



# TJHISTORIAN

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**Join us by Sundown or Else!!!**

## THE TEXAS JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY INVITES YOU TO JOIN US FOR OUR ANNUAL MEETING MARCH 1 - 3



*Jennie Coplin Karren (center) and friends dressed up western for Fort Worth Stock Show, 1916 Photo courtesy of the Fort Worth Community Sesquicentennial Archives.*

Join us in celebrating Texas Jewish history at our Annual Meeting Friday through Sunday at the Greene Family Camp in Bruceville, Texas (which is located halfway between Waco and Temple right off of IH 35).

We will gather in a relaxed and beautiful rural setting to make new friends, renew old friendships and share stories, history, research, music and good times.

The theme for this year's gathering is *Jewish Treasures From All Around the State*. The cost to attend this once-a-year extravaganza is only \$100 which includes lodging and six meals. Features at this year's event include a wine and cheese reception, book reviews, discussion groups, oral history workshops, video programs and live speakers. A complete tentative schedule is on page 2. In addition, society members will have the opportunity to elect officers for 1991.

For those who don't care to "rough it" at the wonderful camp, lodging in nearby Waco and Temple is available. Hotel information is located on page 2.

Don't wait!!! Register early using the form on page 7!!! If you have questions, call Ima Joy Gandler at (817) 772-5717 or Herb or Phyllis Kadish at (512) 451-0051.

## Judaica Bibliographer: Nathan Snyder

If all goes well in a Boston probate court next year, Nathan Snyder will be able to pull off one of his most interesting acquisitions in his ten years as Judaica bibliographer at the University of Texas at Austin's Perry-Casteneda Library.

In effect, the acquisition would allow the university to purchase materials on Jewish culture with German war reparation funds from World War II. Furthermore, it would be a gift from Snyder himself.

"I have been notified that I'm an heir of the estate of Rabbi Simcha B. Ben-Zakkai, my former teacher at Hebrew School and my friend for 35 years," Snyder explains. "My intention is to use the money to set up an interest-bearing account in General Libraries."

Snyder inherited a portion of Ben-Zakkai's estate that had been sitting for years in a bank account because the rabbi, a survivor of the Holocaust, was never particularly keen on the idea of spending German money.

Before his death last year, Ben-Zakkai decided to let a few of his best students do with the money as they saw fit.

Although using German war reparation funds for the purchase of Judaica has obvious symbolic value, Snyder has only limited professional interest in the Holocaust because he considers many other phenomena in the Jewish experience to be of more importance in Judaic studies.

"If you want to have a normal

*continued on p. 4*

# JEWISH TREASURES FROM AROUND THE STATE

## ACCOMMODATIONS In Waco and Temple

### OPTIONS:

1. \$100 - Includes lodging in a two person cabin) and six meals
2. \$95 - includes lodging in a four person cabin and six meals.
3. \$85 includes six meals only - make your own lodging arrangements

### WACO:

Hilton-Waco Hotel  
(817) 754-8484  
113 S. University Parks Drive

Holiday Inn  
(817) 753-0261  
IH 35 & Lake Brazos Drive

La Quinta  
(800) 531-5900  
(817) 752-9741

Comfort Inn  
(817) 662-4622  
3120 Jack Kultgen Freeway (IH35)

Ramada Inn  
(817) 772-9440  
4201 Franklin

### TEMPLE:

Inn @ Scott & White  
(817) 778-551  
31st Street and Loop 363

La Quinta  
(817) 771-2980

Holiday Inn  
(817) 778-4411

Stratford House Inns  
(817) 771-1495

## TENTATIVE PROGRAM

### FRIDAY, MARCH 1

2:00 - 6:00PM Registration - Activities Centers  
6:30PM Shabbat Dinner  
8:00PM Shabbat Services and Oneg Shabbat  
Book Review by Rabbi Jimmy Kessler,  
*Oleander Odyssey*, by Harold M. Hyman  
(The story of the Kempners of Galveston)

### SATURDAY, MARCH 2

8:30 - 9:30AM Breakfast  
9:45 - 10:15AM Shabbat Services  
10:30 - 12:15PM Oral History Discussion Group  
*Ginger Jacobs and Ruthe Winegarten*  
12:30 - 1:30PM Lunch  
1:45 - 2:30PM Tour of the Greene Family Camp  
2:45 - 4:00PM Free Time  
2:00 - 4:00PM Board Meeting  
2:00 - 4:00PM Book Display  
4:00 - 5:30PM *Evelyn Hoffman*, Waco TV celebrity,  
will present videotapes, "Ellis Island" and  
"Interview with Jewish Wacoans of Immigrant  
Heritage."  
6:30 PM Wine and cheese Reception  
7:00PM Dinner  
8:15PM Program: *Jewish Treasures from Around the  
State*  
*William Munter*, "History of the Jews of Texas'  
Middle Corridor (The Lower Rio Grande  
Valley)."  
*Jan Hurt* "Hannah, the Immigrant: Making  
Your Family History Come Alive."  
*Helen Wilk*, "Rabbi Sidney Wolf of Corpus  
Christi, A Man for All Seasons."

