

FROM THE CIVIL WAR TO CIVIL RIGHTS
THROUGH SOUTHERN JEWISH EYES
By Elissa Kaplan

Nationally-known public speaker, raconteur, and author Michael H. Rubin will speak about his first novel, a legal thriller named *The Cottoncrest Curse*, as part of the Jewish Historical Society of Fairfield County's February Featured Program. According to Donna Meredith in her review on the *Southern Literary Review's* website, the novel "takes readers on an epic journey from czarist Russia to post-Reconstruction South to Cajun territory in the swamps of Louisiana and the streets of New York City and New Orleans." The action of the novel also takes readers from the period after the Civil War to the 1960s. The program, which is free and open to the public, will be held on Sunday, February 22, 2015 at Temple Beth El, 350 Roxbury Road, Stamford, CT 06902, starting at 1:30 PM with refreshments at 1:00 PM.

The Cottoncrest Curse tells the story of Jake Gold, loosely based on Rubin's great-grandfather, a Russian immigrant who left home at age 12, came to America, and started earning a living as a travelling peddler. The novel opens with the apparent murder-suicide of Augustine and Rebecca Chastain at Cottoncrest Plantation in 1893. Sheriff Raifer Jackson thinks it was a double murder, and Jake Gold is his leading suspect in the deaths. One of the major themes of the story is how Southern justice was carried out for plantation owners and for the descendants of slaves. Through the characters, settings, and plot, Michael Rubin demonstrates his deep knowledge of Louisiana during Reconstruction and in the 1960s, two intense and dramatic eras of American history. *The Chicago Bar Association Record* states that "Rubin has struck gold in his debut novel."

Michael Rubin, a full-time practicing lawyer, is one of the managing partners of the multistate law firm of McGlinchey Stafford, PLLC. He leads the firm's appellate practice team. In addition, he is an adjunct professor at three of Louisiana's four law schools, where he teaches courses in ethics, real estate, and finance. Rubin has produced many legal papers, which have been recognized as authoritative by state and federal courts, and have been used in law schools around the country. He has received national awards for his legal writing from the Foundation for the Improvement of Justice and the Burton Foundation.

According to Fred Goldstein, Michael Rubin's uncle who is also a Louisiana native now living in Stamford, "Michael is an excellent speaker and a really smart guy. There is history in his lineage. His great grandfather (my grandfather) founded the orthodox synagogue in Alexandria in the late 1800's; his grandfather, a Louisiana legislator, participated in Huey Long's impeachment proceedings; and his father was a federal judge with the Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans. His mother was a published writer, so his novel is a natural product of his heritage. On a personal note, he composed the music for his wedding in the historic Touro Synagogue in Newport, RI."

Questions about the program?

Contact Marcie Schoenfeld at 203-359-9148 or email elissa@de-kaplan.com

The Jewish Historical Society of Fairfield County is a recipient agency of United Jewish Federation of Greater Stamford, New Canaan and Darien.