

Texas Jewish Historical Society

Preserving Jewish Heritage in Texas
Est. 1980

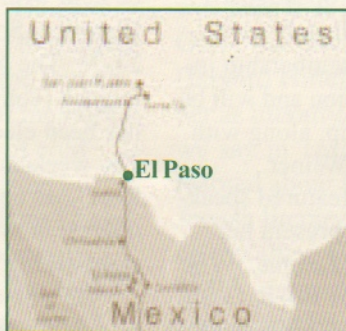


August, 2008

JOIN TJHS AT 2 EXCITING DESTINATIONS!

Jewish Life along the Camino Real

El Camino Real, or "King's Highway" was the first road constructed after the arrival of the Spanish in the 1600s.



Joint Meeting with the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society!

October 24-26, 2008
El Paso, Texas

These three days promise to be a fun-filled weekend with our New Mexico neighbors that is full of fascinating programs on Jewish life along the Camino Real.

Please fill out and return the registration form on page 16.

Jewish European Adventure



Tour of Jewish Portugal and Spain!

Departure Date:
March 6, 2009

Join fellow TJHS members on this 12-day tour, which includes airfare, hotel stay, and transportation aboard a private motorcoach while visiting beautiful sights of Jewish significance in Portugal and Spain.

The deadline for deposits is soon, so be sure to see page 9 for details on how to secure your reservation.

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Message from the President

by Sally Drayer

I want to thank Barbara and Ben Rosenberg, Suzanne and Hugh Campbell, and Carol and Syl Polunsky for hosting the summer quarterly board meeting in San Angelo, July 25-27. We were treated to Southwest Texas hospitality and had a wonderful time sight-seeing historical San Angelo. We had dinner on our won before we met for services Friday evening, and then had an Oneg at the Temple. On Saturday, we chose from five activities that we could do during the day. On Saturday evening, Rabbi Peter Tarlow (TJHS member) of the Texas A&M University Hillel, spoke about *Converso Jews*. Dinner at Miss



Hattie's Restaurant was wonderful! The quarterly board meeting was held Sunday morning.

TJHS will be well represented at the Dallas Jewish Art Festival that will be held at the Morton Meyerson Symphony Center on August 17. We will staff a table with membership information and will be

raffling a TJHS membership, along with books donated by Hollace Weiner. Hollace will be one of the featured speakers at the Festival and will present her new book, *Jewish "Junior League: The Rise and Demise of the Fort Worth Council of Jewish Women*. Jack Gerrick will be hosting the TJHS Traveling Exhibit

table. Sherry Zander of Dallas will be presenting her book *Small Towns, Small Synagogues: Little Gems of Beauty and Historical Insight*, and past TJHS president Ginger Jacobs will be discussing the pioneer Jews of Dallas. We hope to see DFW area members at the Festival—come by and say hello.

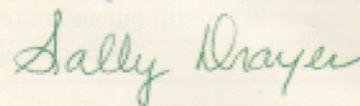
Susan Novick and Shari Schwartz have been working for almost a year to coordinate our fall quarterly meeting to be held with the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society in El Paso on October 24-26. The NMJHS chair is Noel Pugach (congratulations to Noel—he has been elected their next president!). The weekend "Jews Along the Camino Real" has been planned with members' interest in mind, which will include sight-seeing and wonderful speakers.

As you can see, 2008 continues to be a year of traveling the state to learn the history of Texas Jewry. We have visited Texas in the southeast to Beaumont, central to Waco, and west to San Angelo and El Paso.

Since you will receive our next newsletter after Rosh Hashanah, I want to take this opportunity to wish each of you a *L'Shana Tova*; may you have happy and healthy new year.

I look forward to seeing many of you in El Paso in October.

And again, thank you to the co-chairs of the San Angelo meeting—it was great!



President, 2008-2009

The Texas Jewish Historical Society August 2008 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 scan at 300 dpi or greater, in .gif, .tif, or .jpg format and send electronically to Assistant Editor Davie Lou Solka at davielou@solka.net or mail to 3808 Woodbrook Circle, Austin, TX 78759, 512-527-3799. Be sure to include your name and contact information.