### SUNDAY, MARCH 3

8:00 - 9:30AM  
8:30 - 9:30AM Board meeting  
9:45 - 11:00AM Breakfast  
11:00 - 12:15PM Annual Meeting and Election of Offices  
Oral History Workshops:  
*Ginger Jacobs and Ruthe Winegarten*  
- bring your tape recorders, blank tapes and  
videocameras  
12:30PM Lunch and adjournment

# As I Remeber My Family History

By Annie Nathan Schwartz

Donated to TJHS by her neice,  
Doris Nathan Laschen of Houston.

Today, on June 1, 1975, I am approximately half-way past my eighty-first birthday. My Grandson asked that I write the major happenings in my life-time, from the time of my birth in Karostyshev (sic), a small town in the State of Kiev, in Russia. As best as I can recall, I was born in 1894; when I was five years of age, my Father was manager of a small factory for processing leather from the skins of cattle. Because of the foul odor involved, the leather factory was forced to locate outside of the city limits.

Our family lived very close to the leather factory, in a two-room house. One room was used for a kitchen, with some sleeping facilities, on a make-shift basis. The other room served as a combined living room with sleeping quarters. As a substitute for beds, we used wooden benches covered by feather-type mattresses.

The leather factory was owned by a Jewish man, who naturally kept the business closed on Saturday and open on Sunday. I was one of twelve children. Five of my parent's children died in infancy - most of the deaths were caused by Diphtheria.

The only Jewish children allowed to attend Public Schools, in Russia, were those who had very wealthy parents. This does not mean that they qualified openly, since it usually involved a "bribe" to the mayor of the town or the Principal of the school - or both.

When I was ten (approximately a year before we left for America), I worked six days a week in a wool factory and was paid 60 cents per week. There were no child labor laws, and even though there was Jewish ownership of the factory, all of the employees were paid the same starvation wages. Everyone in our family started working at the age of eight and all kicked in their meager wage to keep the family going (on a diet mainly of

potatoes, bread, cabbage, and once in a great while - herring).

We arrived in Galveston in 1905 or 1906. I was twelve; I immediately went to work in a factory that manufactured overalls, owned by the Miller Brothers. Out of my \$2.50 wages per week, I paid \$1.25 to Mrs. Zinn, who taught me how to read and write during the nights.

After the 1915 storm, my future husband, Nathan Schwartz, was forced to take a train from Houston to Texas City. Because the bridge was

washed out between the mainland and Galveston, he was forced to take a boat to attend his wedding (performed by Rabbi Henry Cohen). Even though Dr. Cohen was a Reform Rabbi, he performed a strictly Orthodox service for my wedding.

Having been through the Russian persecutions, World Wars I and II, the Korean and Viet Nam wars, I am hopeful that people of the World and their leaders will find a way to solve their differences and live in peace for many centuries ahead.

## From the Mailbag

*The "mailbag" is an information exchange - for those folks who are looking for information about their families or responding to those requests. To participate, write to the Texas Jewish Historical Society, P.O. Box 10193, Austin, Texas 78766-0193*

*Editors Note: Barbara Israel's address was printed incorrectly in the last issue of the TJHS Newsletter, it is: 2130 E. Knox Rd. Tempe, Arizona 85284*

Dear Barbara (Israel),

Noted your request for information about your family from Big Spring, Texas in the Newsletter of the Texas Jewish Historical Society.

I was stationed at Webb A.F.B. in Big Spring and lived there with my wife, Harriet, from 1954-56. My information is very limited, but it may be of some interest to you.

