

Texas Jewish Historical Society

Preserving Jewish Heritage in Texas
Est. 1980



August 2015 News Magazine

— Mt. Sinai Temple in Texarkana to Close — by Davie Lou Solka

The congregation of Mt. Sinai Temple in Texarkana, Texas announced that it was time for the congregation to close its doors. It is thought that the congregation formed around 1885 beginning with High Holiday services in that year. A synagogue, built at Fourth and Walnut Streets in Arkansas, was dedicated in 1894—after the original planned synagogue was destroyed by fire. A constitution was adopted by thirty members in October, 1893.

With the membership dwindling over the years, a final Shabbat service was held on May 16, 2014, with Student Rabbi Alli Cohen conducting services. Many messages from former rabbis, student rabbis and congregation members have been published in a Mt. Sinai Temple Congregation memory book titled *The Congregation that Helped*



Mt. Sinai Congregation, Texarkana, Texas. For a complete history of Mt. Sinai Temple Congregation, see Encyclopedia article on page 8.

Grow Rabbis.

The 6,000 square-foot property at 1300 Walnut Street will be sold, according to Howard Glick, treasurer of the congregation. Any family members who would like personal artifacts of Jewish memorabilia given by their families to the congregation can contact Diane Icenhower at dflindsey903@yahoo.com. 

IN THIS ISSUE:

Message from the President	2	Encyclopedia—Texarkana	8
A Unique Way to Honor Historic Texas Jewish Businesses by Lynna Kay Shuffield	3	Teaching the World by Vickie Vogel	12

Message from the President

by David Beer

Dear Fellow Society Members,

“Is it hot enough for you?” If you haven’t heard that one yet this summer, are you sure you are IN the Great State of Texas? Seriously, though, the dog days of summer are once again upon us. If there is a saving grace to that metaphor, I reckon we can



take comfort in that it would seem the Great Drought of 2013-2015 seems to be over for a good deal of the state. But, with every silver lining, frequently a cloud, can/will follow. With all the rain from April to June, the mosquitoes, as well as other critters from

the insect world, converge upon us. But, as we have done for generations, we have endured and will continue to persevere.

For those of you who could not make it to Salado for the Summer Board Meeting, July 11-12, you missed a very informative meeting. By the way, TJHS

members are welcome to attend any quarterly Board Meeting and do NOT have to be a member of the board to attend.

Although this meeting was shorter than our usual weekend, a lot of information and camaraderie was packed

into a day and a half. After arriving at the historic Stage Coach Inn, which was a way station for stage coaches that traveled through Central Texas in the 19th century, we gathered in the multi-purpose dining room, hospitality suite and meeting room for conversation and pre-dinner snacks and wine.

Before the evening meal, our own Rabbi Murray Berger, aided by the Cizons’ granddaughter, Sadie Koos, led us in a lovely Havdalah service. We then ate a fine supper of salmon or chicken, wild rice and sautéed vegetables, with a choice of chocolate or carrot cake. YUM!

After dinner, I was treated to the past presidents in attendance explaining to me as the “new kid on the block,” presidentially speaking, what I should expect and look forward to as the recently installed president. They also gave highlights of their administrations, which served as a good history lesson of TJHS for all of us. After hearing what my predecessors had to say, I was accorded the opportunity to say a few words about my vision for TJHS in the weeks and months to come. I want to thank in advance these former leaders of the Society for their advice and counsel in the future.

Do we hold a board meeting on

continued on page 3

The Texas Jewish Historical Society August 2015 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 Editor Davie Lou Solka at davielou@solka.net or by mail to 3808 Woodbrook Circle, Austin, TX 78759, 512-527-3799. Be sure to include your name and contact information.

Editor Davie Lou Solka
Layout/Design Editor Alexa Kirk
Photographers Sally Drayer, Marvin Rich, Davie Lou Solka, 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.



The News Magazine 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.

A Unique Way to Honor Historic Texas Jewish Businesses

by Lynna Kay Shuffield

Historically, many who immigrated to Texas were entrepreneurs and started small businesses that many times grew into large companies. Recently, I had the honor to be able to prepare the application for the Texas Treasure Business Award for Three Brothers Bakery in Houston.

Created by the Texas Legislature in 2005, the Texas Treasure Business Award Program recognizes the accomplishments of Texas businesses and to pay tribute to these entities for their exceptional historic contributions to the economic growth and prosperity of the State of Texas.

Businesses can be nominated for this award by anyone with the approval of the business and must meet the following criteria:

- The business has been in continuous for-profit operation in Texas for the last 50-years or more.
- Has operated the same or a very similar type of business as it did at

least 50-years ago.

- Has a continuous record as an employer for at least the past 50-years.
- Has continued to operate as an independent, for-profit business, i.e., it cannot be operating as a subsidiary of or have been absorbed into another business.
- Maintains a good business relationship with the State of Texas.

Businesses that can also establish that they have been continuously owned by the same family or have operated continuously from a building that is at least 50-years old and have maintained its architectural integrity will receive additional recognition.



There is no filing fee with the THC for this award.

Preparing applications for the historic Jewish businesses of Texas will allow the TJHS to collect and preserve this unique history.

For more information on this program, visit: <http://goo.gl/il7xFn>. Look for the Texas Treasure Decal & Logo.

This decal allows the business to publicly display on its business and advertising that it has received this historic award. Consumers will know when they spot the familiar Texas Treasure Business icon that they are doing business with a successful, Texas-owned-and-operated company that has long contributed to the economic growth of Texas. 🇺🇸

President's News, continued from page 2

Sunday morning of our meetings each quarter? You bet we do! Do YOU have to be a member of the board to attend and participate? No way, José! If you and your spouse or significant other have never attended one of our meetings, I encourage you to make plans and come to an upcoming meeting. You will make new friends, and frequently, many folks see old friends and folks they may not have expected to see at a Texas Jewish Historical Society meeting. In addition, you will learn about the Jewish history of the towns and cities we visit. Our next meeting will be in Tyler in October, and details are being finalized as you read this. Watch your mailbox for a registration form with details—it is NOT in this issue of the News Magazine.

