

Texas Jewish Historical Society

Preserving Jewish Heritage in Texas
Est. 1980



November, 2011 News Magazine

New Historical Marker in Hidalgo County Commemorates Jewish Community

by Davie Lou Solka

On Sunday, October 16, 2011, the Hidalgo County Historical Commission dedicated a Texas historical marker for the former Temple Beth Israel, the first synagogue in Hidalgo County. The former synagogue is located at 402 West 10th Street at Texas Avenue in Mercedes, Texas. The property is now owned by the Christian Science Society of Mercedes.

The inscription on the marker reads as follows:

“During the 1910s, several Hidalgo and Cameron County families founded a small Jewish congregation. The temple lacked a permanent rabbi. Lay readers led most services, while a student rabbi was hired



*Temple Beth Israel,
Mercedes, TX 1935-1948.*

to lead High Holy Day services.

“The group first worshipped in rented space, but in 1935, Temple Beth Israel (House of Israel) was designed by Weslaco architect Newell Waters and was erected at 401 W. 10th Street.

“Members of the congregation represented surrounding business communities as clothing and furniture merchants, newspaper publishers and jewelers.

“By the late 1940s, the growth of McAllen and Harlingen reduced the congregation’s size and in 1948, the membership voted to dissolve, with members joining congregations in the two neighboring cities.”

Gainesville’s Once-Thriving Jewish Community Lives for a Weekend

by Vickie Vogel

The Texas Jewish Historical Society held its Fall Weekend Meeting in Gainesville, Texas, north of Dallas, on October 14-16, 2011. As the sun set on Friday, members and new Gainesville friends gathered in the hotel’s hospitality room for Shabbat blessings. The candlesticks were the 19th-century heirlooms of Lary Kuehn, whose grandparents were among the leaders of the Gainesville Jewish community, which no longer exists. (The synagogue was sold in 1922 and was eventually torn down.) The group went to the Main Street Pub for dinner and then returned to the hospitality room.

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Message from the President

by Rusty Milstein

As all of you know, the Texas Jewish Historical Society has been involved in many beneficial projects and grants. But there is one that is personally very meaningful to me. There have been several items in our periodicals that have mentioned the “web encyclopedia,” which is the




brainchild of Dr. Stuart Rockoff, of the Institute of Southern Jewish Life, with help from the TJHS. The latest addition to the website covers Northeast Texas and, important to me, Longview, Texas, where I was born and reared,

and where Mitzi and I still reside. When I “clicked” on Longview in the web encyclopedia, I was amazed. I thought that I knew almost everything regarding Jews and Jewish life in my hometown, but I soon realized that I did not.

I have read the many articles in our

news magazine about numerous small communities in Texas and the respective Jewish presences there. All of the articles have been very good and interesting, but after reading about my town, it dawned on me—what the

Texas Jewish Historical Society, and all other historical societies, do is so very important to us, our children, and posterity in general. It gives me great pleasure to know that TJHS is an integral part of preserving our history. I would be remiss if I didn’t again thank Stuart Rockoff and his interns for the unbelievable work that they did in providing the Jewish history of Longview and many other communities to us all. They continue to harvest information about the Jewish presence in Texas, and when the project is completed, we will be part of the “web” history of Jews in the South—from the Southeast coast to El Paso. Go to our website, www.TJHS.org, to find a link to the Institute of Southern Jewish Life, and a link to the web encyclopedia of Jewish communities in the South. I am very proud that TJHS is a part of this endeavor. 

Rusty Milstein

President, 2011-2012

The Texas Jewish Historical Society November 2011 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 scans 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 by 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

Photographers Marvin Rich, Davie Lou Solka, and Marc Wormser

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.



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the January, 2012
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Remembering Sarah Lippman

June 21, 1920 - September 11, 2010

by Sheldon Lippman

Sarah Lewis Lippman fell into a coma on September 9, 2010, on the early morning of Rosh Hashanah. Just hours earlier, she had hosted dinner before the evening services. She made her "never fail" matzo balls, chicken soup, and homemade challah. That evening, she attended services at Temple Israel in Schulenburg, Texas, where she participated in the services, singing in her still-clear voice and visiting with her many friends in this congregation.

Sarah died on September 11, 2010. One year later, on September 11, 2011, at the unveiling of her tombstone in the Jewish Cemetery in Hallettsville, Texas, the following commemorative was shared by her family and friends, who gathered to remember her.

Let September 11 forever be an extra-special day when we remember Sarah—wife, mother, grandmother, aunt, cousin, friend, singer, volunteer, butcher, baker, gardener—a woman of strength, character, and love; unequivocally devoted to her family, friends, and faith.

Sarah grew up in an Orthodox Jewish home. Her parents, Joe and Lena Lewis, immigrated to the United States in the early 1900s and raised



Sarah Lippman

their six children—Libbie, Abe, Max, Sarah, Buddy, and Meyer—supported by a family-operated kosher butcher shop in Houston. Sarah worked in the butcher shop when her brothers were serving in the Army during World War II. She always remarked about not being able to open her mouth wide enough for a thick sandwich because of those years clenching her teeth when forcefully cutting into thick cuts of meat.

