

Texas Jewish Historical Society

Preserving Jewish Heritage in Texas
Est. 1980



December 2014 News Magazine

Southern Jews in Global Contexts: Perry Kallison and the Birth of an Israeli Industry

by Nick Kotz

All photos courtesy of the author.

Fifty years ago, when a group of idealistic young Israelis wanted to form a settlement and raise Angora goats in Galilee, the Israeli Ministry of Agriculture sent them to Texas A&M University. The college's extension agents referred them to Perry Kallison. Israel's hope to start a mohair industry could not have been in better hands.

A first generation American, Perry was the son of a Russian Jewish harness maker—Nathan Kallison—who in 1890, at age seventeen, fled the Czar's murderous Cosacks to seek a better life in America. With the help of his beloved wife, Anna, and later their two sons, Nathan built his one-room San Antonio saddlery into the largest farm-and-ranch supply store in the Southwest. The progressive ranch he founded in 1910 and dedicated to the pursuit of scientific farming and ranching pioneered significant advancements in agriculture.

Perry Kallison followed in his father's boot steps. A Renaissance man—merchant-farmer, environmentalist, philanthropist, philosopher, and beloved host of the *Trading Post*, the longest running farm and ranch radio



Perry Kallison on horseback at Kallison Ranch in the 1930s.

broadcast in the nation's history—Perry and his wife, Frances Rosenthal Kallison, a founding member of the Texas Jewish Historical Society, were long-time Zionists and avid supporters of many Jewish causes.

Together they had contributed to the 1930s Ameri-

can effort to help Jews escape from Nazi Germany and immigrate to Israel, the United States, and other countries. In 1946, in the wake of World War II, Frances had written to President Truman requesting him to liberalize immigration for displaced persons. Perry, president of Temple Beth-El in San Antonio in 1948, subsequently contributed funds and passionately rallied political support for the birth of the state of Israel. In 1964, he embraced the opportunity to help build Israel's agricultural strength.

Almost all of the Angora goat and mohair wool business in the United States is centered on the Edwards Plateau near Uvalde in South Texas. From his friends in the area, Kallison recruited Texas ranchers who were willing to donate goats to the Israeli project. Next, he sent

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Message from the President

by Debra Winegarten

What a whirlwind weekend we had with the Joint Texas Jewish Historical Society/Southern Jewish Historical Society meeting in Austin, October 23-26, 2014! Over 175 folks registered, and we were bursting at the seams. We actually had to turn people away, which broke our hearts not being able to share all of the joy and wonderful activities. As a small compensation, this issue is full of pictures to help capture the excitement.

Our meeting began on Friday morning at the LBJ Presidential Library, with a tour of the exhibit, followed by



a speaker panel recounting the role of LBJ in Texas Jewish history, as well as the contributions of Bernard Rapoport. Afterwards, the group split, some viewing items from the TJHS collection at the Briscoe Center for American History and others going to the UT Harry Ransom Center to see the exhibit on the making of "Gone With the Wind" and a behind-the-scenes look at some of their Jewish artifacts. A brief dash back to the hotel to change clothes, then we gathered for a kosher barbecue dinner at Congregation Agudas Achim

on the Dell Jewish Community Campus, followed by a Kabbalat Shabbat service led by Rabbi Neil Blumofe. Because we didn't want to go more than an hour without food, we walked to the Jewish Community Center for a lovely Oneg and a talk by Sam Gruber on synagogue restoration around the world.

Saturday found us in various panels, including our very own Mondells talking about filmmaking and other subjects. For a full listing of the schedule of events, go to our website, www.txjhs.org. Saturday evening found us on Lady Bird Lake on the Lone Star Riverboat bat cruise, where we enjoyed a fajita dinner, perfect weather, a view of the bats, and the beautiful Austin skyline. A lovely Havdalah service capped off the evening. I lost count of the number of times that participants from both groups congratulated me and told me what a superb conference we put together.

And while I was tempted to take all the credit, I am publicly thanking the TJHS board for agreeing to sponsor this meeting and to help fund it. Thanks go to Hollace Weiner and Bryan Stone who designed an incredible program, Davie Lou Solka and her terrific on-the-ground local organizing committee—Nelson Chafetz, Gayle Cannon, Dolly Golden, Nancy Hoffman, Pacey Laves, Abbi

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The Texas Jewish Historical Society December 2014 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
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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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From Russia to Galveston

by Dennis B. Halpin

All four of my grandparents were born in Russia in the late 19th century. They were part of the great wave of immigration of Jews from Eastern Europe to America that occurred between 1880 and 1924. That makes my background similar to most American Jews. My mother's family followed the "traditional route" of going to New York and settling there. My father's family took a different route. My paternal grandfather, Abraham Halpin, was born in Sevastopol, Russia. At the age of 15, his family sent him to America. He arrived alone in New York and stayed with an aunt and uncle on his mother's side. An accomplished musician, in 1913, he enlisted in the U.S. Army to be in the Army Band and was stationed at Fort Crockett in Galveston, Texas. Although he could play all instruments, my grandfather's instrument in the U.S. Army Band was the clarinet. According to family lore, John Phillip Sousa considered my grandfather the best clarinetist in the country. After my grandparents were married, John Phillip Sousa tried to persuade my grandfather to switch to the U.S. Marine Corps to be in the Marine Corps Band, but grandmother had had enough of military life and said "No!" But I am getting ahead of myself.

In the meantime, my paternal grandmother's family was preparing to leave their shtetl of Chobne in Russia to come to America. My grandmother's father, Isadore Smith, came first and arrived in Baltimore, Maryland. There a man named Louis Halfant told my great-grandfather to go to Galveston, Texas, which he did. At that time, most of the Jews coming to America arrived in New York and stayed there. The Jewish leadership in America realized it was not good to have all Jews crowded in one area. So they designated other ports of entry to make it easier for Jews to spread throughout the United States. One of the ports selected was Galves-

ton, Texas, and my grandmother's family became part of what was known as the "Galveston Plan." After settling in Galveston, my great-grandfather sent for his wife (my great-grandmother, Sarah Smith) and their three children, my grandmother Bessie and her two brothers, David and Morris. They arrived in Galveston in 1913 with other extended members of my grandmother's family including her best friend and cousin, Fanny Posnick. My grandmother once described the journey she took to Galveston. She and her family took the train from Kiev to Bremen, Germany, where they boarded a ship that first landed at Montreal, Canada, before proceeding to Galveston. There they met two Jewish soldiers at Fort Crockett, the man who became my grandfather, Abraham Halpin, and his best friend, Henry Greenberg. Our families have stayed in touch to this day. It was also in Texas where my grandfather was reunited with his brother, Joe Melamed, who also came to America on his own.

My grandparents were married in Galveston in 1916 while my grandfather was still in the U.S. Army. In 1914, he participated in the Veracruz campaign when U.S. troops were sent to Veracruz, Mexico. After my grandparents were married, he was sent to Laredo, Texas, where, according to dad, he was under General Pershing chasing Poncho Villa. While in Laredo my grandmother became pregnant with her first child, my father, Morris Halpin. She wanted to be

with her mother for her first born, so she returned to Galveston, where my father was born on the island (BOI) in 1918. My father's brother, Max, was born in Galveston in 1920, and his sister, Ida Flora ("Sister"), was born in Galveston in 1922. My father's youngest brother, Harry, was born in Wisconsin in 1924, where my grandfather moved with the family after his discharge from the U.S. Army. My father became a bar mitzvah in Chicago in 1931, but shortly thereafter, my family returned to Galveston where my father attended Ball High School. While my father was in high school, my family moved to Houston, where my father completed high school at San Jacinto High School, graduating in 1936. However, all of this time, much of my grandmother's family remained in Galveston, and it wasn't until Hurricane Ike in 2008 that the last of my family left Galveston, ending almost 100 years of my family in Galveston. The only family I have left in Galveston is in the Jewish cemetery on 61st Street.

My parents met during World War II. My father had enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps in 1940 (his first post was Brooks Field Army Air Base in San Antonio, Texas) and was already well established in the military when the U.S. entered the war. My mother, Frieda Chazen, who grew up in New York, went to work for the War Department in the Pentagon in Washington,

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Mazel Tov

to the following

Texas Jewish Historical Society Members

Jack Solka, who received the Community Service Award from the JCC in Austin for his work on the relocation of B'nai Abraham synagogue from Brenham to Austin.

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

- TJHS Fall Meeting/Joint Conference with-



Bryan Stone, Hollace Weiner, Program Co-Chairs



Rusty Milstein and Rosalie Weisfeld helped lead Havdalah on the Dinner Cruise



Sylvia Margolis, Abbi Michelson, Phyllis Feldman on the Havdalah Dinner Cruise.



Rabbi Jimmy Kessler talked about Austin on the way to the LBJ Library. Photo courtesy of Barbara Stone.



David Beer, Charles & Jan Hart, Nancy Hoffman on Havdalah dinner cruise.



A deer on the Dell campus greeted TJHS/SJHS.

— SJHS in Austin, October 23-26, 2014 —



Bob Lewis mixed the sound during the video-taping of the plenary panel at the LBJ Library.



The Austin Local Arrangements Committee. Back: Gayle Cannon, Nelson Chafetz, Nancy Hoffman, Jack Solka, Abbi Michelson, Pacey Laves, and Davie Lou Solka, Chair. Front: Lisa Quay, JCC liason; Dolly Golden. Not present: Sheila Rosenfield, Debra Winegarten.



Nelson Chafetz, Lisa Quay, and Jack Solka.



The TJHS Board at the board meeting.



Jack Solka (back to us), Shirley Pollock (behind Jack), Mitzi & Rusty Milstein, Marilyn Glick, and Helen Wilk had lunch at the LBJ Library



Cousins at the meeting: Jack & Davie Lou Solka, Pacey & Myra Laves, Shirley Pollock.

— Groundbreaking Ceremony of B'nai Abraham in Austin, October 26, 2014 —

The pictures on this page are from the groundbreaking ceremony for B'nai Abraham Synagogue, which is being moved from Brenham to Austin. The ceremony was held on the last day of the joint conference with the SJHS.



