

Texas Jewish Historical Society

Preserving Jewish Heritage in Texas
Est. 1980



November, 2010

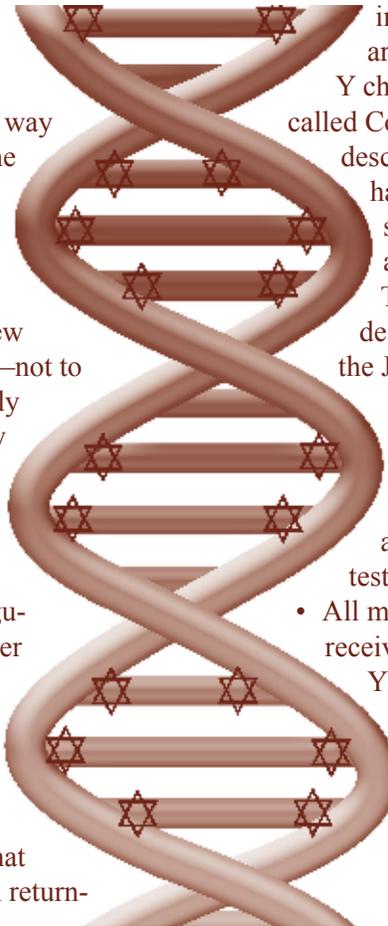
— An Insider’s Look at the Genealogy DNA Field —

by Bennett Greenspan

In the summer of 1999, I was updating my mother’s father’s lineage and was considering the genealogy as a reward for “baby sitting,”—or perhaps it was the other way around! While nearing the completion of the USA NITZ family, I searched a familiar web site and found a person in Argentina searching for the same name—and claiming one city in common with the genealogy that I had recently updated. Within a few seconds, I composed an email and let it fly—not to California where nearly all of my Nitz family went during the depression—but all the way to Buenos Aires!

Over the next several weeks, and despite great efforts on the part of the cousins from “down under,” we were not able to link the families by paper—that singular coveted item that all genealogists consider sacrosanct!

A few nights later, while I was walking the dog, I recalled two different studies that had used DNA for lineage confirmation and authentication. These two articles achieved both notoriety and enough press that I remembered them a few years later. Upon return-



ing home, I searched the web and found both articles, which dealt with the male inherited Y chromosome. One was on a group of Jews, called Cohanim, who claimed to be direct male descendents of Aaron, the brother of Moses. Cohanim were always males, and generally had surnames like Cohn, Cohen, Kahn, Katzman, and Rappaport—just to make it confusing. The other story was of great interest, as it dealt with early American History, slavery, and the Jefferson family of Virginia.

Soon, I was reading the comments of those who agreed with and disputed the finding of each of these two original Y chromosome papers. I was learning what one could and could not expect to learn from DNA testing. For example, I discovered:

- All males have a Y chromosome and they only receive their Y from their father, who received his Y from his father!
- Women don’t have Y chromosomes, and therefore cannot take the Y-DNA test or be tested as part of a surname project.
- The women I was in contact with from Argentina could facilitate, but not contribute

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Message from the President

by Rusty Milstein

Well, it has been five months since our Annual Gathering, and the election of officers and board members. And—I am still waiting on my raise! Maybe for Chanukah.

These past months have flown by so quickly—mainly because of all the help that I have received from those



who have been in my shoes previously. This organization should also recognize the behind the scenes work done by Davie Lou Solka, news magazine editor; Marc Wormser, database guru; and Greg Meyer, our webmaster.

There are also many others who deserve recognition, but they are too many to name.

We had a very educational orientation meeting in Houston in June; and many thanks to Marvin Rich who did the “leg work” in setting it up. Vickie Vogel had a wonderful presenta-

tion to our officers and new and old board members regarding the working of TJHS, and their responsibilities to our organization. Rabbi Jimmy Kessler and Lonnie Schooler gave enlightening talks about the birthing of TJHS.

I am hoping these presentations can be given again at the next summer orientation meeting.

I am anticipating that the coming months will be as fulfilling as the past months have been. In October, we were represented in Las Vegas, New Mexico as guests of the NMJHS; in January our winter board meeting will be in San Antonio; and our Annual Gathering will be held in Texarkana, Texas. My thanks to those of you who have volunteered to host these meetings. TJHS will be helping the Institute of Southern Jewish Life with their encyclopedia of small Jewish communities in Texas. They have already done many communities in the Deep South. We also have on the calendar the fall meeting, the next winter meeting, and the 2012 Annual Gathering. I hope to again have a “fly-in” orientation meeting some time in the summer of 2011—volunteers? I will close with thanks to Sally Drayer who already has her nominating committee up and running. 🇺🇸

Rusty Milstein
President, 2010-2011

**The deadline for the
February, 2011
TJHS Newsletter is
January 7.**

The Texas Jewish Historical Society July 2010 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 scan 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 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
Photographer Marvin Rich

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.



The newsletter of the Texas Jewish Historical Society (USPS) is published four times a year by the Texas Jewish Historical Society, P. O. Box 10193, Austin, Texas 78766-0193, Travis County. Periodical postage paid at Houston, Texas. Postmaster: send address changes to the Texas Jewish Historical Society, P. O. Box 10193, Austin, Texas 78766-0193.
www.txjhs.org

to Y chromosome testing, and that was assuming I could find a lab willing to deal with a genealogist!

- Males obtain their surnames AND their Y chromosomes from their fathers; therefore men make great candidates for genetic reconstruction.

Armed with these facts, I looked for a testing facility willing to test my VERY reluctant male NITZ cousin in California and one of the several very willing NITZ males in Argentina. I discovered that no commercial Y-DNA testing facility existed although dozens of firms were conducting paternity tests (which I found used an entirely different portion of our DNA). The upshot of this was a challenge offer from the University of Arizona's

Michael Hammer (co-author of the 1997 Cohanim study). He volunteered to test two dozen males of my choice, as a proof of concept, with the quid-pro-quo being that IF this technique worked, I'd start a commercial enterprise, with them providing the science and me organizing a company to deal with the clients on the front end.

