

Texas Jewish Historical Society

Preserving Jewish Heritage in Texas
Est. 1980



February, 2010

Join us for our 31st Annual Gathering

April 23-25, 2010

Dallas, TX



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Message from the President

by Sally Drayer

I would like to thank the Jewish community of Tulsa for welcoming us for our winter board meeting the weekend of January 15th. We appreciate being part of the interfaith services held at Temple Israel. We met so many wonderful people during the weekend and the visit to the Sherwin Miller Museum of Jewish Art were learning experiences. Thank you again Phil Goldfarb, Arthur Feldman, and Barry Abels for responding to my emails for the past two years and for helping this meeting come to fruition. As I stated at the meeting, an invitation is extended for members of the



Tulsa Jewish community to attend any of our meetings.

Thanks to Mitzi Milstein for once again taking on the task of chairing the publication of the membership directory. Thank

you to Ima Joy Gandler, Barbara Rosenberg, Vickie Vogel, Davie Lou Solka, and Jan and Charles Hart for assisting the editing—the publication could not have taken place without your help. There were constant emails regarding changes/corrections and additions—thank goodness for technology! Thank you also to Marc Wormser

for keeping the database up to date. A big thank you also to our news magazine editor Alexa Kirk, who made the needed changes, got the changes to the printer, and arranged for the envelopes. Alexa is an integral part of our news magazine and directory and we can always rely on her expertise. I would be remiss if I also didn't thank you—the members of TJHS—for finding errors and changes to be made, and for contacting us soon after you received the directory. It helps everyone involved in the process. I've heard from several members what an excellent presentation the directory makes and how helpful it is in its arrangement. Again, thanks to all involved in the publication of the membership directory.

The Society can't exist without its members—so thanks again for renewing your membership, or if you are a new member, thank you for joining. We offer friendship, and learning about our Jewish roots. Think about adding to our knowledge by writing a history of your family and the way they came to Texas. Our news magazine is comprised of YOUR stories—so send your stories to the news magazine editor. There are always extra copies that can be sent to other family members who enjoy reading about the

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The Texas Jewish Historical Society February 2010 Quarterly News Magazine

The Texas Jewish Historical Society News Magazine is published four times annually. Stories about Texas Jewish history, oral histories, and requests for assistance with research are welcome, as are photographs and historical documents. Please provide color photocopies or scan at 300 dpi or greater, in .gif, .tif, or .jpg format and send electronically to Assistant Editor Davie Lou Solka at editor@txjhs.org or mail to 3808 Woodbrook Circle, Austin, TX 78759, 512-527-3799. Be sure to include your name and contact information.

Publisher-Editor Alexa Kirk
Assistant Editor Davie Lou Solka
Photographer Marvin Rich

Note: The Texas Jewish Historical Society is unable to guarantee the safe receipt and/or return of documents or photographs. It is strongly recommended that you provide color photocopies of both color and black & white documents. We welcome your comments and suggestions.

Visit us on the web at www.txjhs.org.



The newsletter of the Texas Jewish Historical Society (USPS) is published four times a year by the Texas Jewish Historical Society, P. O. Box 10193, Austin, Texas 78766-0193, Travis County. Periodical postage paid at Houston, Texas. Postmaster: send address changes to the Texas Jewish Historical Society, P. O. Box 10193, Austin, Texas 78766-0193.
www.txjhs.org

My Life

by Zella Sobel, edited by Jan Hart and Davie Lou Solka

My father, Max Siegel, immigrated to Waco, Texas from Warsaw, Poland as a widower with four children in 1905. His sister-in-law had written to him in Poland and urged him to come to Waco. She said that he would find work in Waco as a tailor, so he took a boat to Galveston Island and then travelled to Waco.

In 1908, he wrote a letter and sent his picture to friends in Warsaw, and asked them to send a bride to him. A friend of my maternal grandmother urged her to send my mother's picture back to my Dad—and thus, the marriage to Malka Gansky was arranged.

Malka was 23 years old, and she left her family to come to a new land. She could not read or write in English, but she travelled for thirty-one days on the ship to meet a man she had never met who had four children. My Dad met her at the ship in Galveston and took her back to Waco, where they were married that day. She brought with her a feather bed and two feather pillows.

I often asked her how she had the courage to come to a new land

and marry a man she had never met who had four children. Her reply was "Pogroms were going on and they were not good in Warsaw. My mother encouraged me to go to the Golden Medina (Golden Land)."

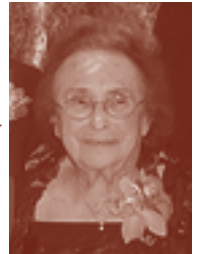
My parents lived a beautiful life together. It wasn't easy, but every Sunday morning, he brought her coffee in bed. Together they had four children. Joe, Lillie, Harry and—seven years later—me. The first four were Pearl, Toby, Sol, and Beatrice. Of these, Pearl was the only one to have children—Margarte Friedman and Jeannette Levine. Another daughter, Hannah Rosenblatt, is deceased.

Mother was a wonderful cook and a wonderful manager. We had a compatible life with our extended family. Mother and Pearl were like two sisters. We were very poor, but did not know it.

