

NEWSLETTER

P. O. BOX 50501, AUSTIN TEXAS 78763

SUMMER, 1986

JEWISH PIONEER HONORED WITH HISTORICAL MARKER

Waco — A Texas state historical marker was unveiled and dedicated on the banks of the Brazos River on August 24, 1986 to honor the contributions of Jacob de Cordova to the development of the city of Waco. Waco Mayor Lanelle McNamera also declared August 24 to be Jacob de Cordova Day.

The dedication represents over a year and a half of planning and work by the Waco Jewish Federation Texas Sesquicentennial Committee (WJFTSC), sponsors of the historical marker. The WJFTSC is chaired by Ima Joy Gandler. Procurement of the marker was also sponsored in part by a grant from the Texas Jewish Historical Society.

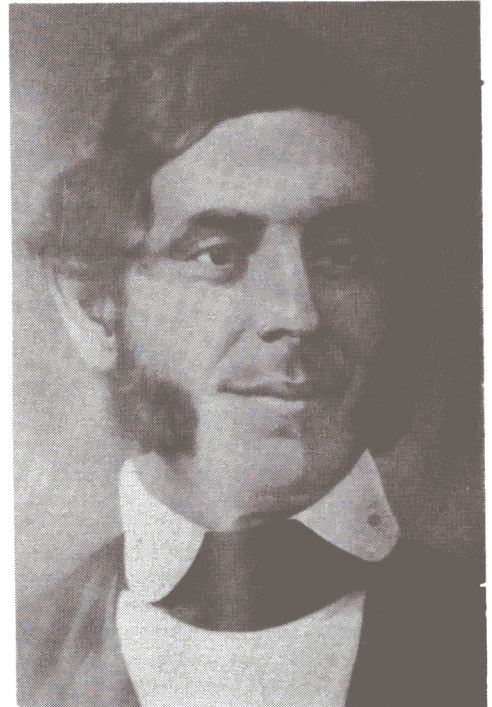
Approximately 150 people gathered to attend the dedication and were welcomed by Harry Harelik, past president of the Waco Jewish Federation, and Archie Hoppenstein, who moderated the program. Judge Stanley Rentz of Waco addressed the gathering on Jacob de Cordova's knowledge of the complicated land laws existing in Texas at that time. Ed Lax, President of the Texas Jewish Historical Society, spoke about Jacob de Cordova's contributions to the Jewish community of Texas.

The marker was unveiled by Ed Lax, Simone Bauer, president of the Waco Jewish Federation, and Chester de Cordova, a descendant of Jacob's. The marker stands on the banks of the Brazos River in Indian Springs Park, which was part of the original Waco Village.

Among the many attending the dedication were state representatives M. A. Taylor and Betty Denton; former mayor and Waco historian Roger Conger; members of the Texas Jewish Historical Society, the Waco Jewish community, the Waco McLennan Co. Sesquicentennial Committee, the Waco McLennan Co. Historical Commission; and about 50 members of the de Cordova family who came from all over Texas and the U.S. Members of the de Cordova family included great granddaughter Gladys Kingsbury of Dallas; Vann de Cordova, great-great grandson, of Beaumont; and Ham de Cordova, a descendant of Jacob's half brother, Phineas.

The WJFTSC also plans a multi-media presentation on September 7, 1986 from 1:00-5:00 p.m. at Temple Rodof Sholom in Waco. There will be a slide presentation entitled "The History of the Waco Jewish Community 1848-1986", as well as a display of memorabilia, photographs, and religious artifacts. Research for the slide presentation was done by Ima Joy Gandler and a script was co-written by Mrs. Gandler, Evelyn Hoffman, and Jean Edelman. Slides were produced by Mrs. Gandler and Vernon Woolf.

Members of the WJFTSC are Simone Bauer, President WJF; Harry Harelik, immediate past president of WJF; Rabbi Mordecai Podet; Ima Joy Gandler (chairman); Jeanne Levy (sec.); Rose Chozick; Hannah Hirsch; Evelyn Hoffman; Archie Hoppenstein; Lorraine Hoppenstein; Eleanor Levy; and Jack Schaevitz. Esther Wolfe was dedication chairman. ●



Jacob de Cordova

The Waco Jewish Federation Texas Sesquicentennial Committee is very grateful to the Texas Jewish Historical Society for the funds allocated for the purchase of a State of Texas historical marker for Jacob de Cordova.
- Mrs. J. E. (Ima Joy) Gandler -

JACOB DE CORDOVA AND THE ORIGINS OF WACO

by Mordecai Podet

"La Cabra ha Tomado La Granada" reads the crest of the de Cordovas, one of the old Jewish families of Spanishtown, Jamaica, British West Indies. "The goat has taken the pomegranate" alludes to the conquest of Granada by Gen. Gonsalvo de Cordova in 1491-92. Jacob's family history is somehow linked to that event.

