

Texas Jewish Historical Society

Preserving Jewish Heritage in Texas
Est. 1980



July, 2011 News Magazine

The Jewish Community Legacy Project

Helping Small, Declining Communities Plan for the Future

by Ruth Hershey Lincoln

A Jerusalem pine planted in 1889 by members of the Moses Montefiore Temple is all that remains of the Jewish community in Marshall. Elsewhere around the state, faded signs or burnished gravestones might be the only evidence of formerly vibrant small communities whose descendants have moved on, as evidenced by the synagogues documented in the TJHS Virtual Restoration of Small-Town Synagogues project.

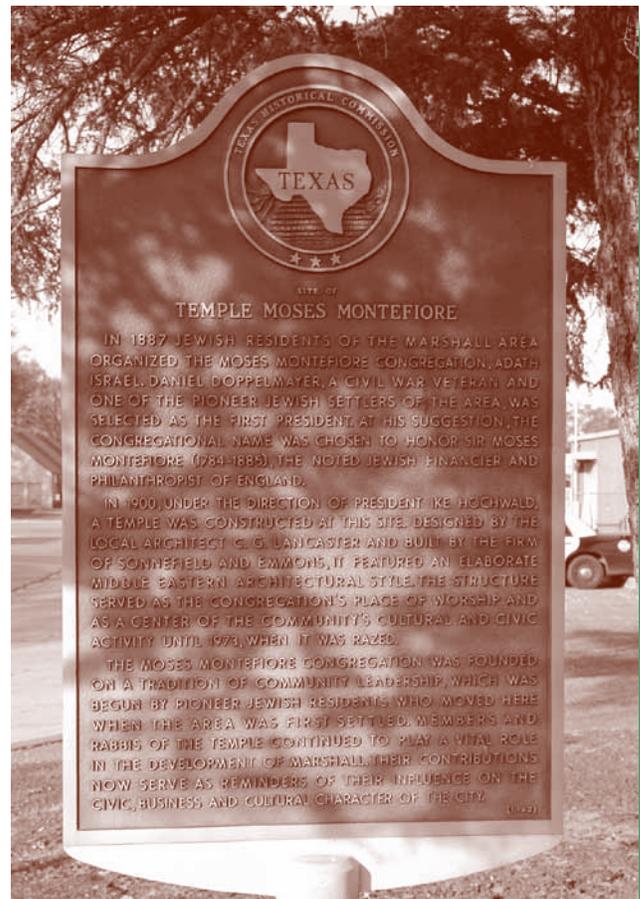
"I'm the last Greenblum who lives in Laredo," said Irving "Pancho" Greenblum to *The New York Times*. He was interviewed for an article about a new national initiative to help fading Jewish communities plan for a future in which they may no longer be viable (<http://jclproject.org/jewish-community-news.html>).

The goal of the Jewish Community Legacy Project (JCLP) is to guide the leadership of these communities through the creation of a legacy plan that states—while the congregation still functions—the intended destiny of communal assets, in order to assure that the past has a place in the future. Such communities in need of plans exist all over the country, and many are in Texas. The JCLP concept resonates whether you live in towns like Brenham or Wharton, or you have moved elsewhere and recognize what time and changing demographics mean for the future of the place of your youth.

The signs of a fading community are evident. Congregational membership declines while the average age increases. There are few or no children in the religious school. Children raised in the community do not return to live there after college.

David Sarnat, longtime Jewish communal professional and president of JCLP, and Austin attorney Brad Greenblum, son of Pancho Greenblum, presented the project at a recent meeting of the TJHS board of directors, in order to enlist the assistance of the Society in identifying appropriate communities that could benefit from JCLP. Every member of the Society can help. There is no charge to communities to participate in JCLP, which was developed with a grant from

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The Historical Marker at the site of Temple Moses Montefiore.

The registration form to attend any TJHS meeting is on the TJHS website. In case you misplace your News Magazine or do not want to cut the form out, you can download it at the TJHS website, at www.txjhs.org. Click on the "Meeting Registration Form."

Message from the President

by Rusty Milstein

I begin by saying “mazel tov” to Gertrude and Don Teter. They have been awarded the Judah P. Benjamin Award for Community Service for their effort in compiling our first edition of *Jewish Burials in Texas*. Thankfully for us, Charles Hart is working on our second edition, which will be out early next year. And congratulations to Doug Braudaway for winning the John Ben Shepperd County Historical Commission Leadership Award. This



honor is an annual award of the Texas Historical Commission.

At our Annual Gathering in Texarkana, Texas (a “thank you” to Ellen Kusin, and her supporting cast), we had an opportunity to try out our digital recorder, and it seemed to work well. I have

Rabbi Jordan Ottenstein’s speech and Melvin Kusin’s talk on my hard drive, and I have burned a couple of copies so far.

I am finding that, for me, the

most difficult part of being president of TJHS is writing the president’s message. There are some lucky people who have the ability to just sit down and begin writing; I am not one of them! So, I thought that maybe I should develop a theme. Just after I read our latest News Magazine, it came to me—the News Magazine.

We are blessed with having a great editor/publisher (Alexa Kirk) and assistant editor (Davie Lou Solka), as well as great photographers (Marvin Rich, Marc Wormser, and Davie Lou Solka) and a whole flock of volunteers who write articles, proofread, and do many other things to make our “Texas Jewish Historical Society News Magazine” the great publication that it is. It was not until I became president that I realized how much time and effort go into producing this News Magazine. One would not believe the number of emails that travel through cyberspace when it is time to proofread—it is amazing! This News Magazine is something that we all can be very proud of. I hope that Davie Lou proofs and edits this message so that it makes me look good! 🇺🇸

Rusty Milstein
President, 2011-2013

The Texas Jewish Historical Society July 2011 Quarterly News Magazine

The Texas Jewish Historical Society News Magazine is published four times annually. Stories about Texas Jewish history, oral histories, and requests for assistance with research are welcome, as are photographs and historical documents. Please provide color photocopies or scans at 300 dpi or greater, in .gif, .tif, or .jpg format, and send electronically to Assistant Editor Davie Lou Solka at editor@txjhs.org or by mail to 3808 Woodbrook Circle, Austin, TX 78759, 512-527-3799. Be sure to include your name and contact information.