Helen Wilk presented an award from TJHS to Mimi and Leon Toubin.



Mimi & Leon Toubin



Quite a crowd gathered for the groundbreaking ceremony.



Jay Rubin, CEO of JCAA.



Soil from Brenham and soil from Austin were combined with soil from Israel and used in groundbreaking.



This is the first TJHS award for outstanding preservation of a historic Jewish site, presented by Helen Wilk to Mimi & Leon Toubin.

Rockdale Cemetery Receiving Needed Help

by **Jack Brooks** of the Milam County Genealogy Society and the Rockdale Cemetery Committee

The Central Texas droughts since 2009 have raised havoc with many of our cemeteries, and the Rockdale Jewish Cemetery is no exception. Twelve 30-to-60-foot cedar trees have died and are posing potential personal injury to visitors, as well as damage to the headstones and fencing.

The Rockdale Public Works Department lacks the funding to have the trees professionally removed, and the limited budget and labor force won't support the lease of an aerial lift for the removal of the trees.

The Public Works people's initial thought was to use a large backhoe and

push the dead standing trees over. It was quickly learned that dropping a sixty-foot tree in a congested cemetery does not work. It was decided that with a team effort comprised of community volunteers and the backhoe operator, it could be done. The plan was to fell the trees in the direction of the smallest and fewest number of headstones.



The location of those headstones would be triangulated and referenced in a notebook and a buried brick

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Jack Solka and Debra Winegarten present \$25,000 grant check to Jay Rubin, CEO of the Austin JCCA, to help with relocation of B'nai Abraham Synagogue from Brenham, Texas, to Austin.

Save the Date

January 23-25, 2015

Board meeting—
Waco, Texas

March 17, 2015

Dedication of a Historical
Marker for Rabbi Sidney Wolf,
Corpus Christi, Texas

March 20-22, 2015

Annual Gathering (joint meet-
ing with Dallas Jewish Histori-
cal Society)—
Dallas, Texas

June 8-15, 2015

TJHS Mission to Cuba

instructions to the head of the department of animal husbandry in Israel.

“Angora goats are very delicate,” Perry wrote. “You need to have someone come to Texas A&M for training to care for them.” The Yodfat Kibbutz—the destination for the Texas goats—was a settlement in an area of Galilee without electricity or roads. When the Israeli representatives, Yoram Avidor and Yehuda Agmor, arrived at the ranch, Perry Kallison sent them to various Texas goat ranches, including one owned by W. S. Orr of Rock Springs. (Years earlier, some Israelis traveling in the Texas Hill Country had spotted Orr’s “little white animals which resembled goats but did not actually look like them.”)

Yoram recalled Perry’s kindness: “He put us up in a hotel and paid all of

our expenses while we were there,” he said. “He had a large store in San Antonio, and he told us to choose whatever we wanted—

clothes, tools, any-

thing we could use when we got back to Israel. For us, it was like being in ‘Wonderland.’”

Determined to help Israel and its people not only to survive but also to prosper in the Promised Land, Perry promoted the Israeli goat mission on the *Trading Post*. And in a widely-disseminated letter dated “August 1964 in the 16th year of the State of Israel,” he noted: “When the children of Israel dwelt in the wilderness of Sinai, before they entered into the Promised Land, they used goats for milk, food, clothing, and for covering the tabernacle (Exodus 26:7). Even today, in Galilee, one may still see the young shepherd leading

his flock homeward as the sun sets over the western sea.

“Modern Israel, however, envisions a new industry: mohair, the lustrous fabric woven from the hair of the Angora goat. The climate and terrain of Israel, in which goats have been raised successfully since ancient times, is like that of Texas. The farmers and cattle growers know well how fortunate would be their endeavor if only the herds, even a foundation herd, could be theirs. Such herds could well be the lifeline of the hill country of Israel, and the mohair industry could strengthen this young oasis of democracy. Rancher W. S. Orr has



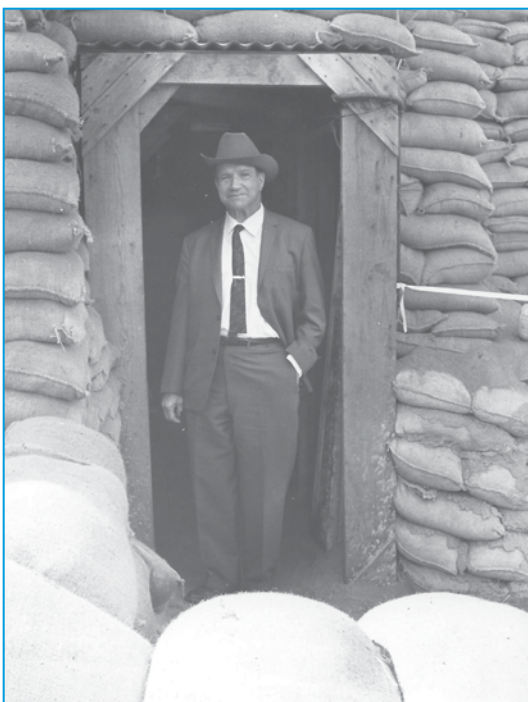
Kallison Ranch Front Gate in 1948.



Angora Goats for Israel.

donated a \$500 registered sire and all that remains is the purchase of one hundred goats at a cost of \$50 each.”

Although they fell short of the initial goal, the Israelis, with Perry’s help, did raise enough money to acquire seventy-five Angora kids from the Schreiner Y. O. Ranch at Mountain Home. Both Jews and non-Jews who were sympathetic to the young country donated goats to Israel. An apple grower in New York heard about the project and contributed the airfare to ship the herd from Texas to New York. El Al contributed one of its passenger planes to fly the herd home to Israel. When the airplane touched down in Tel Aviv, this first use of the sleek airline to transport farm animals drew photographers to



Perry Kallison in an Israeli bunker during an air raid drill, 1970.

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the airport.

The goats, however, did not fare as well as expected in their new home. Although the terrain around Yodfat appeared similar to that of Texas Hill Country, the scrub was different. Due to overgrazing and misuse of the land, the Yodfat vegetation had grown low and dense. When the goats were put out to pasture, stunted trees and bushes snagged the Angoras' fine wool coats. With heavy hearts, the residents of Yodfat shipped the Angora goats to other kibbutzim scattered throughout Israel. Happily, the delicate animals thrived in their new homes—and Israeli representatives returned to San Antonio a few years later with money from the Ministry of Agriculture to buy more.

This time, two hundred and fifty Texas Angora goats were sent from the Uvalde rancher Dolph Briscoe, Perry's longtime friend (who later would serve as governor of Texas from 1973 to 1979). Airlifted on Labor Day, they



Angora Goats for Israel.


were grazing in Israel two days later.

Even in his later years, Perry remained dedicated to Israel. After his and Briscoe's lobbying efforts, support for the Texas effort to help Israelis develop a goat industry came also from the US government, which backed Israel as the United States' strongest ally in the Middle East. In December 1967, Perry briefed President Lyndon Johnson on the status of the Texas Angora goat project just before Johnson was to

host Israel's Prime Minister Levi Eshkol at the LBJ Ranch, some sixty miles away. At the same time, Perry sent his old friend the president a gift from Kallison's store with a note: "With all of the heavy burdens that come across your desk, I thought perhaps this little branding iron would help hold them down."

Several years after the goat-lifts, Perry traveled to Israel. It was 1970, when Israel was in a tense standoff with Egypt and other surrounding Arab states after Israel's victory over Egypt, Jordan, and Syria—the main participants in 1967's Six Day War. Perry was a member of a six-man delegation of San Antonio Jewish leaders trying to raise money for Israel through the United Jewish Appeal. They met with Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir, traveled to the Suez Canal, and dived into a bunker as part of an air raid rehearsal. Then they went to the Negev desert, "which reminded Perry of the Texas Hill Country, and which he also thought might be suitable for raising goats."

For Perry Kallison, his experiences with the Israelis sharpened his awareness of his own heritage. He related the experience of the Jews in Israel to the early lives of Nathan and Anna Kallison. Just as his parents had escaped oppression from the Russian czar in 1890 and had made a new life for themselves in Texas, these Jews of Israel had escaped oppression in Eastern Europe and were trying to carve out a life of freedom in another new and still largely undeveloped land.

This story has been drawn from "The Harness Maker's Dream: Nathan Kallison and the Rise of South Texas" by Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, author, and historian Nick Kotz (TCU Press, 2013). Perry Kallison (1903-1999) was Kotz's uncle. For additional information, please go to www.nickkotz.com. 

TJHS Awarded Grant

TJHS has received word that by the end of this year, 2014, we will be receiving \$5,000 from the Elizabeth Bettelheim Family Foundation. Elizabeth Eldridge Bettelheims' Eldridge family lived in Jefferson, San Antonio, Dallas and Corpus Christi. The Foundation was set up to honor Mrs. Bettelheim by her daughter, Ann E. Bettelheim, to further the work, interests and educational activities she pursued during her lifetime.



Elizabeth Eldridge Bettelheim

**The deadline for
the March 2014
TJHS News Magazine
is Friday,
January 16.**

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 the History Department of the ISJL for permission to do so. To see other towns, go to the Institute's website, www.isjl.org, click on the "History Department" and look for "Encyclopedia" in the drop-down menu.

Waco

Jews have been an integral part of Waco's development since the founding of the city. Jacob De Cordova, the son of Sephardic Jewish parents, settled in Texas soon after it won its independence from



Farmers Improvement Society Bank (central building) on Bridge Street, Waco, Texas, c. 1915.

Mexico. He acquired a large amount of land in the budding republic, and traveled around the United States trying to attract new settlers to Texas. Beginning in 1848, De Cordova laid out a new town along the Brazos River that was the home of the Waco Indian tribe. Along with his business partners, he divided the land into plots and sold them to prospective settlers. De Cordova guaranteed the success of this venture when he offered to set aside free land for schools, churches, and a courthouse, which led to the state's government naming Waco Village the seat of the newly incorporated McLennan County in 1850. Six years later, the village was officially incorporated as Waco. Although he never lived in the town which he helped to establish, De Cordova laid the groundwork for Waco's rise as a commercial center in the heart of Texas.

