



NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 10193 • Austin, Texas 78766-0193 • Fall 1991

Cemetery Restoration Project Planned

There is a Jewish cemetery in the city of Gonzales which is well-maintained by the survivors of the interred there. A second Jewish cemetery exists about three miles north of the city on a ranch, isolated from all the world, except for a nearby pumping oilwell and a herd of cattle.

It is a rather small area, about 50 feet wide and 100 feet long, surrounded by a wrought-iron fence; an inscription on the metal gate says, "Jewish Cemetery." Parts of the fence are bent over, some of the markers are leaning or have fallen over, but at least 13 of them are readable to some extent. Weeds have grown up around the area, making it difficult to read everything.

It is the intention of the cemetery committee to get this cemetery restored to a decent condition. We are also researching the records of Gonzales County to learn all we can about how and why a Jewish cemetery was located in this particular place.

The following names and burial dates (if available) were apparent on the markers that could be read:

Jacob Levy	1896
Caroline Frank	1862
Harry Green	1896
Henry Gerson	1861
Joseph Haas	1872
Caroline Hyman	1864
Charles Levyson	1866
Jeanette Hirsch	1873
Hannah Frank	1863
Aron Frank	1863
Alfred Halfin	1901
Paula Levyson	1878
Gertrude Levyson	1881

It is hoped some of our members

may furnish further information.

When one realizes that this cemetery was established during the Civil War, so many questions come to mind. We will do all we can to provide the

answers. If any readers have information pertaining to any of the families mentioned above, please contact Don or Gertrude Teter, 5013 Glenhaven, Baytown, Texas 77521 (713-424-5829).

Summer and Fall Meetings Offer Attendees Glances of Texas Cultural Melting Pot

TJHS members who attended the Summer meeting in San Antonio June 8 - 9 were treated to more than just terrific Mexican food. The group enjoyed a private tour of the Institute of Texan Cultures Jewish Section including the Jewish Wall. Following the tour, longtime San Antonio residents Jack Frost, Selma Weiner, Helen Jacobson and Betty Cohen explained details of their family histories.

Richard Santos presented a scholarly report on the Crypto-Jews which was followed by a lively group discussion.

This October, the board met in Fort Worth for the Fall meeting. Those in attendance had the opportunity to view the "Soviet Space" exhibit on dis-

play at the Will Rogers Memorial Complex. The exhibit will run through January 1. More than 60 Soviet space artifacts are on exhibit and the TJHS viewers even got to "feel" the effects of weightlessness by going through the walk-in model in the exhibit.

On Saturday, Oct. 5, the TJHS members met with Russian immigrants - old and new. The experiences of the most recent Russian immigrants are quite different from those who came in much earlier times.

TJHS President Fay Brachman and husband, Leon, hosted the group at their house Saturday evening.

Information regarding the next big event - The Gathering in Galveston will be presented in detail in the Winter newsletter.

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News and Notes

It is requested that all material for our archives be sent to Don Teter, Archivist, rather than directly to the Barker Library. We mainly want family histories at this time. Our collection at the Barker Library is being catalogued at this time by Ruth Ginsburg of Austin, working one day a week as a volunteer. When this task is completed, we will then submit the additional items which can be put into the designated categories.

It is requested that any other Jewish Historical Societies, Synagogues, Temples or organizations within the state, that maintain archives, send a list of their holdings. We may desire copies for the Barker, or may direct researchers to the source.

According to Ruth Ginsburg, our liaison to Barker, it is best if donors send clipped articles, noting the date and the source, rather than entire newspapers.

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The Texas Jewish Historical Society is going high tech! What that really means for you is that the editors are accepting submissions of newsletter items on computer disk. If you are interested in writing to us or submitting historical copy, please send it on a disk (either 3 1/2 or 5 1/4) word processed on an IBM compatible computer. We would also appreciate it if you would send in one hard copy (on paper) along with your disk. Be sure to give us your name and address as well, so that we can return the disk.

