

Texas Jewish Historical Society

Preserving Jewish Heritage in Texas
Est. 1980



June, 2013 News Magazine

A Good Match: J.B. Daiches Photo Collection and Fort Worth's Beth-El Congregation Archives

by **Hollace Weiner**, Archivist at Beth-El Congregation Archives, Fort Worth

There were no descendants to claim the photos and playbills that belonged to Jerome "J.B." Daiches, 88, a Dallas builder and lifelong bachelor who left several cartons of dusty, disorganized pictures when he died in December, 2010. After distant cousins and close friends picked out a few snapshots as keepsakes, the executor of the estate, Jimmy Alexander, contacted Fort Worth's Beth-El Congregation Archives. One Sunday afternoon, I met with Jimmy, a longtime TJHS board member, sifted through the musty boxes and broken picture frames stored in his Dallas law office, and surprised him by announcing that the Beth-El Congregation Archives would take practically everything.

The Daiches Collection, rich with images dating from the late 1800s into the 21st century, helps illustrate the story of the Fort Worth Jewish community.

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Louis Daiches Jewelers opened this Fort Worth store in 1940 at 614 Houston Street. Photo by W.D. Smith. Courtesy J.B. Daiches Collection, Beth-El Congregation Archives.

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Message from the President

by Marc Wormser

With this year of my presidency of TJHS coming to a close, I look back on the variety of projects that the society participated in, not just at our quarterly meetings, but also the many activities around the state. We were able to participate in many different parts of Texas due to the diligent efforts of our members. From a presence at the dedication of a Texas historical marker at Congregation Beth Israel in San Angelo to a centennial celebration in the city of Richmond; from a visit to the Max Stool family home in Del Rio to the



participation in the Houston and Dallas Kosher Chili Cook Off, we were there.

Without the support and help of the members of TJHS, the increased participation and exposure of our organization in the local communities could not have materialized. I want to thank any and all who have given of their time and eager involvement to make this past year very successful.

While old projects were completed, new projects were started. The second volume of our burial book *Texas Jewish Burials, Vol. II*, was completed due to the diligent efforts of Charles Hart. The reins of that project have

been turned over to Rusty Milstein, immediate past president, with the charge of continuing to update the list of Jews buried in Texas. This in itself is quite a challenge.

Our new directory was delivered at the end of 2012 with very few pieces of misinformation; this was due to the excellent proofreading of Sally Drayer and Davie Lou Solka. However, thanks to all of our members for being more conscious in reporting changes in emails, addresses, deaths, phone numbers, etc.

Internally, more good things have happened. Our new web site is up and operating. Hopefully, you will like the new design. This is going to be an on-going project with the objectives of increased information about Texas Jews and a less static web site that keeps current with Texas Jewry and affiliated organizations. The web site is an important marketing tool for TJHS.

The acquisition of a portable PA system, along with a camcorder, will allow us to conduct meetings that all can hear and to record those programs and memorable events.

I wish to thank the retiring officers and board members who have helped to make this year a very successful one. I also wish to thank and congratulate the new officers and board mem-

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The Texas Jewish Historical Society June 2013 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 davielou@solka.net 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 and Davie Lou Solka

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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Although J.B. Daiches moved to Dallas as a young man, he was a Fort Worth native, went to Sunday school at Beth-El, and kept a picture of the Confirmation Class of 1936, in which he was a student. Beginning in 1948, Daiches acted on stage with the city's B'nai B'rith Little Theatre, which described him as "one of the more eligible bachelors of the group." J.B.'s father, Louis Daiches, and his cousin, Joe, were among the competing jewelers whose names once adorned downtown storefronts. His mother, Bluma, was the daughter of Jake Weber, another local jeweler.

When Bluma Weber and Louis Daiches, both Polish immigrants, married in 1920, the couple lived with her parents. During a flu epidemic, Bluma took sick and never fully recovered. Although she became pregnant and delivered a healthy son—J.B.—in 1922, the pregnancy so weakened her that she became an invalid who rarely left her bed.

Meanwhile, her husband, Louis, found economic opportunity in the oil-boomtown of Breckenridge. He opened a jewelry store and was among the founders in 1929 of Breckenridge's Temple Beth Israel. Louis led two lives. Work days he stayed in Breckenridge. After closing the store on Saturday afternoons, he commuted to Fort Worth to spend the next day-and-a-half with his ailing wife, Bluma, and their growing son.

Bluma Daiches died in March 1935 at age 32. Her grieving husband did not remain a widower for long. Matchmakers got busy. By year's end, Louis had married Edna Berk, the daughter of an El Dorado, Arkansas, jeweler. (The collection includes photo portraits, on canvas, of Edna's parents, Ben and Rose Berk, on their wedding day in the early 1890s.)

Edna, a piano teacher, had a beautiful soprano voice and became active in the music sections of the Junior Women's Club. The newlyweds built and photographed a house, still standing, in the city's upscale Berkeley neighborhood. They fully expected that J.B., then thirteen years old, would move in and spend his teenage years in a conventional family setting. But that was not to be.

By some accounts, J.B. clashed with his stepmother. By other accounts, the boy's grandmother, Sarah Fred We-



Flying High in early 20th-century Fort Worth, four unidentified young men posed for this staged studio photo, which shows downtown buildings in the foreground. Courtesy, J.B. Daiches Collection, Beth-El Congregation Archives.

ber, threw a crying fit and refused to surrender the youth to his father. Also living in the grandmother's home

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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 news magazine. Write your story, and if you have questions or need help, call our

assistant editor.

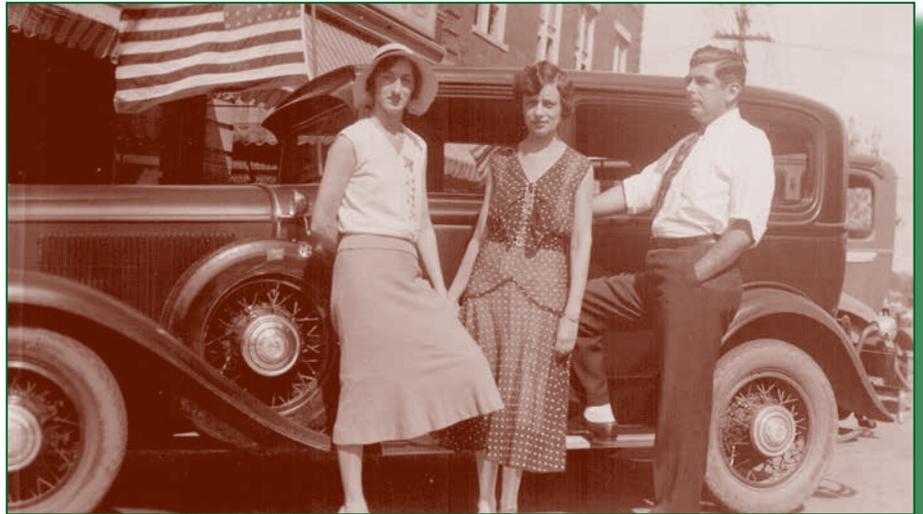
Everyone has a story to tell, long or short. Your history is of interest to members across Texas and the nation! And you will be able to see your family's history in print. It is a wonderful keepsake and a valuable piece of genealogy for fu-

ture generations.

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

were her married daughter, Hannah Weber Sandler, her son-in-law Ike, and their adopted daughter, Eleanor. J.B. and Eleanor were raised like siblings. The boy also grew up close with his grandmother's extended family. He was not as close with his Daiches cousins, whose descendants still reside in Fort Worth. As J.B. grew into adulthood, graduated from Baylor University, and served in the Navy, he and his stepmother became close.

