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Foreword

The late David Susman, for many years Chairman of Woolworths, South Africa, and Peter Jones of River Club, Livingstone, planned to incorporate in a joint project a small museum in the centre of Livingstone as a record of Jewish life there, and to mark the fact that for a long time Jews were a dominant force in Livingstone’s business centre.

David’s parents had left Livingstone in 1933 to live in South Africa while retaining business interests in the territory of what was then Northern Rhodesia and is now Zambia. David grew up in Livingstone and spent much of his childhood visiting family ranches in the territory. While being educated in South Africa, he would return to Livingstone during school and university holidays and was always ‘in love with it’.

Although the ‘Joint Project’ never did get off the ground David remained enthusiastic about the Jewish history component and invited me to take up the idea by chairing an ‘organising committee’ to promote its establishment. I was at the time the non-executive Chairman of Zambezi Ranching Limited, a company linked to David’s other business interests in Zambia.

To develop the project, in 2008 David appointed Shea Albert, designer of the Jewish museum in Cape Town. She prepared a Strategy Paper for the Museum. In discussions, I expanded the Project concept to include the history of leading Jews who started their immigration in Livingstone but moved on to the West as far as Mongu and to the North as far as the Copperbelt. We then decided to name it “The Gateway Jewish Museum”, in recognition of Livingstone being the gateway for Jews to the North and West of the territory: almost all Jewish immigrants came through and stayed for a short while in Livingstone; for many years Jews were dominant in Livingstone’s business centre.

I began the search for a suitable location, which proved to be difficult. The first possible space was in the house occupied by the Regional Offices of the National Heritage Conservation Commission (NHCC) which had, in fact, been donated to the NHCC by Susman Brothers and Wulfsohn in September 2000, but it proved to be unavailable; then I was offered the Education Hall in one of the old buildings in the Railway Museum complex, but this too was unsuitable. Later, in 2012, the old Zambezi Sawmill’s Machinery Hall was offered which the Organising Committee accepted.

In his Will, David Susman left a sum of \$50 000 to my wife Cynthia and myself for implementing the Project. With the help of Saul Radunski, a co-Director of the Council for Zambia Jewry (CFZJ), we refurbished the Hall. Cynthia and I then commissioned a team of professional museum designers (Dijon) from South Africa to design the Project and prepare the exhibition panels. Late Michael Galaun, then Chairman of CFZJ, took a special interest in the Project and Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft augmented the exhibits with details of Jewish holy life.

While the Susman Bequest enabled us to kick off, it soon proved necessary to call on funds from the CFZJ to complete the Project. The Lease of the premises is now in the name of the CFZJ who cover the insurance for the contents. The CFZJ agreed that the NHCC would retain the entry fee charged to visitors to the museum complex, and that they would provide one of their staff to act as Curator and to maintain the surroundings.

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