of the Sigi Ziering Institute: Exploring the Ethical and Religious Implications of the Holocaust at American Jewish University. The author and editor of 22 books, he was the Managing Editor of the Second Edition of the *Encyclopedia Judaica*, a 22-volume, 16 million-word work that won the Dartmouth Award of the American Library Association for Outstanding Research Work of 2006. His work in film has won Emmy Awards and films he worked on have been recognized with Academy Awards. His work on the Holocaust has been extensive. He was Project Director overseeing the creation of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and first Director of its Research Institute. He was also President and CEO of the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation, which took the testimonies of 52,000 Holocaust survivors and liberators and is now the USC Shoah Foundation Institute. He has developed museums on three continents and in several American cities. His writings on antisemitism include editing *Not Your Father's Antisemitism: Hatred of the Jews in the 21st Century*, the fruits of a conference sponsored by the Sigi Ziering Institute at AJU.

Dr. Elliot Dorff, Rabbi (Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1970), Ph.D. in Philosophy (Columbia University, 1971), is Rector and Distinguished Service Professor of Philosophy at American Jewish University and Visiting Professor at UCLA School of Law. He has served on three federal government commissions – on health care, on reducing the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, and on research on human subjects – and he currently serves on the State of California's commission to govern stem cell research in the state.

Dorff has been awarded four honorary doctoral degrees and a Lifetime Achievement Award from the *Journal of Law and Religion*. He has published over 200 articles on Jewish thought, law, and ethics, has written 14 books

on those topics and edited or co-edited 14 more. The one most germane to his article in this volume is *Matters of Life and Death: A Jewish Approach to Modern Medical Ethics*.

He has chaired four scholarly organizations: the Academy of Jewish Philosophy; the Jewish Law Association; the Society of Jewish Ethics, and the Academy of Judaic, Christian and Muslim Studies. In Los Angeles, he is a Past President of Jewish Family Service and remains on its Board. He is a former member of the Board of the Jewish Federation Council.

Rabbi Ed Feinstein is senior rabbi of Valley Beth Shalom in Encino, California and a lecturer on the faculty of the Ziegler Rabbinical School of the American Jewish University. Raised on the frontier of the West San Fernando Valley, he graduated from the University of California at Santa Cruz, the University of Judaism in Los Angeles, Columbia University Teachers College, and the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, where he was ordained and earned his doctorate in education.

Rabbi Feinstein has served as the founding head of the Solomon Schechter Academy of Dallas; Associate Rabbi of Congregation Shearith Israel in Dallas, and Executive Director of Camp Ramah in California. He came to Valley Beth Shalom in 1993.

Rabbi Feinstein is the author of five books, including *Tough Questions Jews Ask*, which is taught in schools and synagogues across North America. His latest book, *In Pursuit of Godliness and a Living Judaism*, is an intellectual biography of his mentor, Rabbi Harold Schulweis. Rabbi Feinstein lives in the epicenter of the San Fernando Valley with his wife Rabbi Nina Bieber Feinstein. The Feinsteins are parents of three adult children and one small dog.

Dr. Pinchas Giller was brought up in Cocoa Beach, Florida. He was ordained at Yeshiva University and received his doctorate at the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley. Rabbi Giller has written extensively on Judaism and his field of expertise, Jewish Mysticism or Kabbalah. He has written four books, *The Enlightened Will Shine: Symbolism and Theurgy in the Later Strata of the Zohar* (State University of New York Press, 1993), *Reading the Zohar* (Oxford University Press 2000), *Shalom Shar'abi and the Kabbalists of Beit El* (Oxford University Press 2000) and *Kabbalah: A Guide for the Perplexed* (Continuum Press; 2011). He has also edited *Be'er Moshe al ha-Torah*, by Moshe ha-Kohen Reicherson. Rabbi Giller is Professor of

Jewish Thought and chairman of the Jewish Studies department of the American Jewish University, Los Angeles.

Dr. Gilbert N. Kahn is a professor in the Department of Political Science at Kean University in Union, New Jersey. His academic interests concentrate on U.S. decision-making in foreign policy in the Middle East. Dr. Kahn also addresses issues including how the Holocaust influences decision-making and decision-makers, as well as responses to contemporary antisemitism in the United States and throughout the world.

