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Holmes
County

HERALD

50¢ Single Copy

"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."
1 John 4:7-8

THURSDAY, MARCH 9, 2017

THREE SECTIONS

PHONE 834-1151

hcherald@gmail.com

LEXINGTON, MISSISSIPPI 39095

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Mayor Cobbins vies to keep seat in Lexington

The *Holmes County Herald* has been authorized to release the following paid political announcement.

Citizens of Lexington, you chose me four years ago to serve as your mayor and for that I am truly grateful and would like to take this opportunity to say thank you.

The time has come again for re-election and I am asking for your vote and support.

I will continue to make it my priority to listen as you speak and be a voice for you while serving as mayor for all people. I have respect of all persons, be-



CLINT COBBINS
cause I believe that everybody is somebody.

I will continue to work with our National, State and local leaders that play a great part in providing programs for our seniors, our children, providing

jobs for our citizens and grants to help beautify our city and its infrastructure.

I believe that with your help and support Lexington can and will be greater. I will continue to focus on building a stronger and unified city.

I will press forward for the revitalization of this great city. I love this city and most of all I love you the citizens.

I do care about what happens to our youths, to our young adults and to our elderly. That is why everyday I give Lexington my 100 percent.

I don't want to work to be seen, I want to be seen working.

On May 2nd, 2017 please go out and vote Clint Cobbins Mayor: City of Lexington.

After 108 years Cohen's on the Square set to close its doors

From Lithuanian peddler to Holmes County retail staple

**By Matthew Breazeale
Holmes County Herald**

It was the American entrepreneurial spirit which led an immigrant from Lithuania to found a Holmes County standard spanning three generations.

Cohen's on the Square in Lexington will be closing up shop for good before the year is up.

Changes and trends in the retail industry have left the iconic store fishing for customers in a much smaller puddle since its inception.

The history of Cohen's is the history of many early Americans starting with the grandfather of the store's current owner Phil Cohen, Samuel.

"He (Samuel) was an immigrant from Lithuania and came to the United States about 1881," according to Cohen. "He came with some relatives that just come over before him. He met them in New York, then he got married a couple of years later and became a peddler. He went all through the wilds of Pennsylvania, which was really not settled, part of it at least. The west part of Pennsylvania and Ohio."

A stomach ailment soon became the catalyst for a migration south.

"Eventually they decided to come south and move to Memphis, that was about the late 1880s," said Cohen. "At that time, this is kind of funny, he had an ulcer, they didn't have Maalox or any of that good stuff back then. All you could do was go to where they had natural spring water that would soothe your stomach. So he got on a train (going to Holmes County) to one of our natural spring water places, a natural well. The train had to refuel in Tchula and he met some people in Tchula who were also Jewish and spoke Yiddish. They convinced him that he ought to stay there, he spent a couple nights and seemed like the water agreed with him. He went back to Memphis, packed up, and then opened up a little store in Tchula in 1900."

Samuel moved to Cohen's current locale in 1908.

"What prompted the move was that Tchula had a one room school house for the first eight grades," Cohen continued. "He had sent his two older daughters to Memphis to be with some relatives and go to high school. In 1908 he had another

son who was getting ready to go to high school, but he was talking to Mr. Rosenthal, who built this building, this whole block. Mr. Rosenthal convinced him, he said 'You know, we've got this new modern school,' it was where the library is now, 'that has the most modern conveniences,' that meant indoor plumbing. 'We go through the twelfth grade, you've already joined our synagogue up here and come to visit us, and I've got a building I need to rent.'

"So when school let out in May he moved up here and rented this building. Eventually he bought the rest of this block. 'Then my father took over the store in 1926.' Cohen's father Ephraim, who was born in 1901, initially ran a business that included the space of where Beth's Flowers is located today. The location operated as a variety store until it was sold to a nephew of his.

"He just concentrated on this store," said Cohen. "Then in 1975 I moved back here and took over the store."

Cohen was born in 1937 and raised in Lexington. He eventually transplanted to San Antonio, after graduating from Tulane University, to work as a stock broker.

"For various reasons both my parents were in and out of the hospital a little bit in 1974. I came back to see about maybe selling the business and leaving, then I wound up staying here."

"This was in 1979, I went to see a couple of fraternity brothers of mine. I thought they were going to be at the party and they weren't there. So I saw this young lady, a girl by herself and I thought I might talk to her a little bit. Wound up, I started dating her, and we got married the next year."

The shifting face of retail towards more digital means has undercut walk-in traffic for mom and pop shops in rural Mississippi.

"It has changed tremendously," said Cohen. "When I came back it had already changed a lot. When I was a kid we sold mostly, what they called house dresses. We sold some nice dresses and nice dresses sold

for \$5.99 back then. That was back in the 1940s. We sold a lot of fabrics, many people sewed. Shoes were always a big item and work clothes. When I moved back here we had gotten in to more fashion stuff and were still using some wholesalers. Today there are very few wholesalers at all."

Cohen witnessed the trend, while growing up, move from clothes made for necessity toward clothes made for recreation and style.

"Eventually athletic wear became a major ongoing trend. If you read today's (March 6) paper, *USA Today*, there are a number of athletic stores going out of business. The online business is killing a lot of the retail stores. This is why Macy's is closing over 100 stores. Belk is closing some, JCPenny announced last week they're closing over 120. The whole retail business has been affected by online sales. Amazon primarily."

Cohen added that small town independent clothing stores are

(Continued on page 6.)

HERALD BRIEF

Lexington to conduct warrant blitz through April

The City of Lexington will conduct a warrant blitz starting in March through April.

The Lexington Police are continuing its effort to collect on overdue fines.

"Most individuals have not honored those agreements ordered by the court," according to a press release from the Lexington Police. "Pay your fine during the warrant blitz to prevent further actions. This operation is zero tolerance," said the release.

REVIVALS

SUNNY MOUNT M.B.C.

Sunny Mount M.B. Church in Lexington will hold its annual Spring Revival Services from Monday, March 13 through Friday, March 17 at 7:30 nightly. There will be a different speaker each night.

GREENSBOROUGH M.B.C.

Greensborough M.B. Church in Durant will hold its Annual Youth Revival beginning Tuesday, March 14 through Thursday, March 16 at 7:30 nightly.



Pictured above, Cohen's on the Square owner Phil Cohen stands behind the counter in the women's department during his ongoing closing sale through April, advertised in this edition of the *Herald*. Pictured below (at left), is the business founder, Samuel Cohen, who immigrated from Lithuania to Pennsylvania in 1881 and eventually settled in Holmes County. Former store owner and Phil's father Ephraim is seen below (at right) in a photo taken in 1985.

(Photos by Matthew Breazeale)



Holmes County Herald
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for 57 years



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Holmes County 7-Day Forecast for March 9 - 15 as reported on THE WEATHER CHANNEL



Thursday
Partly Cloudy
76/59
Precip. Chance
20%



Friday
A.M. Showers
72/53
Precip. Chance
40%



Saturday
Scattered T'Storms
68/43
Precip. Chance
60%



Sunday
A.M. Showers
62/42
Precip. Chance
40%



Monday
Partly Cloudy
69/44
Precip. Chance
20%



Tuesday
Mostly Sunny
68/46
Precip. Chance
20%



Wednesday
Sunny
73/52
Precip. Chance
10%

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