Jacob de Cordova, born 8 June 1808 in Spanishtown, migrated to Philadelphia with his father and brother Phineas about 1830. Here he learned the printing trade. Returning to Kingston, Jamaica, he and another brother, Joshua, founded a newspaper, *The Gleaner*, in 1834. By 1836 he was in New Orleans engaged in import and export, and visiting Galveston often to sell merchandise at auction. Early in 1837, he and Phineas opened a small shop in Galveston, selling tobacco, stationery, and liquor. Finally he moved to Houston and opened de Cordova's Land Agency, destined for fame not only throughout Texas but in New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore — where owners of large tracts of Texas land resided — as well as abroad.¹

Subsequently, he spent years "in the saddle" becoming Texas's foremost land locator, deeply knowledgeable about the state and expert in its complicated land laws. Of the Texas land patents issued until 1856, a large proportion were based on de Cordova location certificates. By the late 1850s, he controlled over a million acres of Texas land.²

*Mordecai Podet is Rabbi of Temple Rodof Sholom in Waco

(see p.2)

Despite his prodigious land enterprise, de Cordova found time for other significant accomplishments. He was elected an alderman of the City of Houston in 1844 and a Texas state representative in 1848. He had been a member of the International Order of Odd Fellows in Philadelphia and New Orleans. In 1838, shortly after his settling in Galveston, he secured a charter for an IOOF lodge. This was the first Odd Fellows charter granted outside the United States; Texas was not yet in the Union. He was appointed IOOF First Deputy Grand Sire of the Republic of Texas.

In 1849, de Cordova started a monthly newspaper, *de Cordova's Herald and Immigrant Guide*, aimed at attracting settlers to his lands. A year later this newspaper became Austin's *Southwestern American*. In 1858, he published *Texas: Her Resources and Her Public Men*, an encyclopedic compendium of land laws, climatic data, biographies, and railroad, cotton-growing, and sheep-raising information. A reviewer, the editor of the *Galveston Civilian*, wrote of this book that it "contains more information about Texas than all state papers issued by her presidents, governors, comptrollers, and treasurers combined." de Cordova traveled to Philadelphia, New York, and England promoting his book and lands.

In the 1860s he conceived a plan for harnessing the Brazos River and was about to initiate the project when he died in 1868 at his home, "Wanderer's Retreat," in Bosque County. Most of his holdings were sold to clear debts. In 1936 his remains were moved to the State Cemetery in Austin.

de Cordova was well educated in the Jewish religion. He could read and write Hebrew and had some acquaintance with Jewish religious law. Preserved in the American Jewish Archives at Cincinnati are several Ketubot (marriage contracts composed in conformity with traditional rabbinic law) written by him.

He had in his youth received his earliest religious training from the Rev. Mr. Jacob Babsadon who, in about 1820, was "reader" of the Jamaica Jewish congregation. Babsadon chanted Hebrew with a nasal twang characteristic of the Jewry of Morocco, his native land. He was succeeded as religious leader of the Jamaican Jewish community by the Reverend Mr. Keys, an English Jew who enunciated Hebrew in the style of West European Jewry. Twenty years later, de Cordova, during long buggy rides over Texas, entertained his companions by chanting in these two contrasting styles portions of the Jewish Sabbath and holiday services, most of which he knew by heart. He is said to have been among the founders of Beth Israel of Houston, the first Jewish place of worship in Texas.³

The extent of de Cordova's daily observance of Judaism is not known. But his religion was a matter of common knowledge. When, in 1847, the voters of Harris County elected him to the Texas House of Representatives, the event evoked from the press praise for the liberal attitude of Texans regarding religion.

The Origins of Waco

In the course of his wide-ranging land acquisition and development, Jacob de Cordova became instrumental in the founding of Waco. Gen. Thomas Jefferson Chambers held title—dated 1832—to a large tract of land on the west side of the Brazos in the area which was to become Waco. The first white settlers came in 1844 when an Indian trading post was established here. Chambers sold his grant in August 1847 to J. S. Sydnor of Galveston, who contracted with de Cordova to divide the Chambers grant and sell it at one dollar per acre. In May 1849, de Cordova hired a surveyor, George B. Erath, who had visited the region earlier. Erath's report to Sydnor and de Cordova recommended a deserted Indian village at Big Waco Springs as a town site. Erath urged Sydnor and de Cordova to locate a town on the Chambers grant at Big Waco Spring.⁴ Sydnor now sold the grant to three equal partners: de Cordova, Jonas Butler of Galveston, and N. A. Ware.

Another grant of land originally bestowed by the Mexican government "lay upon the Brazos River opposite Waco Village and embraced all of the present East Waco, and a great deal more. In 1832 the entire tract passed by a trade to Samuel May Williams, who conveyed it the very next year to Mrs. Sophia St. John of Connecticut . . . [who] held on to the tract for sixteen years,"⁵ then asked Jacob de Cordova to sell it. In August 1848, de Cordova acquired from Butler the controlling interest of an area including the site of Waco village. Soon afterward, de Cordova and his surveyor, Erath, journeyed to the site to lay out the town lots.

Predicting that Waco would be one of the principal cities of Texas, de Cordova announced a sale of lots to the highest bidders no matter the sum offered. The first block of the new town was ready for eager buyers on 1 March 1849. A deed dated 5 May 1849 conveying for six dollars "Lot No. 4 in Block 1" to S. P. Ross is signed thrice by de Cordova, twice as attorney-in-fact for his partners, Butler and Ware, and finally for himself.

Another, dated 10 June 1850, also bears only de Cordova's signature three times. Apparently he was the only one of the partners active on the site. In the latter deed he donates "for the use and benefit of the town forever without right to sell, alienate, donate, convey or in any way dispose of . . . ten feet around Waco Springs, the Common Square, the commons fronting on the river and all streets, lanes and alleys." He donated to the city for schools and churches over twenty-three lots, among them one on South Third Street later occupied by the Methodist Female College. In addition to providing free land for public uses such as parks and schools, de Cordova gave lots for churches to various denominations.

