

Texas Jewish Historical Society

Preserving Jewish Heritage in Texas
Est. 1980



March 2017 News Magazine

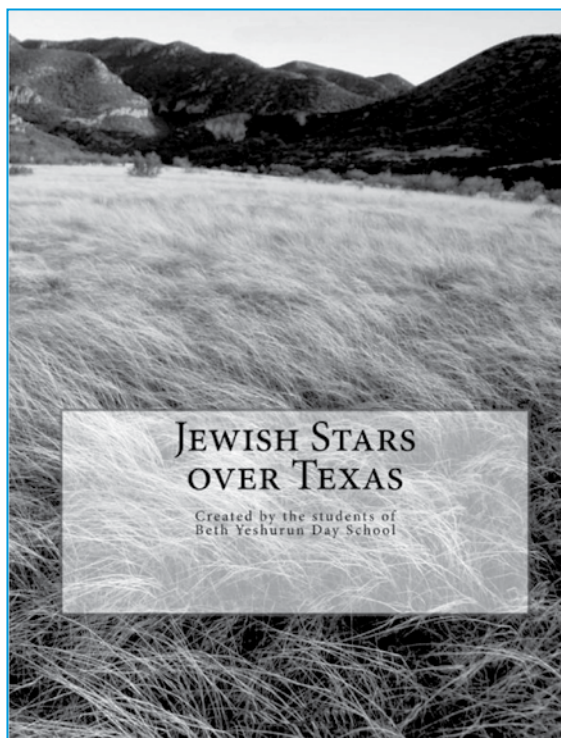
Grant from TJHS Helps Fourth-Graders Publish Book

by Davie Lou Solka

Jewish Stars Over Texas, a 53-page, soft-cover book with biographical profiles of twenty-six important Texas Jews, is available on Amazon for \$11.58. Written and illustrated by fourth-graders at Houston's Beth Yeshurun Day School, the book project was partially funded with a grant from the Texas Jewish Historical Society.

Social Studies teacher Cathryn Mellon hadn't intended to publish a book when she applied to the TJHS for a grant in 2015 to purchase picture frames for her students' color-pencil drawings and one-page typewritten profiles. The educator's initial goal was simply to mount an exhibit focusing on high-profile Texas Jews, past and present. Which she did.

Her students researched historic figures such as Galveston's Rabbi Henry Cohen, philanthropist




and jewelry-store founder M.B. Zale, department store magnate Julius

Rosenwald, and former State Senator Florence Shapiro. The results were exhibited at the school and synagogue.

"We had tremendous response both from grandparents who remembered many of the people and from parents who said, 'I didn't know that so-and-so was Jewish.' Everyone wanted copies of the children's work."

Through CreateSpace, an independent publishing platform that is an offshoot of Amazon, the social studies teacher designed and laid out the book at no cost. Amazon prints and sells the book on demand.

Mellon, who is also Beth Yeshurun Day School's director of curriculum, is working with her current class of fourth graders

on a second edition of *Jewish Stars Over Texas*. 

IN THIS ISSUE:

Message from the President	2	Grant Awarded for "One Foot Over Main Street" 10 by Hollace Weiner
Marshal Temple Moses Montefiore Permanent Exhibit Opening at Harrison County Historical Museum by Audrey Kariel	3	Philip Eldridge and Family 12 by Vickie Vogel
Historical Marker Project by Jane Manaster	6	Austin JCC Host Jewish History Talks 19
		Proposed Slate of Officer and Board Members 22

Message from the President

by David Beer

My dear fellow TJHS members,

First of all, I want to wish all of you the very best for a happy and healthy 2017.

As we begin the New Year and I think back on the past twelve months, my mind goes back through the year (did 2016 fly by, or is it just a “fig leaf” of my imagination?). I think back on the quarterly meetings we attended around the state for our get-togethers, starting a year ago in Galveston for our Winter Meeting. We were hoping for some warm Gulf trade winds, but a cold front arrived with us on Friday—so out with the warm temps idea. None the



less, we honored the ramrod who instigated the idea and concept of the Texas Jewish Historical Society with our first “Extraordinary Preservation of Texas Jewish History” Award. That “ramrod” is our own Rabbi Jimmy Kessler. The good Reb

then went on to be elected the first President of TJHS, and we were off!

For our Annual Gathering, we were in Beaumont (following up with our Gulf Coast vibe). Although our turnout was not as large as we had hoped, those who were in attendance

were enthusiastic and were provided with a wonderful weekend. We had Shabbat Eve services, visited the historic Temple Emanuel, and then followed that with a congregational dinner at the Temple. Over the weekend, we visited museums downtown and then toured a historic home during the afternoon. This was a great way to start off springtime.

For our summer board meeting, we went to Rockport once again, right off the Gulf, hmmm...there seems to be a pattern developing. We were in Rockport for Saturday afternoon and evening and the Sunday morning board meeting. Unfortunately, it rained over the time we were there, but in spite of that, the Five-Year Plan was presented under the guidance of Hollace Weiner and Helen Wilk. Plans to implement the plan were put into motion. Bryan Stone, a professor at Del Mar College in Corpus Christi, the school of which I am an alumni (Go Del Martians!) talked about the just published book that he edited. *Memoires of Two Generations* is the manuscript of an Orthodox Russian immigrant, Alexander Gurwitz (grandfather of our Dr. Neil Gurwitz), who arrived through the port of Galveston in 1910 and eventually settled in San Antonio. He tells his story beginning when he

continued on page 3

The Texas Jewish Historical Society March 2017 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 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.

Editor Davie Lou Solka

Layout/Design Editor Alexa Kirk

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

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



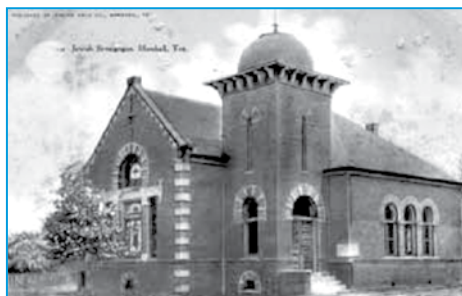
The News Magazine of the Texas Jewish Historical Society (USPS) is published four times a year by the Texas Jewish Historical Society, P. O. Box 10193, Austin, Texas 78766-0193, Travis County. Periodical postage paid at Houston, Texas. Postmaster, send address changes to the Texas Jewish Historical Society,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

— Marshal Temple Moses Montefiore —

Permanent Exhibit Opening at Harrison County Historical Museum


by Audrey Kariel

The Harrison County Historical Museum will host a reception for the opening of the Marshall Temple Moses Montefiore Permanent Exhibit on Saturday, April 22, 2017, from 3:00 to 6:00 PM in the Old Historic Courthouse in Marshall, Texas. The dedication program will be held at 3:30 PM in the historic courtroom. Some of the artifacts of the congregation on exhibit are the Ark, the Eternal Light, a certificate showing



*Temple Moses Montefiore, c. 1900.
From the collection of the Harrison
County Historical Museum.*

a visit from a traveling rabbi from Jerusalem in the 1800's, chairs from the pulpit area, and menorahs. An accompanying booklet for the exhibit will be available.

Special guests will be members of the Texas Jewish Historical Society, who, along with the Southern Jewish Historical Society and numerous donors funded this exhibit. For additional information, contact Audrey Kariel at 903-935-5387. 

President's Message, continued from page 2

was a little boy in Russia. He began writing his memoirs in Yiddish at age fifty-six, and his memory of details from so many years ago are amazing as he relates his life from childhood through his adult life. This book is a must read!

In the fall, we went deep into the Hill Country to Kerrville. This meeting was one of, if not the best weekend of my presidency. We had our largest turn out of members in quite some time and the programs through the weekend were spectacular!

Which brings us up to date with our winter meeting held in Sherman in January. We had a good attendance, and I like what I am seeing—a trend where attendance is continuing to climb from meeting to meeting. That said, I would love to see more you who have not attended a quarterly meeting at all or in some time, plan to join us in San Antonio on April 21-23 for the Annual Gathering.

Friday, night, we were treated to Shabbat Eve dinner at the home of the President of Austin College, Dr. Marjorie Hass and her wonderful husband, Dr. Larry Hass, a professor at Austin


College. Dr. Marjorie Hass is the first woman and first Jewish President of Austin College, which is a liberal arts school founded in 1849. The college hosted our Saturday morning discussion from President Hass and Chaplain John Williams about including the Jewish students into the life of the campus. There are twenty-six Jewish students this year out of a student population 1,300. Following Dr. Hass and Chaplain Williams, we heard from two current Jewish students and one alum about the future of the Jewish Student Organization. We then ate lunch in the school cafeteria. If the food was this good in my days in college, I might have stuck around longer than I did.

After lunch, we visited the Jewish section of the cemetery to hear stories of some of the people who were buried there. To bring these stories to life, some of our members portrayed some of the folks who made a difference for the Jews of Sherman and Denison. After we finished our cemetery visit, members explored historic downtown Sherman, including the Grayson County Courthouse Square with the many shops, restaurants and bars.

Saturday night was dinner and Havdalah service at Fullbelli's Italian Ristorante. Since our scheduled speaker was unable to attend, Hollace Weiner (trooper that she is) put together (in very short order) a presentation about Sherman. Thank you Hollace – you've done it again!