After World War II, Louis and Edna Daiches traveled extensively, snapping pictures in Cuba, Panama, Guatemala and the Caribbean. Travel abroad was just opening up to middle-class Americans, who, judging from photos in the collection, wore hats, orchid corsages, and mink as they embarked on voyages abroad. The collection also includes menus from Grosinger, the Catskills Mountain resort enjoyed by a generation of Jewish vacationers.



Louis Daiches stands alongside his fiancée, Edna Berk, and an unidentified relative next to a new car parked outside the Berk jewelry store in El Dorado, Ark., 1935. Courtesy, J.B. Daiches Collection, Beth-El Congregation Archives.

erhood productions, and, in Dallas County, Theatre Oak Cliff, Richardson Community Theatre, and Theatre Three. Also in the collection are black-and-white studio portraits of children and adults; J.B.'s WWII Navy

the collection arrived in the mail December 2012. It was J.B. Daiches' last will and testament. He proved to be generous to Jewish causes and medical foundations. He left generous amounts to Baylor Health Care System Foundation, the Presbyterian Health-care Foundation, the Parkinson's Disease Foundation, the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association and the Southern Poverty Law Center.

He remembered Jewish organizations, bequeathing large donations to the American Jewish Committee, the Anti-Defamation League, Congregation Ahavath Sholom's Hebrew Cemetery in Fort Worth where his grandparents and several aunts and uncles are buried, the Jewish Federation of Greater Dallas, Dallas's Temple Emanu-El, and Fort Worth's Beth-El Congregation, where his photo collection is on file.

In another serendipitous twist to the story, Beth-El Congregation's board president, Eddie Feld, was J.B. Daiches' godson. As they say in Yiddish, it was "b'shert" that the photographs nobody wanted ended up lovingly organized and filed at the Beth-El Congregation Archives. 



The thermometer reads 90 degrees on a sign promoting Louis Daiches Jewelers at the Fort Worth Cats minor league baseball stadium, ca. 1940s. Courtesy, J.B. Daiches Collection, Beth-El Congregation Archives.

Among other treasures in the Daiches collection are playbills from local theaters where J.B. Daiches performed. Those stages include the Horned Frog Summer Theatre, Fort Worth Theatre Guild, Beth-El Broth-

scrapbook; and professional pictures of Louis Daiches' jewelry store at 614 Houston Street. The latter were taken by W.D. Smith, one of Fort Worth's premier photographers.

The most recent item filed with

The El Paso Kahns

by Pat Lorraine Simons

Blanche Ladabaum and Faye Sheiness were friends in San Antonio in the 1930s. Both were teachers, and Faye thought her brother, Marvin, would like Blanche. She was right! Faye introduced the two, and Marvin and Blanche fell in love and married. Naturally, Blanche wanted to return the favor. She immediately began looking for a husband for her new sister-in-law.

She didn't have long to look. Molly Bierman, a friend from Waco, was dating a German-Jewish immigrant named Rudy Kahn, and Rudy had a good-looking single brother. Blanche promptly called Freddy and asked him if he would like to take out her sister-in-law. Freddy, whose motto was "Freddy's always ready," said sure; but Faye said no. She was afraid to go on blind dates. Blanche, being Blanche, persisted. She suggested that Molly and Rudy double date with Freddy and Faye. Faye would have to agree to that, because she knew Molly. The end of the story is pure Hollywood. Faye and Freddy fell in love and married, and so did Molly and Rudy.

After World War II, the two families settled in El Paso, where they lived and worked within spitting distance of each other for over fifty years. Between them, the two couples had seven children, ten grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

But none of their descendants would be here today if Freddy and Rudy hadn't survived a four-year, death-defying journey from Nazi Germany. The Kahn brothers' story, which also involved fighting Franco in the Spanish Civil War, is the subject



Fay Sheiness Kahn, January, 2012

of a new book, *Brothers on the Run: Fleeing Hitler, Fighting Franco*, by Freddy's oldest daughter, a retired lawyer. The book will be available through Amazon in paperback and as an e-book in late April. The release date will be posted at brotherstherunbook.com.

After finally arriving in Miami on July 4, 1937 (their independence day too!), the Kahn boys traveled to New York, where most family members lived. But when one brother developed health problems and moved to San Antonio for the climate, Freddy and Rudy came to take care of him. Their parents and another brother followed, and they all settled in a home in San Antonio. Hubert died soon afterward, but the rest of the Kahn family remained in San Antonio,

where Freddy worked as an auto mechanic and Rudy ran a small café.

When the US entered World War II, Freddy enlisted in the Army Air Corps, and Rudy joined the Army. During their basic training in San Antonio, they began going to parties for young Jewish soldiers and young Jewish women, who lived in the San Antonio area. It was during this time that Freddy and Rudy met their future wives, Texan Molly Bierman, and Texan (by way of Poland) Faye Sheiness.

In 1943, the Kahn boys again traveled halfway across the world. Rudy ended up back in Europe, fighting his way across France into Berlin. When his unit went home, he stayed another six months to triage Germans seeking post-war reconstruction work

with the US Army. Our army wanted to arrest former SS men, so Rudy took special delight in figuring out who they were, then shocking them with the words, "Ich bin Jude" (I'm a Jew).

During the war, Freddy ended up in Australia, working as an airplane mechanic. He was glad not to see any action. He saw more than enough death and maiming, (including Rudy's and his own), during the Spanish Civil War. But in Australia, Freddy began having serious trouble with his right hand, which he'd already injured twice—in a 1934 work accident and again in 1936, when his plane was shot down in Spain. The Army Air Corps sent him to William Beaumont Hospital in El Paso for a series of surgeries. When the war ended, he

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TJHS Annual Gathering



Photo, top left: David Vogel and Rusty Milstein in the hospitality room.



Photo, top right: Havdalah. Bobbi Wells, Joyce Wormser, Jerry Wells, and Rabbi Laura Sheinkopf.



Photo at right: TJHS members gather outside hotel because of an unexpected fire drill!



TJHS members board the bus with tour guide Keith Rosen and bus driver John for a tour of old Jewish Houston

Houston, Texas, April 19-21, 2013



The Aggies gathered for Muster—Jack Solka, Jan Hart, Joan Katz, Charles Hart, Sally Drayer, Louis Katz, Anita Feigenbaum, Dr. Neil Gurwitz, and Marc Wormser.



Our Saturday morning speakers were Susan Kaufman from the Clayton Genealogical Center, and Jeremy Balkin from Family Tree DNA.



TJHS Officers. Front row: Ruth Nathan, Treasurer; Davie Lou Solka, 3rd Vice President; Vickie Vogel, Parliamentarian; Susan Lewis, Recording Secretary; Sally Drayer, Historian. Back row: David Beer, 2nd Vice President; Samylu Rubin, Corresponding Secretary; Marc Wormser, President.



Joyce Wormser and Jan Hart with Challah from Three Brothers Bakery.

Susan Lewis, Deidra Cizon, and Jayne Nathan at Three Brothers Bakery.



Corpus Christi, Continued

by Vickie Vogel

In our last issue, the history of the Jews of Corpus Christi was recounted. A very reliable source advised me the tales of anti-Semitism were at best overblown and at worst untrue, and the story of Richard King's son-in-law preventing a Jewish burial, though oft repeated, is apocryphal. The dates do not add up. The Jewish burial in question was Jeanette Weil Hirsch, who died in 1873. In 1873, Captain King had no son-in-law. According to King Ranch history on their website, he didn't even meet Robert Justus Kleberg until 1881, and Robert and King's daughter Alice did not marry until 1886.¹

The true story is found on the Texas Historical Marker at the Hebrew Rest Cemetery. A ceremony to unveil the plaque was conducted on December 11, 1983. An account of the ceremony can be found in *Our Golden Years: A History of Temple Beth El 1928-1983*, by TJHS Past President Helen Wilk. The plaque reads:

"This burial ground was established in 1875 to serve the pioneer Jewish settlers of Corpus Christi, 55 years before the formal organization of a Jewish congregation in the area. Earlier burials had been in the nearest Jewish cemetery, located at Gonzales (140 miles north). This land was deeded by Captain Richard King, founder of the noted King Ranch.