After six weeks of collecting samples and ninety days of waiting for the lab to get around to processing them, the results came back. Of the twenty-four men tested, the twins matched, as did both other sets of men who had paper trails indicating that they shared a common male ancestor. My two

Nitz volunteers from California and Argentina were an exact match as well. No random matches occurred, therefore of the twenty-four samples, four sets of two matched each other and all the rest (sixteen men) matched no one, which—according to the anthropologists in Arizona—clearly showed that the samples came from unrelated males. The results of the twelve-marker test from both my “old” cousin and my “new” cousin are shown below:

		DYS#											
		3	3	1	3	3	3	4	3	4	3	3	3
		9	9	9	9	8	8	2	8	3	8	9	8
		3	0		1	5	5	6	8	9	9	2	9
						a	b				-	-	
											1	2	
Kit	Name												
1	Nitz	12	22	14	10	14	15	11	15	11	14	11	31
2	Nitz	12	22	14	10	14	15	11	15	11	14	11	31

With these results, I learned several new facts. For example:

- An international committee sits around, and in addition to drinking coffee, also assigns numbers to the various markers discovered by universities around the world. These markers are preceded by the prefix DYS (Designated Y chromosome Segment), and the markers themselves are each assigned a unique number. The numbers are assigned in chronological order of discovery.
- Each DYS marker has a number associated with it, which is shared by the individual with his male

cousins and other males who are “associated” genetically. These actual numerical values are called alleles.

- The allele values can change, randomly; therefore we don't know the generation in which a change occurred. Although these changes—called mutations—aren't common, I was assured that these mutations always occur between a father and a son.
- Each series of numbers, when looked at together, form a “signature” known formally as a haplotype.
- A single haplotype and other haplotypes that are closely related form a haplogroup, which can be associated with a branch on the tree of *homo sapien*.

These branches on the tree of *homo sapien* stitch together and every male in the world can be located on one branch or another. Although I wasn't terribly interested in testing myself or other direct Greenspan family members like my father, brother, or son, I decided that a test of my close family unit might be a nice idea if I was going to be in the DNA and genetic genealogy business. Soon, I tested my closest family members, my father, my son, and my brother. These results, which are shown here, are expressed using the Family Tree DNA's twenty-five

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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 future generations.

So what are you waiting for?

Send in 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.

— Preserving History—Historical Marker — for Corsicana Jewish Cemetery

by Janet Jacobs

(Reprinted with permission from the Corsicana Daily Sun)

People from Dallas, Houston, San Marcos, and Colorado came to Corsicana on Sunday, September 11, 2010 for the dedication of the Jewish Cemetery historical marker. The event unveiled the historical marker that denoted the contributions of Jews in the community, but it was also a homecoming of sorts for many people whose families had roots in the city.

Speaking at the event was State Representative Steve Wolens, who described the founding of the two synagogues in Corsicana.

Choosing Sunday for the marker unveiling and ceremony was perfect, Wolens said, since it came during the annual Week of Atonement in the Jewish calendar, a week in which Jews look back over the previous year to learn lessons and seek to make amends. “It’s befitting,” Wolens said. “It’s what is done—to come to the cemetery to pay respect.”

He then opened up the event to anyone in the audience who wanted to

speak about their own connections to Corsicana or the cemetery. Many of the people who attended the event live in large cities around Texas and around the country, but still consider Corsicana to be a kind of home, even if they didn’t grow up here.

Jimmy Stone, who spent summers in Corsicana as a boy, said the town is unique. “It gets in your blood,” he said. “My whole family is buried here, and we’re going to be buried here—hopefully not soon.”

Bud Silverberg, whose parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents are in the cemetery, complimented Babbette Samuels, who organized the obtaining of the marker and Sunday’s event.

“This cemetery means so much to me,” Silverberg said. He described an idyllic safe childhood, where the adults looked out for any child, and his parents were confident he was fine out riding his bicycle alone because so many other parents and adults were looking out for the children. “These guardian angels of mine—many of them are buried right here in this cemetery.” Silverberg said.

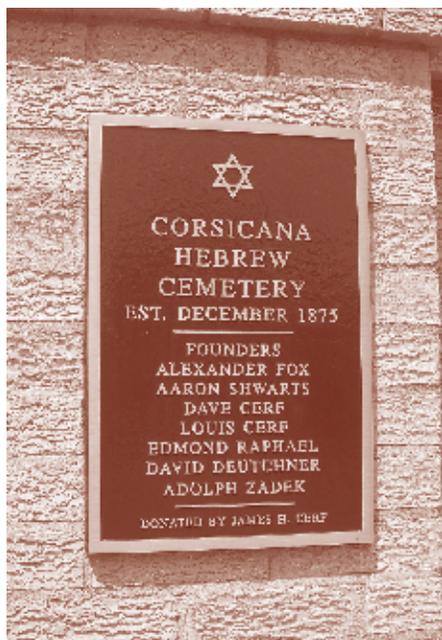
The marker is posted at the Third Avenue entrance, between 31st and 35th Streets in Corsicana. The inscription on the marker reads as follows:

“This burial ground has served the Jewish residents of Corsicana since the late 1800s. The first Jewish settlers in the community came in 1871 when the Houston and Texas Central Railroad extended its line from Houston to Corsicana en route to Dallas. The first Jewish settlers, many of whom traced their origins to Eastern Europe or to Alsace Lorraine, were merchants who made use of the railroads. Soon, the Jewish population was well established in Corsicana and needed a cemetery. In 1881, the Hebrew Cemetery Associa-



Babbette Samuels with the Historical Marker.

tion purchased this property, for use as a burial ground. However, the land had been used for internments prior to this time. The earliest known burial dates to 1877. In 1887, the Ladies Hebrew Cemetery association formed to raise funds for cemetery upkeep. In 1951, additional property was purchased. Cemetery features include obelisks, statuary, and curbing. Noted individuals interred here include civic leader, businessman, and 14-term president of Temple Beth El, Sidney Marks; entrepreneur and philanthropist Kalman Wolens; Civil War veteran Max London; an anonymous rope walker whose fatal fall from a tightrope and the subsequent search for his identity gripped the community; and Ernest Joseph, who served as rabbi for both the Reform and Orthodox congregations in Corsicana. Today, there are more than 400 individuals buried here. Corsicana Hebrew Cemetery remains a hallowed ground which chronicles the history of Corsicana’s Jewish residents who for more than a century have played a vital role in the community’s civic, cultural, and economic development.” 



