

NEWSLETTER

P. O. Box 10193

Austin, Texas 78766-0193

SUMMER 1994

GATHERING IN EL PASO A HUGE SUCCESS

by Don Teter (Baytown)

f you didn't attend the Gathering in El Paso, here's what you missed: The Friday afternoon bus tour of El Paso and Juárez with points of Jewish interest was most

enjoyable. We saw the old Temple Mt. Sinai building and visited the beautiful building this congregation now occupies. We toured the residential areas, old and new, and Jewish homes were pointed out. It was a real good overall tour of a city many of us seldom see.

The dinner and services Friday evening at Congregation B'nai Zion afforded us an opportunity to see that most unusual building and enjoy their Services. At the dinner our award presentation was made posthumously honoring Rabbi Floyd Fierman, who served Temple Mt. Sinai for many years and researched and wrote of the Jews of the Southwest.

Saturday we were treated to an outstanding lecture by Stanley Hordes of Santa Fe who told us many fascinating stories about the Crypto-Jews of the El Paso/Juárez area. Then Blanche Brown told us about her family's business that started from one goat and was built into a large El Paso dairy. At lunch we heard a paper written by Hymer Rosen and read by Mary Freed and Eileen Licht on Sam Dreben, an El Paso resident, who in spite of his small stature became a World War I hero.

Saturday afternoon we heard from Myer Erlich and his wife, Ruth, about his brother, the gentle circus giant, Jack Earle. They had a board full of interesting items

pertaining to the career of this unusual person. We learned that he was also a poet, and some of his works were displayed.

Jean Schecter next introduced us to the Lapowski family

of West Texas and Pat Fish of the Mormon Church introduced us to their vast store of genealogical information available to those who wish to trace their roots.

Saturday night we bused to



Pictured above (I to r): Brigitte Altman (Fort Worth) and Helen Wilk (Corpus Christi) during "Live" Oral History Session in El Paso.



Pictured above (I to r): Ruth and Myer Erlich (El Paso) talking about their brother, Jake, at the Gathering.



Pictured above: TJHS Gathering audience participants enjoying the program in El Paso.

the Enriquez hacienda, the home of Gaspar and Ann Enriquez, who live in a 300-year-old house in a suburb of El Paso where we had dinner, a Havdallah service, and a talk about the history of the house and family.

Sunday morning after a short business meeting in which officers and directors were elected, we heard a video talk on Holocaust Museums by Henry Kellen, Director of the El Paso Holocaust Museum. This was followed by an oral history session in which Helen Wilk interviewed Brigitte Altman, a Holocaust survivor.

Hollace Weiner next spoke of two West Texas Rabbis and their contributions to their communities: Rabbi Alexander Kline, who brought culture to Lubbock by establishing an art museum, and Rabbi Martin Zielonka, who brought refugee Jews from Europe to Mexico. The concluding speaker was Judge Moses Galatzan, who discussed Jews of El Paso who held public office.

Sunday afternoon the El Paso community dedicated its Holocaust Museum and Study Center. An overflow crowd filled the large gym at the nearby Jewish Community Center for the ceremony, and then we were invited to visit the museum, which is quite impressive.

The success of this Gathering

was due to the many who planned and executed the many jobs and details which were necessary, as well as to all those who made presentations. Thanks to all of you.

NEWS **from** THE PRESIDENT

he 1994 Annual Gathering is now history — Texas Jewish History — another example of how we constantly create history by accomplishment. I have heard several good words and have received a few letters expressing satisfaction.

The complete credit for the success of the Gathering coesto Barbara Rosenberg, Debbye Rice, Herb Given and all the El Pasoans who worked so hard to make us feel welcome.

At the board meeting held Friday morning, the Grant Proposal Committee, chaired by Barry Green with Barbara Lampert, Elizabeth Susser and Marvin Rich, presented a set of guidelines for those who wish to apply to the Society for financial support of historical projects within the scope of the purposes of the TJHS. The guidelines were accepted and are available to those wishing to make application.

It was directed that a job description and budget be prepared to effect the possible hiring of an Executive Director by September. This will be discussed further at the June board meeting in Houston.

There was discussion of the video script about the Jewish experience in Texas which we commissioned Allen and Cynthia Mondell to write in 1991. It will be reconsidered, and a decision will hopefully be reached within the next few months.

The long-awaited Journal is at the printers and should be distributed to the membership in May. Howard Lackman deserves our gratitude for gathering material and writing this first entry into scholarly publication by the TJHS. Let us hope it will be the first of many volumes of Texas Jewish History.

Our board meetings are open to all members. Please plan to attend the next one. Don Teter

HELP!

Kay Goldman is working on her Master's degree in history. She needs information on Jewish families who lived in small, central and west Texas towns between 1880 and 1940 - who owned or managed businesses. Please contact her at:

> Kay Goldman P.O. Box 1508 San Marcos, TX 78667 (512) 392-7137

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

Those of you who were not lucky enough to attend the recent Gathering in El Paso really missed out! So we have decided to bring as much of the El Paso Gathering to you as possible.

Included in this edition of the Newsletter are papers presented at the meetings, items from poster sessions that were displayed in the hotel, and excerpts from speeches given that we thought were too good to miss.

Anything we left out was only because of lack of space. We will be happy to include more in later editions of the Newsletter. If you so desire, please let us know. Call Debbye Rice at 713/493-4398.

Our most sincere thanks goes to Blanche Brown, Ima Joy Gandler, Herb Given, Ruth and Myer Erlich, and Merilee Weiner for gathering all this wonderful material for us.

So please excuse our indulgence and have fun wading through this great volume of historical stuff.

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Pictures from our Gathering in El Paso



Pictured above: Blanche Brown telling about her family's Wholesome Dairy in the El Paso area.



Pictured above: Judge Morris A. Galatzan (El Paso) talking about Jewish judiciary & elected officials of El Paso.



Pictured above (I to r): Ima Joy Gandler (Waco) and Brigitte Altman (Fort Worth).



Pictured above (I to r): Dr. Stanley Hordes (Santa Fe, NM) and Barbara Rosenberg (Sugar Land).



Pictured above (I to r): Jan and Charles Hart (Temple), and her mother, Min Siegel (Dallas).



Pictured above (I to r): Muriel Shaw (Houston), Peggy Samet (Houston), and Myer Erlich (El Paso).

Interesting Direction:

Life is lived forward, someone said, but can only be understood backward.

MYER ERLICH REMEMBERS HIS BROTHER JACK

by Debbye Rice (Houston)

yer Erlich remembers his big brother, Jake, with reverence. You can hear a certain tone in his voice that tells you what love and caring there was in his family.

"Jake was a sculptor, photographer, a fine artist, a painter, a poet, a great pistol and skeet shooter, and the women liked him, too — a lot!" he told me over the phone. "Everyone liked Jake".

So it seems. Jake must have been

quite a man. But then, so is Myer! Leaves don't fall too far from the tree.

Jake was born in Denver on June 20, 1906, weighing-in only a little under 4 pounds. But by the time he was 7 years old, he was growing so fast he needed new shoes every 2 or 3 weeks.

By age 15 he had left home to star in silent pictures in Hollywood, making over 40 movies. As "Jack Earle", he shared equal billing with such stars as "Baby Peggy", a famous silent movie star. His first picture was called "Jack and the Beanstalk", a show we've all heard about — if not seen.

At the grand old age of 17 Jake started going blind. He thought it was from the giant bright kleig lights that were all around the movie sets.

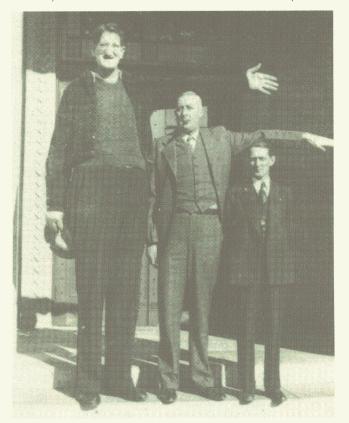
But the doctors found out his pituitary gland was taking over and growing over his optic nerve. This could have killed him if they didn't do something about it right away.

So he came back home to El Paso, and went to some new doctors who were willing to take a chance. They shrunk his pituitary gland with violet ray light, and lo and behold, it worked! And this, folks, was before the days of x-ray vision and

all the newfangled wonders that age has brought to the world of research and medicine.

Myer goes on . . . Some of Jake's friends went to the circus and said they had a friend taller than "the tallest man in the world" in the circus side show. The circus sent someone over to the Erlich house to check Jake out, and right then and there they offered him a contract.

That began Jake's 15 year-long as-



Pictured above: Jack Earle, the gentle giant, towering over two friends, Hope Smith & Harold R. Shoppach. Picture dated 1955.

sociation with the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus. Through the circus, he traveled everywhere there was to go and just about did everything there was to do.

One day a woman visitor to the circus gave Jake some clay and he moved it around this way and he moved it around that way — and before you knew it, he had sculpted animals he saw in the back-stage area of the circus. And these sculptures of his were quite good.

Today "Kliko, the African Bushman" is in the permanent collection of the Museum of American History.

Before too long, he was painting, also, and having one man shows!

Jake was a popular guy, and he would go over to London every year to perform in the Bertram Mill Circus. And before World War II, he took his own circus to Australia. He was even named the honorary ambassador to Antipodes (islands

> near New Zealand) for the San Francisco World's Fair.