President's Message, continued from page 2

bers for their volunteering to serve.

The Annual Gathering in Houston was highly successful, thanks to the work done by the committee, which consisted up of Louis and Joan Katz, Ruth Nathan, Matt Krohn, Jayne Nathan, Joyce Wormser, Claire and Dick Brooks, Marvin Rich, Sonny Gerber, and Bob Gindler.



Rabbi Warren G. Stone and President Ed Birnberg at the dedication ceremony of Hebrew Rest Cemetery in Corpus Christi on December 11, 1983.

David Hirsch² and Emmanuel Morris, who acted as trustees for the Hebrew Benevolent Association, organized the cemetery. Both are buried here.

"The earliest marked grave is that of Helena Henry, who died in 1878, the infant daughter of Paul and Frederika Henry. Also buried at this site are all the members of the Richman Family, victims of a destructive 1919 Hurricane.

"Prominent early residents of

The presentations by Susan Kaufman of the Clayton Genealogical Research Center and Jeremy Balkin on Jewish DNA research gave us a lot of ideas and help regarding our heritage and origins. The bus tour of old Jewish neighborhoods conducted by Keith Rosen was historically interesting. And the Saturday evening entertainment

Corpus Christi interred here include grocer Julius Henry,³ who served as City Alderman and Postmaster; Business and Civic leaders Charles and Sarah H. Weil; Civil War Veteran and merchant M. Lichtenstein; and Simon Gugenheim, a successful area businessman and philanthropist.

"In 1961 Temple Beth El assumed control of the Cemetery. Still in use, it reflects the proud heritage of the area's Jewish community."⁴

The Beth El history also gives a special word of praise to A. Albert Lichtenstein, Sr., for his farsightedness in the establishment of the Perpetual Care Trust for maintenance of the cemetery. Ed Birnberg, as chair of the cemetery committee in 1980, began the process for having an historical marker placed on the site.

In 1953, one and a half acres were purchased in Seaside Memorial Park, and the Temple Beth El Section was formally dedicated in 1954. It is still in use.

Endnotes

¹ http://www.king-ranch.com/end_of_the_war.html

² David Hirsch's photograph was in "Jewish Pioneers in Corpus Christi," TJHS News Magazine, February, 2013, p. 18

³ Julius Henry's photograph appeared in the same article, p. 12

⁴ Nueces County Historical Commission, designated State Historic Landmark by the Texas Historical Commission, 1983. 

of music and song provided by Cantor Mutlu and his wife Nina Faia was fantastic.

As we go forward, it is with the hope and wish that our membership will continue to grow and that the energy and excitement of the coming year will be better than the last. Thank you. 

A Field Man for the United Jewish Appeal in Texas

by Elliot Zolin

From the fall of 1969 through the spring of 1973, I was a “field man” or “campaign representative” for the United Jewish Appeal National to smaller, non-federated communities in Texas. There were a few communities in Oklahoma and a few in Louisiana on the list, but the bulk of the assignment was in Texas. While the major cities—Dallas, El Paso, Fort Worth, Houston, and San Antonio—had federation offices with professional staffs, my responsibility was to work with volunteers and raise money on behalf of the UJA in all the remaining cities and towns—Beaumont, Big Spring, Borger, Breckenridge, Eagle Pass, McAllen, Midland-Odessa, Rosenberg, San Angelo, Wharton, and Wichita Falls. Those were “spring campaigns.”

And in the fall it was Abilene, Amarillo, Brownsville, Harlingen, Laredo, Lockhart, Lubbock, Seguin, Victoria, and Waco.

But those were the communities that the UJA told me about; those that they handed me files on—files that I transported in a metal cabinet that accompanied me in the trunk of my Plymouth. The places that the “office” didn’t know about were the really tiny towns—Del Rio, Danevang, Pampa, Bay City, Edna, El Campo, Coleman, Anson, Sweetwater, Crane, and Alpine. There were Jewish families in all of them.

I got to know people and their families. When I drove to Alpine to meet Paul Forchheimer, he told me that he gave in Tyler. And he did. He was a man that I liked, a man very respected in his community, and basi-



cally the only Jew in town. He was the only Jew for miles and miles, in fact—a big responsibility. It was the same for the Winklers in Fort Stockton. And the same for Sam Anisman in Pampa, which is way out in the Panhandle. I respected these men, living their lives so far away from other Jews, trying to maintain their sense of religion and Jewishness in places without any Jewish people.

I learned about relationships. I grew to understand how the University of Texas at Austin was the catalyst in holding the Jewish community together across the state. Guys came from the Valley and guys came from San Antonio and they met in Austin and remained friends for life. That’s how my friend Selig Carr met his friend Charlie Feldman. And that’s how my friend Charlie Sugerman met Harold Kleinman. And that’s how

couples met and married. That’s how Selig Carr met Maxine Colins from Waco and how Charlie Sugerman met Sondra Weiss from Wichita Falls—although Sondra had also lived in Clovis, New Mexico. Her father Sid had been with Levine’s.

All of the Jews in Texas seemed to know each other. Everyone was somehow related. Sam Lack lived in McAllen and his brother Dave lived in Victoria and their brother Abe lived in Houston. The Luskey men were in Lubbock and Amarillo and Fort Worth and their sister was in Georgetown. Phil Smith was in Waco while his brother Milton was in Austin. Harry Shapiro lived in San Saba and his brother Morris was in Austin. Harry was a big TCU supporter; his son had played some football at TCU and Harry traveled with me to Lubbock to help raise some money from a reluctant contributor in Lubbock whose son had also played at TCU.

I remember making kaddish minyans in Wharton and marveling how fellows drove twenty-five miles north from Bay City and fifteen miles east from El Campo to make certain that there would be a minyan in Wharton. How far one place was from another meant little in Texas. And in West Texas, it meant even less! Folks in Borger drove their kids to Amarillo for Sunday school, which was just about fifty miles—a drop in the bucket. It took almost forty minutes. My friend Herb Goodman in Dallas tells me that he can be stuck on the Tollway for longer that

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Encyclopedia of Texas Jewish Communities

The Texas Jewish Historical Society awarded a grant to the Institute of Southern Jewish Life to research and publish the histories of Jews in Texas towns. These histories are available on the Institute's website and are called "Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities." We will adapt one of these histories in each issue of our News Magazine. Thanks to Dr. Stuart Rockoff, director of the History Department, for permission to do so. To see other towns, go to the Institute of Southern Jewish Life website and click on "Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities."

Corsicana, Texas

By most accounts, the first Jews arrived in Corsicana in 1871 along with the railroad. Most of these early settlers engaged in commercial trade, and a handful set down roots that would nurture the Jewish community in Corsicana for over a century.

Among the first Jews in Corsicana were Prussian-born Alexander and Bertha Fox, who lived in Louisiana before moving to Texas after the Civil War. The Fox family moved to Corsicana in the 1870s, opening a dry goods store. Their children later joined them in the family business and the store remained open well into the 20th century. Alexander's brother (or cousin) Simon Fox followed his family to Corsicana. He later married Lena Solomon, who had lived with Alexander and Bertha as a 16-year old boarder in 1880. Simon started out as a saloon



Beaton Street in Corsicana. Photo courtesy of the Navarro County Historical Society.

keeper, but later owned a dry goods business. Alexander lived in Corsicana until his death in 1922. Descendants of Alexander and Bertha lived in Corsicana as late as 1970.