Sunday morning following breakfast, your board met to discuss and act upon TJHS business. We adjourned as the noon hour came, with another wonderful TJHS quarterly meeting concluded and the attending members headed home.

On April 21-23, we will meet in San Antonio for the Annual Gathering. As we enter our 37th year, Texas Jewish History continues to be made, every day. Come join us in San Antonio to see what this Society has done and will continue to do in the future. There are many of you that I have not had the opportunity to meet and learn about your family's Texas roots. Please come share your stories and learn how we Texas Jews have contributed our people's history to the history of this great state of Texas.

See y'all in San Antonio! 

— Winter Board Meeting In Sherman —



Chaplain John Williams



Louis Katz



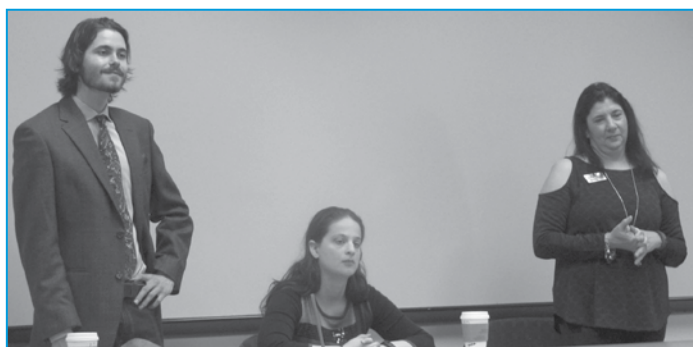
*Hollace Weiner and Gary Whifield,
Chairs for the weekend.*



*Dr. Lawrence and President Dr.
Marjorie Hass, our hosts for Shab-
bat Eve dinner in their home.*



Jan Hart, Deidre Cizon, President Hass, Hollace Weiner, Sally Drayer.



*Student panel—Blake Weinstein, Mandi Sarembock, Laurie
Barker.*



*Shabbat Even dinner at home of Drs. Mar-
jorie and Lawrence Hass*

January 20-22, 2017



Turning Stones into Stories” Players—Nelson Chafetz as Major William Levy; Sally Drayer as Amelia Doppelmayr; Barbara Rosenberg as Ray Exstein Tillman; Helen Wilk as Franciska Tillman; Gary Whitfield as Ike Exstein; Louis Katz as Meyer Doppelmayr.



Nelson Chafetz



Amy Milstein presents a report at the meeting



President Marjorie Hass



Above and to the left: The TJHS crowd at the cemetery.



TJHS members who attended the Winter Board Meeting Weekend.

Historical Marker Project

by Jane Manaster

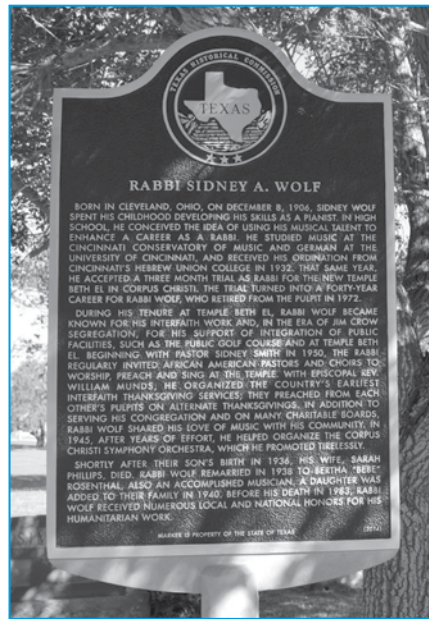
Some 15,000 official Texas State historical markers identify subjects that bear witness to the State's history, and a further 4,500 are categorized as Recorded Texas Historic Landmark (RTHL) buildings that are at least 50-years-old and both architecturally and historically significant. Only around eighty markers relate to Jewish subjects.

Twelve of the present markers denoting Jewish subjects are cemeteries but the range of subjects extends far beyond these and can include, for example, the Hub Shoe Store in Marshall, Hirshfeld Cottage in Austin, Nicholas Adolphus Sterne in Nacogdoches, the Zale Family in Wichita Falls, and Beth-El Congregation in Fort Worth.

Driving across the state, depending partly on our available time, we stop and read the markers and maybe reflect on additional people, places, or organizations that we feel should be remembered for their Jewish connection. Some of these include Frances Kallison, Mayer Halff, Temple Emanu-El Congregation in Dallas, the Jewish cemetery at Terrell State Hospital, and Hirshfeld House.

The Texas Jewish Historical Society has a part to play in remedying the shortage. While distance limits the number of members who can access our growing archive in Austin at the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, we are all able to recognize and indicate to our County Historical Commissions the imprint of Jewish candidates on local history.

But eagerness is insufficient. Historical markers don't come about through a passing thought or whim or passing along a name. Markers demand substantial research often in family papers, library collections, newspapers, our own congregational



The Texas Historical Marker for Rabbi Sidney A. Wolf in Corpus Christie.

records, commercial documentation, and other original documents, photographs, and ephemera.

In addition to subject markers, which may include individuals, organizations, businesses, and one-off curiosities, other designations include the previously mentioned RTHL, and the Historic Texas Cemetery (HTC).

Once possible marker topics have been identified, three formal and sequential steps must be taken:

1. Contact the County Historical Commission, the key player in the whole process.
2. Take the first steps into researching the intended subject to develop a closely detailed narrative.
3. When completed, fill out and submit an application to the County Historical Commission (CHC).

Throughout the procedure, stay in touch with the County Historical Commission which generally holds monthly open meetings. Introduce yourself and your intended project. Your county may well need additional members, so

get in touch with at least one of your County Commissioners and offer to serve.

Those members keen to roll up their sleeves and come up with marker suggestions will find all the requirements and substantial assistance on the Texas Historical Commission's user-friendly website, www.thc.texas.gov. By exploring the site, and acknowledging the Jewish contribution to Texas history, we shall be prompted to add substantially to those earlier markers. To date the majority of markers have been placed in and close to the major cities; the Jewish role in less central and smaller towns must not be forgotten or ignored. For further information or help, contact Jane Manaster at janeman@earthlink.net

This is a sample of the text that is on the historical marker for Jacob de Cordova in Waco placed across from the convention center. TJHS is mentioned at the base of the marker.

"Born to a Jewish family in Spanishtown, Jamaica, British West Indies, Jacob De Cordova immigrated to Philadelphia about 1830. After a brief return to Jamaica where he founded a newspaper, he became engaged in trade between New Orleans and Texas. He and his brother Phineas (1819-1903) opened a shop in Galveston in 1837, then Jacob moved to Houston to establish a highly successful land agency. When Galveston's John S. Sydnor (1812-1869) acquired a large tract of land here on the Brazos River's West Bank in 1847, De Cordova was retained to survey and sell the property. He in turn hired George Bernard Erath (1813-1891) to conduct the survey. By 1848 De Cordova obtained control of the tract and journeyed here with Erath to lay out the town of Waco. About 1849 De

continued on page 19

Notes from the Board Meeting

At the January Board Meeting in Sherman, the following occurred.

Update on Grants Awarded

- Cathryn Mellon, 4th grade teacher at Beth Yeshurun Day School in Houston, Texas, sent a copy of the book her students produced, *Jewish Stars Over Texas*. It was a series of biographies of Texas Jews about whom each student researched and wrote a one-page essay. Portraits were drawn by the students. The book was self-published by the teacher. TJHS gave a grant to help with the framing of the portraits.
- The grant awarded to the Bob Bullock State History Museum was used for a workshop for sixty-five educa-

tors to help teach the Holocaust.

- Work is still progressing on the Rockdale Cemetery clean up.
- Sam Gruber who is working on a book of synagogues of the South in post cards with a special section on Texas synagogues, is progressing with his work. There will be ten sections, totaling eighty-five post cards.
- Part of the grant awarded to Dr. Adriane Katzen for the biography of Dallas socialite, Bea Mallison, has been used to purchase a special camera lens.

Grant Awarded

\$500 was awarded to Jack Yarin to publish research into the identity of

Rope Walker, the aerial artist who died in 1884 in Corsicana, Texas, while performing a tightrope walk between two buildings. Mr. Yarin plans to write three books about his research.

It was decided to give \$1,200 for the marker at the Longview Cemetery contingent on the awarding of the marker.

A committee called **Specific Information Technology Committee** will be formed to explore ways to expand our presence in social media and on the website.

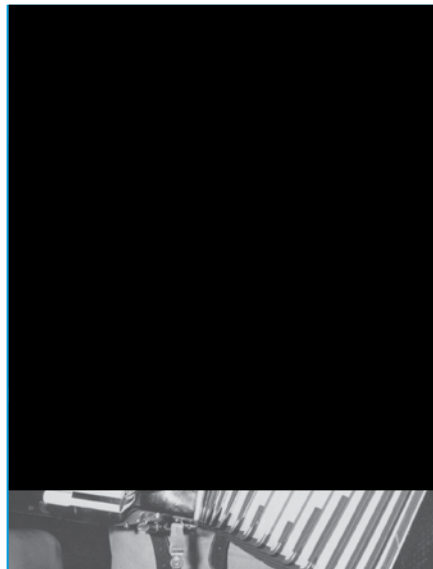
The proposed Slate of Officers for 2017-2018 and board members for 2017-2019 were presented (see list on page 22).