Dr. Kahn's research has appeared in both scholarly and journalistic publications. His most recent papers and publications include "No More Red Lines: President Obama and Syrian WMDs"; "The Rising Political Engagement and Influence of American Orthodox Jews on Israel-Diaspora Relations"; and "Orthodox Jews and Trump." In 2017, Professor Kahn was a Scholar-in-Residence at Oxford University with the Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy. He also participated in the "Global Forum on Antisemitism" in Jerusalem.

Professor Kahn has extensive political consulting experience in the Jewish community, in political campaigns and Washington lobbying. He appears frequently as a political commentator and analyst on television and radio and writes a regular blog, *Kahntensions*. His columns appear regularly in a wide array of publications.

Dr. Susan Kapitanoff is Professor Emeritus of Psychology, was the chair of the Department of Psychology and former Dean of Student and Undergraduate Affairs at American Jewish University in Los Angeles. She received her doctorate from the University of California, Irvine in the Department of Social Ecology. Her research interests focus on health and stress, and prejudice and prejudice reduction. Recently she has been researching collaborative approaches to increasing student success and reducing anxiety in statistics courses. She has been director of the Psychology Department's annual Prejudice Awareness Summit for middle school students for 20 years.

Adam W. McKinney is the Co-Founder and Co-Director of DNAWORKS, an arts and service organization committed to healing through the arts and dialogue. In 2019, DNAWORKS co-convened the "1012 Leadership Coalition" to acquire and transform Fort Worth, TX's former KKK Klavern

No. 101 Auditorium into the Fred Rouse Center and Museum for Arts and Community Healing. McKinney danced professionally with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Béjart Ballet Lausanne, Alonzo King LINES Ballet, Cedar Lake Contemporary Ballet, and Milwaukee Ballet Company. He served as a U.S. Embassy Culture Connect Envoy to South Africa through the U.S. State Department and was named one of the most influential African Americans in Milwaukee, WI by St. Vincent DePaul. He holds a B.F.A. in Dance Performance (Butler University) and an M.A. in Dance Studies with concentrations in Race and Trauma theories (NYU-Gallatin). McKinney is an Assistant Professor of Dance at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth.

Dr. Bruce Powell: Since 1970, Powell has dedicated his professional life to Jewish education. He helped found and lead three Jewish high schools in Los Angeles, including Yeshiva University of Los Angeles High School, Milken Community High School, and most recently, de Toledo High School. He consulted on the founding of 23 more Jewish high schools in North America and provided consulting services to more than 80 Jewish day schools as the President of Jewish School Management (JSM). For many summers, he served as the director of Camp Alonim, and the Brandeis Collegiate Institute (BCI) located on the Brandeis-Bardin campus of the American Jewish University. He won both the Covenant Foundation Award and the Milken Jewish Educator Award for his major contributions to Jewish education. Powell also served for six years as a founding faculty member and mentor for the Day School Leadership Training Institute at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, and as a coach for the Head of School Professional Excellence Project at Prizmah.

Since 2018, He has been the director of the Institute for Day School Excellence and Sustainability (IDEAS), servicing Jewish day schools across America. A distinguished lecturer in Jewish education, he has served on the adjunct faculty of the American Jewish University since 1998. He received his B.A. in English from UCLA; his M.A. in Education and his California State teaching credentials from Cal State Northridge; his doctorate from the University of Southern California, and an honorary doctorate from the American Jewish University.

Powell's wife, Debby, also a Jewish educator, taught at the Abraham Joshua Heschel Day School in Northridge, California, and is the former Director of Community Affairs for the Brandeis-Bardin Institute of the

American Jewish University, in California. They share four children and have invested an aggregate of 52 child-years in Jewish day school education for their kids. Their grandchildren now attend Jewish day schools in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C.

Dr. Erica Rothblum received her Ed.D. in Educational Leadership from UCLA. She holds an MA degree in teaching from Loyola Marymount, a California Multiple Subject Teaching Credential, and a Bachelor of Arts in American Studies from Barnard College. Prior to working at Pressman Academy, Dr. Rothblum was a member of the Teach for America Corps; taught in the suburbs of Boston and at Camino Nuevo Charter School in Los Angeles; she worked as the Director of General Studies and then as Head of School at Beth Hillel Day School in Los Angeles. While at Beth Hillel, the school was recognized for its math education, commitment to professional development, and Judaic Studies/art integration curriculum.

In addition to her full-time commitments in schools, Rothblum has served as a peer coach, lead teacher, grade level chair, mentor teacher and teaching supervisor at the American Jewish University. She is thrilled to be at Pressman Academy, where excellent academics and a commitment to Jewish values merge to create the future generations of leadership.

