



NEWSLETTER

P.O. BOX 50501 AUSTIN, TEXAS 78763

SUMMER, 1989

9th ANNUAL GATHERING IN JEFFERSON MILTON SMITH OF AUSTIN ELECTED NEW PRESIDENT

The ninth annual Gathering of the Texas Jewish Historical Society, TeJHaS, began with a capacity banquet at the Excelsior House in Jefferson, Texas on March 10, 1989, while the overflow dinner crowd was served across the street at the Black Swan Restaurant.

Following the dinner, the entire assemblage adjourned to the nearby restored old synagogue/community playhouse, for a Sabbath service conducted by Rabbi Jimmy Kessler, the founding president of TeJHaS. A delightful reception was held in the house adjoining the synagogue.

On Saturday morning, the members in attendance were treated to presentations by Jan Statmun on oral histories of Jews in east Texas from 1930-1950, and by Ruthe Winegarten and Cathy Schechter on "Deep in the Heart: The Lives and Legends of Texas Jews", the forthcoming book sponsored by TeJHaS. The afternoon was devoted to sight seeing.

At 7:00 pm, 100 members joined for dinner presided over by President Ginger Jacobs. The scholar-in-residence, Dr. Louis Schmier, Professor of History at Valdosta State College in Georgia addressed the group on "Yes Virginia, There are Jews in the South."

Following the presentation, the following officers were elected: Milton Smith, President; Rabbi Jimmy Kessler, Vice President; Doris Glasser, Recording Secretary; Fay Brachman, Membership Secretary; Ima Joy Gandler, Acquisitions Secretary; Kay Goldman, Treasurer; and Allan Mondell, Archivist. Elected to the Board were: Robert Beer, Stanley Glasser, Ginger Jacobs, Frances Kallison, Karen Kaplan, Audriel Kariel, Louis Kariel, Jr., David Lack, Phil Leonard, Cynthia Mondell, Marvin Rich, Rabbi Ken Roseman, Nat Rosenblum, Barbara Rubin, Cathy Schechter, Lionel Schooler and Ruthe Winegarten.

Following the election of officers, a reception and book signing by Dr. Schmier was held in the Bankers Building.

Sunday morning, TeJHaS held the major business meeting of the weekend. Among the reports were updates on plans for next year's Gathering which will be held in Austin concurrent with the meeting of the Texas State Historical Association. This year TeJHaS will sponsor a special presentation on Texas Jewry featuring papers by Denise Joseph of Brownsville and Tommy Stringer of Corsicana along with commentary by Ruthe Winegarten of Austin and Lionel Schooler of Houston.

In addition, reports were made by Fay Brachman on membership, which she has successfully increased to over 200. Doris Glasser described the plans for proceeding with the writing of a school curriculum on the Texas Jewish experience. Ima Joy Gandler discussed the status of TeJHaS's acquisition efforts. Kay Goldman reported on the status of the treasury and the disbursement of dedicated funds.

The outgoing president, Ginger Jacobs, expressed her thanks to all her officers and board members, especially Phyllis and Herb Kadish for their tireless work on behalf of TeJHaS.

In taking over the gavel, Milton T. Smith, the new president, expressed everyone's enduring thanks and appreciation to Ginger Jacobs for her years of service to TeJHaS. Audrey Kariel presented a special gift to Ginger and Milton presented her with a plaque in recognition of her work.

President Smith announced the creation of a permanent endowment fund for TeJHaS and pledged \$5,000 over 5 years. Mike and Ginger Jacobs joined him with a similar pledge. Fay Brachman and her husband, Bob Beer, Shelley

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RABBI JIMMY KESSLER, EDITOR

MILTON SMITH, PRESIDENT



PROFESSOR LOUIS SCHMIER ADDRESSES TeJHaS BANQUET

Louis Schmier, Professor of History at Valdosta College in Valdosta, Georgia addressed the annual Gathering's banquet on Saturday evening, March 11, 1989. The topic of his presentation was "Yes, Virginia, There are Jews in the South."

Of the major Jewish branches in America, the most prominent in the South has been Reform. Schmier reminded the group that the South was very receptive to the Jews inspite of the difficult journey over cultural chasms and it was the first place where Jews were granted the right to vote.

Judaism adapted to the needs of Southern Jews and to the world of the South. Ethnic socio-cultural traditions mixed with religious rituals and permitted the Jews to be more than eternal aliens and inconsequential newcomers. Though anti-semitism never disappeared, for most Jews, the South became a new Palestine.