The entrance to the cemetery.

	DYS #																									
	3	3	1	3	3	3	4	3	4	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4		
	9	9	9	9	8	8	2	8	3	8	9	8	5	5	5	5	5	4	3	4	4	6	6	6	6	
	3	0		1	5	5	6	8	9	9	2	9	8	9	9	5	4	7	7	8	9	4	4	4	4	
				a	b						-	-	a	b							a	b	c	d		
											1	2														
Name	Bennett	12	23	14	10	14	17	11	17	12	13	11	29	17	8	8	11	11	25	14	20	25	14	14	16	16
Elliott	12	23	14	10	14	17	11	17	12	13	11	29	17	8	8	11	11	25	14	20	25	14	14	16	16	
M.I.	12	23	14	10	15	17	11	17	12	13	11	29	17	8	8	11	11	25	14	20	25	14	14	16	16	
Jim	12	23	14	10	15	17	11	17	12	13	11	29	17	8	8	11	11	25	14	20	25	14	14	16	16	

marker test.

Another discovery! Sometimes these mutations happen from a father to a son right in your own generation! Of course I tested these same four males again, blindly, with different names, and in different batches sent to the lab...I mean, this was MY family we're talking about.

So, four years later, what have I learned, and what should you know about genetic genealogy?

- Y-DNA testing works, and works well, despite the occasional surprise related to unannounced adoption, false paternity, and that occasional mutation as in my

own family. Please note above that M.I. is my father. He passed a mutation to me, and I in turn passed that mutation to my son, while my brother Jim received a perfect replica of my father's Y chromosome, without the mutation.

- It's only good in surname projects, and for adoptees who know the surname but not the actual family from which they came.
- Data comes back, generally taking longer than planned or expected.
- In general, the further back the genealogical connection between two people, the greater the num-

ber of mutations that will separate them.

- The scientific method expects that two very distantly related males should test to clearly determine the DNA signature of the common ancestor and rule out a false paternity or unannounced adoption in your line. Then comparisons to other lines can be definitive.
- DNA testing is not a replacement for our beloved hobby, but another, (and just the newest) tool in the arsenal of the prepared genealogist. For further information, contact Bennett Greenspan at www.familytreedna.com. 

TJHS Fall Meeting

in Conjunction with the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society

by Sally Drayer

TJHS members were guests of the NMJHS and their 25th Anniversary Celebration during the weekend of October 22-24, held in historic Las Vegas, New Mexico. "The Adventures along the Santa Fe Trail: The Jews of Las Vegas and Northeast New Mexico" was organized by NMJHS past president Stan Hordes. TJHS members attending were Marilyn Jorrie, Barbara and Ben Rosenberg, Vickie and David Vogel, Monty Strauss and Jane Winer, Sandy and Maurice Feldman, Judy Leonard, and me.

The weekend began with dinner at the El Fidel Restaurant, followed by services at the old Congregation Mon-

tefiore (which is now the Neuman Catholic Student Center). Enough Jewish families have returned to Las Vegas to enable them to have services at the building once a month. Following services, an Oneg Shabbat was held at the historic Plaza Hotel, where

the conference was held. Everyone enjoyed the challah that TJHS provided.

On Saturday morning, we listened

to a discussion led by local historian Marcus Gottschalk about the early



TJHS at United World College. Front row: Marilyn Jorrie and Sally Drayer. Middle row: Sandy Feldman, Barbara Rosenberg, Vickie Vogel, and Judy Leonard. Back Row: Ben Rosenberg, Maurice Feldman, David Vogel, Jane Winer, and Monty Strauss.

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Jewish settlers of the city. We then took a walking tour of historical Las Vegas Plaza. There we saw former businesses owned by the families. Afterwards, we boarded a bus for a tour of Montezuma Castle, which is at United World College. At the college, students led us on tours of the Castle. This is the only U.S. location of the college. Students come from all over the world to earn a two year international baccalaureate degree before going off to very prestigious universities throughout the world. The Castle was a hotel and it's beautiful, as are the grounds.

Upon our return from the tour, we had lunch and the conference officially began with a speech from Stan Hordes. The first session speakers were Susan C. Boyle from the National Park Service in Santa Fe and Laura Gonzales from New Mexico Highlands University in Las Vegas. Ms. Boyle spoke on "Hispanic Contributions to the Santa Fe Trail Trade, 1821-1880." Ms. Gonzales spoke on "Las Vegas: Place of Encounter." Session II speakers were author Sharon Niederman from Raton, Melanie LaBorwit from Albuquerque, and Noel Pugach, who is immediate past president of NMJHS and professor at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. The topics, respectively, were "Synagogues on the Santa Fe Trail: A Slide Lecture on the History of Temple Aaron (Trinidad, Colorado) and Congregation Montefiore (Las Ve-

gas)," "Jewish pioneers: History of the Jewish community of Las Vegas," and "The Jewish Presence in Mora County, New Mexico: 1860s to 1940s." Following each session was a question and answer session.

