

# Texas Jewish Historical Society

Preserving Jewish Heritage in Texas  
Est. 1980



February, 2012 News Magazine

## Coming Soon: The TJHS 32nd Annual Gathering

by Hollace Weiner

Fort Worth will host the Society's 32nd Annual Gathering from March 30 through April 1. The weekend's highlight will be "Forgotten Gateway: Coming to America through Galveston Island," the blockbuster museum exhibit that originated at Austin's Bob Bullock Museum in 2009. The exhibit has been touring the country for three years, and its final stop is at the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History.

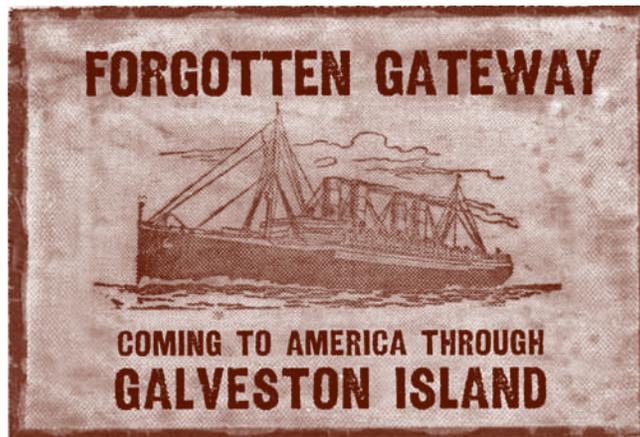
This will be your last chance to view the exhibit. It has received raves as it has traveled from Galveston's Moody Gardens to New York's Ellis Island Museum.

The exhibit's original curator, Austin anthropologist Dr. Suzanne Seriff, will take our group on a private tour on Saturday morning, March 31. Afterward, she will participate in a panel discussion, filling us in on the impact of the exhibit—not only on Jewish research, but on the current discussion of immigration issues. Besides Seriff, the panel, titled "Still Forgotten?" will feature filmmaker Cynthia Mondell, who will show clips from her 1983 docudrama "West of Hester Street." Fort Worth residents who have ties to the Galveston Movement will be our special guests.

A registration flyer for the gathering is in this new magazine. Jack Gerrick is chairman for the meeting. Hollace Weiner is program chair.

For those who arrive early on Friday, March 30, Jack has arranged an afternoon tour of the U.S. Bureau of Engraving, where greenbacks of all denominations are printed. Richard Baratz, an engraver with the bureau (and the artist who draws pictures of celebrities for the famous Sardi's restaurant in New York), will lead the tour.

On Friday evening, we guarantee a festive Shabbat



dinner—home-baked challah and a Mexican buffet in a private Fort Worth home with an unbelievable art collection.

Saturday night will be a one-of-a-kind experience: Pulitzer Prize winning journalist Nick Kotz, a nephew of Frances and Perry Kallison, will speak about his forthcoming book, *The Harness Maker's Vision: Nathan Kallison and the Rise of South Texas*. The book is to be published by

Trinity University Press of San Antonio.

Pull out the registration form and join us in Fort Worth!

### IN THIS ISSUE:

<b>Message from the President</b> by Rusty Milstein	2
<b>Seligman Family History</b> by Louise Landa Seligman	3
<b>Photos from the Winter Meeting</b>	4-5
<b>Growing Up in Downtown Houston</b> by Vickie Vogel	6
<b>Augustus Lewy of Temple and San Antonio, Texas</b> by Patricia Benoit	9
<b>Did You Have Fun at Summer Camp?</b> by Davie Lou Solka	9
<b>Proposed Slate of Officers</b>	11

# Message from the President

by Rusty Milstein

In every President's message, I expound on what a wonderful and interesting organization that I have had the honor of serving. And, with our last meeting in Gainesville, Texas (a "thank you" to Hollace Weiner, Vickie Vogel, and the descendants of Gainesville's



Jewish Community), I am even more impressed. Even though I grew up and live in that corner of Texas, I had to consult a map to find Gainesville. I was amazed to find that there was even a Jewish presence in that locale.

Next, a meeting was planned, and the best thing about the meeting was that some of the descendants began to search for the family members whom they have never met, and they graced our meeting with their presence. We

In a "nutshell," when Dr. Stuart Rockoff went to Gainesville to interview some of the descendants of the Jewish community there, he learned that Lary Kuehn had found the minute book of the United Hebrew Congregation (1905-1922), which is now in our archives in Austin.

were also honored to have Joe Rosenstein, the last member of the congregation, attend our weekend. This was probably the most moving and gratifying meeting that I have ever attended. In essence, this is what TJHS is all about—people and scholars being able to learn about their own history and Texas Jewish history.

Many thanks to Willie and Doug Braudaway for hosting a very interesting weekend in Del Rio, Texas. This is the first time that we have met in that part of Texas. The weekend was chock full of the Jewish history of Del Rio and Val Verde County. We had a very nice tour of downtown Del Rio, featuring Stool Family sites, and, naturally, Max Stool's ol' stomping grounds. We then had a very interesting tour of the Laughlin Heritage Foundation Museum, which featured Air Force history. Our morning concluded with a lunch at Memo's Mexican Restaurant. We had the remainder of the afternoon to explore on our own or rest in the hospitality room. Saturday evening found us touring the Whitehead Memorial Museum, which featured Val Verde County history. After a Havdalah service, we dined at the museum. Then, we went back to the real world—our quarterly business meeting.