Sarah's faith was paramount in her life. Sarah and her husband, Leslie Lippman, were among the original young families in Schulenburg who helped to build Temple Israel, inaugurated in 1951. Sarah was the soloist for High Holy Day services for over fifty years, until she was well into her mid-80s, retiring only when macular degeneration made it impossible to read the music. She continued to sing along, word for word, from her seat in the congregation without the benefit of the songbook. And Sarah took pride in her work as shamus of the shul for just as many years, preparing for services and organizing Pass-over seders. She invited children from local schools of many faiths to learn about Judaism and its traditions.

As faithful as she was to her religion, she was open and friends to all faiths, counted the priests, ministers, and nuns in Schulenburg among her friends, and instilled an ecumenical sense in her children. Not only did she provide her children with a Jewish education but she also sent them to a Baptist vacation bible school and a Methodist youth camp. It was

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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 genealogy for fu-

ture generations.

So what are you waiting for? Send 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.

TJHS Fall Weekend

Gainesville, continued from page 1

Saturday held a full day of programming, scheduled by Weekend Co-Chair Hollace Weiner. The Morton Museum welcomed us with refreshments while we heard Lary Kuehn's history of Gainesville, followed by Hollace's question-and-answer session with Joe Rosenstein, age 92, of Dallas, who is a Gainesville native. Lary presented the Society with a map of the Jewish section at Fairview Cemetery and the minute book of the Congregation, which held seventeen years of minutes.

After a catered lunch at Sarah's on the Square, the group drove to the Fairview Cemetery on the eastern edge of town. Hollace portrayed a mourner who led everyone to three graves with costumed presenters. Shelley Kuehn portrayed the young widow Ottillie Kuehn, Charles Hart regaled everyone with tales of his life as saloonkeeper Henry Waterman, and Gary Whitfield described his days as 32nd Degree Mason Harry Stiefel.

Descendants of Daniel Baum, who settled in Gainesville in 1881,

displayed a grand Baum family tree. Erline Gordon of El Paso led the discussion, helped by cousins Vicki Kessler from Austin, Julius "Jack" Baum of New York City, and Regina Hyman and Barbara Hyman, both of Dallas. Sherry Zander showed tombstone rubbing technique and encouraged all to give it a try.

After free time to explore the town in the afternoon, a long caravan of cars headed south of town to the Lone Oak Ranch & Retreat for a cowboy banquet. After Havdalah Service, led by Co-Chair Vickie Vogel, the meal was followed the evening's speakers. Dr. Bryan Stone, associate professor of history at Del Mar College in Corpus Christi and adjunct professor at the University of Texas in Austin, moderated a panel discussion with Dr. Stuart Rockoff, historian at Mississippi's Institute of Jewish Life, and Sherry Zander, creator of www.smallsynagogues.com. Attendees were encour-

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Joe Rosenstein, age 92, a Dallasite who grew up in Gainesville.



TJHS visits the Morton Museum.

Save the Date

January 6-8, 2012

Winter Meeting
in Del Rio

**March 30-
April 1, 2012**

Annual Gathering in Fort
Worth

*In case you missed the "Gateway to Galveston" exhibit at the Bob Bullock Texas History Museum at the October 2009 board meeting in Austin, you will have an opportunity to see it at its final stop of a nationwide tour. We will attend the exhibit at the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History. Details will be in the January issue of the News Magazine. **Note:** The date of the Annual Gathering has been changed so that we can see this exhibit.*

— Gainesville, Texas, October 14-16, 2011 —



Lary Kuehn presented the plot of the Jewish section of the cemetery, along with the minute book from the Gainesville congregation, to Claire Brooks, TJHS Archivist.

aged to participate in the discussion of “When the Eternal Light Goes Out: Why Synagogues Close Their Doors.”

The *Gainesville Daily Register* sent a reporter, Greg Russell, to several events. He wrote a nice article, with photographs, that appeared on page one of the October 17 edition.

The Fall Board Meeting was held on Sunday morning. 



At Fairview Cemetery, costumed presenters each enacted a monologue. In the photo above, left, is Gary Whitfield as 32nd Degree Mason Harry Stiefel, Above middle is Charles Hart as saloon-



keeper Henry Waterman. Above right is Shelley Kuehn as the young widow Ottillie Kuehn. In the photo to the left, Hollace Weiner represents a mourner and was our guide for the monologues.



The Baum cousins have a “mini-reunion.” From left to right are Erline Gordon of El Paso, Vicki Kessler of Austin, Julius “Jack” Baum of New York City, Gina Hyman of Dallas, and Barbara Hyman of Dallas.

From Our Archives

House of Alexander

by Vickie Vogel

Abraham Alexander was born on April 19, 1822, in Thorn, Prussia. He arrived in Texas in the 1840s with his first wife, whose name has been lost to history. His brother Seelig¹ had already immigrated to Fayette County from Wiszig, Germany, so when Abraham arrived in Galveston, he went straight to La Grange. It is said that Seelig was actually the family name, but when Alexander Selig entered the country, the official recorded his name in reverse. When Abraham arrived, he kept the Alexander name for simplification.

Abraham and his first wife had two children, Cecilia (b. March 5, 1850) and Sam (b. March 3, 1851). Cecilia married Stanislaus Szmiderski in 1870. She died childless. Sam married Annie Cohen and moved to California, where they had six children.

