

# Exhibit tells the story of Jewish settlement 'Yazoor'



Howard County Historical Society hosts its first Hanukkah Celebration to mark the opening of its new exhibit about Jewish History in Howard County at Museum of Howard County.



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**W**hen Dustin Linz, Howard County Historical Society's museum manager, was handed a file and asked to prepare for a group of Jewish visitors, he never thought his research would turn into a new exhibit at the museum and inspire his future graduate thesis.

"It was just a folder of old, random clippings," Linz recalled. "When I did the research ... I found a lot of information that really floored me."

Linz learned that in the early 1900s, a small group of Russian Jewish immigrants settled along the Patapsco

The group's goal was to be self-sufficient by growing

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"The immigrants were not skilled at agriculture work and they had to hire farmers, who didn't speak Yiddish," Linz said. "The subsequent generations ... had no interest in carrying on the dreams of their parents. I didn't know it existed."

On Dec. 18, the Society celebrated the opening of Linz's exhibit about Yazoor and Ellicott City's Jewish merchants with its first Hanukkah party.

"One of the missions I've focused on is diversity," said Shawn Gladden, executive director at the Society for the last four years. "It's a small exhibit but it does tell part of a story. Really, not a lot of people know about [Yazoor]."

"I just thought it would be nice to give some recognition to the different demographics," Linz said.

With the help of an intern, Linz gathered what information he could find about Yazoor, to create the museum exhibit.

"A lot of people are familiar with the Main Street merchants like Caplan's and Taylor," Linz said. "I have yet to meet anyone who knew of Yazoor."

Rabbi Susan Grossman, of Beth Shalom, in Columbia, has not seen the new exhibit, but admitted she had not heard of Yazoor.

"It's very exciting to learn about it," Grossman said. "It was a very different time then. They were probably thinking of their security ... and the ability to be themselves."

Today, the Jewish population takes an active part in the community, Grossman said.

"We are committed to participating fully in the diversity of Howard County," Grossman said. "We are faced with difficult times, anti-Semitism and rising racism. We have our work cut out for us to ensure Howard County remains a warm and welcoming place not only for Jews, but all minorities."

At the Hanukkah party, Linz gave a brief talk about the exhibit before the Hanukkah celebration began.

"We had a really good time. It was a really fabulous night," Linz said, of the event, which included live music by the Columbia Jewish Congregation Klezmer Band, food and Jewish dancing.

The exhibit is part of the museum's permanent displays, though Linz plans to add to it as he does more research about the families who originally owned properties in Yazoor. His research inspired him to do his graduate thesis on Jewish agricultural resources at University of Maryland, Baltimore County. Linz is also planning to continue hosting various Jewish events at the museum.

"I hope to have parties for other Jewish holidays in the future like Purim," Linz said. "Hopefully, we're gathering momentum to do future events."

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