Publisher-Editor Alexa Kirk
Assistant Editor Davie Lou Solka
Photographer Marvin Rich

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



The message 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.

A Texan Matriculates at Harvard

by Annette Robinson Lackman

Reprinted with permission from Harvard Hillel *Journey*, Spring 2008

Several years ago, I was sitting in the Halifax airport awaiting a return flight to Texas when I looked up to see a familiar giant of a man striding toward me. Yes, my husband was duly impressed when I introduced him to one of my favorite professors, John Kenneth Galbraith, who was on his way from an anniversary celebration of the North Atlantic Treaty. Sadly, he died just a short time later. He gave me a thrill when he seemed to remember me and where I sat in the late afternoon seminar. A flood of memories poured over me, memories of cold gray, wintry days, walking from Littauer to 6 Ash Street, where I lived during my first year in Cambridge, having a cup of coffee at "The Bick," and watching those fine French and Italian films at the Brattle.

Academically, I was thrilled to be in seminars with John Kenneth Galbraith, Bill Elliot, Stanley Hoffman, and Paul Nitze, and to sit in on large lectures of Kissinger, Schlesinger, et al. So many things were influences on my young life. But of all those life-changing events, probably the most profound was my association with Harvard Hillel, *The "Little Ole House" Away from Home*.

Shortly after I arrived in Cambridge, it was time for the high holidays. I was feeling a bit sorry for myself since I really did not know anybody with whom to spend the holidays. But after a lot of soul searching, I

dragged myself to the big old lecture hall where Hillel was holding services. Much to my surprise, they were the loveliest services I had ever attended, mostly I think, because everyone who was there really wanted to be there. The "davening" was led by students and was filled with meaning.

My recollection is that there wasn't an empty seat in the house. It was here that I met Rabbi Ben-Zion Gold, who invited me to stop by the Harvard Hillel House (what I remember as literally a "little ole house," as we say in Texas). It was there that I learned about the desire to publish a Jewish literary journal. This was right up my alley: I had a double major at SMU—journalism and political science—and I had an editorial position on the school newspaper. In addition, I knew the technical side of publishing. I even gave a name to this fledgling journal: MOSAIC. Contributors included such luminaries as Martin

Peretz, Mark Mirsky, Judith Kegan, and Erich Segal (who had not yet reaped the rewards brought by the success of his novel, *Love Story*, and the movie rights).

Life After Harvard

The two years of my graduate program sped by. My next goal was a position with the U. S. Foreign Service. I took and passed the Foreign Service exam. I went home to Texas to await notice during the summer months. Fate intervened, however, when I met my future husband in Dallas. By the end of the summer, I accepted his proposal of marriage. After the wedding in Dallas, we went off on a motor trip through Mexico and returned home just in time for him to begin teaching the winter session history courses. We walked into the kitchen, and found a most impressive document awaiting us. It was an appointment to the U.S. Foreign Service—in Turkey!

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SAVE THE DATE!

TJHS Winter Meeting
January 9-11, 2009 in La Grange, Texas

As ZZ Top might say, "A how how how" would you like to spend a weekend in historic La Grange? After a Dutch treat dinner at Frank's Restaurant in Schulenburg, we will be guests of honor for Kabbalat Shabbat at Temple Israel. In fact, we'll be at least 95% of the congregation and will conduct services ourselves.

On Saturday, we'll remember the Jewish merchants on the square in La Grange. We'll explore Round Top, which is a few miles away, with its restored 19th century village and (almost) more antique shops than residents. "Well, I hear it's fine if you got the time," according to ZZ Top.

After your included dinner of the finest cuisine La Grange offers, a special musical treat awaits us at The Bugle Boy, a nationally renowned listening room. Sunday morning is reserved for the Board meeting.

Your reservation form will arrive in the mail this fall. So "just let me know if you wanna go to that home out on the range."