Guess This Member



Well, we finally have a winner! Thanks to **Amy Milstein** who guessed that this lady who has stumped us for one year is our immediate Past President, Debra Winegarten!



Now, see if you can guess this young man. He is a TJHS board member and I did not know he played the accordion. We will have to ask for a concert! 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 Wednesday, March 1. Entries received before that date will not be considered. Previous winners and family members are not eligible to participate. Good luck!



Photograph a Texas Jewish Cemetery Today

by **Gordon Cizon**

The Texas Jewish Historical Society has a project to photograph every Jewish headstone (both front and reverse) in the state. With over one-hundred-seventy-five cemeteries to photograph, your help is needed. A few of the cemeteries have been photographed, and if you will call, I will tell you which ones need to be done.

If you need a camera, we have them to loan along with SD cards. For more information and instructions on how to photograph a cemetery, **please** contact Gordon Cizon at gcizon@swbell.net, 214 361-7179, or 214-868-6543 (cell). If you have one of our cameras and are not using it, **please return them to me.** Your work will go down in history.



Encyclopedia of Texas Jewish Communities

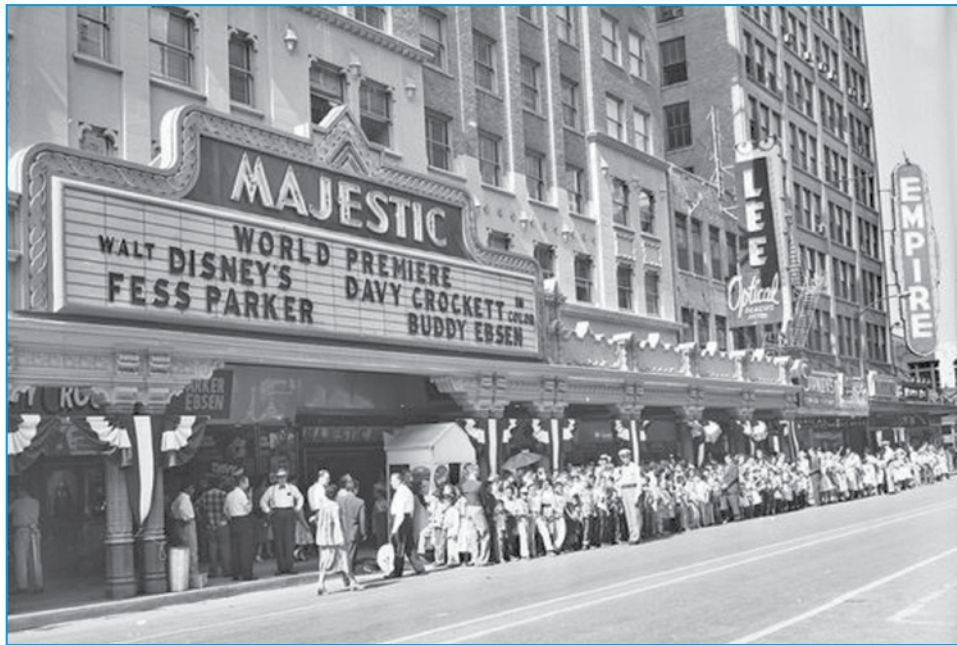
The Texas Jewish Historical Society awarded a grant to the Institute of Southern Jewish Life to research and publish the histories of Jews in Texas towns. These histories are available on the Institute's website and are called "Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities." We will adapt these histories 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 TJHS website at www.txjhs.org, or the Institute's website, www.isjl.org, click on the "History Department" and look for "Encyclopedia" in the drop-down menu.

San Antonio

San Antonio began in 1718 when the Spanish established a military outpost to help prevent French incursions into New Spain. The Spanish constructed a presidio to house its soldiers and four missions to convert the native peoples in the area. A town sprang up around this initial settlement and became part of Mexico after that country gained

its independence from Spain in 1821. Located in the remote northern part of Mexico, San Antonio with its Alamo mission, became an important front in the battle for Texas independence. After the Republic of Texas was established and soon annexed by the United States, a large wave of German immigrants came to San Antonio in the mid-nineteenth century. By 1870, German natives made up over one-third of the population of 8,000 people. The first Jews to settle permanently in San Antonio were part of this German wave.

The first Jew to settle in San Antonio was Louis Zork from Prussia. He and his wife, Adele, were living in



Historic Majestic Theater on the premiere of Walt Disney's Davy Crockett in 1955, Downtown San Antonio.

the city by 1847, and he opened a store by 1851. He later added a wholesale operation that was very successful, and by 1867, Zork was a director of the San Antonio National Bank. He served as a city alderman from 1856 to 1857, and was elected treasurer of Bexar County, serving from 1856 to 1865.

By the end of the decade there were ten or eleven Jewish families living in the city. In 1852, Henry Mayer owned a store, and by 1860, he owned \$10,000 worth of real estate and \$15,000 in personal estate. Both Mayer and Zack were leaders of the Jewish community, and helped buy land for a cemetery in 1856. The Hebrew Be-

nevolent Society was founded the following year. Mayer held perhaps the first Jewish religious services in the city at his home, though they did not meet regularly.

The Civil War was a turning point for the San Antonio Jewish community. Opponents of secession, Henry Mayer and his family left San Antonio after Confed-

erate forces took charge of the city, while the Hebrew Benevolent Society became inactive during the war. The city and the Jewish community began to thrive after the war ended, and growing numbers of Jews were drawn to San Antonio as the city became the economic gateway to Mexico. The Jewish community grew quickly in the post-war years, and in 1886, the Hebrew Benevolent Society was reorganized. It was chartered in 1871, and was later known as the Montefiore Benevolent Society.

Several Jews who came to San Antonio after the war amassed significant fortunes. Alsatian-born Mayer

continued on page 9

Halff came to American in 1850, when he was fourteen years old. After peddling with his older brother out

tional Bank, serving as its president. The Halff's ranching empire did not continue long in the twentieth century.



The view looking south at Alamo Plaza in 1898. The building on the left, owned by Hugo Schmeltzer & Co., became part of the Alamo grounds after being purchased and donated by Clara Driscoll. Photo: Courtesy Arcadia Publishing

of Liberty, Texas, the two opened a store in Liberty in 1856. After his brother drowned, Mayer brought over his younger brother, Solomon, to help him in the business. They moved to San Antonio in 1865, opening a large dry goods operation called M. Halff & Bros. When some of their customers offered to pay their bills in cattle, the Halff brothers moved into ranching. Solomon ran the wholesale dry goods business, which became the largest supply house in the southwest, while Mayer focused on their cattle interests. Mayer bought several ranches in West Texas, and at their peak, the brothers owned over a million acres of land, while their ranches were the third largest producer of cattle in the country. They were among the first ranchers to bring Hereford cattle to Texas. While their cattle interests were in West Texas, the brothers resided in San Antonio, becoming leading figures in the city's business community. Solomon Halff helped organize Alamo National Bank, becoming its first vice-president, while Mayer helped found City Na-

Solomon left the business in 1900, and Mayer's sons eventually sold most of their ranching interests.

Daniel and Anton Oppenheimer were another set of brothers who branched out beyond the dry goods counter. They came to Texas from Bavaria in the 1850s. After fighting for the Confederacy, the brothers moved to San Antonio and opened a general store. According to the *San Antonio Express* in 1880, their store, D&A Oppenheimer "is one of our best known dry goods houses. They transact an enormous business and are known in mostly every household in Western Texas." In the late nineteenth century, Texas law banned state banks, and so many of the Oppenheimers' customers asked to keep their money in the store's safe. Ranchers also used such merchants to front them credit for their endeavors. This banking service for their store customers soon grew into a side business. Around the turn of the century, the brothers closed their store to focus on their banking business. D&A Oppenheimer

remained a private bank and did not belong to the Federal Reserve and nor have FDIC protection. Private banks were later banned in Texas, but the Oppenheimer's bank was allowed to continue since it predated the law. The bank remained a family business, with Dan's son, Jesse, later running it. Dan's grandson, Herbert Oppenheimer, its last president, decided to liquidate the bank in 1988 when there was no one in the family who wanted to run the business.

Julius Joske came to San Antonio in 1867, and opened a small dry goods store. Once he was established economically, he sold the store and returned to Germany to bring his wife and four children back to San Antonio. In 1873, he opened a new store, which grew into the largest department store in the region. Joske's great

innovation was the introduction of penny pricing. Previously, stores in San Antonio sold merchandise at five cent intervals, with a nickel being their lowest price. In 1886, Joske's announced the new penny pricing and the receipt of a huge supply of copper pennies from the United States mint to make change for their customers who would now get a few cents back instead of prices being rounded up to the nearest nickel. When they announced their new pricing policy, they also announced that they had hired a permanent New York buyer who would send the latest big city fashions to the San Antonio store. Joske's sons, Alexander and Siegfried, joined the business, which later became known as Joske Brothers. Alexander bought out his brother in 1903 and greatly expanded the store. In 1929, the store was sold, and later bought by Allied Stores, who built Joske's into a chain of department stores across Texas.