Abraham operated a general merchandise store in La Grange until around 1860, when he opened a store in Winchester, fifteen miles northwest. He was so closely identified with the town that he became known as "Winchester" Alexander. In 1863, he moved his business to La Grange and operated it until a year before his death in 1898. During the Civil War, he made hats for Confederate soldiers, which was a skill that he had learned in Prussia.² He had continued hat-making as head clerk in a large establishment in New York before coming to Texas. His hattery sometimes employed more than one hundred men and was an important part of the La Grange economy.³



The House of Alexander. Photo courtesy of Fayette Heritage Museum and Archives, La Grange, Texas.

His first wife died and, in 1863, Abraham married Dorothea Ackermann,⁴ who was born in Germany in 1846 and came to Fayette County as a child. Her parents were not Jewish, and when she married Abraham, they disowned her and had no contact with her until her death in 1867.⁵ Dorothea converted to Judaism.⁶

The newlyweds moved to a cottage on Washington Street, a block from the county courthouse. It was a four-room house with a kitchen out back, but the house grew with the family. Eventually, it became a two-story Southern-style mansion with tall white columns on a broad porch⁷ and a magnificent live oak tree.⁸ Unusual for La Grange, it even had a basement.

In this house, the Alexanders raised ten children: Henry (b. 1864), Harry (1866-1929), Charles (b. 1868), Essie (1871-1968), Hattie (1873-1950), Victor Dunn (1877-1932), Jake

(1879-1953), Rachel (1882-1944), Gertie (b. 1884), and Jeannette Cecilia (1889-1977). All five boys went to work at an early age, and each became a successful businessman. With the help of some of his brothers, Henry opened a candy factory around 1887. The business was later moved to Houston.

In 1880, Cecilia Szmiderski, Abraham's daughter from his first marriage, died. Her husband lay down by her grave in the La Grange Jewish cemetery and shot himself near the heart with a derringer. Fortunately, he left a note with a friend telling him where to find his body. Szmiderski was saved and remarried the next year.⁹

Abraham died in 1898, after an illness of several months. His obituary said that he was a wealthy man at one time but suffered financial reverses late in life. The *La Grange Journal* stated, "Many men, yea, hundreds of

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them, have lived and died and been of less use to the world than Winchester Alexander...^{9,10}

Harry, Charles, Victor, Jake, and Rachel turned the family grocery store into a wholesale grocery business. The store was on the corner of Washington and Travis, next to the Alexander home, in a one-story building. In 1900, the business was incorporated as the Alexander Brothers Grocery Co. and moved to two brick buildings on East Colorado Street, one of which was two-story. Because it was next to the railroad tracks, the business could handle large volumes of groceries and became one of the strongest wholesale distributors in the area, with branches in Flatonia, Giddings, and Elgin.¹¹ The Great Depression hit the business hard, and it was closed around 1937.

Only four of the Alexander children married. Henry married Mattie Jobe and had four children (Sam, Howard, Lee, and Dorothy).¹² Charles married Cora Jacobs and had one son (Charles). Hattie married Benno Hellman (1861-1933) and had two children (Bertha and Alexander). Jake married Carrie Westheimer¹³ and had four children (Michael, Carol, Richard, and Jacolyn). Henry and Mattie lived in Houston, but the others stayed in La Grange. Charles and Jake had their own homes,¹⁴ but the unmarried siblings lived in the family home.

As Reform Jews, the Alexanders attended services in Houston or Austin until affiliating with Temple Israel, which constructed a building in nearby Schulenburg, seventeen miles south of La Grange, in 1951.

Jeannette was a well-known and talented piano teacher for nearly fifty



Jacolyn Alexander, c. 1934. Photo courtesy of Fayette Heritage Museum and Archives, La Grange, Texas.

years, beginning in 1909, when she graduated from college. She often played the piano or organ for “every church in town” and was the Temple Israel organist for many years. She moved to Houston in 1968.

None of the other sisters were musically bent, but Hattie and Gertie enjoyed painting. Essie preferred literary activities and was a charter member of the Etaerio Club, a literary organization for women that formed in the early 1900s and formally disbanded in 1938.¹⁵

Like many Jews in rural Texas at the turn of the last century, the Alexanders were active in the Masonic Lodge. Abraham, who joined in 1864, and all his sons except Jake were members. Jeannette was the first person in La Grange to be initiated into

the Eastern Star, the women’s auxiliary of the Masonic Lodge.

In Robin McMillion’s article on the Alexander family in our archives, she stated that there was never any persecution of them, or social isolation, because of their Jewish faith, yet the same article described the Ackermanns disowning their daughter for marrying Abraham! Nevertheless, Jeannette, Abraham’s last surviving child, stated that they were “good friends with everybody,” and the Alexanders unquestionably achieved high social status in La Grange society and were one of the most prominent families in town. In fact, when Dorothea Alexander became ill just before her death in 1923, a city ordinance was passed that the area around her home be designated a “quiet zone” for her rest and recovery.