*continued on page 5*

## The Texas Jewish Historical Society February 2012 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](mailto: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](http://www.txjhs.org).*



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# Seligman Family History

by Louise Landa Seligman

*The following history was found in a safe deposit box by Louise's son, David Seligman.*

I am Louise L. Seligman, born of Dora Cohn Landa and Dave Landa, in the year 1900, the month of September.

My parents came to this country in different years in the 1880s. My father came first. He left a wife and two small girls. He went to Hallettsville, Texas, and worked for the light company, stringing wires for electric lights. He worked until he made enough money to bring his wife and two little girls from a small town in Austria-Hungary. My mother came with her family from Breslau, Germany. There were seven children—four boys and two girls. One of the boys was born on the boat coming over here.

When my father brought his family over, they lived in Hallettsville for one year when his wife passed away. In 1897, he married my mother and opened a grocery store, carrying only the finest canned goods, fruits, olives, pickles, kraut, candy, and other items that were necessary at the time. Later, when his children grew older, he added a confectionary, selling homemade ice cream, glaces (shaved ice with colored syrups), and milk shakes.

I was born in September, 1900. Later, there were two other girls, each of us three years apart. We lived a block from the town square in a small white and brown house. In 1910, my

second sister, Ara Celine, passed away from peritonitis of the appendix.

My oldest stepsister, Katie (later married to Meyer Steinweis), helped in my father's confectionary. My second stepsister, Sarah (later married to Louis Samusch), looked after the home and children with a maid who took care of the house and kitchen.

In the year 1912, my father bought a large home about three blocks from town. It was on a lot that covered three quarters of the block going back to the next street. We were about ten blocks from the school, to which we walked. When I was about twelve or fourteen, I had a friend who lived out in the country. She rode in to school on a grey horse and would come by and pick me up on the way to school and let me ride with her. When I got in high school, I became chummy with Sarah and Sue Ragsdale, who had a horse and topless little buggy. They also picked me up for school. These girls were daughters of the famous lawyer Jim Ragsdale. That family later moved to Victoria.

My close friends in Hallettsville were Mary Bagby, Corinne Allen, and Tina and Lela McCutcheon. Corinne, Tina, and Lela were daughters of lawyers. Mary's father was in the state legislature for several years. She later married Sam Devall, who was also in the legislature for a few years. Mary Bagby Devall and I have remained friends all of our lives.

At our home in Hallettsville, we had fowl of all kinds, a cow that my father milked twice a day, and a horse that we hitched to a buggy. Later, my father bought a surrey with lights on the sides and a fringe around the top. This was in grand style in those days. When we got older and my father began to have bad health, he sold the grocery store. He passed away in Galveston at John Sealy Hospital in September, 1915.

I graduated from high school in 1919. There were only four graduates that year—three girls and one boy. I have remained friends with one of the girls from my class, Olga Heye, now Olga Ellingboe, of Kerrville. She is a cousin of Lillie Appelt Johnson, the philanthropist of Wharton.

After graduation, I went to Houston and took a business course. I stayed with my spinster aunt, who lived and worked in Houston. A year after I went to Houston, my mother and my sister Maurine also moved to Houston. My mother bought a large home and we all lived in it. My sister Maurine went to Central High School in Houston and graduated from there. So when we moved to Huntsville, she was ready for college.

In 1922, I worked at three places in Houston. I married Morris Seligman, who at that time was with Levy Brothers Department Store. In 1924,

*continued on page 10*

## 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 news magazine. 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](mailto:editor@txjhs.org), mail it to 3808 Woodbrook Circle, Austin, TX 78759, or call her at 512-527-3799.

# TJHS Winter Weekend



*Left to right: Lewis and Joan Katz, Bob and Susan Lewis, and Mitzi and Rusty Milstein at the Val Verde Winery.*



*Max Stool*



*At left, TJHS members stand in front of Max and Anna Stool's house. Below, the TJHS members attend the winter meeting.*



# Del Rio, Texas, January 6-8, 2012



Photo above: Sally Drayer, Barbara Rosenberg, and Susan Lewis at the Philip Mahl Memorial Kitchen. Photo at right: Willie and Doug Braudaway were the hosts for the Winter Weekend. Photo below: Left to right are David and Vickie Vogel, Neil Gurwitz, and Jane and Guy Manaster at Memo's Restaurant.



Left to right: Susan Lewis, Hollace Weiner, Jeff Mahl, Willie Braudaway, Mona Mahl, and David Baxter at the Philip Mahl Memorial Kitchen.

President's Message, continued  
from page 2

And, to conclude our current year, we will meet in Fort Worth (March 30, 31, and April 1) for our Annual Gathering and election of the new administration of the Texas Jewish Historical Society. 🇺🇸

Rusty Milstein  
President, 2011-2012

**The deadline for  
the April, 2012  
TJHS News  
Magazine is  
March 23.**

**Save the Date**

**March 30-  
April 1, 2012**  
Annual Gathering in Fort  
Worth

# From Our Archives

## — Growing Up in Downtown Houston —

by Vickie Vogel

David Frosch came to Texas in 1892 because his cousin Judel Dorfman lived in Galveston. David moved to Houston in 1894, when it had its heaviest snowfall on record, some twenty inches.<sup>1</sup> By 1895, David had a furniture store at the corner of Main and Capitol on the southern edge of the business district.