Every year at Passover, as well as on the Sabbath, my mother would make gefilte fish. The fish were brought home on Wednesday and were left in the tub until Friday, when it was time to make the fish. Meanwhile,

the family had to bathe in a wash tub when the fish were "visiting."

We grew up on North Ninth Street in Waco, where I walked everywhere—to school, and to Hebrew School. I always ate at home or at one of the Jewish neighbors. We all graduated from high school. My brothers sold papers to help out, since my Dad was not well. I was active in Jewish organizations and competed in speaking contests in Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth, and Beaumont. I became a member of the school debating team and won debates in Waco, and at regional and state competitions. My brother, Harry, promised me a watch if we won, never realizing that we could win. The prize for winning was a four-year scholarship to Baylor University, but I did not accept it because I needed to work. My sister, Lillie, and my brother Harry borrowed \$100 from the Hebrew Free Loan Association to pay for my tuition to business school. After graduation, I had a job with the Waco News Tribune as secretary to the Advertising



Mazel Tov

to the following

Texas Jewish Historical Society Members

Rabbi Jimmy Kessler, for being honored by Congregation B'nai Israel in Galveston, Texas. He has been the rabbi of B'nai Israel for twenty-six years.

Babette Samuels, for receiving the "Preservationist" award from the Navarro County Historical Society in Corsicana, Texas. She was acclaimed a true historian of Navarro County, and received the award for her work in preserving the history and culture of Corsicana. Mazel Tov also to Babette for appearing in the production of *Oliver* at the community theater in Corsicana.

Please send information for this column to Davie Lou Solka at editor@txjhs.org.

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Message from the President, cont. from page 2
family history.

Our Annual Gathering will be held the weekend of April 23rd in Dallas. Information will be forthcoming in a flyer with registration information and activities for the weekend. It's a good time to be together and I hope to see you there. 🍀

Sally Drayer

Manager for \$16 a week.

I attended a Young Judea Convention in Dallas and stayed with Hannah Sobel, where I met her brother, Isaac Sobel. He was nineteen and I was fourteen, so he wouldn't have anything to do with me. I chased him until he caught me! He would come to Waco to see me, and one day asked, "When are you going to say you will marry me?" Isaac traveled for his business in unclaimed freight, so I told him I would marry him when he would be home every night. Two weeks later, he told me that he had bought a stock of wallpaper and paints and was opening a store on Elm Street in Dallas to sell them.

A month before the wedding, Isaac told me that he had rented a house for \$30 a month—he was making \$25 a week. Two weeks later he told me he had bought a refrigerator for \$60—I did not know how we could afford all of this. We were married June 23, 1940, at Agudath Jacob in Waco with the reception at the Hebrew Institute. Rabbi Blumenthal performed the ceremony. I was twenty-one years old, and my sisters made all of the food at the reception.

We went to Galveston for our honeymoon for \$80 for the whole week. This included going to the Balinese Room, driving back to Waco to pick up our gifts, and then on to Dallas to our new home. It was raining when we arrived in Dallas. Isaac opened the

door and carried me across the threshold. I weighed eighty-eight pounds soaking wet! Our new home was furnished in "Early Salvage." My in-laws were in the salvage business and had furnished the whole house, which included a Duncan Fife dining room set. We lived in South Dallas, two blocks from Tiferet Israel Synagogue. It wasn't until we moved to North Dallas that I travelled in a car to services on Shabbat or the holidays.

Since I was new to Dallas, I had lots of time on my hands, so I decided to learn to cook. I had a Mixmaster and a cookbook, so I baked a cake. My husband was happy. My first dinner was for my two brothers and one sister-in-law. I bought a chicken that was split up the back and mixed up some dressing to stuff the chicken, but it wouldn't stay together. I tried to sew up the backbone, but that didn't work. Finally I tied it together with white satin ribbon and tried to put it in a round Dutch oven—it didn't fit! Either the wings stuck out or when I turned it around, the legs would stick out. When my guests arrived, the chicken was not done, but my oldest brother took a piece and said it was delicious. My other brother said, "I'm not going to eat this raw chicken—let's go out to eat." That was my first experience with company.

We loved having people over for dinner, and my husband was so proud of my cooking. Every time we had

company, he would greet them at the door with my cake in hand, and say, "This is what my wife did." I began to help with dinners for Hadassah, Sherith Israel Synagogue, and other organizations. Sherith Israel became my home-away-from-home. We always had our friends for all holiday functions, because most of them were living with parents or in very small apartments. I continued to research cookbooks and learned to cook.

We became parents of a little girl, Gail Elizabeth, and my husband was the co-owner of Reliable Paint Company. I helped in the business whenever I could.

Miriam Rothschild had three little girls and was expecting her fourth child. I told her I would help with a bris if she had a boy. Her husband, Dr. Joe Rothschild, called and said they had a boy and he understood that I would help with the bris. He said it would be small, but about noon, he called and said the people were calling to congratulate him and said they would be at the bris! They weren't waiting for an invitation. I cooked and baked all week and about two hundred people attended. At the bris, when people would say how good everything was, I smiled and said, "I made everything." My buttons were bursting off my blouse.