~Vickie and David Vogel, Co-Chairs

**The deadline for
the November,
2008 TJHS
Newsletter is
October 17.**

TJHS Awards Prizes to Students at Texas State Historical Society Programs

The Texas Jewish Historical Society sponsors the Jewish History Award that is presented by the Texas State Historical Association. This award recognizes students for outstanding research and writing on the topic of Jewish History. The 2008 competition awarded a medal and cash prize to five students. There were two History Fairs held where winners were announced.

At the Junior Historians Annual Meeting in Galveston on March 28-29, 2008, Stephen Cure, Director of Educational Services for the the Texas State Historical Association, presented the award on behalf of Texas Jewish Historical Society. The winner was Carly Bishop from Ennis Junior High School in Ennis, Texas. Her topic was "How Hard Can It Be? An Interview with the Last Jewish Cowboy."

Claire Brooks, TJHS Board Member, presented the following with their awards at Texas History Day in Austin on May 3-4, 2008:

1st Place Junior Individual Historical Paper: "Three Popes Encounter the Holocaust," by Guadalupe Orozco, Hartman Middle School, Houston, Texas.

2nd Place Junior Individual Historical Paper: "The Spanish Inquisition and Crypto-Judaism in America," by Danielle Hecht, Pershing Middle School, Houston, Texas.

1st Place Senior Individual Historical Paper: "Egypt's War for Peace," by Ian Tuttle, Carroll High School, Corpus Christi, Texas.

2nd Place Senior Individual Historical Paper: "Arab-Israeli Conflict," by Lindsey Spiegelman, Bryan High School, Bryan, Texas.

In addition to the award from TJHS, two of the students' papers were selected to compete in National History Day, held in College Park, Maryland on June 19, 2008. This competition recognizes students from history competitions in the United States. Ian Tuttle of Corpus Christi, received 1st Place and a cash award of \$1,000 in the Senior Division for his paper, "Egypt's War for Peace," and Guadalupe Orozco of Houston, received 13th Place in the Junior Division for her paper, "Three Popes Encounter the Holocaust." Their papers will be printed in the fall in the *Texas Historian*, a publication of the Texas State Historical Association.

Congratulations to all of these students. TJHS is very proud to have "their" winners also be winners nationally! 🇺🇸

Jewish "Junior League:" The Rise and Demise of the Fort Worth Council of Jewish Women

Hollace Weiner's latest book, *Jewish "Junior League:" The Rise and Demise of the Fort Worth Council of Jewish Women* tells how the Council of Jewish Women in Fort Worth helped some of its members assimilate into the organization world in Fort Worth. The Council was a training ground for those interested to not only give their volunteer time to the Jewish organizations, but also to the non-Jewish ones. As the years passed, and as more and more women became involved or became part of the work force, the Council's membership began to decline.

Hollace's style of writing makes

this book enjoyable and interesting—especially when you know the people involved. It reflects the concerns faced by the Council; but if you change the name, you would find this to be true in other Jewish women's organizations. Unfortunately, the Council of Jewish Women in Fort Worth did not survive. *Jewish "Junior League"* was published by Texas A&M Press, and is available in most book stores and online.

Hollace will be appearing at the Texas Book Festival on November 2, 2008, to speak about her book. She will be speaking in a room at the State Capitol building. 🇺🇸



— Survivor Happy to Continue Educating —

by Maribel Villalva, *El Paso Times*, June 2006

Reprinted with permission from the *El Paso Times*

El Pasoan and Holocaust survivor Henry Kellen decided in 1984 that he would educate people about the horrors of the Holocaust, so he began collecting as much memorabilia as he could.

By 1992, his idea had grown from a small room in the Jewish Community Center to its own building on El Paso's West Side. But in 2001, that museum was destroyed in an electrical fire, along with many of those artifacts Kellen had acquired.

On Monday, Kellen was able to witness the ceremonial ground breaking of the museum's new location at 715 No. Oregon.

"This is the third time I open this museum," said Kellen. "I hope that it's the last."