Like Texas itself, Waco straddles the South and West. Founded among prime cotton growing land, Waco had a significant slave population before the Civil War. After the war, the arrival of the railroad in 1871 turned Waco into a major inland cotton market. Cotton-related industries sprung up in town in the late 19th century, including several cotton mills. In 1868, a spur of the Chisolm Cattle Trail was built into Waco, as the town took on the feel of the Wild West. Within three years, over 600,000 head of cattle had tramped through Waco's streets on their way north. During the 1870s, saloons and gambling houses proliferated in the frontier town, which gained the nickname "Six Shooter Junction." Prostitution was legal and regulated in Waco until the early 20th century. With both cotton and cattle shaping the city's economy, Waco's culture

was a mixture of south and west.

Waco's Jewish community developed quickly along with the local economy. Jews first arrived in the years just after the Civil War, and by 1879, there was a significant Jewish population.

Jews were drawn to Waco's burgeoning business opportunities and most opened retail stores catering to the farmers and cowboys who came to town. Brothers Bernhard and Alex Alexander arrived from Prussia and opened a dry-goods store in 1879. Polish-born Moses Goldstein came to Waco in 1868 with his wife, Amanda, and their six children. He opened a dry-goods store, and served as a *chazzan* and *shochet* for the growing Jewish community.

When the railroad was built through Waco in 1873, Sam Sanger, a brother of the retailing family, arrived from Philadelphia to open a branch of the Sanger Brothers dry-goods store. Sanger's stores and his wholesale business were very successful and Sam became one of Waco's leading businessmen. He served on the board

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of the Waco Cotton Palace, an annual fair and exposition celebrating the city's primary cash crop. Sam's son, Charles, opened a cotton business, but later joined the family business.

Benjamin Haber came to Waco in 1876, after living in several places in Texas since his arrival from Germany in 1856. He opened a retail store and he and his wife Esther were very active in the Waco Jewish community. J.A. Solomon came to Waco in the 1870s from Russia and also opened a very successful dry-goods store.

Newspaper editor Charles Wessolowsky visited Waco in 1879 and was impressed with the city's economic prospects. He said that it was "destined to become a large and extensive commercial city." It was these same prospects that attracted Jews to Waco. Wessolowsky found about thirty Jewish families on his visit and said that "some of them are indeed front in rank in every branch of industry and commerce." He singled out Solomon & Co. as having a large store that was equal to any in the country in terms of style and elegance. The Jewish community of Waco grew along with the city and by 1900, there were over 20,000 people living there.

The Hebrew Benevolent Association was formed in 1869 by twenty Jews. In the 1870 census, thirteen of these founders were listed as being under forty. All were immigrants, coming from Prussia and Poland with a majority owning dry-goods stores. A few worked as store clerks. Soon after forming, the Benevolent Association bought land for a Jewish cemetery. They also had lavish Purim Balls each year that raised money for the society.

The Hebrew Benevolent Association began holding religious services in a rented room, often led by Moses Goldstein. Jews from small towns in the area would come to Waco for the High Holidays. By 1869, the local newspaper noted that the town's

Jewish-owned stores would be closed for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. In 1878, High Holiday services were held in the county courthouse using a Torah that had been purchased by the group. Traditional practices were observed with Rosh Hashanah services held for two days and the people kept kosher. Yet, the group reached out to the local non-Jewish community inviting them to High Holiday services.

In 1873, thirty-six Waco Jews formed a B'nai B'rith Lodge. It was from this lodge that the push came to establish a permanent congregation. Finally in 1879, Congregation Rodef Shalom was formed with Sam Sanger as President. The Hebrew Benevolent Association gave its Torah to the congregation, and they began raising money for a synagogue building. Solomon Lyons led the fund raising effort, soliciting donations from local gentiles as well as Jews in northern cities. A Ladies Hebrew Aid Society was formed in 1879 "for the purpose of assisting in the erection of a House of Worship and establishing a Sunday School." The society held several dances to raise money for the building fund and was able to pay for all of the synagogue's interior furnishings. In 1881, Rodef Shalom dedicated its synagogue building on Washington Street with Rabbi Jacob Voorsanger of Beth Israel Congregation in Houston giving the dedication address. According to a local history published in 1909, "when the synagogue was completed, it was considered the prettiest religious edifice in Waco." Byzantine in style, with multiple spires and minarets, Rodef Shalom's temple reflected the growing prominence of Jews in Waco.

Rabbi May was hired as the first spiritual leader of Rodef Shalom, but he left shortly after arriving due to health problems. Rabbi Aaron Suhler led the congregation for a few years before he left the rabbinate, though he remained in Waco as a member of the

congregation. Initially Rodef Shalom did not affiliate with the Reform movement, though they did move away from strict Orthodoxy. In 1890, they advertised for a rabbi who could lead services from the more conservative *Minhag Jastrow* prayer book and could give sermons in English. Not until 1907 did Rodef Shalom formally affiliate with the Reform movement, joining the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (now Union for Reform Judaism).

Even though Rodef Shalom had not fully embraced Reform worship, the growing number of newly arrived immigrants from Eastern Europe decided not to join Waco's first Jewish congregation. This group of Orthodox Jews began to meet in a room above a grocery store in 1886. Two years later, fifteen men, led by A. L. Lipshitz, established Agudath Jacob, the city's first Orthodox congregation. They initially met in a rented house which was converted to a synagogue. In 1893, they moved to a house on Columbus Street which was used as a synagogue and Talmud Torah. In 1904, the house was moved aside and a brick synagogue was built in its place. They kept the house, and used it as a school building.

After a storm destroyed the synagogue building, a new one was built to replace it in the same location in 1914. Soon after forming, Agudath Jacob hired Sam Levy to serve as *chazzan*, *shochet*, and *mohel*. Although he was not a rabbi, Levy played a central role in the congregation for over fifty years. He also butchered kosher chickens for members of Rodef Shalom, which showed the city's oldest Jewish congregation still had traditional members. In 1902, the women of Agudath Jacob founded a Ladies Aid Society, which raised money to support both local and national Jewish causes. Pauline Fred led the Society

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for thirty years as president.

According to the *American Jewish Year Book*, by 1907, 600 Jews lived in Waco with Rodef Sholom having fifty-six members and Agudath Jacob forty-five members. Both congregations had religious schools with Agudath Jacob having thirty students who met every weekday, and Rodef Sholom had fifty students who met once a week. Both congregations grew over the next decade with Rodef Sholom having one-hundred members and Agudath Jacob numbering seventy-five.

After several short-tenured rabbis, both congregations eventually hired spiritual leaders who had a significant impact on their congregations. Rabbi Isadore Warsaw came to Rodef Sholom in 1908 and soon began to push for a new building. With his influence, the congregation decided to build a new, larger temple on the same site as their old one, laying the cornerstone for the new structure in 1908. Completed in 1910, Rodef Sholom's new home could seat four hundred in the sanctuary. Rabbi Warsaw left Waco in 1918, and Wolf Macht then led the congregation for the next thirty-three years.

In 1923, Agudath Jacob tore down the old house it had been using as an education building and replaced it with a new Hebrew Institute that had additional classrooms as well as a banquet hall, kitchen, and gymnasium. They even had their own youth basketball team that used the new gym. The congregation added a *mikveh*, which reflected the continued observance of Orthodox practice. In 1924, Agudath Jacob hired Rabbi Charles Blumenthal, who led the congregation until 1945.

Waco Jews established several other organizations that pursued a range of goals. In 1882, a Russian Refugee Society, headed by Sam Sanger, helped settle Jewish im-

migrants fleeing Czarist oppression. Although this group was short-lived, Waco Jews would continue to help settle Jewish immigrants through the work of the Industrial Removal Office and the Galveston immigration movement in the early 20th century. In 1887, Jews in Waco founded the Young Men's Hebrew Association which offered both educational and social programs. The group soon evolved into a purely social organization, changing its name to the Progress Club in 1900 and acquiring a clubhouse that contained a ballroom, dining room, billiard room, and the only roof garden in the city. The social club had forty-two members in 1907, most of whom were affiliated with Rodef Sholom. Later, another YMHA was established in 1919.

The Erzath Zion Society was founded in 1898 by members of Agudath Jacob, which served as a free loan society and a Zionist organization. The group would lend money at no interest to newly arrived Jewish immigrants to help them get started in a business. By 1913, the group had split its functions, creating G'miluth, a new free loan society, while Ezrath Zion continued to work toward the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine. By 1919, Ezrath Zion had 102 members, while the Daughters of Zion, a women's group, had fifty members. Both of these Zionist groups were closely affiliated with Agudath Jacob with most of their members being first generation immigrants. In 1927, Jewish women in Waco founded a chapter of Hadassah.

A branch of the socialist Workmen's Circle was formed by immigrants from Eastern Europe in 1912. Kalman Solovey, a Latvian immigrant who owned a grocery store, and F. Israel were the founders of this group. The Workmen's Circle brought Yiddish programs to Waco for many years, while also raising money for

Jewish causes and also helping Jewish refugees during World War I. In 1931, a Ladies' Auxiliary of the Circle was established which focused primarily on charity work.

The Hebrew Benevolent Association remained active into the 20th century, drawing significant support from members of both congregations. In 1927, the Jewish Federated Charities was founded and consolidated the various Jewish charity efforts in town. Later the organization changed its name to the Jewish Welfare Council, and in 1984 it became the Jewish Federation of Waco and Central Texas, raising money for local, national, and international Jewish causes.

Waco Jews did not restrict their charity to the Jewish community, often giving money to church building funds. According to a report in the *American Israelite* newspaper around the turn of the century, "there is not a Christian church in the city or county which Waco Jews did not help support financially." In 1913, Jewish women in Waco, led by Carrie Sanger Godshaw, founded a local chapter of Council of Jewish Women. The Council opened a night school for newly arrived immigrants to help them learn English and began a penny lunch program at a local school. They also had a program to give socks and shoes to needy children. Godshaw was involved in a number of progressive causes in Waco. An activist for women's suffrage, she founded the local chapter of the League of Women Voters, established the city's first Montessori kindergarten in 1916 and served as a director of Planned Parenthood.