Publisher-Editor Alexa Kirk
Assistant Editor Davie Lou Solka
Photographers Marvin Rich, Davie Lou Solka, and Marc Wormser

Note: The Texas Jewish Historical Society is unable to guarantee the safe receipt and/or return of documents or photographs. It is strongly recommended that you provide color photocopies of both color and black & white documents. We welcome your comments and suggestions.

Visit us on the web at www.txjhs.org.



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-The Oil Derrick with a Six-Pointed Star-

by Davie Lou Solka

During spring break of 2009, Jack and I took our four grandsons, Brian, Kevin, Matthew, and Drew Solka, on a trip to “see Bubby’s roots”—in Kilgore, Texas. For several years, I had talked about taking this trip with them, but their spring break schedules never permitted it—and their summers were spent at Greene Family Camp. But finally, everyone had the same week off and no family trips were planned! It was now or never, since, in the future, it would be even more difficult for the four boys to join us for a trip like this.

We drove with Brian and Kevin to Dallas from Austin to pick up Matthew and Drew, and off we went—east on IH-20. As we approached the Kilgore exit, everyone began looking for oil derricks. I had often told them of the numbers of derricks in the area and the town.

Suddenly, Matthew said “There’s a Star of David on that derrick!” We passed it so quickly that I did not get a good look at it, and I thought that he made a mistake. I told all of the boys that I didn’t remember any six-pointed stars on derricks growing up—they were all five points. We made a mental note to come back and check it out.

We then went to Kilgore and checked into our hotel and began to “see Bubby’s roots.” The boys were very interested and Kevin filmed the

sights and my commentary on each one. It was fun showing them the house in which I lived, my parents’ jewelry store, the schools that I attended, and the location where the small Congregation Beth Shalom building once stood with the adjoining building that served as a Social Hall and Sunday School classrooms. I told them that although our wedding reception was held in that building, the wedding was held in the Kilgore Community Center, because the synagogue was too small.

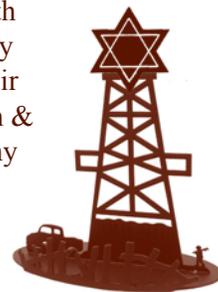
We visited the East Texas Oil Museum and they saw the seven-branch menorah that had been in the Temple’s sanctuary. I asked Joe Brown, the museum’s curator, about the six-pointed Star on the derrick, but he was not aware of its history.

When we walked in the downtown area, we visited the “World’s Richest Acre,” located on half of the block where my parent’s store was, and the Kilgore Historical Preservation Society’s office. We began talking to some of the people there who knew Kilgore’s history, and we asked about the Star of David on the oil derrick. Rhonda Sue Brown told me that a man from Tyler had put a derrick at that location—which was property that he owned—in honor of one of his employees, and he decided to put a six-pointed Star on it, instead of a five-pointed one. She thought that the man’s name was Sam

Roosth, but wasn’t sure. (I knew the Roosth family because my parents rented their store from Roosth & Genecov Company in Tyler.) After that, we went back to exit 587 to take a closer look at the Star of David—and take pictures! I wanted more information and decided to get in touch with Sam Roosth, who is also a TJHS member.

I saw him at a Bat Mitzvah and talked to him briefly. He told me that he did place a derrick on his property at Exit 587, in honor of one of his employees, who was retiring. He had to obtain permission from the Kilgore Historical Preservation Society to place a six-pointed star on top of the derrick. The Society had decided that all restorations of oil derricks would have five-pointed stars on them, since such stars were on the original derricks. But since this property was not in the Kilgore city limits, they gave him permission to place a six-pointed star on that derrick.

So, as you drive East on IH-20 and approach mile marker 587, keep your eyes open for the Star of David on the oil derrick that is there—it may be the only one in the world! 🇺🇸



We need Your Stories!

We are currently looking for stories with ties to Texas Jewish history! Any kind of story about your family history or your Temple’s history can fill the pages of our quarterly newsletter. Write your story, and if you have questions or need help, call our

assistant editor.

Everyone has a story to tell, long or short. Your history is of interest to members across Texas and the nation! And you will be able to see your family’s history in print. It is a wonderful keepsake and a valuable piece of genealogy for fu-

ture generations.

So what are you waiting for? Send your article to our assistant editor, Davie Lou Solka, at editor@txjhs.org, mail it to 3808 Woodbrook Circle, Austin, TX 78759, or call her at 512-527-3799.

TJHS Summer Board Meeting



Samylu Rubin and Jane Manaster.



Jan Hart and her mother, Minnie Siegel.



Susan Lewis, Gordon Cizon, and Charles Hart.



Scott Langston and Dr. Bryan Stone.

Save the Date

October 14-16, 2011

Fall Board Meeting in
Gainesville

January 6-8, 2012

Winter Board Meeting in
Del Rio

April 20-22, 2012

Annual Gathering in Fort
Worth



Ruth Nathan, Selma Mantel, and Lynn Greenberg get ready for the Board Meeting.

Dallas, Texas, June 25-26, 2011



Charles Hart (far right) announces the installation of officers who were not in attendance at the Annual Gathering. From left to right, they are Brad Greenblum, Gordon Cizon, Ruth Nathan, Allen Mondell, Susan Lewis, Mitzi Milstein, Gary Whitfield, Sherry Zander, and Dr. Bryan Stone.



Left to right: Norma Albert, Polly Ettelman, Joyce Wormser, and Raymond Ettelman.



Barry Russ and Dr. Kay Goldman.



The Summer Weekend was attended by many TJHS members.