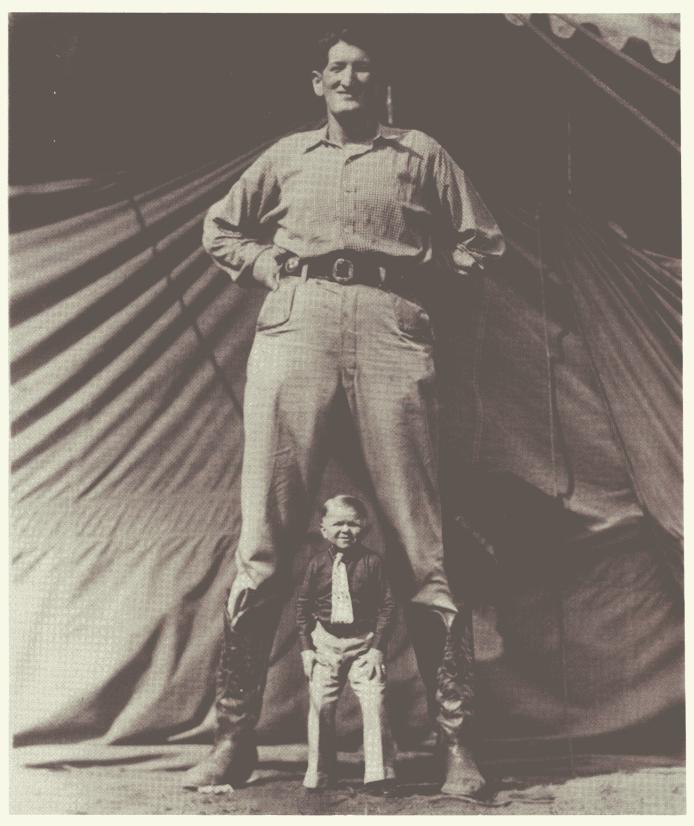
Some little known facts about Jake you won't hear anywhere but here:

- In San Francisco, he lived at the famous Fairmount Hotel.
- He was an observant Jew and would never work on the High Holy Days.
- He called his Mother every Sunday no matter where he was on the road.
- If you were with him, just talking to him you would forget about his height. That's just what he wanted too, to be known for anything other than just being a tall person.
- There was a man named Robert Wadlow who was actually taller than Jake. The American Medi-

cal Association called Wadlow"a freak" in an article. Wadlow sued for libel. Jake testified for the AMA and helped them win their case. His testimony was famous, saying they were all freaks, that was fact, but that it was OK. Imagine that!

- Jake had the greatest little brother in the world, and for that *he* was a lucky man!
- Both Jake and his brother were born with hearts of pure gold!

"HOW'S JACK DOING? BIG, BROTHER, BIG."



Pictured above: Jack Earle, "the world's tallest man", towering above Tiny Tim, "the world's smallest". Picture taken backstage during the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus days.

MY FRIEND, JACK-THE GENTLE GIANT

By Dean Jennings

(*This article was published in both The Saturday Evening Post and the February 1960 issue of Readers Digest Magazine and was put on display with other interesting items about Jack Earle during the Poster Sessions at the El Paso TJHS Gathering)

Tack Earle was the kind of man you could look at a long time and not believe your eyes.

He was eight feet six and a half inches tall, dwarfing all ordinary men. When he spread his huge arms they spanned seven feet four inches and looked like outriggers on a fisherman's boat. His bony hands, wider than ping-pong paddles, could easily span two octaves on a piano; the pipe he smoked was so big it looked like an orchard smudgepot. There were eight yards of cloth in each of his suits, and his fingers, each the diameter of a 50-cent piece, were so thick he had to use a pencil to spin a telephone dial.

Jack Earle was a real giant in a Lilliputian world, and for 14 years he was a freak in the Ringling Brothers, Barnum & Bailey Circus—hating himself and the people who gawked at him. But he was also a giant of high courage and unquenchable will, who wanted to get out of the side show and be like ordinary men. He did, too. It was a prodigious effort, but he beat the odds and cleansed himself of the corroding

I first met Jack some 20 years ago at the San Francisco Press Club, where he caused a memorable stir among reporters who thought they had seen everything. He stepped out of the elevator, ducking his great head from long habit, and ambled into the lounge with the stiff, awkward gait of a giraffe. He had a sharp, craggy face with a nose like a boat hook, and he looked down at you shyly through large shell-rimmed glasses. His handshake was gentle, as though he knew he could easily crack your fingers.

Jack had just arrived from Australia, where, after tormenting weeks of indecision, he had resigned from the circus. Renzo Cesana, of the Roma Wine Co., had offered him a job as salesman, and Jack had accepted it with misgivings. He was almost agonizingly shy, and his deep fear of ridicule and staring eyes made him shrink from people. But he also suffered from a terrible hunger to live a normal life, and he was determined not to go back to the lonely bondage of the side show.

o he went to work, and a spectacular debut it was. The first day, canvassing small shops in the North Beach district, Jack strolled into a small Italian delicatessen. A tiny woman behind the counter took one wild-eyed look, and started yelling for help. Her husband, black mustache bristling, ran from the back room and bravely faced the colossus who stood dumbly, business card in hand.

"All he ever wanted was to be like everybody else"

"Awright, awright!" the storekeeper cried. "I take one-a case any-t'ing you got, thenna you scram."

Jack wrote up an order for one case of brandy and backed out in confusion. Later he learned he had mistakenly gone into a store that wasn't on his list at all. "Oh, I was a great salesman," he told me with a chuckle. "People bought cases and cases of stuff out of sheer fright."

Occasionally he would come to my country home, and he was the sensation of the neighborhood. He would arrive in a vintage sedan which had been rebuilt to fit his sprawling frame. The front seat had been removed, and Jack drove from the back seat, gripping a steering wheel that had been lengthened 19 inches. "It's not easy," he said wryly, "but at least I save on theft insurance. Nobody else can drive it."

The car was a stopper, but the real marvel was Jack Earle himself. When word spread that he was coming, every child for a mile around somehow got the news and hid behind bushes and trees near the house. Even the neighborhood dogs sat quietly with their ears back and did not bark as they always did when other strangers came.

Jack had an almost eerie sense about these curious effects. He told me once that no dog ever barked at him and even vicious ones came up to lick his hand and he knew there were children hiding nearby, though he could not see them.

"C'mon out, I know you're there," he would call softly. "Time for a story from Uncle Jack."

They would then emerge, like little animals venturing out of the woods at dusk and would make a ring around him. And he would tell strange and enchanting stories about Uranus, Pecos Bill, Goliath, Paul Bunyan and other giants. Jack's long arms and weaving fingers fashioned imaginary rivers, mountains and roadways that led into the sky and the castles of the giants, and they were all good giants, who would not harm a child.

Long afterward I learned that Jack often turned up-unasked and unannounced-at orphanages, children's hospitals and other places, to bewitch sick or lonely children with his happy legends. And when he left them, he was often so ill or tired that he could barely get into his car; but he knew they would never be afraid of a giant again.

Tack Earle, as he once said bitterly, J never had a real childhood of his own. He was born in Denver on June 23, 1906, and weighed only four pounds. But when be was seven his arms and legs suddenly began to grow like a wild vine, and within two years he was more than six feet tall. At ten, still growing, he had to have his clothes made to order.

Now, towering over classmates in school, Jack began to suffer wounds. There was never a day without cruel (continued on next page)

taunts; the boys called him "Giraffe", "Old Highpockets", or "Ichabod Crane"; they tripped him and played tricks on him. His anguished parents, Isadore and Dora Erlich, who had two other sons of average height, went from doctor to doctor in a desperate search for some magic potion to stop his growth.

By the time he was 13, Jack was already seven feet tall. He dreaded each new day when, facing a mirror, he could almost measure the relentless upward stretching of his bones. His enormous shoes were now costing \$25 a pair, and he began buying socks by the gross, because the manufacturer wouldn't make his odd size for any lesser number.

To earn a living Jack went to work in Hollywood. He made 48 pictures for Century Comedies with popular Baby Peggy and other child stars. He was vacationing at home in El Paso, Texas, where his family had moved, when the circus came to town. He wandered through the midway, where one of the attractions was Jim Tarver, billed as the tallest man in the world. Jack and his friends bought tickets, and inside the tent there took place one of the great embarrassing moments in circus history. The astonished customers needed only one incredulous look to see that this country boy was a foot taller than the professional giant. "I had a guilty feeling about making Jim Tarver look silly," Jack said. "I backed out and went home."

The following day a Ringling agent showed up at the Erlich home and offered Jack a permanent job. Two weeks later in New York, he reported to Clyde Ingalls, director of the circus sideshow department. Ingalls dressed him up in black-leather knee boots with lifts in the heels, flaring breeches striped with gold braid and a double-breasted coat with gold epaulets and buttons. To exaggerate his height further, they gave him a fur busby that teetered precariously 16 inches above his head. On opening night Jack Earle was a formidable and frightening giant indeed.

But in his heart he was still a boy,

unbearably conscious of his long snaking arms and club-like hands, and painfully aware that people would stare at him as though he were some monster.

As he stood on the platform that first night, nauseated, frightened and hating the people lined up outside, a small voice floated up from below: "Hey, Jack!" He looked down and recognized Harry Doll, the famed midget.

"Welcome, Jack," Doll said. "And take it easy. Remember there are more freaks in the crowd than there are up here."

The midget smiled, and Jack smiled back. Together they turned to face the enemy.

There was no single precipitating Levent that impelled Jack to guit the circus. But there were hundreds of exasperating little sores — the brats who banged his shins to see if he was on stilts, the kidders repeating the same silly remark: "Jack, how's the weather up there?" There were the endless shuttlings back and forth across the country in Ringling Car 96 with the other freaks, the smutty questions about his private life from the loafers who hung around the lot. Once, in Tennessee, he forgot himself and aimed a single punch at a tormentor. The blow broke the man's jaw. The circus settled with the victim, but Jack moped about it for weeks, convinced he was losing his protective sense of humor.