As in other Southern cities, Waco Jews were heavily concentrated in business, especially retail trade. Jews owned a wide array of businesses in the early 20th century, including stores selling jewelry, clothing, dry goods,

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and furniture. Perhaps the best known was the Goldstein & Migel Department Store. Isaac Goldstein moved to Waco as a boy in 1868 with his father, Moses. In 1888, he opened a dry-goods store with his brother-in-law, Louey Migel, who was born in Russia. Their business eventually grew into the city's largest and best department store. Both Goldstein and Migel became leading figures in Waco civic life. Goldstein was a strong supporter of public libraries, and put a circulating library in his department store during its early years. He led the effort to build a public library in Waco, donating land and raising money to match a grant from the Carnegie Fund. Goldstein spent nineteen years as President of the Waco Public Library. He also served many years on the board of the First National Bank of Waco. Migel spent twenty-five years as President of Rodef Sholom and donated land for the Waco Boys Club. According to one local history published in 1902, Migel's "name is almost a household word" in Waco due to his civic involvement. Isaac's son, Aaron Goldstein, later took over the department store and followed in his father's footsteps as a civic leader. Aaron served several terms as a city commissioner and was president of the Waco Chamber of Commerce.

In a description of Waco's Jewish community written in 1909, Isaac Goldstein explained that while Jews had not been very involved in local politics, "in enterprise for the upbuilding of our city and in public undertakings, they are among the foremost."

One of the most colorful and controversial figures in Waco was Gussie Oscar, who moved to town from Calvert in 1905 to play in the orchestra of the Majestic Theater. By 1911, she conducted an all-female orchestra and later toured the country as a piano player for singer May Irwin. When Oscar returned to Texas,

she became the manager of the Waco Auditorium, often challenging local laws and social mores with her programs. Never married, Oscar lived by herself in the honeymoon suite of a local hotel. She challenged local blue laws by showing movies on Sundays. In 1917, she brought in a lecturer on birth control, who spoke to single-sex audiences, the women during the day and men during the evening. Oscar also brought big name stars like Will Rogers, Harry Houdini, and the Marx Brothers to Waco. During the roaring 1920s, Oscar began to bring in risqué plays containing sexual innuendo. One of these plays, Irving Berlin's "Music Box Review," led to the arrest of twenty actresses and Oscar herself for indecency. This crackdown led to the closing of the theater as traveling acts would no longer come to Waco. Despite this setback, Oscar remained in show business, booking events at other theaters in Waco and in other towns in the area until her death in 1950.

Waco grew tremendously over the 20th century, greatly aided by the military buildup during the world wars. During World War I, the army built Camp McArthur just outside the city, and had over 35,000 soldiers stationed there during the war, matching Waco's pre-war population. Business boomed in the city during the war and its aftermath. During the depression, Waco suffered as the local cotton industry was decimated. As with the rest of the country, World War II rescued the city financially. Numerous war industry factories were built in addition to several military installations in the area. Connally Air Force Base remained open after the war, as Waco's population reached 84,000 by 1952. Its Jewish community grew only slightly, from 1,150 people in 1937 to 1,250 in 1960.

Waco's downtown was leveled by a catastrophic tornado in 1953, which

destroyed almost 600 business buildings in the city and killed 114 people, including two Jews. After the tornado many businesses relocated to new suburban shopping centers as the downtown district went into decline. In 1966, in another economic blow to the city, Connally Air Force Base closed. Waco's general population began to decline in the 1960s. At the same time, the Jewish community began to shrink steadily as well. By 1980, only 750 Jews lived in Waco. In 1997, the number was down to an estimated 300 people.

Despite this decline, both of Waco's congregations have persevered. Agudath Jacob moved to a new synagogue in 1951, where it remained for the next twenty-one years. In 1966, the congregation reached its peak of 183 member families, and that same year, Agudath Jacob decided to move away from Orthodoxy, affiliating with the Conservative movement. When Agudath Jacob dedicated its new synagogue on Hillcrest Drive in 1972, their membership was 153. Rodef Sholom also moved to a new building in the post-war years. With the arrival of the baby boom generation, the congregation soon outgrew its old building. When the new synagogue was dedicated on North 41st Street in 1961, Rodef Sholom had 170 members and over 100 children in its religious school. After Rabbi Macht's retirement in 1952, the congregation hired Charles Lesser and later, Amiel Wohl as their spiritual leaders. In 1964, Rodef Sholom hired Rabbi Mordecai Podet, who led the Reform congregation until his retirement in 1988. Rabbi Podet was very active in the larger community, serving as chairman of the Waco Human Relations Council and President of the Waco Ministerial Alliance.


Jews continued to play a leading role in Waco's civic affairs. During the Civil Rights era, city business

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Michelson (who hosted a fabulous hamesh Hospitality Room), Lisa Quay (our JCC liaison), Sheila Rosenfield, and Jack Solka. This weekend would have been impossible without all the sleepless nights and heavy lifting this fabulous crew performed on our behalf.

The weekend ended with many of us at the future location of B'nai Abraham Synagogue for a beautiful groundbreaking ceremony. Jay Rubin, CEO of the JCAA, began the ceremony with the story of the congregation and how Leon Toubin came to him with the idea of moving the synagogue. Leon and his wife, Mimi, have been taking care of the synagogue for over forty years since the doors were closed for religious services. Helen Wilk, TJHS Past President and current Chair of the Awards Committee, presented the Toubins with the first award for the "outstanding preservation of a historic Jewish site" from TJHS. The group then proceeded to the area where the *mikvah* would be and broke ground using soil from Brenham, Austin, and Israel. TJHS is very proud to have

helped with this move with our grant of \$25,000. (See photo on page 7.)

We're in the process of planning our next meeting in Waco, January 23-25, 2015. The theme will be "Capturing Texas Jewish History Before it Gets Away." To this end, we've arranged for the Oral History Department at Baylor University to give us a three-hour oral history training session. Why, you may ask? I'll tell you. Some of our members are reaching the octogenarian stage of life and beyond, and I'm committed to ensuring that we record their stories while we still have them on this side of heaven. Now, I'm a big woman, but there's not enough of me to go around our big state and take everyone's histories. So, we're going to train a cadre of us to go out into the field and make this happen. We are also working on having a descendant of the founder of Waco to come share the Jewish history of Waco's founding. This is a weekend you won't want to miss! Watch your mailbox in the next several weeks for your registration information and form. It will also be posted on our website. 

Trip to Israel

Congregation Agudas Achim in Austin is sponsoring a trip to Israel called "Israel: End to End." It will be March 10-22, 2015, and everyone is invited to participate. For complete details, go <http://caa-austin.org/Israel2015> or contact Joe Steinberg at joe.steinberg@gmail.com.



TJHS Trip to Cuba

Our second mission to the Jewish Communities of *Cuba*

June 8-15, 2015

Join your fellow members, family, and friends on a uniquely insightful trip of cultural discovery and humanitarian effort. We will have experiences offered to few travelers to this tropical island nation. You will get to know Cuba while helping and meeting the Jewish Community.

This will be a great mitzvah, a unique experience, and a fun trip. Be more than a tourist!

Please look to the society's website for more detailed information as it becomes available (www.txjhs.org) or contact TJHS Travel Chair Vickie Vogel at 979-247-4504, 979-699-2493, or vickvogel@yahoo.com.

This mission is pursuant to a General License issued to the Texas Jewish Historical Society by the US Department of the Treasury.

This photo is from our last mission trip to Cuba.



History of the Texas Kallah

by Rabbi Jack Segal

Presented at the Annual Gathering of the Texas Jewish Historical Society in Houston, Texas, 2006

“Kallah” was a term used almost two millennia ago to represent the months of Elul (September) and Adar (March) when large groups of Jewish people would assemble in Babylonia (Iraq) to study the Torah. There are many theories as to the etymology (origin and development of a word) of “Kallah” but for many years no one really knew the exact origin of that word.

Today, three theories have come forth as to the reason why that word was used for the assembly of people to study the Torah. “Kallah” comes from the world “bride.” We Jewish people are considered the bride of God, and the Torah was also considered the bride of God. “Kallah” comes from the Hebrew word “kol” which means wholeness or totality. It represents a university where many subjects are studied. The word “Kallah” is an acronym. Three letters in the word are *kaph*, *lamid*, and *hay*. This stands for *Knesset lomday ha'Torah* (an assembly of those who are studying the Torah).

On Monday morning, March 2, 1927, the first Kallah of Texas Rabbis came into existence. It had a twofold purpose—to encourage Jewish scholarship among its member rabbis and to support and enlarge the Abraham I. Schechter Collection of Judaica that eventually was established in 1939 at the University of Texas. It met at the Hebrew Institute in Houston, Texas.

There was an opening address, then



Kallah of Texas Rabbis—Ft. Worth, Texas.

Photo courtesy of the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives.

an additional address Monday morning and afternoon. There were more addresses presented on Tuesday morning and afternoon.

Nine rabbis presented papers, and some of them were “quite heavy” (there was an additional welcoming address by Abraham Schechter).

The following papers were presented:

Rabbi Henry Cohen of Galveston spoke on “The Jewish Settlements in Texas.” Rabbi David Lefkowitz of Dallas spoke on “The Relationship of the Life and Philosophy of Spinoza to the Jewish Community and to Judaism.” Rabbi Henry Barnston of Houston spoke on “Higher Criticism and Biblical Archeology.” Rabbi Benjamin Mereyowitz of Houston spoke on “Marriage and Divorce.” Rabbi Wolfe Macht of Waco spoke on “The Theology of Avrahamel’s Rosh Amana.” Rabbi Charles Blumenthal of Waco spoke on “Elementary Schools in the Century Before O.C.E.” Rabbi Nathan Blechman of Houston spoke on “The Soul of the Midrash.” Rabbi Samuel Rosinger of Beaumont spoke on “The Sabbatarian Prayer Books of Simon Pechi.” Rabbi Abraham Schechter of Houston spoke

on “Palestinian and Babylonian Rituals.”

