

*Texas Jewish*  
**HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

PRESERVING  
JEWISH  
HERITAGE  
IN TEXAS

ESTABLISHED 1980

MARCH 1998

NEWSLETTER

**SAN ANTONIO**



*1998 Annual Gathering*

**SAN ANTONIO TEXAS**

**RADISSON HOTEL DOWNTOWN AT MARKET SQUARE**

**MAY 1-3, 1998**

# News from our President



Barbara Rosenberg

Dear Members,

I really enjoyed seeing all of the members of the TJHS "family" who came to our meeting last fall in Hot Springs with the Southern Jewish Historical Society. There seemed to be a great deal of enthusiasm and energy in the atmosphere and we felt very "Southern" as we experienced the warm hospitality of our hosts in Hot Springs and were invigorated by the famous baths that are still available. We certainly made our presence known, as a tally of the 157 attendees from 21 states showed that Texans comprised almost half (69) of those in attendance! Perhaps this shows that we are not unwilling to travel a bit of a distance when the program warrants the effort.

The programs were quite interesting: including papers about Jews of the Confederacy, Southern Jewish politicians, Jews of Appalachia, the Hot Springs Jewish community and the Leo N. Levi Hospital, and the "provincial" viewpoint of Eli Evans, the noted author of the classic history of the Jewish South, *The Provincials*. Several papers were also presented by members of TJHS including Brian Stone's analysis of Kinky Friedman, Jane Guzman's description of current Jewish politicians of the South and their influence, Bob Davis's insights gained from his project on virtual computer restoration of small-town synagogues, and SJHS member and former Texan Leon Socol's news of Brownsville and Breckenridge. Our own Rabbi Larry Jackofsky was also on hand to lead a memorable Shabbat service on Friday evening. Also, the Saturday evening dinner at the famous Arlington Downs racetrack with local entertainment was quite enjoyable. I will never forget that hilarious rendition by the "Shechinotes" of Little Rock singing "It Ain't Easy Keeping Kosher in Yazoo City" . . .

I wish to extend our hearty congratulations and good wishes to Juliet George of Fort Worth for her election to the Board of the Southern Jewish Historical Society.

More recently at the end of January we went South to McAllen for our Winter Board Meeting and experienced a different kind of "Southern" atmosphere in the Valley with the Mexican influence of the area. We learned how Jews have adapted to that culture, learning Spanish adopting nicknames like "Pancho," and assisted in the economic and social development of the area, as we Jews seem to do worldwide. Our sincere thanks to Blanche Sheiness, who keeps me young just talking to her, and Norma Albert (the organizer deluxe) for the local arrangements.

Now we are looking forward to our 1998 Annual Gathering in San Antonio and the long awaited opening of the refurbished Jewish Exhibit at the Institute of Texan Cultures on Saturday evening, May 2. Helen Wilk has been working on the program with Walter Fein, who is in charge of the local arrangements. The program promises to be one of which we will all be proud. It is not too soon to send in your registration, which can be found elsewhere in this newsletter. This project with the Institute of Texan Cultures is another major project accomplished by TJHS, and I look forward to seeing a large turnout for this event!

B'Shalom,

*Barbara Rosenberg*

Barbara Rosenberg  
TJHS President

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 P. O. Box 10193 Austin, Texas U.S.A. 78766-0193  
 TJHS Telephone (281) 276-9693  
 E-Mail address: [tjhs@neosoft.com](mailto:tjhs@neosoft.com)  
 Web Site Address: <http://www.neosoft.com/~tjhs/>

Barbara Rosenberg (Sugar Land) .....	President
Jack Gerrick (Fort Worth) .....	Managing Editor
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Hollace Weiner (Fort Worth) .....	Contributing Editor
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# Come to San Antonio for the 1998 TJHS Annual Spring Gathering

by Helen Wilk (Corpus Christi)

**S**an Antonio will be the site of the 1998 Annual Gathering of the Texas Jewish Historical Society from May 1 through 3. Headquarters will be the Radisson Hotel - Downtown at Market Square.

The exciting focus of this Gathering will be the dedication of the renovated Jewish Exhibit at the University of Texas Institute of Texan Cultures, located in the Hemisphere Plaza at 801 Bowie Street in San Antonio.

The TJHS has helped to make this project possible by consulting on the concept and design, providing funding, and obtaining additional funding from Jewish federations and private foundations throughout the state.

Registration for the Gathering will take place at the Radisson Hotel from 1-4:30 PM on Friday May 1. There will be an Open Board Meeting open to all members at 3:30 PM preceded by an Executive Board Meeting at 3 PM.

Buses will provide transportation to San Antonio's Congregation Agudas Achim leaving the hotel at 5:30 PM for Shabbat dinner followed by Friday evening services led by Rabbi Richard Spiegel and Cantor Lutman.

During dinner we will learn more about the history of the congregation and the move to this lovely new synagogue.

The speakers for Saturday's presentations at the hotel will provide an interesting insight to many aspects of Texas Jewish history.

Lenore Karp, Adult Collection Development Librarian at the San Antonio Public Library, will provide an overview of the early years of San Antonio's Jewish community.

Journalist and author Hollace Weiner will speak about Rabbi Ephraim Frisch's tenure at Temple Beth El.

The human interest side of business development in several small communities around San Antonio will be the topic of Texas A&M Doctoral Candidate Kay Goldman.

Professor Seth Wolitz, who heads the Judaic Studies Program at the University of Texas in Austin will join Dr. Michael Kelly, Director of Libraries at University of Texas-San Antonio, to tell us the extraordinary story about the acquisition of a 6,000 volume collection of Yiddish literature by the University of Texas at San Antonio Library.

Saturday night's Dedication Dinner Gala will be held at the Institute of Texan Cultures at 6:30 PM. After dinner, beginning at 8:30 PM, the San Antonio community is invited to join the dedication ceremony and share the musical program as guests of the Texas Jewish Historical Society. We will be entertained by Janice Rubin, a fabulous folk singer who hails from both Fort Worth and Houston. Her musical program includes some delightful folk songs and the stories behind them, as well as some haunting melodies with lyrics of passion and courage. Janice has recorded a CD of Yiddish folk songs which has received critical acclaim worldwide. You won't want to miss her performance.

At the general business meeting on Sunday morning at the hotel, new officers and board members will be elected and an installation will be conducted by TJHS founder Rabbi Jimmy Kessler of Galveston.

You are cordially invited to join us for this special historic event. For further information, please contact Walter Fein (210) 493-3535 or Helen Wilk (512) 991-1118.

And we hope to see you in San Antonio.

*"Permit me in simple words to bless  
The gathering of hay in the meadows,  
The provider of bread and potatoes,  
The artisan who makes shoes  
As well as slippers,*

*The brilliance of the needle that sews,  
The wheels that manipulate clocks,  
The trundlers of bricklayers' hods,  
The kneader of clay,*

*The erector of tents for human beings —  
And a home.*

## My Blessing

by Chaya Rochel Andres

Taken from her book of poems - YOUTHFUL AGING

*My blessing is for all things on earth  
Which advance humanity's worth."*

# 1998 Annual Texas Jewish Historical Society

## Friday, May 1

- 1-4:30 PM **Registration** - Radisson Hotel
- 3:00 PM **Executive Board Meeting** - Radisson Hotel
- 3:30 PM **OPEN BOARD MEETING** - Radisson Hotel
- 5:15 PM **Board Buses for Congregation Agudas Achim** - Buses leave from Radisson Hotel

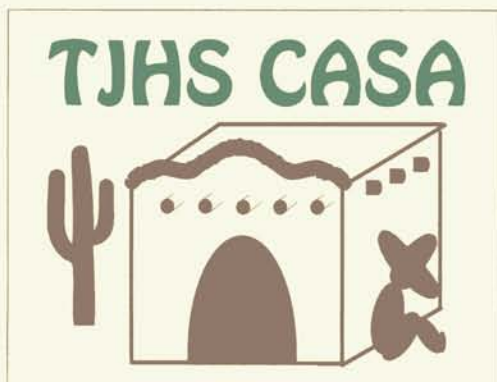
6:00 PM **SHABBAT DINNER**  
Congregation Agudas Achim  
16550 Huebner Road

**History of Agudas Achim** Hy Marcus

- 8:00 PM **Shabbat Services**  
Congregation Agudas Achim  
Rabbi Richard Spiegel & Cantor Lutman

**Oneg Shabbat**

*BUSES WILL RETURN TO HOTEL*



## Saturday, May 2

- 8:00 AM **Torah Study Session** - Radisson Hotel  
Rabbi Jimmy Kessler

8:30 AM **BUFFET BREAKFAST** - Radisson Hotel

9:45 AM - **SESSIONS I & II**  
- Radisson Hotel

**Lenore Karp**, San Antonio Public Library  
"Overview of San Antonio's Early Jewish Community"

**Hollace Weiner**, Journalist & Author  
"The Controversial Rabbi - Rabbi Ephraim Frisch of Temple Beth El, San Antonio"

10:45 AM **Coffee Break**

11:00 AM - **SESSIONS III & IV**  
- Radisson Hotel

**Kay Goldman**, Doctoral Candidate, Texas A&M University  
"Jewish Business Development in Small Communities"

**Professor Seth Wolitz**, Head of Judaic Studies Program at UT-Austin & **Dr. Michael Kelly**, Dir. of Libraries at UT-San Antonio - "How Did a 6,000 Volume Collection of Yiddish Literature Find a Home in San Antonio?"