To serve the city's growing Jewish population, Jewish institutions began

continued on page 11

Grant Awarded for "One Foot over Main Street" Research Identifies Corsicana "Rope Walker" of 1884

by Hollace Ava Weiner

(see article on Rope Walker in TJHS News Magazine, November, 2013)

Jim Yarin, a Massachusetts genealogist, received a \$500 grant from the TJHS to publish research into the identity of the "Rope Walker," the aerial artist who plunged to his death in 1884 while performing a high-wire stunt between two buildings in Corsicana. The performer, during his dying hours, whispered that he was Jewish and wished some final words with a rabbi.

Corsicana had no rabbi and sent one of its leading Jewish citizens to the death bed. Together, the two recited a prayer in flawless Hebrew. The man is buried in Corsicana's Hebrew cemetery under a stone engraved "Rope Walker."

For more than a century, the identity of the Rope Walker, who had a peg leg, has intrigued sleuths. Jim



The Corsicana Hebrew Cemetery includes the grave of an anonymous "Rope Walker" who in 1884 fatally fell from a tightrope, leading to a search for his identity which gripped the community. Daily Sun Photo/Michael Kormos.

Yarin began looking in newspapers published between 1868 and 1884 and discovered dozens of write ups of an aerial artist with a wooden leg. The traveling performer went by three names: Joseph Berg, Professor Berg, and Daniel De Houne. According to Yarin's research, Joseph Berg was a German immigrant and a Civil War veteran. He had performed in Austin,

the TJHS will help with design, layout, and publication costs.

The oft-told story of the Rope Walker has resonance in Texas Jewish history. Historian Dr. Bryan Stone, a former TJHS Board member, began his award-winning book *The Chosen Folks* with the story of the Rope Walker, equating it with the precarious balance of Jews in secular society 🇺🇸

Fort Worth, and Dallas as well as small towns in California, Nevada, and Louisiana.

Yarin plans to write three books about his research, with the first tentatively titled *One Foot over Main Street*. To finance the books, he has been raising money through Kickstarter, an online fund raising site.

The grant from

Does TJHS Have Your Current Email Address?

Is your email address current? Has it changed since the 2015 directory was printed? Have you changed email providers? If so, please send Marc Wormser an email at c2aggie@gmail.com so that he can update your information in the database. To reduce postage cost



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, send it today! Thank you. 🇺🇸

to organize. In 1870, women founded the Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Society, which worked to aid Jewish children and families in need. By 1872, San Antonio Jews were meeting informally for prayer at Ruellman Hall. A B'nai B'rith Lodge was started in 1874, and a short-lived Young Men's Hebrew Association started in 1879.

A group of forty-four Jews established Congregation Beth-El in 1874. Most of these founders were relative newcomers to the city. Nine of these founders were listed in the 1870 census and twenty-nine were located in the 1879 or 1880 census. All of these people worked in retail or wholesale trade, as merchants or store clerks. Their average age was thirty-six. The large majority were from Bavaria and Prussia. Four of the founders came from France, and two from Russia and Poland. Because the majority of the founders were from Germany, Beth-El was Reform from its founding, adopting Isaac Mayer Wise's *Minhag America* prayer book. In 1874, the congregation voted sixteen to five to ban head coverings for all worshipers except for the rabbi. One member strongly objected to this rule and demanded that his opposition be noted in the minutes. While most members supported Reform and with Beth-El joining the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (now Union for Reform Judaism) in 1875, there was still disagreement over ritual practices.

Despite these differences, Beth-El moved quickly to raise money for a house of worship, appointing a committee to solicit the Jewish communities of New York, Boston, and Philadelphia for contributions. By 1875, a modest synagogue was built on Travis Square. Rabbi James Gutheim of New Orleans was the keynote speaker at the dedication. According to the local newspaper, the crowd "was composed indiscriminately of Jews and Christians, Protestants, and Catholics." A choir made up of Jews, Christian

church choir members, and people from a local German singing society, performed during the event. Rabbi Gutheim's dedication address was reprinted in the local newspaper's daily edition, rerunning it in the weekly edition due to popular demand.

During its early years, Beth-El struggled financially. They had to dismiss their first full-time spiritual leader, B.E. Jacobs, in 1878, when they could not afford to pay his salary. In 1879, they were able to hire Rev. Isidore Lewinthal, but because of the large number of unaffiliated Jews in the city who were barred from worshipping at Beth-El, he was prevented from officiating at non-member life cycle events.

These financial difficulties came to a head in 1892, when the congregation voted whether to disband or continue. Faced with this decision, the members chose to remain a congregation, and after a series of short-term rabbis, hired Samuel Marks in 1897. By the turn of the century, under Rabbi Marks's guidance, the congregation experienced a tremendous growth, and had outgrown its building. Rabbi Marks pushed for a new building, and it was dedicated in 1903. Beth-El met at a Baptist Church while their new home was under construction.

Rabbi Marks's tenure was sometimes controversial. In 1918, he criticized the congregation from the pulpit for not being more hospitable to Jewish soldiers stationed in the area. That same year, he aroused the ire of the Temple board when he published an editorial in the local newspaper opposing alcohol prohibition. The leadership of the congregation did not want their rabbi weighing in on such controversial political issues and passed a resolution admonishing him. Despite this occasional tension, Rabbi Marks remained on the pulpit and retired in 1920. By that time, the congregation had grown to 252 member families. Rabbi Ephraim Frisch

became Beth-El's rabbi in 1923 and led the congregation for the next two decades.

A few years after the establishment of Beth-El, a growing number of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe began to settle in San Antonio. While this group of Russian immigrants started out as manual laborers, others followed the same path as the earlier German Jewish immigrants, moving into retail trade. Sol Dalkowitz left Lithuania in 1881 and after a few months in New York City he moved to San Antonio to join his older brother, Julius. Both of them began as peddlers, travelling on foot before acquiring a wagon. They covered small town within a 150 mile radius of San Antonio. After a year and a half of peddling, the opened a retail store, Dalkowitz Brothers, in San Antonio. They were able to establish a thriving wholesale operation, supplying stores in the small towns of the area they had visited.

As the number of Orthodox Jews began to grow, they began to establish their own religious organizations. In 1883, they founded a benevolent society called *Gemilath Chasodim*, which also held religious services. Soon after forming, a Torah scroll was acquired and a dedication ceremony was held to which they invited Rabbi Lewinthal of Beth-El. He attended the dedication, but the local newspaper noted that he did not seem to support the formation of a competing congregation and refused to give the priestly blessing. During the group's early years, they met for regular minyans at the home of Max Karotkin and at the Odd Fellows Hall for High Holiday services. Agudas Achim was established in 1889, and Sol Koenigsberg became its first president. None of the twenty-three founders who were mostly merchants, had been founders of Beth-El. This was a distinct group of recent immigrants who wished to

continued on page 16

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 as possible.

Philip Eldridge and Family

by Vickie Vogel

Philip Eldridge was born in 1833 in Prussia.¹ He came to the United States at age 13 with his brother Louis and their sister Pauline. They settled in Ringgold, Louisiana, near New Orleans. Their parents remained in Prussia. Around 1853, Philip married Bertha (called Betty) Cohen in Cincinnati.² Betty was born in Hanover, Germany in 1832 and came to the United States as a young girl. Her parents, like Philip's, remained in Europe. Betty joined her brother Henry, who had become a successful banker after settling in New York. Their sister Emma also immigrated to the U.S. The two brothers, Philip and Louis, married the two sisters, Betty and Emma.

Philip and Louis opened a successful mercantile business in Louisiana, but the Civil War intervened. Both brothers enlisted in 1864 in Company K, 8th Louisiana Cavalry in Bienville Parish, Louisiana. When the war ended, the Eldridge brothers moved to Jefferson and opened P. Eldridge and Brother,³ a wholesale and retail dry goods, grocery and general mer-



Phillip Eldridge with grandchildren, left to right Zellner, Margaret and Elizabeth.

chandise business. It was housed in a large two-story building located at the corner of Polk and Lafayette Streets, with two stores, connected by an arch downstairs. One side was for groceries and the other for general merchandise. Philip also engaged in shipping

and was a tax assessor.

Philip became a U.S. citizen on May 27, 1867. He was well-read, self-educated, and versed in economics, bookkeeping, and commercial law. He was renowned as a raconteur with a keen sense of humor who was able to exert influence on others in private and civic matters.

The Eldridges lived on Henderson street, next door to the Hebrew Sinai Synagogue, where Philip was a charter member when it was organized in 1873. Son David and daughter Sophia sang in the choir. When membership dwindled and the congregation was unable to obtain a rabbi, Philip conducted the services. In fact, he led services from his home a few months before his death, when he was unable to go to the synagogue.

After Philip's death in 1927, services ceased.

When the synagogue closed, the Eldridge family became custodians of the records and ritual objects, some of which are now in the Jefferson His-

continued on page 13

torical Museum.⁴ There is an article in our archives from the *Jefferson Jimplecute* of April 27, 1967 about the museum, where an antique gold cigar clipper used in Jefferson by Philip Eldridge from 1885-1910 and given to Dr. J. A. R. Moseley was on display.⁵

Philip was held in high esteem by Jews as well as the townspeople. He joined the Masonic Lodge in Ringgold, Louisiana and was admitted to the Jefferson lodge⁶ in 1881. In 1883, he was elected treasurer and remained so until his death. Three sons became Masons as they came of age. Philip, at age 92, was believed to be the oldest living member of B'nai B'rith.⁷



Phillip Eldridge. Photo courtesy Ann Bettelheim.

