

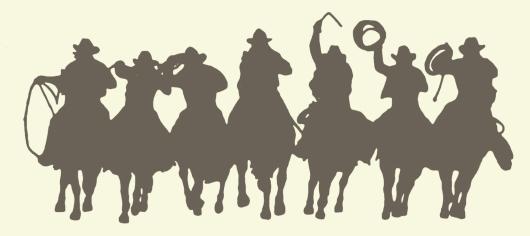
NEWSLETTER

P. O. Box 10193

Austin, Texas 78766-0193

WINTER 1994

TJHS WINTER OPEN BOARD MEETING



SUNDAY — JANUARY 15 — 9:30 AM

FORT WORTH at the RADISSON HOTEL

815 Main Street in downtown Fort Worth

ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME!

For meeting reservations: please call Fay Brachman at (817) 924-9207

For hotel reservations: please call Radisson Hotel at (817) 870-2100

Room Rates: \$79 for single or double room per night

(Be sure to mention you are attending the TJHS meeting to get the special rate)

If you plan to arrive on Saturday

You are invited to FAY & LEON BRACHMAN's home Saturday night — January 14 — 7:30 pm

3720 Autumn Drive

for good conversation and fellowship

Please come!

Call Fay at 817/924-9207 and she'll give you directions to her home

NEWS from our President

hose of us who attended the Mini-Gathering in Tyler had a great time. Barry Green and the very hospitable Tyler people saw to it that we were well-entertained, well-fed and well-informed about the Jewish presence in East Texas. Tyler, and its Jewish community, with two beautiful, active synagogues is quite impressive, as was also the Oil Museum in Kilgore. I got my chance to take a census of the Tyler cemeteries, which made my weekend there a really complete success.

With the Annual Gathering set for March 24-26, 1995, the Nominating Committee will soon begin the task of selecting nine officers and twenty new trustees. If you are interested in becoming active in the Society by serving as an officer or trustee, please advise Barbara Rosenberg, Fay Brachman or me.

At the board meeting it was decided that our primary effort will be directed toward renovating the Jewish exhibit at the Institute of Texas Cultures in San Antonio. Anyone who desires an active role in this project may advise me.

Let me call attention to my article about Jewish cemeteries in this edition. The project is nearing completion, but your cooperation is needed.

Don Teter



Pictured above (L to R): TJHS members who attended the Tyler Mini-Gathering.

THE TEXAS JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

is a publication of The Texas Jewish Historical Society P. O. Box 10193, Austin Texas 78766-0193.

TEX S. HAVEN

Donald Teter (Baytown) — President
Dr. Charles C. Nathan (Houston) — Managing Editor
Debbye Brachman Rice (Houston) — Production Editor
Nell Hall (Fort Worth) — Copy Chief
Fay Brachman (Fort Worth) — Distribution

A TEXAS JEWISH HISTORICAL LEAD: JEWS' LAND IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY

by Martin J. Davidson (Dallas)

am Williamson, a Houston attorney, first told me in the 1950's of the Jews' Land in Montgomery County, Texas. Between his own "seeming" reluctance to be seriously interviewed and the difficulty of finding a competent oral historian to pursue the story, I am concerned that this tragic experience of a Jewish farm colony in Texas will be lost to the historical record.

It is my understanding that there was a local "chevra" in St. Louis that was vaguely associated with the Jewish National Farmers Alliance. The latter organization was philosophically related to a long standing 19th century effort in Europe to return Jews to farming. In a sense it was an American "chalutz" movement, and may have been funded by Baron de Hirsh, one of whose main interests was to resettle Russian and Central European Jews out of the Eastern port-of-entry metropolises.

Each family in the local "chevra" put 25 cents in the "pushka" at every Thursday night meeting until they were able to buy land near Conroe. Ultimately a small colony of men, women and children left St. Louis, moved to Montgomery County and attempted to raise peanuts and

do subsistence farming. The land, which was never suited to farming, was known as the **Ida and Isidore Strauss Subdivision** (Vol. 67, p. 383) and was named after the husband and wife of a philanthropic family that went down with the Titanic.

My recollection is hazy but I tend to recall Sam's telling me about the death from pellagra of his younger brother, among other children in the colony. This would certainly have to be confirmed with Sam. One by one the families returned to St. Louis. However, they kept the ownership of the land and it was Sam's task (having married Sophie Kaplan and moved to her hometown of Houston) to chase the squatters off the property once a year and to look after any legal and tax matters.