Enjoy the remainder of your summer, and I look forward to seeing ya'll in the fall in Tyler. 🇺🇸

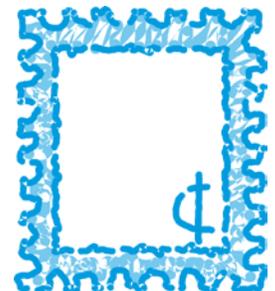
TJHS on facebook

Did you know that TJHS has a Facebook page? Like us at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Texas-Jewish-Historical-Society/187629054741368>.

Save Postage

Please notify TJHS when your address has changed or if you may be temporarily away from home when the News Magazine is to be delivered.

These issues are returned to us at a postage due return of \$1.52 (at printing date) per Magazine. These amounts add up—it's your money we are trying to save! 🇺🇸



TJHS Summer Meeting in Salado



Members at the Summer Meeting.



Jan & Charles Hart, Meeting Co-chairs.



Gordon Cizon presents "Hot Lips" Award to Lynna Kay Shuffield for photographing headstones in local cemeteries.



Gordon Cizon presents "Hot Lips" Award to Sadie Klos (his granddaughter) for photographing headstones in local cemeteries.



President David Beer.

July 11-12, 2015



Neil & Betty Gurwitz, Anita Feigenbaum.



Helen Wilk presenting report from Award Committee.



Lynna Kay Shuffield, Judy Cassorla, and Charles Hart.



Sadie Klos extinguishes candle during Havdalah service

Gordon Cizon presents "Hot Lips" Award to Greg Meyer for photographing headstones in local cemeteries.



TJHS Mission to Cuba

by Vickie Vogel

“What are our people’s expectations with the changes? We have no

of durable goods, selected from a need list provided by the community leadership. These items were divided among the two congregations, the two dozen Jews of Cienfuegos, and a Crisis Pregnancy Clinic in Trinidad.

Although education and health care are free, and foodstuffs heavily subsidized, low salaries and high prices, coupled with the unavailability of many necessities, making a living in Cuba is a struggle for Jews and non-Jews alike. There is a synagogue in Santa Clara, and Cienfuegos Jews join them on occasion.

We met in the cozy home of



TJHS travelers at El Patronato, one of Havana’s synagogues.

the Cienfuegos community leader. She somehow managed to fit thirty-three plastic chairs in her small living room so we would all be able to sit down.

TJHS Past President Rusty Milstein presented our gift to Adat Israel, 2nd Vice-President Davie Lou Solka and board member Jack Solka made the presentation to the Patronato, and Past President Vickie Vogel spoke for TJHS in Cienfuegos.

In between official visits in pursuit of our humanitarian mission, we also

continued on page 7

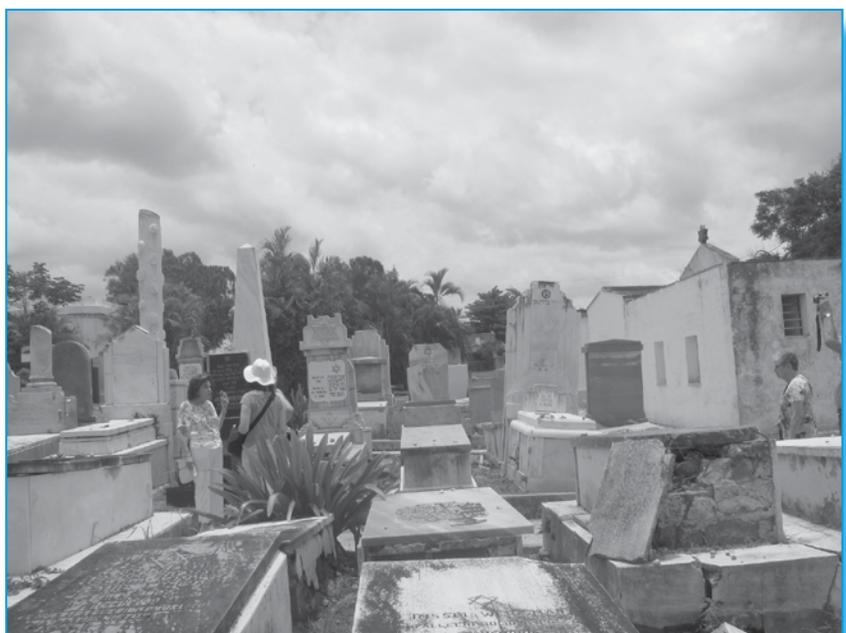


The oldest Holocaust Memorial in the Western Hemisphere is shown here, in United Hebrew Congregation Cemetery in Havana. It was built in 1947.

expectations. We worry about what we will eat today.” The lay leader of the Adat Israel congregation in Havana tells us their need is great, their members are aging, and they struggle every day.

The Texas Jewish Historical Society just completed our second mission to the Jewish communities of Havana, and our first visit to Cienfuegos. After two last-minute cancellations, we made a team of thirty-three. We collected a generous cash donation for the Patronato (the Reform synagogue), Adat Israel (Orthodox), and the tiny Jewish community of Cienfuegos. In addition, we each brought a minimum of ten pounds

Havana’s United Hebrew Congregation Cemetery is in need of repair.



June 8-15, 2015

Cuba, continued from page 6



Clockwise from bottom right: A line of convertibles snakes

through Havana as TJHS members are driven to their next destination of the tour. Vickie Vogel presented a gift to Cienfuegos Jewish community leader, Rebecca Langus in her home. Rusty Milstein presented a gift to Adat Israel (Orthodox) Synagogue leader Yacob Hernandez. The sanctuary of El Patronato synagogue. Ron Zander places a spoon on his nose, and Davie Lou Solka meets the challenge!

enjoyed a lecture on Havana's architecture, the musical rhythms of Cuba, the World Heritage site of Trinidad de Cuba, the wonderful art collection in the Museo de Bellas Artes (with our curator guide, a member of the Jewish community), Fuster's unique tile art, Ernest Hemingway's home, and a surprise caravan through the quiet streets of Havana in classic car convertibles. As the modified car klaxons attracted the attention of Habaneros, we waved like mad and took each other's pictures. In addition, a special performance taught us a lot about the Cuban religion of African origin know as Santeria.