Years later, at a meeting in Waco of the State Grand Lodge of the Odd Fellows, Past Grand Master Capt. M. D. Herring of Waco was spokesman for the presentation to the Grand Lodge of a portrait of Jacob de Cordova in his robes of office as deputy grand sire, painted at the order of the Grand Lodge. In his glowing tribute to de Cordova, Herring remarked on his generosity to Waco's schools and to Christian churches of all denominations.⁶ A historical note published in 1936 observes that "these lots now have churches built upon them. When the Presbyterians were ready to build, they found that the city, for some reason, had disposed of the lot intended for their religious denomination, but the city furnished another lot."⁷

On 19 August 1856, Waco Village was incorporated at the City of Waco. ●

Notes

¹Henry Cohen, "The Jews in Texas." In *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, No. 4, 1894.

²*The Jewish Texans* (San Antonio: Institute of Texan Cultures, 1974), pp.3-4.

³*Encyclopedia Judaica*, s.v. "Texas."

⁴Roger N. Conger, *Highlights of Waco History* (Waco: Roger N. Conger, 1945), p. 30.

⁵Roger Conger, "The Earliest Beginnings of Waco," *Waco Heritage & History* Vol. 1, no. 2 (Summer 1970), p. 11.

⁶I. A. Goldstein, "The Waco Jewish Community: Some Historical and Reminiscent Notes," Texas Jewry Collection, The Texas Collection, Baylor University, Waco, Texas.

⁷Henry Cohen, "Early Jewish Settlements in Texas." In Cohen, David Lefkowitz, and Ephraim Frisch, *One Hundred Years of Jewry in Texas* (Dallas: Jewish Advisory Committee for the Texas Centennial Religious Program, Texas Centennial Exposition, 1936), p. 29.

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Do you have a story to tell? A colorful ancestor, favorite anecdote or place of interest relating to Texas Jewry? Are you looking for lost family members or seeking information about your family? Do you have mysterious photographs from an old family album that you would like to identify? The Texas Jewish Historical Society is interested! Submit items for the next newsletter by November 15, 1986. Send them to TJHS, P.O. Box 50501, Austin, Texas 78763.

TJHS TO SUPPORT *HANDBOOK OF TEXAS* REVISION

Jews have played an important role in the social, economic, political, and cultural history of Texas. Yet, except for a sentence here or paragraph there, they have been omitted from the pages of Texas history books.

Even before Texas fought for and won its independence from Mexico, Jewish pioneers came to Texas. They blazed trails, developed land, founded settlements, established schools and symphonies, and built families and businesses. They came to Texas as early as 1821 when Samuel Isaacs was one of Stephen F. Austin's "Old Three Hundred" colonists.

The Texas Jewish Historical Society recognizes the need for Jewish Texans to be included in those pages of history and has initiated a project to ensure that it happens.

In May, the Officers and Board of Directors of TJHS approved funding for a project to survey and identify topics for possible inclusion in the revised and expanded *Handbook of Texas*. Funding was approved to hire two researchers and writers, Cathy Schechter and Ruth Winegarten, both of Austin. Their research advisory committee will be chaired by Board member Jimmy Kessler, also of Austin.

The *Handbook of Texas* is the comprehensive and authoritative encyclopedia of the state first conceived by Texas historian Walt Prescott Webb in 1940. The first two-volume *Handbook* was published in 1952 by the Texas State Historical Association. It was at once recognized as a "unique and unparalleled work of scholarship" and quickly became one of the most widely used books in Texas. The original *Handbook* was updated with a third volume in 1976.

Today, thousands of students, scholars, and citizens are involved in a ten year project to revise and expand the *Handbook* to six volumes of 1,000 pages each. The new edition will be published in 1995. The six volumes will contain over 25,000 entries on the significant people, places, events, cultural traditions, and physical features of Texas.

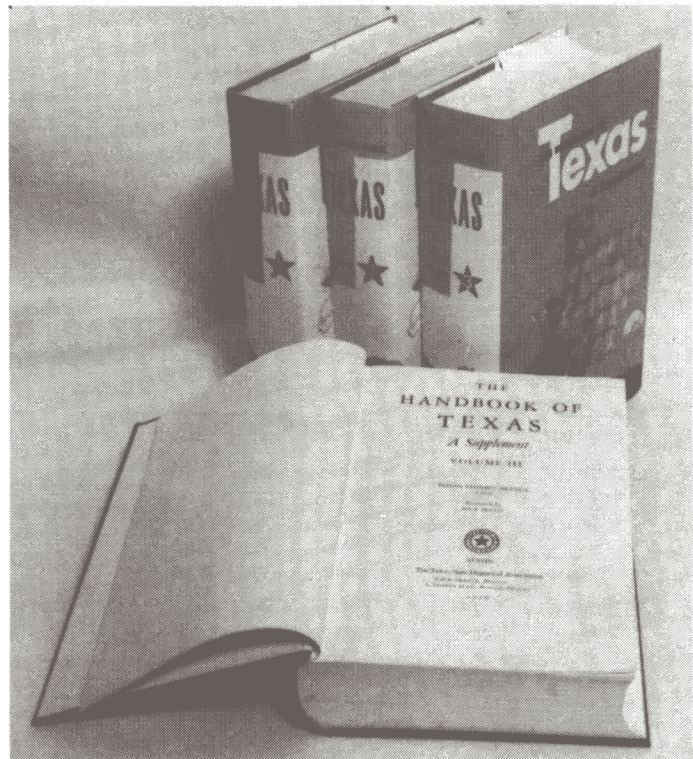
Cathy Schechter and Ruth Winegarten recently met with *Handbook* editor, Dr. Tom Cutrer, who enthusiastically endorsed the Texas Jewish Historical Society participation in the expansion of the *Handbook*.