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We have received a request for information regarding prostitution in Texas during the period from 1877 - 1917. Ellen K. Brown, a researcher at Baylor is searching for information as she is compiling a master bibliography of papers and resources on this subject. If you have any information

that you can share with her on this subject, please send it to: Ellen K. Brown, Texas Collection, BU Box 7142, Waco, Tx. 76798. (817)755-1268

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Jacob Emanuel "Jake" Gandler, 68, died in Houston on Tuesday, July 30, 1991. He was born Aug. 2, 1922 in Waco to Ruben and Feige (Beerman) Gandler.

He graduated from Waco High School in 1939 and from Texas A&M in 1944 with a B.S. in engineering.

He was a captain in the U.S. Army Infantry in WW II and received the Silver Star, Bronze Star and Purple Heart.

He married Ima Joy Chodorow (longtime member of TJHS) in Waco on June 25, 1950. He was co-owner of an engineering firm until his retirement.

Jake Gandler was very involved in the Jewish community holding position such as president of both the temple and the federation in Waco.

TJHS member, Rabbi Larry Jackofsky delivered the eulogy.

Report from the President

by Fay Brachman

This is a 'report' of Leon's and my visits to the headquarters of the American Jewish Historical Society in Waltham, Mass and to a meeting of the Friends of the Touro Synagogue in Newport, Rhode Island.

We spent most of the afternoon of August 5 (Monday) at the headquarters of the American Jewish Historical Society on the campus of Brandeis University at Waltham, Mass. We visited with Ron Curhan, President; Bernard Wax, Director of Special Programs; and with Stanley Remsberg, Assistant Director. It was a very good meeting. They knew in advance we were coming, and our visit was cordial, informative, and relaxed. We talked about their activities - their vast archives - how they could be helpful to us in our planning. We watched their video for membership recruitment, and made arrangements for them to

send us a copy to 'show' to our board. They are very anxious to be 'of service' to us - they're delighted to have us a part of their organization. We talked about our activities, and when I mentioned the Gathering in March, Ron immediately said that he'd attend if he was invited!

I honestly feel that we made a good step forward in joining with the American Jewish Historical Society as an Institutional Member. I feel that we will receive our money's worth in information and ideas to make the money we spent worthwhile. Now it's up to us to make sure that we request their help and information...

I still 'tingle' when I think of the Touro Synagogue in Newport. I have been anxious to visit there for some time. Luckily for me, Leon met Robert Abrahms (now of Houston) who is a member of the Board of Directors of the Friends of the Touro Synagogue. He invited us to attend their annual

meeting on August 11th, and then the program they present annually (in the Synagogue) where George Washington's letter to the congregation is read. This year, the letter to Washington from a Mr. Seixas was read by Mr. Seixas great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great grandson! The letter in reply from Washington was read by Rhode Island's Governor - who just happens to be Jewish!

The Synagogue itself is lovely, and Leon and I were privileged to have a personal guided tour by the Rabbi! We were also introduced to the assembly at the meeting as visitors from Texas! (I was amazed that I knew a number of people there whom I had met at the meeting of the American Jewish Historical Society in Hartford, Connecticut in late May of this year.)

I hope that all of you will have the opportunity to visit the Touro Synagogue. I'm sure you'll 'tingle' just as I did.

ANNOUNCING TEXAS JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY ESSAY CONTEST

TeJHaS 1992 Essay Contest :

Open to all Middle and High School students.

Based on the Curriculum Guide to Deep in the Heart

**Middle School
6th - 9th Grades**

A diary entry (or entries) of approximately 1000 words, in the first person of a Jew coming to Texas for the first time in the last century or the beginning of this one. The entry can be based on the life of a real person, either known or a family member - or an appropriate imaginary personality. The entry should include:

- What life was like.
- What were the hardships?
- What was exciting about life.
- A Jewish component of life (attending a service, life cycle event or organization meeting.)