Sarah Mindel Abramson arrived in Galveston in time for the 1900 hurricane. She lived with her sister and brother-in-law, Jennie and Mose Painkinsky (later changed to Paine), and during that terrible storm, Sarah helped carry a pregnant Jennie through the rising flood waters to higher ground.<sup>2</sup>

In 1902, Sarah and David married in Galveston, with Rabbi Henry Cohen officiating. Daniel Frosch was born in 1912, at the family home at 1707 Jefferson, near Jackson in downtown Houston, but the only memory that Daniel retained of that house was when a cousin, Israel Frosch, visited in military uniform and gave Daniel a toy cork gun. Israel was based at Fort Sam Houston and was being transferred. Daniel speculated that it must have been 1915, before the United States entered World War I.

The family moved to 1504 Hamilton when Daniel was three years old, so his memories were from that home. Daniel wrote a lengthy essay of his recollections of growing up there and gave it to TJHS in 1987.<sup>3</sup> The Frosch family lived on Hamilton from 1915 to 1927.

Many Jewish families lived in the neighborhood where the George R. Brown Convention Center is today. The Frosch two-story home was



*Left to right, seated: Florence Frosch Blum, Dan and Cornelia Frosch, Madilyn Frosch, and Edna Leah and Alex Frosch. Left to right, standing: Ben Blum, Lily and Max Frosch, and Haskell Frosch. Photo courtesy of Maxine Reingold.*

divided between David and his brother Urban, who, with wife Annie and son Alwood, lived on the second floor, while David's family lived on the lower floor. Alex was Daniel's oldest brother, followed by Leon, Max, and baby sister Florence. The last child, Haskell, had not yet been born.

Daniel didn't remember the 1915 hurricane well, but he recalled that two of Aunt Jenny's daughters came to stay with them a few days, sleeping on the sofa or the floor. David's cousin Judel Dorfman and Judel's wife Chaya Sarah left Galveston after the 1915 storm and moved to Houston.

The family had two horses, one buggy, and one wagon. Bill pulled the wagon, and Prince, a dappled gray, was used with the buggy. In the backyard were the stables that had a small

room to store hay and grain and two other areas that later became a garage and a workshop. There were two rooms above that were used as servants' quarters by the man who cared for the horses and drove the wagon. The backyard and driveway were paved, and in the center of the backyard was a drain that the kids used for hose shower parties in the summer. At some point, a Model T Ford was purchased and the horses were sold. Papa never learned to drive a car, but Uncle Urban did.

The unscreened front porch, with a small lawn in front, held a number of wooden rockers. The house was built on piers of about eighteen inches. The sidewalk was paved, and there were paved curbs and gutters, but Hamilton

*continued on page 7*

street and the next street north were graded dirt. Around 1919, the city started paving the streets Bell and Hamilton. First, storm sewer lines had to be put in. This was great entertainment for the neighborhood children. First, the ceramic pipes were laid out. There were no plastic pipes, and concrete pipes were not considered strong enough. The children played hide-and-seek through the pipes until a trenching machine dug the trench in



*Dan Frosch around 1930.  
Photo courtesy of Maxine Reingold.*

which to put the pipes. The dirt that was removed was piled into mule-drawn wagons and carted away. When the workday was over, the play day began and the older boys explored the trenches while the younger kids, like Daniel and his sister Florence, looked down and watched. Fortunately, no one was ever injured. Teams of mules pulling metal scoops or plows dug up the surface of the street to prepare it for paving. Daniel remembered the frequent snap of the harness as the muleteer urged his pair along. And mixing the concrete! There was no ready-mix, so the children watched as

huge piles of gravel, sand, and sacks of cement were hauled in wheelbarrows and loaded into a large concrete mixing machine, and a hose added water. Then a gate would open and the concrete would pour into mule-drawn or hand-pushed carts, and taken to the area where other men with rakes would spread it. Then mule-drawn wagons hauled in hot asphalt and a steam roller. What fun! Now the kids had a place to roller skate.

The Frosch family kept kosher. The kitchen had a gas stove and a wood stove that was used in the winter for heating and cooking. They had an icebox and a "Pittsburgh hot water heater."<sup>4</sup>

There were three bedrooms downstairs: one for the parents, one with a bed for Daniel and Max and a bed for Florence, and one with a bed for Alex and Leon and a second for Uncle Oyzyer (Oscar Frosch), who was one of David's cousins who lived with them. Sleeping arrangements were changed, however, after Daniel and Max got in a fight and were still angry when they went to bed. Daniel waited until Max was asleep and then punched him in the eye! Max's screams brought Papa, who moved Max to Alex's room and brought Leon in to bunk with Daniel.<sup>5</sup> When Papa decided that it was time for Florence to have her own room, Daniel was moved to a daybed in the dining room. Later, when baby Haskell was old enough to leave his baby bed, he bunked with Daniel.

There was only one bathroom. On top of the electric wall light fixtures were gas jets that could be lit when there was a power outage. There was one closet in the hall.

Daniel attended cheder at Congregation Adath Yeshurun<sup>6</sup>, where the family were members. He said that it was located about where the George

R. Brown Convention Center is today.

One day in 1917, Mama called Daniel to the window to see a squad of cavalry soldiers going down the street. The unit had been on an overnight bivouac between Leeland and Dowling, where there was an open field used by carnivals and circuses.