Said Cutrer, "We are delighted to have the Texas Jewish Historical Society as partners and co-sponsors in this project. Although there are a number of competent individuals already working on articles regarding the Texas Jewish experience, there has not been a central organization that has taken responsibility for overseeing the integration of these materials or placing them in the larger context of Texas and Jewish history. A project such as this is long overdue."

Winegarten and Schechter are in the process of formulating a survey questionnaire which will be sent to Jewish federations, congregations, men's and women's organizations, archives, libraries, local historical societies, families, businesses, and individuals (including Society members) to identify Jewish topics for possible inclusion in the *Handbook*. All topics are subject to the approval of the editorial committee of the *Handbook of Texas* and all assignments will be made by Cutrer.

It is anticipated by the TJHS Research Advisory Committee that surveys will be mailed in October or November.

Information received from completed survey questionnaires will be shared with researchers and writers for the *Handbook of Texas* and will become part of the permanent TJHS archives at the Barker Texas History Center at the University of Texas at Austin. ●



Did you know . . .

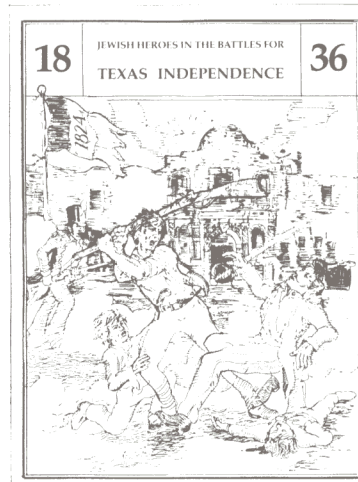
- The first cotton mill in Texas was established by Jacob de Cordova.
- The first kindergarten in Texas was founded by Olga Kohlberg of El Paso.
- Carrie Marcus Neiman co-founded the most fashionable department store in the nation.
- Sam Houston's surgeon general was Dr. Albert Moses Levy.
- The Carr P. Collins prestigious Texas Institute of Letters Award for literature was awarded to Frances Sanger Mossiker of Dallas.
- David S. Kaufman, a Jewish attorney, represented Texas in the U.S. Congress from 1845 to 1851.
- San Antonio's first symphony orchestra was founded by Anna Hertzberg.
- Hattie Henenberg, a Jewish attorney of Dallas, served as a member of the 1925 Texas All Woman Supreme Court.
- Adah Isaacs Menken was also known as the Naked Lady of Nacogdoches.
- Adolphus Sterne of Nacogdoches was a Jew who served in both the upper and lower houses of the Republic of Texas Congress.
- Rosanna Osterman of Galveston turned her home into a hospital during the Civil War and spied for the Confederacy.
- Helena Landa helped her husband free their slaves and ran eight businesses after the Civil War.
- Fanya Feldman Kruger of Austin was a Texas Jew who published three books of poetry.
- Rabbi Henry Cohen of Galveston helped Russian Jewish immigrants to resettle in Texas from 1906-1914.

JEWISH HEROES IN THE BATTLES FOR TEXAS INDEPENDENCE

(All materials researched & compiled by Natalie Ornish)

CHRONOLOGY

- 1812 Magee-Gutierrez Expedition - **Samuel Noah**
- 1826 Fredonian Rebellion - **Adolphus Sterne**
- 1832 Battle of Nacogdoches - **Adolphus Sterne**
Louis (Moses) Rose
- 1832 Battle of Travis at Anahuac - **David Levi Kokernot**
- 1832 Beginning of First Texas Navy - **David Levi Kokernot**,
Captain of schooner, *Stephen F. Austin*
- 1835 Battle of Concepción - **David Levi Kokernot**
- 1835 "The Grass Fight" - **David Levi Kokernot**
- 1835 The Storming of Bexar (early battle at the Alamo)
Dr. Albert Moses Levy, "Surgeon General of the
Texas Volunteers"
Louis (Moses) Rose
Herman Ehrenberg
- 1836 Battle of the Alamo - **Anthony Wolfe** (killed)
Michael and **Benjamin Wolfe** (killed)
(sons of Anthony)
Louis (Moses) Rose
- 1836 Battle at Refugio - **Edward Isaac Johnson**
- 1836 Battle at Coletto Creek - **Edward Isaac Johnson**
Herman Ehrenberg
Benjamin M. Mordecai
M. K. Moses
- 1836 Massacre at Goliad - **Edward Isaac Johnson** (killed)
Herman Ehrenberg
Benjamin M. Mordecai
M. K. Moses
- 1836 Special Mission for Sam Houston -
David Levi Kokernot
- 1836 Battle of San Jacinto - **Private Kohn**
Albert Emanuel
Samuel Isaacks
Eugene Joseph Chimene
- 1836 Mexican General Santa Anna, captive of the Texas
Army, is escorted to Washington, D.C. to confer
with President Jackson - escort included **Major**
Leon Dyer
- 1836-37 **Dr. Isaac M. Lyons** made Surgeon General of Texas
under General Tom Green.
- 1837 The war with Mexico continues.
Dr. A. M. Levy re-enlists in Texas Navy. Ship
Independence attacked near Velasco and Dr.
Levy imprisoned in Mexico after battle.
- 1836-42 Patrolling waters of the Gulf of Mexico with the Texas
Navy aboard the *Brutus* and *Independence* was
Dr. Albert Moses Levy (Two enlistments)
- 1840 Battle at Plum Creek - **Benjamin M. Mordecai** (killed)



