



NEWSLETTER

P. O. Box 10193

Austin, Texas 78766-0193

SUMMER 1993

Texans Invade New York!!

by Don Teter (Baytown)

Ten members of the Texas Jewish Historical Society attended the 101st Annual Conference of the American Jewish Historical Society April 29–May 2 in New York City. We undoubtedly were the largest state group based on our Jewish population as there were a total of less than 200 in attendance. TJHS had almost that many members at our annual Gathering held in San Antonio this past March!

Thursday featured a meeting at the Jewish Theological Seminary where a collection of historic Jewish Americana was shown and described in addition to an afternoon program on "New York and American Jewry: Similarities and Differences". In the evening there was a tour of Brighton Beach and dinner at a Russian restaurant.

Friday was devoted to visiting Ellis Island during the day followed by early services and Shabbat Dinner at the Central Synagogue, New York's oldest continuously used synagogue building. The program included an Award for Music to James Levine, artistic director of the Metropolitan Opera Company, and a talk entitled "New York Jewry: Torchbearers For America".

Saturday morning we attended Congregation Shearith Israel, the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, the oldest congregation in North America, where we witnessed an unusual (to most of us Texans) Sephardic service. Kiddush followed in the Little Synagogue, a replica of the original 300 year-old synagogue, during which the synagogue's unique history was explained to us. Then a luncheon featuring Sephardic food was held in the auditorium and an Award for Fashion was presented to designer John Weitz who talked on "Living in Many Societies".

We then walked across Central Park to Temple Emanu El, the largest synagogue in the world, where we were given a talk and special tour. Albert Vorspan was given an Award for Social Justice after which he addressed the group on "New York Jewry's Fight For Social Justice".

That evening a Champagne-Dessert Reception was given at the UJA-Federation of Jewish Charities Ballroom honoring the Jewish Historical Society of New York on its 20th anniversary. An Award for Dissemination of History was given to Morris Shappes and an entertaining musical program by the Hester Street Klezmer Troupe concluded a busy day.

Sunday we had a choice of touring the Tenement Museum and the Lower East Side or Colonial Jewish New York. Luncheon was served at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion followed by the annual meeting of the American Jewish Historical Society during which our own immediate Past President **Fay Brachman (Fort Worth)** was elected AJHS Board Trustee. She joins TJHS's second President **Frances Kallison (San Antonio)**, a long time member of the board of the AJHS, in this distinctive position. An Award for Philanthropy was presented to Stephen Solender who spoke about "New York's Leadership in the World of Philanthropy". This was followed by a choral concert, "The Music of American Jewry", by the HUC-College of Sacred Music.

Attending from Texas were **Fay and Leon Brachman (Fort Worth)**, **Ima Joy Gandler (Waco)**, **Minnie Pulman (San Antonio)**, **Helen and Larry Wilk (Corpus Christi)**, **Frieda and Edel Schikman** and **Gertrude and Don Teter (Baytown)**. It should be noted that the four Baytonians comprised ten percent of the Baytown Jewish population.

REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT...

As the Texas Jewish Historical Society enters its post Bar/Bat Mitzvah years, I have accepted the presidency of the Texas Jewish Historical Society realizing the terrifying challenge of succeeding **Fay Brachman (Fort Worth)**. Under her leadership we have become one of the largest Jewish Historical Societies in the country. Much has been accomplished during our 13 years of existence, including a growth to over 600 family members, the sponsoring of the highly regarded book *Deep In The Heart*, participation in the Handbook of Texas project, and the establishment and ongoing growth of our Archives at the Barker History Center at the University of Texas at Austin.

However, there is still much to be achieved. Under the guid-

ance of **Dr. Howard Lackman (Arlington)**, a TJHS Journal is going to be produced this fall. We are continuing the Jewish Cemetery project, in which we will document all of the Jewish cemeteries and burials in the state. The Society has been asked to participate in the remodeling of the Jewish section of the Institute of Texan Cultures in San Antonio, and we are continuing to participate in the Texas Jewish Newspaper project at the Barker Center, through which all of the Texas Jewish newspapers will be microfilmed.