Photographs or drawing may accompany the entry.
(For more information, see Unit II in the curriculum guide.)

**High School
10 - 12 grades**

An essay, play or poem of 1000-1500 words based on Jimmy Kessler's quote:

"The history of Jews in Texas is important. We know of our Jewish heritage only because our religious ancestors thought enough of their posterity to record their life experiences. We can do no less."

Jimmy Kessler

Forward Deep in the Heart

The issues addressed should be:

- Why is it important to remember?
- The importance of History.
- Why do Jews value History?
- Anecdotes illustrating the point are suggested.
- What lessons can we learn (including

examples)?

(See page 37 in the Curriculum Guide for more information.)

PRIZES

First Prize in each category \$50.00 and a copy of Deep in the Heart for the winner.

\$50.00 for the institution that the winner attends.

Four Runner up prizes in each category of \$15.00 and a copy of Deep in the Heart.

Publication of the prizewinners' entries.

For more information, or to submit entries, contact: Ellen Mack, RJE
Beth-El Congregation
P.O. Box 2232
Fort Worth, Texas 76113

*Be sure to take your
family's oral history!
Before it's too late!!!*

TJHS NEWSLETTER

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Additional Newsletter credit goes to:

Meryl Kaplan Evans
Washington, D.C.
for typing and other assistance.

**Reflections of
Southern Jewry**

The Letters of Charles Wessolowsky (1878-1979)

These remarkable letters, written on a journey through the South and Southwest in 1878-1879, present a detailed record of the residents of the Jewish communities visited by Wessolowsky on his two-year odyssey.

Southwest communities visited and described include: Galveston, Brenham, Hempstead, Houston, Columbus, Luling, San Antonio, Navasota, Giddings, Austin, Rockdale, Round Rock, Palestine, Hearn, Calvert, Marlin, Waco, Corsicana, Mexia, Ennis, Dallas, Fort Worth, Sherman, Dennison and Paris. In each city, he tells about the people he met there.

Reflections of Southern Jewry	\$10.00
The Letters of Charles Wessolowsky	
Edited by Louis Schmier	
postage and handling	2.00
Tx sales tax	.80
total	\$12.80

send your orders to:
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San Marcos, Tx. 78666

Learning About the Past: The Crypto-

Tales from Richard Santos - speaker at the Summer meeting of the Texas Jewish Historical Society.

A child soon to be twelve years of age, approaches his grandfather and asks, "who are we, papa?"

The good humored, ever jovial grandfather looks perplexed as if he did not understand the question. "What do you mean?"

"Yes, who are we?" repeats the child. "Daddy says mommy es pura india, but she says he is a square head Spaniard."

"The Almeida's probably have some indian blood, but I was always told that we were Mexican Jews," says grandfather in a hushed tone of voice. "I was told that we were Portuguese and had lots of land and silver mines in Taxco and some businesses in Mexico City.

Something happened and the family lost it all. No one ever told me

what happened. All I know is that everything was lost and that the family moved to Puebla and from there to Concepcion del Oro, and from there to Laredo. But that was a long time ago. I don't even know if the family came from Spain or South America, maybe both. My grandfather used to say we were Mexican Jews and that I know."

For a child who was baptized a Roman Catholic, attended Methodist kindergarten, a Catholic elementary school, Presbyterian or Catholic Sunday services and a Baptist Sunday School, this was very confusing and mind-boggling. The child immediately assumed his grandfather was getting old. Retirement must have confused his memory.

The subject was never discussed again as the grandfather died shortly

thereafter.

Mother was right about Father. He was of Spanish and German descent. Mother was not pure india. However, it took some ten or twelve years after grandpa's death to discover how right he had been about the Almeida's. The child was now an adult and a university student of English and History. In backtracking the settlement of Texas he had reached the documentation of the conquest and colonization of the Kingdom of Nuevo Leon. This, in turn, had led to the Cavajal y de la Cueva family and its demise at the hands of the Mexican Inquisition.