A Mrs. Wolfson, who was at the

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We need Your Stories!

We are currently looking for stories with ties to Texas Jewish history! Any kind of story about your family history or your Temple's history can fill the pages of our quarterly newsletter. Write your story, and if you have questions or need help,

call our Assistant Editor.

Everyone has a story to tell, long or short. Your history is of interest to members across Texas and the nation! And you will be able to see your family's history in print. It is a wonderful keepsake and a valuable piece of gene-

alogy for future generations.

So what are you waiting for? Send in your article to our assistant editor, Davie Lou Solka, at editor@txjhs.org, mail it to 3808 Woodbrook Circle, Austin, TX 78759, or call her at 512-527-3799.

bris, said that her son was having his bar mitzvah, and that she would like for me to help her. I told her that I had no experience and I would probably over prepare, but she said that was okay.

I made enough food to send to the Salvation Army and after the bar mitzvah, they ate for a week! That was how my catering career began. There was no one else catering in those days, and I thought that I would stay in business long enough to pay for braces on Gail's teeth.

I was scared to death to learn how to drive a car. My husband took me out to help me learn to drive. I think he sang "Nearer My God to Thee" the entire time we were in the car. After the first lesson, he told me I needed a professional to teach me, so I hired one. However, I had fingernail marks on my hands from gripping the steering wheel.

One day, my husband came home with a new car. I was mad at him because I did not think we could afford a new car. He handed me the keys and went to work. I looked at the keys and looked out the window at the new car. I called my friend, Maxine Waldman, to come see my new car. She called me back and said for me to come see her. We lived in University Park and I didn't want to drive across Preston Road. I noticed my neighbor mowing his lawn and asked him to drive me across Preston Road. I was not afraid to drive down Stanford. After he drove me across Preston Road, I took over and got to Hillcrest. There was no one to drive across Hillcrest for me. I sat there for a few minutes until there was no traffic coming either way, and I darted across the street to pick up Maxine.

She asked me to drive her to the State Fair to meet her husband. I was afraid to do it, but she convinced me

to do it. We got to Hall Street, which was pretty narrow. I said, "Maxine, I will never make it." "Sure you will," she said, "just shut your eyes and go straight through." How I made it to the State Fair, I will never know, but I was not afraid of driving after that. I felt I had all the experience I needed.

Catering has been a very happy business. Most of my customers are my friends, and it has been so nice to be part of their happy times. When I began the business, I had two wonderful helpers—my husband and a lovely lady, Letha Poole, who was in my house for over forty years. We learned to cook together. When my sister Lillie retired from fifty-two years of working, she moved to Dallas and helped me. My last helper, Sylvia Scolnic, was a volunteer at Tiferet Israel before she came to help me. We enjoyed working together for fifteen years.

I have never advertised, nor am I listed in the phone book under my own name. I have been busy for about sixty years and have done functions for four generations. When a friend of mine, Steve Waldman, celebrated his 50th birthday, I realized I had helped prepare for his bris. In the beginning, I was very naïve. I didn't even know I needed a liquor license to buy wine for a Bar Mitzvah!


I have catered many events in Dallas including the wedding of my brother and sister-in-law, Sol and Hannah Kaplan, during World War II and many bar mitzvahs, brises, Shiva minyans, and even events during Passover. I was preparing for a bat mitzvah on the day that President Kennedy was shot. After I heard what happened, I came home and took everything out of the freezer and baked it. The synagogue was full and everything was eaten. It was a very sad day.

I have been mentioned by Steve

Blow in the *Dallas Morning News* several times and have celebrated many happy times with my customers. I have had repeat jobs with many families. For one of my customers, I did a wedding, the girls' bat mitzvahs, the girls' weddings, the parents' twenty-fifth wedding anniversary and the grandparents' fiftieth wedding anniversary. After I did fourteen events in one weekend, I decided to try and slow down. I have sent food all over the state, and to other states, including California, Florida, and even England and Israel. I was in the catering business for sixty years.

I have been blessed with wonderful daughters, sons-in-law, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and of course, my beloved husband, Isaac. My daughter Marcia is married to Fred Fox and their children are Marla Fox, and Gregory Fox. Gregory and his wife Heather have a son, Isaac. My daughter, Gail Golub is deceased. Her children and their spouses are Jeffrey Golub and Leonard and Hannah Golub. My son-in-law and his wife, Cheryl, are the parents of my adopted granddaughter, Jennifer Golub. Isaac and I had another daughter who died at a very early age. My great-grandchildren are Isaac Fox and Orly, Olivia, Abigail, and Asher Golub. Isaac died in 1990, one week short of our fiftieth anniversary.

On June 7, 2009, Mayor Tom Leppert of Dallas presented me with a Special Recognition certificate for "having been a leader in the Dallas community and invaluable hard work and dedication that touched the lives of those who know her and will long be remembered...."

Today, at age ninety, Zella Sobel says she would not take anything in the world for the friends and associates she has made. "All I expected from people was that they pay me and enjoy my food," she said. 