In time the vacant property became very valuable as real estate development acreage and most, if not all, of the original settlers' descendants sold their land at high prices. In addition to **Sam Williamson** (the prime source) further information on the Jews' Land may be acquired from **Isidore Fry**'s niece **Susan Abramson**, 7439 Chattington, Dallas, TX 75248, Tel: 214/661-5575, or from **Jacob W. Rittles** of St. Louis. Both these names were given to me by **Sam Williamson**.

Pictures from the "Mini-Gathering" in Tyler



Pictured above (L to R): DON TETER (Baytown), PHIL HURWITZ (Tyler), BARBARA ROSENBERG (Sugar Land) & NELL HALL (Fort Worth). Picture taken at the Tyler Mini-Gathering.

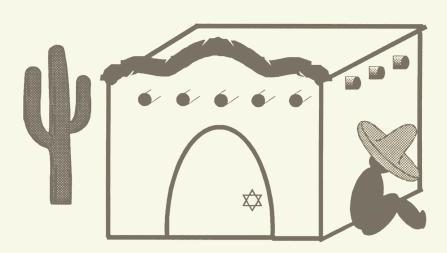


Pictured above (L to R): Candid shot of TJHS members attending the Open Board Meeting held during the recent Tyler Mini-Gathering.

hoto by Mar

TEXAS JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY TRIP TO BROWNSUILLE, HARLINGEN, McALLEN & MATAMOROS

Thursday, Feb. 9 —— Sunday, Feb. 12, 1995



Thursday-February 9, 1995

Arrive on your own in Brownsville, check in at Howard Johnson Lodge. At 8:00 PM group gathers for socializing and orientation in hotel lounge with Rabbi Ed Rosenthal of Brownsville.

Friday-February 10, 1995

Breakfast, followed by bus trip to Brownsville Historical Museum with lecture and tour of exhibits by director and curator Mr. Bruce Aiken. Then to Temple Beth-El with address by Mr. Ruben Edelstein about history and development of Brownsville Jewish Community. Lunch at Luby's, then on to the Brownsville Hebrew Cemetery with a lecture on history and development of cemetery and the Brownsville Chevra Kadisha, followed by a tour of Brownsville with walking tour of the Palmito Hill Battlefield (site of the last battle of the Civil War). Then we'll go to Temple Beth-El for Shabbat dinner, services, Oneg Shabbat, and return to the hotel.

Saturday-February 11, 1995

Breakfast, followed by bus trip to Temple Beth Israel in Harlingen with address by Mr. Lewis Levine about the history and development of the Harlingen Community and Shabbat morning services, on to the Harlingen Jewish Cemetery. Lunch at the Potpourri Tea Room in Weslaco. Then on to Temple Emanuel in McAllen to meet with Rabbi David Lipper and learn about the McAllen Jewish Community. Dinner at Garcia's in Matamoros, Mexico, with time for shopping in the Matamoros Mercado and return to the hotel.

Sunday-February 12, 1995

Breakfast in the hotel followed by Jewish speakers from the area telling how they came to settle there. Wrap-up of the weekend's events followed by departure on your own.

Itinerary subject to change!

Trip Committee: Ima Joy Gandler (Waco), Chair

Fay Brachman (Fort Worth), Blanche Sheiness (Alice), & Joan Weiss (Killeen)

TRIP GENERAL INFORMATION

Cost

- \$65.00 per person for TJHS members \$100.00 per person for non-members
- This includes rented bus for Brownsville, Harlingen, McAllen, Matamoros, Friday night dinner at Temple Beth-El in Brownsville and admission to Brownsville Historical Museum.

This does **NOT** include:

- Transportation to and from Brownsville
- Hotel accommodations (See separate data concerning Howard Johnson Lodge and 2 breakfasts)
- Meals, other than Friday night dinner at Temple Beth-El in Brownsville

Reservations

- \$30.00 deposit per person (member or non-member) postmarked by December 21.
- Deposit refundable if request is postmarked by January 15 or if cancellation is called in to Ima Joy Gandler (817) 772-5717 by January 15.
- Send check made out to *Texas Jewish Historical Society* along with the completed application form, postmarked by December 21, to Mrs. Ima Joy Gandler, 3001 Wooded Acres, Waco, Texas 76710. Reservations taken in order received.
- First 45 people will be basis of trip. Any names after 45 will be placed on waiting list.