12:30 PM **LUNCH** - Poolside at the Radisson Hotel

ALL AFTERNOON **Free Time**  
**Hospitality Suite OPEN**

6:00 PM **Board Buses for Institute of Texan Cultures** - Buses leave from Radisson Hotel

6:30 PM **DINNER**  
Institute of Texan Cultures  
801 South Bowie Street

8:30 PM **Musical Program**  
Janice Rubin, Yiddish folk singer

**DEDICATION of Jewish Exhibit**  
Institute of Texan Cultures

*BUSES WILL RETURN TO HOTEL*

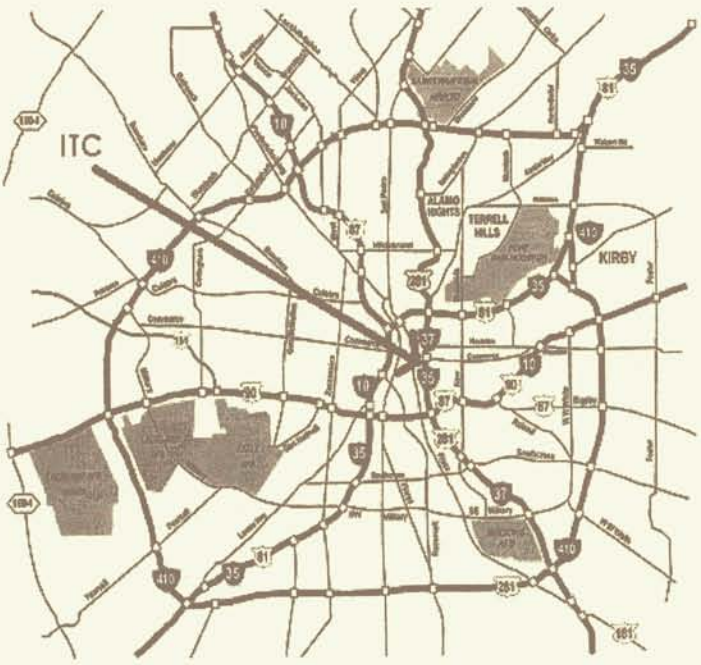


# Gathering Schedule

**Sunday, May 3**

**8:30 AM BUFFET BREAKFAST - Radisson Hotel**

**9:30 AM General Membership Business Meeting  
Election of 1998/99 Officers & Board  
Installation Service - Rabbi James Kessler  
Adjournment**



# Registration

This is the **ONLY** registration form for the Gathering!  
Please list name of each person attending!

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
PLEASE PRINT

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Conference Registration Fee for Members:  
\$145 x \_\_\_\_\_ persons = \_\_\_\_\_

Conference Registration Fee for Non-Members:  
\$170 x \_\_\_\_\_ persons = \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL ENCLOSED:** \_\_\_\_\_

**NO REFUNDS after APRIL 28**

Please make checks payable to: "TJHS"  
Mail to: Texas Jewish Historical Society  
c/o Glenda Alter  
153 Rilla Vista  
San Antonio, TX 78216

## TRANSPORTATION INQUIRY

Please check the following if applicable:  
 I will need transportation in San Antonio.  
 I will have a car and will be happy to provide transportation for others.

**Don't forget to call!**  
**THE RADISSON HOTEL-**  
**DOWNTOWN IN MARKET SQUARE**  
202 West Durango Blvd.  
San Antonio, TX 78207  
for your room reservations  
Tel. (210) 224-7155 or (800) 333-3333  
Fax (210) 224-9130  
**TJHS Rate: \$85 single or double room**  
**RESERVATIONS**  
**MUST BE MADE BY APRIL 10!**

# The Institute of Texan Cultures in San Antonio

What is it? What's its purpose? Who goes there?

by Jack Gerrick (Fort Worth)

**T**he Institute of Texan Cultures is a university educational center dedicated to enhancing the understanding of the history and diverse cultures of Texas through exhibits, programs, and publications that encourage acceptance and appreciation of our differences as well as our common humanity. Operating on the premise that people are stronger citizens when they know more about themselves and each other, the institute provides a forum for understanding culture and history and symbolizes the state's strength in diversity.

The Institute of Texan Cultures opened in 1968 as the Texas Pavilion at HemisFair. During the Fair's

six-month run, the exhibit was so well received that the decision was made to continue and expand its scope to incorporate a wide variety of educational programs. Today, as part of the University of Texas at San Antonio, the Institute maintains more than 50,000 square feet of exhibits and has an average attendance of 300,000 visitors annually, including approximately 70,000 schoolchildren from public and private schools throughout the state.

The Institute tells the story of Texas through the exhibit floor featuring contributions of 27 of the ethnic and cultural groups that settled the state. These are the "Texans," who helped create the Texas

mystique that has continued to lure writers, producers, and travelers to our land.

Our Jewish exhibit has been at the Institute for many years and has grown old and outdated as related to other cultural exhibits. We noted that many of the schoolchildren passed by our exhibit because there was nothing of interest to spark their curiosity. Some of the visitors did not know of a Jewish presence during the formation of the State of Texas.

Many months ago, the Texas Jewish Historical Society voted to renovate and renew our exhibit by issuing a grant to fund the project using professional help from the Institute. And now, at long last the project is completed and ready for the public!!!

The Texas Jewish Historical Society will dedicate the renovated Jewish Exhibit on Saturday May 2 at the Institute in San Antonio. This will coincide with the celebration of the 1998 TJHS Spring Gathering. Please make plans to attend this special event. You won't want to miss it.



*The Institute of Texan Cultures in San Antonio. Be sure to attend the dedication of the newly renovated Jewish exhibit there on Saturday night, May 2, during the TJHS Annual Gathering. See you there.*



## Come on our next TJHS Bus Tour Trip through the South

by Ima Joy Gandler (Waco)

**A** very interesting and historical Texas Jewish Historical Society bus tour trip is being planned for Jackson and Utica, Mississippi, Memphis and Nashville, Tennessee and back to Jackson from July 13-July 18 or 19.

The trip will meet up with the Southern Jewish Historical Society's special exhibit in Jackson Mississippi and will tour special areas of Jewish interest in the Southern parts of the United States. Individuals will provide their own transportation to and back home from Jackson, Mississippi. We hope that enough of our members will be interested so this trip will take place.

The proposed itinerary is as follows:

**July 13 — Jackson.** "Splendors of Versailles," artifacts from the Palace of Versailles presented by the Mississippi Commission for International Cultural Exchange and "Alsace

to America," Discovering a Southern Jewish Heritage, presented by the Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience.

**July 14 — Utica to Memphis.** Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience at Henry S. Jacobs Camp at Utica.

**July 15-18 or 19 — Memphis and Nashville.** Jewish points of interest as well as other well-known tourist attractions.

**July 19 or 20 — Depart Jackson** for home on your own.

We need to know how many people are interested in this trip before we proceed. Only those persons who reply will receive further information as to itinerary, dates, accommodations, cost and other details. If you are interested, please contact **IMA JOY GANDLER**, 3001 Wooded Acres, Waco, Texas 76710, or phone (254) 772-5717 as soon as possible. Please reply no later than April 1st.

## Is Dr. Pepper Jewish?

by Norma Albert (McAllen)

**M**embers of the TJHS who attended the McAllen quarterly meeting last month were privileged to view a videotaped oral history of Moe Adams interviewed by Norma Albert of McAllen.

In the interview Mr. Adams responded to written questions and answered them verbally. He has been deaf for the major part of his life, but has never seemed to let it be a handicap or hinder his active participation in the community, neither Jewish nor civic.

The following is Norma Albert's synopsis of the interview:

Moe Adams was born May 15, 1899 in Waco, Texas to Isaac and Ann Adams. It was his father's third marriage.

Moe was the last of 16 children but the second child of his father's third marriage. He has only one sister, Bess, from this union. All of his other siblings were much older.

His father lived to 107 years of age.

His father was the first distributor of Dr. Pepper in the country and had all of Waco and the whole surrounding county in his distributorship. He also had the Schlitz beer distributorship.

Moe left Waco as a young man to go to Tulsa to check into the oil well business. It was while being caught in a cyclone where the car was covered by snow that Moe walked to the nearest house to get help. As he walked his eardrums froze and he lost his hearing.

He went to the Mayo Clinic and all the doctors he could find, but nothing could be done for him. It was suggested that if he went to live in a warmer climate, perhaps that might help.

His friend, Sam Lack, was moving to McAllen at that time and Moe decided to come also. That was in 1939.

Moe became interested in

helping to find property for Temple Emanuel and was instrumental in finding the location where the Temple now stands. He also found the location for the cemetery. He was treasurer for the Temple and for the cemetery for 45 years.

Moe learned charity as a young boy. His mother always had a gallon of milk for anyone in need and Moe delivered the milk in an open bucket on his bicycle.

Moe is a very charitable and religious man and has never looked upon his deafness as a handicap. He received the Easter Seal Humanitarian award in 1991.



# The Binding of Memory

by Robert P. Davis, Architect & creator of "Virtual Restoration of Small-Town Synagogues in Texas"

All that remains of the Moses Montefiore Temple in Marshall, Texas is the Jerusalem pine planted by the congregation just before construction began in 1898. The building was pulled down in 1972. What evidence remained of what it looked like and just where it stood on the site were insufficient to construct the kind of computer model I was making for other small-town synagogues around Texas. I posted what I had, however, on the Internet site devoted to the project. A few months later I received an e-mail message from a woman in California whose father had been the rabbi in Marshall in 1939. Just before leaving he had taken a roll of snapshots which she had just found — and would I like to see them? From those I was able to put the building back together, inside and out, for everyone to visit as it must have been during the best of times.

What impresses me about this story is not the recovery of this building from the grave, but the chain of memory that made it possible. We are tempted to over-value the artifact, the synagogue building, and overlook the invisible and elusive accumulation of memories of the Jewish community that are bound to it.

The original purpose of the project, Virtual Restoration of Small-Town Synagogues in Texas, sponsored by the Texas Jewish Historical Society, was to document the many synagogues throughout rural Texas whose congregations have evaporated or nearly so, before the buildings disappeared entirely. As an architect I was to prepare architectural drawings — in modern practice computer models — of these buildings. I asked and the TJHS agreed if I might also record some of the memories that people might recall about the synagogue or the Jewish community. As a result of my experience, I believe we vastly underestimate the importance of those memories and overestimate the real value of the buildings. Frankly the buildings aren't much, but the memories are a treasure. The synagogues, as the focus of communal energy and activity, are natural safe deposit boxes for memories, from which they can be retrieved and reconstituted as fragments in the larger

story of a place. My subject is not the synagogue buildings as such, but the memories they contain.

Memories are invisible. Every room, every building, every street in every town is overlaid with memories. A dent in a wall, a crack in a window, a particular chair, a street corner, a person's face — all bear silent witness to some, possibly memorable, event. We have a hole in the wall near the bottom of the stairwell in our house, the result of a temperamental kick by one of our otherwise adorable children. I covered the hole with something I had around, a little tin plate with the Hebrew word "yeladim" (children) embossed on it. It looks OK — after all the children all sleep upstairs. But a sharp-eyed observer asks, What's that doing there — and we tell the story.