Upon this point in his academic studies, the student was aware of the infamous Spanish Inquisition of World History. However, he was totally ignorant of its Mexican counterpart. The

SAN ANTONIO CIRCUS COLLECTOR, SENATOR ONE AND THE SAME

A San Antonio civic leader and state senator, Harry Hertzberg was an avid circus fan and prolific collector.

The son of Eli and Anna Hertberg was born in 1813. As a child he fell in

love with the circus and began collecting memorabilia and books in the early 1920's; he made friends with great performers who gave him gifts.

A devoted member of the San

Antonio Public Library board, he left his entire collection (the largest of its kind anywhere in the world) to the public library upon his death in 1940. Many prominent circus people attended the dedication of the museum collection in 1942.

The collection includes an ornate parade wagon; Tom Thumb's coach, built by P.T. Barnum; his miniature violin and even a cast of Tom Thumb's foot. Posters, acrobat bars, booklets describing the animals, route books, journals and photos, sheet music, book manuscripts and scrapbooks are also a part of the collection.

As a State Senator, Hertzberg supported suffrage (1919). "Our men (Hertzberg and fellow senators Burrough and Witt) stood like a stone wall manned with gattling guns," after living through two days of filibustering by the anti-suffragist movement. This quoted from the *Texas Suffragist* June 25, 26, 1919.



Harry Hertzberg inside the museum he donated to the City of San Antonio.

Jews

Mexican Inquisition had never been included in the history textbooks. The discovery immediately brought to mind not only grandfather's curious statement, but the common jokes about Monterrey, Nuevo Leon and its people. "La gente de Monterrey son muy judios, muy codos - the people of Monterrey are very Jewish, very tight."

Imagine the young college student's surprise when further research into the Carvajal y de la Cueva family led to the discover of Jorge de Almeida - the retired ship captain who had come to the Viceregency of New Spain circa 1568. Twelve years later he married Leonor de Carvajal shortly after the arrival of the conquistador Luis de Carvajal who had brought 200 Spanish and Portuguese Sephardic Jewish families for the establishment of the Kingdom of Nuevo Leon.

Almeida took his bride to his residence in Mexico City where he had silver mines and businesses in Taxco. He reportedly also owned some ships which sailed from the ports of Tampico, Veracruz and Acapulco.

Leonor, wife of Jorge Almeida was twice arrested by the Mexican Holy Office of the Inquisition. On December 8, 1958, she, her mother, sisters and her brothe were executed in Mexico City's best known and documented Auto do Fe. Jorge Almeida and his children were never arrested, although he was declared a fugitive and tried in absentia and executed in effigy.

With heartfelt remorse for having considered his grandfather ignorant and perhaps on the edge of senility, the young man decided to fill in the gaps of historical ignorance and prejudices and honor the memory of his ancestors. The next fifteen years were spent collecting documentary evidence, raw oral history data and cultural manifestations.

The result of Richard Santos' studies and explorations are being documented in a book in progress, entitled The Sephardic Colonization of the Spanish North American Frontier.

Hispanics Rediscover Jewish Identity

by Steven Almond

Excerpted from *New Mexico Magazine*

When Stanley M. Hordes began investigating New Mexico's Crypto-Jews a decade ago, he figured it to be a dead tradition.

But in 1981, Hordes' "dead" tradition sprang to life in New Mexico and came knocking at his door.

"When I was working as State Historian strangers would slip into my office, look around nervously, then tell me about some family in their town who didn't eat pork or prayed in a secret room," he recalls.

As these unsolicited visits continued and the descriptions of Crypto-Jewish rituals stacked up, a gradual chill of realization began to seize Hordes. "Could it be," he thought, "that after 500 years and thousands of miles these people that I studied might still exist?"