As in our first mission, we visited the Jewish cemetery on the outskirts of Havana. Inside the cemetery is the old-

continued on page 16



Encyclopedia of Texas Jewish Communities

The Texas Jewish Historical Society awarded a grant to the Institute of Southern Jewish Life to research and publish the histories of Jews in Texas towns. These histories are available on the Institute's website and are called "Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities." We will adapt one of these histories in each issue of our News Magazine. Thanks to the History Department of the ISJL for permission to do so. To see other towns, go to the TJHS website at www.txjhs.org, or the Institute's website, www.isjl.org, click on the "History Department" and look for "Encyclopedia" in the drop-down menu.

Texarkana

Jews have been present in Texarkana since shortly after the city's founding in 1874 and have proven instrumental in its development and growth. While only bits of information are known about the organization of Texarkana's earliest Jews, a synagogue was quickly founded, creating a physical Jewish presence in a growing city. Mt. Sinai Temple Congregation, though it has moved from its original location in Arkansas to a new home in Texas, recently announced that it would be closed.

On the Texas-Arkansas border in Bowie County, Texas, and Miller County, Arkansas, sits Texarkana, a city with one history but two identities. Texarkana was established in 1874 at the site of the junction of the Cairo and Fulton Railroad, which crossed through Arkansas, and the Texas and Pacific Railway, which ran east-west through Texas. Around the turn of the century, both the Arkansas and Texas sides of Texarkana installed water, gas, and electrical facilities as industries sprang up on both sides of the state line. Until the Great Depression, jobs



This is the oldest known photograph of Texarkana taken in 1874. This is a view of Front Street showing the first businesses, all of which were established within days of the initial sale of lots that formed the town. The children at the well are three of the children of A.L. Ghio, Sr., an early mayor of the Texas side and a major force in developing Texarkana.

with the railroads or in the agricultural processing industries attracted individuals to Texarkana.

In the last quarter of the 19th century, Jews began to settle in the newly formed town. Most of these were immigrant merchants, usually selling dry goods and clothing. Abram Erber and Abram Goldberg, both born in Poland, and Russian immigrant Solomon Davidson owned dry goods stores in Texarkana. Abraham J. Hoffman, born in Austria, was a clothes merchant and by 1883, Marks Kosminsky, born in Russia, owned

and ran a general store with his brother, Joseph. Joseph Deutschmann, who was born in Poland, helped the development of water and gas companies in Texarkana, owned a stake in the city's first street cars, and worked in real estate developing housing in the growing town. When a flood in 1874 destroyed an African-American residential area he had built, Deutschmann constructed "Deutschmann's Canal" which drained the flooded area and still bears his name. Other prominent early Jews were clothing mer-

chant Sam Heilbron; bankers, Joseph Marx and Leon Rosenberg; Confederate Army veteran Bebo Berliner; and café owner, Martin Levy.

When Jewish newspaper editor, Charles Wessolowsky visited Texarkana in 1879, he found ten Jewish families with around seventy-five people who had little organization and a curious situation regarding their spiritual leadership. Reverend Charles Goldberg, pastor of a local church, was trained as a rabbi in Germany, but became an ordained

continued on page 9

minister after falling ill and was nursed back to health by a Presbyterian family in Missouri in the 1840s. Without a rabbi for the 1876 High Holiday services, Texarkana's Jews asked Reverend Goldberg to officiate. He continued performing the services through the late 1870s. In 1879, Wessolowsky described Goldberg as a "hypocrite" with "hidden selfish motives." However, Goldberg never attempted to convert Texarkana's Jews to Christianity. When he died, he asked for a rabbi and requested that he be buried in the Jewish cemetery.

Because Texarkana's newspaper records only date back to 1884, the earliest documented High Holiday services in Texarkana were held in 1884, and were reported by Charles Wessolowsky, even though Reverend Goldberg had been conducting services prior to Wessolowsky's visit. They were probably held in Kosminsky Hall, the Masonic Hall built above one of Marks Kosminsky's storehouses. Services in 1885 were conducted by Rabbi Friedman of Camden, Arkansas, with help from Marks Kosminsky. That year the *Daily Texarkana Independent* wrote: "Tomorrow is the Jewish New Year, and all our citizens of that faith will close their business houses from 6 o'clock this evening until 6 pm tomorrow." Mt. Sinai Temple Congregation was most likely formed around 1885 and Mt. Sinai Memorial Park, a Jewish cemetery, was likely purchased that



Offenhauser Insurance Company building shortly after the third floor was added, circa 1901.

same year. An April, 1885 newspaper announced monthly meetings of the Texarkana Hebrew Benevolent Association in Kosminsky Hall, with Joseph Deutschmann serving as president. By July, 1886, meetings were held twice a month. In 1888, the women of the community established the Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Society, which gave charity to those in need and maintained the cemetery. In 1900, the society had twenty-one members. Later, the group became the Mt. Sinai Sisterhood and remained extremely active in the congregation for years to come.

After Mt. Sinai Temple Congregation was founded, its president, Joseph Deutschmann, sought to

acquire a synagogue building. An Episcopal Church was for sale and Deutschmann, with the help of his non-Jewish friend Fred Offenhauser, purchased it and had it moved to Eighth Street and State Line Avenue on the Arkansas side of Texarkana, remodeling it into a synagogue. However, in 1892, a grocery store adjacent to the synagogue caught fire and the congregation's new home burned to the ground. But, thanks to the leadership of Deutschmann, a new building, built at Fourth and Walnut Streets in Arkansas, was dedicated in 1894. In October 1893, Mr. Sinai's thirty members adopted a constitution for the congregation. Around this same time, the congregation hired its first rabbi, A. Shriber. By

1900, a Rabbi Kaiser led the congregation. In the early 20th century, as the city's population swelled from 14,000 in 1896 to around 21,000 in 1925, Mt. Sinai's membership grew as well, reaching fifty households in 1917.