Our past successes have been due to so many members who have volunteered their time and expertise. Outstanding examples are **Barbara Rosenberg (Sugar Land)** who has so capably chaired the past two Gatherings in providing outstanding speakers and activities, and

Debbye Rice (Houston) who produced all the tickets, program booklets, scratch pads and everything else that required her wonderful talent in computer graphics.

There is still a great need for volunteers. There must be someone among our large and diverse membership who could chair the Membership Committee, someone who could edit the Newsletter, or someone who could transcribe oral history tapes. These are not great time-consuming tasks, *but they are necessary if we are to continue successfully!*

Please contact me at any time about this or anything else. My answering machine is always on, and I promise to return your calls pronto, if not sooner.

Until next time,
Don Teter (Baytown)

Members in the News

New member **George Cooper (Houston)**, is doing a study of the Rockdale, Texas, Jewish community for a graduate degree. If anyone can furnish him any information, he would be most appreciative, and our Archives would benefit from the results of his work. His address is **George M. Cooper, 7610 Woodman Trail Dr., Houston, Texas 77040.**

Fay Brachman (Fort Worth) spoke recently at Arlington's Temple Beth Shalom during Friday evening services. **Dr. Howard Lackman (Arlington)**, newly elected 3rd Vice President of TJHS, expressed his appreciation for her informative presentation explaining the Texas Jewish Historical Society to those attending the service.

One thing most people do not know about TJHS's Newsletter Copy Editor, **Nell Hall (Fort Worth)** or **Doris and Jack M. Frost Jr. (San Antonio)** is that they have more experience as political campaign volunteers than almost anyone. Nell's daughter, Valerie, is the wife of Dallas Congressman Martin Frost, a very influential member of the Rules Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives. Martin just happens to be the son of Doris and Jack. So the Frosts and Nell Hall have been working on Martin's campaigns for the last twenty-some years, but you never hear any of them boasting about their experiences or their children. From people such as these TJHS members come our leaders of tomorrow...*history in the making!*

TJHS's 1st Vice President, **Barbara Rosenberg (Sugar Land)**, ran for a position on the Fort Bend School Board of Trustees. She did not win, losing by *only 300 votes or so*, which in itself was amazing, as she was targeted by the Christian Coalition and unfairly discriminated against time and time again. *Sorry, Barbara, better luck next time!*

The way we heard it, certain **Waco TJHS members** were delighted not to have **David Koresh** show up at their Passover Seder again this year. Last year he played the part of Elijah, the prophet! *Imagine that!*

THE TEXAS JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER is a publication of
The Texas Jewish Historical Society
P. O. Box 10193, Austin, Texas 78766-0193.
Donald Teter (Baytown), President
Debbye Brachman Rice (Houston), Publisher
Nell Hall (Fort Worth), Copy Editor

San Antonio Bar/Bat Mitzvah ANNUAL GATHERING Proved To Be A Huge Success

by Don Teter (Baytown)

Our annual Gathering in San Antonio March 12-14 was truly outstanding. The content and caliber of the talks were excellent, the tours, the services at the Temple, the music and art reception were all most enjoyable and educational. Our San Antonio hosts were very gracious and helpful and provided a memorable weekend for all.

Barbara Rosenberg (*Sugar Land*) did a fabulous job in chairing the whole meeting, especially in arranging the program and events. **Debbye Rice's** (*Houston*) talents in computer graphics produced a novel and beautiful program booklet, as well as all the tickets, badges, and souvenir memo pads.

Vernon Woolf (*Waco*) has produced indexed video tapes of the entire Gathering. These will be placed in our Archives and available for anyone desiring to see them. Good job, **Vernon!**

Thanks to everyone who worked on the Gathering and those who attended. We'll see you next April in El Paso!!!



Pictured above (L to R) are: Dorothy & Milton Harelik (Hamilton), Max Stool (Del Rio). Photo taken during the San Antonio Gathering.

Photo by A. Robert Beer (Dallas)



Pictured above (L to R) are: Howard Lackman (Arlington), A. Robert Beer (Dallas), Herman I. Morris (Fort Worth). Photo taken during the San Antonio Gathering.