From Our Archives

The Gold Watch by Vickie Vogel

A gold watch unites three generations of the Brown family of San Antonio.¹ It is believed that the earliest ancestors were probably Marranos from Spain who fled to Holland, and when the Jews were driven from there to England, they were given the name “Brown” because of their swarthy color. The more recent family history begins in Russia, where an unnamed ancestor was an international trader who liked the climate in the Ukraine town of Elizabethgrad and settled there. His son, Ephraim Brown, was a farmer whose wife’s name was Catherine. When their son was born on March 3, 1881, they named him Alexander after Czar Alexander II, who was ruling at the time. Ten days later, the Czar was assassinated, which led to pogroms, including one in Elizabethgrad. The Browns hid in a haystack when they heard the pogromists coming. They gave up their farm and everything they owned, except what they could carry in hand, and set sail for America. Landing in New Orleans, they settled on a farm in Louisiana, but after contracting malaria, they moved to St. Louis, where Ephraim became a secondhand-clothing peddler. Then the family moved to San Antonio, where they reared Alexander and his two sisters.

Alexander married Carrie Bertha Pfeiffer (1886-1977).² The gold watch comes from Carrie’s side of the family. Her grandparents were Philip and Johana Pfeiffer, who had come to the United States from Germany around 1829 and operated a tailor shop in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, before the Civil War. They moved to New York City, where their son John (Carrie’s father) was born on September 22, 1859. On John’s third

birthday, President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, but John was almost six years old when the war ended. He graduated from City College of New York in 1877 with a degree in

Photo courtesy of Dr. John Morton Brown.



Philip and Bessie Brown

pharmacy. As a graduation present, his parents presented him with a gold watch with their pictures inside. Since no one under the age of twenty-one could get a pharmacy license under New York law, John Pfeiffer moved to New Jersey and opened a pharmacy in Jersey City. After six months or so, he decided to go to San Francisco, where he had a married sister. He sold the pharmacy and used the money to buy a ticket on the New York Central Railroad. When he arrived in Chicago, he had to transfer to the Union Pacific Railroad. He went into a gambling joint, where he lost all his money, but since he still had the railroad ticket, he continued his journey. When the train stopped in Cheyenne, Wyoming, he decided to win his money back, but at a gambling joint there, he lost his railroad ticket.

There was a cattle train headed to California, and John convinced the brakeman to let him ride in the caboose in return for helping with the cattle. By the time he reached Virginia City, Nevada, he had not eaten in three days. In desperation, he entered a Harvey House

restaurant and asked if he could get a meal in exchange for his gold watch.³ The owners examined the watch, opening it and seeing the pictures. They said that they recognized the people. When John asked them to identify them, they answered, “Philip and Johana Pfeiffer.” Before the Civil War, they had worked for the Pfeiffers in the tailor shop in Tuscaloosa! They fed John well, and he got to keep his gold watch.

John made it to San Francisco, where he worked for Levi Strauss, making the now-famous denim work pants in 1879. The next year, John became a “drummer” or traveling salesman throughout Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia. He traveled by stagecoach, since the railroads did not reach his territory. He was once on a stagecoach when it was held up by Charles Earl Bowles, otherwise known as the infamous Black Bart, who, of course, took the gold watch. John asked him to give it back, because it had pictures of his parents in it. Bart, known as the “gentleman bandit,”⁴ opened the watch, looked at it, and threw it back to John.

While a drummer, John often visited Roseburg, Oregon, where there was a number of Jewish families very hospitable to him, often taking him on picnics. In 1883, John married Sophie Goodman.⁵ Her parents had also emigrated from Germany before the Civil War and settled in Macon, Georgia, where she was born on November 19, 1863, around the time of General Sherman’s march to the sea.⁶ Philip wrote that her parents were killed or died of disease as a result of the march, and baby Sophie was taken in by an uncle who lived up north.⁷ The uncle’s sister lived in San

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Francisco, and that is probably where John and Sophie met. The uncle would not allow Sophie to marry John until he stopped traveling and got a business. A. B. Frank, a friend of the uncle, was in the saddlery business in Texas, and John was sent to him. John bought the general store in Carrizo Springs, returned to San Francisco, married Sophie, and brought her to Texas.⁸

Carrizo Springs must have seemed a strange and lawless place to the young couple. Lynch law was in effect, and on John's first day, he saw nine accused cattle rustlers hanging from mesquite trees on a ranch outside of town. This had such an impact on John that later on, when a young man eloped with a girl on two of John's horses, he did not report it for fear that the boy might be lynched.

A notorious gunman named John King Fisher was married to a woman from Carrizo Springs. One day, he rode his horse into John's store and shot up the place. He later paid \$50 for the damages.⁹

John drilled the first artesian well in Dimmit County. He grew cotton as well as the county's first strawberries, which later became an important crop in the area. He bartered merchandise for cattle, as the cattlemen were cash poor. He fenced in 640 acres near town for these cattle. When they became too numerous for the available grass, he hired three cowboys to drive them to Indio Ranch, near Eagle Pass, to sell. The deal fell through, and they had to drive the cattle back to his pasture. The cowboys had crossed over into Mexico, where they drank too much tequila to herd cattle. The whole herd scattered and was lost in the brush. From then on, John drove his herds to a town forty-five miles east, where there was a railroad to ship them to Chicago or Kansas City for sale. He also accepted javelina hides in trade, sending them to Germany, where they were made into knapsacks for the German army. John figured that he bought a million hides between 1883 and 1895.

On August 8, 1886, Carrie Bertha Pfeiffer was born to John and Sophie in Carrizo Springs. When she was five

years old, the family moved to Encinal, an even smaller town.¹⁰ They stayed until 1895, when the Encinal store was burned down, possibly by an anti-Semitic arsonist (according to Carrie's son in 1988). After this catastrophe, the Pfeiffers moved to San Antonio, where John opened and operated a pharmacy until the 1930s, despite being wiped out by the great flood of September 1921, the worst in San Antonio history. Houses were lifted from their foundations and piled against each other, and some fifty people were killed.¹¹

Carrie attended the University of Texas, class of '06. On January 10, 1908, she married Alexander Aaron Brown, the son of Ephraim and Catherine Brown, the farmers from Russia who became used-clothing dealers. Although Ephraim had no formal education, Alexander was sent to Vanderbilt for a year and then to Jefferson Medical School in Philadelphia for four years, and became a doctor. He practiced medicine from 1904 until 1946.