With its English name and use of English prayers, Mt. Sinai Temple Congregation was Reform from its founding, though it did not consistently affiliate with the Reform movement. In 1907, Mt. Sinai belonged to the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, but this membership was short-lived. Probably the congregation's decision to disaffiliate was due to economic reasons, rather than

continued on page 10

ideological ones. Finally, in 1939, Mt. Sinai Temple Congregation officially rejoined the UAHC. While some of Texarkana's Jews were Orthodox in their traditions, their numbers were too small to form a separate congregation. Orthodox minyans were held early on Saturday morning, and since the Orthodox group was small, some Reform members would attend the traditional service to help with the required ten members for a minyan. By the 1940s, this Orthodox group had dwindled, and the separate services were discontinued.

In addition to Mt. Sinai Temple Congregation, Texarkana Jews established other Jewish organizations. In 1901, a B'nai B'rith Lodge for men was formed, and in 1947, the Jewish women formed a chapter of B'nai B'rith Women. Other Jewish organizations included a Zionist association, founded in 1917, and the Jewish Charity Chest, founded in 1931 to help those in need during the Great Depression.

Texarkana's Jews became important leaders in the local business community as Jewish-owned businesses proliferated on East and West Broad Street in downtown Texarkana. Many Jews, such as Adolph and Morris Sandberger and Isaac Schwartz, ran dry goods stores. Others, such as Gus Zimmerman, Sol Danziger, Benjamin Fane, and Jacob, Julius, and Max Scherer, worked in the clothing industry either as tailors or retailers. Other Jewish-owned businesses included Heilbron Jewelry, run by Ray Heilbron, and Texarkana Casket Company, owned by Leo Krouse. Leonce Kominsky, son of Marks Kominsky, and Nettie Marx Klein were physicians.

The Jews of Texarkana matched their involvement in business with civic service on behalf of their city. Leo Krouse, born in Austria-Hungary, served as Mt. Sinai president,

president of the Board of Trade, and ran war relief fundraising efforts during World War I. Simon and Harry Ehrlich owned many theatres throughout the southwest, including the Grand Opera House in Texarkana. The brothers were noted for their philanthropy, hosting a fundraiser for the Jewish cemetery at the Grand Opera House in 1911. Simon and Harry were especially supportive of needy children in Texarkana. Nettie Marx Klein was one of the first female physicians in Texas and was president of the Bowie County Medical Association. East Prussia native and Spanish-American War veteran Louis Josephs was a successful attorney. Joseph was elected to the state legislature from Miller County three times, beginning in 1913. He later served as a Texarkana Municipal Court judge from 1925 to 1936.

Even though the congregation had renovated the temple building in 1930, a larger facility was needed to house the growing membership which numbered forty families in 1940. Due to the Great Depression, fund raising efforts were difficult, but, thanks to the generosity of Simon Ehrlich, the Ehrlich Education Building was completed and dedicated in 1935, the year of Mt. Sinai's fiftieth anniversary.

As the world plunged into World War II, Texarkana's economy thrived due to the construction of the Lone Star Army Ammunition Plant and the Red River Army Depot, both located just a few miles from the city. Hundreds of servicemen and women were now stationed in or near Texarkana, and the members of Mt. Sinai provided a Jewish connection for the Jewish soldiers. Congregants hosted soldiers for High Holiday or Shabbat services, Seders, meals, and various social events with many Jewish and non-Jewish soldiers attending. Thanks to the romantic involvements between

the soldiers and the local Jewish girls, some servicemen eventually settled in Texarkana.

Following World War II, Mt. Sinai, which had around fifty households, decided to construct a new synagogue building. The old building was sold in 1946, but since the new building would not be completed until 1949, the congregation met in the Miller County Courthouse on Friday nights, with High Holiday services held at the Congregational Church. In April, 1948, the congregation adopted a new constitution, and the following year the new building was dedicated. It was now located on the Texas side of the city. Various Jewish community leaders and Reverend Chauncy V. Farrell, president of the Texarkana Ministerial Alliance, spoke at the dedication. The new synagogue had a social hall, kitchen, rabbi's study, Sunday school classroom, and a sanctuary seating ninety people.

Mt. Sinai initially thrived in the post-war era. By 1952, 40,490 people lived in Texarkana, and many Jews chose to make Texarkana their home in the 1940s and 1950s. Leo and Madelyn Walkow owned a dress shop and were active in the congregation, serving on the Temple and Sisterhood boards. Leo prepared many of the congregation's youth for their Bar and Bat Mitzvah service, and in 1981 the social hall was renamed the Leo A. Walkow Hall in his honor. The congregation also drew members from small towns surrounding Texarkana, including Jake and Hannah Meyers from Ashdown, Arkansas, and Ellen and Henry Kaufman from Atlanta, Texas.

Until the late 1950s, Mt. Sinai was led by a variety of rabbis. The longest serving were Joseph Bogen (1900-1906), Rudolph Farber (1915-1922), David Alpert (1930-1935), and

continued on page 11

Moses Landau (1946-1950). Rabbi Joseph Levine was on the pulpit from 1958 until 1981. A native of McKeesport, Pennsylvania, Rabbi Levine was an excellent speaker and lover of American history. He was much beloved by his congregants and the greater Texarkana community. With its spiritual leadership in place, the congregation added three more Sunday school rooms in 1956, and, thanks to Sisterhood, the building was air-conditioned in 1959. The cemetery was refurbished and was renamed Mt. Sinai Memorial Park in 1974. The Mt. Sinai Cemetery Perpetual Care Trust was established in 1980.

From its 75th anniversary in 1960 through the late 1980s, Mr. Sinai's memberships numbered approximately forty households. Many children raised in Texarkana chose to move to larger cities after college, while some members moved away. New members arrived in the 1970s keeping the membership at level numbers. A

continued on page 18

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 News Magazine. Everyone has a story to tell, long or short. To submit your story, or if you need help writing your story, contact Davie Lou Solka at davielou@solka.net or 512-527-3799.

Save the Date

August 30, 2015

Dedication of B'nai Abraham Historic Synagogue in Austin, Texas, 11:00 AM.

October 2015

Fall Board Meeting in Tyler. Registration form will be mailed with all the details. There is **no** form in this issue of the News Magazine.

November 13-15, 2015

New Mexico Jewish Historical Society meeting in Las Cruces, New Mexico.