In Berta Trillo's home, the answer to this question burns brightly every Friday. On this night, the 46-year old Las Cruces resident celebrate a secret ritual she says her family has handed down for 500 years: the lighting of the Sabbath candles. Ten years ago, Trillo - who asked that her real name not be used - thought nothing of the candles. But when she stumbled across the scribbled confessions in her grandma's notepads, the ritual's meaning jolted into focus.

"The books had funny letters, funny words, unlike any prayer I'd heard before," she says. Before she could recognize the Hebrew script she came upon a blunt confession: "Jew. You are a Jew. We are Jews."

The realization terrified her. But it also explained a lot about her upbringing: her family's hidden worship, her inbred mistrust of Catholicism and a diet that adhered to Judaism's Kosher laws.

These days, the walls of Trillo's home are covered with Hebrew let-

ters painted in sloppy watercolor by her grandchildren. She says she wants to hand down the faith to her progeny. But, like other modern Crypto-Jews, she remains terrified of making her practice too public.

"After centuries of hiding, you can't expect these people to come out just because some researcher comes sniffing around," says Hordes, co-director with sociologist Dr. Tomas Atencio of a research project on Crypto-Jews one must know something of the panicked era that spawned them.

Ironically, the first Crypto-Jews, or *conversos* as they were branded, had falsely converted to Catholicism so that they could escape the Edict of Expulsion, a law in 1492 that banished all Jews from Spain.

By veiling their Judaism beneath a Catholic facade, they had hoped to remain in Spain. But as the Spanish Inquisition's attempts to root out hidden heresy turned more severe, many Crypto-Jews looked toward the New World, a remote land that appeared to offer religious freedom.

Indeed, so many *conversos* settled in the New World that in 1570 Spain's Phillip II established Inquisitional centers in Lima, Peru, and Mexico City to "free the land, which has become contaminated by the Jews and heretics."

Hordes believes it was this grim specter (of the Mexican Inquisition) that pushed colonial Crypto-Jews to the fringes of the New World.

"The names of the pioneers who headed north to settle New Mexico read like a laundry list of people in trouble with the Inquisition for Judaizing," he says.

Today, reports of Crypto-Jewish communities scattered around South America and the Southwest United States abound.

FROM THE MAILBAG

A couple of items in your Summer 1991 newsletter interested me. A first was on Jewish cemeteries in Texas. I believe there may be a very small Jewish cemetery in the village of Harwood, Texas (east of Luling, Texas in Gonzales county). There once was a B'nai B'rith chapter in Luling, Lockhart, Gonzales and Seguin that as one of its projects (circa 1955) tried to maintain the Harwood cemetery. All of the folks in this lodge have passed on most likely by now. A possible contact would be Buddy Michelson who may still be the owner of the Chevrolet agency in Lockhart, Texas.

The second item that interested me was the list of past Texas Jewish politicians. I believe that Ben Mark Jacobs was mayor of Luling, Texas in the mid to late 1930's. He has a nephew, Dr. Milton Jacobs and a niece, Esther Jacobs both living in San Antonio. Sincerely, William C. Suhler, 13406 Dowlais Drive, Rockville, Md. 20853.

Information Exchange

One of our Archive supporters has an inquiry about an ancestor who lived in Texas in the 1800's. Do you have anything in your file re: Isaac Cahn. Unfortunately, she has no more information than the name.

I did research in your marvelous book (*Deep in the Heart*) first, but the name was not in the index. I find your book very useful and have given the title of the book to many of my Elderhostel students who are interested in Texas Jewish History. Most cordially, Abraham Chanin, Director and Research Professor, University of Arizona, Bloom, Southwest Jewish Archives, 1052 North Highland Avenue, Tucson, Arizona 85721. (602) 621-5774.

William Sokolosky was born June 6, 1859 in New Orleans, La. He moved with his parents to Vicksburg in 1869.