Brothers Solomon and Ruben Friedman also moved to Corsicana in the 1870s. Simon had left Poland in 1866, while his younger brother came over six years later. The two brothers opened a dry goods business and ran it for several decades. They brought other family members to town, including their brother, Alexander, who owned a saloon and

of the city's leading businessmen, serving as the president of one of the local banks.

A B'nai B'rith Lodge was formed, and in 1875, land was purchased for a cemetery with the first burial occurring two years later. The Ladies Hebrew Cemetery Association raised money to maintain the burial ground. By 1891, the group had forty-two members, all of whom were married women.

Perhaps the most notable and mysterious burial in the Corsicana

later, a cigar stand.

Louis Cerf, a French immigrant, also settled in Corsicana and opened a retail and wholesale grocery business. His son, I.N. Cerf, joined his father in the grocery business, and later became one

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Jewish cemetery was a traveling entertainer who came to town in 1884. His act consisted of walking a tight rope while carrying a heavy iron stove on his back. While he was performing the stunt in Corsicana, he fell and was crushed by the stove. As he lay dying, he told onlookers that he was Jewish and asked for a rabbi to pray with him in his last moments. Since there was no rabbi in Corsicana at the time, one of the local Jewish merchants came to his side and prayed with him before he passed away. The small Jewish community felt strongly that this stranger should be buried in their cemetery, although they did not know his name. To this day, there is a gravestone in the Corsicana Jewish cemetery that reads "Rope Walker".

The same sense of community which impelled Corsicana Jews to give this stranger a Jewish burial also led them to start praying together. By 1890, Jews were meeting together for the High Holidays, yet they had not formed a congregation. In 1893, the community hired a man from New York to be a teacher, shochet (kosher butcher), and service leader, but his tenure did not last long.

In 1894, oil was discovered in Corsicana, and many people came to seek their fortune. In 1923, a larger discovery occurred at the



McDaniel's Drug Store in Corsicana. Photo courtesy of the Navarro County Historical Society.

nearby Powell Oil Field, and Corsicana was transformed from a cotton trading town to a major oil industrial center.

This new economic vitality attracted more Jewish immigrants and by the end of 1898, the city had two different Jewish congregations. Jews began to meet together regularly for Sabbath services in a room above the Freedman Dry Goods Store. Reform-minded members of the group broke away in 1898 and established Temple Beth-El, while the traditionalist maintained Orthodox services above the Freedman store. Encouraged by the Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Society and its President, Carrie Freedman, Temple Beth-El quickly built a synagogue, and hired a full time Rabbi, Julius Magil.

In 1900, Temple Beth-El dedicated Corsicana's first Jewish house of worship, a striking Moroccan style building with twin onion domes on South 15th Street. In a large public ceremony, which at-

tracted both the Jewish and gentile community, Rabbi Magil dedicated the building with several local Christian ministers taking part. At the end of the dedication, Rabbi Magil called Carrie Freedman to the front and said, "It was you who built this temple. Had it not been for your untiring efforts, there would have been no Jewish place of worship here now".

During the oil boom, Corsicana was a rough frontier town. By 1900, it had thirty-five saloons, which concerned many local citizens. After a public uproar, the city passed an alcohol prohibition law which had a significant impact on the city's Jews. Many of them owned saloons or liquor businesses. Some chose to leave Corsicana, while others, like Simon Fox and Alexander Freedman, went into other retail enterprises.

The Orthodox Jews of Corsicana moved their services to the second floor of the Odd Fellow building, and later to the American Legion Hall. In 1915, the group was officially chartered as Agudas Achim. They soon built a small brick synagogue on North 12th Street, which was dedicated in 1917. A. Daw was the congregation's rabbi at the time, leading the services in Hebrew and giving sermons in Yiddish. In its early years, Agudas Achim was

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From Our Archives

Scaling the Levitansky Tree

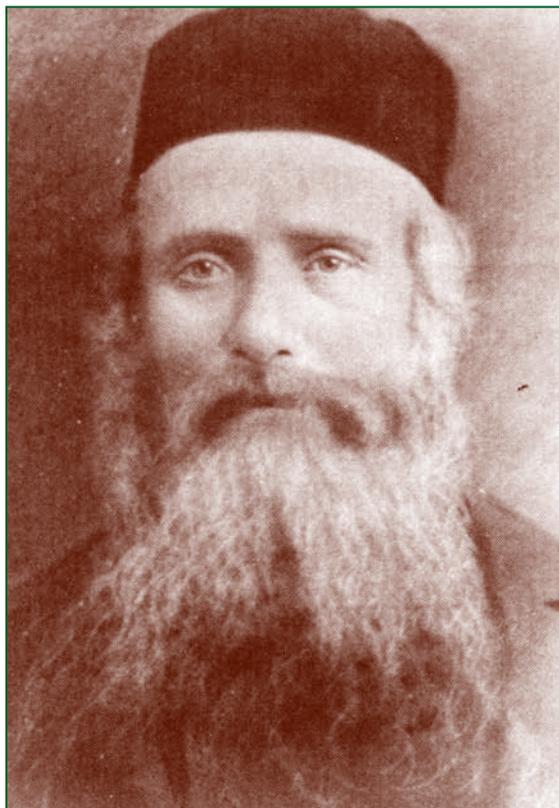
by Vickie Vogel

All photos courtesy of Texas A&M University Press, www.tamupress.com, from *Pioneer Jewish Texans*, Natalie Ornish, 2011.

The Levitansky (Lewitansky) family tree includes branches in Texas Jewish history, but some branches were shortened to Levin, Levine and possibly even Levene. Origins can be traced back to 1492 in Lithuania, where this family of the tribe of Levi fled following the expulsion from Spain.¹ Gershon Levitansky was born in 1775 and married Heni (last name unknown).² They had a son, Schlaime Itzhock (Schlomo Itzhak), in 1794 in Krasnopol, Poland. Schlaime married Channa Londy, with whom he had two daughters (who died in infancy) and twelve sons.³

Schlaime and Channa both died in Lithuania, but between 1860 and 1890, their sons came to America - to Massachusetts, Illinois, New York, California and elsewhere - with one son, Moshe, responsible for the family branch in Texas.

Moshe Levitansky was born in 1825. In 1845, he married Minuche (Minnie) Onicko.⁴ In 1847, their first son was born in Suwalki, Avrum Schlaime Levine. Two more sons followed, Yonkel in 1851 and Aaron in 1861. Moshe came to the United States around the time of the Civil War, but he did not stay long. Trained for the rabbinate, Moshe did not find America traditional or "kosher" enough for him. Most of his children, however, settled in Texas. Moshe died in 1905 in his home town of Suwalki.⁵



Moshe Levitansky

Avrum Schlaime, Moshe's first-born son, married Leine Reishe in 1868 in Lithuania. After Leine died, Avrum lived in Brenham, Texas with his daughter Minnie and son Joseph until his death in 1936. He is buried in Bnai Abraham Cemetery in Brenham.⁶

Moshe's second son, Yonkel, was also born in Suwalki. He married Esther Zipporah Postavelski in 1872. This branch of the family took the name of Levin. Some of their sons ended up in New Orleans;⁷ Seattle; Mercer Island, Washington; and Indiana. Daughter Chasche Levitansky married Louis

Fink of Houston and Beaumont. One of Chasche's sons, Gus, lived in Brenham.

Moshe's third son, Aaron Chaim was born in 1861 in Krasnipoli, Lithuania. He came to America when he was 18 or 19 years old. Aaron married Sarah Carol Fink (or Funk) in 1891 in Brenham, and all their children were born there. He died in Houston in 1943, but was buried in Brenham. He and Sarah had many children, who lived in Sealy, Houston, Waco, Fort Worth, and Tahoka as well as San Francisco and Long Island.