Photo by A. Robert Beer (Dallas)

WRITE NOW!

An Historic Event Is About To Occur!

by Howard Lackman (Arlington)

The TJHS directors voted in December, 1992, to promote the publication of a formal journal for the society. The idea was to create a journal that would be of interest to the membership, attractive to scholars, and a publication which would encourage both professional and less-than-formal academic research in Southwestern Jewish history (all the land area ever under a Texas claim).

The first volume of this journal, named *The Chronicle*, will appear in the fall of 1993. This is an invitation to the entire membership of the TJHS to become a part of the publication. While one segment of the journal will consist of formal researched and

footnoted articles, another section will consist of vignettes of Texas Jewish history, moments in the history of the vox populi that reflect interesting moments in the everyday history of early Jewish inhabitants of the state.

Let the editors worry about your form, grammar and spelling! If you have a story of the lives of Texans that ought to be written about, please write it and send your effort to *Dr. Howard Lackman, Editor, The Chronicle, Department of History, UT/ Arlington, Arlington, Texas 76010*. Be a part of Volume 1. Manuscript deadline is July 1, 1993, for this volume.

Archivist's File

by Ruth Ginsburg (Austin)

The melting pot has been rejected as the symbol of American society. In its place the rainbow with its bands of spectral colors shading into one another has been suggested, or the mosaic whose pieces are both separated and joined by the cement of residence in one country with its particular laws and institutions. Whether the cause or effect of a changed perspective, the result has been a sharper focus on the identity of the group and its heritage. In view of this intensified interest, it is particularly fortunate that the Archives of the Texas Jewish Historical Society will shortly be made available to the public.

In 1980 **Rabbi Jimmy Kessler** (*Galveston*) established the TJHS Collection at the Barker Center. He and the then Center Director, Dr. Don E. Carleton, agreed to begin a long-term relationship between the two organizations, whereby the Center would serve as official repository for the Society's records and for appropriate collections of personal papers as well.

The collection was started with three documents relating to Moses Albert Levy and Robert Triplett. Since then many donations have been made by individuals and groups.

However, the greatest part of the Archives is the result of a survey undertaken in 1986 when the Society began to try to identify primary and secondary sources of information about Jewish Texas. In following up the responses of the survey, **Kathy Schechter** (*Austin*) and **Ruthe**

Winegarten (*Austin*) collected a massive amount of information. The book *Deep In The Heart* resulted from this research and the background material was placed in the Collection. So the Archive really is ongoing.

Family histories, memorabilia, business or organizational records, letters, pictures, etc. are still being sought.

The actual records of the Society: minutes of Board and Annual meetings, program, newsletters, membership lists, etc. are also part of the Archives. At present the two parts of the Collection consist of some eighty inches of indexed documents as well as material in the Sound Archives, the Artifacts Collection and the Texas Newspaper Collection. The documents are arranged under the headings of Family Histories, Individuals by Occupation, Communities and Religion.

However, there are materials in the Barker Center which document Jews and Jewish History which are not housed with the Society's Collection. Donors may choose which option they prefer.

The Eugene C. Barker Texas History Center is located at the University of Texas, Austin. In 1945 the Regents directed that all books, archives, letters, documents and other items relating to Texas and Southwestern history be brought together in one place on campus to be "a corner forever Texas".

The University Archives is one of the largest such institutions in the country and contains over seventeen million items. It is composed of

three complementary units— the Texas Collection Library, the University Archives, and the Texas Newspaper Collection. The Barker Center is itself a part of the Center for American History, created in 1991.

The services which the Barker Texas History Center provides for The Texas Jewish Historical Society include registering materials, conservation attention, arrangement, rehousing for preservation and security and description to provide access.

The Collection is housed in closed stacks and will be available for room use only. However, as soon as our Archive is fully processed, a description of the Collection can be obtained through the nationwide interlibrary electronic database known as OCLC from access terminals in participating libraries across the country.