An example of the Alexander family community activities was the Casino Fair Parade, a predecessor to the County Fair, around 1916. Rachel, known as Rae, rode a float as “Lady Rae, Duchess of Carnations, of the House of Alexander.” Her brother Victor was also on the float. Essie was in the parade as part of the parade committee, and Jeannette was an attendant on another float. A separate float for the Alexander Grocery Company was part of the trades display.¹⁶

In 1991, TJHS Past President Don Teter interviewed Jacolyn Alexander (Jake and Carrie’s daughter) and the audiotape is in our archives.¹⁷ She did not recall any anti-Semitism in La Grange, although her brother said that he experienced some, the details

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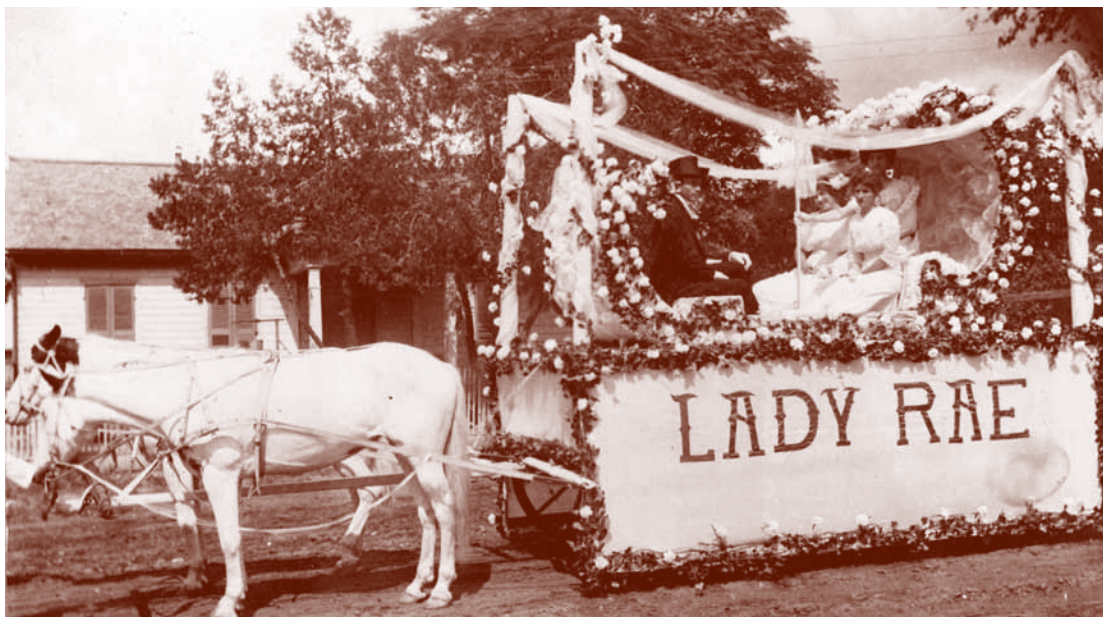
of which she did not recall. She said that when she was growing up,¹⁸ there were no Jews in La Grange until the Kleins arrived. Then the Lautersteins came, and then the Palmers from Houston. She remembered that there were Jews in La Grange when her grandfather arrived, but the only name that she could recall hearing was Rosenthal.¹⁹

Jacolyn's mother, "Miss Carrie," as she was known in La Grange, died following surgery in 1934,²⁰ when Jacolyn was in high school. Her obituary praised her civic and charitable efforts in the community. Hundreds attended the funeral. Jacolyn's father, Jake, continued to live in La Grange with his sisters until his death in 1954.

Don Teter was particularly interested in the old Jewish cemetery in La Grange, which TJHS last visited in 2009. Jacolyn said, "As I was growing up, I heard the story that my aunts took my grandmother out to the cemetery every week. They got stuck going out there one time in the car. Shortly after that time, my grandmother got sick and passed away [1923].

Please Note:

If you are sending a check to the Texas Jewish Historical Society, please indicate the purpose of the check—dues, gift, contribution, etc.



Casino Parade Float, 1916, featuring Lady Rae (back), Duchess of Carnations, of the House of Alexander. Victor (left, partly hidden) is also on the float. Photo courtesy of Fayette Heritage Museum and Archives, La Grange, Texas.

My mother was instrumental, had my grandfather's remains removed to the city cemetery, where we had bought property. After that, they went out occasionally to see about things and how they were. Aunt Essie was very interested in seeing it kept up."

She recalled that in the early 1940s, the property was sold to a Mr. Brown from Houston, who was to see that it was maintained. Jacolyn believed that the records, after Essie's death, were entrusted to Bernard Sass of Dallas,²¹ who was a child or grandchild of Abraham's brother. Jacolyn did not know what became of the records at Bernard's death.²² None of her immediate family is buried in the La Grange Jewish Cemetery, which is located on private property between the football stadium and the Colorado River.

Jacolyn also shared memories with Don about her siblings' confirmations. Her brother Michael Alexander (1916-1972) was confirmed in Houston at Beth Israel, where his grandfather Michael Westheimer was a founding member. Jacolyn's other two brothers,

Richard²³ and Carrol, were not interested in confirmation, but Jacolyn was. Carrie took her to Beth Israel, where they were told that she would have to come every week. Carrie would not allow her to ride the train alone into Houston every week, so there was no confirmation.²⁴ Jacolyn died on October 29, 2010.