The *Jefferson Jimplecute* published an article in 1911 about "P. Eldridge—Jefferson's Popular Pioneer Merchant—Extensive Dealer in Dry Goods, Shoes, Clothing and Millinery—A Bargain center" who enjoys the "confidence and esteem of the community in which he transacts business and is favored by a patronage which is unwavering and pleasurable..." Philip took this opportunity to thank the public for its patronage during 43 years of merchandising. Al-

though other sources say Philip came to Jefferson in 1867, the newspaper article cites 1857 as the date when he established his business. 1867 seems more likely since five children were born in Louisiana before the sixth child was born in Jefferson in 1868.

Philip's name was a "household word" and stood for "honest dealings and straightforward business methods." The business had an immense stock of groceries, dry goods, notions, shoes, clothing, and millinery "up-to-date and stylish. No shoddy goods find a place here" and prices "are so low as to be in the reach of every pocket book." The article states Eldridge is "one of our best known and respected business men," who is "public spirited and believes in the future growth of Jefferson and is always willing to do his part in helping to advance the city and its interests."⁸

Philip and Betty had six sons (Edward, Louis, Albert, Henry Louis, Samuel, and David) and two daughters (Eva and Sophia, called Sophie).

Edward was born in 1858 and died at age 27 in 1885. He graduated from Emory and Henry College in Virginia, and became a traveling salesman for a large New York and Cincinnati firm. He was killed in a train wreck near Cincinnati. William Henderson, a former classmate who was working in Cincinnati, read of the accident in the paper, visited the wreck, and saw to the shipping of Edward's body to Jefferson. This led to a close friendship between the Henderson and Eldridge families.

Eva was born in 1859. She received certificates of scholarship in music, art, and literature from a Catholic school. She was an accomplished musician and well versed in ancient and modern literature. At some point, her mother, Bertha, became a semi-invalid suffering from rheumatism. As the older daughter, much of the care and running of the household fell to Eva. She never married. Eva died in

Jefferson in 1951.

Louis was born in 1861 and died young in 1874. He loved outdoor activities including swimming, horseback riding, and hiking. While recovering from an ear infection, he was riding near the swimming pool when his attention was drawn to a boy struggling in the water. Louis jumped in and saved the boy from drowning. Water entered his affected ear, and he died from mastoiditis.⁹

Albert Eldridge was born in 1863 and died in infancy in Natchitoches, Louisiana.

David Albert was born in 1866, shortly before the family moved to



Bertha (Betty) Cohen Eldridge. Photo courtesy of Ann Bettelheim

Texas. He married Blanche Zellner (1878-1967), who was born in Tennessee. David was a prominent attorney and served as Dallas County judge.¹⁰ David read law in Jefferson and after a stint in newspaper reporting and other work, he earned enough to put himself through law school at Cumberland University in Lebanon, Tennessee. He formed a partnership with an older lawyer in Jefferson, but relocated to Dallas in 1886 and maintained a solo

continued on page 14

practice.

David was quite devout, teaching Sunday School for many years in Jefferson and at Temple Emanu-El in Dallas, where he was its secretary for seventeen years. David died of a heart attack in Dallas in 1945.

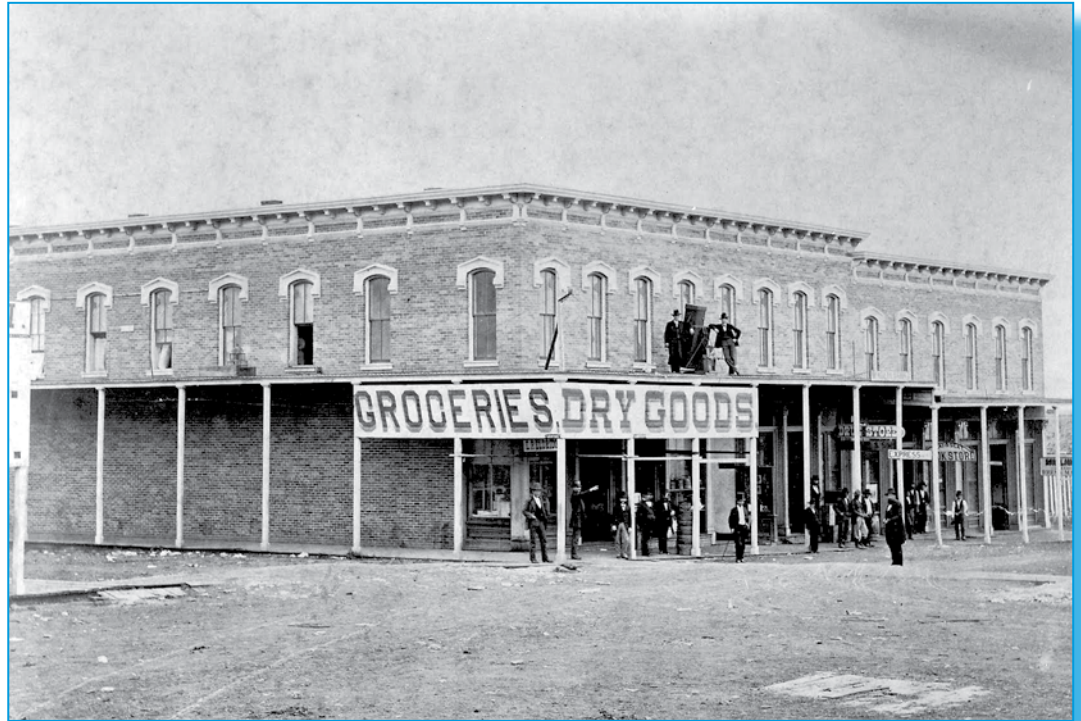
David and Blanche had a son, Zellner Edward Eldridge (1906-1977), born in Dallas.¹¹ Zellner, also a prominent Dallas attorney, married Evelyn "Evvy" Wortsman (1914-2013) of Dallas.¹² Evvy's parents were Dr. David L. (a founder of the Salesmanship Club) and Amelia Wortsman. Evvy graduated from UT-Austin, where she was a campus beauty and a member of Alpha Epsilon Phi sorority. She tutored at-risk students in DISD, volunteered with the American Red Cross, and created flower arrangements for the Dallas Museum of Art. She was known for her style, grace, and sense of humor. They had two children, David and Beth.¹³

Philip and Betty's son Henry Louis was born in 1868 and died in 1955.¹⁴ He received a commercial degree from Poughkeepsie Business College and went into business with his father, closing it when his father was 93.

An elderly German couple lived near Jefferson with a large farm, worked by tenants. The couple had a reputation as being difficult to deal with. One day they came into the Eldridge store to shop on a very busy day. Philip tried to wait on them, but grew impatient with their haggling. He asked Henry to finish their order. They continued to shop with Henry for twenty years. He kept their books for their various tenants at no charge. The husband died, leaving his property to his wife. When the wife died and her

will was read, she had left her entire estate, some 1200 acres of land with livestock, farm implements and rent houses, to Henry. The will stated it was because of Henry's many kindnesses and the consideration he had

Samuel Cohen Eldridge was born February 1, 1872. He married Emma Fisher Levi (1876-1946) in 1906. They had three daughters. After receiving his B.S. degree in 1891 and his LL.B. in 1893, both from Cumberland



Phillip Eldridge store, Jefferson. Photo courtesy of Ann Bettelheim.

shown her and her husband.

Henry was one of the founders of Jefferson's Carnegie Library.¹⁵ In 1954, he donated land to the Jefferson garden club in memory of his sisters, Sophie and Eva, who had been active in that organization.¹⁶ Like his two sisters, Henry never married.

Sophia (Sophie), was born in 1870 in Jefferson.¹⁷ She attended the Belwood Seminary in Anchorage, Kentucky, and Dr. Price's School for Young Ladies in Nashville, Tennessee. Like Eva, she had musical talent, and could sing and play the piano. She was an artist who painted in oil. Sophie taught in the Sunday School and sang in the choir. She also sang in the choir of the Methodist Church in Jefferson. Sophie died in 1953 at Golden Acres in Dallas.

University in Lebanon, Tennessee, he studied in his brother David's law office in Dallas for a year. He was a member of the bars of Texas and Tennessee. He became County Judge and Assistant City Attorney. Sam served as secretary of the Bexar County Democratic Executive Committee. He was secretary of Temple Beth El in San Antonio for 46 years¹⁸ and was named an honorary life member. As a notary public, he is listed in the Bexar County Journal of the Senate of Texas.¹⁹ He was a grand president of District Grand Lodge No. 7 of B'nai B'rith, of which he was also an honorary life member. He was a life member of Alpha Tau Omega fraternity and of Anchor Lodge No. 424. He was a 32nd degree Scottish Rite Mason,

continued on page 15

and served as first vice president of the Texas State Pioneer Association. A paper he wrote, "Union of Youth," was read at the World's Parliament of Religion in Chicago in 1893. Sam taught Sunday School for many years. His hobbies were golfing and bowling, which he enjoyed until he was 82 years old. His bowling team won several trophies.

Sam and Emma had one daughter, Margaret (1908-2003).²⁰ A letter to Sam thanking him for a donation to Congregation Rodfei Sholom (San Antonio) is in our archives. Sam died at home in San Antonio on August 26, 1955.