Cover of invitation launching opening of exhibit which will go on tour throughout Texas. For information write: Dallas Jewish Archives, 7900 Northaven Rd., Dallas, Tx. 75230, or call 214 739-2737.

JEWISH HEROES EXHIBIT OPENS IN DALLAS

"Jewish Heroes in the Battles for Texas Independence", a Dallas celebration of the Sesquicentennial, opened in June at the Dallas Jewish Archives to a large group from many cities. The exhibit is scheduled to go on tour and will be shown in libraries, schools, synagogues, community centers, and universities throughout Texas.

The original exhibit consisted of ten panels of heroes who fought in the battles and an eleventh panel on "Other Prominent Jews of the Republic." There was also a display of rare papers and chronology of the Jews who fought in minor battles as well as the major battles at the Alamo, Goliad, and San Jacinto.

In addition, the Dallas Gala featured a talk by Saul Viener of Richmond, Virginia. Dr. Viener is an author and chairman of the Board of Trustees of the American Jewish Historical Society.

Mrs. Natalie Ornish, curator and chief researcher of the exhibit said, "The purpose of the exhibit is to portray the fact that Jews were in Texas from the earliest times under Spain and later Mexico, as well as in the era of the Republic and that they had great impact on the history of Texas."

Several descendants of the men of the Republic were among the guests at the grand opening gala. Among them was Jessie Levy Foss of Lafayette, La. Mrs. Foss is the great granddaughter of Dr. Albert Moses Levy. Dr. Levy fought in battles for Texas independence for six years, from the Storming of Bexar in 1835 to service in the Texas navy. Mrs. Foss arranged for historic items still in her family to be available to the public for the first time including a picture of the sword Dr. Levy used at the storming of Bexar, Dr. Levy's commission in the Texas navy signed by President David G. Burnet, and a letter in Dr. Levy's handwriting.

Also attending the opening were Susan Dyer Johnson of Corpus Christi, her sons Douglas and Patrick, and Peggy Bobbitt of Richardson and her daughter Karen. They are descendants of Major Leon Dyer, a prominent Texas Jew who was chosen by Stephen F. Austin and Sam Houston to escort the captive General Santa Anna to Washington, D.C. to meet with President Andrew Jackson.

One of Texas' foremost pioneers, Jacob de Cordova, was represented by his great-granddaughter, Gladys Kingsbury, and Vann de Cordova of Beaumont. Mr. de Cordova loaned for display a letter signed by Rebecca (Mrs. Jacob) de Cordova and the actual speech given when Jacob's body was buried with honors in the State Cemetery in Austin.

The exhibit was sponsored in large part by Congregation Shearith Israel, Temple Emanu-El, Andy Jacobs, and Dr. and Mrs. Edwin P. Ornish. There were many other contributors, including the Texas Jewish Historical Society.

TJHS NEWS . . .

The Texas Jewish Historical Society Executive Board met at the 7th Annual Gathering in Dallas in March, 1986 and also in Marshall, Texas at the home of Mr. & Mrs. Louis Kariel, Jr. in May. The following items are a summary of other activities sponsored by the Society:

- TJHS will sponsor an essay contest for elementary and high school students during the coming school year. The topics this year will be "How My Family Came to Texas" or "Growing Up Jewish in Texas". Elementary students will write 1000 words or less and high school students will write up to 1500 words. Natalie Ornish will chair the essay committee and Doris Glasser and Cathy Schechter will prepare guidelines. Announcements to Jewish schools and Sunday Schools throughout the state will be sent in the fall of 1986.

- A Publication Committee was established to oversee the printing of the newsletter and to read other items of interest to the TJHS for potential sponsorship for publication by the TJHS. Jimmy Kessler will chair the committee.

- We need to keep a minimum of 30 subscriptions to the Western States Jewish Historical quarterly to continue as co-sponsor of the journal. Any member interested in a subscription should contact President Ed Lax, 4507 Goodfellow, Dallas, Texas 75229 for more information.

- Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Bass of Houston are planning a rededication of the Jewish cemetery in Hempstead, Texas in the fall of 1986. Mrs. Bass is a descendant of Samuel Schwarz, a Jewish pioneer, philanthropist, and veteran of the Confederacy. The Society has been asked to attend the rededication and Cathy Schechter, who is also a descendant of the Schwarz family, will be working with Mr. Bass.

- The 8th Annual Gathering of the Texas Jewish Historical Society will be held the weekend of March 7, 1987 in Ft. Worth.