Session III was a panel discussion led by Stan Hordes on Crypto-Jews in Las Vegas and Northeast New Mexico. Panel members were Orlando Mondragon from Santa Fe, the Honorable M. Christina Armijo from Albuquerque (previously from Las Vegas, New Mexico) and Sandra Loya, also from Albuquerque.

Dinner was preceded by a reception, where a local harpist entertained us. NMJHS President Dorothy Amsden welcomed all to the conference and welcomed the TJHS to the weekend. Stan Hordes introduced the Honorable Alfonso Ortiz, mayor of Las Vegas, who honored the NMJHS with a key to the city. The mayor and his wife, Sallie, sat at the table with Marilyn, Sandy, Maurice, and I, and we all had a nice discussion concerning the city. Vickie Vogel represented TJHS and spoke about the society and the trip to India in the spring. We heard from David Scholder, founder of NMJHS and his reflections on the establishment of the society. The evening was concluded with a concert of liturgical 19th century music from Congregation Montefiore (music found in a local book store) sung by Aaron Wolf and accompanied by Andre Garcia-Nuthman.

Session IV was held Sunday morning and chaired by Noel Pugach. We listened to a panel discussion about the Jewish Legacy of Las Vegas and northeast New Mexico. Panel members were Betty Hartman and Nancy Paxton from Albuquerque, and Florence Ilfeld Beirer, currently residing

in San Mateo, California, originally from Las Vegas, New Mexico.

After a break, Session V was held. It was a panel discussion by local Las Vegas Jewish community residents Diana Presser, Katrina Immerman, and Nancy Terr (who recently relocated to Albuquerque). Following the session, we had lunch and the conference ended.

Attending the conference were descendants of the early Jewish settlers of the city and it was interesting for us to hear from them and their recollections growing up in Las Vegas.

The NMJHS members were welcoming to TJHS members and we were recognized individually on Sunday morning.

Speaking for myself, it was a wonderful weekend, full of interesting and informative information regarding Jewish settlers in New Mexico. Some interesting facts we all learned were that the cemetery in Las Vegas was established in 1881 and is one of the first Jewish cemeteries west of the Mississippi—the other large one is in San Francisco. The Jewish citizens of Las Vegas were quite involved in civic affairs and many were the town's prominent merchants. Congregation Montefiore was the first Jewish congregation in New Mexico. It was established in 1884 and dedication for the Temple was held in 1886. It was named for world famous British philanthropist Sir Moses Montefiore. It was a vibrant Reform congregation, but over the years, the Jewish population in Las Vegas decreased, and the congregation was dissolved in 1955.

Settlement of Jews in New Mexico—many of them merchants—parallels so much the history of Jews in Texas and Oklahoma (which we learned at our winter meeting in January, 2010, in Tulsa). Thanks to NMJHS for welcoming the society as their guests and hopefully we can have another joint meeting. 

Mazel Tov

to the following Texas Jewish Historical Society Members

Jan & Charles Hart, on the marriage of their son, Dr. David Hart to Dr. Karen D. Stuart, and on the birth of their granddaughter, Daphne Dawn Hart.

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

From Our Archives

by Vickie Vogel

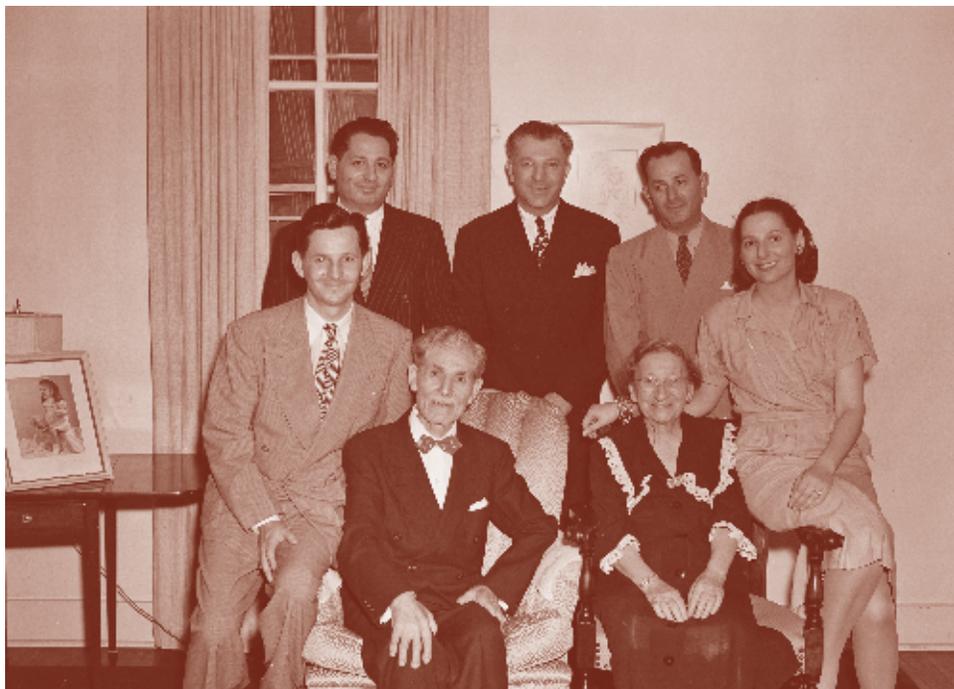
This is the eighth in a series of articles on materials and information that can be found in the TJHS archives at the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas in Austin. If you would like to write an article on any of the items in the archives, please visit <http://www.cah.utexas.edu/services/using.php>.