Moshe's grandson Joseph, the son of Avrum Schlaime, was born in Poland in 1874. He arrived in Texas in 1892 and married Mary Fink in 1895 in Brenham. Joseph and Mary had nine children.⁸ They celebrated their Golden Anniversary in 1945. He died in Brenham in 1954.⁹

Another branch of the family descended from Schlaime Itzhock, the patriarch born in 1794, also landed in Texas. Saul Edgar Levine married Perla Rubinstein of San Antonio. Saul graduated in 1936 from Iowa State College with a BS in Engineering. He became head of the Mathematics Department at Robert E. Lee High School in San Antonio. During World War II, he served as captain of an engineering corps that worked on the Burma Road. His brothers, Norman and Melvin also served in the military,

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as well as their father, Lt. Col. Max Levine. Max was on leave from the Iowa State Bacteriology Department and stationed at Ft. Sam Houston.

Another brother, Dr. B. Eugene Levine was a heart specialist in California.¹⁰

Schlaime Itzhock and Channa's son Yonkel was born in 1827 in Suwalki (not to be confused with Moshe's son Yonkel). Known by the nickname "Yonkeley Mahzick" (Yonkel the Mischief), he crossed the ocean at the age of 16 as a stow-away, but was sent home. He crossed the Atlantic almost a dozen times.

Establishing himself in business in Marshall, Jefferson and Brenham, as well as Shreveport, Louisiana, he covered his territory from Fort Worth to Galveston in horse- or oxen-drawn covered wagons, a traveling store with shelves and showcases.

In 1853, Yonkel married Ettel Dantey and they had five children.¹¹ Ettel was afraid to cross the Atlantic, so Yonkel traveled back and forth. She worked up her courage to make the trip in the 1890's, only to find that Yonkel had sailed for Suwalki. She stayed for about a year, visiting family, before returning to Suwalki. She died there a few years later.

Colorful stories abound of Yonkel the Mischief. When he arrived in the United States just before the end of the Civil War, he learned he could earn \$300 by joining the Union Army as a replacement for someone else, a not uncommon practice in those days on both sides. When the war ended, Yonkel was



Avrum Schlaime Levine in Brenham, Texas.

granted citizenship. Yonkel carried with him medals he said he had won in the war. Relatives in the North believed he fought for the Union army. Genealogist Etta Levin, however, said he never lived in the North, and she believed he fought for the Confederacy.¹²

Civil War Historian Gary Whitfield believes Yonkel fought for neither side. As he remembers hearing the story, Yonkel was to be drafted into a New York regiment. When he saw that each draftee received a \$300 enlistment fee, he signed up. As he waited to get his uniform, he asked a man to save his place in line so he could go relieve himself. Yonkel rounded the corner and headed to Chicago! To his relatives there, he made the stunning announcement that he was going to Texas. With his recruit's money, he bought goods which he sold from Indianola to Denton, making a

handsome profit.

When the war ended, Yonkel returned to Europe.¹³ The Chicago relatives recalled that on his later visits, he was always dressed as a cowboy, although he never actually became one.

On one of Yonkel's return trips to America, he arrived at Ellis Island wearing the long coat and sidelocks of Eastern European Jews - with cowboy boots. The story goes that an official jostled him, which caused Yonkel to strike him while letting loose a torrent of curses in the "most curious Russian-Texas drawl." If he had not shown that he was a citizen who had fought

in the Civil War, he would have been deported for his actions.

In 1873, Yonkel's son Sam arrived in the United States, planning to join his father in Shreveport. When the boat docked in Baton Rouge, however, he was encouraged to go to Jefferson across the river, since there was a yellow fever epidemic in Shreveport. He rejoined his father later, and they were in business together in Marshall, Dallas, and Brenham. Sam's wife Zellica joined him in Dallas with their son David, born in Europe. When the second son, Joseph, was two months old, Zellica died of

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led by unordained “reverends” who would lead services, teach Hebrew to the children and oversee the koshering of meat in town. One local butcher shop, owned by a non-Jew, would slaughter and sell kosher beef in addition to its regular offerings, while the reverend would visit members’ homes and slaughter chickens for them. Morris Liebson served in this capacity from 1927 to 1935.

By 1919, approximately 200 Jews lived in Corsicana, divided into two active congregations. Agudas Achim had twenty-one families and Beth-El had twenty-six. Both congregations had buildings and full time spiritual leaders. With the oil boom in 1923, additional Jewish families moved to Corsicana and by 1937, there were 360 Jews living in the city.

Temple Beth-El struggled to maintain its building and pay a full time Rabbi and often went without rabbinic leadership. There were a series of short term Rabbis, with none staying more than four years. Rabbis from Dallas or Waco would come to lead services twice a month.

Meanwhile, Agudas Achim outgrew its first building and had moved to a former church it had purchased in 1932. In 1935, Rabbi Harry Shapiro was hired and he brought a new vitality to the congregation. Born in what was then Palestine, Rabbi Shapiro had studied at Rabbi Kook’s famous Yeshiva in Jerusalem and had rabbinic training in the United States. Soon after his arrival, Rabbi Shapiro organized a Young Judea chapter and the Corsican Jewish Federation. In 1957, the congregation built a new synagogue building on North 19th Street. Rab-

bi Shapiro served Agudas Achim almost thirty years, retiring in 1964.

Members of Agudas Achim were active Zionists. Harry Rothkopf was the congregation’s first and longtime president and served as head of the Corsicana Zionist District. He also led fundraising efforts for the Jewish National Fund. A Hadassah chapter was organized by the women of the congregation in addition to founding the religious school. Marie Wolens was the longtime president of the Ladies Auxiliary, which worked to support the synagogue, in spite of the women being excluded from involvement in religious services.

Jews in Corsicana enjoyed tremendous acceptance, in spite of the Ku Klux Klan’s strong influence. The local Klan chapter had 900 members and held several public rallies. The endorsed particular business as “100% American” which did not include those owned by Jews. In spite of this, the many Jewish owned businesses were not significantly affected, since most customers shopped based on price and quality, not the religion of the store’s owner. By the latter part of the 1920s, the Klan had lost most of its influence.

Sidney Marks, who was born in Corsicana to Russian immigrant parents, joined his father’s dry goods business by 1910 and built it into one of Corsicana’s leading department stores. Later he opened a successful advertising agency. Marks was an active member of Temple Beth-El and led services when there was not a rabbi. He served many years as president of the congregation. He was also active in the general community and was a founding board member of

the Drane Foundation, which aided citizens of Navarro County. In 1963, he was selected as man of the Year by the Chamber of Commerce.

Kalman Wolens left Russia in 1893, settling in Chicago. During the first decade of the 20th century, he moved his family to Corsicana, where he started peddling eyeglasses on the street. After borrowing money from a member of the local Jewish community, he opened a small clothing store. After achieving some success in the business, Wolens bought a small parcel of land outside of town in 1914. Oil was discovered on his land in 1923, and Kalman Wolens suddenly was rich. He then expanded his K. Wolens stores to towns across the state. At its peak, the K. Wolens chain had sixty-three locations. Many Jews came to Corsicana to work for the business, which finally closed in the 1990s.

The Wolens family was very philanthropic, establishing a foundation to support various civic projects. For his beneficial impact on Corsicana, Kalman Wolens was named Man of the Year by the Chamber of Commerce. The Wolens family was also strongly committed to their Judaism. He and his wife, Ida, observed the dietary laws and were major financial supports of Agudas Achim.

While Corsicana’s economy suffered during the Great Depression, the local oil industry remained relatively strong. Between increased industrial production and a military pilot training base during World War II, Corsicana became one of the state’s most prosperous cities per capita in Texas during the 1950s.