The Alexander family has not been represented in La Grange in over forty years. They scattered to Houston, El Paso, San Antonio, and Sweetwater, Texas, as well as to California and Connecticut.²⁵ The stately Alexander home was torn down. The local newspaper's building now stands on the site.

References

¹Seelig, known as "Captain Alexander" for his service in the Confederate Army, was discovered dead in his bed on September 19, 1896. http://www.txgenweb3.org/txfayette/obituaries_a.htm. His wife, Bertha, was born in 1831 and died in 1908. Norman C. Krischke, *Jewish Cemeteries: La Grange, Columbus, Hallettsville*, self-published 1999. Many of the birth and death dates in this article

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— Did You Have Fun at Summer Camp? —

by Davie Lou Solka

CAMP BONIM CAMP YOUNG JUDEA ECHO HILL RANCH GREENE FAMILY CAMP


If you attended or worked at a Jewish camp in the 1950s, 1960s or 1970s, we are looking for your memories of those fabulous summers.

The *Western States Jewish History Journal* plans to publish an issue devoted to stories about Jewish summer camps west of the Mississippi. Some essays may be printed in the *Texas Jewish Historical So-*

ciety News Magazine. Think about those great summers and write about your experiences. The essay can be a paragraph or up to the maximum of 2,500 words. All essays will be subject to editing for editorial consistency and space limitations. Write about programs, activities, friendships, special days, boy-and-girl mixers, and the reasons that your

parents sent you to camp.

Include your name (women, please give your maiden name), mailing address, telephone number, and email address. Projected deadline date at this time is June 30, 2012.

If you have any questions, contact editor@txjhs.org. All essays are to be sent to the same email address, also. 

House of Alexander, continued from page 8

are from this booklet.

²Box 3A164, Texas Jewish Historical Society Collection, The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

³*Dallas Morning News* obituary, March 26, 1898 and http://www.txgenweb3.org/txfayette/obituaries_a.htm.

⁴There is a copy of the marriage license of Mr. A. Alexander and Miss Dorothea Ackermann, dated December 21, 1863, in Box 3A164.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Oral history of Jacolyn Alexander by Don Teter, Box 3Y189.3. Jacolyn said that the fact that Abraham had been previously married was also a factor in Dorothea's parents' objections.

⁷Robin McMillion, *The Abraham Alexander Family*, Box 3A164, op cit.

⁸*The Alexander Family*, author unknown, hand-dated 1915, ibid.

⁹Smiderski was of "noble and rich Israelite parentage," and fought in the Polish Uprising in 1862, and rose to the rank of Colonel before escaping to Austria when the Polish Army was overpowered. He emigrated to America in 1865. Norman C. Krischke, op cit.

¹⁰http://www.txgenweb3.org/txfayette/obituaries_a.htm.

¹¹Victor D. Alexander obituary, http://www.txgenweb3.org/txfayette/obituaries_a.htm.

¹²Jacolyn Alexander said that Henry married "out" and the family lost touch. Oral history with Don Teter, 1991.

¹³Carrie was the daughter of Michael Westheimer, ibid.

¹⁴Charles died in 1933, http://www.txgenweb3.org/txfayette/obituaries_a.htm, and Jake in 1954. Jacolyn Alexander, oral history, op cit. According to txgenweb3, Victor Alexander died on September 26, 1896, after a brief illness at the age of 55. The math doesn't work. If he was 55 when he died, then he would have died in 1932. Since we have a photo of him in 1916, the death year is more likely 1932. http://www.txgenweb3.org/txfayette/obituaries_a.htm.

¹⁵<http://www.texasescapes.com/Preservation/La-Grange-Texas-First-Fayette-County-Library-Judge-Stiehl-House.htm>.

¹⁶Photograph and unspecified newspaper account, Fayette Heritage Museum and Archives, La Grange. The photograph was labeled by Verna Reichert, who is on the float with Rachel Alexander.

¹⁷Box 3Y189.3, Texas Jewish Historical Society Collection, The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin. For a guide to conducting your own oral-history interviews, see Judith Moyer, http://dohistory.org/on_your_own/toolkit/oral-History.html.

¹⁸She was born in 1916. <http://obits>.

dignitymemorial.com/dignity-memorial/obituary.aspx?n=Jacolyn-Alexander&lc=7469&pid=146306520&mid=4426895.

¹⁹Rosenthal Brothers General Mercantile (1896) and the Rosenthal Law Office (1881) were located on the square. Isaac Rosenthal, known to all of La Grange as "Papa," was born in Posen, Germany, in 1826 and arrived in America in 1848, during a time of political unrest in Europe. After a few years in New York, Rosenthal moved to Georgetown and was in the mercantile business there for a short time before relocating to La Grange. He married Estina Rosenfield of Houston, and they had eleven children. L. David and Vickie Vogel, *Jewish Merchants of La Grange*, unpublished, 2008.

²⁰Carrie Alexander obituary, http://www.txgenweb3.org/txfayette/obituaries_a.htm.

²¹Bernard Sass died in 1986. <http://www.legacy.com/ns/obitfinder/ssdi-search.aspx?Page=1&countryid=1&daterange=All&firstname=bernard&lastname=Sass&stateid=57&entriesperpage=25>.

²²Subsequent searches by David Vogel and others have yielded no clues.

²³Richard (1913-1988) was a lieutenant colonel in the army and fought in World War II and Korea. Krischke, op cit.