From Our Archives

by Vickie Vogel

This is the fifth in a series of articles on materials and information that can be found in the TJHS archives at the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas in Austin. If you would like to write an article on any of the items in the archives, please visit <http://www.cah.utexas.edu/services/using.php>.

— Dearest Mothers Moe Klein and Others — by Vickie Vogel

This article is drawn from newly-donated archival material from Temple Israel in Schulenburg. It has not yet been catalogued and numbered, but you can search “Temple Israel” in the online index to our collection at the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas in Austin.

Hwang Un Ju was a young Korean student in the late 1950s. His physical needs and his yearning for education were met in part by his Jewish foster mothers in Texas, until his needs created a dilemma, with anguished letters crossing the Pacific Ocean.

The Tri-County Section of the National Council of Jewish Women was organized in 1936 with twenty-eight members¹ from Colorado, Fayette, and Lavaca Counties. The first president was Mrs. Joe Stahl.² The organization sponsored educational, cultural, and recreational activities such as book reviews, raffles, bingo parties, suppers, guest speakers, and scholarships. They established a bed at the National Jewish Hospital in Denver, paying \$100 per year until their \$1,000 commitment was fulfilled.

Tri-County Section started a Sunday School in 1938 under the direction of “Aunt” Susie Steiner, Irene (Mrs. Louis) Waldvogel, and Clara (Mrs. Charles) Klein. It was held in various homes. Rabbi Robert I. Kahn came over from Houston to conduct the confirmation services.

In the late 1940s with widespread epidemics of polio, the Section fur-

nished a two-bed room at the Warm Springs Foundation in Gonzales. They visited patients and helped in other ways. In 1951, Tri-County Section was instrumental in raising funds to build Temple Israel in Schulenburg and the women worked tirelessly to fill its needs, whether for small items like dishes and cup towels or large needs like an organ. They hosted suppers, Seders, and other seasonal celebrations.

In addition to supporting Hillel and Hebrew University Secondary School in Israel, they were active in local community fundraising for Red Cross, Cancer Fund, Boy Scouts, and various hospitals and homes for the aged. They also supported programs of the national organization (NCJW), attending conferences and conventions.

In 1956-1958, Mrs. Joe Stahl was serving her second term as President. Tri-County became active in overseas work in the “ship-a-box” program—each month a box of specified articles was sent to “foreign lands.” It was at this time that they adopted a Korean boy through Foster Parents Plan, Inc.³ Fifteen dollars per month was sent for the maintenance (clothing and food) and education (school supplies) of a young boy in Korea. Foster Parents Plan, Inc. entered Korea with UN approval in 1953, since many children had been orphaned by war and there were not enough orphanages to shelter and feed them. FPP provided food, shelter, medical care, schoolbooks and classes, and letters from the foster par-

ents in Canada and the United States.

Hwang Un Ju’s first letters were accompanied by an official translation, initialed by the translator L.K.L. In August, 1960, he thanked his foster mothers for sending him 8,260 hwan (\$8), a pair of trousers, and a bucket. He described a visit to the countryside and how wonderful it was to get away from the noisy city. Inspired to write an essay, he had it translated and sent to them. In September, he received a winter jacket and ten yards of cotton sheeting along with the \$8. He had been chosen to compete in an oratory contest in school and said he hoped to win a prize.⁴

“People! How do you always see the bad things and use lips for them? A great number of noble and gracious things are surrounded with us; how can’t we find the precious perfume of humanity and feel it?”⁵

By October, Hwang felt confident enough of his English to do without a translator. His three-page letter on lined notebook paper is accompanied by his essay, “Imaginative Understanding,” where he argued that world problems come from man’s inability to put himself in the place of another and feel his pain.

“The person who wishes for a world where men would constantly think of others is not a dreamer. This is only realistic why to create a warless and happy world.”⁶

His letter begins, “Dearest mothers, Moe Klein and others,” and thanks

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them for the \$8, a blanket, and two pairs of underclothes. He expresses hope for the good health and happiness of all his foster mothers, before he proudly announces he has taken first prize in the oratorical contest.

"At that time, I received the prize in the clapping of hands of all teachers, seniors, and a parents of our school made the place of meeting more splendid... I told them that my getting the first prize was due to the my dearest foster mothers who live in the... United States, and thanks to my dearest foster mothers assiting to me from the bottom of my heart, then every body again gave a welcome of clapping of hands... I thanks to the God who gave me such a luck to me."⁷

He asks for books and magazines from the United States that they think he is able to read. He is curious about America and wants to improve his English. At the end of each letter, Hwang apologizes for his "awful writing and many mistakes" and signs, "Love your Korean foster Son, Un Ju Hwang," placing his name in the American style with surname last.

Hwang's November, 1960 letter is addressed to "My Dear Mamma Eli Rubin" and is mailed to the address of the Rubin Insurance Agency in Hallettsville. He says a Mr. Chung in Washington, D. C. got the address for him, and reveals his deep desire to study in the United States. He requests that she respond to his home address, rather than through the Foster Parents Plan. Expressing thanks for the \$2.50 birthday gift in addition to the usual \$8, and a pair of wool gloves, Hwang says how pleased he was to have news of Isy Jean, Henry, and Mrs. Schwartz.⁸ "Always I think them as my real brother and sister, much more Mrs. Schwartz who send poem for me." He bought a book with his birthday money, *The Collection of Korean Short Stories*, which had been recommended by his school, but he had been

unable to buy it as his classmates had.