- Mrs. Kariel informed the Board that a history of Temple Emanu-El of Longview, Texas has been written by Sandra G. Sachnowitz. The book is entitled *The Roots of Temple Emanu-El of Longview, Texas*. Copies can be obtained for \$5.00 by writing Mrs. Gary Sachnowitz, 1214 Hillcrest Drive, Longview, Texas 75601 or calling her at 214-757-5223. ●

Excerpts from Ruthe Winegarten's *Texas Women: A Pictorial History, From Indians to Astronauts*,

Eakin Press, 1986. Order from Rosegarden Press, Box 49084, Austin, Tx 78765. Price: \$25.

Many public institutions we now take for granted were founded or held together by the efforts of women. Schools, churches, synagogues, libraries, kindergartens, and hospitals were among women's highest civic priorities, along with legal reform, social welfare institutions, the arts, civil rights, sanitation, public health, and beautification.

Rosanna Ostermann (1809-1866) was one of Texas's earliest Jewish leaders. She and her husband settled in Galveston in 1839 and opened a general store. She established the city's first Jewish cemetery, brought the first rabbi to Texas in 1852, and held the first religious services in her home in 1856.

During the Civil War and Union blockade, most Galvestonians left the island. But Rosanna stayed behind to nurse the wounded on both sides and spy for the Confederacy. Her will left funds for charities throughout the nation — hospitals, synagogues, a nondenominational widows' and orphans' home in Galveston, and a hostel for sailors.

Helena Landa and her husband Joseph moved to New Braunfels from England before the Civil War and went into business. After Lincoln's 1863 Emancipation Proclamation, Joseph freed their slaves; he was tried by local Confederates and fled to Mexico to avoid being hanged. Helena operated their general store, flour and sawmills, and cotton gin. She preserved Jewish traditions by reciting Friday night prayers, lighting candles, and observing Passover. Her husband was able to return home after the Civil War.

Olga Bernstein Kohlberg brought the idea of preschool training from her native Germany to El Paso. She and the Woman's Club persuaded the local school board to start the first public kindergarten in Texas in 1893, a year after the women had opened

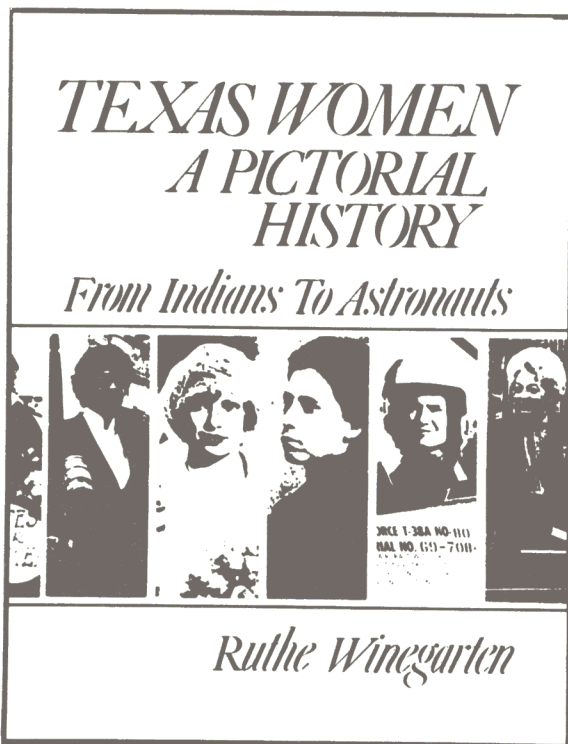
a private one. Other women across the state soon took up the kindergarten movement.

Kohlberg led in establishing other community institutions, including El Paso's first public hospital and a sanatorium for babies in New Mexico. She was also a founder of the El Paso Public Library and president of its board for thirty-two years. She devoted her life to civic improvements and the woman's club movement, which she saw as "giving inspiration and enlightenment to those in a community that are organized for special work; civic, humanitarian . . . to set up standards, spread information, and . . . produce leaders."

Anna Hertzberg formed a club when she saw a problem or wanted to get something done. She started the Tuesday Music Club to sponsor concerts and scholarships, and organized an association which launched San Antonio's first symphony. She was a founder of the San Antonio Women's Club, which started the city's first public library.

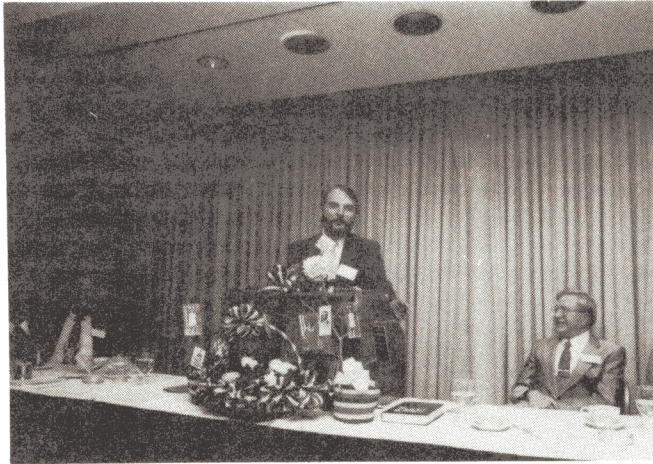
As president of the San Antonio Council of Jewish Women, Hertzberg established the city's first night school and sold the idea to the school board. Councils of Jewish Women in other cities were active in community service as well. The Dallas Council established that city's first free milk fund (still in existence) and provided "penny lunches" for poor school children until the public schools opened lunchrooms.