Jewish merchants benefited

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Corsicana, Texas, continued from page 14

from this general prosperity. P. Samuels Men's Clothiers, which had been founded in 1897 by Philip Samuels, remained in operation until it closed in 1990. Philip's son, Irvin Samuels, ran the business for many decades. In addition to dry goods and clothing stores, Jews in Corsicana ran grocery, hardware, and jewelry stores. They were also very involved in the theater business. In 1911, M.I. Levine had several theaters—which included The Cozy, The Ideal and The Starlight.

In 1956, Ernest Joseph, who had fled Nazi Germany with his parents, came to Corsicana to work for K. Wolens. When Rabbi Shapiro

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Save the Date

June 7-9, 2013

Summer Meeting
Corsicana, Texas

August 4-5, 2013

Jewish Genealogical
Society of Greater
Boston Annual
Conference in Boston.
For further information,
visit www.iajgs.2013.org.

October 4-6, 2013

Fall Meeting
in Longview, Texas

January 10-12, 2014

Winter Meeting
in Calvert, Texas

Mazel Tov

to the following Texas Jewish Historical Society Members

Betty and Dr. Neil Gurwitz, on the Bar Mitzvah of their grandson, Ethan Gurwitz, at Temple Beth El in San Antonio on March 16, 2013. Ethan is the son of Elliott and Emily Gurwitz and the brother of Zoe Gurwitz.

Samylu Rubin, on the celebration of her 80th birthday with a party on March 15, 2013 at her son's home in Plano.

Babette Samuels, on the celebration of her 85th birthday with a party on March 14, 2013 at the Warehouse Living Arts Center in Corsicana.

Jack Solka, on his recent appointment as Regional Director for Texas and New Mexico for Volunteers for Israel

*Please send information for this column to
Davie Lou Solka at davielou@solka.net.*

El Paso Kahns, continued from page 5

was honorably discharged and given a short-term job as a translator for Werner von Braun.

Freddy met a number of German rocket scientists, who were working near El Paso after the war. At the time, he had no idea how much these scientists had enhanced the German war effort. Later, he said he would never have translated for them if he'd know what they had done for Hitler.

Freddy liked the climate in El Paso, and when his translating job ended, he decided to stay there. Faye and their two children—a toddler and an infant—left San Antonio and joined him in El Paso, where Freddy began repairing cars and appliances. He worked hard and soon opened a store in Five Points, called Guarantee Appliance Center. Always on the lookout to better his lot, Freddy heard of an opportunity to distribute Necchi and Elna sewing machines in the Southwest. He grabbed that job, bought a small plane, and began setting up sewing machine stores all over the Southwest.

In 1954, Rudy decided to join Freddy in El Paso. He, his wife, and

their children bought a house near Freddy and Faye's, and Rudy opened a women's clothing outlet store across the street from Freddy's business.

Over the many years that followed, the Kahn families became prominent in the small El Paso Jewish community. They were active in the B'nai Zion Synagogue and many El Paso organizations.

Blanche, Marvin, Freddy, Rudy, and Molly have all passed away years ago. But their children, who grew up together, remain friends to this day, although most live in other places now. Even so, the Texas connection abides. Freddy and Faye's daughter, Marian Kahn Daross, lives in El Paso with her husband. And so does Faye Sheiness Kahn, who moved from Poland to Texas in 1929, married Freddy Kahn, raised four children, presided at one time or another over every El Paso Jewish women's club, and spearheaded the El Paso drive to free Soviet Jewry.

Faye turned 97 years old on April 18, 2013. 

A Very Small World

by Edward A. Stone

When I was a freshman at the University of Texas in 1959, I met Jan Siegel, a friend of my wife Barbara, from Dublin, Texas. A few years later, Jan married a man from Houston named Charles Hart, and they moved to Houston. When Barbara and I were living in Houston in the early 60s we saw the Harts occasionally and Barbara and Jan stayed in touch during the seven years that we lived outside of Texas.

When we returned to Dallas, we saw Jan and Charles occasionally—both because of Barbara and Jan’s friendship and because, after Jan’s parents moved to Dallas, her parents became friends with Barbara’s parents. By then, Jan and Charles were living in Temple.

A few years ago, the four of us were having lunch in Dallas. I knew that Jan and Charles had been very

active in the Texas Jewish Historical Society and were interested in family histories. I also knew that Charles and I were both from Houston, but we did not know each other there; Charles is several years older than I. So, I asked him who his Houston relatives are. He said that he has a cousin about my age and mentioned her name.

I knew who she was, but immediately asked who her father was. Charles told me that her father was Gerry Morgenstern. That was a “wow” moment.

To digress, in early 1934, my father was traveling in Texas (presumably on business) and was going to be in Dallas. When he told his mother that he was going to be in Texas, she was insistent that he contact one of her closest friends—a woman who had been in her wedding in New York in 1903 and subsequently married and

moved to Houston. My father called the woman in Houston and she was insistent that rather than spend the weekend alone in Dallas, he should go to Houston. She had a son his age and there was a big party that weekend in Houston that my father could attend with her son.

Well, my grandmother’s friend’s son was Gerry Morgenstern. And the party was being given by my mother, Billie Goldberg. My folks met at the party and were married six months later—my father became a Texan and called Texas home for the rest of his life.

The coincidence that the grandmother of a friend of mine would have been in my grandmother’s wedding over 100 years before and would have been responsible for my father coming to Houston where he met my mother—that is a very small world! 🇺🇸

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

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Calvert Texas

by Vickie Vogel

“Calvert is a town of two faces: For passers-by on the highway there is the face of the average town. One sees the row of business buildings and a metals foundry. For home folk, there is another face. Across the railway tracks and safely screened from traffic is a town of beautiful homes filled with priceless antiques; a town where pride of ancestry is seen in delicate silverware and crystal, stately family portraits, and heirlooms dating to the days of the Texas Republic and earlier.”

Explore Calvert at the Winter Meeting of the Texas Jewish Historical Society, January 10-12, 2014. We will stay at three charming Victorian bed and breakfasts, and examine the rich Jewish history of Calvert, which in bygone days was one of the biggest towns in Texas, and is now a serene and quiet haven for 1,200.

If you are a descendent of the Calvert Jewish community, or if you know someone who is, please contact Barbara Rosenberg right away.

Watch for the registration form in a future news magazine. 🇺🇸



The Hammond House in Calvert, Texas, photo from the early 1900s. The house was used as a jail, a hotel, and a family house.

typhoid fever.

Several years later, he married Channa Freda Barkofsky,¹⁴ the daughter of Meta, his father Yonkel's sister. Sam and Channa had met when she was eleven years old and they were both in Hamburg, preparing to sail to America.

Meta was born in 1837 in Suwalski. She married Jacob Laib Barkofsky in 1855. This branch of the family took the name Levine. Meta and Jacob spent several years in Sweden before coming to America.

Jacob bought a lottery ticket and won a large sum of money, but he lost most of it in Sweden or later in Boston. The family in Texas urged Jacob to come here, which he did, sending for Meta and the children. Although they only stayed four years before returning to Boston, their daughter remained in Dallas when she married her cousin Sam.

Yonkel remarried after Ettel's death, remaining in Suwalki until 1912 when he returned to America to visit children and grandchildren before heading to Krasini-Poli. Unable to contact him during World War I, his children learned through the Red Cross that the Germans had taken the town and all the old people were sent to Suwalki. Yonkel died there in 1919. A death certificate was eventually sent to his family. None of Yonkel's descendants settled in Texas.

When families recycle given names, it can be quite confusing for researchers with multiple Yonkels and Shlaimes, especially with variant spellings of the family name.



Meta Levitansky

Whether going by Levin or Levine or Lewitansky, it is certain that the Levitansky family, in all their generations, left their mark on Texas Jewish history.