"Mr. G" by Vickie Vogel

Sam J. Glosserman¹ was born in Lockhart on October 15, 1903, the first American-born child of Philip (Feiwel) and Mamie (Mashie) Pomerantz Glosserman who married in Poland in 1896. Philip, born September 14, 1872 in Bereze, Poland and Mamie, born in October, 1875 in Prussiana, Poland/Russia were both from innkeeper families. Philip trained for the rabbinate, but his studies were interrupted by army service. He won a prize for being the best sharp shooter in his regiment.²

Hearing from relatives about life in America, Philip came over in 1900 to avoid further army service. He joined his wife's brother Louis Pomerantz in Seguin. Philip worked for three years as a peddler, walking to farms in the area and sleeping in barns, before he was able to send for Mamie and sons Maurice³ and baby Mose,⁴ who was born shortly after Philip left Poland. Mamie traveled in steerage for a month with two babies, one of whom his father had never seen.

Peddling was a hard life, walking all week and returning to Seguin for Shabbat. One night, a drunken farmer pointed a gun at Philip all night, who pretended to be asleep. In 1905, Mamie's brother Harry Pomerantz, who owned a fruit stand in Lockhart, offered



The Glosserman Family. (Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin. Identifier: e_ha_0188. Title: Glosserman [family group]. Date: Glosserman Family Group. Source: Annas (Harry Forrest) Photographic Archive. Creator: Annas, Harry Forrest

to sell it to Philip and accept time payments⁵—a lucky break for the growing family. After Sam, two more children were born—Herman⁶ and Esther.⁷ Mamie studied English with Esther's kindergarten teacher.⁸

Sam spent his life in Lockhart, playing an important role in business, civic, and government affairs. He was known as "a salesman's salesman" who could sell clothing, cars, or the city itself.⁹ From an early age, he worked in his father's fruit stand, which included a peanut

roaster. Sam remembered that his job at the age of four was to take a box of roasted peanuts every Saturday morning to the Carter Hotel and sell them at a nickel a bag. Sam gave up his job as peanut vendor when he started school.

At the age of six, he started selling newspapers, and by age seven he was the agent for the *Houston Chronicle* in Lockhart. The papers would come in on the Katy train by way of Smithville. Bundles would be tossed out of the train as it came

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through. Sam would wrap up against the cold, walk to the station, deliver the papers before breakfast, and then go to school. Sam reminisced about the “extras” editions when some big event happened, such as the sinking of the *Titanic* and the *Lusitania*, and how he felt like an entrepreneur delivering the papers to the hotels where people eagerly awaited the news. Herman also sold newspapers, playing a harmonica to attract customers.¹⁰

When the saloon next door closed because of Prohibition, Philip acquired the property and turned the fruit stand into a combination grocery store, feed store, and soda fountain, and bought and sold pecans and charcoal. Sam remembered the time his father bought a refrigerated carload of bananas. Sam went to the station and ate bananas until his stomach hurt. They sold most of the bananas straight from the car.

When former President Taft visited Lockhart to give a lecture in the Lyceum Series, the Carter Hotel asked Sam’s brother Maurice to help plan the menu. He bought squabs and the hotel presented this delicacy—squabs on toast. That’s when the President announced he was a vegetarian!

Sam described his mother, Mamie, as having coal black hair and blue eyes. One of his earliest memories was of Mamie taking him to a coffee klatch where he was stuffed with cookies and cakes.¹¹ In 1908, Philip received naturalization papers certifying that he, Mamie, Maurice, and Mose were now United States citizens. Philip liked to say, “Only in America can a man start with a pack on his back and become one of the town’s most beloved and respected citizens.”¹²

When Sam was fourteen, he kept the store’s books because his older brothers were away in college. He graduated from Lockhart High School in 1919 and enrolled at the University of Texas where he was a member of the University Menorah Society: An Intercollegiate Organization for the Study and Advancement of Jewish...Ideals¹³ and was member of Sigma Alpha Mu fraternity.¹⁴ He attended UT for two years.¹⁵

Philip opened a dry goods store and Mose and Sam ran it. Maurice stayed in the grocery business with his father. In 1929, the dry goods store became Glosserman Clothiers, a landmark business on the town square. Another business started by the family was Glosserman Chevrolet. When the grocery business closed, Maurice joined his brothers in the auto agency.¹⁶ Glosserman Chevrolet has been in operation for 81 years and is still in the family, operated after Sam’s death by David Michelson (son-in-law), and currently by Jeffrey Michelson (grandson).¹⁷ Maurice, who died at the age of 99, spoke of his father, Philip, as a pious man who helped others get a start in business in Lockhart.¹⁸

Sam was known as “Mr. G” to his employees, who admired his sales ability, kindness, and generosity to them and to the community.

“He was a very good talker,” said Crystal McKean, a clothing store employee for over thirty years. “He never saw a stranger...He was a super salesman. You might not want one thing, but he could sell you.”¹⁹ One story told of Sam concerns a large two-story house on the property next to a church in Lockhart. The church bought it and tore down the house to construct a parking

lot. In the house, an old cancelled check was found made out from W. C. Stagner to Sam Glosserman for a couple of dollars for a suit of clothes. The check was presented to Sam, who was in his 80’s at the time, and he said, “I remember that suit.” If you knew Sam, it is said, you knew he was telling the truth.²⁰

In 1934, Sam married Elsie Klein from Houston, the eldest of eight children of Alexander and Jeanette Klein. Alexander was the comptroller for Piggly Wiggly grocery chain. They moved to Beaumont after Elsie graduated from San Jacinto High School. Sam and Elsie met at the Michelson’s²¹ candy store and ice cream parlor in Gonzales, through mutual friends in Galveston. Sam would drive to Beaumont after work on Saturday to see Elsie, returning Sunday afternoon.²² They had four daughters: Abigail, Deborah, Maschia, and Glicka, and one son, Michael.