Daniel never went to the circus, but when they heard the band, all of the neighborhood kids would rush out to see the circus parade go by Bell and Chenevert as it headed downtown.

"Unless you were small when you first experienced the heart-breaking sound of the approaching steam calliope on its way to town, you cannot know the feeling of the lump in your throat as the calliope passed, for that was the end of the parade."<sup>7</sup> One parade that he remembered well had a large number of Indians in native costumes.

Daniel related many memories of his childhood neighbors. The next-door neighbors were E. and Tillie Spinner, who were also members of Adath Yeshurun. Mr. Spinner had a lumberyard. The Spinners owned a car, which seemed tremendous to Daniel at the time. They had no children and were very kind to Daniel and Florence, who remembered being taken for a ride in the car. It had running boards and isinglass windows. When the Spinners moved away, the B. L. Levinson family moved in.

Except for the Herman Grossman children, the neighbors on the other side of them, all of the neighborhood children with whom Daniel and Florence played were Jewish. The Grossmans spoke German as a first language, and Papa and Mama were fluent enough to converse with them in German. One Christmas, Daniel knew that Santa Claus would be visiting next door, and he wanted to see how a fat man would get down the small chimney, but Papa convinced him to

*continued on page 8*

go to bed.

The kids played softball and “peg.” A six-inch piece of broomstick, tapered at both ends, was the peg. Another piece of broomstick that was one-and-a-half feet long was the bat. The boy with the bat would tap one of the pointed ends of the peg, which would spin it up in the air so he could hit it with the bat. The distance that he knocked the peg was measured by using the bat as a measuring device.

There was no problem with playing in the streets, because traffic was practically non-existent. Mr. Finkelshtein, a peddler from the same area of Galicia as Papa, would drive his wagon of fresh vegetables by, loaded from the farmers’ market next to City Hall. And there was the dairy man with his wagon loaded with glass pint and quart bottles of raw milk, and the iceman with his wagon. It was a treat when the iceman chipped at big blocks and pushed a few pieces to the edge for the children! There was also Mr. Weinberg, who had a wagon that looked like a horse-drawn army ambulance, but inside were kosher salamis hanging and kegs of herring in brine that required additional pickling by the purchasers.

The children were not taught Yiddish, but they picked up quite a bit from listening to their parents, since they used Yiddish when the kids were not supposed to hear. What an

incentive to learn a foreign language! In 1918 or ’19, Daniel realized his parents were talking about a terrible disease that was spreading. Sadie Rose Nathan, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. M. J. Nathan, caught the influenza and died.<sup>8</sup>

Daniel reminisced about other neighbors: the Hymans, the Lewis family, the Jacobs, the Blocks, I.A. (a furrier) and Annie Sharmon, M. J. Schlom, Harry Margolis (grocer), Lewis Schlanger who had a cow, Daniel Gross, and Jacob Karkoski.

Another memorable event in Daniel’s childhood was when Maurice Karkoski took him to the Iris Theatre<sup>9</sup> to see the film *The Birth of a Nation*. The politics were over Daniel’s head, but one scene impressed him—a large number of men riding horses and wearing white robes—though he had no idea what it meant.

Across the street from the Frosch home were Cantor and Mrs. Reuben Kaplan, who had two daughters, Pearl and Bessie, and one son, Morris (and, later, a baby, Harry). Morris and Daniel were inseparable until the end of Morris’ life. One of Daniel’s saddest days was serving as pallbearer for his friend. Morris graduated from Rice, Phi Beta Kappa, but in 1932, he died while attending medical school.

Morris started school at the normal age of 7, but Daniel was slightly younger. His brother Max took him to see if he could be enrolled along with Morris at Longfellow Elementary on Chartres. The principal said, “No, we have too many pupils.” Daniel had to walk home alone, crying all the way, not understanding why the number of eyes in the school had anything to do with it. Papa taught him to read and write and do simple arithmetic. Daniel was allowed to enroll in the spring, so Morris was always one semester ahead of him.

They both went to cheder to-

gether, next to the synagogue at 909 Jackson. Mrs. Udoff was their first teacher. When she asked Daniel when his birthday was, he answered, “When it snows,” since it had snowed on his two previous birthdays on January 11. Mr. Greenfield was Mrs. Udoff’s replacement and taught him through his bar mitzvah preparation.

One memorable incident in cheder was when Samuel Kalmans hit Daniel in the eye for an unknown reason. Mitchell Lewis didn’t like it, so he “beat the daylight” out of Kalmans. Daniel went home with a black eye, but he was always grateful to Lewis for defending him. Mitchell had grown up on McKinney at Dowling, a “tougher neighborhood.”

Daniel recalled that once in a while, a herd of cattle would be driven down Bell Street toward the railroad tracks, herded by cowboys. The neighborhood kids loved that!

Chartres Street had many Jewish families, most of whom were members of Adath Yeshurun and came from the same region in Europe, the Austrian province of Galicia, where Papa came from. Dan recalled names such as Philip Battelstein and Meyer Mendlovitz, along with Johnnie Mendlovitz and his wife, Lizzie. Lizzie was the daughter of Judel and Chaya Sarah Dorfman, Papa’s first cousin, who lived in Galveston when Papa came over in 1892. Also on Chartres were Louis Shainock, Isaac Kornblith, the Susholtz family, and D. I. Lovitz.