There was also an ominous thought he had never mentioned to anyone—the certain knowledge that he would be lucky to live another 10 or 12 years. He was 34 in 1940, and had already used up more years than nature gives most victims of gigantism. "I was in pretty good shape," he told me, "but I was already having some minor troubles and I was pretty sure things would get worse. Frankly, I wasn't afraid of death, but I didn't want to die in a tent. Most of all, I wanted to be on the outside — free — and there wasn't much time."

Jack worked for the Roma company almost 12 years. Starting as a salesman,

he was soon named a special representative for the firm, and contributed dozens of ingenious merchandising ideas. In this new world of business he met thousands of people in virtually every state, called on them in their offices and homes, and joined them in new-found laughter and happiness. "Why, you know, people are glad to have me around!" he grinned. "I can wash windows without having to climb up on a ladder, and I'm handy for dusting moldings most housewives can't reach."

Hidden talents flowered like plants long robbed of sunlight and water, and he shared them with his friends. He learned public speaking and sold thousands of dollars worth of war bonds. At Christmastime he was the most impressive Santa Claus of all, and many a patient in hospital wards heard him sing carols in a fine, clear voice.

He mastered the art of portrait photography, studied sculpture and wrote poignant little verses, in which he mirrored the mingled sadness and joy of what he called his rebirth. Toward the end, serious kidney troubles and other physical problems sent him to the Mayo Clinic for the fourth time in a van. In search for relief, Jack took up water-color painting to pass the time. He painted with a sure, delicate touch—quickly, as though there would be no tomorrow. When each picture was done he would get it framed and give it to some grateful friend.

The last time I saw him, not long before his death in July 1952, he presented to me a large water color he had done on a deserted beach near my home. There were three sea gulls high in flight over a still and bleak stretch of sand. There was a beach umbrella and an empty sand bucket nearby, and perhaps this was the parting symbol of his life, as though a child had wearied of the sand play and had been swallowed by the frothing sea. Now and then, when the sun is far down in the sky, I look at the painting. And I say to myself softly and humbly: "Hi, Jack—how's the weather up there?"

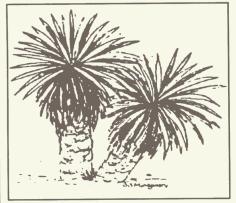
States in 1898, a penniless little immigrant from Russia. Who would have thought that twenty-three years later, on Armistice Day in 1921, he would be serving in the honor guard at the dedication of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Seventy years later, Dreben remains almost as unknown as the soldier he helped to inter in Arlington National Cemetery. Yet this adopted El Pasoan was a muchdecorated American soldier who also participated in some of the most swashbuckling adventures of the early 1900s.

The day after his death in Los Angeles on March 15, 1925, newspapers all over the country carried front-page articles that paid tribute to him. The El Paso Times was no exception and, indeed, devoted the better part of an additional page to the subject of Sam Dreben's life and military career, including a two-column eulogy written by his good friend Damon Runyon. In the eulogy, Runyon described Sam as "a short, dark, chunky man, of self-effacing manner" — popularly known as "the fighting Jew" — who was "the bravest, the gentlest, the courtliest man I ever knew." "He struck you as anything but a fighter," continued Runyon. "He was almost painfully polite, always apparently greatly abashed . . . But beneath the velvet of his demeanor was the iron of a warrior soul."

El Paso has been home to several warriors more famous than Sam Dreben — Pershing, Bradley, Patton, Terry Allen - but none of these was more colorful or more courageous than he was. And the memory of his daring exploits lingered in the El Paso Southwest for several decades after his death. Whenever old-timers used to get together to talk about well-known border characters, someone was sure to mention Sam Dreben. And then the stories about him would begin to flow-wonderful stories that took you all over the world with Sam "the fighting Jew": to the Philippines, China, Central America, Mexico, France.

Sam's story actually began in Poltava, Russia, where he was born on June 1, 1878, to deeply religious Jewish parents. While he was still an infant, his family moved to Odessa on the Black Sea. Mrs. Dreben wanted her Sammy to become a rabbi, but the idea did not appeal to the youngster, who dreamed of being a soldier and wearing a uniform with shiny buttons. When informed that a Jew could not serve as an officer in the Czar's army, Sam was disappointed but not disheartened.

Twice he ran away from home, once going as far as Germany, only to find that there were no jobs for Jewish boys in that country. He returned home for a time and labored in the fields, listening to the sto-



ries of America, the refuge of the oppressed. At eighteen he left home for good, stowing away on a ship bound for England. In London, Dreben earned a precarious living carrying vegetables to market, but was soon fired for eating some of the produce. Obviously England was not the land of opportunity that he was seeking. But getting to America was not going to be easy. He managed to make his way to Liverpool, where he worked for a time as a dock laborer and as a tailor's assistant in a sweatshop, for one pence a day.

After saving enough money for the price of steerage passage to the United States, he arrived in New York City in January, 1899, and went to Philadelphia, where relatives had preceded him. He soon realized that the United States was not the star-spangled heaven he had imagined it would be. A person had to work to eat, and Sammy was unable to find a job. For a few weeks he attended night school, struggling to learn the English language.

In 1899 the war in the Philippine Is-

lands was going on, and Dreben heard stories of the fighting. Moreover, he learned from a recruiting sergeant that the regular army, to his amazement, paid its soldiers fifteen dollars a month and three meals a day. "Do they give the uniform too?" he asked.

"Sure, you get all your clothes," the sergeant told him, "and also medical attention. Why, if you get killed they don't even charge a cent to bury you."

Within an hour little Sammy held up his hand and swore to protect the United States against all enemies, received his first meal, and was issued an ill-fitting uniform with real brass buttons. When he returned to the home of his relatives, his aunt exclaimed, "Sammy, you're crazy! Don't you know soldiers get killed?"

"Maybe, but they don't charge you anything to eat," Sammy assured her.

Dreben was assigned to Company G, Fourteenth United States Infantry, then stationed at Bacoor, in the Philippines, and was given a ticket and expense money to San Francisco. With other recruits and a few old-time regulars, he boarded a train for San Francisco. The Army had a time-honored custom in those days called "chiseling the rookies." On the first day Sam was initiated into the game of stud poker. On the second day he was broke and went hungry for the rest of the trip, except for handouts from his companions.

At San Francisco the squad of recruits was marched aboard a transport. In a short time, Sam learned that extra coal passers were needed in the stokehole. Every soldier who volunteered for a four-hour shift would receive the princely sum of one dollar. It seemed like found money, and for four hours Sam sweated in the terrific heat below deck. At the end of the shift he came on deck weary and weak, but he had a silver dollar in his pocket. On the mess deck a bunch of soldiers were ganged up in a corner shooting craps. Sam had learned all about the game on the train from Philadelphia. At least he thought he had. He took the dice, dropped his dollar on the deck, and said, "Shoot de works." Oneroll

of the dice and Sam heard the verdict: "Snake eyes." And he saw his silver dollar disappear.

In the Philippines, on his very first day under fire, Sam characteristically "shot de works," but this time-as indeed throughout his military career-he did not come up "snake eyes." The incident was later described by one of his fellow soldiers, Tex O'Reilly. Sam's outfit, ordered to put down the rebellion for independence led by Emilio Aguinaldo, was marching toward a stone bridge, where-unknown to the American soldiers-the rebels had placed "an ominous looking cannon loaded with black powder, nails, rivets and scrap iron, good for a single blast." Suddenly it "blasted away," and the men lucky enough to escape being hit scrambled for cover. "All but one man. A lone soldier emerged from the smoke, moving at a half-trot onto and across the bridge, disappearing as he leaped into the enemy trenches." It turned out that Sam survived unscratched, and when his fellow soldiers later demanded an explanation of his "damfool conduct," he responded in his guttural English": "Vell, I heard the captain say 'Forvards!' and I don't hear nobody say 'Stop.'"

Dreben next saw action in China, where the Fourteenth Infantry was deployed to rescue the besieged legations of the United States and other western nations in Peking during the Boxer Rebellion in 1900. After the Rebellion was crushed, Sam, his Army hitch over, returned to the United States and got a job as a municipal rat catcher in San Francisco.

Finding that type of employment disillusioning for a fighting man, he enlisted in the Army. At the end of his hitch, he found himself in the Panama Canal Zone. The next day he joined a force of adventurers, led by General Lee Christmas, fighting in the Guatemalan revolution. There he met Tracy Richardson, a machine-gunner-for-hire and a soldier-adventurer who was to become Sam's close friend and comrade-in-arms. Before the fighting was over, Sam was made a "coronel." The two soldiers of fortune followed wars wherever they found them.

According to one account, Dreben became involved in a Central American revolution which seemed to be going nowhere, both sides fighting aimlessly and listlessly. Sam picked the likeliest-look-

ing side and got a job organizing its army. He drilled, cussed, fed, and paid his troops, but got no appreciable results. They still lacked spirit. Thinking it over, he hit upon a brilliant scheme. Appealing to their love of glory and finery, he promoted every man in the army. The lieutenants became captains, the captains became colonels, the colonels became generals, the generals became field marshals, and the buck privates became second lieutenants. There were no enlisted men. He then outfitted them all in splendid uniforms trimmed with gold braid, the whole army looking like the male chorus of the Strauss operetta The Student Prince. Now the bedizened officers fought like devils.

Sometime during the Mexican Revolution, Sam established his residence in E1 Paso—at 2416 Montana Avenue. But he was often away from home—fighting in the Revolution. At the outset he fought in Madero's revolt against Porfirio Díaz. Later he was in many revolutionary battles in Chihuahua, fighting with Generals José Ines Salazar, Emilio P. Campa, and Pascual Orozco. He also fought with Pancho Villa, serving as Villa's purchasing agent for a time. But when Villa and Venustiano Carranza broke their alliance, Dreben remained loyal to Carranza.