From 1954 to 1964, Sam Glosserman was mayor of Lockhart. During his ten-year administration, the debt-free City Hall was built (on land where once stood the house where Sam was born), City Park was established, and the Dr. Eugene Clark Library was acquired.²³ The fire station was renovated, and a master plan was created for the city. City streets, lighting, street signs, and electrical and water systems were all improved and expanded.²⁴ Richard Bean, city manager during part of Sam’s tenure as mayor, said, “He was very much a booster of Lockhart. (He) remained active in civic affairs after leaving the mayor’s office...”²⁵ In fact, there is a Sam Glosserman Room at the Lockhart City Hall.²⁶

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“Mr. G”, continued from page 8

In 1960, Sam founded Darst Creek Oil Company and soon after became president of Lockhart Oil & Gas Company. In addition to his many business ventures, he was active in civic affairs: a director of the Lockhart Hospital; Vice-



Sam Glasserman. Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin. Identifier: e_ha_0083. Title: Glosserman, Sam. Date: 1948. Source: Annas (Harry Forrest) Photographic Archive. Creator: Annas, Harry Forrest.

President of the Lockhart Chamber of Commerce; county chair of the American Red Cross; Director of the Plum Creek Watershed Association; President of the Kiwanis Club,²⁷ the Businessmen’s Club and Community Concerts. In 1985, the Lockhart Chamber of Commerce presented him its Most Worthy Citizen Award.

Also participating in Jewish organizations, Sam was a member of Congregation Beth Israel in Austin (where the family went for Yom Kippur) and Temple Beth El in San Antonio (where they went for Rosh Hashanah), and was active in Seguin’s B’nai B’rith Lodge 1456²⁸ and United Jewish Appeal. Sam insisted that his children have a Jewish education. At Beth Israel in Austin, son Michael celebrated his Bar Mitzvah and all the children were confirmed. At Passover, Mamie hosted the seder and after her death,

Roslyn (Mose’s wife) and Elsie rotated as hosts for the up to forty family members and guests.²⁹

In mid-December, 1989, Sam was hospitalized, and on February 4, 1990, he died at the age of 86.

Funeral services were held at McCurdy Funeral Home Chapel in Lockhart with Rabbis Sam Stahl and David Jacobson of Temple Beth El, and Rabbi Emeritus Louis Firestein of Beth Israel officiating. Interment was at Beth El Memorial Park in San Antonio. Pallbearers were his nephews: Gerald Klein and Lewis Hoffer of Beaumont, Nor-

man Glosserman of Houston, Robert Glosserman of San Antonio, and Mark Klein and Philip Glosserman of Los Angeles. He was survived by his wife, Elsie; daughter and son-in-law Abigail and David Michelson of Lockhart; son and daughter-in-law, Michael and Marilyn of Bethesda, Maryland; daughter, Deborah of Cleveland Heights, Ohio; daughter and son-in-law Maschia and Stephen Kaplan of Elliot, Maine; daughter and son-in-law Glicka and Michael Kaplan of Portsmouth, New Hampshire. He was also survived by eight grandchildren: Jeffrey and Jon Michelson, Marc and Scott Glosserman, Jenny and David Kaplan, and Jacob and Naomi Kaplan. It was requested that memorials be made to Reading is FUNDamental of Lockhart.³⁰

Long-time employee Crystal McKean said, “He was a fine man.

Lockhart has lost a great man.” His son Michael said, “I think he was just a very blessed man and a blessing to anyone who knew him and came in touch with him. He was a revered person in his community. I think he was viewed as a wise and elder statesman. I would say Dad’s sense of humor and his affinity for older and younger people were among his great strengths.”³¹ At Lockhart’s 2001 Christmas Celebration, the library dedicated their 12th Annual Dickens’ Celebration to the memory of the Glosserman family.³²

Daughter Abbi Michelson remembers her father as an energetic man who seldom sat down at the store. He did his bookwork standing at the counter. If a conference was needed, they sat in the shoe department. Glosserman Clothiers specialized in men’s wear, but also carried women’s clothing. One time, Mose bought so much lace that Sam said, “That’s it. We’re not going into dry goods.” After Sam’s death, daughter Abbi ran the store for four years and then it was closed.

Elsia died August 20, 2000, in Lockhart. She had broken her arm in a fall and then suffered a stroke a week before her 90th birthday.³³

When Sam Glosserman was a boy, people came into town on Saturday to shop, socialize and eat barbecue. “People used to go around and around, walking around the square having the time of their lives...People in boots, people in wide-brimmed Stetson hats. When it rained, it was muddy and it was awful...This was really a wild town...I used to stand on Dad’s corner and see...one fight after another.” Sam remembered the time the sheriff and a constable had a gun fight on the courthouse steps.³⁴

In 2007, grandson Marc Glosserman, a native of Bethesda, Mary-

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"Mr. G", continued from page 9

land, opened a restaurant in New York called Hill Country BBQ and included on the menu a "Mayor of Lockhart" drink of tequila and sparkling wine. Lots of stories and pictures are on the wall about Sam Glosserman,³⁵ including one of Glosserman Clothiers, which also sold cowboy boots.

"I always romanticized Texas," Marc said, "with its barbecue and cowboy boots."³⁶

"Had my grandparents been alive when I came up with this idea, they probably would've been scratching their heads—'Why in the world would you wanna do that?'" Glosserman told Marc Tracy of *Tablet Magazine*, who turned out to be his cousin. "I remember my grandmother would go and she'd just get five pounds of brisket, ten links of sausage, and get this huge

piece of butcher paper, and she'd put it on the table for everybody," Marc reminisces of childhood visits to Lockhart.³⁷

Sam Glosserman believed the most important possession in life was a good name. He took pride in his heritage, and emphasized the necessity of family responsibility, an obligation to Judaism, and loyalty to the community.³⁸ And growing up in Lockhart is bound to involve barbecue.

References

¹Box 3A 168, File 2, Family Histories Fro - Gug, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas, Texas Jewish Historical Society Collection. Unless otherwise cited, all information is from this file. All written documents cited are contained in

this file. According to daughter Abbi Michelson, the "J" stands for "Jack."

²Esther Dora Glosserman family history, undated.