When Philip Eldridge died in 1927, the *Jewish Record* of San Antonio published an obituary, noting that Sam Eldridge had returned home from his father's funeral. It quoted the *Jefferson Journal*, "Practically the entire citizenship of Jefferson paused and all business and other forms of trade was stopped for an hour this afternoon in respect for Philip Eldridge, 94, prominent pioneer citizen of this section, who died yesterday morning at his home here. Hundreds of sorrowing relatives and friends from almost all over Texas, Louisiana, and some as far away as Cincinnati, Ohio, paid their last tribute... All stores and other places of business in Jefferson were closed from 3 to 5 o'clock in respect for Mr. Eldridge and to give their employes [sic] an opportunity to attend the funeral." Rabbi Abraham Brill of Shreveport officiated. The procession slowly followed the body to the cemetery, and was "one of the largest ever seen here."

One of Philips Confederate comrades said, "(T)he old soldier has fought his last battle in his beloved Southland where he took up arms in a cause he thought to be right, and, like the immortal Stonewall Jackson, he might have said, 'let us pass over the river and rest in the shade of the

trees.'" Masons from around the state gathered for the service. Six pallbearers and 52 honorary pallbearers are listed.²¹

Betty²² and Philip Eldridge are buried in Jefferson in Mount Sinai Cemetery,²³ along with three sons (Edward, Henry, and Louis), and their two daughters, Eva and Sophie. Baby Albert lies in Natchitoches, Louisiana. David is interred in Dallas at Emanu-El Cemetery, and Sam is at Temple Beth El Cemetery on Palmetto Street in San Antonio.

Endnotes

- ¹ Unless otherwise stated, all information is from Box 3A164 of the Texas Jewish Historical Society Records, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin. Biography of the Eldridge Family is a new addition to our archives from Ann Bettelheim, and is not yet catalogued. It was compiled by Elizabeth Bettelheim in 1984.
- ² <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=6649952> ; Unsigned, undated biography notes in Box 3A164. Where discrepancies in dates appear in this document, the dates on the tombstones are used.
- ³ Years later, Louis moved to Galveston. Philip had lived briefly in Austin and McKinney, but settled permanently in Jefferson.
- ⁴ Ruthe Winegarten and Cathy Schechter, *Deep in the Heart: The Lives and Legends of Texas Jews*. Eakin Press, 1990. P. 67.
- ⁵ "Over 3000 Items To Be Displayed at Jefferson Historical Museum, *Jefferson Jimplecute*, April 27, 1967. Also found in our archives are Betty Eldridge's funeral notice for the service from the family residence, Philip's Civil War papers and his citizenship papers.
- ⁶ Philip joined in Sherman, which later consolidated with the Dallas lodge.
- ⁷ *Deep in the Heart*, op cit.

⁸ "P. Eldridge Jefferson's Popular Pioneer Merchant," *Jefferson Jimplecute*, January 20, 1911

⁹ Mastoiditis is a rare infection in the bone behind the ear that can be treated today with antibiotics, but was once a leading cause of child mortality.

¹⁰ *Deep in the Heart*, op cit.

¹¹ <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=41880575>; <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=41880898>

¹² There's a photo of Evelyn Wortsman on p. 20 of the July 2016 edition of the TJHS News Magazine.

¹³ <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=108363569>

¹⁴ <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GSln=Eldridge&GSfn=Henry&GSbyrel=all&GSdyrel=all&GSst=46&GSctry=4&GSob=n&GRid=6902767&df=all&>

¹⁵ *Deep in the Heart*, op cit.

¹⁶ "Copy of Deed of Land to Garden Club," *Jefferson Jimplecute*, May 13, 1954.

¹⁷ <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GSln=Eldridge&GSfn=Henry&GSbyrel=all&GSdyrel=all&GSst=46&GSctry=4&GSob=n&GRid=6902762&df=all&>; <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GSln=Eldridge&GSfn=Eva&GSbyrel=all&GSdyrel=all&GSst=46&GSctry=4&GSob=n&GRid=6902769&df=all&>

¹⁸ *Deep in the Heart*, op cit.

¹⁹ https://books.google.com/books?id=VHpDAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA1139&lpq=PA1139&dq=Sam+C+Eldridge&source=bl&ots=WZxXo4U_cf&sig=Nvc4dtRRFIRHYegOT-NJ0esjzl4&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiK_JSB1r7NAhVeF2MKHfOsCfYEQ6AEIJzAC#v=onepage&q=Sam%20

worship according to the practices of Orthodox Judaism.

In 1890, Agudas Achim bought land for a cemetery and hired Moses Edelhertz as their first spiritual leader. He worked primarily as a *shochet* (kosher butcher) for the congregation until he was replaced by Moses Sadosky in 1893. Agudas Achim held their first High Holiday service at the Knights of Pythias Hall, and drew Orthodox Jews from many small towns in the area. They met in private homes, rented halls, and the back of members' stores until 1898, when the first synagogue building was built. A dedication ceremony was held with Rev. Sadosky leading the service and Beth-El's Rabbi Samuel Marks as the keynote speaker. The Reform rabbi's prominent involvement reflected a cordial relationship between the two segments of the San Antonio Jewish community.

Rabbi Solomon was hired in 1899 and by 1907 Agudas Achim had forty members. By 1911, with seventy-five members, tensions within the congregation began over issues of religious ritual.

In 1907, the non-Jewish wife of founding member Selig Deutschman died. He wanted to bury her in the congregation's cemetery, against the wishes of Rabbi Solomon and several members. She was buried in the Agudas Achim cemetery. In protest of the congregation's movement away from strict adherence to Orthodox Judaism, a group broke away to form B'nai Israel in 1914. The following year, Rabbi Solomon left Agudas Achim to become B'nai Israel's rabbi.

A few years before the split, in 1909, a group of recent immigrants had founded their own Orthodox congregation, Rodfei Sholom. By 1916, B'nai Israel and Rodfei Sholom decided to unite, creating Rodfei Sholom. With about one-hundred members, the new congregation bought a house to use as a synagogue. In 1918, they tore

it down and built a new synagogue on the lot. Daily morning and evening services were held and a *mikvah* was built. By 1912, San Antonio had two kosher butchers and by the 1920s, there were several kosher restaurants catering to the Orthodox community.

In 1912, the two Orthodox congregations created a school called the Hebrew Institute, which taught Hebrew language and Jewish history to the children on weekday afternoons. A building was constructed in 1923 and the school was run by Israel Lewin. Various organizations used the building for functions until the school was dissolved after World War II.

Council of Jewish Women established a chapter in San Antonio in 1907, and Mevaseret Zion, the city's first Zionist organization was founded in 1897. In 1914, Henrietta Szold visited San Antonio and founded a chapter of Hadassah. It soon became defunct, but was reorganized in 1917.

Support for Zionism was strong in San Antonio, primarily from the city's Eastern European Jewish community. When Britain issued a white paper limiting Jewish immigration to Palestine in 1930, the Jewish community formed an emergency committee that held a mass protest meeting. Community leaders spoke, including Mayor C. M. Chambers and Rabbi Ephraim Frisch of Temple Beth-El. A desire to preserve Yiddish and advance the cause of socialism led to the establishment of the Workman's Circle in 1913, and a Yiddish Folk Shule was organized in 1925. Children of these immigrants attended the school where Yiddish language and culture was taught and preserved. The school did not continue as this generation grew older.

While some San Antonio Jews supported the ideals of socialism, others were industrialists drawn to the city because of its cheap labor. In 1918 Charles Schwartz moved his shirt and dress manufacturing company to San Antonio from Chicago.

In 1934, Meyer Pearlstein from the International Ladies Garment Workers Union came to organize the Hispanic women who worked at Schwartz's company, Dorothy's Frocks. In 1936, Lily Schwartz, Charles' widow, decided to close the plant when picket lines caused violent clashes when the workers went on strike. She moved the factory to Dallas where unions had not established a foothold. The Southern Pecan Shelling Company was founded by Julius Seligman in 1926 and hired Mexican female workers. In 1937, a strike was settled in arbitration, Seligman mechanized his operation, reducing his work force from 10,000 to 800. He sold the company in 1946.

In addition to industry San Antonio Jews were heavily involved in the city's retail trade. In the 20th century, a number of the city's prominent department stores were Jewish owned. These included Richbook, Wolff & Marx, Blum's, Dalkowitz, and Solo Serve. Will Frost got his start working for Joske's, and in 1917, he opened a ladies clothing store with his brother, Joe. They expanded the business into the finest department store in the city. Frost Brothers installed air conditioning in their four-story building, one of the first stores to do so. When the brothers died in the 1940s, the store was sold to Gilbert and Sylvan Lang, who expanded the business to locations across the state. In 1970, the chain was sold to Manhattan Industries.

Opened in 1899, Nathan Kallison's saddle shop was the most uniquely Texas-owned business in San Antonio. Nathan's sons, Morris and Perry, took over the business, which had two stores—Kallison's Western Wear and Kallison's Farm and Ranch Store. Perry also broadcasted a radio show called "Cow Country News" for over forty years, using it to promote the stores. Kallison, along with Joe and Harry Freeman, helped lead the charge to get a city coliseum built,

continued on page 17

convincing voters to approve the bond money arguing that it would be able to host an annual livestock show and rodeo. In addition to this store and radio broadcasts, Kallison owned a ranch and raised his own cattle. His wife, Frances, was well known for her interest in history and worked in many areas in San Antonio. She was a founding member and second president of the Texas Jewish Historical Society. In 2016, she was inducted into the National Cowgirl Hall of Fame in Fort Worth.