He renews his request to come to America.

"I am writing to you in my petition, that please not forget your kind assistance. I hope you'll never never give up me to think real of your son forever. All I have the persons depending upon is only you. Even though I am in a adverse circumstance, I have a great ambition due to your assistance, and I am enduring all my pain. I know very well that I should study very hard to study abroad in the United States."⁹

Hwang asks for Ruth Klein's home address, and apologizes, "I hope you'll apologize for my poor making sentence, and please understand of it..." and signs it "Love your foster Son, Hwang Un Ju.

In November, 1960, Hwang received a pair of shoes along with his \$8 stipend. He describes his school field trip to a 12th century temple twenty miles away, which leads him to a discussion of the beautiful buildings and bridges in America and a picture he saw of Niagara Falls. He longs for more information about such wonders. He was excited about Pearl Buck's visit to Korea, but disappointed she did not give autographs. He would have taken her picture, but he had no camera.

"I have tried to make this letter as interesting as possible... Good luck to you, mamma!"¹⁰

There are two letters dated September 18, 1961 from Hwang to "Mother Eli Rubin and Others," one typed and an eight-page expanded version in longhand. He notes he has sent the same letter to the Rubin Insurance Agency and to the Rotary Club of Hallettsville.¹¹ He says he tried to send a pair of traditional Korean shoes that Ruth Klein wanted, but Foster Parents Plan would not forward them. He was resending them directly through the mail, and another pair for Ruth Rubin.

He apologizes that they will come sea mail because of the high air rate. As he prepared for the college entrance exam, he asked for help with his registration fee.

In the longhand version, he tells of his visit to a government office which advised him that in order to go to school in the United States, he must have an American citizen sign the Affidavit of Support for expenses of some \$1640. Pointing to his academic record, he writes,

"In my all earnestness and with all my sincerity I beg you to help me at this critical moment of my life. I should like to study very hard and to become a person like Dr. Albert Schweitzer and live the rest of my life securing peace and welfare for the all human being. In today's Korea entering college for a person with similar home background is almost an impossibility, and though I may be impudent to you, I must ask you to help me. And please know that I feel ashamed of saying such a thing, nevertheless, I cannot but talk to you... I plead you to get together and open a road for me to finished a college course here and later to go to the United States for study... If you can break down the four years expense of only \$2,000 and send me enough for each semester in March and September, I am willing to study more and more hard than any other students... My future and fate depend on you, and indeed my life would not be worth living without having this ambition realized."¹²

Hwang mentions his mother is 52, his 28 year old brother has tuberculosis, and his 26 year old brother earns \$50 a month. Presumably, there is no father in the household.

Two days later, Hwang writes again expressing appreciation for \$8 and a pair of cloth shoes. Hwang won second place in a school contest

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Honor or Memorialize a Friend or a Loved One With a Donation to the TJHS Endowment Fund

When you honor or memorialize a friend or a loved one with a donation to the Texas Jewish Historical Society's Endowment Fund, you help support important programs. Send the honoree's full name, type of honor (memorial, congratulations, and occasion—birthday, anniversary, award, new child or grandchild, etc.) and your name, along with a check in the amount of your choice to:

The Texas Jewish Historical Society
P. O. Box 10193
Austin, TX 78766-0193

Your support of Texas Jewish Historical Society's programs is greatly appreciated and will be recognized in an issue of the quarterly news magazine. Thank you.

The Texas Jewish Historical Society gratefully acknowledges your gift to its Endowment Fund in the amount of

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Your gift will further the efforts to record, preserve, and disseminate historic information about Texas Jewish culture.

In Memoriam

Rachel "Raye" Mayer Brown, TJHS board member, died January 1, 2010, in Houston, Texas. She is survived by her children, Tania and Rick Oshman and Richard and Gayle Brown; four grandchildren; her sister and brother-in-law, Shirley and Marvin Rich, TJHS board members; brother and sister-in-law, Sam and Elaine Merwin, TJHS members; and brother and sister-in-law, Al and Elaine Brown. Friend, David Leff, TJHS board member, and numerous nieces and nephews also survive her.

Walter Cohen, TJHS member, died November 28, 2009, in Austin, Texas. He is survived by his brother, Alfred "Slugger" Cohen and eight nieces and nephews.

Ima Joy Gandler, one of the found-

ing members of TJHS, and current board member (Archivist), died January 25, 2010, in Waco, Texas. She is survived by her children Michael and husband, Michael; Laura; Howard Gandler and partner, Karen Ireland; two grandchildren; sister-in-law, Sylvia Solomon; as well as numerous nieces, nephews, and cousins.