Alexander joined the army in World War I on May 2, 1917, serving in the field artillery and later in the medical corps. He came down with the influenza during the worldwide pandemic that killed between 50 and 100 million in 1918-19.¹² For a long time, he hovered between life and death, but he finally recovered.

Carrie Pfeiffer Brown was a renowned activist in civic affairs, including the National Council of Jewish Women, serving as president or board member of numerous organizations, including three terms as president of the state chapter of the American Association of University Women.¹³ She was active in the cause of women's suffrage. Her activities in educational matters resulted in Governor Coke Stevenson being urged to appoint her to the University of Texas Board of Regents. Had Stevenson done so, she would have been the first woman to hold the position.¹⁴ There is a photograph of Carrie Brown in the TJHS-sponsored book *Deep in the Heart: The Lives and Legends of Texas Jews: A Photographic History*, in which

it is noted that Carrie was one of the first women in San Antonio to bob her hair and drive a car.¹⁵

On November 1, 1912, Carrie and Alexander's son, Philip Pfeiffer Brown, was born in San Antonio, a mile from the Alamo.¹⁶ After his discharge from the army, Alexander took a vacation at a rustic fishing camp named Flour Bluff, where Corpus Christi Bay joins the Laguna Madre on the Texas coast. Philip was too young to fish, but he was impressed with the spectacle. Alexander also took him fishing on Medina Lake, near San Antonio. As a boy, Philip fished in the San Pedro Creek and the San Antonio River near their home. These experiences developed in him a lifelong love of fishing.

Philip reminisced about a trip taken with a friend when he was about fourteen years old. They were taken by a friend of his father's nurse to Corpus Christi Bay. When the man brought out a bottle of whisky and drank it, Philip's friend Irving called collect to report it. Philip's mother phoned the man and told him to leave the boys. They were frightened all night that the man would be angry, but the next day, Philip drove(!) himself and his friend (they had come in Alexander's car) back to San Antonio.¹⁷

Once, when Alexander and Philip were fishing in Corpus Christi, a mud catfish was hauled into the boat and, as it flew through the air, it hit Philip's leg and stuck one of its poison fins into him. A few days later, the leg was badly swollen and draining. A doctor gave him a tetanus shot and cleaned the wound. It continued to drain for several months. On another occasion, while fishing with his father in Corpus Christi, they were awakened and told to leave immediately because a hurricane was coming. The highway was jammed and cars were running out of gas, but they had just filled up, so they safely made it home. The cabin in which they had been staying was washed away.

In 1934, Alexander took Philip and his brother, Alexander, Jr., dove hunting on a tract of land that he owned.

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Philip was armed with an 1898 model Winchester 12-gauge shotgun that he bought from his brother for \$5. He enjoyed the experience so much that he never missed dove season, except when he was in the army during World War II. His father had built a cabin on a lease in Frio County. The lease was sold when Philip was overseas. On Philip's first deer hunt, he wanted to hunt doves, but his brother and friend said that he would scare off the deer, so he went to a blind and shot a 10-point buck, which fell dead instantly. "I then swore off hunting deer and for the most part stopped shooting at mammals in general." Once, however, he did shoot a javelina when a bunch charged him. The deer head was taken to a taxidermist, at his mother Carrie's insistence, and hangs today on his son's wall.¹⁸

Philip remained a devoted dove hunter throughout his life and wrote about his experiences. "I, Philip P. Brown, an ardent Jew, at the age of 80 years, hereby confess that from the year 1934 to and including the year 1977, I sinned against what I have been told are Jewish laws against hunting birds. In hunting birds, I followed Esau, an ancestor of the Arabs, rather than Jacob, the patriarch of the Jews." Philip estimated that he had killed six thousand doves in his lifetime, all of which were eaten by him, his wife, and their friends.¹⁹

Philip also tells of hunting on the Kallison Ranch, west of San Antonio. In 1938, Philip began duck hunting, which he accounts as more successful than his

goose hunting. He once killed a goose in Colorado, which then landed on the ice fifty yards from shore. To retrieve it, he had to crawl out with a dead tree branch, which he decided was a dangerous and foolish thing to do. He usually hunted by himself and slept in his station wagon. He was once arrested in North Texas, where a sheriff thought that he had stolen the car that he was in and may have used his gun to kill the owner of the car.

"I know that the majority of Jews would consider me a great sinner and would hold me in great disdain. But at this late date, I can only hope that the Great Judge on High will be merciful to me in the hereafter," Philip wrote.

Philip graduated from Main Avenue High School in San Antonio.²⁰ Because of the Great Depression, when he graduated in 1930, a medical education could not be financed. He worked and saved, entering the University of Texas and receiving a law degree in 1935. He was a Member of The order of the Coif and Chancellors, the UT Law School honor society that recognizes the sixteen law students who have achieved the highest grade point average in their class through their second year.²¹ He also served as editor of the *Texas Law Review*. He worked as a professor of law at UT from 1935 until 1941, when he was drafted.

Although Philip writes about many fishing trips, his favorite was in July 1940, when he took Bessie Stein fishing, renting a rowboat and baiting her line. She caught a large sheepshead, which Philip was never able to do. It was a wonderful memory for him. Similarly, his happiest dove hunting memory was in September 1940, right after he and Bessie became engaged. They sat against an old barn. The doves weren't the only things billing and cooing.