 (If we don't have 30 people by December 21, postmarked deadline, trip will be cancelled and deposits will be returned.)

Final Payment

- \$35.00 balance per person for TJHS members
- \$70.00 balance per person for non-members
- Must be postmarked by January 15, 1995 to Mrs. Ima Joy Gandler, 3001 Wooded Acres, Waco, Texas 76710—Phone (817) 772-5717.

Hotel Accommodations

- · Hotel reservations are not included in the cost of the tour trip. Please make your own hotel reservations!
- Single or double room (breakfast included) rate of \$49.00 + tax per night is available at:

Howard Johnson Lodge

1945 North Expressway

Brownsville, TX 78520-8849

(210) 546-4591

• When making reservations, state that you are part of the Texas Jewish Historical Society tour group to get the group discount and good rate.

Application Form—TJHS Trip to Brownsville, Harlingen, McAllen, & Matamoros Thursday, Feb. 9—Sunday, Feb. 12, 1995						
Name (s)						
Address						
City	State	Zip	Phone			
	☐ (\$30 per person-*Member)					
	(\$30 per person-*Non-member)	Balance \$70 per person				
Send with check made out to Texas Jewish Historical Society to: Mrs. Ima Joy Gandler; 3001 Wooded Acres; Waco, Texas 76710; Phone # (817) 772-5717.						

MY EXPERIENCE WITH THE FAMILY TREE

by Leonard Resnick (Houston)

es, the story of Ferguson is true; my wife and I met Mrs. Ferguson at the registration desk of a women's convention in New York about 6 years ago.

I have been involved in genealogy for about eight years. The first step was learning how to spell the word "Genealogy." My experience began when a young cousin from Dallas wanted to learn about the history of her family. When visiting in Houston, she visited with my 96 year old mother-in-law for an interview, resulting in only a thumbnail sketch of the family. Afterwards, I told her that I would send her a list of her relatives living in Houston. I did not realize what I had gotten myself into because I did not know where to cut off the list of relatives.

The families, settling in Houston, immigrated through Galveston, the Ellis Island of the West. About 10,000 Jews arrived in this country through Galveston between 1907 and 1914. They were the core of the Jewish communities that were established throughout the middle west of the United States.

There are approximately 500 individuals in 6 generations emanating from the Houston area who have descended from the original émigrés of the **Kalmans**, **Rubenstein**, **Getz and Freedman** families, who came to the United States through the port of Galveston, Texas. The oldest of the original group was **Dina Friedman Getz Rubenstein**, who was born in 1834 and died in 1930 in Houston at

the age of 96.

Dina's father was Eleazar Friedman, whose name was used to establish B'nai Eleazar Inc. in New York City. B'nai Eleazar is a cousins society, established to keep members of the family in contact with one another, and at the same time provide a section of a large cemetery for burial plots for the members of the society. This society was founded in 1925, when a set of bylaws was adopted.

The first relatives of the New York group arrived in this country through Ellis Island in the early 1890's, preceding the arrival of the Houston families by ten years or more. The vast majority of the relatives in the New York area had no knowledge of their Houston relatives until I found the name and address of the secretary of the Eleazar Society in New York, and contacted her for more information. My first letter to her was a surprise. since she had no information about the large number of relatives in the Houston area. Likewise, the Houston families, with a few exceptions, had no knowledge of their Eastern relatives.

Over these past eight years, I have found approximately 1,700 relatives originating from the New York area. I have also found a group on the west coast of about 150 people. A few years ago, I submitted my computer records to the Jewish Genealogical People Finder, which after a very short period, has total entries of over 300,000 names for possible linkage between independent family trees. Now, I have no doubt that my database contains family records having the largest number of relatives in one Jewish family in the Houston area.

Dirt streets were prevalent in Houston at the time of the arrival of the immigrant families. The only street that was paved in Houston was Jackson Street, which had a street car running between Tuam and Buffalo Bayou. The **Kalmans** family had a dairy farm with 35 cows, and milk was delivered into Houston from the dairy on Griggs Road, where Palm Center is now located. All of the work at the dairy was done by hand, including pouring the milk into bottles. The milk wagon made the ten mile trip into Houston twice each day.