Endnotes

¹ Box 3A165, Texas Jewish Historical Society Collection, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin. Unless otherwise stated, all information comes from this box, which includes some 100 pages of genealogical records of the Levitansky family, largely compiled by Etta L. (Mrs. Jack) Levin in 1960.

² <http://wc.rootsweb.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=GET&db=:2686525&id=I550534167>

³ <http://www.geni.com/people/Schlomo-Lewitanski/6000000013999963036>

⁴ Family lore says Moshe had four wives: Minuche who bore the children, Rifka who was the second wife, and two others whose names are unknown. <http://wc.rootsweb.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=GET&db=:2686525&id=I550209157>

<http://www.geni.com/people/Moshe-Levitansky/6000000002813496295>

⁵ <http://www.geni.com/people/Moshe-Levitansky/6000000002813496295>

⁶ They had a second son, Ike.

⁷ Their son Abraham Louis Levin was a renowned Louisiana physician and inventor of the Levin Tube, still widely used for duodenal drainage after surgery. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham_Louis_Levin His cousin, Samuel A. Levine, was a distinguished cardiologist in Boston. The Levine's sign, the Levine scale and Lown-Ganong-Levine syndrome are named for him. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samuel_A._Levine

⁸ Daughter Rosa married Sam Toubin. They owned/operated a dry-goods store in Brenham, as well as stores in La Grange and elsewhere. Their son Leon still lives in Brenham and, with his wife Mimi, looks after the historic synagogue there. Rosa died in 1989. Joseph and Mary's other children were Louis (married Lillian Bishkin), Maurice (married Rose Sachnowitz), Gus (married Sylvia Susnitsky), Florence (married Sam Hyman), Frank (married Betty Tabakin), Ruth (married Arthur Rosenblum, M.D.), Ethel (married Bernard Slipakoff), and Minnie (married Hyman Lebman).

⁹ <http://www.geni.com/people/Joseph-Levin/6000000002813496253>

¹⁰ http://www.ameshistoricalsociety.org/vets/ww2_vets_1/levine_saul_edgar.htm

¹¹ <http://www.geni.com/people/Yankel-Levitansky/6000000002813575427>

¹² Natalie Ornish, *Pioneer Jewish Texans*, Texas A & M University Press, 2011, p. 311

¹³ Gary Whitfield email to author, March 6, 2013.

¹⁴ Born 1861, died 1943. <http://www.geni.com/people/Channa-Levine/6000000003882147987>. Sam died in Chicago in 1938. 

that. Herb's grandfather was Sam Perl from Brownsville, Texas. Sam headed Brownsville's UJA campaign several times.

I was welcomed into homes everywhere. I ate dinner with families and babysat the little ones. I helped some of the teenagers with a bit of Hebrew and I was introduced to eligible daughters. None of the introductions "took," but did, on occasion, ... possibly ... result in a higher level of giving.

It was a big responsibility to represent Israel in those days. The world was much smaller. So many fewer Jews had visited Israel. People felt a visceral need to connect with the Jewish state. They wanted to help absorb new immigrants, care for our cousins who had somehow managed to survive World War II's horrors, help create the infrastructure of a new nation, and support Israel's efforts to withstand hostile neighbors on all sides.

By giving to the United Jewish Appeal, Jews in the small towns of Texas became one with their brethren in the larger communities throughout the state, across the country, and around the world. I gave them that opportunity and when we walked the downtowns of these smaller communities, going into the junior department stores, the tot-to-teen stores, the men's wear stores, and the jewelry stores, we went as a team—me representing the State of Israel and the chairman representing his Jewish community. The chairman always introduced me to one of the higher-ups at the bank or to the president of the local Chamber of Commerce; these Jewish merchants were proud to stand with Israel.

It was a much easier time than today to represent the state of Israel. The victory in the Six Day War had just taken place. The memory

of the Holocaust was still an open wound—particularly in border communities such as Laredo, McAllen, and Brownsville, where many people had settled after the war. Israel was still a young country. Golda Meir was Prime Minister. Everyone loved Golda! She was "the Meir who made Milwaukee famous." Many of Israel's present controversies were unknown at the time.

And my job was to make sure that each community held its campaign. It was my job to discipline a community. A UJA campaign on behalf of the Jewish Agency's activities in Israel and on behalf of the Joint Distribution Committee's programs throughout the world had to be held every year, regardless of what was happening in the local economy and regardless of a building campaign at the local synagogue. You raised more, you raised less. But a campaign needed to be held and the issue of the Jewish people had to be kept central.

There are other people whom I need to mention. My dear friend Albert Granoff ran the UJA campaign in Laredo from the inception of the UJA in 1939 through his passing in 1973—except for one year when he was ill. He was a wonderful man and I was honored to be a pallbearer at his funeral in June, 1973.

My friend Larry Wadler in Wharton, his lovely wife Geri, his boys Paul and Michael, and his daughter Donna were always so welcoming and warm. Larry ran the campaign every year and helped maintain Shearith Israel Congregation until its time ran out. They even let Paul and Michael take the bus to Houston and spend the night at my home-away-from-home, the Chief Motel. The boys and I spent the following day at Astroworld.

Mitchell Rasansky in Dallas, his wife Rita, and their boys Rick, Jeff,

and Jerry were very active in everything Jewish. Mitchell would make a phone call or hop in my car and visit anywhere in the state to try to raise some money for the UJA. And he was good at it. And he has remained my friend for the almost forty years since I left Texas.

I spent four years and drove probably 120,000 miles. I averaged about 30,000 miles per year. I met many warm, wonderful people, and I would like to believe that I did some good for our Jewish people.

But by meeting so many terrific people and seeing so many great places, I know I did a lot of good for myself. My wife Ronnie and son Ari still travel to Texas to explore and see our friends. Ari has inherited my love for Texas. On occasion, he dons his cowboy hat and boots and holds up his pants with a wide, big-buckled belt. He likes rodeos. A few years back we went to a rodeo in Navasota and he's been talking about it ever since. And at the dance hall in Gruene, he played pool with a rancher from New Braunfels and had his first taste of Shiner Bock, all the time enjoying a young gal singing country-western and backed by a solitary fiddler adding the tears and pathos.

On a soft June evening along the Guadalupe, what could be better?

When our friends from Texas come to visit, the Lone Star flag always graces our front porch in Roslyn Heights, New York.

I thank all of the very fine, sweet, welcoming yidden I met, from one end of Texas to the other, from Texarkana to Alpine and from Amarillo to Brownsville, during those four memorable years, August 1969 through July of 1973.

Elliot Zolin, 66 Jefferson Avenue, Roslyn Heights, New York 11577, 516-551-8987, ez66jeff@aol.com.



retired from Agudas Achim in 1964, Joseph would lead services and teach Hebrew school for the congregation. Impressed with his abilities, the Wolens family paid for him to receive rabbinic training at Orthodox yeshivas in St. Louis and New Jersey. After he received ordination in 1966, Ernest Joseph became the full time rabbi of Agudas Achim.

Despite the prosperity of post-war Corsicana, the Jewish community did not grow. Increasingly the Jewish children sought greater opportunities elsewhere. Even though the city itself continues to grow and flourish economically, the Jewish community has dwindled.

Temple Beth-El felt this decline and since they did not have a full time rabbi, Rabbi Ernest Joseph agreed to serve the congregation, in addition to continuing to serve Agudas Achim. The two religious schools were combined and eventually the members of the Reform

congregation decided to disband and sell their historic building. Most of the remaining members joined Agudas Achim, which had moved away from Orthodoxy toward Conservative Judaism.

Because of Temple Beth-El's architectural and historic significance, the Navarro County Historical Society bought the building in 1982. Money was raised for its restoration and in 1987, the building was rededicated and is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Serving the Corsicana community, it is used as a cultural center and community meeting space.