Architectural history, I'm afraid, will consign the small-town synagogue to a footnote of some regional vernacular. Some, especially those built before WWII, are lovely, simple, pleasant, and comfortable — but hardly worth a prize, then or now. Walk in most any one of them and you won't see much elaborate decoration — until people begin to talk, conjuring up the memories of the place, and then you see their true adornment. These buildings will always be special to those who grew up in them. When properly restored and revived as the core of common Jewish memory, they will become special to all of us.

I want you to understand what I mean by memory and history: Memory is personalized history. The Yahrzeit plaque with your father's name on it is not just any roster of names on the wall. Memory is what happened to us — history is what happened to them. Memory is whatever we hold in our heads as a nucleus from which we reconstitute the essence of an event, a person, a place, a lifetime. It may be congruent with history or skewed in some personal way by rage, jealousy, disappointment, or some other equally potent emotion. History, even if lifeless and impersonal, at least contains the facts in the case; without it we have no substance. But history without memory has no feeling, and is not much of a story. History charged

with memory, however, can enchant, compel, and bind us to a place or event, though we've never been there.

A good example is Holocaust History whose memorial and spiritual content is so overwhelming, the historic fact becomes nearly irrelevant. The voices of individual survivors speaking memory bind us to their experience. Every Jew feels a visceral connection to the events of the Holocaust, though localized in time and place, that has become universal. It is our capacity to elevate local Jewish history to the universal that makes the memory of a small Texas Jewish community significant. That transformation, from the local to the universal, is a spiritual process.

I was personally moved by what I saw and heard as I traveled from town to town. In just the same way that I was moved by a scene near the end of the movie, *Schindler's List*. You know the scene in the factory just after the guards have fled, it's dark and quiet and the inmate-workers, still in their places, know something horrible has come to an end — a lone voice begins to recite the Kaddish. (*Yiskadal, v'yiskadash, shmey rabah...*). Until that moment I had not thought the movie very credible, but in an instant I was bound to memories of times and persons gone and I wept.

Not all memories are memorable. Most are the stuff of ordinary life which fade and are constantly being replaced. But some events do not fade. Some things we don't forget. Some of those memories are definitive — they define a time or a place or an idea with a short, hard punch. The trick is to recognize the real thing when you see or hear it, bring it back alive, keep it fresh till served.

## Because, It Don't Mean A Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing

There are plenty of Texas towns that had sufficient numbers and resources to establish synagogues but didn't. Everyone who has been associated with establishing and nurturing community institutions knows that it often falls to one person or a small group whose enthusiasm and energy boost the rest into orbit. If you weren't there, the names and dates don't



mean a thing. It is rare to find some evidence, some artifact that conveys that sense of personal commitment and energy that can be felt even by strangers. But, I found one.

The old reform temple in Corsicana, Texas is by any measure an unusual building. Its elaborate, carpentered wood-trimmed clapboard exterior is capped by two distinctive onion domes. The graceful interior is lit by beautiful Tiffany glass windows and shaped by a gently vaulted ceiling. The congregation folded in 1976 and the building was acquired by the city as a conference center. They have faithfully preserved it much as it was when it functioned as a temple. The city manager had given me the key and while snooping around, I found up in the balcony now used for the air conditioning, equipment in a pile of stuff no one had known what to do with and had been unwilling to throw away a framed, hand-lettered and illustrated, now heavily stained testimonial to one of the former congregants:

#### **Testimonial for Sydney Marks**

*Who among us here today deserves the honor  
that we pay  
Who among this crowd the small has always  
been at our beck and call  
This friend of ours of whom I speak has kept us  
here week after week  
Thru the years when we could easily falter he  
always took his place at the altar  
He's been our rabbi, teacher, and president, our  
advisor and leader, he was heaven sent  
How many times we would have locked the  
doors - This Temple would have been no  
more  
He has begged and pleaded and even cursed —  
stay active together that we must  
We loved him and wanted to comply with his  
wishes, even when it came to washing those  
damn dishes  
We could sing his praises so much longer and  
pledge our support so much stronger  
And thank the Lord for such a friend but this little  
story must come to an end  
You've heard enough so I'll end these remarks  
by saying Thanks and God bless Mr. Sydney  
Marks  
March 22, 1959*

This bit of stuff, this charged particle of memory, bound me to this little town. I could easily feel the emotion of the occasion for which this placard was made. Because Sydney Marks, the essence of communal spirit, is not unlike special people I have known. Much more than that, I recognized that we are all implicated in a process which included my finding this testimonial

and presenting it to you. A dormant memory is now hitched up again to the continuum of Jewish history.

I asked people, usually in twos and threes, to give me a guided tour of their town and talk about the best of times. My guides usually began intending to provide me with a neat historic chronicle of Jewish life in the town (who came first, who lived where, who did what and when), but almost immediately they would be diverted by some memory invisible to me. Most tours quickly devolved into a walk down memory lane. Every town has a visible component of streets and buildings and an invisible one of memories clinging to them. No one sees all of them, but everyone who lives there sees some. As a stranger, you see nothing. You are, upon arrival, interrupting a stream of consciousness without knowing till much later where you came in.

We have no idea what is important. Every family tells stories which are cued by odd items: a funny hat, the crack in the dining room wall, that covered hole in our stairwell. There is no obvious way to know; significant memories may be embedded in the most ordinary things. Most everyone here has important memories peculiar to themselves, and concealed in plain wrappers. Just as the Corsicana testimonial connected us to one of the community's sources of energy, the following is an example of a moment that in a flash defines the feeling of the times.

The little temple in Abilene was built right in the middle of WWII in 1942 when building materials for non-war related efforts were nearly unobtainable. But the army was building a 30,000-man training camp which included a medical-records detachment, many of whose personnel would be Jewish. The army asked the Jewish community to build the temple and the building materials were found. I asked Mr. Cohen, who was showing me around the place, why it was named "Temple Mizpah" (Mitzpah, not mitzva) but he didn't answer — either because he thought it obvious or just not worthy of comment. All but two synagogues I visited were named B'nai Israel, Beth Israel, Beth Shalom or some other common Biblical coinage which we all recognize as typical synagogue names. *Mizpah* means watchtower in Hebrew but that is also the name of a Jehovah's Witness magazine. But I kept asking and he finally took out his

wallet and fished out what looked like a silver half-disk, which had been divided from its other half by a zig-zag cut. This is a "Mizpah" coin, he said, They were a kind of charm, popular during WWII, sold in pairs on which was engraved, half on each, this phrase from the Bible: The Lord watch between me and thee, while we are absent one from another."

Whether married couples or sweethearts, the man took one half and the woman the other. It spoke eloquently of its time when the most important personal events during wartime were painful good-byes and joyous homecomings, over which hovered the terrifying probability of the War Department telegram. No better, more meaningful name could have been found for a synagogue which sometimes hosted as many as four marriage ceremonies a day during the war.

I was galvanized by the story that accompanied the coin, as if I'd stumbled on some buried treasure. But, it's not enough to toss it on the table and hear the ring of truth. The memories need to be made coherent, assembled into well-crafted stories, injected into the bloodstream as it were. The following are examples of delivery vehicles that have traditionally been able to find the quickest route to the heart.

Two contemporary plays by a Texas playwright, Mark Harelik (whose mother is treasurer of the TJHS) demonstrate how effectively the lessons of history can be transmitted through good drama. In the play *The Immigrant*, he tells the story of his grandfather Yehezkel Harelik who settled in the small central Texas town of Hamilton and raised a good Jewish family where there were no other Jews. The dramatic moment comes when he splits with his friend and benefactor, the local banker, over the America First issue just before WWII. Here is a modern Abraham maintaining his Jewish identity and integrity. A more recent play, *The Legacy*, explores the darker side of Jewish isolation. The father insists his son, preparing for his Bar Mitzvah, learn to chant his Haftorah in the Old World accents of his grandfather. While the mother, dying of cancer, turns to Christian Science just before the end.

Another especially effective mechanism is Yizkor (or *yahrzeit*): Congregations momentarily swell four times a year for a 5 or 10 minute Yizkor



service during Yom Kippur, Shemini Atzeret, Pesach, and Shavuot. There is the familiar ritual, where tradition is observed, of the filing out of all whose both mother and father are still alive, leaving behind a quiet group, each of whom concentrates on their own personal loss. It is a powerful time, both for those inside as well as those outside. Very few among those saying Kaddish remain dry-eyed. Most are profoundly moved, dwelling on their own mortality, the fragility of life in general, and the conduit of love that connects each of us to the past and carries us into the future.

Food is an especially potent delivery system: I particularly sought out recipes, which somehow figured in the stories of towns and found one for hot tamales in Marshall. The woman of the congregation made and sold them to finance the construction of the Annex, the social hall, in 1931. In San Angelo people remember the delicious aromas of food wafting up from the basement late in the day on Yom Kippur as the community break-fast was being prepared in the kitchen below.

*In Memory's Kitchen: A Legacy of the Women of Terezin*, is a recipe book compiled by concentration camp inmates...desperate for food and on the brink of starvation, these women conjured up memories of wonderful meals and recipes as kind of spiritual substitute for their physical lack.

Neil Folberg's "*And I shall Dwell Among Them: Historic Synagogues of the World*" is an example of art used to convey an unseen spiritual presence. Sometimes bizarre lighting and digital processing tricks are employed to render his own special, and for us illuminating, vision of these unusual synagogue buildings. Artists sometimes have the ability to see or sense the presence of something special in a place, like those invisible memories, without being told, and then express it substantively in a way the rest of us can understand and feel.

There were at least two times when I needed this kind of technique to fully render a multisensory experience of place. (1) Temple Freda in Bryan, Texas sits within yards of the radius of a local switch track. My guide told me that when the train passed by (which was often), all the kids would hang out of the window and cheer it on. Each time I was there a train came by

and I wanted to take the nearly impossible picture of this tiny Greek revival building in the embrace of the Union Pacific Railroad. (2) The Beth Israel sanctuary in San Angelo sits atop a partially submerged basement, has stained glass windows composed of beautiful, uncharacteristically clear and vivid primary colors, and is situated with a long, uncluttered western vista. Barbara Rosenberg told me that as the sun was setting at the time of the high holidays it would shine up through the windows and cast sparkling, color gems all over the ceiling.