One revolutionary battle stands out from the others. It took place near Parral, in southern Chihuahua. Even with Dreben and Richardson on his side, General "Cheche" Campos' federal army was fighting a disorganized war. Suddenly, General Pancho Villa and his army appeared on their flank, struck a blow, and faded away into the desert. Soon they returned and captured Parral, causing most of Dreben's men to flee the city. Sam, with only a small gun squad left to help out, grabbed a machine gun and began to fire upon the Villistas, stopping their charge. Then he began working around the flanks of the area on foot with fewer than a dozen Mexican troops. With his hands on the trigger of his machine gun, he and his men retreated several hundred yards. When the enemy again advanced, he opened up and drove them to cover. He continued these tactics for more than two hours until darkness gave him and his men a chance to rejoin the retreating federal army. It has been described as the greatest solo battle of the Revolution.

Another exploit, recalled later by some of Sam's El Paso friends, took place near Jiménez, where the Federales were concentrated. Dreben and Richardson, now fighting against the government forces, were entrusted with the job of forming the rebel line of defense. From the hills they watched the advance of the army below. Homer Scott, a young photographer who had been following the numerous battles in Mexico, armed only with a camera, was nearby. Viewing the scene near Jiménez, Scott called to the two warriors and asked, "Why don't you load one of the switch engines of the train with dynamite and bump them in the nose?"

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It was a grand idea. They brought one of the old engines to the top of the hill, hastily packed it with 800 pounds of dynamite, and scattered percussion caps over the boxes. When the enemy trains were almost within rifle range, Sam opened the throttle, tied down the whistle, and jumped from the cab! Like a monster out of a nightmare, that roaring death machine rushed down the slope, striking the leading government train head on. There was a terrific explosion, and wreckage was strewn for a hundred yards across the track.

Twice during the Revolution, Sam came to the rescue of his friend General J.J. Méndez, military commander of Ciudad Juárez. The first rescue came in response to a revolt against General Méndez by one of his young captains, Jesus Valverde, who was angry because he had been severely disciplined by the General for insubordination. Routed in the middle of the night from his bed in Juárez, Méndez crossed to El Paso. He immediately applied to Chihuahua City and Mexico City for reinforcements and returned to Juárez accompanied by Dreben, who was to instruct the troops in the use of the new equipment. Soon, however, Sam was placed in command of the defense of the Customs House. He and Méndez then led a charge against the rebels and expelled them. Dreben received the thanks of the Mexican government for his work in quelling this revolt.

Then, with hardly a respite, along came a second rebellion, full of hot action but lasting only a few hours. Another ambi-

tious young captain named Castre, with visions of being a second Pancho Villa, had decided it was a good time to stage a revolt and had gathered a small army on the outskirts of Juárez. General Méndez could scarcely muster a score of loyal soldiers and a few guns. Instinctively he raced once more across the river to El Paso and consulted his old friend Sam Dreben. By the time he and Dreben could return to Juárez, firing had already started and the Customs House was being attacked. But once again the loyalists prevailed.

After Villa carried out his infamous raid on the American garrison at Columbus, New Mexico, Sam's allegiance to his adopted country proved stronger than any of his allegiances in Mexico. When General John J. Pershing entered Mexico chasing after Villa, the little soldier promptly volunteered his services and served with distinction as a scout for Pershing in the Punitive Expedition. When Pershing withdrew to El Paso in 1917, Sam returned to civilian life.

Now a married man and almost forty years old, Sam thought his soldiering days were over. However, two events changed his expectations: the death of his infant daughter (which plunged him into deep sorrow) and the entry of the United States into the World War. When a special company was recruited in E1 Paso, Sam enlisted as a private but was soon promoted to first sergeant in Captain Richard F. Burges' Company A of the 141st Infan-

After training at Camp Bowie, the regiment was ordered to France, where it participated in several of the hardest campaigns of the war-among them, the Meuse-Argonne drive and the allied Champagne offensive. On one occasion, as reported (much later) in The El Paso Times of March 16, 1925, Dreben saved Major Burges' life: "... when their regiment was under heavy fire, the Americans had taken some ditches. Major Burges had found a dugout and was in it when Dreben came by and insisted that he get out of that one and spend the night in another. He had gotten out on time before his dugout was bombed. 'Yes, he saved my life, by this thoughtfulness,' Burges said."

It was not merely "this thoughtfulness" that inspired in Major Burges his profound respect and deep affection for Sam Dreben. According to Burges, Sam was always the first man to reach the objective during attacks, his initiative and courage serving consistently as an inspiration to his men. And, indeed, the records of Sam's deeds in World War I bear out these words. At St. Etienne, for instance, Dreben captured a machine-gun nest, killing fourteen Germans single-handedly. For this heroism, he was decorated with the highest French honor given an enlisted man—the Medaille Militaire—and a second medal, the Croix de Guerre with palms. He also received the Italian War Cross and the United States Distinguished Service Cross.

First Sergeant Dreben and Major Burges returned from France together, and were met by cheering crowds in their hometown of El Paso. Once again a civilian, Dreben became a prominent figure in real estate and insurance circles.

The esteem in which Dreben was held by the ranking military officials of the United States and France is illustrated by the following incident. Sam, wearing all his decorations, attended a convention of the American Legion in Kansas City, Missouri. While walking through the lobby of the hotel, he met General Pershing and Marshal Foch on their way to a banquet being given for the military notables present. Pershing immediately stopped and, turning to Foch, said, "This is one of my bravest soldiers." Foch, seeing the French decorations pinned on Dreben's chest, embraced him in the French style. Pershing then invited Sam to the banquet. Needless to say, Sam accepted with pleasure.

abbi Martin Zielonka, rabbi of Temple Mount Sinai in El Paso from 1900 to 1938, knew Dreben for many years and bore testimony to Sam's pride of Jewish descent. The rabbi was in fact a close student of Dreben's life and published his findings in a long article entitled "The Fighting Jew," which appeared in Volume 31 of the American Jewish Historical Society (1928). Norman Walker, a newspaperman who also knew Dreben well, said, "Sam's two most cherished possessions were his Jewish ancestry and his American citizenship."

Although Sam Dreben's career as an

active soldier ended with the signing of the Armistice in 1918, his "warrior soul" remained strong and vigorous. Sometime in the early '20s he made a significant contribution to American Legion policy in El Paso by fighting for what he knew to be right. When a known Ku Klux Klan member sought to join the organization, Sam introduced a resolution prohibiting any Klansman from membership in the Legion: "These men, oath-bound to secrecy, hide behind their masks and say that because I am a foreign-born Jew I am not good enough to be an American. Every time America has called for volunteers, I have put on the uniform. They did not ask me at the recruiting office if I was a Jew, and they did not ask me on the battlefield what my race or religion was.

. . The soldiers didn't wear masks in France, other than gas masks, and they don't need them now." A stormy debate followed, the chair ruling that Dreben's resolution was out of order. But Sam appealed to the post for a ruling, and his resolution carried without a dissenting

In 1921 Dreben received an invitation from Washington, D.C. The Unknown Soldier was to be buried with honors in Arlington National Cemetery on November 11, and General Pershing had picked the guard of honor from among the men who had shown the greatest bravery in the war. Among those chosen-and the list included such luminaries as Sergeant Alvin York—was El Paso's Sam Dreben.

On March 16, 1925, the day after Sam's death, the Texas Legislature adjourned for a day in his honor, and the flag was flown at half staff at the state capitol. General Pershing sent this telegram to Sam's widow: DEEPEST SYMPATHY IN GREAT LOSS YOU HAVE SUFFERED IN THE DEATH OF YOUR HUSBAND ... HE WAS MY DEAR FRIEND. And in his nationally syndicated newspaper column, Damon Runyon wrote: "If I were asked to write his epitaph, I would put it in a few words. I would simply engrave in the granite shaft: SAM DREBEN, ALL MAN.

Hymer Elias Rosen has been active in the El Paso scene for over fifty years, with a diversified background in the entertainment field and research in the area of Jewish pioneers in the Southwest.

FROM GOATS TO A WHOLESOME DAIRY

by Blanche Brown (El Paso)

Before we talk about goats and cows, let me give you some family background. My father, Lazar Kopilowitz was born in Pokroi, Lithuania, under the rule of Czarist Russia. His family had a wholesale grocery, stationary and tobacco business. My father

went from town to town with a horse and cart, selling.

When World War I started, the German Army approached Pokroi and the Russians forced the family to evacuate. With



Pictured above: "Supreme Aylew", two weeks before killing on Feb. 29, 1928.

his widowed mother, grandmother and brother, they fled to Riga, Latvia, where some relatives lived. With some of the money received from the sale of their small business, my father started for America. It was either that or the Russian Army!

He arrived in San Francisco on November 1, 1915, on a Japanese ship. I remember him talking about the pickled eggs he ate—and how sick they made him. He first worked as a busboy-dishwasher for \$15 a month plus room and board. He also worked tearing down the San Francisco Exposition.

When he had saved enough money, he went to Newark, New Jersey, to a distant relative, George Lowenstein. There he worked for a wholesale candy store hauling freight for \$6 a week. After learning some English, he was promoted to stock clerk. Then he began his own candy route selling door to door — making of course much more money.

The U.S. entered the war, and Daddy found himself in the Army at Camp Humphreys, Virginia. He stayed there until 1919 when he was honorably discharged. It was during this time that he became a U.S. Citizen in an unusual ceremony. He and other foreign nationals who had served in the U.S. Army were

taken before the Supreme Court to be naturalized as U.S. Citizens. After the Army, my Dad returned to Newark and the candy route. Soon he and three others founded their own candy company (which I understand is still in existence).