A copy of the inventory is available from the Center for American History for a nominal fee. To find any item one must get the Box Number from the inventory. The item can be photocopied if requested. The Barker Center is open from 8–5 Monday through Friday and 8–12 on Saturday. Inquiries can be sent to the *TJHS, c/o The Barker Texas History Center, Sid Richardson Hall, University of Texas, Austin, Texas 78713.*

It has been said that history is memory. The Texas Jewish Historical Society wants to collect and save those memories. In future Newsletters, specific needs will be highlighted.

Official Texas Historical Markers

by Fay Brachman (Fort Worth)

Are you aware of the 'procedure' to obtain an Official Texas Historical Marker?

Official Texas Historical Markers are popular and useful tools for promoting and preserving all aspects of Texas' rich heritage. Over the years, a variety of topics, including persons, events, institutions, buildings, festivals, ethnic groups, churches, sites and communities have been marked. Markers can serve as educational tools both for informing the public about Texas history and for sparking interest in preserving local history.

To determine whether a proposed marker topic meets the age requirements, the rules are:

1) Historic structures must be at

least 50 years of age

- 2) Institutions, organizations, cemeteries, congregations, etc., must date back at least 75 years
- 3) Historic persons must have been deceased at least 20 years

I have recently been involved in procuring historical markers for my synagogue in Fort Worth, Ahavath Sholom Congregation. Please note that the marker was procured for the congregation, not the building. A historical Marker was also procured for the Cemetery of Ahavath Sholom. Our congregation just celebrated its 100th anniversary—the cemetery was begun a few years later in 1905. Both, therefore, fulfilled the age requirements for markers.

Even though the procedure requires patience, effort and historical research, the final result is worth all of the efforts. Having the marker placed in front of our synagogue for all the world to see has become a great source of pride for our congregation's membership.

The Texas Historical Commission will be happy to send you a brochure stating the guidelines and procedures required to obtain a marker. Their address:

Texas Historical Commission
P.O. Box 12776
Austin, Texas 78711
Tel: (512) 463-6100

Please write or call them! They will be interested in your project and glad to answer your questions.

Dr. Marcus Videotape Available for Purchase

The videotape of Rabbi Jimmy Kessler's (Galveston) interview of Dr. Jacob Marcus was shown at the recent Gathering in San Antonio. Several people asked about obtaining a copy of the videotape.

Those who desire a copy may send \$10.00 to *Dr. Marcus Videotape, c/o TJHS, P. O. Box 10193, Austin, Texas 78766*. Be sure to include your name and mailing address.

Mark your calendars

for the next TJHS

OPEN BOARD MEETING

Sunday, June 13, 1993

9:00 A.M.

at Peggy Samet's home:
10402 Willowgrove

in Houston

(713) 668-9191 to R.S.V.P.

Last Call For Articles To Be Included In New Edition of *The Handbook Of Texas*!!

by Rabbi Jimmy Kessler (Galveston)

If there are any of your deceased relatives or acquaintances whose stories or contributions to Texas you think ought to be included in the *newest edition* of *The Handbook of Texas*, this is your *last chance* to submit that information for consideration!

Only complete articles with no bibliographies may be submitted at this time. And please try not to make the article any longer than three typed double-spaced pages.

Please send your articles to *Sam Harelik, 2517 North 42nd Street, Waco, Texas 76710*. He will sub-

mit the articles to the Handbook Committee for their consideration. There is no guarantee of acceptance, and the articles will be subject to editing.

Please don't delay! Send your stories in now! *The deadline is July 1, 1993.*

Survey of Jewish Political Involvement

The Hebrew Union College-Skirball Museum in Los Angeles has asked the Texas Jewish Historical Society to participate in a survey of Jewish political involvement.

For our own Archives, as well, we need to compile a more complete list of Jews who have run for — and who have served in — any political office, *especially in recent years*. Party affiliation, if known,

should be included. Also desired are campaign items such as buttons, bumper stickers, etc.

Please send all information to **Don Teter, 5013 Glenhaven, Baytown, Texas 77521.**



Can you identify anyone in these two photos?