I want to praise (faintly and indirectly) the idea of political correctness and sanitized history: I collected lots of local histories which daintily skirted or ignored sensitive issues, whitewashed embarrassing events, and protected the reputations of those who not have deserved it. Most local histories have been thoroughly disinfected and sanitized for someone's protection. People talk, however, with less circumspection than they write; it was sometimes hard, even comical to observe the difference between a written and spoken version of the same event. Yet all of these with the Disney World-type versions of history and the prettily tarted up restorations (Dachau) have their place. Every artifact, every recollection, recreation, and facsimile — honest and dishonest, fraudulent or fanciful — taken altogether allow us to triangulate on the true nature of things.

I've spoken of memories or mementos that by themselves practically tell the story of the place, and of those methods that effectively deliver the goods.

### Doing The Job

**N**ow I'd like to talk about doing the job, or at least how I did mine. During the course of the project I had a number of insights that led to particularly effective methods of information encouragement and collection and the virtual restoration of the synagogue buildings themselves.

Getting people to talk freely was easier than I would have guessed: As noted, memories are invisible and strangers cannot pick them up loose on the ground. They are, however, easily coaxed out of hiding. People want to place their best memories in the public domain — it's how they stay alive — and the darker ones usually find their way there on their own. People want to talk, want to remember, want to share —

sometimes they need only the opportunity to be heard — other times they need to hear the magic word or be given some visual cue — like one of the 3D, interactive computer models, virtual restorations, made for this project. Simply stated, most people are delighted if someone just shows up to listen.

I used an ordinary highway map and the 1908-28 editions of the American Jewish yearbook to plot the communities with synagogues throughout Texas. In the beginning I looked for but could find no discernible pattern of settlement. I called an historian, Suzanne Campbell, in San Angelo who listened to my problem then said one word, "railroad," and with the proper railroad map, I was back on track.

There were plenty of gaps in my knowledge of places that I attempted to fill in from unusual sources. A jewelry salesman who traveled the region (eastern LA to west Texas, Mexico to Oklahoma) from the early 50's to the late 70's seemed to know every town and every Jewish family in it and had an opinion about each of them. We spent several hours with a large scale map rolled out on the kitchen table talking about the communities, the personalities, who was a proud Jew and who was trying to sneak away, and whether he was able to make a dollar on their trade.

It's time to explain just what virtual restoration is. It is a process of computer simulation whereby the visual and aural aspects of a building are reproduced in apparent 3D within the artificial viewing environment of the computer screen. It is a model which can, at the will of the viewer, be turned in any direction, split apart, flown over, under, around, and through. The model can be quite simple or so detailed that every lump, scratch, and broken window shade can be rendered with convincing photorealism. The sun can be made to shine through the windows at any angle appropriate to the time of day or season of the year and moving parts can be made to move. With enough money we can even put old Mr. Susnitsky with his long white beard back in his accustomed seat at B'nai Abraham in Brenham, Texas in 1930.

What's the point of this technical exercise? I have already said the artifacts, the buildings are far less important than the memories which overlay them. But that is the point and their function: to provide those who can't travel back to the source,



the thing itself, a point of reference, a spur to memory. Sometimes it is enough to see a reasonable facsimile and say, "I remember sitting in that corner over by the stove, etc." It helps to reconstruct it as they remember it, when it was the best of times. That might mean turning the present-day church back into a synagogue, tearing down later accretions, and rebuilding the mikvah as it stood in 1936.

The Brenham Mikvah was a few strips of concrete foundation wall almost completely concealed in the grass. It had been torn down in the early 50's. From a variety of recollections of those who had seen it or used it, I was able to reconstruct it to the present model of the synagogue.

Most architects work with a small inventory of readily available materials, crafts, and methods of construction. Today it's sheetrock on metal studs, acoustical ceiling tile and carpet; 100 years ago it was plaster on lath, pressed tin ceilings, and plank floors. Although buildings of a particular period may differ markedly from each other, they will usually be assembled from the same kit of parts. This process is common to every period in architecture from ancient to modern times.

I found while routinely measuring the

old synagogue buildings and noting the materials and methods of construction, I began to recognize and understand how to use the kit of parts of that period. Then, while constructing the computer model using a kind of software that simulates the building process itself, I instinctively applied the patterns of that era with the same facility as my own. In other words, I could anticipate the original architect's next likely move and proceed to virtually construct the building only referring to my field dimensions. I developed a natural sense of how the building was originally constructed and sometimes why — this led to an increased awareness of just when something departed from the expected. At that point I instinctively looked for a story...

In a town not too far from Houston, there was a nice little synagogue built in the late 20's. As I was measuring the interior and observing the carpentry details, it was clear the Bimah had been constructed originally with access from either side. At some point the sides had been closed up and a single set of front steps built — but when and why. Some time later I heard the story that connected to that construction anomaly. A young woman was planning her marriage in the synagogue. She wanted

to march straight up the aisle rather than make the series of undramatic and unbecoming right-angle turns. Her father gained permission from the Rabbi to alter the bimah just for the wedding and then reconstruct it afterwards at his expense. Just before the wedding, the young woman went up to visit her fiancée in Waco and there was a terrible auto accident. The wedding never took place and the altered construction remains as a silent memorial to that tragedy.

Those stories hidden in quirks of construction and odd conjunctions become apparent when one is able to somehow enter the flow of the building, and feel the assembly of its parts in just the way the original architect and builders did. Every building, every community has its particular rhythm which if you are quiet and observant and attentive you can discover. That is how the stories can be made to live again.

### Conclusion

**E**ach of those empty synagogues, out on the Texas plain or anywhere else, is a packed valise, full of memories and ready for pickup. Its little nametag reads "If found, return to the Jewish people."

## This is Your Life — Winston Heidenheimer





# The Jewish Herald-Voice at Ninety

by Bryan Edward Stone (Austin)

**T**his April the *Jewish Herald-Voice* will celebrate its ninetieth year of recording the growth and activities of the Jewish community of Houston. It plays a very important role in Houston today, but its long history is relatively little known.



Joe and Jeanne Samuels, current editors of the Jewish Herald Voice since 1973.

The *Jewish Herald-Voice* began in 1908 as the *Jewish Herald*, a journal which Edgar Goldberg, its founding editor, imagined as an English-language weekly “which would chronicle the news affecting the Jews of Texas.” Believing that “the Jews of Texas are interested in Texas just a little bit more than they are in Ohio or New York,” he presented news and opinions from around the state, providing Texas Jews their only regular shared forum. Just seven years after its founding, Goldberg changed the paper’s name to the *Texas Jewish Herald* to reflect his statewide view of the Jewish community. In addition to covering news from around Texas, Goldberg also established a policy — still in effect today — of giving equal space to Jews of every denomination and belief. He saw this approach as the only way to hold together a community that was prone to split along lines of practice and politics. This policy often brought him

criticism: “We have been accused of being anti-Zionistic — of being Zionistic — of being too much in favor of reform — and of giving only Orthodox news,” he remarked. “Well, at any rate, we have not been accused of being unJewish.”

Goldberg was at the paper’s helm through some of the most crucial events in Texas-Jewish history. The Galveston Movement, which landed the first boatload of Jewish immigrants in Texas in 1907, was a favorite subject, and its successes and trials were carefully documented in articles and editorials. Goldberg’s *Herald* recorded the establishment of new synagogues across the state, encouraged its readers to participate in B’nai B’rith and the National Council of Jewish Women, and in editorials by prominent rabbis like Henry Cohen of Galveston and Samuel Rosinger of Beaumont counseled them on how to preserve as much Jewish tradition as possible in the “hinterland” of Texas. And even as it celebrated Jewish success and prosperity in Texas, it recorded the rise of anti-Semitism: the Ku Klux Klan at home and the Nazis abroad.

When Goldberg died in 1937, the paper passed into the care of David H. White, an active and popular member of Houston’s Jewish community and founder of a local monthly, the *Jewish Voice*. White merged the two papers into the *Jewish Herald-Voice* and proclaimed the new periodical to represent “The Jewish Herald’s 31 Years Experience PLUS The Jewish Voice, The Vigor of Youth.” Under White’s 25-year supervision the *Herald*, which had suffered severe financial setbacks during the Great Depression, recovered fully and became the most important forum in the city for Jews to communicate with one another about local activities, debate issues of national and international importance, and consider forceful opinion presented by White and other contributors. As Jewish newspapers were established in other Texas cities, the *Herald* necessarily became more focused

on events at home than elsewhere in the state, but Houston was a thriving community that provided more than enough material to fill the pages. In addition, White was dedicated to providing full coverage of international news. On May 20, 1948, for example, the paper’s headline announced “Republic of Israel Proclaimed May 14.” White’s editorial celebrated the event as “A Fulfillment of a Dream” and declared that “Much good will come out of this tiny nation. The United States will always be proud that it was the first to recognize the rebirth of Israel.”

When Dave White died in 1972, the *Herald* remembered him as “Houston’s No. 1 Jewish elder statesman. An intellectual. Champion of black rights. And yet, in politics, supporter of the man, not of party or philosophical labels.” His wife, Ida, ran the paper for a while until its current editors, Joe and Jeanne Samuels, bought it from her in 1973.

The Samuels have approached their role with a keen sense of the history behind their newspaper, and they have done a great deal to remind Houston Jews of the generations of Jewish pioneers who came before them. They have also overseen the development of the *Herald* into something much more than a bulletin of events and ideas. When they bought the paper it had fewer than 3,000 subscribers and was about 18 pages in length. Today its circulation has more than doubled, and an average issue fills about 40 pages, plus frequent supplemental sections that can make the weekly total as many as 80 pages.

And its readers aren’t all Jewish. As Jeanne Samuels says, “politicians feel the Jewish community can be the swing vote in elections,” and the *Herald*’s endorsement can carry a lot of weight. “We’re deluged with candidates before every election,” she says, “and many politicians and academics read the *Herald* to keep abreast of feelings within the Jewish community.” The *Herald* also offers some of the most complete coverage



available of events in Israel and the Middle East. The establishment of Israel was "the grandest thing that's happened to the Jewish people," Joe Samuels says, "and it has a great impact on the American people and our government." Texans, Jewish or not, turn to the *Herald* for details on those issues that might not make it into local dailies.