In 1921 my dad was sent to the Fort

Bayard, New Mexico V.A. Hospital for health reasons. He paid forpassage for his mother, brother, and childhoods weetheart, Leah Forman (my mother) to join him. My

parents were married here in El Paso in the Erlich home and Mr. Erlich signed as a witness on their marriage license.

Daddy got out of the hospital and was told to stay in the Southwest and work outdoors—so to Deming they went. They had learned about the health benefits of goat's milk, so they raised a few milk goats

and chickens, selling the milk and eggs. As a matter of fact, my sisters and I were all raised on goat's milk. And my son Howard drank goat's milk for the first three years of his life.

Aftermy sister Florence was

bom, my parents wanted a bigger city with better medicine and especially more "yiddishkeit", so they packed up Florence and six goats and moved to El Paso in 1925. They opened the Life Saver Goat Dairy, expanding later to dairy cows and becoming The Wholesome Dairy. By 1946, we still had some goats but mostly cows.

I have told you very little about my

mother, Lillian Forman Kopilowitz. She came to the U.S.A. through Ellis Island. She had also worked in Newark. After coming West and marrying my dad, she did everything but milk the animals. She kept the books, washed bottles, checked drivers in and out, and even helped deliver milk. She never drove a car, but went along with the drivers. From what I was told I was almost born in the milk house because there was work to be finished.

Wholesome Dairy grew from one employee to over one hundred thirty, serving West Texas and Southern New Mexico. The annual payroll and purchases of this 100% home-owned dairy contributed more than one million dollars a year to the area's economy. An additional million dollars was spent on feed and grain. All of the milk was produced on company-owned farms in the El Paso area.

My father attributed his success, not to himself, but to his wife and his two sons-in-law who joined the business after World War II. Bernard Schoichet became the Vice-President and General

Manager of Wholesome Dairy, and Robert Brown, my husband, was Secretary-Treasurer and Farm Manager. Bob says the minute I introduced him to my folks and told them he had a college

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Pictured above (I to r): Son of "Supreme Beauty Girl", son of "Fatima", son of daughter of "Kola Ku", and twin brother of son of "Beauty Girl".

degree in Agriculture, my mother cooked special dishes for him to entice him. My parents believed that a person who works for himself works harder and does a better job, so in 1948 the sons-in-law became partners in the business.

When the farm in Anthony was sold, B-K Farms had 5,200 animals being fed, milked, and cared for. In 1980 our plant was sold to Borden's.

A REVERENCE FOR ART IN LUBBOCK

by Hollace Weiner (Fort Worth)

This article appeared in the Sunday, August 22, 1993 edition of *The Fort Worth Star Telegram*Printed here with the newspaper's permission and was presented to the TJHS Annual Gathering in El Paso by the author

LECTURE INLONGHAND describing Egyptian life after death fills one side of the paper. The flip side contains a jolt: a typewritten note to Rabbi Alexander S. Kline warning that unless he returns the letter by August 1967, his pension plan options will dissolve.

A second sheet of paper outlines in ink the Chinese dynastics from Shang to Tang. The reverse side bears the orange-and-blue logo of a Howard Johnson motel in Nashville, where the rabbi lodged when he penned those thoughts during the summer of 1981.

Still another page of handwritten notes marvels at the dimensions of the Parthenon, figures more relevant to the rabbi than the typewritten letter on the reverse disclosing that his salary in 1962 hovered around \$5,000.

Scholarly on one side, mundane on the other, the archives of Rabbi Alex Kline fill 68 dusty boxes stacked against a wall inside the Museum of Texas Tech University. Categorized by era and artist, the papers illuminate the frugal habits and faraway thoughts of a small-town rabbi who recycled paper before the term was coined and interpreted the art of the ages to this tumbleweed town.

When he died in 1982 at 79, the rabbi who ministered to Lubbock's 80 Jewish families — a mere 0.1 percent of the town's population — had spent two decades lecturing 20 weeks a year at the local museum. There, in a room now named after him, the rabbi enthralled West Texans with his humble, cut-and-pasted art collection: a lifetime of clippings from newspapers and magazines, glued on cardboard and illustrating art from the pyramids to Picasso.

"We were insatiable for him," said Pauline Bean, 78, founder of the Women's Council of the West Texas Museum Association.

That Kline's title was rabbi—not curator—concerned no one. "This is still West Texas. Nobody cares about your credentials if you can produce," said Winifred

Vigness, former history professor at Tech. "If you can build a better mousetrap, who cares if you went to Mousetrap University?"

If he was not a professional art authority, Kline's grasp seemed intuitive. A native of Budapest, his father was a fourth-generation rabbi; his mother, an artist who passed along her fascination for paintings and architecture. Throughout Alex Kline's life, their personali-

"Rabbi Alexander Kline preached religious values to his congregation and taught aesthetic values to his town."

ties pulled at his destinies.

Arriving in America in 1921, the 18-year-old Hungarian was already fluent in six languages when he started tackling English, which he mastered without an accent. Employment wasn't hard to find. He worked at a Pittsburgh bank that specialized in foreign currency. A lucrative career in international finance was assured, but the tug of his past persisted. After earning his high school equivalency degree in night school, Kline moved west to the University of Cincinnati and Hebrew Union College, the seminary for Reform (less traditional) rabbis in America.

As an undergraduate, he studied art history. Then, throughout his rabbinical school years, he wrestled with the relationship between art and religion. Because the Second Commandment forbids graven images and because the biblical prophets rage against "elaborate personal adornments," Judaism was historically slow to produce the temples and tapestries that nourish artists' souls.

Yet, Kline argues in his graduate and undergraduate theses, houses of worship are "sermons in stone, color and stained glass... Art is the eternal articulator of the soul of humanity . . . the permanent expression and record of his best experiences." He couldn't get enough.

"He wanted to be a student of art," said Rabbi Jacob Rader Marcus, dean emeritus of Hebrew Union College and one of Kline's teachers in the early 1930s. "He became a student of art by cutting out clippings from all the papers and studying them. He may have learned something. I don't know. He was an amateur critic of art with a capital A."

Wherever he held a pulpit — Jackson, Tenn.; Asheville, N.C.; Port Arthur; El Paso; Clarksdale, Miss. — Kline continued cutting and pasting and lecturing, preaching on the pulpit about Judaism and off the pulpit about his passion for art.

He reached his zenith in Lubbock, the hub city of Texas' South Plains, a monotonous terrain with aptly named towns like Plainview, Levelland and Brownfield. Against the colorless landscape, he proved to be an artist with words.

The Impressionist painters, he told his audiences, brightened "their canvases with color and with the brilliance of the sun."

The Pop and Op artists took the "razzle-dazzle manmade world of cities, honkytonks, brightly packaged products — a confection of vulgarities — and out of their impermanence made something arresting and permanent."

The Bible, to the eloquent rabbi, was also art, a literary anthology packed with first-rate drama, mythology and verse.

To believers who absorbed his words — residents concerned that Lubbock was more Buddy Holly country than cultural oasis — the rabbi's arrival in 1960 was nothing less than a miracle of good timing.

"It was just an act of God," Pauline Bean recalled.

That summer, she and a friend had hauled from Dallas a museum panel truck they'd loaded with Lubbock's first extensive look at fine art. The cache included originals by Rubens, Renoir and Rouault, all on loan from a Dallas couple vacationing in Europe, redecorating their house and delighted with the Lubbock Museum's offer of free summer storage.

Overwhelmed by the priceless art, Pauline Bean was at a loss to explain it to the public until she read in the Lubbock Avalanche Journal on Aug. 5, 1960, about the arrival of the new rabbi. He was an art

authority, the local paper reported, with a collection of "80,000 reproductions . . . one of the largest in the nation."

"We knocked on his door," the docent recalled. "We had no idea what we were doing."

Intrigued, the rabbi accompanied the women to the art display and effortlessly supplied historic data on each canvas. He seemed especially enchanted with French artist Georges Rouault's bold, paintsmeared portrait of a colorful clown.

"I'll never forget the rabbi's words," Pauline recalled. "He said, 'The artist's palette was like ground-up jewels.' After that, we were in the palm of his hand. We were insatiable for him — and for Eleanore."

LEANORE was the rabbi's wife and Econstant companion. Constant because at the age of 59, the well-traveled rabbi did not drive a car. Never tired, Eleanore Kline, seven years her husband's junior, transported him everywhere, dropping him at the front door while she parked down the road, toting the lecture notes he folded into brown wrapping paper.

Though dutiful in demeanor, she was the rabbi's intellectual peer. On their first date in 1934, he had corrected her Latin, and she was smitten.

"Like Siamese twins, they were inseparable," recalled daughter Susan Kline Brochstein, who lives in Houston, where her mother, now 83, has suffered a series of small strokes. "She was very much of that generation. She put him on a pedestal - the woman behind the man."

Yet she would bicker with him in public.

"He would be in the front lecturing," the daughter recalled. "She would be in the back taking care of the projector. If she didn't agree with what he said, she would correct him. There was a lot of banter back and forth. It was a totally shared life."

Winifred Vigness, who for a dozen years was executive secretary of the West Texas Museum Association, compared the couple to a show business team: "Eleanore knew the rabbi needed center stage. I think she was the manager and he was the artist."

The rabbi's daughter added "He called

the shots for her to manage."

Inside Lubbock's Jewish community, congregants likewise perceived Eleanore Kline as the backbone of the rabbi's secular success as well as his 20-year tenure at their synagogue, a record in a house of God that has had nine rabbis during the past 53 vears.