For 35 years, Hertzberg succeeded at almost every type of club work. Under her leadership as president from 1911 to 1913, the Texas Federation of Women's Clubs influenced the passage of laws protecting married women's property rights. She was president of the Texas Kindergarten Association and even got elected to the San Antonio School Board in 1915, years before women got the vote. She also chaired the Texas Commission of the Panama Pacific International Exposition. ●



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 7TH ANNUAL GATHERING

by Ed Lax



Dr. Don Carleton, Director of the Barker Texas History Center at the University of Texas, addressed the 7th Annual Gathering.



Immediate past president Lionel Schooler and new President Ed Lax. Bob Beer, right, is also pictured.

The seventh annual gathering of the Texas Jewish Historical Society was held March 14-16 and hosted by the Dallas Jewish Archives of the Jewish Community Center in Dallas. Delegates from all over the state attended.

The Society attended Friday evening services at Temple Shalom. Rabbi Kenneth D. Roseman gave a historical synopsis of the rabbinic life of Isaac Mayer Wise. An Oneg Shabbat in honor of TJHS was held.

On Saturday afternoon, the officers and directors met to review the prior year's activities and to outline a course of action for the coming year. Later on Saturday, the entire membership attended a seminar and slide presentation at Temple Emanu-El conducted by Rabbi Sheldon Zimmerman and Ms. Gerry Cristol, Temple archivist. The group also toured the Temple archives room and viewed art treasures.

Highlighting the Gathering was the Saturday evening dinner, preceded by a cocktail reception honoring Dr. Don Carleton, director of the Barker Texas History Center at the University of Texas. Dr. Carleton addressed the Gathering with some background history and research obstacles met while writing his recently published book, *Red Scare* (Texas Monthly Press). *Red Scare* deals with the McCarthy era as it impacted Houston.

Rose Biderman of Dallas Jewish Archives also gave a slide presentation on "Deep Ellum", the hub of Jewish business activity in Dallas a generation ago.

The evening concluded with the election of new officers and the presentation of certificates of appreciation to outgoing president Lonnie Schooler, Congregation Shearith Israel, and Temple Emanu-El for their fine work in gathering and preserving Texas Jewish History.

A meeting of the general membership was held Sunday morning at the Dallas Jewish Community Center, followed by four excellent workshops. Dr. Carleton told us of the importance of collecting and preserving local history and of the availability of the archival vaults at the Barker Center for Texas History. He recounted a series of events that pointed to the fact that historical "gems" may show up in the oddest of places. Ruthe Winegarten spoke of the important role of Texas Jewish women in shaping the history of the state. Her new book, *Texas Women: A Pictorial History* has recently been published.

Natalie Ornish highlighted the many brave Jewish men who fought with other Texans in the battles during the War of Independence from Mexico.

Chester de Cordova, a direct descendent of Jacob de Cordova, spoke to us about his illustrious forebear and gave us some insight into personal family history. In addition, he made available for viewing mementos in honor of and books by and about Jacob de Cordova. ●

• The 8th Annual Gathering of the Texas Jewish Historical Society will be held March 7-9, 1987 in Fort Worth.

• Jewish organizations have played a key role in Texas Jewish history by uniting the Jewish community and representing Jews in the secular world. Organizational minutes and records are excellent sources of historical data. The Texas Jewish Historical Society urges organizations to submit their materials for preservation in the Archives as well as articles and photographs for the TJHS newsletter.

Items for the newsletter should be sent to Texas Jewish Historical Society P. O. Box 50501, Austin, Texas 78763. For information about submitting archival materials, please contact Cathy Schechter in care of TJHS.

Materials for the TJHS archives, housed at the Barker Texas History Center at the University of Texas Austin, need not be originals. Copies are welcome and encouraged.

Organizational memberships are welcome.

Houston: From Centennial to Sesquicentennial

by Lionel Schooler

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1936 was a watershed year in Houston's Jewish history.

The Jewish Community Center (known as the Y. W. and Y. M. H. A.) was founded in that year and began operations on Chartres Street on the east side of downtown Houston.

The Jewish Community Council, the forerunner of the Jewish Federation of Greater Houston, was also founded in that year.

Congregation Beth Israel's newly hired assistant rabbi, Robert I. Kahn, was instrumental in revitalizing the temple's religious school. He also formed a youth group known as Temple Juniors.

In 1937, Rabbi Henry Cohen of Congregation B'nai Israel in Galveston delivered the invocation at the second Inauguration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. By this time, Rabbi Cohen was nationally and internationally renowned as a Jewish and ecumenical leader.

The Jewish Community Center soon moved to its second location at Caroline and Blodgett Streets in the area southwest of downtown Houston (now occupied by radio station KNUZ).

In 1941, Congregation Adath Yeshurun celebrated its 50th anniversary, making it the second oldest, continually active synagogue in Houston after Beth Israel.

With the outbreak of World War II, Rabbi Kahn departed Houston to become a military chaplain for the duration of the war.