Nathan Washer moved to San Antonio from Fort Worth in 1899 to open a branch of the men's clothing store he owned with his brother. An active Mason, Washer served as Grand Mason of the Texas Masons in 1901. Later the San Antonio Masonic Lodge was named for Washer, who also served as president of the Chamber of Commerce. He served on the San Antonio School Board, leading an effort in 1922 for a two million bond measure that resulted in six new schools being built. Texas Governor Dan Moody appointed Washer to the State Board of Education in 1928, where he served as president until his death in 1935. Washer also spent twenty years on the San Antonio Public Library Board and helped establish the local symphony orchestra society in 1915.

The wife of a successful jewelry merchant, Anna Hertzberg, organized the Tuesday Night Music Club, a women's musical appreciation group that met in her home for thirty years before it moved to a house it had purchased next door. She was one of the founders of the San Antonio Symphony and in 1915 was elected to the San Antonio School Board at a time when women did not have the right to vote. During the election, both competing sides included her name on their ticket. As president of the Council of Jewish Women, Hertzberg helped create a night school for new immigrants. She was active in various women's clubs,

and served as president of the San Antonio and later, the Texas Federation of Women's Clubs.

By 1937, an estimated 6,900 Jews lived in the Alamo City, while twenty years earlier there had been 3,000. World War II had a significant impact on the city with the population growing 61% during the 1940s. Fort Sam Houston and multiple Air Force bases in the area provided a solid economic base for the city in the post-war years with the Jewish community growing to 9,000 people by 1984.

This growth impacted the three Jewish congregations. By 1924, Beth-El had outgrown its building, and began a building campaign for a new building. David Jacobson was hired as associate rabbi in 1938, and became the senior rabbi when Rabbi Frisch retired in 1942. Under Rabbi's Jacobson's leadership the congregation moved away from classical Reform Judaism and grew significantly during the war years. A new chapel auditorium and social hall were added in 1946, and when Rabbi Jacobson retired in 1976, Temple Beth-El had 853 families. Rabbi Samuel Stahl became senior rabbi and led the congregation for the next twenty-five years. By 1995, the city's only Reform congregation had 1,100 families. When Rabbi Stahl retired and became rabbi emeritus, Rabbi Barry Block became senior rabbi and served until 2013. His tenure ended after controversy within the congregation led to his negotiated departure. In 2016, Rabbi Mara Nathan continues to lead, along with Assistant Rabbi Marina Yergin and Cantor Julie Berlin.

Agudas Achim bought land for a new synagogue in 1918, and constructed a new building in 1923. Under the leadership of Rabbi Gershon Feingenbaum, who came in 1919, the congregation moved away from strict Orthodoxy during the 1920s. By 1946 they were affiliated with the Conservative movement. Because

of financial circumstances during the Great Depression, the congregation could not afford a full time rabbi until 1933 when Rabbi David Tamarkin was hired. After that, Agudas Achim enjoyed greater stability in rabbinic leadership with Rabbi David Tamarkin, Rabbi Sidney Guthman, Rabbi Amram Prero, and currently, Rabbi Jeffrey Abraham, who was hired in 2014. Due to changing demographics, the congregation decided to build a new synagogue on Huebner Road in 1992.

In 1940, Orthodox Rodef Shalom's members were moving away from the synagogue's neighborhood on Wyoming Street. A synagogue was built on Laurel and Ogden Streets in 1950, but the neighborhood began to change, so the congregation moved again to a new building on Northwest Military Highway. This building included a *mikvah* and a *mechitza*. Rabbi Aryen Scheinberg was hired in 1970 and during his four-decade tenure the congregation grew and an expansion of the building became necessary.

In 2016, Rodef Shalom is surrounded by Shalom Place where many members have bought homes so they can easily walk to the synagogue on Shabbat.

Temple Chai was organized in 2005, when dissatisfied congregants at Temple Beth-El left to form a new congregation. It is affiliated with the Union for Reform Judaism and is led by Rabbi David Komerfsky.

Other congregations in San Antonio include Beth Am, a Reconstructionist congregation, founded in 1982; Congregation Israel, a post-denominational covenantal congregation, organized in 2006; and Chabad who has been in San Antonio since 1985.

In addition to numerous religious institutions, the Jewish Federation was founded in 1922; a Jewish Community Center was founded in 1935; a Jewish

continued on page 18

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

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

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

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

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

\$ _____

In honor/memory of: _____

Acknowledge to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Donor Information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

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


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.*

San Antonio, continued from page 17

community day school was founded in 1973; and a Holocaust Museum (located in the JCC) was established in 2001.

During the second half of the 20th century, San Antonio Jews remained active in the city's civic life. Rabbi David Jacobson worked with the bishops of the Catholic and Episcopal Dioceses to integrate the city peacefully. Bill Sinkin also worked to integrate the Fiesta Parade and helped integrate businesses, sitting in at the local Kress store lunch counter with an African American minister friend until he was served. Sinkin served as head of the city's Public Housing Authority.

San Antonio Jews have been involved in state politics. Rose Spector was elected County Judge in 1974, the first woman to serve in that position in Bexar County. In 1980, she was elected as district judge and in 1992, ran successfully for the Texas Supreme Court. Joe Straus was elected to the Texas State House of Representatives in 2005. He was selected Speaker of the Texas House in 2009 and was re-elected in 2011.

The San Antonio Jewish community remains strong and with an estimated 12,500 Jews today continues to support and maintain Jewish life in the city. 

Save the Date

March 9, 2017

65th Anniversary Celebration for Temple Israel in Schulenberg will be held at
3:00 PM

April 21-23, 2017

Annual Gathering,
San Antonio


—Austin JCC Hosts Jewish History Talks—

The Adult Programs Department at the JCC on the Dell Campus in Austin, TX, is hosting a series of Jewish History Talks, with the help of the Texas Jewish Historical Society. Lisa Quay, Adult Programs Director, requested money to help with the series, and TJHS awarded \$1,000 at its board meeting in October. The series began in January with a talk by Debra Winegarten, immediate Past President of TJHS, titled A “Mostly True History of Jews in Texas.” The forty people in attendance enjoyed her


interesting, humorous, and fascinating stories about Jews from the beginnings of Texas to present day. Everyone is looking forward to the rest of the six-part series, and many people who could not attend the first one have made plans to not miss any of the others. Future talks include:

- February 15—**The Galveston Movement**—speaker is Professor Suzy Seriff
- March 22—**A Brief History of Jewish Life in Austin**—speaker is Professor Anthony Orum

- April 19—**Endangered Texas Jewish Cemeteries**—speaker is photographer Robert Neil Cohen
- May 10—**The Republic of Texas, Indianola, Galveston and Hat-tie Heneberg’s Role on the 1925 All-Women Court**—speaker is historian and lawyer David Furlow

Information on Texas Jewish Historical Society will be available at all sessions and all members of the Society are welcome and encouraged to attend. 

Historical Marker Project continued from page 6

Cordova also was retained to sell a vast tract near here on the East Bank of the Brazos. De Cordova donated several lots to the new town, including this Waco Spring site, the common square and sites for numerous schools and churches. He died while formulating a scheme to industrialize the Brazos River Valley and was buried at Kimball in Bosque County (about 45 mi. NW). In 1935 De Cordova’s remains were moved to the State Cemetery in Austin.” 

We need Your Stories!

We are earnestly 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 News Magazine. Everyone has a story to tell, long or short. To submit your story, or if you need help writing your story, contact Davie Lou Solka at davielou@solka.net or 512-527-3799.


Eldridge, continued from page 15

C%20Eldridge&f=false

²⁰ <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GSI-n=Eldridge&GSfn=Sam&GSbyrel=all&GSdyrel=all&GSst=46&GScty=2534&GSctry=4&GSob=n&GRid=156432776&df=all&>

²¹ “Father of S. C. Eldridge Dies Thursday in Jefferson, Texas,” The Jewish Record, July 11, 1924

²² Betty Eldridge died in 1906.

²³ <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GSI-n=Eldridge&GSfn=Philip&GSbyrel=all&GSdyrel=all&GSst=46&GSctry=4&GSob=n&GRid=41880748&df=all&> 


Contributions

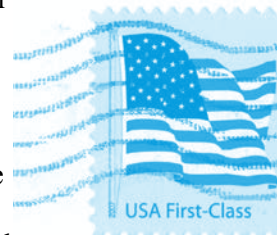
The following donations have been received by the Texas Jewish Historical Society:

In Memory of	From
Shirley Shapiro	Marcy Berman
sent to Mitzi & Rusy Milstein	

Gift Membership to	From
Roslyn (Ros) Goldfarb	Melvin Lipsitz

—Save Postage—

Please notify TJHS when your address has changed or if you may be temporarily away from home when the News Magazine is to be delivered. These issues are returned to us at a postage due return of \$1.52 (at printing date) per Magazine. These amounts add up—it’s your money we are trying to save! 



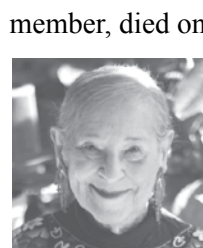
In Memoriam

Irwin "Winky" Salmanson, TJHS



member, died on November 22, 2106, in Austin. He is survived by his wife, Helen; his children, Marc & Kara; and his grandsons, Dylan and Lance Snelson.