As one of only a handful of Jewish men stationed at the base on permanent duty, my wife and I became acquainted with some of the Jewish townspeople, notably the Mellinger family and the Jim Zack family. The Mellingers (Sam and a brother whose name I can't remember) owned a men's store and the Zack's owned a ladies' store. We were introduced to the Fisher family (can't remember first names), and we visited in their home a time or two. I recall that the elderly Mr. Fisher told us about the history of the family in Big Spring. He told us that they arrived in Big Spring (which was the

end of the rail line at the time) in the late 19th century and peddled merchandise in the area. Over the years, they developed a substantial business supplying ranches and he described the store as "the commissary for West Texas." He told about wagons coming in from ranches as far away as 200 miles to load up with provisions. The family had many old photographs depicting the town and the store. I remember one photo quite vividly - a huge, black dust storm approaching and engulfing a house. If you ever lived in Big Spring, you would appreciate the awareness of that scene.

Religious services were held in a meeting room in the old Settles Hotel, the only high rise building (maybe 10 floors) in town at the time. The hotel provided a cabinet to store religious items (I can't remember for sure if there was a torah, but I don't believe so). There were so few Jews in the town that attendance at the services usually did not total 10 men and women.

Good luck on your search for information.

Sincerely yours,  
Elliott Z. Cohen

7010 Scotsdale  
San Antonio, Texas 78209

# Judaica Bibliographer Sees Job as an Opportunity for Cultural Activism

Jewish life, you can't deal too much with the destruction of your people," he says. "The Holocaust is very important to world history, but Judaic studies revolve around the culture of a living people with 4,000 years of history and tradition -- not an exterminated people -- and that's why I have to keep the Holocaust in perspective in my work as a bibliographer. In cultural studies, you don't examine just the sufferings -- you must also focus on the normal, everyday life of the people."

To Snyder, Judaic studies is a vast region of scholarly concern which encompasses many languages, disci-

*"That's how a language dies -- first you lose the creators; then you only have the readers; then you lose them; and then you have a few librarians like myself whose job is done in silence."*

plines, artistic milieu and customs. With approximately 50,000 books on Judaica in the Perry-Casteneda Library, including 5,000 in Yiddish, 15,000 in Hebrew and 30,000 in virtually all the European languages, the study of Judaic culture is about as multicultural and multilingual as scholarly endeavors get, Snyder says.

Fluent in Yiddish, Hebrew and Aramaic, and knowledgeable in several other languages, Snyder spent much of the last decade building the university's Judaica collection from an already solid base of Hebrew books that had been acquired from a variety of sources. In fact, Snyder was originally hired by the General Libraries to accomplish the immediate task of cataloging 7,000 books that had ended

up at UT Austin as part of a complicated U.S. wheat shipment to Israel. The Judaica collection apparently dates back to the 1936 acquisition of the Rabbi Abraham I. Schechter collection of about 2,000 titles, but it has been in the last two decades that the collection has grown substantially. During Snyder's tenure, important collections have trickled in from various institutions and private collections.

An important recent acquisition on microform is a collection of Old Yiddish books from the 16th to the early 18th centuries that gives UT Austin scholars access to virtually every book in the field of Old Yiddish, Snyder says. Purchased at a cost of 6,780 Swiss francs, the microform reproduces a collection of inestimable value.

UT Austin is also the holder of the Rabbi Henry Cohen collection, a group of early printer Hebrew books owned by the longtime resident of Galveston. Other important gifts in recent years are the Lucius N. Littauer Foundation donation for the purchase of memorial books about Eastern European communities destroyed during the Holocaust; a few thousand books from K. Vaisbrot at Biblioteque Meden in Paris (the only Jewish library in Europe that escaped looting during the war); an annual donation of books from Dr. Maurice Tuchman from the Hebrew College Library in Brookline, Mass.; several hundred from the Spertus College of Judaica through the auspices of Norman and Helen Asher; 12,000 duplicate copies from the Jewish Public Library in Canada; and about 600 from UT San Antonio.

It is in Yiddish that Snyder perceives his work to be particularly important in the transmission of culture. Hebrew, a semetic language, is assured of continued success because of the foundation of Israel and the

adoption of Hebrew there as the official language. But Yiddish, Snyder believes, has been losing ground since World War II.

The first language of most Ashkenazi Jews of pre-war Eastern Europe, the Germanic-based Yiddish is now spoken primarily by the elderly. The last years in which regular primary and secondary schooling was

*Judaic studies revolve around the culture of a living people with 4,000 years of history and tradition*

conducted in Yiddish were in the 1930's, Snyder notes, and the only internationally recognized Yiddish writer still living today in the U.S. -- Isaac Bashevis Singer -- is well into his '80s.

"That's how a language dies," says Snyder. "First you lose the creators; then you have only the cultivated readers; then you lose them; and then you have only a few librarians like myself whose job are done in silence."