In addition to the traditional coverage of politics, organizational activities and religious news, the *Herald* covers a wide range of topics including arts and entertainment, cooking, sports, and health. As Houston's Jewish community has become increasingly complex and diverse, the *Jewish Herald-Voice* has expanded along with it to provide coverage to all groups and points of view. For people with an interest in Texas Jewish history — whether professional scholars or amateur genealogists — the *Jewish Herald-Voice* is a fascinating and invaluable resource. The longest-running Jewish paper in the Southwest and one of the oldest in the country, its past issues — available at the paper's offices in Houston and on microfilm at the Center for American History in Austin — reveal more about Texas Jewish life, thought, culture and development over the last ninety years than any other single source.

*Editor's Note: TJHS member Bryan Edward Stone is a young writer based in Austin Texas. Be on the lookout for him. He's going places, like a West Texas tornado in July.*

## "Roots"

### Millions of Americans Seek Their Ancestors in Record Books, Cemeteries & Cyberspace

by Jack Gerrick (Fort Worth)

Americans have long had a passion for climbing family trees — from watching "Roots" to mailing away for supposed proof of ties to the crowned heads of Europe. But in the past few years, genealogy has gone from a mere spectator sport to a major league passion.

A 1995 survey for American Demographics Magazine found that 42 million Americans have started to trace their heritage. Last month Broderbund software sold the one millionth copy of its *Family Tree Maker* computer program. The Internet has also made it easier to track down everything from birth certificates to people with similar surnames. Now Americans of East European descent have access to documents behind the old Iron Curtain.

But the biggest boom to the heritage hunt has been cyberspace. Many European Jews have difficulty finding their ancestors since the Nazis burned records kept in synagogues, but the rulers of the 19th century kept very careful tabs on their subjects and many of those documents have recently become available with the dissolution of the Soviet bloc.

Experts warn that the computer isn't a one-stop genealogical shop. Libraries and courthouses still contain primary-source information, such as birth certificates, real-estate deeds and wills.

Here is some help to shake the family tree:

◆ **Web Site:**

[www.oz.net/~cyndihow/sites.htm](http://www.oz.net/~cyndihow/sites.htm)---specializing in ethnic searches

◆ **Web Site:**

[www.ancestrysearch.com](http://www.ancestrysearch.com)

◆ **CD-ROMS:**

*Family Origins* (\$29.95) from Parsons Technology;

*Family Tree Maker* (\$69.95) from Broderbund Software

◆ **Libraries:**

The Family History Library in Salt Lake City. Their telephone 800-346-6044. A Rabbi is on staff.

◆ **Books:**

"Ancestors" (\$16.00) by Houghton Mifflin;

"The Source" (\$63.93) by Ancestry

## Genealogical Request

We have had a request for any information concerning **German Jews** who came with and after **Heinrich Pfluger's** colonists in 1846 to the **Pflugerville** area.

Contact **Eliud Martinez**, 137 Nisbet Way, Riverside CA 92507, if you have any information.

Thank you.



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## Photo from the Past



*Circa 1915, this photograph is of Rose Epstein Maas, Simon Friend and Esther Steinberg Friend. The location is Murdoch's Beach in Galveston, Texas. Thank you Gertrude Toro for getting this fabulous photo to us to share with everyone.*

## Photo from our Hot Springs Meeting in November



*If you were in Hot Springs in November, you should be in this photo. We had 69 members in attendance, and everybody had a great time. It was a good meeting.*



# Jewish Settlement in Texas

by Robert P. Davis (Houston)

Creator of "Virtual Restoration of Small-Town Synagogues in Texas"

Imagine a world of almost limitless opportunity: land in every direction could be bought for a song; eager customers with nowhere to shop; and jobs available to anyone able to step off the train. Coupled to this vast economic potential was a feeling of expansive, infectious optimism that gave everyone the feeling that they had arrived in the right place at the right time. And, nobody could care less if you were Jewish.

Western European, mostly German Jews had been arriving in noticeable numbers since before the Civil War. Revolutionary turmoil attended the gestation of the modern German state in the 1840-50's and many Jews decided to move elsewhere for their health. Although some arrived directly by sea, there was a steady percolation of people from the Eastern Seaboard through communities in the South. A few took up farming in central Texas, but most settled in towns in their line of march like Jefferson and Marshall or near the Gulf ports of entry, Galveston and Victoria. Those two nodes, the Northeast earlier and the Gulf later, constitute the major points of entry for the flow of Jewish immigration into eastern Texas.

It is significant that the small towns in this study are shown here on a railroad map of Texas. During the period of greatest settlement, ca. 1880-1920, the railroad provided reliable, economical, and efficient transportation to the interior of the state. The towns bunch up nicely north or south reflecting their development along separate systems. People in Abilene (Union Pacific RR) had more to do with Texarkana, almost 300 miles to the east, than they did with San Angelo (Santa Fe RR), less than 100 miles south. In 1886 Bnai Israel, the Reform congregation in Galveston, hired Henry Cohen, an Orthodox-trained rabbi from London. He would be associated in one way or another with Jewish settlement in Texas for most of his 62-year tenure. Many of the investors in the Gulf, Colorado, and Santa Fe Railroad, which moved up the Brazos River Valley then turned west to San Angelo, were members of Cohen's

congregation. Later, the Galveston Plan would ally prosperous (German) Jews in New York and Galveston in a scheme with both social and economic benefits for its supporters.

Railroads, like shopping malls today, were the development instruments of their time. Government charters promised large tracts of land along the railroad alignment in exchange for its construction. Rail access "quickened" the land around it, increasing its frontage value just as freeways do. Passengers holding their one-way tickets to Richmond, Rosenberg, Sealy, Bellville, Brenham, Somerville, Caldwell, Milano, and points west were all potential customers for building lots.

Most Jews coming to small Texas towns were nominally Orthodox, by training and culture. In a very short time, however, they either moderated their religious practice or made their way to the big cities. Kosher meat, mikvahs, schools for the children, and learned men were, then as now, hard to find in the country. The Reform Pittsburgh Platform of 1885 turned those defects into virtues and provided a tolerable, "American" program for many small town synagogues. The older communities in the northeast like Marshall were more predisposed to the Reform view from the beginning, but most towns eventually came around to acceptance if not affiliation.

By 1910 there was a Jewish presence in many county seats and trading towns in the state. This often took the form of a Hebrew Free Loan or other self-help society, subscribers to the Jewish Publication Society, or a cemetery. During this, the period of the Galveston Plan, the clash between already established, Westernized German Jews and the less seemly Ost Yuden lately out of the shetl played out in their deliberate distribution to ports far removed from New York City. The social tension between these two groups never really dissipated. In time, however, the preponderance of Eastern European Jews flavored most communities.

Communities formed often as a widespread network of small towns linked

to a trading center. Everyone came together for the holidays in the local Oddfellows Hall or similar quarters. After WWI some of these places managed to build synagogues, which took no small effort, resources, and will. Some towns had it, most didn't. Brenham with a handful of families built an Orthodox Shul before the turn of the century, while Calvert with more than 40 families and a few wealthy donors never got anything out of the ground. The building of the synagogue was the ultimate representation of communal energy. In the prewar years it was a haven for those whose English might still be heavily accented and others for whom acculturation was painful. In the postwar years it was a demonstration of the successful conclusion of that process.

Few in the old country knew they would fetch up in Lockhart or Harlingen or Sherman, but some dreamed of Spindletop. Settlement in one or another town along the railroad may have been largely accidental, but places like Breckenridge, Wichita Falls, Kilgore, and Port Arthur were destinations at the ends of rainbows. News of the oil booms from 1900 through the early 30's traveled worldwide and brought immigrants to these places to make their fortunes. Few did, but many stayed to have children, sell dry goods or pick up scrap iron.

The traces of family dispersion can be easily read in the places that remain, indicating the boundaries and extent of their nets. Names that appear in Jefferson in 1870 show up in Marshall in 1900 and Sherman in 1930. Wives come from Corsicana and uncles open stores in Texarkana, then move to Breckenridge. Similarly stories told in Baytown are repeated in San Angelo, and people in Brownsville recall relatives held up by banditos on the train from Marlin. Wherever they came from and however they disbursed, this three-generation-old phenomenon has now contracted into the big cities. In the north from Texarkana to Abilene, Corsicana to Sherman they've moved to Dallas/Fort Worth, in the south to Houston and on to San Antonio. The small towns were wonderful places to grow up, but nobody wants to go back.



# Kinky Friedman: Home On The Range Again

by Enid Nemy of THE NEW YORK TIMES

KERRVILLE, Tex.

There's nothing Kinky Friedman likes better than talking about himself. He's totally self-absorbed, and he's fully aware of it.

"It's part of my charm," he says, his rakish mustache twisting into a smile. At the moment, he is explaining how the name Richard, which is on his birth certificate, evolved into Kinky.

He sweeps off the black cowboy hat with a grand gesture, displaying what he calls his "moss." Hair or moss, it is decidedly kinky. "Chinga gave me my name," he says.

It's no surprise that Kinky Friedman would have a friend called Chinga (originally Nick), or vice versa, and that another friend once known as Larry is now Ratso. But for the moment, while tooling along Route 16 to his trailer home in the Hill Country of south-central Texas, we are talking about Kinky, or at least he is, and he is saying, with some accuracy, that "with a name like Kinky, you should be famous, or else it's a social embarrassment."

Mr. Friedman, 50, isn't *really* famous yet, except in some quarters, but it looks as if he's en route. He is, however, a full-fledged original. At various stages of his career as a songwriter and performer, the Kinkster, as he sometimes calls himself, toured with Bob Dylan, traveled with Willie Nelson ("I was beating him like a drum," he said of the marathon chess games they had), played the Grand Ole Opry and sang and strummed guitar with his country western band, the Texas Jewboys. He also dashed off songs like "They Ain't Makin' Jews Like Jesus Anymore" and "We Reserve the Right to Refuse Service to You."

Another little ditty, "Get Your Biscuits in the Oven and Your Buns in the Bed," got him booed off the stage and chased off the campus by feminists at the State University of New York at Buffalo in 1973. The following year, he says, the National

Organization for Women named him the male chauvinist pig of the year. He accepts all this philosophically and says, somewhat proudly, "I have managed to offend everyone at one time or another, including Texans, Jews and feminists." He is, he says, "of the Jewish persuasion, but I'm not religious."