Noah Notsotsky came to this country, changing his name to "Freedman" at the suggestion of one of his sons who preceded his father's arrival and had already assumed the name "Freedman." His granddaughter, Fay Freedman Rosenthal, knew that she was related to the Kalmans family, and thought that she was related through her father's side of the family, but I informed her that she was related through her mother's side. Through my research, she learned of her relationship after she reached the age of 80. I explained how she was related to the Kalmans family, and gave her the names of her grandparents, her great grandparents and her great great grandparents, including the maiden names of her grandmother and great grandmother. When she heard all this information. I felt like a Boy Scout receiving his first merit badge. The connection between these two parts of this family evaded me for the first six years that I had been working on this family history.

bout six years ago, I took my notebook and went through a few of the Jewish cemeter-

ies for birth and death dates of relatives. I found the gravestone of one of my wife's uncles indicating that he was born on February 29th, 1895. There was no February 29th in 1895 since February 29th occurs only in leap years. (Birth dates were arbitrary in those days and most birth dates were established by associating them with one of the Jewish holidays).

For fifty dollars, I bought the roster of our relatives who were buried in the Eleazar Society's burial plot, which is located in New Jersey. I learned from those records that a cousin's leg was buried—preceding the rest of the body—by one year. Orthodox Jews believe that the entire body must be buried in preparation for the arrival of the Messiah.

My great grandfather was a soldier in the army of Tsar Nicholas I and served for thirty years from 1825 to 1855. He and another Jewish boy were the only survivors of their regiment in a battle that was fought during the Crimean War. They survived because they were Jewish and were assigned the menial task of obtaining the water for the horses of the regiment. Upon their return to the camp, they found that the entire regiment had been wiped out, leaving no survivors. My grandfather gave me the gold medal that was given by the Tsar upon my great grandfather's retirement from the army.

My granddaughter, who lives in St. Louis, called me to ask if I had any family heirlooms that she could use in order to write a school paper. I mailed the medal to her, along with the story. I told her that she should tell the story about her great great grandfather when presenting the medal to her future grandchild!

My mother's family had some things that were different, or should I say "unique." A cousin of my mother, the oldest of eleven children, now 92 years old and currently living in Georgia, was a graduate of the University of Texas in 1923. She has no children, and is now married to her sixth husband. She asked that I show only two husbands in my records because she is afraid that her current husband of 34 years would divorce her if he heard of the extra husbands, and she will not give me the names of her first four husbands.

between a second cousin and a second cousin once removed? You are a second cousin to the children of your parents' first cousins, and you are a first cousin once removed to the children of your first cousins.

My sister-in-law is also my second cousin. Her brother had a menage-a-trois. On his wedding day, the woman who showed up at the ceremony was not the woman named on the wedding invitation. The rabbi married her brother to the substitute bride. A few years later, the original bride moved in, and the shared spouse sired seven children between the two brides.

My computer program makes no allowances for such a relationship. He died and left two widows, and for those who ask, I do not know the cause of his death.

If you have old photographs of your family, be sure to list the names of every individual in each photograph so that subsequent generations will be able to identify the relatives. My sister-in-law has many photographs of relatives from past generations, but even her father cannot identify anyone.

If you are serious about collecting complete records of all your relatives, you really need a computer and a program that can transfer the data between the various computer programs that are available. After careful consideration, I decided to buy a program called "Family Roots." A good program should include data about each individual's birth date, place of birth, death date and place of death, sex, mother, father, maiden name of the bride, marital status, number of marriages, names of the spouses with maiden names, a list of the children including the same information for the children as for the parents.

This collection of data made it necessary for me to write at least 300 letters and make innumerable phone calls during the eight year period that I have been collecting all of this information. Genealogy seems to be a never ending process, and I still cannot foresee the end of this project. I am continually attempting to enroll other relatives to assist me in the accumulation of data. This is more easily accomplished by sending biographical data sheets for each individual and asking that the blanks be filled with missing data. I like to use individual records rather than group sheets because group sheets make it easier for someone to become confused about the data required. My computer program provides me with a selection of twelve to fifteen different templates to use for recording family records.

SAVE THE DATE!