The Kaplans had a dog named Pup Minsky. Cantor Kaplan was from Minsk. In the summer, the Kaplans’ beds had mosquito netting. Later, houses were properly screened. Cantor Kaplan was also a mohel and a shochet. Morris and Daniel often watched the slaughter of chickens that were brought to him and accompanied him west of town to slaughter cattle.

continued on page 12

## Please Note:

*If you are sending a check to the Texas Jewish Historical Society, please indicate the purpose of the check—dues, gift, contribution, etc.*

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# Augustus Lewy of Temple and San Antonio, Texas

by Patricia Benoit, and published with her permission

Temple, Texas, has no monuments to Augustus Lewy, the city's third mayor, whom many credited with pulling the city out of financial ruin. He lies in an Alabama grave, far away from Texas, where he garnered a remarkable record of public service. In no particular order, he loved poker and politics. But anti-Semitism dogged him out of town and thwarted his aspirations to higher political offices.

Born around 1855, on December 25, Lewy was Temple's first city attorney in 1882 and then mayor of Temple from October 1886 to August 1889. He inherited an upstart town perched precariously on the Blackland Prairie and dominated by bullets, bordellos, and barrels of whiskey. He put an indelible progressive stamp on the town. By the time he left Temple, the city was thriving and financially stable, with a distinctive municipal building, a city park, water works, and a fire department.

Lewy was credited for the erection of Temple's striking three-story municipal building and opera house, a

city landmark completed in November 1884. On the first floor at one end was a meat market; on the other was a large meeting hall for city council sessions and civic groups. Upstairs was a performance hall. The building burned in 1897. By that time, Lewy was embroiled in the San Antonio mayoral race.

Lewy apparently liked Temple so much that he named one of his daughters after his adopted city. But he and his family left Temple in 1889, after he lost a bitter election for state Legislature, in which one of his opponents ran on an "anti-Hebrew" platform.

Born in Montgomery, Alabama, Lewy was the son of Benjamin M. and Ester Lewy, who were both born in Prussia, now part of Poland. They were among the earliest influx of Jewish immigrants to settle in Montgomery in the 1840s, although Lewy's father served in the Confederacy. Lewy grew up in intellectually vibrant, progressive surroundings of antebellum Alabama.

The center of their lives was the Kahl Montgomery Reform synagogue,

believed to be the only synagogue built in the South during the Civil War. High holy day services were attended by members and Christian neighbors who wanted to learn more about their Jewish friends, according to Temple Beth Or's official history.

Benjamin Lewy, a watchmaker, owned and operated a successful downtown Montgomery business. Augustus worked for his father as a watchmaker for eight years while studying law at night. He passed the Alabama bar sometime in 1879 or 1880. Not content to stay in Alabama, Lewy headed west to Texas to practice law, winding up in Galveston. He then saw opportunities in the newly forged Central Texas railroad town. He settled in Temple by early 1882, shortly after marrying the former Dora Cahn of Montgomery, daughter of a prominent Jewish family.

Although Temple had many Jewish residents, no historical records show the presence of a formal congregation. Lewy was active in the Odd Fellows, the Elks, the Knights of Pythias, and

*continued on page 13*

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## Did You Have Fun at Summer Camp?

by Davie Lou Solka

**CAMP BONIM**   **CAMP YOUNG JUDEA**   **ECHO HILL RANCH**   **GREENE FAMILY CAMP**

If you attended or worked at a Jewish camp in the 1950s, 1960s or 1970s, we are looking for your memories of those fabulous summers.

The *Western States Jewish History Journal* plans to publish an issue devoted to stories about Jewish summer camps west of the Mississippi. Some essays may be printed

in the *Texas Jewish Historical Society News Magazine*. Think about those great summers and write about your experiences. The essay can be a paragraph or up to the maximum of 2,500 words. All essays will be subject to editing for editorial consistency and space limitations. Write about programs, activities, friendships, special days, boy-and-

girl mixers, and the reasons that your parents sent you to camp.

Include your name (women, please give your maiden name), mailing address, telephone number, and email address. Projected deadline date at this time is June 30, 2012.

If you have any questions, contact [editor@txjhs.org](mailto:editor@txjhs.org). All essays are to be sent to the same email address. 

# 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  
Austin, TX 78766-0193**

Your support of the Texas Jewish Historical Society's programs is greatly appreciated and will be recognized in an issue of the quarterly news magazine. Thank you.

The Texas Jewish Historical Society gratefully acknowledges your gift to its Endowment Fund in the amount of

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*Your gift will further the efforts to record, preserve, and disseminate historic information about Texas Jewish culture.*

*Seligman Family History, continued from page 3*

Morris decided that he wanted a business of his own. So he and my mother bought a rather large department store in Huntsville. Sam Houston State College was in Huntsville, so we enjoyed having most of the college students as our customers. Soon afterwards, my mother's brother, who formerly was in the banking business, decided that he wanted to be the sole partner with my mother. So Morris and I had to move from Huntsville.