Mr. Friedman disbanded the Jewboys (who, incidentally, were not all Jewish) in 1976, and for the last decade has been writing mysteries, always with you-know-who as the hero. His eighth book, "*God Bless John Wayne*," will be published by Simon & Schuster next week, and he's already polishing No. 9, tentatively titled "*The Love Song of J. Edgar Hoover*." His last two books, "*Elvis, Jesus and Coca-Cola*" and "*Armadillos and Old Lace*," have sold, in hard cover, in numbers sufficiently respectable to bring forth musings from him about "losing my cult status." The two books are also out in paperback (Bantam Books).

"Mysteries are comforting in that they offer us resolution, and life itself rarely does," he says, at the wheel of his dusty 1983 white wood-paneled Chrysler LeBaron convertible. The car belonged to his mother, Min, a speech therapist, who died in 1985. Mr. Friedman himself never uses the word "die." His dearly departed have either "stepped on a rainbow" or "gone to Jesus."

Mr. Friedman is resplendent in blue jeans, a turquoise polo shirt, a beaded-and-fringed brown suede vest and a belt

studded with silver medallions, each with a Star of Texas entwined with a Star of David. He is heading for Echo Hill Ranch, a 350-acre spread owned by his father, Tom, near Kerrville. The ranch is dotted with white and blue buildings, hummingbirds, armadillos, dogs, horses and children. Tom Friedman, a retired psychology professor at the University of Texas, bought the property in 1953 and with his daughter, Marcie, operates it as a summer camp for children.

Kinky Friedman's home on the ranch is a trailer that will never again go anywhere. It's a strange shade of green (a broccoli would recognize it), and for a reason even he can't explain, there's a watermelon slice painted on the inside of the door. The whole thing looks as if it might topple through the crepe myrtle and juniper into nearby Wallace Creek. The trailer has, in fact, toppled and been washed away several times by floods and has survived not only all that but also a family of raccoons and a fire. Since 1985, it has also survived the Kinkster himself and a decor of mashed cigar stubs.

It's 9 AM. The ashtrays are overflowing, but Mr. Friedman forestalls comment. "Cigars give you a relaxed mind-set," he says, with an authority that brooks no dissent. So, O.K., breathe as little as possible and let the eyes wander—to the flag-framed Army cot, a little stove with a rickety coffee pot (he generally eats at his father's house), a picture of Mohandas K. Gandhi and a poster of Hank Williams. And a





little farther along to the framed letter with a hand-written addendum: "Dear Kinky: I have now read all your books. More, please. I really need the laughs. Bill Clinton."

After a few minutes, the place begins to exude an odd charm. At the far end, there's Kinky's wardrobe hanging on a length of pipe, almost brushing a Smith Corona typewriter on a small wooden table that has to be admired simply because it's standing. The toilet — perish the thought of a door — sits beneath a century-old one-eyed steer's head. On the bathroom wall, there's a 25-year-old notice that he took from a Singapore hotel: "In order to avoid unpleasant odors, please pull this chain before leaving this lavatory." Nearby are two unrelated maxims: "Image is more important than knowledge" and "It's 3 AM: Do you know where your restaurant is?"

The coffee has perked, or boiled, and he pours a cup. He is engaged in his usual activity — he once said, "I'm not afraid of anything, just that I may have to stop talking about myself for five minutes" — and is overcome with embarrassment when he realizes he hasn't offered his guest a cup.

"I'm so used to being alone here," he says. Not always. And certainly not everywhere. The Kinkster has had numerous romances and been semi-broken-hearted several times. But not for long. He now has a new romance with a woman in Texas. And that's all he'll say about that. "I'm a gypsy," he said. "I'm married to the wind."

Mr. Friedman is attached to the trailer, the ranch and Texas. He returned to his almost-native state (he was born in Chicago but came to Texas as an infant) in 1985 after eight years in New York. Most of those years were spent in Greenwich Village, performing solo in clubs, sniffing cocaine, he says (he prefers to call it "Peruvian marching powder"), drinking and generally carousing. He gave up the drugs about the time he gave up New York.

"I stopped myself," he says. "I'm a big

believer in meeting demons and conquering them. I gave them up because I had lots of friends 'going to Jesus' in rapid succession. I was totally depressed." Several years ago, his cat, Cuddles, who had fought the drug wars with him, also went to Jesus.

"In Texas, we have spiritual elbow room," he says. "I think I write better without all the input of the world — listening to too many people, reading too many books, watching television junk. In an aching expanse of emptiness, creative ideas pop up. In a city, you find yourself writing for the movies or the mass market.

In the trailer, you're alone, there's an inward turning."

However, "Greenwich Killing Time," his first book, published in 1986, was written in New York. Still he recalls: "I had no idea whether I could complete it. I had the attention of a cocker spaniel at the time."

"Coming back to Texas and the ranch saved my life," he says in one of his infrequent serious moments. "I'm writing now for the sheer joy of it, for myself." For himself, possibly; for the sheer joy of it, not quite. "I wouldn't mind a hefty financial statement," he admits.

Mr. Friedman doesn't deny his numerous quirks. One of them led to his book career. He had been searching, he says, for a way of life that didn't require a public presence. He was no longer enthusiastic about music tours and wanted something he could do on his own, at his own pace. Mysteries seemed logical because, he says, he had learned that "nothing is as it appears to be, and if you have a story where nothing is what it appears to be, you've got a mystery."

Still, one feature of his mysteries is certainly as it appears to be — a great number of real people with real names pop up as characters — not world-famous or glitzy people, but family members, friends, neighbors and acquaintances.

Another quirk led to his running for justice of the peace in Kerrville in 1986. His campaign slogan was, "If you elect me your first Jewish justice of the peace, I'll

reduce the speed limit to 54.95." He was the only one surprised when he lost. The winner became a character in one of his books.

It was idealism, not a quirk, that led him to Borneo with the Peace Corps in 1966 after graduating from the University of Texas. He looks back on it with pleasure.

"I feel I did something really good in my life for two years," he says. "I distributed seeds, started interracial boys' clubs, chewed betel nuts, played guitar and wrote my first country songs about America."

Although he's no longer touring, he has not given up his music. "Old Testaments and New Revelations," a compact disc of some of his greatest hits, has sold more than 100,000 copies. And a new CD, "From One Good American to Another," is about to be released. It contains previously unreleased versions of old songs, as well as new material. When he makes personal appearances, he enlivens his book signings with guitar playing. And he not infrequently hands out a tortoise-effect guitar pick as a memento. Needless to say, his name is on it.

Mr. Friedman is on the verge of being happy, but he's a bit concerned about it. He believes happy people don't accomplish much. Still, he's pleased that the BBC documentary on Texas that he narrated in 1990 was highly rated, that his books have been translated into ten languages, that he's becoming more widely read with each one and that there's a renewed interest in his music.

"I've been given a second act," he says. "That doesn't often happen in America."

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*Editor's Note: We know this is an old article about Kinky Friedman, but true-blue Kinky fans know that he only gets better with age, so we didn't think you'd mind too much. Rock on.*

***"Kinky Friedman's home on the ranch is a trailer that will never again go anywhere."***



# Southern Jewish Friends of Bill

by Jane Guzman (Dallas)

**A**lthough Bill Clinton, our president, was born in Hope, Arkansas, he grew up in Hot Springs, and considers it his home. Due to the number of tourists who used to visit during the 1950's and 60's, to take the waters and go to the track, Hot Springs was more open and cosmopolitan than most small Southern towns of that era. Jews lived in Arkansas prior to the Civil War, and fought in that conflict; at least one died. From the beginning, Jews have been an integral part of Hot Springs, active in civic affairs such as the library, the Garland County Development Corporation, and the YMCA. The Leo N. Levi Hospital has been an important part of the city as well. Perhaps this was one reason anti-Semitism never took a particularly strong hold in Hot Springs. In later years, for example, the Hot Springs Country Club did not exclude Jews from joining; it was owned by the Arlington Hotel, and welcomed Jews both as guests and members.

Therefore, the young Bill Clinton, or Billy Blythe as he was known as a boy, grew to manhood in a town remarkably free of religious prejudice that often plagued the South. He was fortunate to have a mother unusually tolerant of others who seemed "different." She learned kindness and acceptance of others at a young age; one of her earliest memories was a terrible spanking her mother gave her after she called an old black woman a *nigger*. She taught the values of tolerance her parents instilled in her to her sons, Bill and Roger. In fact, she planted these values in her oldest son, Bill, to such an extent that when he learned that one of his college roommate's family home in New York was in a suburb with a restrictive covenant prohibiting Jews from living there, Clinton, as he had become, argued that these laws were as prejudiced as any Jim Crow laws

back in Arkansas at that time.

I have selected six men to profile who are Jewish, and to a greater or lesser degree, all Friends of Bill. Four of them are from Texas; one of them a congressman, and three are on the executive board of the National Jewish Democratic Council.

This organization, according to its literature, calls itself "the national voice of Jewish Democrats." Its mission statement is to promote Jewish values in the Democratic party; to protect America's future from the radical right/Christian Coalition; and to provide a unified voice for Jewish Democrats. To serve on its executive board, one either gives money to the organization or is active in other ways. According to Pamela Dubin, the group's director of development, it is suggested that executive board members donate \$15,000 to the National Jewish Democratic Council, but she suggested that no one does. She volunteered the information that **STEVE GUTOW**, the first executive director of the NJDC, gives nothing at all.

Mr. Gutow was the first person I interviewed. He was born in Dallas in 1949. His mother was active in Democratic politics, exposing Steve to politics at an early age. As a pre-teenager, he served as president of Kids for Kennedy. He was the chairman of the Dallas Federation's Jewish Community Relations Council, vice chair of the B'nai B'rith Klutznick National Museum in Washington, president of the Texas chapter of the American Jewish Congress, a state board member of the American Civil Liberties Union in opposition to the death penalty, and took leave from his law firm to found the AIPAC region for the Southwest. Later, he was the initial organizer of the National Jewish Democratic Council in 1990. He is currently studying in Philadelphia and plans to become a Reconstructionist rabbi.

Gutow met Bill Clinton for the first time in 1972, when he was the organizer of the McGovern campaign for Dallas County. Clinton was the state coordinator, and Gutow remembers when he walked in the door. He recalls that he was "bigger than life." He does not describe himself as a Friend of Bill, but is well connected politically. He recalls that Arthur Schechter and Bernard Rapoport, the two other men on the executive board of the NJDC joined, but became more supportive after Clinton's

election in 1992.