²⁴Oral history, Jacolyn Alexander, op cit.

²⁵McMillion, op cit. 

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, or occasion—birthday, anniversary, award, new child or grandchild, etc.) and your name, along with a check in the amount of your choice, to

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

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

Sarah Lippman, continued from page 3

important to her to know and appreciate the faiths of others.

Singing was a big part of Sarah's life. In addition to Temple Israel, she had been invited many times to sing at weddings in most of the churches in Schulenburg. In fact, her singing was ultimately responsible for Sarah meeting her husband, Leslie, a life-long resident of Schulenburg. When she was singing at the wedding of Leslie's cousin in Galveston, Leslie's father and Sarah's mother took the initiative to make sure that their "shy" children met. They married in 1946 and moved into Leslie's childhood home with his father, Ike. The partnership succeeded. Together they worked in the family store, Ike Lippman and Son Dry Goods, and retired together when they closed the business after seventy-seven years on Main Street in Schulenburg. They celebrated their Golden wedding an-

niversary in November of 1996. Leslie died one month later, at age 81. [*The February 2011 edition of the TJHS newsletter contains an article by Vickie Vogel on Leslie Lippman's wartime letters to his father.*]

The family farm in Engle, Texas, was also a major centerpiece in their lives. Several family reunions included a haywagon ride. Sarah started a garden that grew every year in size, with row upon row of vegetables, roses, and fruit trees. Leslie had a waterwell with windmill put near the garden instead of having to haul gallons of water on the back of the pickup truck from their home in Schulenburg. The garden was a family affair with kids, grandkids, and friends taking a hoe to weed to help Sarah—as she'd say—"clean the garden." Sarah's pantry was typically filled with an array of colorful canned vegetables harvested

from the garden.

Shortly after the death of her mother in 1970, Sarah started to hold monthly birthday parties at the Colonial Nursing Home in Schulenburg, remembering the pleasure her mother had at similar monthly celebrations at the Seven Acres Jewish Home for the Aged in Houston. Sarah would bake cakes and make sandwiches and organize entertainment with children from St. Rose Catholic Elementary School, polka dancers, Czech singers, and other local talent. She continued this tradition for forty-plus years, "retiring" as she approached age 90. At that point, she was older than most of the residents of the nursing home.

Sarah regularly attended an over-55 fitness class as much for the fellowship as for the exercise. She would never schedule appointments or visits

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on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, to assure that she did not miss an opportunity to stretch, breathe deeply, and laugh with friends. Never one to boast about her less-than-stellar academic record, she often mentioned her most memorable accomplishment in high school athletics when she scored all fifteen points in a volleyball game. Somewhere in the archives of San Jacinto High School in Houston (class of 1936), there may still be a trophy with her name on it.


Sarah and Leslie enjoyed dancing and joined dance clubs that met in and around Schulenburg. Sarah even became quite adept at the Chicken Dance and Electric Slide. Even after Leslie's death, and as she gradually lost strength in her legs and depended on her roller-walker (known to family as "Miss Winnie"), she still enjoyed going to the dances and listening to the music. And she would always tell her children of her excitement when someone asked her to dance. Sarah was not a wallflower.

Sarah lived for sixty-four years in the Lippman family home on Summit Street in Schulenburg; this is the same home in which Leslie grew up and their four children were

raised. This is certain: Sarah's ultimate, unflinching pride was in her children. She and Leslie allowed their children to grow, learn, and explore the world. And she was happy that all her children are in long, loving relationships: Irvin and Bill in Fort Lauderdale, Florida; Sheldon and John in Washington, D.C.; Marilyn and Mary Ann in Dallas, Texas; and Phil and Jenny in College Station, Texas. She was doubly proud of her grandchildren—Allison in College Station; and Andrew and his wife, Miranda (Johnson), in Houston.

Sarah will be remembered for many things. For the unveiling of Sarah's tombstone, a friend, Linda Behrens of New Ulm, Texas, wrote a poem that concluded with the lines

Yet Sarah continues to give,
Just in a different circle.
Her family and friends receive her bounty.
Ever grateful they are for her goodness,
They sing her praises, now and ever more.

Sheldon Lippman assembled these remembrances of his mother with input from his siblings, Irvin, Marilyn, and Phil. 

Does TJHS Have Your Current Email Address?

Is your email address current? Has it changed since the 2010-2011 directory was printed? Have you changed email providers? If so, please send Marc Wormser an email at marc.wormser@att.net so that he can update your information in the database. To reduce postage costs and printing delays, we are going to be electronically sending as much mail as possible, so don't be left out or behind—send your current information today!

Please put "email change" in the subject line and with your name in the text of your message, and send it today! Thank you.


TJHS Travelers On the Road Again!

A trip is being planned to Portugal, Spain, and Morocco, which will include Jewish sites. It is a sixteen-day tour, and we will leave on Friday, December 7, 2012. Come with us



and discover three countries, languages, and cultures on this journey. We

will relive the glory days of the Libson empire, wander through Madrid, and visit the Synagogue of Transito, then we will cross the Mediterranean to the city of Casablanca. View the full itinerary at <http://www.goaheadtours.com/tours/IAF/portugal-spain-morocco.aspx>.