January 8-10, 2016

Board Meeting in Galveston

— Indexed Issues Available on Microfilm —

Lenore Karp from San Antonio has indexed special issues of the *San Antonio Jewish Record* devoted to local South Texas Jewish communities. This index is available on microfilm in the Texana/Genealogy Department of the San Antonio Public Library. Many entries include photos of local personalities. They may be found in the locations listed at the right.

For questions or additional information, contact Matt De Waelsche, Archivist/Librarian II, Texana/Genealogy Department, San Antonio Public Library at thomas.dewaelsche@sanantonio.gov. 

Brownsville	July 24, 1925
Brownsville	August 27, 1926
Corpus Christi	August 14, 1925; August 13, 1926; August 10, 1928; July 19, 1928; June 13, 1930; July 3, 1931
Corsicana	April 5, 1929
Eagle Lake	October 16, 1925; August 30, 1929
Eagle Pass	July 31, 1925
Gonzales	August 20, 1926; August 21, 1928; September 20, 1929; October 18, 1929
Harlingen	August 27, 1926
Laredo	July 10, 1925; August 7, 1925; July 30, 1926; August 17, 1928; July 12, 1929; July 11, 1930; July 3, 1931
Lockhart	August 21, 1928; September 20, 1929; October 18, 1929
Luling	October 25, 1929
Rio Grande Valley	September 3, 1926; August 24, 1928
San Benito	August 27, 1926
Seguin	August 21, 1928; September 20, 1929; October 18, 1929
Victoria	August 28, 1925; August 2, 1929
Wharton	September 11, 1925; August 16, 1929

From Our Archives

This column is based on information in the TJHS Collection, housed at the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas campus in Austin. It has been supplemented with online research. If you have corrections or additions, please submit them in writing to the TJHS editor at editor@txjhs.org. We want our archives to be as complete and accurate as possible.

Teaching the World by Vickie Vogel

In our last issue, we examined the life of Rosella Werlin, journalist and publicity director extraordinaire. We mentioned her husband, Joseph Werlin, who deserves his own article.

Joseph Sidney Werlin was born in Philadelphia on December 5, 1900.¹ He was the second child and first son

of Sarah Childs and Jacob Baer Werlin. Jacob and Sarah emigrated from Russia in 1890 as teenagers. They married in 1895. After operating a chain of tailoring shops in Philadelphia (which included a branch in Houston), Jacob learned of a national promotion to bring farmers to Texas. Coming from a farm in Ukraine, he was eager to return to the land.² In 1910, Jacob invested “his meager savings plus borrowed money” in a small farm in Pearland. Jacob’s dream of growing pears, strawberries



The caption reads: “Extreme Left: Neighbor’s Auto Loaned for Photo. The Jacob B. Werlin and Family Go Farming in Pearland, Texas-1910-1912.” Texas Jewish Historical Society Records, di_09436, The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin.

and pecans did not meet with success. The soil was poor, the rain was meager, Jacob lacked experience, and he and Sarah had six children.³ They were broke by 1913.

The family moved to Houston where Jacob is said to have owned the first Hebrew typewriter in Texas. He completed two manuscripts on Biblical subjects and many newspaper articles, as well as a manual on farm financing.

His son Joseph inherited his father’s love of writing. Giving up

he was able to enroll in the fall of 1919. At the end of his first year, he decided it was not suitable for him and withdrew.⁴

Joseph took entrance exams for Rice Institute (now Rice University), which was virtually tuition free. Working part time and contributing his wages to the family, he completed his BA degree in 1924. Deciding an academic career was for him, he enrolled in the University of Chicago where he attained his MA in 1926.

formal schooling after half a year in high school to help support the family, Joseph began an intensive self-study program. When World War I broke out, he received a Congressional appointment as third alternate from Texas to the United States Naval Academy. When candidates ahead of him failed their examinations,

continued on page 13



Professional photo of Joseph Sidney Werlin taken for the University of Houston, circa 1940. Photo courtesy Joella Werlin.

The next year, he studied at the University of Berlin and did research at the University of Moscow.

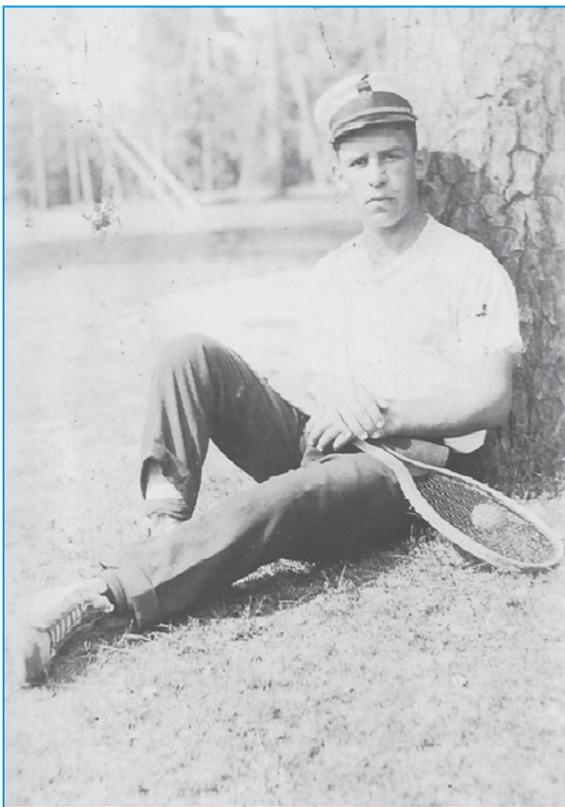


Photo of Joseph Sidney Werlin at Annapolis, 1919. Photo courtesy Joella Werlin.

Returning to the United States, Joseph married Rosella Horowitz in 1928. She was the daughter of Rabbi and Mrs. Henry J. Horowitz of Galveston. The newlyweds moved to Chicago where Joseph received his Ph.D. in 1931, the first American to receive a Ph.D. for research into the Russian social/economic experiment of 1898-1905. Starting a family in the midst of the Great Depression, Joseph became a part-time social worker to make ends

meet while pursuing his academic work.