In his research, Professor Schmier found that Texas was not particularly different in its reception of Jews from the rest of the South. Jews were clearly involved in the Texas Revolution, on both sides of the Civil War and in the economic development of this part of the U.S. Jews were and are legislators, mayors, aldermen, councilmen, editors, publishers, fire and police chiefs, lodge leaders, civil rights leaders, professionals, entrepreneurs, industrial leaders, indian chiefs, artists, and some even reached national fame such as Judah

Judah P. Benjamin and Robert Strauss.

Dr. Schmier challenged the group to consider the preservation of the Southern Jewish experience as almost a religious mission. Involvement in Jewish history gives a sense of family and friends.

The professor commended TeJHaS for its efforts and its collection of materials that might otherwise have been lost. He expressed the hope that we would collect more oral histories and encourage further research. At the moment, he is the only full time faculty member studying Southern Jewish history on a full time basis.

TeJHaS was pleased to make available for sale, Dr. Schmeir's book, "Reflections of Southern Jewry", which he then was kind enough to autograph. *Copies are still available from TeJHaS. Please write if you would care to make a purchase.*

SMITH PRESIDENT *continued from page 1*

and Jimmy Kessler, Cathy Schechter and Jaron Winston also pledged \$1,000 each.

The President explained to the group that though there was currently \$25,000 in the treasury, part of those funds were dedicated for several projects. Therefore, the creation of an endowment fund was necessary for the future of TeJHaS. He encouraged as many members as possible to consider a 5 year commitment to the TeJHaS Endowment Fund.

Following the business meeting, the members were treated to a delightful session of reflections by members of the Jewish families that once lived in Jefferson. Mrs. Elizabeth Eldridge Bettelheim of Alameda, California read some of her old letters of life in Jefferson; the Hart brothers, Van E. of Montgomery and Carol B. of New Orleans shared stories of their childhood; and Mrs. Carolyn Simon spoke of her father-in-law's recollections from his early days in Jefferson.

It was the clear concensus of those who had attended all previous 8 Gatherings that this was the best. All credit is due to Audrey and Louis Kariel. *yah-shar ko-ach.*

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Kneeling, left to right, Les Simon of Jacksonville, Jacob Moss's great grandson; Carol B. Hart of New Orleans, son of Lillie O. Hart and Oppenheim family descendant. Front row, standing, left to right, Carolyn Simon, Jacob Moss and Kalesky families; Sharyn Pleasant of Houston, Segal family; Madeline Segal Hall of Marshall; Jeanne Solman Holley of Houston, Segal family; Fran Tillman of Sherman, M. Doppelmayr and Eva Eberstadt descendant; Van E. Hart of Montgomery, Ala., Oppenheim family; and Elizabeth Eldridge Bettelheim of Alameda, Calif. Back row, Joe Weisman Hirsch of Fort Worth; Louis Kariel, Jr. of Marshall and Hoy H. Felton, Jr., both Doppelmayr family descendants. [TeJHaS Meeting, March 16, 1989, Courtesy of Jefferson Jimplecute]

A CALL FOR ARTICLES

The Fall Edition of the TeJHaS Newsletter will be expanded to include articles on Texas Jewish History. Please send your material to Editor, 3008 Ave O, Galveston, TX, 77550 by 7/31/89.



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TeJHaS
ANNUAL MEMEBERSHIP

I am enclosing my contribution of \$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 \$1000 to the Texas Jewish Historical Society for the 1989 membership year.

Classification of Membership: \$25-Annual Member; \$50-Supporting Member; \$100-Sponsor and Organization; \$250-Sustaining Member; \$500-Benefactor; \$1000-Patron.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (____) _____

I am interested in serving on a TeJHaS committee.

My areas of interest are: _____

Please furnish us with a brief family history for our archives.

Contributions to TeJHaS are tax deductible within the limits of the law.

Please Clip Application and Send To
TeJHaS
c/o Kay Goldman, Treasurer
P. O. Box 1508
San Marcos, Texas 78666



Texas Jewish Historical Society
TeJHaS
P. O. Box 50501
Austin, Texas 78763

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DATED MATERIAL

YOU ARE INVITED TO ATTEND THE TeJHaS BOARD MEETING, JUNE 18, AUSTIN-CREST HOTEL, 10-3, AUSTIN