³Maurice married Frances Rosenthal of Houston. They had two children, Shirley and Norman. After Frances died, Maurice married Pearl Marks. Ibid.

⁴Mose married Roslyn Kuminir of Houston. They had two daughters, Karen and Leslie. Mose was president of the Lockhart School Board for twenty years, board chairman of the First Lockhart National Bank and president of the School Board Association of Texas. Mose is credited with introducing Hebrew to the curriculum at the University of Texas. Ibid.

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Searching for our Roots

by Marvin Rich

This past summer, Shirley and I took a Danube River cruise from Budapest, Hungary, down to the Black Sea. And then, we fulfilled our desire to see all of our parents' and grandparents' European home.

We have been to Wolbrom and Dzialoszyce, Poland where her parents were born. We went with Rabbi Jack Segal to Russia, and took a side trip to my father's home shtetle of Novy Schwerzne in what is now Belarus. But we have never been able to visit my grandparents' home in Huj, Romania, which is in the eastern province of Moldavia.

After a non-stop flight from Houston to Frankfurt and then to Budapest, we boarded the Vantage River Explorer. This is a 170-passenger boat with forty-two crew members including a chef, waiters, hotel stall, and four multi-lingual guides.

In Budapest, we took a Jewish heritage tour, including a visit to the restored famous Dohany Synagogue, which is the second largest synagogue in the world. We also saw the Holocaust memorial of shoes along



Shirley and Marvin Rich at the Vaslui Synagogue in Romania



Belgrade Synagogue

the Danube in memory of the Jews who were thrown in the Danube to drown or were shot by the Nazis.

The next day we continued with stops in Kalosca and Pecs, Hungary. In all of these towns, we were told that there was no longer a Jewish presence, although there were synagogues still standing.

Our next stop was in Vukovar, Croatia, where we went to local homes for lunch. Our hostess spoke fluent English because she had a bed and breakfast in her home. She had a degree in agriculture and her husband was locally employed. The Croatians are still recovering from the civil war and this was very obvious in the town.

We then proceeded to Belgrade, Serbia, where we visited the synagogue in the downtown area. We did not visit the local Holocaust Memorial because it was further out and we were limited by time.

The next day, we cruised down the Danube, which is brown—not blue! We went through a mountain gorge called The Iron Gates and through two locks which raised the boat past a large hydro-electric supply dam. The scenery was beautiful.

The next stop was in Ruse, Bulgaria, and we toured the town, which was very interesting. We continued down to Cernavoda, Bulgaria for a city tour. We stopped in Oltenita, Romania and went to a five star hotel in

Bucharest. We enjoyed the city tour and saw the People's Palace which is the national parliament building, built during the Communist era by President Ceausescu. The Romanian Iron Guard was a Nazi puppet and most of the Jewish population were sent to death camps. After the war, many survivors went to Israel.

This was the end of the standard cruise tour, but we took the four night extension and went to Brasov in Transylvania. On Friday morning, we met our guide and driver, Mitch, who was fluent in English since he had worked on American cruise ships. He had a BMW SUV that was very comfortable with plenty of room for Shirley's walker. We drove from Brasov through the Carpathian Mountains to Bacau. It was a beautiful drive with curves and switchbacks. The road was in good condition, but only two narrow lanes wide. We went through villages with horse-drawn wagons, and televisions antennas and satellite dishes on most homes. But there were also water wells and outhouses in the yards.

We arrived in Vaslui and had an address of a cousin who lived there

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before World War II, so we tried to find the house. We found the street, but it was on a section of the main road that ran through the old Jewish neighborhood and had been widened. The Jewish Cemetery was near this main road, so we went there. It was locked and no one answered the phone number that was on the sign, so we could not get in.



Shirley and Marvin Rich in Huj, Romania.

When we went to City Hall to find records, we discovered that we needed permission of the mayor to get into the record archives. He saw us immediately and we were optimistic. The birth records were in separate books for each religion and were hand written with the given name at the top and the family names in the text, but underlined. We began in the Jewish book of 1870 and after about fifteen minutes, found a cousin's father's name. However, it was already after 3:00 PM, so we gave up and left to find the remaining synagogue. It was behind a large apartment block, and locked. It was intact, but looked unused.

After we had lunch, we went to Huj and asked where the Jewish cemetery was. We found it down a dirt back road, but it, too, was locked. I walked down the road and saw the graves behind a barbed wire fence with thorn trees growing along the fence line. It was difficult to get a good view, but I was able to take a

few photos.

We then went to the only synagogue that was still standing. It was locked behind a large apartment block. We found the lady who had the gate key, so we had a good look and took a few photos. She said that the shul president was old and sick, and most of the local Jews

had intermarried.

By this time, it was after 8:00 PM and beginning to get dark. Our return trip through Vaslui and Bacau was easy because there was almost no traffic. However, at Bacau we took a wrong turn and did not get back to our hotel in Brasov until 2:00 AM! After a rest and touring in Brasov, we



Doheny Synagogue Cemetery

returned to Bucharest and flew home.

Although we did not find any family records, it was exciting to visit the site of our roots. If you are inspired to return to your family's origins, I advise you to try to do so and tell your children to also go, because it is something that you will never forget. 🇺🇸

⁵"Phillip [sic] and Mamie Glosserman," p. 326, "Historical Caldwell County: Where Roots Intertwine." The Mark Withers Trail Drive Museum, 1984. Available at Dr. Eugene Clark Library, Lockhart. Abbi Michelson located the information available at this library and copies have been placed in the TJHS archives.

⁶Herman married Gladys Garonzik of Dallas. They had three children, Robert, Terry, and Philip. Herman graduated from the University of Texas and practiced law in San Antonio. He was president of Temple Beth El in San Antonio from 1949 to 1951. Glosserman family history, op cit.

⁷Esther graduated from the University of Texas and married Dr. Bernard Brill from New York in 1942. They had two daughters, Stephanie and Alexa. Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

⁹David Matustik, "Lockhart merchant, leader dies at age 86," *Austin American-Statesman*, February 6, 1990.