"She kept an edge on his temper. She'd say 'Now, Dear," recalled congregant Bobbie Freid, a frequent visitor to the rabbi's six-room household that overflowed with magazines he intended to clip.

THE KLINES' two children were al-I ready grown by the time the couple reached Lubbock: David in Hebrew Union College, Susan married to a Houston man and raising children.

While the rabbi read art journals, his wife tended the temple — Congregation Shaareth Israel, a simple one-story sanctuary was a high-pitched roof at 23rd and Avenue Q. There, Eleanore ran the religious school. Eleanore gave Hebrew lessons to preteen bar and bat mitzvah students. On the rabbi's modest salary, Eleanor saved for summer trips to museums abroad.

With her attention keyed to the present, Eleanore earned a following in her own right.

Her frequent "Conversations in Literature" lectures at the library were as popular as his seminar at the University Museum. Except her focus was best sellers. In a town with a country-western beat, she was not averse to reviewing current pulp because, she believed, popular fiction "reflects the age in which we live."

Although Nobel laureate Saul Bellow was her favorite, authors Danielle Steele and Sydney Sheldon made her book review list. If a work of fiction failed, she clued in her followers with advice to use "the good old Jewish custom and begin from the back."

Short, trim and dressed in tailored suits, the Philadelphia-born Eleanore Spitz Kline wore her salt-and-pepper hair pinned back into a simple arrangement. She wore dark-rimmed, stylish glasses and accented her outfits with jewelry fashioned from polished stones purchased on trips to museums abroad. In high heels, she stood 5 feet 5 inches, half a head shorter than the rabbi. Every photo of the pair in the Avalanche Journal shows her gazing up into his smiling face.

He, too, was neat, well-groomed and formal, with a halo of white hair on his balding pate, deep-blue eyes, glasses and, always, a suit and tic in public.

"He was a rabbi you were proud to be seen with," said Norma Glassman Skibell, whose two youngest sons were bar mitzvahed under Kline's supervision.

HE CONTRASTED Kline with five Oprevious rabbis who had preached in Lubbock but lasted no more than a couple years. Some rabbis had been at odds with the congregation. Others found the town too small and remained until they could find a larger, less remote pulpit. Not Kline. He preferred small towns to big cities.

"The rabbi is given latitude to grow," explained his daughter-in-law, Barbara Kline who lives in Monroe, La., where her husband, sixth-generation Rabbi David Kline, heads a 136-member congregation. "There are different challenges."

Alex Kline wrote about the challenges and rewards in an April 1954 article in the Central Conference of America Rabbis Journal.

"The rabbi serving in a small town need not become a small town person!" he insisted in an article titled The Small Town Rabbi. "Where there is only one, everything depends upon him. He becomes the symbol of Jewish unity . . . the sole purveyor of the Jewish religion."

In Lubbock, Kline fit easily into the role of ambassador of the Hebrew people. His prominence at the museum led to guest sermons from church pulpits and guest lectures at campus philosophy classes.

"Before, with the Jews there had been little interaction, other than businesswise." said Pauline Bean, a Methodist whose family leased retail space to a Jewishowned department store. "There was no animosity. They kept themselves secluded."

"Rabbi bridged the gap between the Jewish community and the gentile community," Bean said. "It traveled on the back of art. Rabbi and Eleanore were easy to know. They gave. They moved out into the community. They opened the door."

Eleanore Kline guest lectured at Tech on Roman family life. She spoke to Sunday

school classes about Judaic customs and talked to social clubs about Jewish food. One season she emphasized the Passover seder, a ritual banquet that is the root of Jesus' last supper. "All of a sudden, we began doing Passover meals in our churches," Bean recalled.

NULTURAL exchanges worked both ways. Bean remembers the weekend the rabbi phoned her husband, Russell, an experienced farmer, for assistance in planting a backyard vine and fig tree. Although the rabbi understood the peace-on-earth symbolism of the plants, he lacked the green thumb to get them in the ground. His thoughts were more distant.

When he died of a heart attack March 29, 1982, the rabbi's focus was on the Far East. He and his wife were planning an excursion to Japan. Two lectures remained in his 10-week series on Chinese art.

As Christians and Jews gathered at the rabbi's house to mourn, Jewish customs took over. At sundown for the next seven days, family and friends recited traditional Hebrew prayers.

Seven weeks after the rabbi's death. Eleanore Kline delivered the final two seminars in the Chinese art series. The next season, the lectures continued with Texas Tech scholars at the lectern. This fall the series begins its 33rd year.

Although the lectures draw new audiences, the rabbi's archives, with their cutand-pasted illustrations, gather dust. "I doubt very much that any of the art students at Tech are going to go over there and look at the torn-up pictures that rabbi collected," Bean said. "But these were the start. It's a wonderful memory for many of us. The rabbi was like the rock that dropped in the pond and sent out ripples."

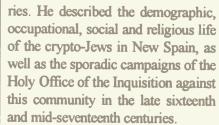
Would you like to take an **ORAL HISTORY** of a loved one or a cherished member of your community? For help, please call Helen Wilk (512) 991-1118

THE SEPHARDIC LEGACY IN NEW MEXICO: A HISTORY OF THE CRYPTO-JEWS

r. Stanley M. Hordes, a private historical consultant from Santa Fe, New Mexico. spoke on the history of the crypto-Jews of New Mexico, from their origins in the forced conversions of Spain

in the fourteenth and fifteenth century, down to the present.

Dr. Hordes touched on the origins of the conversos from their Jewishorigins in Spain and Portugal, through the forcedconversions of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, to their migration to the New World in the sixteenth and seventeenth centu-



Attention was devoted to the early colonization efforts northward from central Mexico into New Mexico, and the possible cause and effect relationship between the persecution of crypto-Jews and converso participation in the establishment of the new colony. He also treated the evolution of the crypto-Jewish community in New Mexico through the succeeding three centuries. and described the customs and consciousness that have survived. His presentation was accompanied by slides showing the manifestation of this consciousness on cemetery headstones.

Dr. Stanley M. Hordes received his B.A. in History from the University of Maryland in 1971, his M.A. in Latin American History from the University of New Mexico in 1973. and his Ph.D. from Tulane Univer-

> sity in 1980. His doctoral disserta-"The tion. Crypto-Jewish Community of New Spain, 1620-1649: A Collective Biography," was based on research conducted in the archives of Mexico and Spain, supported by a Fulbright dissertation fellowship.

During his tenure as New Mexico State Historian (1981-



Pictured above: Dr. Stanley M. Hordes of Santa Fe, New Mexico.

1985), he began to encounter several individuals within the Hispanic community who continued to practice vestigial Jewish customs, such as lighting candles on Friday night in observance of the Jewish Sabbath and observing Jewish dietary laws. Further investigation revealed that the practice of such customs was not uncommon, and could be found in almost every community in the state. Conversations with colleagues in the fields of sociology, literature and folklore corroborated these preliminary observations. These conversations led to the establishment of a project, sponsored by the Latin American Institute at the University of New Mexico, to research the history and ethnography of New Mexican crypto-Jews.

REMEMBERING RABBI ROBERT SCHUR OF FORT WORTH

"Take a long walk. Read a good book. Make a new friend."

By Hollace Weiner of The Fort Worth Star Telegram & printed in the Sunday, Feb. 13, 1994 edition of the newspaper Copied with permission of the city editorial staff of *The Fort Worth Star Telegram*.

That advice, simple yet sage, was the annual message that Rabbi Robert Schur delivered to a synagogue full of squirming students before dismissing them for the school year. From toddlers to teens, the youngsters chimed in with the rabbi's annual refrain, perceiving only with age that their summer assignment was both secular and saintly.

From the time that Schur came to Texas as a red-headed reverend in December 1956 until his last good-bye from the pulpit as a white-maned presence in 1987, he shared plain and complex truths to a congregation that was sometimes citywide.

"Tyranny is more often the consequence of timidity than treason," he said in 1965 when he led the city's first massive demonstration for integration. "To stand on the sidelines while a violent struggle convulses the nation is worse than cowardice." Later he poetically wrote: "Life is a sequence of moments strung together on a fragile cord."

When Robert Joseph Schur, 72, died 10 days ago, silenced and shut away for six years by Alzheimer's disease, mourners filled the sanctuary at Temple Beth-El. As they heard once again, in a eulogy, the rabbi's gentle prescription for life — "a long walk . . . a good book . . . a new friend" - many silently mouthed the words and dabbed their eyes as memories welled up.

I never knew the red-headed young rabbi who came to Texas during the Eisenhower era, challenged adults with his social conscience and taught in his first confirmation class a teen-age boy who would become Rep. Martin Frost.

The rabbi I met on my arrival in 1978 was white-haired and black-robed. Tall and lean, he had a prophetic air, a theatrical voice, a pink complexion and a glint in his blue eyes.

From a distance, he appeared biblical. Up close, he was accessible, unlike any religious leader from my past. I had grown up in the Northeast, where cities have hefty Jewish populations, and rabbis seemed caretakers of congregations. Little more.

Upon moving to Fort Worth, I was startled at Schur's visibility. Although he represented a sparse Jewish populace that totaled less than one percent of the city, the rabbi was a mainstream figure, familiar for his advocacy of causes from civil rights to children's rights.

Rather than cloister himself among Jews, the rabbi's peers were Christian clerics—the so-called Cowtown Clergy, a dozen prelates of all denominations and races. Monthly, they convened in each other's living rooms, thriving on discussions both spiritual and spirited. Their collegiality spilled over into the community..

When President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, the rabbi helped lead a public memorial service at the Tarrant County Convention Center, an interfaith gathering that started the healing process. Religion proved balm for grief.