In 1934, he was invited to become a charter member of the faculty of the University of Houston, which was expanding from a junior college to a four-year institution. A creator of the Department of Sociology, he gained a full professorship in 1945. With the end of World War II and renewed travel opportunities abroad, Joseph developed a ground-breaking summer study center in Mexico under the university's auspices. The idea was so successful, it was broadened to include centers in Guatemala and in Cuba at the

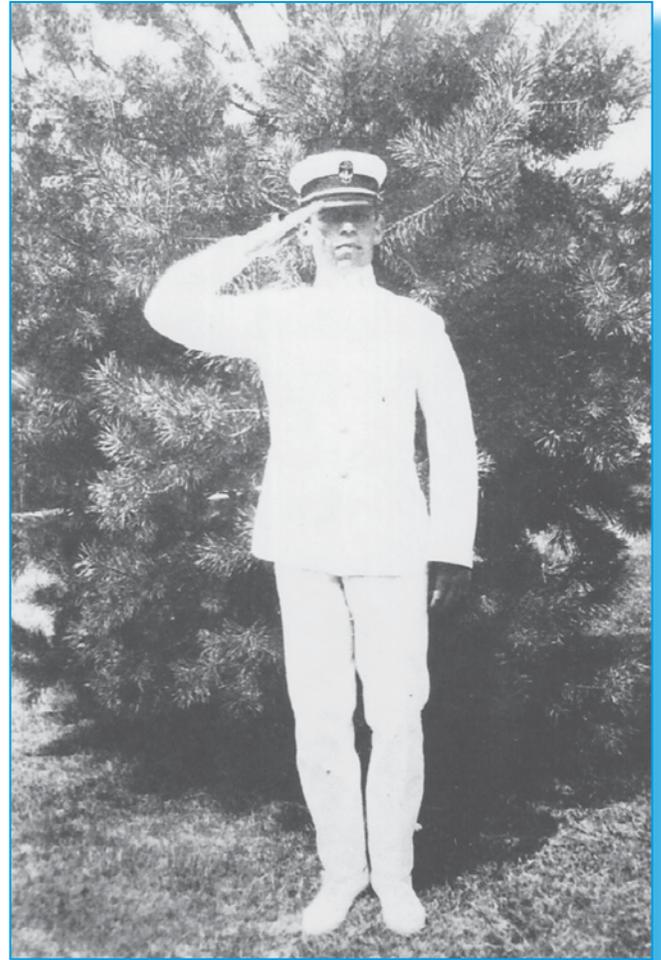


Photo of Joseph Sidney Werlin at Annapolis, 1919. Photo courtesy Joella Werlin.

University of Havana. He conducted similar programs in Europe for the rest of his life.

Joseph Werlin's lifelong interest in Mexican-American relations led to an award as Distinguished Visitor's Medal and Diploma from the Government of the Federal District of Mexico. He was working on a book, *Today's Mexico*, at the time of his death. A noted linguist, Joseph spoke Spanish, French, Russian, Italian, and German, and knew to a lesser degree Portuguese, Greek, Dutch, Danish and Sanskrit. He also studied several Latin America Indian dialects. He wrote and lectured extensively.

In 1948, Joseph Werlin was

continued on page 14

named “Man of the Week” by *The Jewish Beacon*. The article points out that the teacher who instructed the Werlin children in Pearland’s one-room schoolhouse took her graduate degree thirty years later from her former pupil.⁵ He received the Bronze Medal from the Belgian Ministry of Education in 1951 for his work on behalf of international understanding. In 1959, Honorary Citizenship of Vieux Montmartre (Paris) was bestowed on him because of his “quarter of century of visiting, writing, and lecturing on Europe.”

The Werlins had three children. Sons Herbert Holland Werlin and Ernest Pyle Werlin followed their father’s academic footsteps, as did daughter Joella Barbara who was Phi Kappa Phi and studied cultural anthropology. She married neurologist Dr. Lawrence Zivin in 1961. At the time of his death, Joseph had two grandchildren: Adam Henry Zivin and Joselyn Amy Zivin.

A heart attack or cerebral hemorrhage brought a sudden end to Joseph’s life at his home on May 30, 1964. He was 63. Herbert was studying for his doctorate in Nairobi, Kenya at the time. Ernest was at the University of Texas, and Joella was living in Seattle. Three of his brothers



Joseph and Rosella in front of Rockefeller Chapel, University of Chicago, when he received his Ph.D. 1931. Photo courtesy of Joella Werlin.

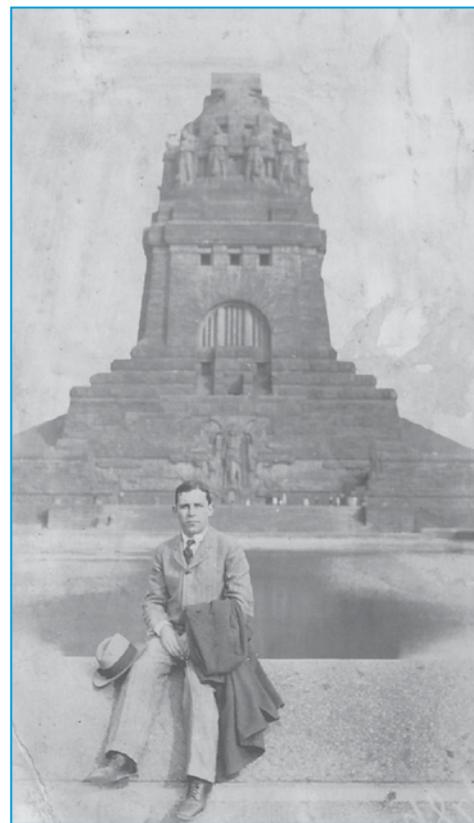
were living in Houston (Reuben became a patent attorney, Eugene an architect, and Samuel an optometrist), and his sister Nadine, who had been a nurse in Havana, was in the Canal Zone. Rabbi Robert Kahn officiated at the funeral at Levy Memorial Chapel, with burial in Emanu El Memorial Park.

A letter from one of his students, Bill Stalker, was published in

the *Houston Chronicle* on June 8 of that year. “He was a kind and understanding man with a sense of humor. He could laugh uproariously at a funny joke, and even on serious subjects he would have a tongue-in-cheek chuckle. Just like when he assigned me to study the prostitution racket in Houston. I protested. He replied: ‘I don’t think they’ll get next to you, Bill.’ How laconic can you get?”