Mark your calendar for the TJHS GATHERING in Houston March 24-26, 1995

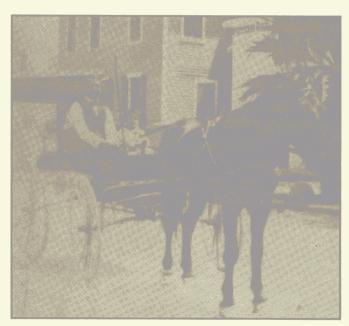
MY GRANDFATHER, HYMAN DIAMOND

by Gladys Stein Pink (Houston)

y grandfather, Hyman Diamond, arrived in the United States from Russia about 1900. He worked for seven years selling bananas and then piece goods, before he raised enough money to send for his wife, Sadie, and two children, Nathan and my mother Ida, who was then twelve years old.

They arrived in the hull of a ship with all the belongings they could carry wrapped in sheets. Some of these belongings (which I now have) included a brass samovar, an assortment of large, very heavy copper cooking pots and several sets of silver candlesticks. They even brought the pet goat to furnish fresh milk.

After settling in Galveston, two more sons were born, Max and Jake.



JEWISH GENEALOGIST MIRIAM WEINER TO BE SPEAKER AT TJHS GATHERING

iriam Weiner, the only Jewish genealogist to be certified by the Board for Certification of Genealogists in Washington DC, and an expert in Jewish genealogy and family history, will be a featured speaker at our Gathering in Houston this coming March.

Her column, "Roots and Branches", appears in newspapers throughout the country and she is a regular contributor to "Avotaynu", the international Jewish genealogical publication, as author of its "Ask the Expert" column. Her articles are published in the journals of Jewish Genealogical Societies nationwide and she is a member of the board of directors of the Jewish Genealogy



Society of New York.

Ms. Weiner has lectured at the first international seminar on Jewish Genealogy in Jerusalem, at the inaugural assembly of the American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors in Philadelphia and also at the Fifth Annual Summer Seminar on Jewish Geneal-

ogy in New York City. Ms. Weiner received her B.A. in historical studies with a concentration in modern Judaic history and Holocaust studies from the State University of New York in Albany. Prior to her genealogical pursuits, she was a licensed private investigator in California, a background which has increased her ability to develop sources of information not widely known in the genealogical community.

She is co-author with Arthur Kurzweil of the "Encyclopedia of Jewish Genealogy."

Ms. Weiner's talks are chock full of interesting information and not to be missed. We are indeed fortunate to have her at our Houston Gathering and hope you will enjoy her lecture.

We Get Letters!

1953 Oro Fino Gulch Helena, Montana 59601 October 13, 1994

Debbye Rice Texas Jewish Historical Society P.O.Box 25149 Houston, Texas 77265

Dear Ms. Rice,

I am writing at the suggestion of one of your members, Mrs. Mary Ann Plaut of El Paso. She saw a notice I placed in the magazine "Genealogical Helper" searching for information on a lost Texas branch of my family and sent me a number of suggestions on how to proceed.

Here is the story as my father remembered it: my dad's mother, Celia Aronoff, came to the US from Slutsk, a town in Belorussia, in the 1880's. She and my grandfather were married in 1896. older sister Anna (Hanya?) married a man named Bass and they moved to Texas. They had several kids. When their neighborhood was being wired for electricity a line came down and one of the kids grabbed it. A second child tried to pull the first one free, and Anna then tried to save both of them. All three were electrocuted. The family lost touch with the father and remaining children.

My father, who is now 88, grew up hearing this story from his mom. I heard it from him as a child, and again a few years ago when I started to put together a family history. There isn't much to go on: no town, no date, no first name for Anna's husband, not even info on whether Anna and her husband came to New York first or came by ship directly to Texas. I asked the Texas Health Dept's vital statistics branch to search death records, but they couldn't find anything. I wrote to major newspapers but their archives weren't indexed. At that point I gave up, thinking some day I would go to Texas and search. Last spring I saw a copy of the "Genealogical Helper" and sent in my request, and Mary Ann Plaut responded. Can you put something in your newsletter asking if anyone recognizes the story? Please let me know if you can do this, and if there is any charge.

Thank you for any help you can give me.

More Letters..