We went to Livingston for two years. Then, we went to Rosenberg and worked for the Daileys. There, Morris learned to buy cotton from the farmers. The Robinowitz brothers needed a manager for a store in El Campo, so Morris joined up with them. I made many friends during the nine years that we lived there. It was a town full of social activities, and I enjoyed living there. The Robinowitz brothers

had a sister get married, and she and her husband took over the store. There was a R.B. Department Store in Edna, and Morris became manager there, since the previous manager wanted to return to his home in New York.

It was at this time that an oil boom was occurring in Edna, and places to live were at a premium to find. We lived in a very small house for a year or so, until the Harry Mauritzes finished building their home. When they moved from the house that they had rented from the McCormicks, we moved in. We lived in that home for several years and finally bought it in 1948. I helped Morris in the store, since the children were old enough to go to school.

In 1926, David was born in Houston, since Huntsville did not have a hospital at that time. In 1932, Ara Celine, our daughter, was born in El

Campo at home with a nurse on duty for two weeks. There was no hospital in El Campo at the time, and we called her our depression baby. I became the buyer for the store when the children were old enough to take care of themselves.

When we first went to Edna, Morris had to find a way to get to know the people. Every morning, a crowd of men gathered on the corner and talked about cattle. He decided that he had to buy some cattle to talk their language and get acquainted. He started with seven cows. He made enough money from these cows to send David to A&M College. He continued in the cattle business until his death. He loved that outdoor work, and that was how he spent his Sundays.

I got to know the people of Edna by joining the PTA and being a room

*continued on page 15*

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# Proposed Slate of Officers 2012-2013

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## TJHS Travelers On the Road Again!

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A trip that will include Jewish sites is being planned to Portugal, Spain, and Morocco. It is a sixteen-day tour, and we will leave on Friday, December 7, 2012. Come with us on this journey and discover three countries, languages, and cultures. We will relive the glory days of the Lisbon empire, wander through Madrid, and visit the Synagogue of Transito; then we will cross the Mediterranean to the city of Casablanca. View the full itinerary at <http://www.goaheadtours.com/tours/IAF/portugal-spain-morocco.aspx>.

For information about a group discount, contact Vickie Vogel at [vickvogel@yahoo.com](mailto:vickvogel@yahoo.com).

There was a ranch near where Waugh Drive crosses Buffalo Bayou. When Cantor Kaplan got back home with the carcass, he cut off the hind quarters and sold them to Mr. Lewis, who had a butcher shop in a neighborhood where he catered to those not seeking kosher meat.

Uncle Urban held a Saturday night poker game in his upstairs quarters. Among the regulars were Uncle Oyyzer, Moishe Schlakzug, Philip Weinberg, Harris Weingarten, and Mrs. Solomon Freundlich, a widowed relative of Papa.

Passover was a major event for young Daniel. The removal of chometz; the changing of the chinaware, pots, and pans; the seder meals on the first two nights—it was “the” family event of the year. Although the males were not as observant of head coverings the rest of the year, they wore felt hats more typical than yarmulkes at Passover. Aunts and uncles and cousins filled the table. The service was completely in Hebrew.

There was one childhood event that could have ended in tragedy but fortunately did not. After one Fourth of July, the neighborhood kids followed their usual routine of going around and picking up spent firecrackers, sparklers, Roman candles, rockets, baby giants, etc., which were readily available at any grocery store. They would hide out behind the wood pile in the backyard, see if any of the spent fireworks still had a “kick” in them, and put them in their mouths and light them like cigars. Moish Levinson put a spent baby giant in his mouth to “smoke,” but it turned out to be live. They rushed Moish next door and his mother called the doctor to come out. He put Moish on voice and bed rest for several days. The kids learned a valuable lesson.

Longfellow Elementary was largely made up of children of immigrant parents, many of whom were Jews.

Daniel went on to South End Junior High. The school was so crowded that they had split sessions. While at South End, the family moved to 2001 Rosewood in 1927 and joined the conservative Congregation Beth El.

Papa (David Frosch) died in 1935, after a slow decline in his health, but he lived to see his first grandchild, Max’s first daughter.

Around 1938, Daniel went to work for Walter Pye’s mens department at Columbia Dry Goods. He met a young woman named Cornelia Warren, who was working at a dress shop. There was a picnic for San Jacinto Day, and they started talking. Soon, they were in love. Daniel’s mother didn’t mind that Cornelia was divorced and had an eight-year-old daughter, but she was not Jewish. Sarah asked them to wait a while. They waited a short while, marrying on August 27, 1940, at Rabbi Blumenthal’s house. Cornelia converted and all was well. The Frosch family had two cars, so they loaned one to the newlyweds, so that they could honeymoon in San Antonio and Kerrville before building their home in West University at 3102 Plumb.<sup>10</sup>

The army turned down Daniel because of his weak eyes. He joined the Texas State Guard and rose to the rank of first lieutenant. He saw duty in Beaumont during the 1943 race riot, when white workers looted and burned buildings in the black neighborhood and assaulted citizens.<sup>11</sup>

Daniel finished his accounting degree and went to work at Walter Pye’s Men’s Shop, at Fannin and Capitol. Dan was with Walter Pye for some fifty years, retiring as comptroller in 1986. He and Cornelia loved to travel and often went to Mexico (Dan was fluent in Spanish), as well as Asia, Russia (several times), Israel (five times), Spain, Portugal, Turkey, Greece, France, Italy, England, and Scotland. After his sister-in-law Edna Leah Frosch<sup>12</sup> started a travel business,

the extended family would sometimes travel together.