The University of Houston passed a Memoriam Resolution, a copy of which is in our archives, and a Joseph S Werlin Memorial Scholarship was set up. On May 30, the *Houston Post* lauded Werlin, writing, “He will be long remembered by those whose privilege it was to know him.” A *Post* editorial of June 2 praised his life’s work as a professor of sociology and anthropology.

Joseph Werlin’s love of learning and teaching carried him around much of the world, spreading knowl-



Joseph Werlin sits in front of the Volkerschlachtdenkmal (Monument to the Battle of the Nations) in Leipzig in 1928. The monument was dedicated in 1913 to commemorate the defeat of Napoleon at Leipzig. Photo courtesy Joella Werlin.

edge and understanding with the aid of his extensive language skills. He lived his life doing what he loved.

Endnotes

- ¹ Unless otherwise stated, all information is from Rosella Werlin’s biography of her husband in Box 3A167, Texas Jewish Historical Society Records, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.
- ² Roselyn P. Krinsky, “Man of the Week,” *The Jewish Beacon*, Thursday, May 20, 1948.
- ³ Joseph, Reuben, Eugene, Samuel and Nadine. The sixth child is not named in our archives.
- ⁴ Rosella Werlin, in a letter to TJHS Past President Lionel Schooler in 1984, said Joseph resigned “because of extreme anti-Semitism.”
- ⁵ Krinsky, op cit. 

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

**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

\$ _____

In honor/memory of: _____

Acknowledge to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Donor Information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

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

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.

If you need TJHS membership applications for an event, program, personal use, etc., please contact Rusty Milstein at hrmilstein@prodigy.net.

The deadline for the November 2015 TJHS News Magazine is Friday, October 9.

Can You Guess This Member?



No winners so we'll try again! This cutie in the one-piece "romper" has been a member of TJHS for many years and attends most meetings. He is very friendly and is always willing to talk to anyone! The winner will receive a year's free membership to TJHS. Email your guess to Davie Lou Solka at editor@txjhs.org any time beginning **Monday, August 17**. Entries received before that date will not

be considered. Previous winners and family members are not eligible to participate. Good luck! 



The travelers have lunch in Havana. On the left are Bertha Miller, Judy Cassorla, Gayle Cannon, and Vician Picow (standing). On the right are David Vogel and Kimberly & Harry Dietz.



Jack & Davie Lou Solka presented a gift to Adela Dworin at El Patronato.

est Holocaust memorial in the Western Hemisphere. On our last day, we visited the memorial set up for Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, executed in the United States for espionage and treason in 1953. Workers there were cleaning the bas-relief lettering as we arrived.

After our week-long visit, we boarded the American Airlines char-

ter flight back to Miami. Many of us left personal items behind to be distributed to those in need, but we took with us fond memories of this friendly island nation and the resourceful 1,500 remaining members of the Jewish community. Yes, we will go back—perhaps in a couple of years—to see what further changes have come to Cuba. 🇺🇸

— Great Places to Share Jewish History —

B'nai Abraham Historic Synagogue (Austin, Texas)—this shul, originally in Brenham, Texas, was moved to the Dell Community Campus in Austin and has been restored to its original beauty and simplicity. The Orthodox congregation in Austin, Congregation Tiferet Israel, will be holding their religious services in the building after the Dedication August 30, 2015. The building was built in 1893.

Lloyd Street Synagogue (Baltimore, Maryland)—is the third oldest standing synagogue in the United States. The 1845 synagogue was restored in 1963-65 and is a historic site of the Jewish Museum of Maryland. The original 1845 mikvah is accessible to museum attendees. Baltimore Hebrew

Congregation was one of the many congregations that have been served by this building—not all of them Jewish.

Shearith Israel (New York City)—this is the fifth home of America's oldest Jewish congregation. Its classically inspired building, built in 1897, faces Central Park and is the first and best of many Roman-temple-type synagogues. It combines a monumental exterior with a more subtle interior featuring restored Tiffany windows and an exhibit of the Orthodox Congregation's history.

Stone Avenue Temple (Tucson, Arizona)—built in 1910, this small building was known as Temple Emanu-El, and

is the oldest synagogue in Arizona. It has been preserved by local preservationists and is a one-story sanctuary that combines elements of Classical high style and Mission architecture. In 2006, it was merged with the Jewish Historical Society to form the Jewish History Museum.

Temple Beth Israel (Portland, Oregon)—This Byzantine design building now houses Congregation Beth Israel. It is known for its one-hundred foot dome with Star of David oculus. The dome was inspired by the Steelerstrasse Synagogue in Essen, Germany, and has eighteen stained-glass windows and a circular menorah window. It is on the National Register of Historic Places. 🇺🇸



Texas Jewish Historical Society Grant Application

The mission of the Texas Jewish Historical Society is to expand and enhance the knowledge and understanding of the Jewish presence in Texas and the history of Jews from their first arrival in the State to the present.

We solicit applications for projects that are in that spirit.

On the form below, please show how your project meets our mission.

Application Form

The Texas Jewish Historical Society will consider applications from individuals and non-profit organizations in any written or visual medium. Attach additional sheets as necessary.

Contact Name: _____

Organization Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: (_____) _____ Fax: (_____) _____

Cell: (_____) _____ Email: _____

Briefly outline personal and professional background information that support this application:

Title and Description of project:

What is the anticipated budget for the project? Are you seeking additional support from elsewhere? Attach an itemized, line-item budget with your request. The committee needs to see where the money will be spent. We understand that this may be your best estimate.

Please detail the timeline of your project:

We would expect to receive a copy of the completed project with acknowledgement of TJHS support. Also, a copy or account of the completed project should be submitted to the Society's archive at the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas at Austin.

*Send applications to: Hollace Weiner, 4210 Stonedale, Fort Worth, Texas 76116; hollaceava@gmail.com;
TJHS Grant Committee, P.O. Box 10193, Austin, Texas 78766-0193; or president@txjhs.org.*

Welcome New Members!