**ARTHUR LOUIS SCHECHTER** is a successful lawyer in Houston. He is a joiner, and has served as president of Temple Beth Israel, the oldest Jewish congregation in the state, as president of the Jewish Welfare Federation for his city, and as president of the Houston chapter of the American Jewish Committee. He has also been active in other civic causes, as diverse as the Service to the Homeless, Cullen/Frost Bank, the Mickey Leland Kibbutz Fund, Theatre Under the Stars, Seven Acres Jewish Geriatrics Center, Westwood Country Club, the Youth Symphony Board, and the Texas Jewish Historical Society. He is the vice-chairman of the National Jewish Democratic Council.

During the last national election, Schechter was the Texas finance chair for the Clinton/Gore '96 Campaign, is currently a Managing Trustee on the Finance Committee for the Democratic National Committee (DNC), a member of the United States Holocaust Museum Council, and currently, the designated appointee to the ambassadorship to the Bahamas. He is awaiting his formal interview by the United States Senate, which he hopes will lead to his confirmation. He also has attended at least one White House coffee.

Mr. Schechter's office is decorated with two black fur sofas; his walls and table tops are adorned with pictures of him and his wife dining at the White House, riding on Air Force One, and standing with other politicians such as former governor Ann Richards.

Menus are framed alongside the photos; the meal served on Air Force One was a Texas burger, chips and a cookie; the dinner he and his wife consumed at the White House on December 15, 1995 included salmon, carrots and cilantro glazed escarole, a rack of lamb filled with cardamom, a cracked wheat and almond pilaf, and a passion fruit Yule log with fresh raspberries. He has sat next to the president at these dinners. There are also a few pictures of his children and grandchildren.

Schechter was one of only fifty-five citizens, along with Barbra Striesand, Mort Zuckerman and Steven Spielberg invited to accompany the president to witness the signing of the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan at Aqaba. Republicans and



Arab-Americans were invited along on this trip, and they flew there on a government plane, Air Force One B. When asked, he said that he and the others who witnessed the signing paid for their trip.

Schechter had been somewhat active in local Democratic politics in the eighties, but became involved on a national scale during the next decade. He says he did so because of his concern for a reaction he regarded as defensive to the religious right.

Schechter met Clinton for the first time in 1990, when he and a friend traveled to Little Rock for a meeting with then Governor Clinton, to discuss the possibility of a run for the White House. Mr. Schechter stated that he believes Clinton's most attractive feature is the fact that he harbors no prejudice toward Jews, amazing for a Southern Baptist, although he remembered Clinton's grandparents' tolerance for blacks. After a trip to Israel with the President, he introduced him at a Jewish dinner as being "Jewish on the inside." Schechter is clearly a player in Democratic politics and is obviously enjoying himself; he has a sense of history and awe about his experiences.

**BERNARD RAPOPORT** is an institution in the Democratic party. The interview was on his birthday, and Richard Gephardt called to wish him "Happy Birthday" while I was there. He said the top Democratic senators, including Daschle, Kerry, and Kennedy, gave him a birthday party on Nantucket the weekend before. He stated that they are all dear friends, and the reason they were is that he has never needed anything from them. Eighty years old, he is the Chairman of the Board and the Chief Executive Officer of the company he founded. The American Income Life Insurance Company, a fully unionized company, has grown to \$500 million in assets by selling small supplemental insurance policies to over two million union members nationwide.

Rapoport's father, a Marxist revolutionary, who immigrated to San Antonio and made his living as a pushcart peddler, made a strong impression on his son, but as the young man worked his way through the University of Texas he read the economist Thurston Veblen, and the budding Marxist became a dedicated capitalist. It was there that he decided to build an enterprise that he believed would combine profit and social

good.

Mr. Rapoport lives in Waco. He is the immediate past chairman of the Board of Regents for the University of Texas, a member of the Advisory Committee for Trade Policy and Negotiations in Washington, D.C., a member of the Board of Directors of the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, a charter member of the 1875 Society of Hebrew Union College's Jewish Institute of Religion, a member of the Board of Directors of the Waco Symphony Orchestra, the chairman of the United Negro College Fund and serves as a trustee of Paul Quinn College, the Waco Boy's Club Foundation, and the Bernard and Audre Rapoport Foundation.

His office contains only two pictures of him and President Clinton in the anteroom. His office furniture is spartan. One wall is covered with family memorabilia, including his son's high school and college diplomas. (His only child is a professor of government at William and Mary College in Williamsburg, Virginia). One wall is covered with autographed pictures of Democratic senators, past and present. The wall behind his desk contains full shelves of books — all kinds of books; literature, Chinese art, government and history. A Congressional Directory is next to his computer. Rapoport is extremely philanthropic and generous, but declares that he has no choice; his parents raised him to be that way.

He opened up a small jewelry store in Waco after he graduated from the University of Texas in 1939, but it did not prosper, so he started selling insurance. His wife's uncle signed a note for \$25,000 so he could start his own company; that company today is worth one billion dollars. He entered politics while he was a college student. Lyndon Johnson was the NYA administrator for Texas. (National Youth Administration: this organization had two functions: to provide grants for college and high school students whose lack of money threatened to keep them out of school, and to enable poor students to continue their education and to keep them out of an already crowded labor market.) Meeting Johnson was the beginning of his lifelong involvement with politics.

Rapoport met Clinton in 1972, during the McGovern campaign in Texas and they

began a friendship that has lasted over the years. After Clinton's defeat after his first term as governor, Mr. Rapoport offered to put him on retainer at his insurance company. Clinton turned down the offer, even though he could have made \$5,000 or \$10,000 a week. Rapoport believes that the fact that he turned down that much money proves he could have had no hand in the Whitewater affair, and said he would not know a business deal if it hit him in the rear end. Once, on national television, the president was asked about the Lincoln bedroom, and he declared that "B" Rapoport was one of his best friends, and he was not only asked to stay there, in effect, he could board there if he wanted to. He added that Clinton is such an honorable person that he would not ask someone for money if he did not have it to give.

Bernard Rapoport's sense of humor is matched by his generosity, philanthropy, intelligence, charm and devotion to liberal causes. He recalled that after the election, President Clinton asked him what he wanted. He replied that he only wanted to be left alone!

**MARTIN FROST** is a Democrat representing the 24th Congressional district of Texas, which includes the Oak Cliff area of Dallas and parts of Arlington in Tarrant County. Elected for the first time eighteen years ago, he is currently third in seniority in the thirty-member Texas delegation. Frost was recently reelected Chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee. This is an elected position, but Congressman Gephardt nominated him, and the vote was unanimous. The *Fort Worth Star Telegram* and *The Dallas Morning News* have named him one of the top five representatives in the Texas delegation. He is the only Jew ever elected to Congress from Texas. His father was an old friend of Robert Strauss, former chairman of the Democratic National Committee and the last American ambassador to the Soviet Union. Upon Frost's graduation from law school at Georgetown University in Washington, D. C. (Clinton's undergraduate alma mater), Strauss's former law partner was Federal Judge Irving Goldberg. He called Federal Judge Sarah T. Hughes to arrange for Frost to serve as a law clerk for her. Following his clerkship, Frost practiced law until his election in 1978. Frost has met Clinton



over the years through a variety of ways, including through his cousin, Rabbi Eugene Levy of Temple B'nai Israel of Little Rock, Arkansas, although he is not a long time Friend of Bill. He has attended all the major peace signings at the White House. He considers Clinton one of the strongest supporters of Israel ever elected president. Frost was one of the founding members of the Democrat Leadership Council, along with Clinton and Gebhardt.

The only two Jews from Arkansas that I was able to talk with at any length were **RABBI EUGENE LEVY** and **LESLIE SINGER**. According to Frost, the rabbi, who is his cousin, played a part in the campaign. In 1992, a wealthy Jewish oilman in Dallas was considering supporting Clinton but did not know his position on Israel. Frost suggested that he call his cousin, the rabbi in Little Rock. Rabbi Levy assured him that Clinton's position vis-a-vis Israel was a good one, and the man wrote out a substantial check to the Democratic National Committee and sent it to the rabbi, who then took it over to campaign headquarters.

I met Rabbi Eugene Levy in his office at Temple B'nai Israel in Little Rock. We were joined by Leslie Singer, who became acquainted with Governor Clinton in a roundabout way; his wife, Connie, is a dress designer and owns a boutique where Mrs. Clinton used to shop. She became friends with Mrs. Singer, and the two couples often went out together during the Little Rock years. They have remained friends, and have stayed in the White House several times, at least once in the Lincoln Bedroom. Mr. Singer told me that the president likes to give him little gadgets. Once in Brussels, Clinton saw something he thought Singer would like, but the store was closed; several years later, he returned to Brussels, went back to the store, bought it, and sent it to him.

Rabbi Levy first met the governor in October, 1987, two months after he arrived in Little Rock, through David Saperstein, who was in Little Rock to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the integration of Little Rock's Central High School. As a rabbi, he had access to the governor through the religious community. Clinton made a few trips to Israel, but Rabbi Levy believed his boyhood pastor instilled a love of Israel in him. Levy remembers Clinton's presence

at the temple on only one occasion: the meeting of the Southwest Association of Reform Rabbis. Levy invited him to come by, and he stayed about thirty minutes. Later, during the first presidential campaign, these men remembered that they had shaken his hand in 1991.

Rabbi Levy gave the benediction at Clinton's last inauguration as governor in 1991, as well as the benediction for his successor, Jim Guy Tucker. He says that Clinton has a mesmerizing quality that makes you forget what he says.

In 1992, the Jews of Arkansas organized to help elect the governor president. The group called itself "Arkansas Jewry to Elect a President." The aim was to have as many names of as many Arkansas Jews as possible on an advertisement promoting their governor. The letter went out in early September; responses were due by the twenty-fifth. This ad was signed by over 225 Jews from Arkansas, and ran in ten national publications.

In addition, Rabbi Eugene Levy and Rabbi Matthew Friedman of Hot Springs sent letters to their colleagues asking them to support Clinton in the election, and Rabbi Seymour Weller of Little Rock's Orthodox synagogue Agudath Achim also encouraged the governor's election to the White House.