Each lecture was critiqued by a different rabbi. It should be obvious that these lectures were extremely intellectual ones and they were geared for people who had good backgrounds in Talmudic and Biblical stud-

ies. All of the rabbis submitted copies of their talks and a picture, and all were eventually published in a booklet.

The Kallah would meet each year for friendship, Torah study, and to see neighboring cities. There was a potential of 75 to 90 rabbis in the state, even though only approximately one-third attended the Kallah meetings.

I arrived in Houston in 1965. At that time, the Kallah was thirty-eight years old, even though it did not meet for several years during World War II. I remember that there was controversy for the 1966 Kallah that I attended.

The Kallah had invited Rabbi Dr. Immanuel Jacobovits of the Fifth Avenue Synagogue of New York to be the guest lecturer. Prior to that assignment, he had been the Chief Orthodox Rabbi of Ireland. That year, we wanted to honor Rabbi Israel Rosenberg of Congregation Shearith Israel in Wharton on the tenth year in that city. We also wanted to honor Rabbi William Malev of Congregation Beth Yeshurun on his twentieth year as a Rabbi in Houston and his synagogue’s 75th anniversary. However, we hit a snag, a blockade, and a restraint.

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We told Rabbi Jacobovits that we wanted to honor Rabbi Malev and that we also wanted to honor his congregation; however, he said, "No!" He stated, "It is a Conservative congregation, and as an Orthodox rabbi, I cannot participate in such an observance." He stated that he was still fulfilling the British Orthodox refusal to participate in non-Orthodox functions. Therefore, in order to placate him, we went to Wharton, Rabbi Rosenberg's synagogue.

In fact it is interesting to note, that this non-participation of Orthodox rabbis with Conservative and Reform rabbis was from a decree of twelve of the most important Orthodox rabbis in the United States in 1955. At that time, they stated that Orthodox rabbis could participate with Conservative and Reform rabbis only in matters to help the community—UJA, Israel Bonds, Feed the Hungry, and to raise funds for the poor. However, they state most emphatically that they could not participate with Conservative or Reform rabbis in matters that involved theology, religious philosophy, or Jewish Law.

Honoring the 75th anniversary of a Conservative congregation would mean that Rabbi Jacobovits was recognizing the existence of Conservative Judaism as an equal to Orthodox Judaism. That he could not do. According to him, and according to Orthodox Judaism, there was only one form of Judaism—Orthodox Judaism, not Conservative or Reform Judaism.

Also, to complicate that Kallah, a letter was sent by Rabbi Robert Shapiro of Houston to Rabbi Raphael Schwartz—a man who was then vice president of the Texas Kallah. Rabbi Shapiro was not an active rabbi with a pulpit but rather a metals expert, who was a Talmudic scholar and had been ordained in Europe. That year, the officers of the Kallah, in addition to Rabbi Schwartzman, were President Rabbi Amram Prero, a Conservative rabbi, and Secretary-Treasurer was Rabbi Raphael Schwartzman, an Orthodox rabbi.

The letter from Rabbi Shapiro

stated:

"Dear Rabbi Schwartzman—I am in receipt of a letter from the Secretary-Treasurer of the Kallah of Texas Rabbis, and to my astonishment, I read the second paragraph which states: 'To indicate whether or not you require kashrus.'

"You are having a most important gathering named "Kallah" which should be a gathering to improve the knowledge and observance of traditions, laws, and rituals. Here, rabbis are gathering to the affair and calling it 'Kallah' and questioning kashrut is required?? This defeats the purpose of the Kallah from the start!

"You recall when the U.J.A. wanted non-kosher—everyone stormed, including myself, even the Reform members admitted and agreed to have it kosher. How a body of rabbis, especially the Orthodox and Conservative, question kashrut at their gathering is beyond my comprehension. It is disappointing and grieves me greatly. I, of course, will not attend."

The letter was signed by Rabbi Robert Shapiro and was sent to Rabbi Louis Firestein, Rabbi William Malev, Rabbi Jack Segal, and Rabbi Moshe Cahana.

At this Kallah, the following addresses were presented:

Rabbi Jacobovits spoke on "Jewish Medical Ethics" and "Is the American Jew Vanishing?" Rabbi Abraham Brachman from Fort Worth spoke on "The Alleged Death of God." Rabbi Moshe Cahana of Houston spoke on "Man Was Made in the Image of God." Rabbi M. David Geffen spoke on "The Seven Noachide Commandments." Rabbi Harold Gottesman spoke on "Three Sidros and Three Gemaras as a Guideline for Today." Rabbi Robert Kahn of Houston spoke on "A Moroccan Kamaea." Rabbi Morris Katz spoke on "The So-Called Holy Column in St. Peter's." Rabbi Raphael Schwartzman of Houston spoke on "A Rabbi's Responsas." Rabbi Jack Segal of Houston spoke on "When May One Disinter a

Body from One Cemetery to Inter the Body Into Another Cemetery?" Rabbi Henry Tavel of Houston spoke on "Hospital Procedures."

Rabbi Schwartzman spoke on a number of religious questions that truly captivated the interest of those in attendance:

May one buy bread from a Jewish bakery that keeps open on the Sabbath?

May one buy from a kosher butcher who also keeps *treyf* packages of turkeys and cakes?

If one is a widower and he passes away, should he be buried next to his first wife, his second wife, or in the middle of both?

May a double ring ceremony be performed in an Orthodox wedding?

May an Orthodox rabbi participate with a Conservative or Reform rabbi at a wedding?

On a number of occasions, Rabbi Schwartzman referred to Conservative and Reform rabbis as "non-Orthodox ministers." Part of his response was that sometimes it is permissible to co-officiate with these non-Orthodox rabbis, because of *darkay shalom*, in order to perpetuate peace in the community. However, Rabbi Schwartzman added that the non-Orthodox rabbis should not be witnesses at the wedding. One should have none of the rabbis acting as witnesses. Two laypeople who are Sabbath observers should be asked to be the witnesses.

The next year, 1967, the Kallah was held in Fort Worth and Rabbi Isadore Garsek was honored for his twenty years at Congregation Ahavath Sholom in Fort Worth. Rabbi Robert J. Shur was also honored for his ten years at Beth-El Congregation in Fort Worth. The guest lecturer was Rabbi Eugene Mihaly who was a professor at HUC-JIR. Rabbi Mihaly spoke on "The Passover Haggadah," "The Message of the Prayer Book for Contemporary Man," and "The Midrash as Literature, Method, and Philosophy."

Five additional papers were

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presented: Rabbi Israel Rosenberg spoke on “Names and Nouns.” Rabbi Jack Segal of Houston spoke on “Artificial Insemination—a Legal, Psychiatric and Theological Analysis.” Rabbi David Geffen spoke on “The Rabbi and Coca-Cola.” Rabbi Judah Fish of Austin spoke on “How Much Yiddish Do Our Youngsters Know?” Rabbi Abraham Brachman of Fort Worth spoke on “Some Notes on Messianism.”

In 1969, the Kallah met in Galveston and Rabbi Norman Lamm, an Orthodox rabbi was the main lecturer. He spoke on “Confrontation of Judaism and Secularism,” “The Ethics of Protest” (this was the time of Vietnam), and “The Relative Roles of Prayer and Study in Judaism.”

Four additional papers were presented that year: Rabbi Hyman Schachtel of Houston spoke on “Why Judaism will Endure.” Rabbi Jack Segal of Houston spoke on “The Halachic Approach to Heart Transplantation” (Dr. Cooley and DeBakey were performing heart transplantations in Houston). Rabbi Lothar Goldstein of Port Arthur spoke on “Physics, Metaphysics, and Jewish Mysticism.” Rabbi Raphael

Schwartzman of Houston spoke on “Organ Transplants.”

At the 1974 Kallah, I spoke on “Should We Rebuild the Third Temple in Jerusalem?” and was appointed Secretary-Treasurer. Our bank account had a balance of \$439.61.


In 1977, we went to San Antonio and had eighty-nine rabbis registered on the books as rabbis in Texas or close to Texas. I spoke on the subject of “A Rabbi’s Attitude Toward the Death Penalty.” In 1978, I spoke on “Judaism and Homosexuality” and Rabbi Robert Kahn was honored for his approximately forty years as a rabbi in Houston.

However, the momentum began to wane. The attendance became smaller and smaller. No one wanted to be the chairperson for the next year. Therefore early in the 1980s, the Kallah fell apart, disappeared, evaporated, and dissolved. However, it lasted for more than fifty years, and I must personally state that I loved presenting papers there on subjects of the day.

The Talmud says (R.H. 18b) *Sheku-lah mee-ta-tan shel tza-dee-kim k’saray-fot bet Elo-hay-nu*—“The death of the righteous is like the burning of the

Temple.” The Texas Kallah was truly terrific as long as it lasted. But when people could no longer give two days to it, when they lost interest in maximum learning, and when they no longer were interested in preparing papers, the Kallah lost its four Vs: vim, vigor, vitality, and vivacity—and it died, and we put up a sign: R.I.P.—Rest in Peace. However, I must admit that I miss it.

We all look at different subjects in different ways. Yes, the Kallah was important to the Jewish people almost 2,000 years ago. It was important to the rabbis of Texas more than fifty years ago. And now, educating the laypeople of our community has become priority number one.

(Editor’s note: On April 26, 2009, at the Annual Gathering of TJHS held in College Station, Texas, Rabbi Jimmy Kessler presented a check for \$3,100 to TJHS from the Kallah of Texas Rabbis. He was the last treasurer of the Kallah, and in consultation with several rabbis, they agreed to donate the remaining funds to TJHS with the hope that a history of the organization be written. There were no conditions attached to this money.) 


From Russia to Galveston, continued from page 3

D.C. On Yom Kippur 1942, my dad was in Washington, D.C., getting ready to be shipped out for the invasion of North Africa (he did not know it at the time) and went to synagogue for Yom Kippur. My mother was also in synagogue for Yom Kippur, and that was where they met. They stayed in touch and, after dad returned to the states in 1945, they became engaged. My parents told me that at first, my mother’s father doubted that my dad was Jewish. After all, there were no Jews in Texas! A call from my father’s mother to my mother’s father in Yiddish convinced him otherwise. My parents were married in Houston by Rabbi Max Geller of Beth Jacob (now part of the United Orthodox Synagogues of Houston) in 1946. Although born in Poland in 1920 and raised in New York, my mother

spent most of her life in Texas. My mother passed away in 1989, and my father passed away in 2007.