He married Bessie on November 2, 1940, in San Antonio. Bessie, born on September 7, 1915 in San Antonio, was the daughter of Julius Stein, born in a Ukraine shtetl, and Rebecca Stein, born in a *shtetl* in northeast Poland.²²

After basic training at Fort Sam

Houston in San Antonio, Philip was sent to Oglethorpe, Georgia, to attend military police officers' training school, graduating a second lieutenant with a salary of \$125 per month. Daughter Safari Brown had been born on April 5, 1942, in Austin, and was six months old when Philip was transferred to Georgia. The baby was named for her great-great-grandmother Shifra.²³ Bessie and the baby moved to Chattanooga, near Fort Oglethorpe. Philip was given leave, and they all headed to San Antonio, with the baby in an oversized shoe box. The train was so crowded that they had to stand until the sandwich vendor sold enough stock that they could sit on his bench.

From San Antonio, they drove to El Paso, where Philip was assigned to a military police company at Fort Bliss. Next, he was sent to Alva, Oklahoma, where a POW camp was being organized. He was transferred to Fort Custer, Michigan, to the Army Criminal Investigation School, for two months. He returned to Alva and received orders to go to Camp Maxey, near Paris, Texas.

Bessie continued to follow Philip, living in Hugo, Oklahoma, across the river from Paris. In June 1943, race riots in Detroit²⁴ resulted in Philip's outfit being sent there. Afterward, he went to Waterloo, Michigan, to set up another POW camp. While he prepared to ship overseas from Fort Custer, the family rented a room in Battle Creek. The house was owned by Nazi sympathizers, and when they discovered that the Browns were Jews, they were ordered out. They found lodgings with three other families.

In February 1944, Philip was sent to Hampton Roads, Virginia, where he boarded ship in a convoy of seventy-five cargo ships with twelve destroyers. Twenty-one days later, they docked in Oran, Algeria, before traveling to Port Said, Egypt, through the Suez Canal into the Red Sea to Aden, where another convoy formed to cross the Arabian Sea to Bombay, which had recently been attacked by the Japanese. Four days on a train in 115-degree heat brought them

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to Calcutta, which Philip pronounced “the most disease-ridden and foulest smelling city in the world.” They lived in thatched huts nearby, then boated upriver to a train that took them to north-eastern India, where they again lived in thatched huts before heading to northern Burma. Since there was no road, they traveled in an unarmed C-47. As they became airborne, the Japanese attacked. They had to fly at tree-top level for about four hours and finally landed safely. Philip developed a lifelong dread of flying and thereafter avoided it whenever possible.²⁵

They were building a road from Ledo, India, to Bahmo, Burma, to hook up with the old Burma Road running north from Mandalay through Rangoon to China, in order to supply the Chinese. He was under the command of General Joseph “Vinegar Joe” Stillwell.²⁶ The road was completed a few months before the Japanese surrender. Philip believed that his outfit would have been involved in the invasion of Japan if President Truman had not decided to drop the atomic bombs. Philip always maintained that Washington, Lincoln, and Truman were the three greatest Presidents and that he owed his life to Truman’s decision.

The climate in the jungle was hot and humid. Philip had to eat ten or twelve salt tablets a day. He developed malaria, which troubled him throughout his life, as well as hepatitis and dysentery. At the end of the war, Philip traveled by train back across India and boarded the U.S.S. *General C. G. Morton*²⁷ to sail home. There was a terrible storm in the Atlantic, maybe a hurricane, and Philip could eat nothing for three days.

In late 1945, he was promoted to first lieutenant. He joked that he was the longest-running second lieutenant in the army. He blamed a colonel in Alva, Oklahoma, who had given him an unsatisfactory rating for going into the officers’ mess through the back door rather than the front.

When his unit landed in New York City, Philip went to Fort Dix, New

Jersey, and caught a train to Tyler, where Bessie picked him up. He looked so worn out that she was afraid that he would die. Philip suffered from spherocytosis (a hereditary blood disease), glandular fever, and severe anemia, but he never went on “sick call” or to a hospital during his four years in the army.

Philip and Bessie’s son John Morton Brown, his middle name from the ship that brought his father home alive from the war,²⁸ was born on December 4, 1946, in Houston, where Philip had resumed his law practice, working for two years with Stewart Title Guaranty Company. He then joined the legal department of Shell Oil in Oklahoma. In 1966, he was transferred to Colorado, where he examined titles to tracts of land in fifteen states for drilling oil and gas wells. He worked late one night, and as he walked to his car, six teenage boys accosted him. They robbed and stabbed him, but a brave woman crossed the street and scared the robbers off. “If I had not come over here, they would have killed you,” she told him. The men who had seen what was happening had gone inside and locked their doors. X-rays revealed that Philip was stabbed with a knife in the back of the neck, and an ice pick had been stuck through his back into the lung near his heart. The doctor said that he was the luckiest person in the world to be still alive.

Philip retired from Shell Oil in January 1974.

Philip and Bessie’s daughter Safari married Ron Wasserman on December 19, 1971, in Denver. In 1981, son John, who had graduated from the University of Colorado School of Medicine in Denver in 1977, married Ingelise Rasmussen in Minneapolis. He specializes in anatomic and clinical pathology in Easton, Pennsylvania. Their daughter, Cari Brown, is also a doctor.

Philip was an active supporter of many Jewish causes, especially the rescue of Ethiopian Jews.²⁹ In 1973, he wrote a pamphlet titled “Judaism and Christianity—Fundamental Differences,” which was widely distributed.³⁰

There is a news clipping of a letter to the editor of the *Intermountain Jewish News*, dated April 25, 1986, on the topic of separation of church and state. Philip described troubling experiences at the Oklahoma high-school graduation ceremonies of his daughter and later his son. The speaker at his daughter’s commencement was a Baptist minister whose speech was titled “Hitch your wagon to a star.” The star referred to turned out to be Jesus.

At his son’s commencement a few years later, the speech discussed how, when Jesus grew to manhood, the Jews crucified him and were condemned to hell unless they converted to Christianity. The minister then pointed out that seven in the graduation class were Jews, and since Christians loved Jews and did not want them to burn in hell, he invited the seven Jewish students and parents to come to the stage and accept Christianity and repudiate Judaism under the large cross on the stage. Philip sent copies of the sermon in a protest letter to the principal, the school board, and the state superintendent of public instruction. No one replied but the state superintendent, who said that he could not police all the baccalaureate sermons in Oklahoma.