More than sixty invited guests attended Monday's ceremony on the site that overlooks Downtown El Paso. The museum will now be part of the much-anticipated

"museum district," joining the El Paso Museum of Art, Insights El Paso Science Museum, and the soon-to-be-completed El Paso Museum of History.

After several more costly plans for a new museum were considered, officials finally purchased the building at Oregon and Yandell streets last summer for \$750,000. A capital campaign fund was organized to raise money to cover the building costs and renovations, which

will total an estimated \$2 million. To date, \$1.8 million has been raised.

Leslie Novick, the museum's executive director, said work on the interior of the building will begin today. The building's roof will also be raised to give the exterior an updated look.

The museum should be open to the public in late December or early January, she said.

"It took five years and a lot of hard work to get here," Novick told the crowd, which included Mayor John Cook, South-West city Rep. Beto O'Rourke, several museum board members, and a handful of Holocaust survivors.

Among them was Tibor Schaechner, who spent time in a concentration camp as a teenager.

"This is very exciting," Schaechner said. "This is our chance to teach the young generation and tell them what happened. Our generation

is fading now."

Museum officials estimate about nineteen Holocaust survivors remain in El Paso.

The museum hasn't been out of the public eye. Since that 2001 electrical fire, several businesses have provided space for exhibits and events. In 2004, the owners of the Centre Court Building Downtown, at 101 S. Kansas, allowed museum officials to use the basement until a permanent location was secured. The museum will continue to operate there until the new location is ready.

Several individuals and museums from around the world have donated items for the new museum, Novick said.

The new museum will have eleven galleries to tell the story of the Holocaust in chronological order. It will have a sixty-seat multi-purpose room, a library and study center, and a gift shop.

Editor's note: Since this article appeared in 2006, the groundbreaking for the Museum was in July of that year, and the Museum opened to the public on January 27, 2008. Six weeks after the reopening, the Museum was flooded by sewage water on March 14, 2008. Leslie Novick, Executive Director of the Museum, said that none of the Holocaust artifacts were destroyed. "Thankfully, our artifacts are high enough off the ground. The only things that are ruined are things that can be replaced: carpeting, computers, and furniture," she said. The Museum re-opened on May 4, 2008.

Henry Kellen is still very involved with the Museum, and Tibor Schaechner's wife, Ann Schwartz Schaechner, is the current president of the Museum board.



Henry Kellen at the El Paso Holocaust Museum.

Ettelman's Discontinued China and Crystal

by Davie Lou Ettelman Solka

Eddie and Dora Laves Ettelman opened Ettelman's Jewelry Store in Kilgore, Texas, in August, 1945. Prior to that opening, they owned a pawn shop in Greenville, Texas, where their children, Davie Lou and Raymond were born. They decided to move from Greenville when a major fire destroyed the block that included their store. After looking around for several months, Eddie decided to relocate to Kilgore because it had a synagogue and a larger Jewish population than Greenville. The store was originally named Peacock Jewelry Store, but because there was already a Peacock Jewelry Store several miles away, the name was changed to Ettelman's Jewelry Store after it was opened.

In the Kilgore store, they carried jewelry, luggage, gift items, and patterns of china, crystal, and silver from



Dora Laves Ettelman



Eddie Ettelman



The front of the store in Kilgore, Texas.

the major companies. The Ettelmans had a large bridal business because in the 1940's and 1950's, a bride would choose her selection of china, crystal, and silver at a jewelry or gift shop. They had individual card tables set for each bride showing her selections displayed. With a population of approximately 18,000 in Kilgore, and servicing many smaller communities in East Texas, Ettelman's was one of the main stores in which brides looked. Many of my friends selected their patterns at my parent's store, and I grew up with a love for this type of business.

Some of the lines that Ettelman's carried were Cambridge, Tiffin, and Heisey crystal; and Haviland and Caselton china. This was the day of "exclusives," meaning that a company would give exclusive use of their patterns to a certain store. My father would say that he would have to be sure and be in these compa-

nies' showrooms at the Gift Show in Dallas so that he could continue his exclusive with them. This also meant that he was the only store in an approximate one-hundred mile radius for this "exclusive."