Following the World War II, my father attended the University of Houston where he received his degree in Architectural Engineering in 1949. While my father was in college, my mother worked for Beth Yeshurun where she was Rabbi Malev’s secretary. In the 1950s, he went to work for Brown & Root, Inc., in Houston, where he eventually became Chief Specification Writer and, in that capacity in the early 1960s, wrote the specifications for the site development and most of the buildings at the Manned Spacecraft Center, now known as the Johnson Space Center. Ironically, I am now an engineer at NASA, working in the buildings that my father designed! At that same time,

he oversaw the renovation of the old Jim West mansion for the Lunar and Planetary Institute (now located at a new facility at another location).

I, my sister, and all my immediate cousins in my dad’s family were born in Houston. I was a member of Boy Scout Troop 247 at Beth Yeshurun, from 1964 to 1968. While I was in the Boy Scouts, I received the Ner Tamid award. My certificate was signed by Rabbi Malev (who helped create the award for the Boy Scouts) and Rabbi Schwartzman at Adath Emeth where we were members. Both my sister and I attended Bellaire High School and received degrees from the University of Houston and Texas A&M University. 2013 marked the 100th anniversary of my grandmother, Bessie Halpin, arriving in Galveston. 

From Our Archives

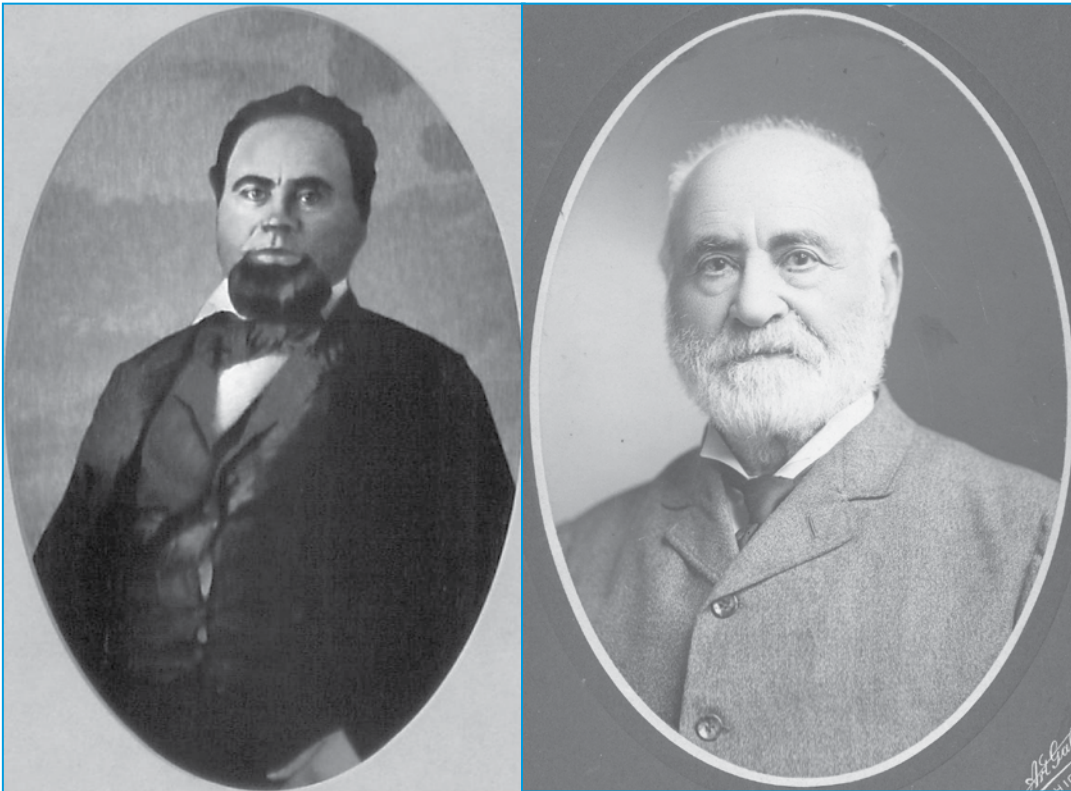
This column is based on information in the TJHS Collection, housed at the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas campus in Austin. It has been supplemented with online research. If you have corrections or additions, please submit them in writing to the TJHS editor at editor@txjhs.org. We want our archives to be as complete and accurate as possible.

— Travels and Travails of Henry Mayer — by Vickie Vogel

While browsing the TJHS archives index, my attention was captured by the entry titled *The Life & Travels of Henry Mayer*.¹ I like to travel, too, so I decided to see where Henry went. The file contains a photocopy of Henry's hand-written

memoir. He was born in 1817 in Ingelheim, Germany, to Marcus and Gertrude Oppenheimer Mayer who had seven sons: Leopold, Moses, Gershon, Henry, Michael,² Simon, and a younger brother whose name Henry had forgotten. He remembered his parents mourning the son who died before the length of time required for them to receive a pension or present from the king. Later, three sisters were added: Regina, Amelia, and Zetshen.³

Henry described his father, Marcus, as "a tall fine looking man, stout and well built, redish [sic] beard,



Henry Mayer. Photos courtesy of Dr. Kay Goldman.

black hair and eyes, very popular and highly respected not alone in his home town but all around the country." He wished he had a portrait of him, but that was considered a luxury for the nobility. His mother, Gertrude, was small of stature with black hair and large black eyes. Henry noted she was a good housekeeper, neat and tidy and economical. Gertrude did all her own work except the washing which was done once a year "when women were hired and the clothes taken out to what was called the Grosse Bleiche (large bleaching grounds) where they

washed and bleached the clothes by drying the clothes on the grass."

In those days, recounts Henry, a good *hausfrau* would have linens by the dozens "nay hundreds" all properly marked. His brothers had a hundred shirts, too numerous to mention.

Gertrude was brilliant in math, and could figure any

sum in her head faster than her sons could do it with pencil and paper. She maintained this ability throughout her long life. She would tell the children stories of how the Russians and also the French overran the country. She spun the flax grown in their fields, had it made into cloth, and had the tailor come to their home to cut the cloth, for fear he would use too much if not closely watched. She canned the fruit the boys picked, instructing them to clear out any spoiling fruit from where it was stored in the attic.

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She called it “ausputzen” and the boys found it great fun. For bread, the baker would come to the house every two weeks and set the rye dough, come back and work it, then take it to his own house to bake, and bring it back.

Henry and his brothers were a lively group of boys, large and strong and good with their fists. They stuck together, and to fight any one meant to fight all six of them. They loved playing pranks on the teachers at their two schools, one daily and one religious. Their Hebrew teacher was a “born devil.” He had just had his boots “re-footed,” and they stood next to him. When he grabbed one to strike Henry, the top came off, which caused great hilarity among the boys. “I could fill a book with the pranks we played,” remembered Henry.

At the age of 17, Henry went to live with an aunt in Fürfelt for a year, but he had heard so much about America, he decided to try his luck

there. Joining a party of young people heading to Paris to emigrate, Henry took charge of hiring a wagon for the baggage, collecting the fair share from each of the party, and traveled free for his efforts. Everyone walked the entire way.

After a few days in Paris, they were ready to embark. Because Henry spoke French, he made the necessary purchases, receiving a commission from each of the others. From Paris, the group walked to the port of Le Havre, a distance Henry spoke of as about 60 miles, but it is actually over a hundred.⁴ They booked passage on the *Richmond*, and had a hard trip before arriving, sixty days later, in New Orleans. Even worse, Henry was robbed of all he possessed by a pickpocket. He especially regretted the loss of an old silver watch that had belonged to his father. He also regretted that he had not convinced his family to come with him. When Marcus died in 1840 at the age of 65, Henry

was greatly pained that he did not see his father again.

Henry looked for work in New Orleans as his funds dwindled. Walking past a restaurant, he was surprised to see his childhood friend Samuel Kaufman standing in the doorway, dressed all in black, wearing white kid gloves, with a napkin over his arm. He was a waiter. Sam quit his job, and he and Henry became partners, buying a very small bill of goods and peddling through the county, each carrying a pack. Before they returned from their first trip, they bought a horse which was blind in one eye. They tied their packs on the horse, and Sam, who was small, rode on top while Henry led the horse. After a few trips, they were able to buy a wagon. Henry continued peddling for a couple of years while Sam managed the store they established in Richmond, Virginia.

Here the handwritten copy ends. A 100 page typewritten article follows, with no author named. She follows

Henry’s narrative, adding other material. The Mayer family, she states, were wine merchants who shipped all over Europe, and later, even to America. Henry is described as intelligent with black eyes, white even teeth, a clear complexion and coal-black hair, with a cheerful disposition. This section is written like a novel. She embellishes the tale of meeting up with Sam in New Orleans, and their peddling days, and covers the next stage of Henry’s life.

Henry’s friend Bernhard Cohen and his wife Regina (or Rachel) lived in



Rachel Mayer. Photos courtesy Dr. Kay Goldman

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Philadelphia. Regina's family history was recorded by her daughter Rebecca, and is located in a different box in our archives.⁵ Regina's grandfather was Nathan Loeb Bomeisler,

dict Lorch, a young lawyer from Mainz. He was actually born in Nancy, where his mother was visiting at the time. At six feet tall, Benedict had served in the French army and been

give you the clothes off his back. His wife kept his clothes under lock and key to keep him from giving them away. Alexander owned a parrot that could out-swear any sailor (he was purchased from one). Many times the parrot yelled, "Fire!" and caused the engines to come out. Alexander also raised white King Charles dogs which commanded a high price.