“I do not want my grandchildren and their children to have any of the agony and anguish that I outlined above and hence am strongly against anything of a religious nature in the public schools,” Philip concluded.

In 1985, Philip’s health problems, including a defect in his middle ear and being extremely underweight, resulted in stints in the VA hospital for some six months. Bessie believed that he would not come home again and threw away about two hundred doves from their freezer.³¹

Philip Pfeiffer Brown died on March 11, 1994, in Denver, at the age of 81. He was survived by his wife Bessie; daughter Safari Brown Wasserman of Fairfax, Virginia; son Dr. John Morton Brown of Easton, Pennsylvania; and grandchildren Micah and Miriam

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Honor or Memorialize a Friend or a Loved One With a Donation to the TJHS Endowment Fund

When you honor or memorialize a friend or a loved one with a donation to the Texas Jewish Historical Society's Endowment Fund, you help support important programs. Send the honoree's full name, type of honor (memorial, congratulations, or occasion—birthday, anniversary, award, new child or grandchild, etc.) and your name, along with a check in the amount of your choice, to

The Texas Jewish Historical Society
P. O. Box 10193
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Your gift will further the efforts to record, preserve, and disseminate historic information about Texas Jewish culture.

The Gold Watch, continued from page 9

Wasserman and Cari Ellen Brown. His brother, Alexander A. Brown, Jr., of Edinburgh,³² and sister Betty Cohen, of San Antonio, also survived him. He was buried at the Fort Logan National Cemetery in Denver with Rabbi Bruce Greenbaum of Denver's Temple Emanuel officiating.³³

Bessie Stein Brown still leads an active life in Denver at the age of 95. In fact, she traveled to Israel three years ago to visit relatives.³⁴

And the gold watch? Philip inherited it from Alexander, but in 1969, his home was burglarized and the watch was taken, to Philip's great distress. Yet its story and so many other stories of Philip Pfeiffer Brown and his family are preserved forever in our archives.

References

¹Philip Brown wrote a number of articles and a letter, and he also completed a questionnaire about his life. They can all be found in the Philip Brown folder in Box 3A187, Texas Jew-

ish Historical Society Archives, The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin. Unless otherwise noted, all information came from this file.

²Carrie Bertha Pfeiffer Brown, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fbrvc>.

³Fred Harvey was a railroad-freight agent who saw a need for restaurants along the rail lines. He opened the first Harvey House in 1878 and is credited with creating the first restaurant chain in the United States. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fred_Harvey_Company.

⁴[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Bart_\(outlaw\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Bart_(outlaw)).

⁵Email, John Morton Brown, May 28, 2011, with information from Melvin Cohen (Betty Brown Cohen's son).

⁶http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sherman's_March_to_the_Sea.

⁷Philip's nephew, Melvin Cohen, believes from his research that Sophie was born in 1864 and that Jonas Good-

man died in Albion, New York, in 1876, after the Civil War, but he has no information on her mother's death. Philip's wife Bessie Brown believed that Sophie did not get along with her stepmother and was sent to live with relatives in San Francisco. Email, John Morton Brown, May 28, 2011.

⁸Carrizo Springs is the County Seat of Dimmit County and is located 45 miles north of the Mexican border. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carrizo_Springs,_Texas.

⁹King Fisher, after multiple charges of murder with no convictions, eventually turned to law enforcement and died in a shoot out in San Antonio. <http://www.ccchaney.com/Damron/kingfisher.html>.

¹⁰The population peaked in 1937 at 800 residents. Encinal is on I-35, about 55 miles southeast of Carrizo Springs. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Encinal,_Texas; <http://www.wildtexas.com/travel-calculator.php>.

continued on page 11

- ¹¹<http://www3.gendisasters.com/node/4426>. John died in 1938.
- ¹²http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1918_flu_pandemic. Six-year-old son Philip got the flu and was very sick, but he also recovered.
- ¹³Carrie Pfeiffer Brown is listed in the *Woman's Who's Who of America*. http://books.google.com/books?id=aHUEAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA133&lp=PA133&dq=philip+pfeiffer+brown&source=bl&ots=n1vrbrpIm_&sig=eMIB_GdRlkFwXSFO3BFy-Fam2EY&hl=en&ei=Cne_Td_EdSXtwezkoCzBQ&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CBoQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=philip%20pfeiffer%20brown&f=false.
- ¹⁴<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fbrvc>.
- ¹⁵*Deep in the Heart: The Lives and Legends of Texas Jews: A Photographic History*, Ruthe Winegarten and Cathy Schechter, Eakin Press, 1990, p. 110.
- ¹⁶A second son, Alexander, Jr., was born on July 30, 1917. <http://www.legacy.com/ns/obitfinder/obituary-search.aspx?daterange=2000-2009&firstname=alexander&lastname=Brown&countryid=1&stateid=57&affiliateid=all>. Daughter Elizabeth Catherine (Betty) Brown Cohen was born December 20, 1922. <http://www.legacy.com/ns/obitfinder/ssdi-search.aspx?daterange=2000-2009&firstname=Betty&lastname=Cohen&countryid=1&stateid=57&affiliateid=-1>.

- ¹⁷Philip took his son John dove hunting from around the age of seven and let him steer the car from age nine, perhaps preparing John in case he found himself in a similar situation! Email, John Morton Brown, May 28, 2011.
- ¹⁸Emails, John Morton Brown, May 28, 2011 and May 31, 2011.
- ¹⁹Except as noted below.
- ²⁰Obituary of Philip Pfeiffer Brown, *North San Antonio Times*, March 31, 1994. In Box 3A168, TJHS Archives, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.
- ²¹<http://www.utexas.edu/law/academics/chancellors/archive.html>; <http://www.utexas.edu/law/academics/chancellors/>.
- ²²Julius died in the United States in 1960, and Rebecca died in Denver in March 1990, at the age of 95. They were at one time members of Congregation Beth Yeshurun in Houston. Email, Bessie Brown, May 29, 2011.
- ²³Safari later served in the Peace Corps in Tanzania. Emails, Dr. John Morton Brown, May 14 and May 28, 2011.