"If you want to be active in a minority culture, then a university setting is an ideal setting, because universities have pretty much taken over the study of ethnicity in 20th century America," he says. "A lot of individuals and institutions have to be praised in ensuring that Jewish culture us preserved and remains an important part of world culture, and I hope that my own efforts have contributed something."

"As Archimedes said, 'Give me a fulcrum and I will move the universe.'" he says. "Well, give me some Judaic books and I will work."

*This article was reprinted courtesy of the Texas Jewish Post, Dec. 20, 1990.*

# You Can't Live all Your Life, A Story About Fannie Lack

(Houston: Aation Print, 1967)

## A Little Background...

Fannie Raizes Lack was born about 1872 or 1874 (no one is sure about the exact year) on the fifth day of Chanukah. Her birthplace was Lutzen, State of Vitebsk, Russia.

Her oldest son, Abe, says, "Her early years were filled with economic struggles, although her family was considered well-to-do by local standards. They had a large house and a tavern."

Fannie often spoke to her daughter Rose about her skill as a "barmaid" in those days.

Abe continues, "Father's family was of the intellectual type. (Rose refers to her mother as coming from 'landed' people and her father coming from 'learned' people). Grandfather was a shochat and his five brothers were great rabbis in various communities."

Fannie Raizes and Solomon

Lack were married in 1895...

Abe remembers when he was seven, "The year was 1905 and there was a huge parade through the streets celebrating a manifesto that the Czar had granted the people...it proved to be false...those who participated in the parade were spotted and considered revolutionaries."

"Father had participated. I remember those who hid in the hay barn with Mother smuggling food to them. It was then decided that it would not be healthy for them to remain in Russia. So Father slipped out at night and made for the border, to go to London on his way to Africa. After ten years of married life, Mother was left with me, Sam, Rose and Ed (their children) with no visible means of support, except for her parents.

...Six years had passed between the arrival of the first and the last. It had taken four different journeys for the Lack family to reach America. Little Sarah had been born in Omaha.

Davie was yet to appear, but for the present, Fannie's family was a unit again.

## The Texas Connection

At various times, members of the Lack family lived in Omaha and Tulsa. The children went on to marry and start lives of their own.

Abe married Sarah Stillman of Sioux City, Iowa. They lived in Tulsa and Florida and eventually moved to Houston in 1932 (with their children Fredell, Zella and Sandy) to start a business of their own.

Sam met and married Bee Haas of Nashville. After a while, they moved to Florida with their two daughters, Jean and Sylvia, but shortly afterwards came to Houston to work for Abe and eventually to settle in McAllen where Sam became one of the outstanding citizens.

Fannie's youngest daughter had married Morris Weiser, a graduate pharmacist from the University of Texas. They, too, moved around Texas, settling finally in Houston.

Fredell Lack (Eichhorn) remembers her grandmother, Fannie's manner of walking, "There was always a look of joy on her face. Even years later her lips were full and red, almost sensuous looking for an old woman. There was excitement in her step. She never did anything slowly."

Sol Lack died at 57, in Tulsa, leaving a widow of 54, with very little money and two small children to take care of. He had only been a fair businessman, but he was a learned Talmudic scholar and a most charitable man.

Fannie Lack finally made her last major move to Houston in 1942. Here the best years of her life were to be spent but not without tragic moments in which she more than ever before showed her children the gallant and courageous makeup she had and the genuine love she had for her children.



Jacob Schmidt, the Father of Leon Schmidt of Austin, is on the right. Man on the left is unknown. C. 1907 Jacob was headquartered in Seguin and peddled in South Texas, as far as DeWitt County where he finally settled. Photo courtesy of Leon Schmidt, Austin.

# News and Notes

## Scholarship in Jewish Women's Studies.

### Deadline Soon

A \$500 scholarship in Jewish Women's Studies will be given in 1991 to a graduate student who is enrolled for the Fall semester and whose area of research is Jewish Women's Studies. Applications must be postmarked by February 15, 1991. Send to NWSA, University of Maryland, College Park, Md. 20742. (301) 405-5573.



Dear Ms. Miller:

Please note the following correction. The photograph on the cover of your Winter 1990 newsletter was labeled incorrectly. The woman on the left is Chaya Andres who is the sister-in-law of Chaya Rochel Andres, the Yiddish poet and author. The woman on the right is Ida Moses Blinderman. Please note the appropriate names in your next newsletter.