For information about a group discount, contact Vickie Vogel at vickvogel@yahoo.com. 

Visit us on the web at www.txjhs.org

— Edwin Katten, Sr., The Coin Collector —

by Edwin Katten, Jr.

My father, Edwin Katten, Sr., was born in Mexia, Texas, on November 14, 1893, and passed away in Mexia on January 5, 1950. Even though he was born and died in Mexia, he lived the majority of his life in New Orleans, Louisiana, hometown of both of his parents. After attending school in Mexia through the tenth grade, he went to work in New Orleans as a retail-store salesman. He later joined his brother in the men's-clothing manufacturing business.

At a young age, he developed an interest in coin collecting. He was artistic and had beautiful penmanship. His interest in coins was not only for their value as collectibles, but also because he appreciated the inherent



beauty of the engravings. As a child and a teenager, I remember him poring over coins in the evening. In the 1930s, this was a form of entertainment for him. He taught me about the quality of coins and showed me how to properly handle coins by their edges. I was also admonished to never attempt to clean a valuable coin.

Apparently, when he began collecting coins, he established friendships with several bank tellers, includ-

ing one at the Federal Reserve Bank in New Orleans. These friends would set aside coins for him when they received one that they thought would interest him. The teller at the Federal Reserve Bank held back several gold coins for him when gold was called in during the early thirties. One coin that he received was a Baldwin \$20 gold piece, which he always said was the most valuable coin in his collection. He redeemed the coin for its face value and gave the teller two seersucker suits in gratitude for saving the coin for him. I am not sure what seersucker suits retailed for in 1933, but my guess is that his cost as a manufacturer was not over \$3! That coin was sold in 1946 for \$2,800.

My father was a member of the New Orleans Coin Club and also be-

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In Memoriam



Merilee Gerstenhaber Weiner, TJHS member and former board member, died on June 23, 2011, in Houston. She is survived by her sons, Elliot and Suzi, Jay, and Gary and Karin; and her Weiner family, Louise and Mel Rainer; Chuck and Joanie Weiner; Dr. Susan Weiner; and Nancy Weiner and Rina Shazit. Also surviving her are eighteen grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren.



Zella Sobel, TJHS member, died on July 24, 2011, in Dallas. She is survived by her daughter and her husband, Marcia Sobel-Fox and Fred Fox, grandchildren and their spouses, and great-grandchildren.



Carolyn Fox Liedeker Epstein, TJHS member, died on September 8, 2011, in Houston. She is survived by her husband, Robert A. Epstein, her children, Ross Allen and Janet Epstein, Lauren Lou Epstein Scharf, and Neal Evans and Susan Epstein; seven grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.



Leon Gachman, TJHS member, died on August 16, 2011, in Fort Worth. His wife, Eleanor Gachman, preceded him in death earlier this year. They are survived by their son Arnold, and his wife Harriette, two grandchildren and their spouses, and five great-grandchildren.



Dr. Coleman David Caplovitz, TJHS member, died on August 27, 2011, in Houston. He is survived by his wife, Marilyn; daughters, Lori Bohm and Karen Barrett, their husbands, Richard Bohm and Terrence Barrett; and four grandchildren.



Ralph S. Marks, TJHS member, died on September 28, 2011, in Houston. He is survived by his wife, Kayala, his son, Tevin A. Marks, and his brother, Myron B. Marks.

**May their memories
be a blessing.**

Galveston Memories

Adele Regan from Galveston is the contributor of the two photos below, which illustrate Jewish Galveston in 1949 and 1971.



Confirmation Class, Congregation Beth Jacob, Galveston, Texas, 1949.

Left to right: Stanley Schreiber, Adele Lippman, Ronnie Moskowitz, Sandra Marus, Julian Bronstein, Dolores Haus, Rabbi Louis Feigen, Mrs. Ethel Feigen, Elayne Rubenstein, Leonard Seibel, Marlene Clark, Marvin Wolk, Lila Kleinman, and Morris Zucker.

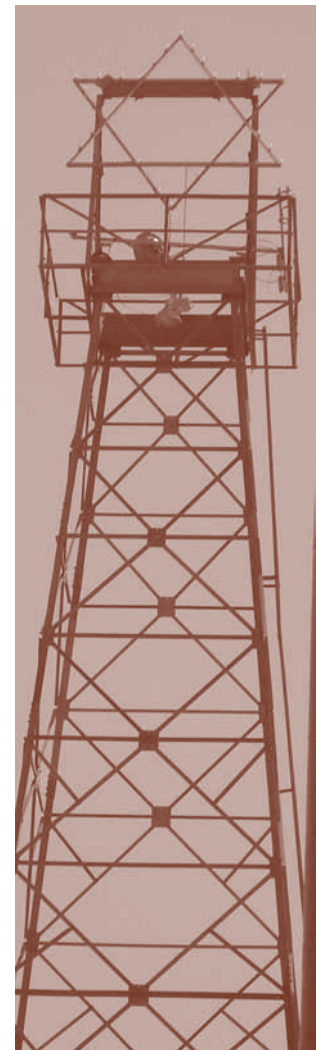


GALVESTON: Zacharias Frankel Lodge No. 242 honors 50 year members at banquet chaired by Ben Nathan, lodge president. Left to right: David White, Houston, past Supreme Lodge VP and Editor of The Jewish Herald Voice presented the 50 year membership citations to: Ike Lippmann, Adrian Levy, Sr., George Moskowitz, J.R. Nierman, Joseph Swiff, L.A. Schornstein and A.L. Farb.