The deadline for the November, 2011 TJHS News Magazine is October 7.

- ²⁴http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Detroit_Race_Riot_%281943%29.
- ²⁵It may be that the landing field was under siege and the pilot of the plane had to circle, hoping not to run out of fuel, until the Americans again secured the airstrip. Email, John Morton Brown, May 28, 2011.
- ²⁶General Stillwell, best known for his service in China and Burma, held formal military dress in contempt. His concern for his men and his acerbic personality resulted in the nickname "Vinegar Joe." http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Stilwell.
- ²⁷[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_General_C._G._Morton_\(AP-138\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_General_C._G._Morton_(AP-138)).
- ²⁸Email, John Morton Brown, May 28, 2011.
- ²⁹Box 3A168 op cit.
- ³⁰No copy was in our archives, but John Brown mailed one to me, and it makes a valuable addition to our collection.
- ³¹Box 3A187 op cit.
- ³²Alexander died on July 15, 2006, just before his 89th birthday. Betty died on September 9, 2003, in San Antonio. www.legacy.com op cit.
- ³³Box 3A168 op cit.
- ³⁴Email, Dr. John Morton Brown, May 14, 2011. 

Does TJHS Have Your Current Email Address?

Is your email address current? Has it changed since the 2010-2011 directory was printed? Have you changed email providers? If so, please send Marc Wormser an email at marc.wormser@att.net so that he can update your information in the database. To reduce postage costs and printing delays, we are going to be sending electronically as much mail as possible, so don't be left out or behind—send your current information today!

Please put "email change" in the subject line and with your name in the text of your message, and send it today! Thank you.

Mazel Tov

to the following

Texas Jewish Historical Society Members

Doug Braudaway, of Del Rio, for receiving the "John Ben Sheppard County Historical Commission Leadership Award" from the Texas Historical Commission.

Gertrude and Don Teter, of Baytown, for receiving the "Judah P. Benjamin Award for Community Service" for compiling the first edition of *Jewish Burials in Texas*, published by the Texas Jewish Historical Society.

Esther and Harol Vexler, of San Antonio, who celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary in March 2011.

Please send information for this column to
Davie Lou Solka at editor@txjhs.org.

Travel Survey

Please send your thoughts on our travel activities to me by email at vickvogel@yahoo.com, by phone at 979-247-4504, or by mail at 3114 Frank Road, La Grange, TX 78945. Any format will do, as long as you supply information to the following questions. Thank you!
~Vickie Vogel, travel and adventure chair

1. Are you interested in
 - a. International travel
 - b. Domestic travel
 - c. Either
 - d. I am not interested in travel

2. I prefer to travel in the
 - a. Summer
 - b. Fall (but not during High Holy Days)
 - c. Winter
 - d. Spring (but not during Passover)
 - e. Doesn't matter

3. I prefer trips of
 - a. One week or less
 - b. Two weeks
 - c. Length of time is not important

4. I don't want to spend more than
 - a. \$2,500
 - b. \$3,500
 - c. \$4,500
 - d. Money is no object

5. I would like to go to
 - a. Europe
 - b. South America
 - c. Asia
 - d. Africa
 - e. North America
 - f. Other _____

6. Are you interested in a tour of Jewish Spain and Portugal? _____



JCLP, continued from page 1

the Jewish Federations of North America and subsequent seed funding from The Marcus Foundation and the National Museum of American Jewish History. The Jewish Federations of North America and the National Museum of American Jewish History continue as partners, and The Marcus Foundation currently supports the project. The Union for Reform Judaism is also cooperating. While there is no financial cost, each community is asked to sign a letter of agreement that outlines its obligations, as well as those of JCLP.

The first step toward creating a legacy plan is to form a dedicated and focused working committee. Given various life pressures, leadership should be able to realize a finished document within 8-12 months of agreement to proceed.

During that time, a congregation will inventory assets, identify and work with a communal executor about asset placement, and define when to cease functioning while arranging alternative ways to provide religious services to remaining congregants. Individual circumstances might determine the specific time required to progress through the process.

Once the legacy plan is complete and approved by the board, it will inform the community as it moves forward, to be realized as determined by the stated conditions.

Actions to preserve the stories and accomplishments of trailblazing generations strengthen us all. If you or someone you know can help, please contact David Sarnat at 770-690-8230 or dsarnat@gmail.com. 

TJHS in India

by Vickie Vogel

In March, The Texas Jewish Historical Society traveled to India, visiting the Taj Mahal and other famous sites, including the sixteenth-century Paradesi Synagogue in Kochi. They also met Sarah Cohen, the famous embroidery artist and one of the last Jews in Kerala. 



Photo at left: Bob and Susan Lewis of Big Spring, Texas, and Vickie and David Vogel of La Grange, Texas, travel to India. At right, Vickie watches as Sarah Cohen shows her embroidery tips (top) and David and Sarah share a laugh (bottom).



Gainesville, Texas

by Hollace Weiner

When Stuart Rockoff, historian for the Institute of Southern Jewish Life, arrived in Gainesville to conduct research for the online *Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities*, a stranger was waiting for him at the city's Morton Museum. The gent introduced himself as Lary Kuehn, perhaps the last local descendant of Gainesville's United Hebrew Congregation, a synagogue founded in 1885 and fading into history by 1922. The man had in hand the congregation's last minute book. Within its pages were handwritten accounts of the synagogue's board meetings from May 1905 to November 1922, when the congregation sold its landmark synagogue for \$1,000.

Rockoff alerted the Texas Jewish Historical Society about this rich primary-source document. Hollace Weiner and Vickie Vogel began making plans to do further research on Gainesville and to host our fall board meeting there on October 14-16. (For details, consult the



Photo courtesy Erline Gordon.