Charles David Nathan, former TJHS board member and husband of TJHS treasurer, Ruth Nathan, died September 28, 2009, in Houston, Texas. In addition to Ruth, survivors include his children, Marilyn and Gilbert Cohen, Dr. Richard and Cathy Nathan, Seth and Lori Frank, Sari Frank, and his sister, Leah Goren and sister-in-law, Bernice Friedlander.



May their memories be a blessing.

Visit us on the web at www.txjhs.org.

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on English fables and his prize was an English-Korean dictionary, plus, of course, the clapping of hands. Hwang's official letters, through Foster Parents, only discuss school, health, and the weather and do not mention college or coming to the United States.

The only example of a letter from the Tri-County Section to Hwang is a carbon copy dated September 22, 1961 on official Tri-County Section National Council of Jewish Women stationery, unsigned, but probably penned by Ruth Klein or Ruth Rubin.

"Have you ever done something with a feeling that you were doing something 'wrong?'" the letter begins. The earliest letters written directly to the "mothers" addresses went unanswered. She explains that the Foster Parents Plan specifically told them when they signed up that home addresses would not be available to foster parent or child. She applauds the good that the organization does, and points out that its success depends on following the rules. Breaking the rules could jeopardize the program.

"One of the main reasons for NOT sending addresses was for the very thing that has now happened, since you were able to trace your foster mothers in Texas: and that was that advantages were taken—appeals by the thousands would be made, some trust-worthy appeals, and some NOT—and the average person would never be able to know whether he was wasting his money or whether it was being used for good purpose... Therefore, Parent's Plan had placed people in each country to see for themselves, investigate the conditions in the homes of those helped, and report to each Foster Parent."

She points out that despite the common belief of people in other countries, not every American is rich. In Hwang's first letter to her home address, there was "a plea for CASH—

and today's letter shows you want more and more."

"I am not saying that what you write is not true—in fact, having corresponded with you for many years, and wanting to believe that OUR foster child is an honest and most worthy recipient—we believe you, we believe every word about your needing money for college education, etc. It would be a great blow to our faith in human beings if we did not believe that a boy, helped by us so many years, would never, never deceive [sic] his foster parents. I am merely saying that what Foster Parents knew would happen in most cases, has happened here. None of us in Tri-County are in any position to send the amount of money you mention."

She reminds him that they, too, have families to support, children to educate, and that they work hard to earn a good living. She tells him of the many other things they support—hospitals, children's homes, old peoples' homes, etc. "No people on the earth give as freely or as happily as the Americans—but there is always a limit above which we cannot possibly go."

As a talented student who wants an education badly, she continues, surely there is some way for him to make it happen, and suggests his own city or country, or Korean Rotary Clubs should help. If he succeeds and makes it to the United States, many people will help. She tells him how they entertain boys and girls from all over the world who come here to study, and help financially whenever possible.¹³

The 1961 correspondence ends with a glitter-speckled Christmas card to Tri-County Section from Hwang Un Ju.

An envelope postmarked January 16, 1962 from Foster Parents' to Anne Klein contains an unused mailing label and a blank contents of parcel label. The final piece of correspondence is

postmarked January 29, 1962 forwarded from Foster Parents' with a note from the translation section in Pusan, "Please attached fine [sic] your FC's December letter, which will be the last letter you receive from him. Sincerely, L.K.L."

It is handwritten and dated December 11, 1961. Hwang thanks them for the \$2.50 for his birthday and a pair of wool gloves. Is there deeper meaning to his statement, "Now it is winter here in Korea but the weather is here in Pusan is warm like the Spring day." What they have sent him is not what he needs. He wishes them a happy Christmas and a wonderful New Year. "I send you my love and may God bless you. Faithfully your son, Un Ju Hwang."¹⁴

At first, I could find no explanation for why this is the last letter. Had he reached the maximum age for the program, or was sponsorship terminated? Did Hwang Un Ju make it to college and the United States? Since 1952, money had been budgeted for a Korean orphan. No money was budgeted after 1961. At last, I found the President's report for 1961-1962. Ruth Rubin reports that "we have seen our Korean boy educated, culminating the past year with his graduation from high school."

"We are saddened in a way, by having to give him up now, but the Foster Parents Plan assures us that there are so many others who need our help, and since he is old enough and educated this far, he can take care of himself. Un Ju's many letters of appreciation and love for Tri-County members, all of whom he feels are his foster parents, will be remembered by us always, and we hope to send him a little gift on his birthday and on holidays in the future as well. We can not give him up entirely."¹⁵

No further mention is made in the

continued on page 10

budget or annual reports of another adoption or of further gifts to Hwang Un Ju.¹⁶

References

¹ Mrs. Gus Levine, Mrs. Elbert Joel, Alice (Mrs. Henry) Gindler, Mrs. H. Frady, Esther Rubin Wall, Evelyn Klein Eneman, Minnie Bertha Lauterstein Reiswerg, Essie Alexander, Goldie (Mrs. Harry) Landa, Susie (Mrs. Leo) Steiner, Mrs. Julius Schwartz and Clara Perelman were among them. Rae Alexander, Mrs. Hedwig Frosch, Mrs. I. Lauterstein, Mrs. B. F. Pinchin, Mrs. Sid Klein, Rae (Mrs. Louis) Klein, Mrs. Sam Reichman and Mrs. Brunno Cohen were active members, but it is unclear if they were also founders. The names in the records of the Tri-County Council are almost always "Mrs." and then the husband's name. Where a given name is used in this article, it is usually from personal knowledge and not from the

records.