Following the election, a number of Jews from Arkansas attended the inauguration. Rabbi Levy spoke at the prayer service and Rabbi Weller encouraged kosher food to be available at the New York and Arkansas receptions.

These are a few of the Southern Jews who have known the President. Some have given money; others, Rabbi Levy and Mr. Singer declare they have not. Martin Frost knows him through governmental affairs. All agree he is a warm, likeable man.

George Stephanopoulos likened Clinton to a "kaleidoscope". He said in conversations, Clinton will put one facet toward the other person, but it is only one facet. Although it is real, like a kaleidoscope, it can change in an instant.

*Jane Guzman presented this report at the Hot Springs Joint Meeting with the Southern Jewish Historical Society last November.*

## Rules of Judaism

- ▶ WASPs leave and never say good-bye. Jews say good-bye and never leave.
- ▶ The High Holidays have absolutely *nothing* to do with marijuana.
- ▶ Never take a front-row seat at a *Bris*.
- ▶ A bad matzah ball makes a good paperweight.
- ▶ The only thing more important than a good education is a good parking spot at the mall.
- ▶ Be nice to your kids. They'll choose your nursing home.
- ▶ If only the good die young, what does that say about our senior citizens?
- ▶ If vegetarians eat only vegetables, what do humanitarians eat?



## Yiddish Is Alive and Well — Thank You Very Much!

**M**onica Santiago V. Sherwin-Williams et al had already droned on for four years when counsel for the defense filed its umpteenth otherwise unmemorable motion in the case last August. "It is unfortunate," it declared, "that this court must wade through the *dreck* of plaintiff's statement of undisputed facts."

Jonathan Shapiro of Stern, Shapiro, Rosenfeld & Weissberg in Boston, one of the plaintiff's four lawyers, was startled by the choice of words. *Dreck*, he knew from his grandparents, was Yiddish for doo-doo, though a tad more tart. Even by the standards of the *nareshkaytn* normally filed by opposing lawyers, he thought such *chutzpah* intolerable. So last September he and a co-counsel, Neil Leifer of Boston, resolved to talk *takhles* with Judge Joseph I. Tauro, the *tsadik* hearing the case.

"For almost four years now, plaintiff and her attorneys have been subjected to constant *kvetching* by defendants' counsel, who have made a big *tsimis* about the quantity and quality of plaintiff's responses to discovery requests," it stated. "This has been the source of much *tsores* among plaintiff's counsel and a big *megillalh* for the court."

It was hardly *balebatish*, the lawyers complained, to call a fellow lawyer's work "*dreck*," particularly "in view of the *chazeray* which they have filed." Finally, "since not all of plaintiff's lawyers are *yeshiva bokhers*," it was presumptuous as well. "Plaintiff prays that the court put an end to this *mishugos* and strike "*dreck*," he concluded.

Ever since the motion was filed, *yentes* at law firms have been photocopying and faxing the Shapiro-Leifer broadside throughout the country. In a way, the memo has challenged all of the *bobe mayses* about the death of Yiddish.

The offending memo was

written by Karen De Santis, an associate at the Washington office of Kirkland & Ellis of Chicago. But it was signed by *makher*s from three other firms — Goodwin, Proctor & Hoar and Bingham, Dana & Gould in Boston and Popham, Haik, Schnobrich & Kaufman in Minneapolis. And, Mr. Shapiro asserts, the word "*dreck*" was retained at the specific insistence of lawyers at Bingham, Dana.

Lawyers at Bingham Dana at first tried to make Mr. Shapiro's request sound like *bobkes*. "We find it difficult to believe you would seriously have us all *shlep* to court to argue such a *meshugganah* motion," Meghan Magruder, a partner, wrote Mr. Shapiro. Had he called only to *kibbitz*, she continued, he would have learned that the scribes of the offensive motion "are all *goyim*" who innocently misused the word.

Were Mr. Shapiro enough of a *mentsh* to withdraw the motion, she went on, the defense would happily stipulate that *dreck* be changed to "morass." "As the taxpayers must ultimately pay to resolve such a motion, it would be a *mitzvah*," she concluded. "Moreover, your *shtik* may be lost on the court."

But when he ruled on the motion last December, Judge Tauro showed the defense lawyers no *rakhmones*. "Any further use of inappropriate language in any proceeding before this court will result in the imposition of sanctions," he wrote in stern and unadulterated English.

In the meantime the authors of the memo continue to get *nakhes*. Stanley G. Feldman, vice chief justice of the Supreme Judicial Court of Arizona, awarded the Shapiro-Liefer collaboration his prestigious "motion of the year award." And in an article entitled "Plain Yiddish for Lawyers and Judges," in TRIAL MAGAZINE, Ralph Slovenko of Wayne State University Law School in Detroit quotes the memo at length.

"With the utmost complete extermination of European Jews during World War II, many scholars prophesied the end of the Yiddish language," he noted. Instead, he continued, with its "peculiar mix of toughness and compassion," Yiddish is "finding new and unprecedented application in American law."

He might just as easily have said that Yiddish is supplanting Latin as the *mame loshn* of the law.

*Editor's Note: Thank you, Barbara Rosenberg, for contributing this enlightening article to our humble newsletter.*

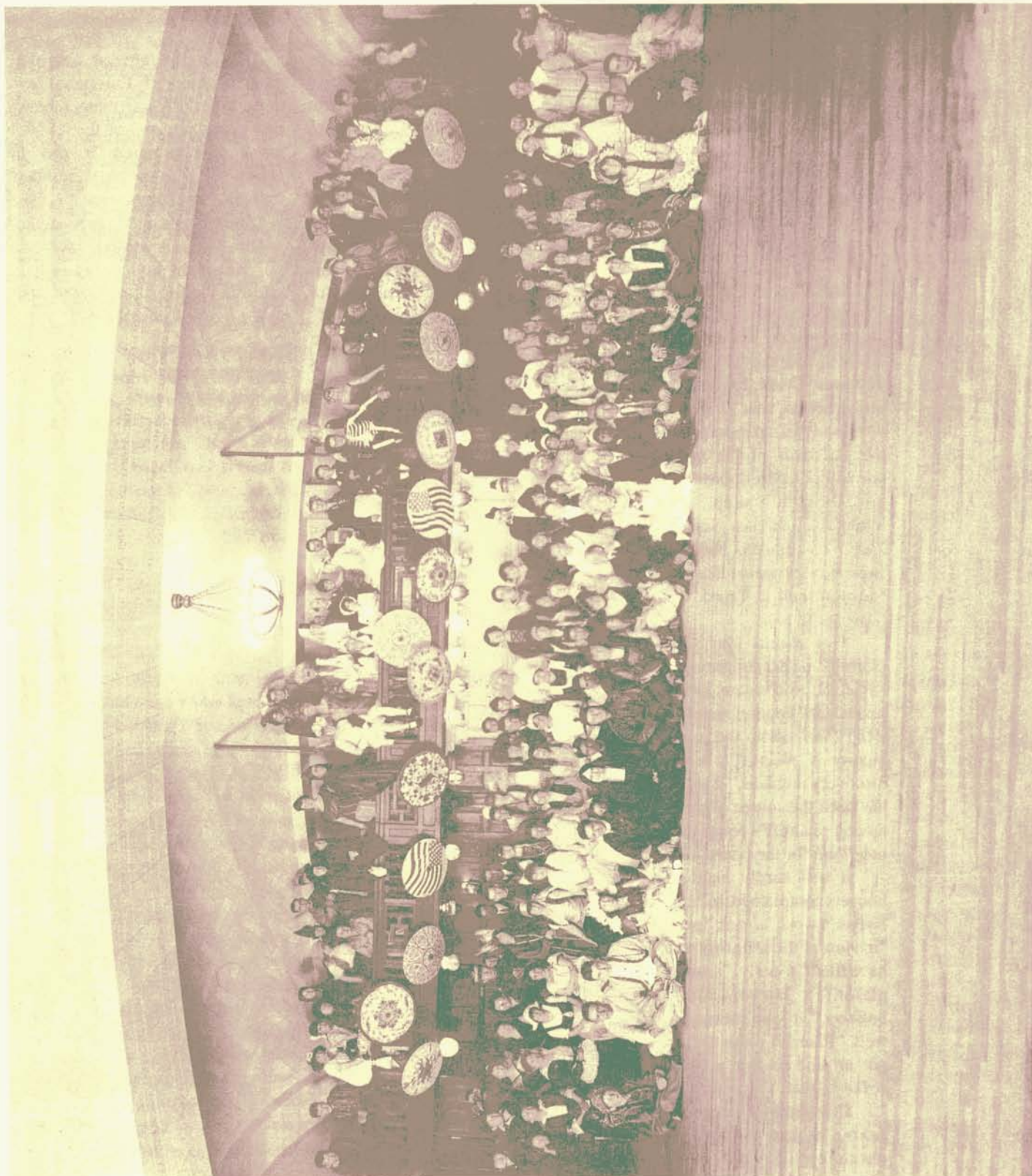
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Send to WALTER FEIN, 5 Villa Mar, San Antonio, Texas 78230-2745, or call him at (210) 493-3535.



## Are you in this picture?



*Sam Rosen of Fort Worth thinks this is a photo taken at the Hebrew Institute in Fort Worth at a costume party about 1912. Sam's father (Joel Rosen) is in the picture along with the grandmother of Sam's wife's (Joan Berger Rosen) - Mini Friedman, and his grandparents. Do you recognize anyone? Please contact Fay Brachman (817) 924-9207 of the Fort Worth Jewish Archives. A big thank you to Sam Rosen for this fabulous photo.*





## Texas Jewish Historical Society Website

### Texas Jewish Historical Society

P.O. Box 10193  
 Austin, TX 78766 0193  
 Telephone - (281) 276-9693  
 E-mail address - [tjhs@neosoft.com](mailto:tjhs@neosoft.com)  
 Web Site address - <http://www.neosoft.com/~tjhs/>

**T**he Texas Jewish Historical Society draws its membership from across the State of Texas, bordering states and across our great nation. TJHS supports a wide-ranging agenda. Quarterly gatherings are held at points of particular interest, an extensive newsletter is published regularly, and a speakers bureau is maintained. A variety of research projects are facilitated through the Jewish Archives in the Barker Library, or supported directly such as "Virtual Restoration of Small-Town Synagogues in Texas."

We are very proud of our organization and ask you to look us up and celebrate the joys of Texas history.

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