Dear taye -Would you please ask Debbie to put a notice in the Newsletter to ask people to please contact me is they have any TOBIASS in sheir family. We have been contacted by a Jewish Scotsman in Glasgow trying to trace family for his geneology. His name is Michael TOBIAS [100016.2631 @ COMPUSERVE. COM] to reach him by Computer. MICHAEL TOBIAS 29 FLORENCE DRIVE GIFFNOCK GLAS60W G46 6UN SCOTLAND Telephone: (0) 41 638 5304 Thank you -Joan & Stanley Weiss 701 Oak Hill Prive Killeen, TX 76541 (817)690-5972

CEMETERY PROJECT-HELP!!!!

by Don Teter (Baytown)

and my committee, which consists of my wife, with occasional help from other members, have spent almost four years on this project. We have personally visited all but two of the cemeteries where Jews are interred in Texas.

It has been a most worthwhile and satisfying experience to document the cemeteries and burials from their beginnings to the present decade. There is a tremendous amount of history to be learned from this effort, and it is hoped that future historians will be able to glean useful information from our efforts.

What we lack is census information for most of the large city cemeteries. I have written to all of the congregations in these cities and have received only a few answers. Two have given me computer printouts and one has given me the desired information in another form. What is needed is NAME, BIRTH DATE (if available), and DEATH DATE as they appear on the marker. Here is what I need help with:

Beaumont: Temple Emanu El—No response

Dallas: Congregation Shearith Israel—No response

Dallas: Congregation Tiferet Israel— No response

El Paso: Congregation B'nai Zion is willing to let us copy records in their office, but these do not have birth dates. Walking the cemetery is advisable. Any volunteers?

El Paso: Temple Mt. Sinai has responded that they are working on putting records into computer. An El Paso member should follow this and inform me of progress.

Ft. Worth: Beth El Congregation— No response Galveston: Congregation B'nai Israel—Someone needs to walk cemetery, as congregation does not have all records desired.

Galveston: Congregation Beth Jacob—No response

Houston: Congregation Beth Israel— No response

Houston: Congregation Beth Yeshurun—No response

Houston: Congregation Emanu El— No response

San Antonio: Congregation Rodfei Shalom—No response

San Antonio: Temple Beth El has the records and is willing to let us copy them. Anyone in San Antonio volunteering to do this?

Anyone wishing to help with any of the above is asked to contact Don Teter, 5013 Glenhaven, Baytown TX 77521, 713/424-5829. There are some ways of accomplishing this that I can help you with.

TEXAS JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

	rical Society for the 1993-1 \$25-Annual Member		\$100	-Sponso
inomboromp oracomouncem	\$250-Sustaining Member			
Name:	PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT CL			
Name of Spouse:				
Address:				
		Zip:		
Home Tel #:	Office Tel #:	Fax #: _		
My areas of interest are:				

DATES TO REMEMBER

Sunday — January 15 — 9:30 AM TJHS WINTER OPEN BOARD MEETING The Radisson Hotel 815 Main Street **Fort Worth**

> March 24-26 TJHS ANNUAL GATHERING & SPRING MEETINGS Doubletree Hotel at the Galleria Houston

NEWSLETTER **PUBLICATION SCHEDULE**

Issue Date	Deadline
Spring 1995February	10, 1995
Summer 1995 May	10, 1995
Fall 1995July	10, 1995

Please send materials for the Newsletter to: **DEBBYE RICE** P.O. BOX 2200 FORT WORTH, TX 76113-2200

or FAX: (817) 877-5450

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Mr. & Mrs. Steven L. Alexander Woburn, MA	Dr. & Mrs. Morton Krumholz Austin, TX				
Anne Beckett	Mr. Goldye E. Levi				
Mr. & Mrs. Merom Brachman Columbus, OH	Mr. & Mrs. Emanuel Parzen College Station, TX				
Mr. & Mrs. Louis Dobin Temple, TX	Zelda Siegel				
Sol Freed	Gerald H. Smith				
Mr. & Mrs. Milton A. Frost, Jr Houston, TX	Norma Stern				
Jody Hirsh	Mr. & Mrs. Seymour Van Os				
Family N. Hachman Houston, TY	Dr. & Mrs. Steven Wachs				
	•				
Mrs. Eva WolffDallas, TX					

Don't forget the Open Board Meeting in Fort Worth on January 15th!



TEXAS JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 10193

Austin, Texas 78766-0193

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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