When Rabbi Joseph died in 1999, Agudas Achim decided to close. The building was sold to the city and is now used as a senior center. By 2000, there were only a few Jewish families living in Corsicana and they gathered together for services each Friday night in their home. Babbette and Irving Samuels

worked to ensure that the legacy of Corsicana's Jewish community was preserved. Since Irvin passed away in 2004, Babbette continues to take care of the cemetery.

Despite small numbers, the remaining Jews in town, along with others from the surrounding area, gather in the old Temple Beth-El for services, led by Rabbi Frank Joseph, the son of Ernest Joseph. Rabbi Joseph drives in from Dallas to help this small group keep Judaism and its heritage alive in Corsicana. 🇺🇸

Correction

In our last issue (February, 2013), a review of the book *Markus: Planter of Trees* was written by Linda Blasnik. We misspelled Ms Blasnik's name as Blasnick and would like to apologize to her. We are very sorry!

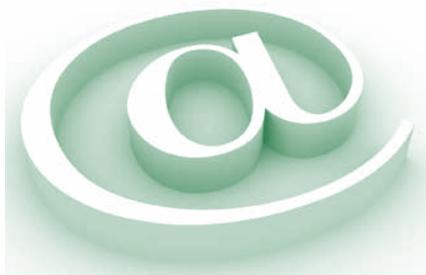
Please Note:

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

The deadline for the July 2013 TJHS News Magazine is Friday, June 7.

Does TJHS Have Your Current Email Address?

Is your email address current? Has it changed since the 2012-2014 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.

An Unbelievable Coincidence

by Edward A. Stone

As our journey into family history progressed, my wife, Barbara, was trying to establish a tie between her great-grandfather Louis Pandres and some other Pandres families in Dallas. Her mother knew that Hortense Sanger was probably a cousin, but was not totally positive if Hortense's grandfather Adolph Pandres was in fact Louis's brother.

One evening, Hortense and her husband Mort Sanger (a descendant of the Sanger Brothers of Dallas), invited several of us to a dinner party at the Stoneleigh Hotel.

During the course of the conversation, Hortense mentioned that her

maiden name had been Landauer and that her father's family had come from a small town in Germany near Speyer, very close to Strasbourg France.

I mentioned to her that some of my ancestry on my mother's Goldberg side of the family was also from that area and the names had been Landauer (from the town of Landau which is in the same area). Hortense then said that her family was from the very small village of Rühlzheim—the same as my Landauer ancestors.

Next, she mentioned that the earliest names she knew of were Karolina and Samuel Landauer, who lived in Ruhlzheim in the late 1700s. That was

startling to me, since those were the same names and dates of my ancestry in the same small village in Germany.

The conclusion was that Hortense had common ancestry with Barbara, my wife, on her mother's side and with me on her father's side. How often does it happen that one person has common ancestry with both spouses in a marriage two hundred years later and thousands of miles away?

The coincidence was further amplified when I learned that Carol "Doc" Miller, another Dallasite, also descended from the same two people in Rühlzheim, Germany, 200 years ago! 

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

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

In Memoriam



Dr. Nathan Cedars, TJHS member, died on February 6, 2013, in Stephenville. He was 96 years old.



Stella Novit, TJHS member, died on March 28, 2013, in Dallas, at the age of 99. She is survived by her daughters

and sons-in-law Bette Novit Evans and Michael Moakod and Shirli and Steve Lampinsein, her sister-in-law Minnie Segal, and four grandchildren and their spouses

May their memories be a blessing.

Grant Requests

Sonny Gerber is chair of the Grant Committee. All requests for grants should be directed to Sonny at 5610 Grape, Houston, TX 77096. Sonny can be reached at 713-817-6290.

Can You Guess This Member?

The third time has to be a charm! We are going to ask you again if you know who this TJHS board member is. Some of you have told me (editor) that you know who it is, but you did not give me a name! So, in addition to the clue in last issue—

“This person is number one in our book,” here is another clue— “He’s one of those Aggies.”



Email your guess to Davie Lou Solka at davielou@solka.net any time after May 31. Entries received before that date will not be considered. Previous winners and family members are not eligible to participate. The winner will be announced in the next issue.

If you have a suggestion for future persons, please send photo to Davie Lou Solka. 

Contributions

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

In Memory of	Dr. Herman Schaffer
From	Bette Jean Cohen
In Honor of	Samylu Rubin, on her 80th birthday
From	Carol, Royal, and Janice Brin
	Davie Lou and Jack Solka

Can You Help?

An established Israeli author needs help in locating a Texas relative of Shmuel Fux of Plonsk, Poland. Shmuel came to the United States around 1906 and lived until the 1950s, he thinks, in New York. Shmuel died as Dr. Sam Fox. He was a dentist and also pub-

lished Yiddish poetry. Marilyn Hassid of the JCC in Houston remembers that the mayor of Plonsk told her that a relative of Sam Fox once came to visit, but his office has no record of the man. If you can help Marilyn in any way, please contact her at mhassid@erjchouston.org

Welcome New Members!

Martin & Lynne (Werblow) Baron

6807 Pemberton Dr.
Dallas, TX 75230
214-750-4910
mandlbaron@sbcglobal.net

David & Jill (Robinowitz) Clay

3709 Cresthaven Ter.
Fort Worth, TX 76107
817-625-0536
d.j.clay@charter.net

Filmore Cohen

3403 Glenn Lake Ln.
Missouri City, TX 77459
281-499-4222
njcc456@yahoo.com

Peter & Phyllis Gingiss

5110 San Felipe
Houston, TX 77056
713-721-4134
Cell: 713-206-7617
pmingiss@comcast.net

Michael & Sharon Grantz

322 S. Oak Cliff Blvd.
Dallas, TX 75208
972-514-7921
michaelgrantz@man.com

Has Your Address Changed?

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

Joseph & Amy Grinstein

6416 Belmont
Houston, TX 77005
832-778-6222
Cell: 713-557-8847
amygrin@sbcglobal.net

Cantor Kat Hastings

1311 Antoine Dr. #166
Houston, TX 77055
kahastings@hotmail.com

Kenny & Ziggy's Deli Restaurant

2327 Post Oak Blvd.
Houston, TX 77056

Nick Kotz

5071 Galemont Ln.
Broad Run, VA 20137

Eric & Deborah (Rabson) Lipman

5455 Imogene St.
Houston, TX 77096
713-664-9511
ericlipman@yahoo.com

John & Ami Mizell-Flint

2708 Tanglewood Dr.
San Angelo, TX 76904
325-944-8102
Cell: 325-944-8940
amimizell@suddenlink.net

Richard & Esther (Lithun) Pritchard

8207 Braeswood Blvd.
Houston, TX 77071
713-771-7128
elop@comcast.net

Mark & Leanne (Wilkenfeld) Reiter

5916 Azalea Ln.
Dallas, TX 75230
214-360-4277
lewreiter@aol.com

Ileene (Rosenfield) Robinson

5314 Brownway
Houston, TX 77056
713-621-2402
ileene@juno.com

Timothy Quevillon

7121 Hart Ln., #1200
Austin, TX 78731
Cell: 504-606-7258
trq001@shsu.edu

Steven & Phyllis (Lepon) Segal

3901 Sunset Blvd.
Houston, TX 77005
713-667-8001
plepon@gmail.com

Pat Lorraine (Kahn) & Paul Simons

10 Bon Aire Dr.
St. Louis, MO 63132
314-993-9255
patsimons1@gmail.com

Directory Changes

Bette Jean Cohen

601 Ohio Dr., #7206
Plano, TX 75024
214-356-1207

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



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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@charter.net.



Texas Jewish
Historical Society
P.O. Box 10193
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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

Check the Appropriate Box(es)

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