Leopold became a Methodist, persuaded by the shoemaker he was apprenticed to. He married a Gentile from Philadelphia. On his deathbed, his wife took her three boys away and left him dying, "with the remark that had she known he was a Jew she never would have married him."⁶

Fanny married Henry's business partner, Sam Kaufman, while the family was living in Vicksburg.⁷

Eleanor and Benedict's daughter Regina (Rachel)

married Bernhard H. Cohen, a native of Gericka, Westphalia, in 1835 in Philadelphia. His father was head rabbi over all Westphalia. At age 100, Rabbi Cohen was officiating on Yom Kippur when he began to feel ill, having fasted all day, and he left the bimah. A chair was placed outside the door for him, and there he died, surrounded by the whole congregation. Although human images were not allowed, a Gentile had painted his picture, prints of which became quite popular in many homes.

Bernhard and Regina had a daughter, Rebecca, in 1838. Just before Rebecca was born, her parents had been given a pet monkey. The monkey was jealous of the baby. One day a man rang the doorbell and told them there was a monkey on the roof with a baby in its arms. Mattresses were piled around the house in case he dropped or threw the baby. Mr. Cohen

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Rebecca Mayer's 90th birthday. Photo courtesy of Dr. Kay Goldman.

a manufacturer of cloth. His wife's maiden name was Heller, and she was considered the most beautiful woman in Bavaria. They had two daughters (Theresa and Eleanor) and four sons (Siegfried, Michel, Joe and Louis). All the sons came to America. Theresa stayed in Munich, as did the parents. Eleanor, Regina's mother, was born in 1785 in Munich, Bavaria.

Louis was shipwrecked and captured by Indians. He made the signs of free masonry, which gained the good will of the Chief and gave him safe passage to a town. A widow with children took him in when he became ill. They fell in love and married, although he confessed he had nothing. She took him to a large Philadelphia store, walked into the private office, introduced her new husband and asked that everything be turned over to him! Louis managed her firm for years.

Eleanor, aged 15, married Bene-

a bodyguard of Napoleon. He was wounded at Waterloo or Austerlitz, an injury that plagued him throughout life. His family moved to Mainz, Germany, where he met Eleanor after marriage was proposed between the two, and they agreed to wed. Their wedding was the largest ever in Munich, according to Rebecca, and even members of the nobility attended. They settled in Landau. Eleanor joked to Rebecca that she had played with her big doll until the first baby came. She and Benedict had seven children: Leopold, Alexander, Herman, Louis, Regina (or Rachel), Carolina and Fanny.

The sons were sent to the United States, most likely to Eleanor's brothers in the Philadelphia area. Ten years later, the Lorchs decided to immigrate, also settling in Philadelphia.

All the Lorch sons married non-Jews except Alexander. It was said Alexander was so generous he would

grabbed a handful of nuts and climbed onto the roof and coaxed the monkey to bring the baby to him. They found a new home for the monkey.

Bernhard and Regina left Philadelphia before Rebecca's second birthday and moved to Vicksburg, Mississippi. Although Bernhard may have been trained as a watchmaker, it is likely he operated a general store in Vicksburg. Henry Mayer, the family friend, visited often and formed an attachment to baby Rebecca. As she grew up, he became so fond of her, he called her his "Little Wife."

Bernhard was well educated, very musical, always jolly and happy, his daughter Rebecca remembered. He died at age 33 in 1844 "of congestion of the brain brought on by going to a funeral, and as everybody had to walk in those days, and the heat being terrible, it was July 21st in Vicksburg, Miss."⁸ Rebecca was ten years old. He was buried in a metal coffin so that he could be removed to Cincinnati where Eleanor and Benedict now lived.⁹ The body would travel by boat, but the crew mutinied when they saw a coffin being loaded so the plan was delayed.

The second attempt also failed. The family traveled by dray to take the remains to the landing. As they waited for the steamboat to land, they saw the lights coming, but then there was a great commotion, people ran about yelling, and where the boat and lights had been seen, all was darkness. The boat sank. Bernhard's body had to be buried again. They did not put up a tombstone, since he was to be removed, but then the Civil War came. Vicksburg was shelled, the cemetery was destroyed, and they never found the grave again.

Regina moved the family to Cincinnati to be near her parents. She married Jacob Lowenstein within a year, and had another daughter, Fanny. Rebecca said he was "a worthless person." The marriage was not happy, and Regina soon divorced him

and resumed using the name Cohen. She married a third time to Sigmund Feinberg, a Courlander¹⁰ or Russian, "a fine man and loved by us all,"¹¹ and had other children.¹²

Rebecca was schooled at a convent until she was disciplined one day. Thereafter, she went to the public school without parental knowledge. When this was discovered, her mother was horrified that she was mingling with the hoi polloi, and she was returned to the convent school.

Meanwhile, Henry Mayer was trading among the Indians and had added Spanish to his French, German and English skills. He continued to visit the family and when Rebecca finished school, she and Henry became engaged, marrying in 1852. The bride was 15 and the groom 35.

Their wedding trip was to Chihuahua, Mexico. Rebecca kept a diary of her adventurous trip, which included a riverboat fire and dramatic rescue. The carriage had to be hand steadied to keep it from skidding down the side of the hill. They waited in Independence, Missouri, for merchandise from New York. 500 mules made up their wagon train. When Rebecca met her first Indian, he offered Henry twenty horses for her, but it was no sale. There are tales of mosquitoes, buffalo, prairie dogs, wolves. The diary continues for some 40 pages and makes fascinating reading.

It also made familiar reading. Where had I heard this before? Aha! This diary is the basis for Kay Goldman's book, *With a Doll in One Pocket and a Pistol in the Other: Rebecca Cohen Mayer, 1837-1930*.¹³ Kay told the Mayer story at a joint meeting of TJHS and the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society in El Paso in October of 2008, and wrote a summary for the TJHS News Magazine.¹⁴

Rebecca and Henry's lives read like a well-plotted movie script, or a Saturday morning cliffhanger series, which lurches from adventure to adventure, many of which take place

in Texas. As the draft of this article began to stretch on and on, I realized even an abbreviated account could not do it justice, so I have omitted almost all of the diary.

At some point, Henry took Rebecca's stepfather, Sigmund Feinberg, into the H Mayer business in San Antonio. He was accidentally shot by a man they had befriended named Schwartz. Schwartz in turn was killed years later by an Italian who claimed Schwartz was the cause of his being imprisoned. After Feinberg's death, Regina (Rachel) and her children lived with Henry and Rebecca for a short time, then rented a cottage where Ella, the youngest, died of convulsions. As an old woman, Rebecca wrote, "My grandmother and sister Ella and Feinberg are buried in the disputed graveyard there, in San Antonio, where my mother put up a big stone fence so as to keep Schwartz from being buried next to Feinberg."¹⁵ When Eleanor neared the end of her life, she always carried with her a shroud and a hundred dollars. When she learned the Jews of San Antonio had no burial ground, she donated that money. Others donated as well, and Eleanor was the second person to be buried there. Rachel (Regina) moved back to Philadelphia.

The Mayer family's adventures continued, including an anecdote about translating for Mary Todd Lincoln whom Rebecca encountered shopping in a German department store. The family lived in Liverpool for four years, where their ninth daughter and twelfth child was born. Nina died at six months old.

H Mayer & Co had been highly prosperous, with agents all over the world, but Sam Kaufman, still in charge of the New York end of the business, had been speculating and losing vast sums of the firm's money. The business failed, and Henry had to start over again at age 58. They returned to America in 1875 and went

continued on page 22

to Chicago, living with Rebecca's sister before renting a house. Henry built a grain elevator; Rebecca started a ladies' underwear factory. The banks holding their notes failed, and both businesses were forced into bankruptcy. Rebecca opened a fancy goods store, but gave it up after a year. She took a job in a cloak factory, but had to quit when their daughter Katie died a year after her marriage, leaving a two week old baby to be cared for.

They began a boarding house, but lost money. Finally, Henry became an insurance broker and made good. In 1902, Henry and Rebecca celebrated their golden wedding anniversary. Henry died in 1906 at age 90. Rebecca lived another 23 years, dying at age 93.¹⁶

Here, the typed article ends. As I was replacing it in the file box, I saw a partly crushed piece of paper in the bottom. I smoothed it out and saw it was a handwritten note to Don Teter, a past president of TJHS, from Mary Seidenfeld of Chicago, undated. It says the information I have been reading is Frances Kallison's article

published in the American Jewish Historical Society Quarterly.¹⁷

At the end of Rebecca's article in our file, she notes on April 23, 1917, "Today my 80th birthday a day full of happiness and thank God that I have been permitted to live so long and to be able to have my children and grandchildren also great grandchildren and their fathers, my sister and her family and my brother and a few friends—we have feasted." She wrote a similar statement a year later, noting she had received many flowers and useful presents, but since it was wartime, they only had a plain but good meal. Her daughter Jennie noted that the article was written out in pencil by her mother, and that even after she "got childish" she would read over the notes, making corrections. Daughter Bertha added that Rebecca was 90 years old before she finished all the writing and corrections, her mind only beginning to fail after that age.

This article only hits the high points of the travels and travails of Henry Mayer. I encourage you to read Rebecca's account in our archives,

or Kay Goldman's book, for all the exciting details.

Endnotes

- ¹ Unless otherwise stated, all information is from Box 3A188, The Life and Travels of Henry Mayer, Texas Jewish Historical Society Records, Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin.
- ² Henry spells it "Michial" but Ancestry.com cites the traditional spelling. http://records.ancestry.com/marcus_mayer_records.ashx?pid=148206277.
- ³ I couldn't read Henry's handwriting, but Ancestry.com says her name was Zetshen. http://records.ancestry.com/marcus_mayer_records.ashx?pid=148206277.
- ⁴ <http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/distances.html?n=334>
- ⁵ Box 3A 191, Texas Jewish Historical Society Records, Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin.
- ⁶ Ibid.
- ⁷ Email, Kay Goldman, September 28, 2014.
- ⁸ Box 3A 191, op cit.
- ⁹ Benedict died in Cincinnati in 1849 of cholera, aged 75. Eleanor died in San Antonio in 1855, aged 70, after

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Rockdale Cemetery, continued from page 7

would be placed at each location. Then the headstones would be temporarily dug up and dollied or moved by tractor to an out-of-the-way fence line. The tree would then be pushed over, cut up and hauled away. The headstone replacement would then follow. It isn't a perfect plan, and it is laborious, but it is working for us.