Likewise, when my German shepherd died, the rabbi took my son and daughter out of Sunday school class to console them. And their healing process began.

"As a kid I loved him," recalled my daughter, Dawn, now a college sophomore. "He would talk to us about pets and love, not grownup things like politics." My son Mark, a junior studying in Israel, recalled that the rabbi's office had an open door. Kindergartners filed in, mesmerized to hear Schur describe his books and belongings.

While the rabbi remained a Pied Piper

with children, he gradually lost his magnetism among adults who sadly watched him falter and forget.

Alzheimer's disease, which robs the mind of recent memories, forced him to the calendar to recall the month and glance out the window to cite the season. "While reading I understand what's there, but it vanishes," he said in a May 1986 interview that helped bring Alzheimer's out of the closet in Tarrant County.

Still, his recollection of distant facts was so precise that when I spoke with him five months later, he described Cincinnati's Walnut Hills High School, where he had played baseball, basketball, volleyball, track and swimming "and lettered in them all."

He reveled in blessing children. Placing his hands atop the head of a girl, he would proclaim: "May you be like Sarah, Leah, Rachel and Rebecca," the biblical matriarchs. His wish for each boy: "May you be like Ephraim and Manaueh," the sons of Joseph.

Ever the teacher, the rabbi enjoyed standing among a cluster of kids and holding aloft the Torah — the unwieldy parchment scroll wound between a pair of 3-foot wooden spools. "Do you think the Torah is heavy or light?" my daughter recalled him asking. Her classmates were certain it was heavy. "It's light," the rabbi replied. "When you love something, it's never heavy."

For the rabbi's wife, Rolly, the burden of his illness was not so heavy either. Her wish was to outlive him so she could care for him. At his deathbed, she held his hand and spoke to him until he breathed his last.

And as the rabbi's spirit drained, his daughter Sally, on a plane descending over Dallas/Fort Worth Airport, uncontrollably, yet knowingly, burst into tears.

THE LAPOWSKI FAMILY OF EL PASO

by Jean Lapowski Schecter (El Paso)

ur grandfather, Nathan, was born in Poland in 1863. He had three brothers, Jacob, Ludwig and Samuel. His primary education was received in Poland. After graduating from a college in Warsaw in 1879, he and his brothers emigrated and settled in Gainesville, Texas, in 1882 where he engaged in the cattle business. At different times he moved to Colorado City, Big Spring and Midland. He entered the dry goods business operating stores in Abilene, Gonzales, San Antonio, and San Angelo. On Concha Street in San Angelo there were two Lapowski firms. S. Lapowski and Bros. (operated by Sam and Jake) was a dry goods and hardware store. Two doors away was a store presumed to be our grandfather's.

Our grandfather embarked upon what became a very distinguished military career. He joined the state militia in 1887, and later became a captain in the Cochran Light Guards in San Antonio, was made a Captain of the Heming Guards in Gainesville, and in 1889 was promoted to Major. Major Lapowski then served during the Spanish American War and fought in the Philippines. His citizenship papers are dated May 28, 1892, recorded in Mitchell County, Colorado City, Texas.

In 1909, when President Taft met President Diaz of Mexico in E1 Paso, Major Lapowski was a member of the greeting committee. He served as a Major in the Big Bend Country during the trouble with Mexico in 1916. The Major could not overcome a call to duty in WWI and he reentered the service and was promoted to Lt. Col. in 1917. He served five months in France with the 36th Division and was gassed at St. Mihiel. He was sent to Walter Reed Hospital where he was treated and released to return to his

family in El Paso and to begin a career of civil service.

Nathan Lapowski served as El Paso city clerk during the administration of Mayor Charles Davis and was appointed Secretary of the Civil Service Commission and named head of the city's employment bureau. Lt. Col. Lapowski devoted much of his time obtaining compensation adjustments for ex-servicemen and their families.

After a long illness, our grandfather, Nathan, died on February 17, 1928, and was buried with full military honors as a Cavalry officer. The casket was borne on a caisson draped in an American flag. The horses draped in black with boots in the stirrups backward, and a twenty-one gun volley was fired as a salute over his gravesite in Mt. Sinai Cemetery.

uch of his history was chronicled in a newspaper account. Before the Spanish American War, he married Eva Baum, daughter of Daniel Baum. She was born in Corinth, Mississippi on November 16, 1873. She was a member of the Daughters of the Confederacy (her father had served in Company I, 13th Neiss Regiment) and a member of the Sisterhood of Temple Mt. Sinai. She passed away at the age of 83 in December, 1956.

Of course, we should mention that the first child of that union was Errold Lapowski (our father), born in Gainesville, Texas in 1899. At 18 months, his mother and he came to E1 Paso to join Nathan, then stationed at Ft. Bliss. Errold graduated with the first class of E1 Paso High School in its present location, where he was active in sports. He joined the Marine Corps, attaining the rank of Corporal, and was discharged in January 1919. He began his civilian career joining

the staff of the Popular Dry Goods Co. (now known as The Popular) and was manager of the men's furnishings department until his death in 1944. He was a 32nd degree Mason, member of the El Maida Shrine Temple and a director of Temple Mt. Sinai.

He married Eleanor Klein of Enid, Oklahoma — and Emily and I are their daughters. Our brother Gerome, a bachelor, opened an office supply store. Later he had a gift and china store named Lapowski's, working there until his death in 1947. Emily is the only direct descendant of Nathan Lapowski bearing the family name.

ore about the brothers, our uncles. Jacob (Jake), had five children: Richard, Leonora, Estelle, Earl and Stanley.

Ludwig left for parts unknown and remained so. But Emily and I met his son, a dermatologist, during our visit to the 1939 World's Fair in New York City. We remember because his name was Uncle Bolek Lapowski, and children joked while calling him a "Bowl of Slaw".

Sam had one son and two daughters. His son Clarence changed his name to Dillon, and was a partner of Dillon, Reed of NY Financiers. Clarence's son, C. Douglas Dillon, was ambassador to France under Eisenhower and Secretary of the Treasury under Kennedy. His daughter, Joan, married Prince Charles of Luxembourg in 1967 and became a Princess. No, we were not invited to the wedding.

An El Paso Times quotes Sara McClendon in an interview with C. Douglas Dillon where he mentions his ancestors, early Texas pioneer storekeepers of Polish origin, BUT HE HAD FORGOTTEN HOW TO SPELL THE NAME!

HOLOCAUST MUSEUM SEEKS TO GIVE EVIDENCE OF THE HORROR

by Deborah Martin • This article was featured in the April 4, 1994 edition of the El Paso Herald-Post

n every wall, there are faces. In the first room, they are vibrant, healthy. Lean athletes pose for a team photo, a pretty little girl smiles for the camera, a woman shows off a bathing

suit. Almost immediately, those everyday images hanging just inside the El Paso Holocaust Museum and Study Center give way to disturbing sights.

Nude women run beside a freshly dug mass grave.

A gaunt man, eyes locked in a lifeless stare, lies atop a pile of bodies.

Distressing as they are, the images don't spark much of an emotional reaction in Dr. Larry Gladstone. This is not really intended for me," Gladstone said.

He doesn't need to look at the photographs or read the accompanying text to know what happened during the Holocaust — he lived it.

His name is on a list inside the museum that names El Pasoans who survived Adolf Hitler's attempt to wipe the Jews from the face of the earth.

His voice bears a hint of bitterness when he recalls the political climate in the years leading up to the Holocaust, and he recalls how eager many were to jump on the Nazi bandwagon.

"The worst part of all is the apathy. There's no excuse for it," he said.

He was 20 when he was placed in a labor camp, and spent nearly three years engulfed in back-breaking work.

He worked 12 to 18 hours a day, clearing roads, repairing bridges and moving with the Nazis as they were pursued across Austria by the Russian army.

"It was," he said, "a death march. People who dropped from exhaustion on the way were left to die."

Gladstone remembers an old man who simply couldn't go on, and sat by the side of the road. His son stayed with him, knowing that his decision would cost him

his life, but unable to leave his father behind.

"Fate determined who survived and who didn't," he said. He lost most of his family to the Nazis.



Pictured above: The El Paso Holocaust Museum and Study Center.

He believes he was able to survive because, "I was young. I was very athletic and I was determined to live. I knew the Germans were going to lose the war - it was obvious. I knew about the bombings in Germany and the big Russian offensive - somehow, information got to us."

ittle information about the camps filtered to the United States, though. So Albert Schwartz was stunned by what he discovered when he arrived at a concentration camp as an Army captain in the 104th Infantry Division.

The main image that has stuck in his mind is bodies strewn everywhere. "I remember the smell of death and the thousands of corpses on the ground. It's not something you like to talk about," he said.

The soldiers gave candy bars to the few survivors they found. "It was probably the worst thing we could have given them. They probably needed a drink of water more," Schwartz said.

Gladstone remembers being given a can of German beer. He also remembers the horrendous stomach cramps it gave him after years of a meager diet that was barely enough to sustain him.

Memories of the concentration camps have been seared into their minds. That's why it is unthinkable to them that so many people are coming forward and claiming that the Holocaust never occurred.

> One man told Gladstone that the Holocaust was impossible, that Hitler had killed "only" 3 million Jews, not the 6 million cited in history books, and complained that "The Jews complain too much about a little thing."

> "What good does it do?" Gladstone asked, in arguing with someone with ideas like that.

> The best thing to do is to make sure that evidence of what happened is preserved and made available, especially as eyewitnesses pass away. The fear is that once the witnesses are gone,

it will be harder to challenge revisionists.

"They could say, 'If it happened, show me a witness.' And there won't be any," Schwartz said.

In El Paso, at least, there will be the museum. The guiding principle behind it is to make sure that something bears witness to the horrors of the Holocaust so that it will never happen again, to anyone.