Sincerely,

Dave and Ruth Andres

*Editors note: We're very sorry for the misidentification. We are pleased to be able to run the picture again, with the correct names.*

## ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPTION

Fay Brachman has kindly agreed to transcribe oral history tapes of TJHS members. Send the tapes to her at: 3720 Autumn Drive, Fort Worth, Texas 76109.

## TJHS 1991 DUES TIME

DUES ARE DUE! If you have not sent in your 1991 dues to the Texas Jewish Historical Society, now is the time to send in your dues. A membership/rednewal form is on page 8 of this newsletter.

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## Support our special projects: join the campaign to boost the Society's Endowment Fund

The Endowment Fund of the Texas Jewish Historical Society urges you to participate in its campaign to raise funds.

The fund is designed to develop special projects and programs, using only interest from investment of the principal. Pledges of \$1,000, \$2,500 or \$5,000 can be paid over a five-year period.

For further information, please contact Herbert Kadish, administrative assistant, at P.O. Box 10193, Austin, Texas 78766-0193 or call him at (512) 451-0051.

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## 1990-91 Officers and Board Members

**President:** Milton Smith, Austin

**Vice President:** Rabbi Larry Jackofsky, Dallas

**Secretary:** Nell Hall, Fort Worth

**Treasurer:** Shelley Kessler, Galveston

**Archivist:** Ima Joy Gandler, Waco

**Membership Chair:** Faye Brachman, Fort Worth

**Staff:** Ruthe Winegarten, Austin

Herbert and Phyllis Kadish, Austin

### Executive Board Members

Jimmy Alexander, Dallas  
A. Robert Beer, Dallas  
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Ginger Jacobs, Dallas  
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Herb Silverberg, Corsicana  
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Donald Tetter, Baytown  
Helen Wilk, Corpus Christi

## Jan Hart and Gertrude Tuner Reisberg Author New Books

Jan Hart, a TJHS member, is the author of a forthcoming (Spring 1991) children's book, *Hannah, the Immigrant*, to be published by Eakin Press. Design for children from the fourth grade through the seventh grades, we predict the book will meet with a warm response. *Hannah, the Immigrant* is based on the life of Jan's family. More about the book in coming issues.

Congratulations to Gertrude Turner Reisberg for her wonderful book of poetry, *From the Heart*, published by Nortex Press, Dallas. Order by sending \$7.95 to Gertrude directly at: 5117 W. Lovers Lane, Dallas, Texas 75209.

Sprintime is nearly here - this is when a family's thoughts turn to -- PASSOVER!!! Are you going to be a guest at someone else's seder? Thinking about a gift to take along?

Give a gift that lasts long after the maztah is gone: a copy of *Deep in the Heart* (order form below).

### Donate a Book to a Local Library

Many individuals and organizations are giving welcome gifts to their local public, junior and senior high and religious school libraries: a copy of *Deep in the Heart: The Lives and Legends of Texas Jews*.

With all of the other books coming out about the Jews in Texas History, giving a gift like this could be the best way to communicate your commitment to spreading the word; to popularize the history of the Texas Jews and help the general public become educated about our contributions and achievements in the growth and development of this state.

### Deep in the Heart:

*The Lives & Legends of Texas Jews  
A Photographic History*

3 Books for \$90

(includes sales tax, shipping)

_____	Number of copies @ \$29.95 each	_____
	Texas residents add 8% sales tax	
	(\$2.40 each copy)	
	Shipping	\$3.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	Check or money order enclosed	\$ _____

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NAME (S) \_\_\_\_\_ NUMBER OF PERSONS @ \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ \$100/person (2-person cabin)  
 ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ \$ 95/person (4-person cabin)  
 CITY, STATE, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ \$ 85/person (food only)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (children at half-price)

TELEPHONE:(Day) \_\_\_\_\_ (Evening) \_\_\_\_\_

### REGISTRATION FORM FOR ANNUAL MTG.

Total Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Return form and check to: TJHS Box 10193, Austin, Texas 78766-0193



**TeJHaS**  
**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP**

I am enclosing my contribution of \$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 \$1,000 to the Texas Jewish Historical Society for the 1990 membership year.

*Classification of Membership: \$25 — Annual Member; \$50 — Supporting Member;  
\$100 — Sponsor and Organization; \$250 — Sustaining Member;  
\$500 — Benefactor; \$1,000 — 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:**  
**Texas Jewish Historical Society**  
**P.O. Box 10193**  
**Austin, Texas 78766-0193**

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**TeJHaS**  
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