² Following presidents were Irene (Mrs. Louis) Waldvogel, Anne (Mrs. Myke) Klein, Ruth (Mrs. Eli) Rubin, Clara Klein, Bess (Mrs. Harold) Pinchin, Ruth (Mrs. Moe) Klein, Sarah (Mrs. Leslie) Lippman, Celia (Mrs. Willard) Waldvogel. The writer of the speech at the 25th Anniversary Celebration was also a president, but her paper is unsigned.

³ Jackie Kennedy was the Honorary Chair for the 25th Anniversary of the organization, which was supported by celebrities like Jack Benny, Kay Kayser, Robert Sarnoff, Sophie Tucker, and Steve Allen. *Lifelines*, newsletter of Foster Parents Plan, Inc. 1962.

⁴ His letters are copied verbatim, without correcting errors or a notation of [sic] which would be so plentiful it would be distracting.

⁵ Hwang Hu Ju essay "Of Humanity."

⁶ Hwang Hu Ju essay "Imaginative

Understanding."

⁷ October 1960 letter Hwang Hu Ju to Anne Klein.

⁸ Carmen Schwartz' two children, Henry and Isy Jean.

⁹ November 30, 1960 letter from Hwang Un Ju to Ruth Rubin.

¹⁰ November 8, 1960 letter from Hwang Un Ju to Ruth Klein.

¹¹ There is a notation that indicates Rotary Club may have also been sponsoring Hwang.

¹² November 18, 1961 letter Hwang Un Ju to Ruth Rubin.

¹³ The letter ends so abruptly, there must be a missing third page.

¹⁴ December 11, 1961 letter Hwang Un Ju to Anne Klein.

¹⁵ Ruth Rubin, President's Report 1961-1962, given at the Annual Banquet on May 2, 1962.

¹⁶ The President's Report of May, 1969 announces that affiliation with the

continued on page 11

The Chosen Folks: Jews of the Frontiers of Texas

by Bryan Edward Stone

University of Texas Press, March, 2010. Article by Hollace Weiner

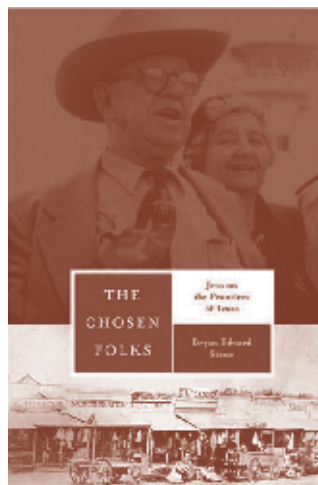
Ready for the next BIG book on Texas Jewry? Dr. Bryan Edward Stone, who contributed to the society's last book with a chapter about "Jews on the Frontier," is the author of a long-awaited volume due out in March from the University of Texas Press.

The book's colorful title is "The Chosen Folks," an apt description for how we Lone Stars of David feel about our dual identity.

Bryan is one of us. Along with his parents, Barbara and Ed Stone of Dallas, he is a member of the Texas Jewish Historical Society. A Dallas native, Bryan received his Ph.D. from UT, is an associate professor of history at Del Mar College in Corpus Christi,

and was a visiting professor at UT's Schusterman Center in Austin, where he originated a course in Texas Jewish history.

"The Chosen Folks" examines the Texas Jewish narrative, beginning with the crypto-Jews who fled the Spanish Inquisition. The book's 296 pages are brimming with memorable stories—like the one about the tight-rope walker who fell to his death in Corsicana; the performer's



final words were a stream of such flawless Hebrew that he was buried in the Jewish cemetery. "The Chosen Folks" also covers the Ku Klux Klan and its impact on Texas Jews, the Lone Star Zionist movement, and Jewish involvement in Civil Rights.

"The Chosen Folks," a hardcover volume with more than three dozen illustrations, retails for \$50 and is available at a discount

when ordered through the UT Press Website: www.utexas.edu/utpress/books/stocho.html.

— Stained-Glass from Fort Worth's Past —

Exhibited at Beth-El Congregation

by Hollace Weiner

When Fort Worth's Beth-El Congregation moved from the inner city to a new location in 2000, more than two dozen decorative stained-glass window panes were removed and stored in the Temple Archives. A sampling of these works of art is the focus of a new, luminous display in the congregation's Hall of Remembrance.

The stained-glass windows in the old Temple contained circular paintings of Jewish ritual objects found in collections from Rome to Damascus. A Passover plate illustrating the song "An Only Kid," an 18th-century Megillah, and the image of a pair of hands performing a priestly blessing were among the stained-glass paintings that instilled beauty to worship services for more than fifty years. The painted glass was handcrafted in 1947 in a Dallas art studio.

In April of 2000, several months before the congregation vacated its old synagogue, artisans removed the stained-glass discs, replacing each with an opaque circle of glass. Con-




gregant Marty Robinson, a Jack-of-all-trades, built protective cases for these fragile works of art.