Lt. Col. Nathan Lapowski (1863-1928) was a Gainesville merchant who served with the Texas Volunteer Guard from 187 to 1918.

on the road to Indian Territory. When the county voted in Prohibition in 1910, business dried up. Jewish merchants involved in the wholesale-liquor trade and the saloon business departed for Dallas, Fort Worth, and Tyler.

The congregation's minutes, full of energy and growth in the preceding years, gradually show signs of slowing down. In the early years, the minutes include references to the Spanish-American War and a Jewish soldier who died on board the battleship U.S.S. *Maine*. They discuss a 1905 petition to President Teddy Roosevelt, asking that he protect Jewish victims of Russian pogroms. Also in the meeting summaries are plans to purchase an organ, hire rabbis (there were at least five full-time rabbis and many part-timers), and install an indoor commode in 1910. The pages include an angry resignation of a temple president, eulogies following the deaths of longtime members, and arguments over annual dues (which ranged from fifty cents

registration flyer inserted into this news magazine.)

The city, a rural county seat that is sixty miles north of Fort Worth and Dallas, is located seven miles south of Oklahoma. Gainesville thrived around the turn of the twentieth century, when it was a frontier cattle town

to two dollars).

The minutes show that this small congregation, which at its peak had thirty families, was plugged into the national and international Jewish network. The Gainesville congregation sent \$5 to a Washington, D.C., synagogue hit by fire and \$1 to a Troy, New York, congregation that had asked for help to pay off a mortgage.

The TJHS's Gainesville meeting will include a panel discussion—with Stuart Rockoff, Sherry Zander, and moderator Bryan Stone—analyzing the reasons why small-town congregations disperse. Also on the agenda is a cemetery tour, during which TJHS members dressed in period clothing will give monologues about the dearly departed, many of whom are eulogized in the congregation's minute book.

To view the Gainesville congregation's minute book, which is on a website hosted by Texas A&M



Photo courtesy Lary Kuehn and Morton Museum.

Gainesville Synagogue, ca. 1900.

University/Commerce, go to this link: <http://dmc.tamu-commerce.edu/cdm4/document.php?CISOROOT=/cooke&CISOPTR=496&REC=10>. To register for the Gainesville conference, contact Vickie Vogel, arrangements chair, at vvogel@cvctx.com. Consult the flyer inside this news magazine. 



Photo courtesy Erline Gordon, El Paso.

Extended family of Daniel Baum, founding president of Gainesville's United Hebrew Congregation. Front row: Israel Baum, Alice Baum, Samuel and Sara Baum Strauss, and Samuel Baum. Back row: Godfrey Baum, Eva Baum Lapowski, Henry Baum, Essie Baum Rosenbush, Joe Baum, and Rose Baum Aronson.

Cemetery Book

The Cemetery Book that was published by the Texas Jewish Historical Society in 1997 is being updated. We have had cooperation from many people and most congregations in Texas, but there are still a few cemetery listings that need to be updated. Also included are the burials that are in non-Jewish cemeteries, so if you know of

one that took place after 1997, please contact Charles Hart at 254-778-2676 or cbhart635@sbcglobal.net.

The deadline for updating listings is December 30, 2011. After that date, the updated book will be printed. If you have a question concerning an update, please contact Charles Hart. 

Welcome New Members!

Betty Taub Feir and Mike Richardson

6513 Lakeview Dr.
Texarkana, TX 75503
Ph. 903-278-4499
Fax 903-793-8589
bshrink@aol.com

Barbara and Howard Glick

6110 Pleasant Ln.
Texarkana, TX 75503
Ph. 903-831-6816
Fax 870-330-9221
hglick@tsinco.com

Marilyn and Marshall Glick

3-D Dogwood Lake Dr.
Texarkana, TX 75503
903-794-4774
mmglick@windstream.net

Marilyn Lippman

8619 Vista View
Dallas, TX 75243
Ph. 214-221-4154
Cell 214-563-1319
mlippman@sbcglobal.net

Sheldon Lippman

3815 Veazey St. NW
Washington, DC
Ph. 201-966-3159
Cell 202-549-0122
slippman@yahoo.com

Samuel (Mendy) and Natalie Rabcioff

P. O. Box 8170
Longview, TX 75607
Ph. 903-753-6506
Fax 903-758-3988
sobols@cableynx.com

Has Your Address Changed?

If you have any changes in your information, please send them to **Marc Wormser, 1601 S. Riviera Ct., Pearland, TX 77581, 832-288-3494, marc.wormser@att.net.**

Contributions

The following donations have been received by the Texas Jewish Historical Society:

In Memory of Willie Wolf Bauer
From *Rev. Tyrone Bauer*

In Honor of Jack Gerrick, on his 80th birthday
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Ruth Schnitzer
Davie Lou and Jack Solka
Helen and Larry Wilk

A Gift Membership for Aron "Doc" Seibel
From *Barbara and Ben Rosenberg*

In Memoriam



Madlyn Brachman Barnett, TJHS member, died on June 5, 2011, in Fort Worth, Texas. She is survived by her husband Lou, and her children and their spouses, Laurie and Lon Werner, Eliot and Sheryl Barnett, and Rhoda and Howard Bernstein; seven grandchildren; and many extended-family members.

May her memory be a blessing.

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TJHS Traveling Exhibit

The Texas Jewish Historical Society has compiled two museum-quality photo exhibits, with explanations, depicting early Jewish life and contributions. Both exhibits highlight the lives of Jews in Texas since the early part of the century.

Each exhibit is comprised of approximately thirty-six photographs that can be either self-standing with an easel back or hung on a wall. There is no charge for the exhibits, and they will be shipped, prepaid freight via UPS in waterproof boxes, to

your location. The only expense to the borrower will be the shipping of the exhibit back via UPS ground.

The exhibits have been displayed in various locations in Texas and other parts of the United States, including Rhode Island and California. They are an excellent program for schools, congregations, and other organizations. To schedule the exhibits, please contact Jack Gerrick at 817-927-8765 or email him at texbed@aol.com.



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