Thaddeus Atzmon

9906 N LBJ Dr., #1
San Marcos, TX 78666
ta1145@txstate.edu

Merle (Zinn) Gross Ginsburg

10 Grace Square, Apt. 4A
New York, NY 10028
722-225-6612
mzginsburg@gmail.com

John Jekabson & Marianne (Goldsmith) Smith

577 62nd St.
Oakland, CA 94609
msmith.writer@gmail.com

Directory Changes

Howard & Barbara Glick

hglick@tsimco.com

Marilyn Glick

mmglick@windstream.net

Dolly Golden

goldendolly81@yahoo.com

Joel & Marilyn (Soltz) Kay

713-723-2262

Karen Siegal

(Not Siegal)

Davie Lou Solka

361-946-6880 (add cell)

If you have any changes in your information, please send them to **Marc Wormser at 1601 S. Riviera Ct., Pearland, TX 77581, 832-288-3494, or c2aggies@gmail.com.**

TJHS Committees

Award Committee

Helen Wilk, Chair, hkwilk48@gmail.com
Elaine Albin, Sally Drayer, Ruth Nathan, Hollace Weiner

Education Committee

Bobbi Wells, Chair, bj.wells@verizon.net

Grant Committee

Hollace Weiner, Chair, hollaceava@gmail.com
Sonny Gerber, Guy Manaster, Jack Solka, Michael Wolf

Meeting Committee

Charles Hart, Chair, cbhart635@sbcglobal.net
Nelson Chavetz, Sally Drayer, Amy Manual

Membership Committee

Marc Wormser, Chair, marc.wormser@att.net

Publicity Committee

Bob Lewis, Chair, ts@crcom.net

Speakers Bureau

Jan Hart, Co-Chair, jshauthor@sbcglobal.net
Davie Lou Solka, Co-Chair, davielou@solka.net

Travel Committee

Vickie Vogel, Chair, vickvogel@yahoo.com

Traveling Exhibit Committee

Sally Drayer, Co-Chair, sallyedraye@gmail.com
Marc Wormser, Co-Chair, c2aggie@gmail.com

Texarkana, continued from page 11

decline in membership soon set in, and in 2011 the membership was thirty-five individuals. Sisterhood disbanded, and there were no children for a Sunday school. An Art Auction fundraiser was held for many years and was attended by many non-Jews in town. After Rabbi Levine retired in 1981, student rabbis from Hebrew Union College came to conduct services.

Even though there will no longer be a physical synagogue building in Texarkana, Mt. Sinai was a large presence in the city since its inception. While the heyday of the synagogue was in the 1940s and 1950s, the congregants have always contributed, commercially and civically, to Texarkana's development and the Jews of the city managed to maintain a strong commitment to both their faith and community. 

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



TJHS Board of Directors 2015-2016

Officers

President

David Beer
(Dallas)

1st Vice-President

Susan Lewis (Big Spring)

2nd Vice-President

Davie Lou Solka (Austin)

3rd Vice-President

Jane Manaster (Dallas)

Treasurer

Ben Rosenberg (Sugar Land)

Recording Secretary

Daniel Weinbaum (Beaumont)

Corresponding Secretary

Claire Brooks (Houston)

Historian

Sally Drayer (Dallas)

Archivist

Samylu Rubin (Dallas)

Parliamentarian

Vickie Vogel (La Grange)

Immediate Past President

Debra Weingarten (Austin)

Board of Trustees

2014-2016

Marvin Barenblat (San Antonio)

Rabbi Murray Berger (Dallas)

Nelson Chafetz (Austin)

Gordon Cizon (Dallas)

Bette Jean Cohen (Plano)

Anita Feigenbaum (College Station)

Sonny Gerber (Houston)

Dr. Neil Gurwitz (Bastrop)

Marilyn Jorrie (Boulder, CO)

Joan Katz (Houston)

Louis Katz (Houston)

Kay Krause (Richardson)

Scott Langston (Weatherford)

Mitzi Milstein (Longview)

Ruth Nathan (Houston)

Jack Solka (Austin)

David Vogel (La Grange)

Hollace Weiner (Fort Worth)

Jerry Wells (Plano)

Sherry Zander (Dallas)

Board of Trustees

2015-2017

Elaine Albin (Rockport)

Douglas Braudaway (Del Rio)

Dick Brooks (Houston)

Suzanne Campbell (San Angelo)

Brad Greenblum (Austin)

Jan Hart (Temple)

Morton Herman (Fort Worth)

Harold "Pacey" Laves (Austin)

Marilyn Lippman (Dallas)

Amy Manuel (Denton)

Abbi Michelson (Lockhart)

Amy Milstein (Frisco)

Allen Mondell (Dallas)

Shirley Rich (Houston)

Lynna Kay Shuffield (Houston)

Larry Simpson (Wichita Falls)

Rosalie Weisfeld (McAllen)

Bobbi Wells (Plano)

Gary Whitfield (Fort Worth)

Joyce Wormser (Pearland)

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 late nineteenth 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 Sally Drayer at 972-458-7298 or email her at

sallyedraye@gmail.com or Marc Wormser at 832-288-3494 or c2aggie@gmail.com.

Texas Jewish
Historical Society
P.O. Box 10193
Austin, Texas 78766-0193

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
HOUSTON, TX
PERMIT NO. 1662

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Texas Jewish Historical Society New Membership and Information Update Form

Join the Texas Jewish Historical Society today! Or use this form to update your contact information. Complete each section below. Clip out and mail this form with your check made payable to the Texas Jewish Historical Society, P.O. Box 10193, Austin, TX 78766-0193. **Please PRINT.**

YES! Count me in! My dues are enclosed. Please **update** my information

Check the Appropriate Box(es)

New Member Donor: _____
 Renewing Member Address: _____
 Updated Information Only Phone: (____) _____
Occasion: _____

Membership Category

\$35 Annual Member \$18 Student Member \$500 Benefactor
 \$50 Supporting Member \$100 Sponsor \$250 Sustaining Member \$1,000 Patron

Name(s): _____

Maiden Name: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home telephone: (____) _____ Cell: (____) _____ Fax: (____) _____

E-mail address(es): _____ Website: _____

Contributions to the Texas Jewish Historical Society are tax deductible within the limits of the law.