In November 1971, David White presented fifty-year membership citations to Ike Lippman, Adrian Levy, Sr., George Moskowitz, J.R. Nierman, Joseph Swiff, L.A. Schornstein, and A. L. Farb at a banquet of B'nai B'rith Zacharia Frankel Lodge No. 242 in Galveston, TX.


Star of David on Oil Rig near I-20

This is a six-pointed Star of David on top of an oil derrick at mile-marker 587 on Interstate Highway 20, near Kilgore, Texas. The article with information on this Star appeared on page 3 in the July 2011 issue of the TJHS News Magazine.



Edwin Katten, continued from page 12

longed to the American Numismatic Association. He watched the newspaper and listened to the radio for stories about coins. Somehow, he heard that some kids had found a bag of coins in the chimney of an old house that was being demolished in New Orleans. He found the kids and bought eleven 1860-0 mint state silver dollars from them. This hoard had apparently been placed in the chimney just before the Civil War and had then been forgotten.

My father's coins came to me at the time of his death. The receipts from this collection are to be placed in a Charitable Trust that will be used for charitable contributions during my lifetime and my children's lifetimes, and will hopefully continue through future generations. 

Contributions

The following donations have been received by the Texas Jewish Historical Society:


In Memory of Merilee Weiner
From Selma Mantel

In Memory of Frances Kallison
From Bobbi Ravicz

A Gift Membership for Miriam and David Cohen
From Mrs. Ruth Cohen

— Cemetery Book —

The Texas Jewish Burials Book, which was published by the Texas Jewish Historical Society in 1997 is being updated. We have had cooperation from many people and most congregations in Texas, but there are still a few cemetery listings that need to be updated. Also included are the burials that are in non-Jewish cemeteries, so if you know of one that took place after 1997, please contact Charles Hart at 254-778-2676 or cbhart635@sbcglobal.net.

The deadline for updating listings is December 30, 2011. After that date, the updated book will be printed. If you have a question concerning an update, please contact Charles Hart. 

Welcome New Members!

David & Robin (Benjamin) Bock
5930-E Royal Ln.
Dallas, TX 75230
Ph. 214-358-2522
david@dvbock.com

Stacey (Todd) Clark
2510 Custer Pkwy.
Richardson, TX 75080
Ph. 214-783-4103
staceyclark@earthlink.net

David & Miriam (Gamson) Cohen
220 Riverside Blvd., #33-D
New York, NY 10069-1001

Ralph and Gloria Davis
823 Colonial Dr.
Tyler, TX 75701
903-597-3676

Jeff & Debra (Levy) Fritts
6905 Echo Bluff Dr.
Dallas, TX 75248
Ph: 972-239-2313
jeff_debra@sbcglobal.net

Igor & Gina (Campos) Gory
3307 Abingdon Dr.
Richardson, TX 75082
Ph. 972-671-1992
gmgory@gmail.com

Marlou Levine
1508 Wisteria Ave.
McAllen, TX 78504
Day Ph. 956-868-8626
Night Ph. 956-686-8626
mplevine@aol.com

Naomi (Goldwin) Malakoff
4331 Lemac
Houston, TX 77096
Cell: 917-683-0043
naomisuem@gmail.com
www.uosh.org

Frances (Bobbi) (Kallison) Ravicz
51 Bristol Green
San Antonio, TX 78209
Ph. 210-826-3184
Cell 210-373-5951
bobbibooks@att.net

Howard & Linda (Lebowitz) Shapiro
7623 Village Tr.
Dallas, TX 75254
gumshoe2@att.net

Has Your Address Changed?

If you have any changes in your information, please send them to **Marc Wormser, 1601 S. Riviera Ct., Pearland, TX 77581, 832-288-3494, marc.wormser@att.net**

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Would you like to save paper and instead receive this News Magazine by email? You will be able to read the latest TJHS news in your inbox

days before it is scheduled to arrive in your mailbox. Please send to alexa.kirk@gmail.com an email saying that you would like to be on the email list.



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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 be either 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.

Become Active in TJHS

If you are interested in becoming more active in the Texas Jewish Historical Society, then the Board of Directors is the place for you! There are three board meetings and one annual meeting (called the Gathering) per year. A board meeting is also held at the Gathering. These meetings are held in various cities in Texas. Decisions concerning the society are made by the board, and this body makes sure that our mission to preserve the history of the Jews of Texas is accomplished. If you have an interest in Texas Jewish history and want to explore the Jewish history in the communities of your state, come join us—we'd love to have you. Check out our web site www.txjhs.org or let us hear from you at editor@txjhs.org. 

Texas Jewish Historical Society

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Join the Texas Jewish Historical Society today! Or use this form to update your contact information. Complete each section below. Clip out and mail this form with your check made payable to the Texas Jewish Historical Society, P.O. Box 10193, Austin, TX 78766-0193. **Please PRINT.**

☐ **YES!** Count me in! My dues are enclosed. ☐ Please **update** my information

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