Circa 1885 he moved to Dallas, Texas and married Flora (Schendle?) in Dallas, April 24, 1887. They had two sons, Mark B. (1890) and Israel B. (1892) In the 1900 census he was listed in Corsicana, Texas with his family. May 20, 1903 Willie died - supposedly in Dallas. I have been unable to find him buried in Dallas, Fort Worth or Corsicana. His wife and two sons can not be located anywhere in the 1910 census. Any clue would be most appreciated. Thomas C. Sokolosky-Wixon, 1803 Jackson Ave., Pascagoula, Miss. 39567 or phone collect 601-762-777 or 762-0008.

Does anyone have information on Sam Katzenstein, who came from Germany to Galveston and opened a store and post office in Bremond? His wife, Celia, was a Lowenstein (different spellings) before she married.

My Mom, who is 90, was born in Bremond at the turn of the century and may have moved to New York City when she was four. Her older sister was Gladys and they had another sister who died as a child. Mom remembers visiting the school in Bremond. In New York City her father had some sort of a textile factory.

Celia had five sisters. Bella, one who settled in Shreveport and whose husband was in the lumber business settled around Conroe, I think. I think one was Aunt Birdie.

I have a cousin Norman Sandfield (or Sanfield) who researched part of the family. My Uncle Eli who was in Shreveport was probably a Weiner. One of the aunts, Clara, married a Shreveport banker, Philip Lieber. Clara had a twin brother who died as an infant. They have a married daughter in Rusk.

Anyone with information, please contact Nan Bracker, 1941 Gaston Place, Apr. 209, Austin, Texas 78723.

The reason I am writing is because I am very interested in learning

continued on next page

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more about my family history and the article in the newsletter about cemeteries caught my eye...especially the reference to a Jewish cemetery in San Diego, Texas. My mother was born in San Diego and I visited there many times as a child. However, in all those years I was never aware of any Jewish cemetery. It is quite possible that my great grandmother, Mary Henry, was buried in it.



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

- Mr. & Mrs. Robert E. Abrahms, Houston
- Dave Andres, Dallas
- Mrs. Arthur Bassist, Fort Worth
- Drs. Muarry and Roberta Schwartz Berger, Dallas
- Richard D. Berlin, Dallas
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- Henry Klepak, Dallas
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- Dr. and Mrs. Joel Kutnick, Corpus Christi
- Mr. and Mrs. Jack Lapin, Houston
- Dr. Melvyn Lerman, Dallas
- Dr. and Mrs. Herman A. Lesser, Houston

continued on back page

In any event, if you can point me in the right direction to anyone who can enlighten me on the cemetery, and/or any other information about the Henry family, it would be much appreciated.

I was named after Rabbi Samuel Marx of San Antonio and I recall seeing a reference to him at the Institute of Texan Cultures. Sincerely, Samuel A. Montague, 10710 West 90th Terrace, Overland Park, Kansas 66214, (913) 888-1979.

Political Updates

We have heard from many of you who responded to our call for names of Jews involved in Texas politics as office holders around the state. A few

to add:

Texas House of Representatives:

- Guy Floyd, Bexar County (late 60's, early 70's)

Mayors:

- Lockhart - Sam Glosserman (60's - 70's)
- Fort Worth - Bayard Freidman
- Dublin - Morris Hoffman (four terms in the 50's)
- San Saba - Harry Shapiro (three terms - late 50's)

Cemetery Addition

Wiess' Bluff, just north of Beaumont on the Neches River. Family of Simon Wiess, b. Lublin, grandfather of Harry Carrothers Wiess - Humble Oil.

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I am enclosing my contribution of \$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 \$1,000
to the Texas Jewish Historical Society for the 1991 membership year.

*Classification of membership: \$25 - Annual Member; \$50 - Supporting Member;
\$100 - Sponsor and Organization; \$250 - Sustaining member;
\$500 - Benefactor; \$1,000 - Patron*

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My areas of interest are: _____

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

Clip and send to address below

Contributions to TJHS are tax deductible within the limits of the law

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