Esther Sharlack Vexler, TJHS



member, died on November 1, 2016, in San Antonio, TX. She is survived by her children, Jack & Bette Vexler, Stuart Vexler & Cari Kahn, and Jill Vexler; eight grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Adelle Goldstucker Silberberg,



TJHS member, died on March 22, 2016, in Austin, Texas. She is survived by her husband, Harold; her children, Jay & Langdon Silberberg, John Silberberg Missey Morgan, Celia Silberberg & Barry Jucha, and Harriet & Alan Schwartz; five grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; and her sister and brother-in-law, Elaine & Herb Silverberg.

James R. Alexander, TJHS member,



died on November 24, 2016, in Dallas, Texas. He is survived by his wife, Rosalie Cinnamon Alexander; and cousins, Stuart J. Sharpe and Shayna Sharpe Grundman.



Helene Toomim,

TJHS member, died on January 11, 2017, in Denton, Texas. She was born January 15, 1931 in Houston Tex-

as. She is survived by her daughters, Kim Toomim Schwarzlose and Leah Melissa Toomim; her daughters and sons-in-law, Claudia Toomim & George Moss, Rachel Toomim & Mark Youngblood, and Amy Toomim Manual (TJHS Corresponding Secretary) & David Manual; and seven grandchildren.

May their memories be a blessing.

TJHS Pins Support Texas Historic Cemetery Designations Project

We encourage cities across Texas to protect their Jewish Cemeteries by applying for Texas Historical Cemetery Designations. Texas Jewish Historical Society pins are available for purchase as a way to help defray some of the expense involved in helping Texas communities to get Texas Historic Cemetery Designations for their Jewish Cemeteries.

Each pin is a minimum donation of \$20 payable to Texas Jewish Historical Society.

Please send a check for the number of pins that you want to purchase, and PRINT on the form with your check payable to: Texas Jewish Historical Society, P. O. Box 10193, Austin, TX 78766-0193



Thank you for your support of the Texas Historic Cemetery Designation Project of TJHS!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email address: _____

Donation amount: _____ Check number: _____

Number TJHS pins requested: _____



Texas Jewish Historical Society Grant Application

The mission of the Texas Jewish Historical Society is to expand and enhance the knowledge and understanding of the Jewish presence in Texas and the history of Jews from their first arrival in the State to the present.

We solicit applications for research projects that are in this spirit.
Deadlines for submission are March 1, June 1, September 1, and December 1.

Application Form

The Texas Jewish Historical Society will consider applications from individuals and non-profit organizations in any written or visual media. Attach additional sheets as necessary.

Contact Name: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: (_____) _____ Fax: (_____) _____

Cell: (_____) _____ Email: _____

Title and Description of project.

Briefly outline personal and professional background information that support this application.

What is the anticipated budget for the project? Are you seeking additional support from elsewhere?

Please detail the timeline of your project.

Completed project must acknowledge TJHS support. A copy or account of the completed project should be submitted to the Society's archive at the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas at Austin.

Send applications to: TJHS Grant Committee: P.O. Box 10193, Austin TX 78766-0193, or email to grantchair@txjhs.org.

Welcome New Members!

Margaret Cohen
5322 Imogene St.
Houston, TX 77096
713-480-0481
marge.cohen@gmail.com

Roslyn Goldfarb
5732 Wortham Ln.
Dallas, TX 75252-4918

Drs. Lawrence & Marjorie Hass
921 N. Grand Ave
Sherman, TX

**Bruce & Kathy (Cornelison)
Kravitz**
5810 Westmont Dr.
Austin, TX 78731
512-454-6542
Bruce Cell: 512-779-7185
Kathy Cell: 512-804-8178
brucekravitz@gmail.com

Directory Changes

Lenore Karp
2701 Cembalo Blvd., #303
San Antonio, TX 78230-3045

If you have any changes in your
information, please contact

**Marc Wormser, 1601 S. Riviera Ct.,
Pearland, TX 77581, 832-288-3494
c2aggie@gmail.com**

**The deadline for the
May 2017 TJHS News
Magazine is Friday,
April 21.**

Proposed Slate of Officers Texas Jewish Historical Society 2017-2018

President

Davie Lou Solka (Austin)

1st Vice President

Nelson Chafetz (Austin)

2nd Vice President

Susan Lewis (Big Spring)

3rd Vice President

Jane Manaster (Dallas)

Recording Secretary

Joyce Wormser (Pearland)

Corresponding Secretary

Amy Milstein (Frisco)

Treasurer

Ben Rosenberg (Sugar Land)

Historian

Sally Drayer (Dallas)

Archivist

open (bylaw proposal)

Parliamentarian

Vickie Vogel (LaGrange)

Board Members 2017-2019

Elaine Albin (Rockport)
Douglas Braudaway (Del Rio)
Willie Braudaway (Del Rio)
Diedra Cizon (Dallas)
Brad Greenblum (Austin)
Jan Hart (Temple)
Morton Herman (Fort Worth)
Dan Krause (Richardson)
Harold "Pacey" Laves (Austin)
Marilyn Lippman (Dallas)
Guy Manaster (Dallas)
Abbi Michelson (Lockhart)
Allen Mondell (Dallas)
Cynthia Mondell (Dallas)
Lynna Kay Shuffield (Houston)
Gary Whitfield (Fort Worth)
Cynthia Wolf (Beaumont)

*Nominating Committee: Marc Wormser, Chair; Nelson
Chafetz, Sally Drayer, Jan Hart*

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



TJHS Board of Directors 2015-2016

Officers

President

David Beer (Dallas)

1st Vice-President

Susan Lewis (Big Spring)

2nd Vice-President

Nelson Chafetz (Austin)

3rd Vice-President

Jane Manaster (Dallas)

Treasurer

Ben Rosenberg (Sugar Land)

Recording Secretary

Daniel Weinbaum (Beaumont)

Corresponding Secretary

Amy Manuel (Denton)

Historian

Sally Drayer (Dallas)

Archivist

Samylu Rubin (Dallas)

Parliamentarian

Vickie Vogel (La Grange)

Board of Trustees 2015-2017

Elaine Albin (Rockport)

Douglas Braudaway (Del Rio)

Dick Brooks (Houston)

Suzanne Campbell (San Angelo)

Brad Greenblum (Austin)

Jan Hart (Temple)

Morton Herman (Fort Worth)

Harold "Pacey" Laves (Austin)

Marilyn Lippman (Dallas)

Abbi Michelson (Lockhart)

Amy Milstein (Frisco)

Allen Mondell (Dallas)

Shirley Rich (Houston)

Lynna Kay Shuffield (Houston)

Rosalie Weisfeld (McAllen)

Gary Whitfield (Fort Worth)

Cynthia Wolf (Beaumont)

Joyce Wormser (Pearland)

Board of Trustees 2016-2018

Gordon Cizon (Fort Worth)

Anita Feigenbaum (College Station)

Sonny Gerber (Houston)

Dr. Neil Gurwitz (Bastrop)

Marilyn Jorrie (Boulder, CO)

Joan Katz (Houston)

Louis Katz (Houston)

Kay Krause (Richardson)

Scott Langston (Weatherford)

Joe McClellan (Longview)

Mitzi Milstein (Longview)

Ruth Nathan (Houston)

Davie Lou Solka (Austin)

Jack Solka (Austin)

Phyllis Turkel (Houston)

David Vogel (La Grange)

Hollace Weiner (Fort Worth)

Sherry Zander (Dallas)

Rotating Member

Past Presidents

*(Living Past Presidents are
members of the Board of Trustees,
per our By-Laws.)*

Sally Drayer (Dallas)

Jack Gerrick (Fort Worth)

Charles B. Hart (Temple)

Rabbi Jimmy Kessler (Galveston)

Howard "Rusty" Milstein (Longview)

Marvin Rich (Houston)

Barbara Rosenberg (Sugar Land)

Lionel Schooler (Houston)

Vickie Vogel (La Grange)

Helen Wilk (Corpus Christi)

Marc Wormser (Pearland)

Debbie Winegarten (Austin)

TJHS Traveling Exhibit

The Texas Jewish Historical Society has compiled two museum-quality photo exhibits, which 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 exhibit, and they will be shipped, prepaid freight via UPS in waterproof boxes, to your location. The only expense to the borrower will be shipping 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 214-244-6234 or sallyedraye@gmail.com or contact Marc Wormser at 832-288-3494 or c2aggie@gmail.com.

Texas Jewish
Historical Society
P. O. Box 10193
Austin, Texas 78766-0196

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
HOUSTON, TX
PERMIT NO. 1662

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Texas Jewish Historical Society New Membership and Information Update Form

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)

- ☐ New Member ☐ Donor: _____
☐ Renewing Member Address: _____
☐ **Updated Information Only** Phone: _____
Occasion: _____

Membership Category

- ☐ \$35 Annual Member ☐ \$18 Student Member ☐ \$500 Benefactor
☐ \$50 Supporting Member ☐ \$100 Sponsor ☐ \$1,000 Patron
☐ \$250 Sustaining Member

Name(s): _____

Maiden Name: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ Cell: _____

Email: _____ Website: _____

Contributions to the Texas Jewish Historical Society are tax deductible within the limits of the law.