When he retired, Dan started work on his family history, which culminated in “Unto the Seventh Generation,” which fills three thick files in our archives. There are also oral histories of Florence Frosch Blum (Daniel’s sister), Edna Leah Frosch, Max Frosch, Cornelia Frosch,<sup>13</sup> and one of Haskell and Madilyn Frosch.<sup>14</sup>

Daniel Frosch died on April 10, 1993, and was buried in Houston, the city that he loved and in which he had enjoyed a wonderful childhood.<sup>15</sup>

As he wrote in 1987, “I know now just how rich—without material wealth—my childhood really was. The warmth of family, the imparted respect for learning, and the decency of the neighborhood are the treasures stored in my memory. That was home—1504 Hamilton.”

### *References*

<sup>1</sup><http://www.wxresearch.com/snowhou.htm>.

<sup>2</sup>Jenny and husband Mose Painkinsky (Paine) moved to 2901 Odin Ave. (the name was later changed to Lyons Ave), where they lived above their small grocery store. They would travel by trolley to visit the Frosches.

<sup>3</sup>Box 3A164, Texas Jewish Historical Society Collection, The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin. Unless otherwise noted, all information is from Daniel Frosch’s two essays in this file and reflects his memory of the events and people described.

<sup>4</sup>The electric water heater was invented in 1889 by Edwin Ruud, after he immigrated to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The Ruud Manufacturing Company, still in existence today, made many advancements in water heater design and operation. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water\\_heating](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water_heating). This may be why Frosch called it the Pittsburgh water heater.

<sup>5</sup>Sadly, Leon was killed in a hit-and-run accident shortly after graduating high school, while he was changing a tire at night.

*continued on page 14*

the Sons of Confederate Veterans.

Less than six months after Temple's founding in June 1881, citizens failed in their first attempt to incorporate the town. But by January 1882, Temple's new citizens pushed again for an incorporation election in July. The measure passed shortly before the Lewys arrived in Temple.

But Temple had severe problems. In a few months, it grew from nothing to quickly hewn plank houses on the Central Texas treeless plain. The city was nearly bankrupt. J.W. Callaway, the city's first elected mayor, served until 1884. Callaway and his successor, W.H. Craine (mayor from 1884 to 1886), were beset by accusations of malfeasance, incompetence, and raucous feuds with other public officials.

Lewy was named the city's first city secretary and, soon after Temple incorporated, city attorney. He inherited a mess. He promptly moved to get approved the town's first ordinances – some as mundane as regulating wayward cattle and drunken railroaders, and others as necessary as setting a tax base, establishing fire and sanitary ordinances, and compiling a municipal budget.

When Craine died in office in 1886, an interim served for a month, until Lewy assumed the post. While he worked to right the foundering city, Dora bore three daughters—Ernestine in 1883; Rosalind in 1884; and Amy Temple, born on December 1, 1886, a month after her father became mayor.

During his terms as city secretary and then as mayor, Lewy oversaw and guided the completion of the city waterworks, the creation of the fire department and the city park (now the municipal parking lot and tourist information center), and the erection of the city's first municipal building—a striking three-story landmark, completed in November 1884, that loomed high over the upstart city with its distinctive bell tower. The grand structure was all

things to all citizens—a meat market and a large meeting hall for city council sessions and civic groups. Upstairs was a performance hall.

As mayor, Lewy pushed for tight budgeting and halting the efforts of prohibitionists. He revived the city's credit, redeemed outstanding obligations, and ran the city on cash basis.

Lewy discovered that the office had its perks, too. He liked to play poker all day every Sunday and, as a court magistrate, tried other poker players during the week. On one occasion, a man charged with gambling came before Lewy and pleaded “not guilty.” Lewy called him a liar, saying that he had played with him the day before. The mayor fined the defendant \$16.70.

By 1888, he filed as a candidate for state representative. Lewy, considered the establishment candidate, garnered support from prominent Democrats. But two independent-minded candidates challenged him in a bitter clash of words. One opponent used anti-Semitic rhetoric. In August 1888, the Temple, Dallas, and Galveston newspapers quoted him as saying that Lewy “is of Hebrew origin and therefore should not be elected to the legislature.” A third, dark-horse candidate won, running on a pro-labor, anti-monopoly platform.

Disheartened, Lewy finished his mayoral term in August 1889. “When he left the mayor's office, he did so voluntarily over the protests of the citizens,” according to newspaper reports.

By February 1890, the family moved to San Antonio, where Lewy opened another law practice. By 1892, he was back in politics, this time as San Antonio city attorney. He eventually was elected district attorney and, later, alderman, netting a reputation as a law-and-order, fiscally conservative reformist.

But his Temple legacy endured. Lewy's influence and managerial skills had long-term benefits. By March 1892, Temple Mayor William Carton

reported to the city commission, “Only a short time ago, the financial condition of the city was most deplorable ... Our treasury warrants were floating around promiscuously and we had no money in the treasury with which to take them up. This condition of affairs, I am proud to say to you, owing to your prudent and judicious management, does not now exist.”