¹⁰Glosserman family history, op cit.

¹¹<http://www.library.lockhart-tx.org/showcard.asp?MARCID=19295>. Oral interview with Sam by Bill Phillips. 217 S. Main St., Lockhart, 512-398-3223. A transcript is in Box 3A 168, File 2.

¹²"Historical Caldwell County: Where Roots Intertwine," p. 326, op cit.

¹³http://www.e-yearbook.com/yearbooks/University_Texas_Cactus_Yearbook/1922/Page_363.html.

continued on page 14

“New Cousins” Find Each Other

by **Ralph S. Marks**

Why did two of our cousins, who had never been to Marshall, Texas, call me and my brother in Houston a few months ago? Possibly because my brother, Myron Marks and I, Ralph Marks, were born (long, long ago) in Marshall. We had never before heard from nor met this brother and sister cousins who evidently wanted to trace their mother’s roots. These cousins knew that their grandfather, my uncle, was born in Marshall, along with their mother, my first cousin.

In the 1880s, my mother was part of a large family of five sisters and one brother, whose parents were Zelick and Rosa Bergson. All were born in Marshall. The one male, Bert Bergson, had one daughter in 1919, who was my first cousin. She was the mother of Robert and Marion Steeg, the cousins who had called my brother and me. They are our first cousins, once removed. Myron and I are in our late eighties and our “new” cousins are in their sixties.

Robert and Marion (Jr.) Steeg were born in New Orleans and had many questions about their grandparents, especially their mother, who was also named Marion (Sr.) She had died when Robert and Marion were very young.

We went on a tour—to Marshall—all of us. We visited the Jewish Cemetery and saw the cemetery’s cornerstone which read “Bergson” which had been removed from the former Moses Montifiore Temple. That block of granite at the cemetery entrance is a transported cornerstone saved from the distant, demolished building which was once the house of worship for more than 150 East Texas Jewish families. Later, we saw the plaque where the razed synagogue had stood. We visited with Lew and Audrey Kariel.

We Marks’ and Steegs’ toured a changed and modernized town square. Robert and Marion hung on every word of descriptions that Myron and I gave. My wife, Kayla, was with us, and she knew

a lot about her in-law Bergson family. She bonded with Marion as only females can.

Our son, Tevin, was also with us, and he is a winning professional videographer in Houston with his own studio. “On Your Marks” documented the school where Marion (Sr.) had attended and the still-standing home where the Steegs’ grandfather, Bert Bergson had lived.

We were close-kin families in that small city and saw one another almost every day. Each of my relatives of two generations long ago left Marshall. Myron and I left to serve in World War II. All of the others later lived out their lives in other cities, but have now passed away.

The memories of all of us getting to know each other and finding some of those unknown beginnings and filling in the blanks was very special. We found comfort and fulfillment in finding a sense of who and what we were and are. 🇺🇸

In Memoriam



Leon Brachman, TJHS honorary member and long-time database recorder, of Fort Worth, died September 7, 2010, in Fort Worth, Texas. He is survived by his children, Debby Brachman Rice; Marshall Brachman and his finance, Anne Pizzato; and Wendy “Noga” Brachman Fisher, and her husband, Warren; grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.



Jerome Wolens, TJHS member, formerly of Fort Worth, died August 2, 2010 in Boca Raton, Florida. He is survived by his children, Marc & Paul Wolen; Pamela & Douglas Neimand; and Alyson & Richard Slutzky, and four grandchildren.

May their memories be a blessing.

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¹⁴Telephone interview with Abbi Michelson, October 6, 2010.

¹⁵Telephone interview with Abbi Michelson, September 21, 2010.

¹⁶Glosserman family history, op cit.

¹⁷Telephone interview with Abbi Michelson, October 6, 2010.

¹⁸Maurice Glosserman speech at his 90th birthday celebration, as quoted in Glosserman family history, op cit.

¹⁹Matustik, op cit.

²⁰Lynn Moore. <http://archiver.rootweb.ancestry.com/th/read/TX-CALDWE/2006-05/1147890125>.

²¹Coincidentally, Sam’s daughter Abbi later married David “Buddy” Michelson. Abbi is currently a Board Member of TJHS.

²²Telephone conversation with Abbi Michelson, September 23, 2010.

²³Telephone conversation with Abbi Michelson, September 29, 2010.

²⁴*Austin American-Statesman* obituary, February 6, 1990.

²⁵Matustik, op cit

²⁶<http://www.newstreamz.com/2008/03/06/>>-envision-central-texas-blog-regional-growth-meetings-for-hays-county-on-march-24-and-april-2/>.

²⁷Maurice, Mose, and Sam all served as president of the Kiwanis, Business Men’s Club, and the Lions Club. Oral history, op cit.

²⁸The Seguin Council of Jewish Women worked closely with the Lodge. Speech presumably by Maurice Glosserman, undated.

²⁹Telephone conversation with Abbi Michelson, September 29, 2010.

³⁰*Austin American-Statesman*, op cit.

³¹Matustik, op cit.

³²Glosserman family history, op cit.

³³Telephone interview with Abbi Michelson, September 28, 2010.

³⁴Oral history, op cit. Sam shared many other fascinating memories of Lockhart in this interview.

³⁵<http://www.roadfood.com/Fo-rums/m404564-print.aspx>. Also “You Can Take the BBQ Out of

Texas,” Bryan Curtis <http://www.texasmonthly.com/2008-06-01/webextra3.php>.

³⁶<http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/fea/travel/thisweek/stories/071110dnenthillecountry.1dd0758.html>.

³⁷<http://www.tabletmag.com/life-and-religion/2003/theres-the-rub/>.

³⁸Telephone interview with Abbi Michelson, October 6, 2010. 

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Winter Board Meeting in
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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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