Dr. Rotem Rozental was Chief Curator and Senior Director of Art and Creative Programming at American Jewish University in Los Angeles, where she served as Assistant Dean of the Whizin Center for Continuing Education and the Director of the Institute for Jewish Creativity. Rotem empowers and mentors artists worldwide. Her work with creatives is driven by her scholarly research and writings about cultural technologies, institutional archives and civic identities. She is a faculty member at the Brooklyn Institute for Social Research, where she teaches seminars about photography and visual culture, and recently curated the virtual exhibition *Dana Arieli: The Zionist Phantom* with The Schusterman Center for Israel Studies at Brandeis University. She received her M.A. from the Cohn Institute for History and Philosophy of Sciences and Ideas at Tel Aviv University in 2011, and her Ph.D. from the Art History Department at Binghamton University, New York, in 2019. Her book, *Pre-State Photographic Archives and the Zionist Movement* is forthcoming with Routledge.

Rotem's research examines the conflicted meeting points of photo-

graphic and archival technologies with civic spaces. Her writings about photography and contemporary art appeared in *Artforum*, *Tablet*, *The Forward*, *Philosophy of Photography*, *Tohu Magazine*, and *Doc! Magazine*, among other outlets. Rotem's work has been recognized and supported by various organizations, including *Artis*, *Independent Curators International* (ICI), and the *Center for Jewish History*.

Danielle Sassman is the Senior Director of Assessment, Institutional Research, and Registrar Services at American Jewish University. Danielle leads in the development, implementation, and monitoring of academic-wide assessment and evaluation, and academic institutional data across the University for institutional effectiveness, assessment, accreditation, and regulatory mandates. She also oversees all aspects of the Office of Registrar Services and provides support for the learning management systems. Danielle specializes in learning, design, and technology and is a 2021 award recipient for the Top 100 Visionaries in Education by the Global Forum for Education and Learning. She joined AJU in July 2020, in the middle of the pandemic. Her educational background includes undergraduate and graduate studies at Mount Saint Mary's University, and she is currently a doctoral candidate at the University of Southern California.

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Dr. Robbie Totten is the Chief Academic Officer and an Associate Professor of Politics and Global Studies at AJU. He also serves as the University's Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO). Previously he was a Visiting International Relations Assistant Professor at UCSB and a Political Science Lecturer at UCLA. He has published in academic journals on areas related to foreign relations, U.S. immigration policy, and the American Founding. More recently, he has begun to research and write on higher education administration and student learning.

Dr. Ron Wolfson is the Fingerhut Professor of Education at American Jewish University where he has been on the faculty for 46 years. He is the author of 20 books on Jewish life, including *Shabbat, Passover, Hanukkah, God's To-Do List, The Seven Questions You're Asked in Heaven, The Spirituality of Welcoming, Relational Judaism, The Relational Judaism Handbook* with Rabbi Nicole Auerbach and Rabbi Lydia Medwin, *Raising A+ Human Beings: Crafting a Jewish School Culture of Academic Excellence and AP Kindness* (with Dr. Bruce Powell), *Creating Sacred Communities: Leading Practitioners Share Lessons Learned* (with Rabbi Brett Kopin), and *The Best Boy in the United States of America: A Memoir of Blessings and Kisses*. He is the President of the Kripke Institute.

Acknowledgments

Words of acknowledgment are in order.

I would like to thank Robbie Totten, AJU's Chief Academic Officer for conceiving this symposium. We must also thank all the contributors who gave so willingly of their time, knowledge, and talent to make the publication possible.

We had the good fortune of working with AJU's B'Yahad team, headed by Rabbi Sherre Zwelling Hirsch, who is the University's, Chief Innovation Officer. She was ably assisted by Sherry Heyerly, Chloe Noland and most especially by Dr. Rotem Rozental, who insisted that the impact of COVID-19 on the arts be front and center and recruited the presenters as well as writing a chapter of her own.

AJU's office of Communication assisted ably, so Michelle Starkman and Natalie Gross must be thanked. Arielle Margolis, who recently joined our staff proofread the galleys with skill and grace.

We are grateful to Jeanette Friedman and her team for this publication. She was engaged not only in the publication of this work, but its content. Her insights are challenging, critical in the best sense of the term.

Finally, Tamika DeCambra characteristically ably assisted in every aspect of preparing this work. She is competent and diligent and works well under pressure for which I am most grateful.

Michael Berenbaum