Saving the window panes required a great deal of lobbying. The Building Committee initially approved removing only those panes that would be reused in the new premises. A dozen panes, depicting each of the Twelve Tribes of Israel, were incorporated into


the design of the new building.

The remaining stained-glass medallions, which graced the sanctuary and the stairwells, would have been abandoned had not preservationists within the congregation relentlessly argued, cajoled, educated, and convinced the membership they were worth saving. The old synagogue, at 207 W. Broadway Avenue, has been sold twice and remains vacant.

The exhibit, titled "Stained-Glass from Beth-El's Past," will be on display for the next year or two. It was researched and arranged by Archives Committee members Hollace Weiner, Rosanne Margolis, and Barbara Rosenthal. Bruce Weiner installed the lighting, which adds a spiritual feel to the display. A bulletin board describing the background of the exhibit includes photos by Len Schweitzer, Marty Stenzler, and Ralph Lauer. Ritual objects augmenting the display are on loan from Rabbi Ralph Mecklenburger, Barbara Rosenthal, Audrey and Ron Slotter, and the Beth-El Judaica shop.

Beth-El Congregation, 4900 Briarhaven Road, Fort Worth, is open to the public Monday through Friday, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM and for Friday evening services. For worship times, check the website, www.bethelfw.org, or call ahead to 817-332-7141. 

Dearest Mothers, continued from page 10

National Council of Jewish Women as the Tri-County Section had been terminated and the group would function in the future as Temple Israel Auxiliary. The last surviving member of the Auxiliary turned the remaining funds over to the Temple several years ago. 

Crypto-Jewish Conference at Texas A & M, 2010

Texas A&M Hillel, in conjunction with the office of the Chancellor of the Texas A&M University System, will host the Third Annual Conference on Crypto-Jewish History and Life on April 8-9, 2010, in College Station, Texas.

The Conference will focus on Texas and the American Southwest, and will seek to provide a greater understanding of the Crypto-Jewish phenomenon, including its impact on modern Texas Jewish culture and modern Texas Hispanic culture. The

Conference will show the interlocking relationship between the two groups. This year's Conference will seek to explore this unique Southwestern historical cultural phenomenon from the perspective of academic and archival research as seen in films and music.

If you would like to participate in the Conference or need more information, please contact Rabbi Peter Tarlow at 979-696-7313 or email him at hillel@tamuhillel.org.

TJHS Winter Board Meeting



Mitzi and Rusty Milstein

On Friday night, January 15, we attended Temple Israel Brotherhood's Interfaith Dinner and Services, along with Temple members and members of the Antioch Baptist Church. There were over 200 of us for dinner and services. The Interfaith Service, was led by the Rabbi and Cantor, and Reverend M. C. Potter of the Antioch Church. But the sermon by Rabbi Capers Funnye "Rev. Dr. Martin

Luther King, Jr. and Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel: Prophets in Our Midst" was an experience none of us attending the weekend meeting will soon forget. What a dynamic speaker! I invited Rabbi Funnye to our hospitality room later that evening, as he was also staying at the Marriott. We were surprised when he indeed came by and visited with us for about an hour. We all had a truly wonderful time.



David Beer



Barbara Rosenberg



Dr. Karen York is the curator of the Sherwin Miller Museum of Jewish Art. She spoke on the topic "From Shtetl to the Sooner State."



Shirley Gindler, Samylu Rubin, and Bob Gindler

—Tulsa, Oklahoma, January 15-17, 2010—



Rabbi Capers Funnye of the Beth Shalom B'nai Zaken Ethiopian Hebrew Congregation of Chicago, Illinois was the guest rabbi at the interfaith dinner and service at Mount Zion Baptist Church on Friday evening. Rabbi Funnye is the cousin of First Lady Michelle Obama.



Barry Abels is the Executive Director of the Jewish Federation in Tulsa.



Abbi Michelson



Sherry Zander



Robert Abzug, the director of the Schusterman Center for Jewish Studies, spoke on "Emmigrating from New York to Texas: Mishpuchah in a Semi-Strange Land."



Independent Film Director Allen Mondell's topics were "A Dallas Journey" and "West of Hester Street."

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Roberta Herman from *Barbara & Ben Rosenberg*

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TJHS Traveling Exhibit

The Texas Jewish Historical Society has compiled two museum quality photo exhibits with explanations depicting early Jewish life and contributions. Both exhibits highlight the lives of Jews in Texas since the early part of the century.

Each exhibit is comprised of approximately thirty-six photographs that can either be self-standing with an easel back or hung on a wall. There is no charge for the exhibits and they will be shipped prepaid freight via UPS in

waterproof boxes to your location. The only expense to the borrower will be the shipping of the exhibit back via UPS ground.

The exhibits have been displayed in various locations in Texas and other parts of the United States, including Rhode Island and California. They are an excellent program for schools, congregations and other organizations. To schedule the exhibits, please contact Jack Gerrick at 817-927-8765 or email him at texbed@aol.com.



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**The deadline for the May, 2010
TJHS Newsletter is April 16.**

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