These pictures were found in the El Paso Mt. Sinai Congregation Archives. The photos were taken in San Antonio during 1898 and 1899. If you can identify anyone in the pictures, please advise **Herb Given, 5700 Mira Grande Drive, El Paso, Texas 79912; (915) 584-4004.**



From The Hill County Courthouse Fire, 1992

by Howard Lackman (Arlington)

She was a beauty to be sure, so I drove off I-35 at Hillsboro to have a sad look at her charred remains. Many times, years ago on endless trips from Dallas to Austin and back, old Highway 77 had carried me through the town and into Grimes Garage for the coldest water on the road.

I sat and pondered the sad fate of that gallant county courthouse, and then the memory flooding back rose as I looked at the Northeast corner of the square, remembering a store seemingly as old as the courthouse itself, a microcosm of Yiddishkeit in Texas. I remembered Joe Gerick's emporium.

Joe Gerick, cobbler in Russian Lithuania, had wandered to Corsicana, Texas, and repaired shoes until the doctor told him to get fresh air or waste away to nothing. So Joe became an East Texas peddler. Across by horse and wagon into Louisiana and west into Hillsboro, Joe carried shoes and boots for the trade, and bananas for his kosher menu. Eventually Joe would find a home in Hillsboro to settle permanently.

Joe and Mamie Gerick really ran a community center in their

store. Joe was the only salesperson I ever met who could accurately and infallibly look at a foot and determine the exact size. He peddled his boots from that uncanny accuracy, and was even a bit miffed if a first-time customer insisted on a fitting. Over the years I showed Joe pictures of nephews from Boston and nieces from New York, and without faltering he studied girth and growth and called off a size. The present was sent and was invariably a perfect fit.

Joe didn't have cold water like Grimes, but his restroom was truly a rest stop, particularly for the wearied traveller in search of *The Jewish Forward*. There were recent issues, battered issues, torn pages, but always the personals page, inviting matrimony for those seeking a mate, was intact. I wonder now that I look back why I felt placitude while trying to read the Yiddish paper on Joe's commode. Maybe I was amused and calmed reading about folks far removed from Hillsboro, Texas, who had real *tsouras*.

In the cool dark interior (my memory is of one naked light bulb hanging from the high tin ceiling) boxes were piled, and beside the cash register was a cardboard con-

tainer to which Joe moved after every sale. In time I would learn that this was Joe's "credit card" box, containing a card for each customer who paid when it was a convenient time to reduce their balance. That box and those cards, pencilled, edges rounded, grey with dust, was Joe Gerick's IRS record which he and only he could understand.

Actually, the State of Texas sales tax some years later and Joe's bookkeeping, added to the hearing aid that would not work when he was driving a car, combined to close Gerick's in Hillsboro.

I saw Joe several times after he retired to Fort Worth. He still had the big smile on the smallest, most wiry body I had ever seen. He died a few years back, and I realized as I sat looking at the Courthouse shell just a few weeks ago just how much I missed seeing Joe. Then I noticed a few days later in the local paper that Joe's son, Irving, had gone back to Russia. He was in the first Peace Corps contingent to move into Saratov in southern Russia.

Many thoughts from the Hill County Courthouse fire.....



Photo by A. Robert Beer (Dallas)

Pictured above: Frances Kallison (San Antonio). Photo taken during the San Antonio Gathering.



Photo by A. Robert Beer (Dallas)

Pictured above (L to R): Barbara Rosenberg (Sugar Land), Judy Munter (San Antonio), Blanche Sheiness (Alice). Photo taken during the San Antonio Gathering.

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Welcome New Members!