Rabbi Hyman Judah Schachtel was elected Chief Rabbi of Beth Israel in August, 1943, bringing to an end the 43-year tenure of Rabbi Henry Barnston, who continued to serve Beth Israel as Rabbi Emeritus until his death in 1949.

Within two months after Rabbi Schachtel's election, a vote occurred at Beth Israel concerning whether that synagogue should adopt "Basic Principles". Under the leadership of then-president Leopold L. Meyer, and chairman of the Policy Formulation Committee, Israel Friedlander, "Basic Principles" were adopted. These "Principles" acknowledged the unity of God and the acceptance of Judaism, but rejected the notion that Jews any longer represented a "nation", as opposed to a religious community. It emphasized that the adherents to the "Principle" considered their nation to be the United States, and their nationality to be American. It rejected the "obligatory nature" of dietary laws, priestly purity and rabbinic and Mosaic laws observed by Conservative and Orthodox Jews as "foreign to the beliefs and observances of Judaism in modern America." The use of Hebrew in religious services was to be downplayed because that language had "become unintelligible to the vast majority of our coreligionists". With regard to Jews in Palestine, the obligation perceived by persons favoring adoption of the "Principles" was to promote the spiritual, cultural and social welfare of coreligionists here.

At a meeting on November 23, 1943, adoption of the "Basic Principles" was debated. The result of the meeting was that these "Principles" were adopted, creating a schism in Congregation Beth Israel. Rabbi Kahn resigned from the congregation, as did approximately 140 members. These people formed a new Reform congregation, naming it Emanu El. The membership met at the First Presbyterian Church until it bought land on the outskirts of town on Sunset Blvd. across from Rice Institute.

Rabbi Kahn was elected first rabbi of Emanu El and served in that capacity for 30 years.

In 1945, discussions commenced between leaders of Congregations Beth El and Adath Yeshurun on the wisdom of merging their two synagogues. At the time, Beth El had the smaller membership, and both were concerned about their survival . . .

A merger of Beth El and Adath Yeshurun was agreed upon and in 1946, congregation Beth Yeshurun was formed. In 1947, Beth Yeshurun moved to a new location, 3501 Southmore Blvd., in southeast Houston.

The first rabbi of Beth Yeshurun was William S. Malev. A year later, he was joined by Cantor George Wagner.

In 1943, the Jewish Home for the Aged was formed. It moved from Branard Street to its first permanent location on Chimney Rock Road in 1945, where it remained for almost 30 years.

The first congregational day school in the United States offering both secular and religious education in a combined curriculum was begun in 1954 at Congregation Beth Yeshurun, headed by Peggy Samet, who was joined by the school's first educational director, Joshua Weinstein.

. . . Sources indicate that the Jewish population of Houston in 1950 was 10,000-12,000 out of 596,000 persons living in Houston. By 1985, the Jewish population was estimated to be 40,000 out of a total population of 2,900,000.

From six synagogues at the end of the 1960s, the greater Houston area now boasts 24 representing the entire spectrum of Jewish religious observance and the broad geographical expanse of Jewish residency.

And so it goes and grows. Greater Houston continues to expand and with it, the size and quality of the Jewish community. ●

**Lionie Schooler, a Houston attorney, is the immediate past president of the Texas Jewish Historical Society.*

The next regional board meeting for the Texas Jewish Historical Society will be held in Austin on September 21, 1986 at the Sheraton Crest at 12:00 noon. Items for the agenda will be announced shortly. All board meetings are open to the public. If you are interested in attending, contact Cathy Schechter at P. O. Box 50501, Austin, Texas 78763 or 512-479-6840.

LOCAL NEWS . . .

• **Ft. Worth**—The Ft. Worth Jewish Community's Sesquicentennial Celebration and tour was held Sunday, June 29, 1986 and was attended by over 300 people. The celebration centered around bus tours of historical sites in Ft. Worth and exhibits of historical Jewish businesses, families and organizations. The committee is continuing their work toward coordinating a commemorative book about the Jews of Ft. Worth. Publication date is not yet set.

• **Matagorda County**—The gravesite of Dr. Albert Moses Levy was rededicated with a state historical marker on May 4, 1986 with about 30 family members and others from the Dr. Albert Moses Levy Post 607 of Houston attending. They were joined by the members of the Matagorda Cemetery Association and the Sons and Daughters of the Texas Revolution. Dr. Levy's great granddaughter, Jessie Foss, gave a talk at the rededication.

CALENDAR . . .

• **September 7, 1986**—"The History of the Jews of Waco 1848-1986", Temple Rodef Sholom, Waco.

• **September 7-14, 1986**—"Cultural History of Our Residents", Seven Acres Jewish Home for the Aged, Houston. Living history project to determine residents' first impressions of Texas with maps of Texas and the world to show residents' birth places and routes to Texas.

• **Ongoing**—American Jewish Committee (Houston) Oral History Projects. This is the 3rd year of the Iris Siff Houston Jewish Women of Achievement Program, which is part of the National American Jewish Committee's Oral History Program. 8-10 women are interviewed for significant contributions to the Jewish community or community at large. Housed at the AJC in Houston. Those interested are invited to call the AJC.

The AJC Houston is also involved in its first year of a Holocaust Oral History Project in conjunction with the Jewish Federation of Greater Houston and Jewish Holocaust Survivors. A library in Houston will be created to house Holocaust memoirs. This will be an ongoing project and those interested should call the AJC, 713-524-1133

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