Museum displays explain the rise of Nazism and what happened to the Jews during it. They are designed for those who know little or nothing about the Holo-

A room at the back of the museum memorializes the dead. Names of family members El Pasoans lost are carved into plaques on the Memorial Wall. "This adds a little finality like a gravestone," Schwartz said.

The words above the plaques sum up what many will feel after walking through the museum and seeing such things as a tattered concentration camp uniform and a case filled with the tiny shoes that are all that remain of dead children.

The inscription reads "THESE DO I REMEMBER; FOR THEM MY SOUL WEEPS."

MUSEUM FOUNDER RECOUNTS HORRORS

by Becky Powers Special to the El Paso Times Appeared in the Dec. 1, 1993 edition of the El Paso Times

ENRY KELLEN had heard what the Nazis planned to do with the Jews, but he never quite believed it. "I never thought it would come to a complete genocide," said Kellen, a Nazi concentration camp survivor who now lives in E1 Paso.

Ten years ago, after Kellen retired from his work as a fashion designer, he began work to set up El Paso's Holocaust Museum and Study Center as a testimonial to the 6 million Jews and 5 million non-Jews killed by the Nazis.

"I felt I had a moral obligation to never let the universe forget that the Holocaust happened, and to teach young ones about the danger of hatred and prejudice," Kellen explained.

Recent events in eastern Europe have stimulated local interest in the museum. Kellen said. "People are seeing atrocities on TV and starting to believe the Holocaust really could happen!"he said. "My story is not exceptional."

And this is his story: "Even though Adolf Hitler predicted that if war would break out there would be a complete annihilation of people, we thought he was just talking. The Germans were a civilized people."

Kellen, like much of the rest of the world, vastly underestimated the Nazis' barbarism. He wound up losing much of his family at the Kaunas concentration camp in Lithuania.

He was 24 years old in June 1941 when Germany occupied Lithuania, a tiny country on the Baltic Sea where Kellen lived with his family. Regulations against Jewish people were not long in coming after the Nazis arrived.

Jews had to wear a yellow Star of David to identify themselves. They were no longer allowed to walk on sidewalks. They had to keep a 7 PM curfew. They were chased out of schools.

During this time, Nazi soldiers picked

up Kellen's father on the street and shot him.

In August 1941, Nazi authorities forced all the Jews in the city out of their homes into slums (ghettos). Not long after that, authorities transported Kellen and his family, along with 30,000 other Jews, to the Kaunas concentration camp.

"There was no gas installation in our camp. People were just shot. Or they died from malnutrition or disease. Of 30,000 inmates . . . only 2,500 survived," he said.

Kellen's brother was tricked into volunteering for slaughter. Camp posters were put up asking for 700 men, college graduates, to be at a certain place at 7 AM because they were to be sent to the city hall to do paperwork," Kellen said. The notices guaranteed the men would be brought back the same night.

"My mother encouraged me to go, but I didn't for some reason," Kellen said. "My brother went and never came back. After the war we learned they were all taken out and shot."

"On October 28, 1941," Kellen said, "we were told to be at a certain place at the camp — young and old, sick, and children. The pretext they used was that they had to count us in order to know how many rations to give us."

"More than 10,000 people were taken out," Kellen said. The next day, Kellen "watched through the fence and saw 10,000 people marching up the mountain. They were men, women and children. Some mothers were carrying babies. Then all day long we heard the noise of machine guns. I lost all my uncles and cousins in this selection."

Kellen's sister and her 5 year old son Jerry had been visiting Kellen's parents from their home in Poland when Germany invaded Poland and they were taken to the same camp.

The Nazis forced the camp inmates

to work. Kellen's mother and sister made uniforms for German soldiers in a factory, and Kellen and other male inmates built an airport.

"We had two enemies: the cold winters and the guards who were beating us up," Kellen said. "And all the time, smaller groups of people were being taken off and shot. Somehow, somehow I don't know how — I survived It. seemed we didn't have a chance to survive."

In late April 1944, Nazi authorities ordered that all the sick people and children in the camp must be disposed of. Guards wrenched children from their mothers' arms and threw them onto a truck.

Kellen's nephew Jerry was nine years old by this time, but he was so malnourished, he looked like a two year old boy," Kellen said. Kellen's sister hid him behind a pillow. Kellen decided then he had no choice but to risk an escape with his nephew.

"By coincidence, we found that there was a Lithuanian farmer with a house about 10 miles from the camp who was willing to hide us," he said.

The family kept Jerry hidden in the camp for about a week while Kellen planned an escape. Then Kellen and Jerry escaped to the farmer's home, along with Kellen's future wife, Julia.

Kellen's mother and sister remained in the camp and were later transported to another camp, where both died of starvation and typhus.

In 1946, Kellen moved with Jerry and Julia to El Paso, where Julia's sister lived. Kellen and his wife adopted Jerry. who died in his sleep unexpectedly at age 27.

"I was very fortunate to come to America right after the war," Kellen said. "Even after being here for 40 years, I don't ever take my freedom for granted."

MARVIN A. RICH APPOINTED TO TEXAS STATE COMMISSION

Marvin A. Rich of Houston has been appointed by Governor Ann Richards to the Texas State Library and Archives Commission for a term ending Sept. 28, 1999.

Rich, 61, retired in 1992 as regional manager of EDC Library Services. Rich attended undergraduate school at the University of Texas at Austin.

He is a member of numerous professional organizations including the Texas Library Association and the Texas Professional Association of Library Sales and served as a member of the Texas Jewish Historical Society Board from 1989-93.

Marvin Rich has been national Anti-Defamation League commissioner for B'nai B'rith, a member of the local ADL board and a member of the Community Relations Committee board of the Greater Houston Federation. A member of Congregation Beth Yeshurun, he has been a Meyerland precinct judge for many years and is very active in Democratic campaigns.

JEWISH LIFE IN SMALL TEXAS TOWNS

by Ima Joy Gandler (Waco)

as your family the only or one of the only Jewish families in a small Texas town? How will anyone be able to document their existence if there are no data to base it upon.

Do you have pictures of your family and of other Jewish people, businesses, organizations, congregations, events? Do you have birth, marriage, death, Bar Mitzvah, confirmation certificates? Do you have congregational or organizational minutes, correspondence or business

Abilene Gladewater Amarillo Goose Creek Atlanta Harlingen **Bay City** Hillsboro Big Spring Jefferson Borger Kilgore Brady La Grange Brownsville Lampasas Cameron Laredo Cisco Lockhart Corsicana Longview Del Rio Lubbock El Campo Lufkin Ennis Marfa **Ferris** Marlin

records? Please send copies or originals, properly identified to: Ruth Ginsburg, 1111 West 12th St. #114, Austin, TX 78703.

What do you remember about your family life and those other Jews who lived in your small Texas town? Write or tape your story. Please send it to: Helen Wilk, 260 Cape Aron, Corpus Christi, TX 78412.

Some of the smaller Texas towns where Jews live or have lived are:

Marshall Stafford Maypearl Sweetwater McAllen Tahoka **McCamey** Temple Mexia Terrell Midland Texarkana Mission **Texas City** Odessa Three Rivers Pampa Velasco Richmond Victoria Waxahachie San Angelo San Saba Weimar Schulenberg Wharton Simonton & Wichita Falls Snyder

TEXAS JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

	oution of: \$25 \$50 rical Society for the 1993-1			\$500	\$1,000
	\$25-Annual Member; \$250-Sustaining Member;	\$50-Supporting Member;			
Name:					
Name of Spouse:	PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT CI	EARLY IN INK			
			Zip:		
Home Tel #:	Office Tel #:	Fax #:			
My areas of interest are:_					
*Contributions to TJHS ar	re tax deductible within the	limits of the la	aw.		

OPEN BOARD MEETING

SUNDAY — JUNE 5 — 9:30 AM

Houston Hobby Airport Hilton

he Texas Jewish Historical Society will hold its next Open Board Meeting in Houston at the Hobby Airport Hilton on Sunday, June 5, beginning at 9:30 AM. The entire membership is welcome and cordially invited to attend. Please call Merilee Weiner at (713) 668-9191 for lunch reservations.

The date of the meeting, June 5th, has been selected because the National Genealogical Society is holding its annual conference in Houston from June 1-4. The Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies is sponsoring five lectures at their meeting:

Wed., June 1 --- 4 PM ----- HOW TO FORM A JEWISH GENEA-LOGICAL SOCIETY Thurs., June 2 - 2:30 PM --- FUNDAMENTALS OF RESEARCH-ING JEWISH FAMILIES

Fri., June 3---- 2:30 PM --- WELCOME TO THE GOLDEN DOOR:
IMMIGRANT RESEARCH IN NEW
YORK

4 PM ----- RECENT ADVANCES IN JEWISH
GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH

Sat., June 4----9:30 AM --- HOLOCAUST RESEARCH: DOCU-MENTING VICTIMS, LOCATING SURVIVORS

There are many other sessions for those who are interested in genealogy. Call Don Teter at (713) 424-5829 for infomation.

NEW TJHS DIRECTORY IS COMING OUT THIS SUMMER!

In order to make sure your name(s), address, and phone is listed as you want in the new TJHS directory, please fill out the form below and mail to Debbye Rice—P.O. Box 25149, Houston TX 77265 [or fax to 713-493-4275].

IF YOU WANT YOUR NAME LISTED A CERTAIN WAY, PLEASE INSTRUCT ACCORDINGLY! Please type or print LEGIBLY!

1st Name:
Middle Name:

Last Name:
Maiden Name:
Mailing Address:

City:_______ State:_____ Zip:_____

Area Code: _____ Home Phone: ____

TEXAS JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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