Mrs. Helen A. Beckoff, El Paso
Frances and Alfred Blumenthal, El Paso
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Coggan, Fort Worth
Bonnie and Martin Colton, El Paso
George M. Cooper, Houston
Rachel and David Cristol, Fort Worth
Mr. and Mrs. Jack Eisenberg, El Paso
Mr. and Mrs. Roy Elsner, Odessa
Doris and Isaac Epstein, Laredo
Anita and Leslie Feigenbaum, Bryan
Mr. and Mrs. Milton D. Feinberg, El Paso
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Yolanda Munter, San Antonio
George Palmer, Dallas
Jeannie and Karl Preuss, San Antonio
Minnie Pulman, San Antonio
Barbara C. Rosenwasser, El Paso
Marilyn and Don Schlossberg,
The Woodlands
Barry Shiloff, San Diego CA
Cecilia Wittels, San Antonio
Vera Zlabovsky, El Paso

Newsletter Publication Schedule

<i>Issue Month:</i>	<i>Deadline:</i>
August 1993	July 1, 1993
November 1993	October 1, 1993
February 1994	January 1, 1994

Unless specified in a cover letter accompanied by a stamped and return-addressed envelope, all *original* materials submitted to TJHS Newsletter will be forwarded to the Barker Texas History Center and will become the property of that

library. If you wish to have the original items donated to the Barker Library, please make arrangements with *Ruth Ginsburg (Austin) (512) 494-2205*.

For valuable, one-of-a-kind, or fragile items or articles submitted to

the TJHS Newsletter for publication, please submit copies only. We cannot be responsible for items lost in shipment.

Remember: Please do not send your only copy of a treasured photograph!

Typing Oral Histories

The Society has amassed a number of oral histories on tape. These need to be transcribed and placed in the Archives. We own a brand new transcribing machine, which can be made available to anyone who will volunteer his or her talents. Please contact *Don Teter (Baytown)* at (713) 424-5829.

Have you taken an ORAL HISTORY on anyone lately?

It is important to do so before it's *too late!*

Please contact our ORAL HISTORY CHAIRPERSON
Helen Wilk
260 Cape Aron
Corpus Christi, Texas 78412
(512) 991-1118.

Newsletter Editor Needed!

TJHS needs a NEWSLETTER EDITOR beginning with the next issue!

If you have an interest in history, enjoy writing, and do not mind deadlines, please telephone *Don Teter (Baytown)* at (713) 424-5829.

TEXAS JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

I am enclosing my contribution of: \$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 \$1,000
to the Texas Jewish Historical Society for the 1993-1994 membership year.

Membership Classification: \$25—Annual Member; \$50—Supporting Member;
\$100—Sponsor; \$250—Sustaining Member;
\$500—Benefactor; \$1,000—Patron.

Name: _____

Name of Spouse: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Tel #: _____ Office Tel #: _____ Fax #: _____

My areas of interest are: _____

Contributions to TJHS are tax deductible within the limits of the law.
Clip and send to address on reverse side.

Meetings... Meetings... Meetings...

— OPEN BOARD MEETING —

Sunday - June 13, 1993 - 9:00 A.M.

at Peggy Samet's Home:
10402 Willowgrove, Houston
Call: (713) 668-9191 for R.S.V.P.
ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME!

1993-1994 BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE:

June 13 — Houston
September 12
December 5
April 8, 1994 — El Paso
The times and locations will be announced later.

FIRST OPEN BOARD MEETING

The first TJHS Open Board Meeting of the year will be held on Sunday morning, June 13, in Houston, at the home of Peggy Samet, 10402 Willowgrove.

The meeting will start at 9:00

A.M. Brunch will be served. All members are welcome! We hope to have a good sized crowd.

Please let us know you are coming by calling Merilee Weiner at (713) 668-9191 for your R.S.V.P.

1994 GATHERING IN EL PASO

Our next Annual Gathering will be held in El Paso the weekend of April 8-10, 1994. The El Paso people are already hard at work planning a really great event. Please try to attend! See you in El Paso!

Please Check Your ADDRESS LABEL!

Your telephone number has been included on the address label for this issue. PLEASE CHECK YOUR LABEL FOR ACCURACY, & REPORT ANY ERRORS TO *Fay Brachman, 3720 Autumn Drive, Fort Worth, Texas 76109; (817) 924-9207.*

She and her husband, *Leon Brachman*, maintain the computer records for the membership. The files need to be updated with correct phone numbers, etc. We are very grateful to them for their work.

Thank you in advance for your help.

TEXAS JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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