By 1897, Lewy again tried to run for higher office, this time San Antonio mayor, against the powerful political machine of Judge Bryan V. Callaghan, Jr. A politically deft Irish Catholic who was bilingual in German and Spanish, Callaghan was also controversial, trailed by allegations of “irregular methods” to push his agenda. Lewy ran on a reformist platform, but Callaghan spread what San Antonio newspapers alleged were “slandorous statements” without elaborating.

Temple civic and business leaders weighed in on the acrimonious Bexar County campaign. On February 7, the *San Antonio Light* published a letter from the *Temple Tribune* and signed by six prominent citizens (including the mayor). It touted Lewy's upstanding character and administrative abilities. The letter emphasized that Lewy had not left Temple because of “something he did or did not do when here.”

The letter was blunt: “This report is so palpably false that to deny it is not necessary here in Temple, however, his friends concluded to offer the following testimonial for what it is worth...” The signers credited him with creation of the downtown market square and the opera house. They also praised him for shoring up the city's finances, “which had heretofore been neglected and, in short, brought order out of chaos and placed on a sound basis the entire affairs of this city.”

Callaghan won. Contemporaries remarked how Lewy accepted his defeat philosophically and good-naturedly, returning to his lucrative law practice.

*continued on page 14*

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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.**

## Growing Up, continued from page 8

<sup>6</sup>Congregation Beth Yeshurun was founded in 1891 as Adath Yeshurun and took its current name upon merging with Congregation Beth El. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Congregation\\_Beth\\_Yeshurun\\_\(Houston,\\_Texas\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Congregation_Beth_Yeshurun_(Houston,_Texas)).

<sup>7</sup>Box 3A164, op cit.

<sup>8</sup>For more on the 1918 Flu Pandemic, see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1918\\_influenza](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1918_influenza).

<sup>9</sup>In 1919, Will Horwitz transformed the 1913 Travis Theatre, located at 614 Travis, from a live-performance (burlesque) venue into a movie house, renaming it the Iris Theatre after Ruth Iris Horwitz, his daughter by his first wife. Movies at the Iris cost 5 to 15 cents per person, angering movie producers who threatened to withhold their films if Horwitz didn't raise prices. Horwitz refused and the movie producers backed down. His Homefolks Theatres chain thus introduced to Houston modest, reasonably priced movie houses for ordinary people, with second-run, family-oriented entertainment. <http://www.discoverhouston.com/Downtown%20Houston%20Tunnel%20System.htm>.

<sup>10</sup>Photo at [http://maps.google.com/maps?client=safari&rls=en&q=3102+Plum+Houston&oe=UTF-8&um=1&ie=UTF-8&hq=&hnear=0x8640c05743eea705:0xa8663645eb348f61,3102+Plumb+St,+Houston,+TX+77005&gl=us&ei=AualTomiLYXZ0QGt0NGeDg&sa=X&oi=geocode\\_result&ct=image&resnum=1&ved=0CBwQ8gEwAA](http://maps.google.com/maps?client=safari&rls=en&q=3102+Plum+Houston&oe=UTF-8&um=1&ie=UTF-8&hq=&hnear=0x8640c05743eea705:0xa8663645eb348f61,3102+Plumb+St,+Houston,+TX+77005&gl=us&ei=AualTomiLYXZ0QGt0NGeDg&sa=X&oi=geocode_result&ct=image&resnum=1&ved=0CBwQ8gEwAA).

<sup>11</sup>See <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/jcb01>.

<sup>12</sup>Edna Leah Jacobs married Daniel's brother Alex. She died in 2010. <http://jhvonline.com/edna-leah-jacobs-frosch-p8463.htm>.

<sup>13</sup>Cornelia died on May 24, 2011, in Tulsa, Oklahoma. <http://houstonjewishfunerals.com/obituaries/2011/5/31/i-cornelia-frosch.html>.

<sup>14</sup>Box 2.325/V112a TJHS Collection, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, oral histories with Florence Frosch Blum and Cornelia Frosch, transcribed by Maxine Reingold. See Also Box 2.325/B130 for additional Frosch family history.

<sup>15</sup><http://www.legacy.com/ns/obitfinder/ssdi-search.aspx?date=All&firstname=Daniel&lastname=Frosch&countryid=1&stateid=57&affiliateid=-1>. 

## Augustus Lewy, continued from page 13

Voters returned him to the San Antonio city council in 1900, but his health began to fail.

Lewy died on March 14, 1902. Services were held in San Antonio at Temple Beth El, the Reform congregation. Lewy's body was carried back to Montgomery, Alabama, to be buried next to his parents.

San Antonio, Temple, Dallas, and Galveston newspapers all carried stories on his death. The *San Antonio Light* headline summed up his life: "Career of a Useful Citizen Closes." 



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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](mailto:texbed@aol.com).

### *Seligman Family History, continued from page 10*

mother for my daughter's class. I don't remember the date, but I was president of the PTA for a couple of years. When the band was organized, I helped raise money for band uniforms. Every night of football season, we sold roasted peanuts in the shell and cold drinks. On Saturday mornings, I got up to help pick up the bottles on the field. By returning them, we got two cents each. That was a cold job, but it was money, and every little bit helped.

*Note from David Seligman, Louise's son: As I remember, we went to El Campo after Huntsville, where Dad managed the store. Then we moved to Rosenberg to work for the Daileys. Then we moved to Livingston, where Dad managed a store for the Davises. From there, we moved to Edna, where Dad was again associated with the Robinowitz Brothers.* 

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