Six trees have already been removed and the holes left by the root structure filled and leveled. We still have the headstones of Mr. Isaac Emsheiner, Mr. Joe Lowenstein Jr., Ms. Rosa Rosenfield, Mr. George Goldsticker and two others "at the sidelines" awaiting the removal of the last six dead standing cedar trees.



Once the tree work and leveling is completed, the cemetery should be in respectable shape again. It does have a mismatched double front gate due to a previous tree fall, but that is only

cosmetic.

The Rockdale Crown Garden Club has taken a recent interest in making landscaping improvements to the cemetery. This has encouraged the cemetery improvement volunteers, and we're anxious to see what they come up with in that regard. One of the many encouraging things that has come out of the cemetery improvement project was the reawakening of a dormant Rockdale Cemetery Committee which was a member of one, and I'm

sorry to say, in name only. We now have a wonderful, diverse group of eight enthusiastic, sincerely dedicated individuals who have a true concern for all of Rockdale's cemeteries. 

TJHS Article Reunites Families

the following letter was received by David and Dolly Seligman from Eric Brahinsky

May 4, 2014

Dear Mr. Seligman (*I hope I have reached the right person*),

I was delighted to run across your article "The Story of Morris Seligman" in the online edition of the January 2007 issue of the Texas Jewish Historical Society Magazine. The article, besides being informative and deeply engaging, has special significance to me because some of the names and places mentioned in it have connections with my own family ancestry.

My paternal grandparents, Nathan and Dasha (Shapiro) Brahinsky, came to the U.S. in 1908 (possibly 1907) and 1911, respectively (they married in 1916). Both were born and raised in Altynovka (or Altinovka) in the Ukraine, then part of Russia. Your article says that your father, Morris, was from "Altinovka...in the state of Minsk in the Bobruikovo district." My research indicates that my grandparents' village was in the Chernigov (Chernihiv) district; nearby towns included Krolovets, Nezhin, and Kono-top with Kiev about 150 miles away. Still you mentioned something that leads me to believe your Altinovka and mine are one and the same...

You said that Morris "made the journey from Russia to Germany with a cousin, Maurice Rifkin, who had a sponsor in Philadelphia." I am presently looking at a family-history docu-

ment that my aunt Hannah Brahinsky (Nathan and Dasha's daughter) wrote in the 1970s. Here are some excerpts of interest:

"My mother, Doris Shapiro, better known as Dasha, was the fourth daughter and the fifth of seven children (five girls and two boys) of Norman (Notie or Noté) and Debbie (Dobé) Shapiro, née Lubinski. Across the road from them lived the Rifkin family (now living in Florida)."

...and later on:

"Maurice Rifkin, who had been my mom's neighbor in Russia, had a travel agency in Philadelphia for many years. We were so disappointed that because of his wife's illness he was unable to attend my parents' 60th wedding anniversary celebration in Dallas. Mr. Rifkin was able to tell Mom (bad news about her family, as he went back to Russia many times."

What a small world: two families were neighbors and close friends around 1900 in Eastern Europe, and more than a century later, their relatives live a short drive away from each other in Texas! I live in San Antonio (but grew up with my family in Dallas).


I have looked up Maurice Rifkin on the internet and learned (perhaps you already knew this) that he was at the center of some notable controversy around 1950: he was under investigation by the FBI because he (and

almost no one else) had applied for and received a certificate that allowed him to send mail to and receive it from, the Soviet Union. Evidently the government suspected him of being some sort of Communist sympathizer or spy, when in fact, he wanted only for members of the Russian-Jewish immigrant community in the U.S. to be able to communicate with and send money and gifts to their families in the old country. (And evidently during much of the period Maurice held this certificate, it was of no use anyway because Stalin was blocking communication and commerce from the other end.)

I will let you go, but I just wanted to thank you for your beautiful and fascinating article.

Eric Brahinsky

P.S. I don't know if you'd be interested, but my aunt, Hanna Brahinsky in Dallas probably knew Maurice Rifkin, and at the very least would know much more about him than I. She is 92, but is still pretty sharp!

(*Editor's note: David Seligman now lives in Austin and said he contacted Hannah Brahinsky and he is fairly certain that these are the same people and are his relatives. Eric Brahinsky gave his permission to reprint his letter in a conversation with David. You never know what will turn up when you send us your family history! Write us today!*) 

Henry Mayer, continued from page 22

several years in poor health. *ibid.*

¹⁰ Courland is a region of western Latvia. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Courland>

¹¹ Box 3A 191, op cit.

¹² Joan Teller. <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~orjgs/ourfamily/joan/joan.htm> Joan is George's daughter. George (1869-1938) was the youngest son of Henry and Rebecca. http://records.ancestry.com/henry_mayer_records.ashx?pid=133401248.

¹³ Kay Goldman, *With a Doll in One*


Pocket and a Pistol in the Other: Rebecca Cohen Mayer, 1837-1930 a Memoir, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform (October 2010). Dr. Goldman found an article at the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives while working on her dissertation. She researched Rebecca's family and contacted Joan Teller (see endnote 12).

¹⁴ TJHS News Magazine, November 2008, p. 11.

¹⁵ Box 3A 191 op cit. There is a photo

of Feinberg's tombstone on page 17 of *Deep in the Heart: The Lives & Legends of Texas Jews* (Ruthe Winggarten and Cathy Schechter. Eakin Press:1990).

¹⁶ <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~orjgs/ourfamily/joan/joan.htm>

¹⁷ Only one article by Frances Kallison is listed in the Center for Jewish History online catalog, her master's thesis for Trinity University. Frances R. Kallison, "100 Years of Jewry in San Antonio," 1977. 

leaders formed a committee to handle the integration of public facilities in Waco in 1961. City leaders were worried that the Air Force would close its nearby base if black soldiers were forced to use segregated facilities in the city. With this economic threat, the leaders decided that they needed to integrate. A.M. Goldstein of the Goldstein-Migel Department Store led this committee which worked quietly to integrate the city's stores and other public places without protests or unrest.

Bernard Rapoport was raised in a politically radical family in San Antonio. Although he later became a successful businessman, creating the American Income Life Insurance Company, he never forgot his progressive roots. Rapoport was actively involved in both state and national politics as a major funder of the Democratic Party. He and his wife, Audre, endowed several chairs at the University of Texas in Austin and at other universities. He died in 2012.

Today, Waco is a growing city, but its Jewish community continues to decline. Most of the Jewish children raised in the city have moved to larger cities seeking economic and social opportunities. Rodef Sholom, which had 161 families in 1995, had only 98 in 2011. Agudath Jacob is even smaller, with about 80 member households in 2011. Despite their small size, both congregations employ full-time rabbis. Rabbi Gordon Fuller has led Congregation Agudath Jacob since 2005, and Rabbi Laura Schwartz Harai is the current rabbi of Rodef Sholom. 🇺🇸

In Memoriam

Ruben H. Edelstein, TJHS member, died on July 21, 2014, in Brownsville. He is survived by his wife, Bernice; his son and daughter-in-law, Julie & Bill Edelstein, his daughter and son-in-law, Beth & Mike Sullivan; three grandchildren, and his brother, Arthur.



Barry Green, TJHS member and former TJHS board member, formerly of Tyler, died on October 3, 2014, in Fort Worth. He is survived by his daughter and son-in-law, Mona & Steve Karten, his son and daughter-in-law, Rachel & Jonathan Green, his daughters, Sheryl Green and Caryn Green; and seven grandchildren.



Ralph Lewis Frapart, TJHS member, died on August 16, 2014, in Brownsville. He is survived by his sons and daughters-in-law, Jules & Phyllis Frapart and Ross & Myra Frapart; his son, David Frapart; seven grandchildren and their spouses; and his brother, Lewis.

Harry Swiff, TJHS member, died on August 25, 2014 in Dallas. He is survived by his son, Brian J. Swiff; his daughter and son-in-law, Shari & Stuart Schwartz; and two grandchildren and their spouses.

Michael (Mike) Jacobs, TJHS member, died on July 28, 2014, in Dallas. He is survived by his wife, Ginger (a past president of TJHS); his daughter, Deborah Linksman; his sons Mark E. Jacobs, Andrew Jacobs, and Reuben Jacobs; four grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.



Helen Jacobson, TJHS member, died on October 8, 2014, in San Antonio. Helen was 104 years old at the time of her death. She is survived by her daughter and son-in-law, Dottie & Sam Miller; her daughter, Liz Helenchild; four grandchildren and their spouses; and two great-grandchildren.



Sherman Kusin, TJHS member and former board member, formerly of Texarkana, Texas, died on August 31, 2014 in Austin. He is survived by his wife, Ellen; his sons and daughters-in-law, Stuart & Jana Kusin and Robert & Angela Kusin; his daughter and son-in-law, Joelle & Aaron Miller; his brother, Mel Kusin; his sister, Gloria Bishkin Davis; and six grandchildren.



May their memories be a blessing.

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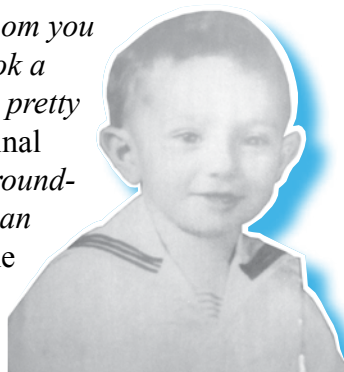
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Your gift will further the efforts to record, preserve, and disseminate historic information about Texas Jewish culture.

— Can You Guess — This Member?

Okay, everyone—no one came forth to Guess this Member, so we will give you one last look and then we will have to tell you! In addition to the clues of *Someone on whom you can depend, and he does look a little older today, but is still pretty handsome/cute*, here's the final one—*Even though he's surrounded by Longhorns, he is still an Aggie!* Maybe the third time is a charm? The winner will receive a year's free membership to TJHS.

Email your guess to Davie Lou Solka at editor@txjhs.org any time beginning **Monday, December 1**. Entries received before that date will not be considered. Previous winners and family members are not eligible to participate. Good luck! 



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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 Sally Drayer at 214-458-7298 or email her at sdrayer@yahoo.com or Marc Wormser at 832-288-3494 or c2aggie@gmail.com.



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