By the end of the 1950s, many of the American china and crystal companies were closing their doors and/or consolidating. Because of the large stock that they carried and the relationship that they had with the owners of the various companies, Dora and Eddie were contacted by some of these companies to see if they would be interested in handling some of their discontinued patterns. The Ettelmans agreed to do this and their "new" business—Ettelman's Discontinued China and Crystal—was born.

In addition to the companies that they already carried, they began to include other companies. I remember my mother saying that Syracuse China Company woke up one day and said,

continued on page 7

"We are not going to make fine china anymore—we will concentrate on commercial." And that was what they did and are still doing today. Needless to say, this left many of their dealers with large inventories and when the company was asked to buy back the inventory, they were told to call Ettelman's in Kilgore, Texas. Eddie would travel all over the South and Midwest to pick up merchandise from stores that had discontinued china and crystal. They decided to concentrate on American companies only, which included Syracuse, Lenox, Franciscan, and Flintridge china and Fostoria crystal, and would only handle china and crystal—no silver. Soon, the china and crystal houses and other stores were referring customers and store owners

tion—"under the pearl showcase"—"next to the luggage wall"—"next to the compact showcase"—"near the diamond showcase." Fortunately, they had a second-floor storage area that was almost as large as the first floor, and there it was somewhat easier to organize—but still a challenge!

Although they had customers from Kilgore shop in the store, and other people driving quite a distance to shop with them, most of their business came from orders in the mail. They shipped china and crystal all over the United States and to some foreign countries.

My mother became ill, and in January, 1977, they came to Corpus Christi to live with me and my family so that she could undergo radiation.

They closed the doors of the store with all intent to return. Unfortunately, Mother died in July of that year, and after a great deal of thought and discussion, my father asked my brother and me if we would like to continue the business.

We and our spouses decided

that we would, so in August, 1978, my brother, Raymond, and my father went to Kilgore to pack the merchandise for the move to Corpus Christi. The packing process took almost four weeks to conclude, and we placed the merchandise in storage until we found a location for our new venture.


We found a warehouse with approximately 2,400 square feet, and began unpacking in the summer of 1979, with our first "Corpus Christi" sale that August. My father was on-hand

to supervise the unpacking and to help with identification of patterns. Everything was placed on metal shelving—we did not need to look "under the pearl showcase" or "near the diamond showcase!"

The business had literally been closed for over two years, and because of Mother's illness, it had not received much attention. We had a lot of catching up to do. The post office in Kilgore had saved the mail before it was forwarded to Corpus Christi (small towns do have their advantages!). One of the first items of business was to open thousands of letters. My sons, who were 15, 13, and 10 at the time, were paid a nickel a letter to open and sort each letter by company (junk mail did not count). We began to answer the mail after making a careful inventory of each pattern of china and crystal.

Eddie Ettelman died in November, 1980, knowing that the business he and Dora had begun and pioneered would continue. We maintained their high standards and stayed with the American companies that they had carried, only adding Lenox crystal since we did have the china.

It was with mixed emotions that the decision was made to close the business in 1994. My husband, Jack, and my brother and sister-in-law, Raymond and Polly Ettelman, and I worked together for fifteen years. Our children were not interested in continuing the business, so we chose to sell the inventory at auction. It was a wonderful working relationship for the four of us and I know that my parents approved and were pleased that their children continued their dream.

Ettelman's Discontinued China and Crystal was still a leader in the field when it closed, but it was time to put an end to an era—and a special place in time and in our hearts. 



This is from the auction that was held when the business closed.

with surplus inventory to the Ettelmans. "Call the Ettelmans in Kilgore" became the buzz-word in the discontinued china and crystal business.

As time passed and the inventory grew, my parents began creatively storing the patterns. They still had the jewelry and gift items in their 1,100-square-foot store, so patterns of china and crystal were stored in boxes and placed wherever. In the inventory books, one would find a location nota-

In Memoriam

JAYNE MYERS EISEN, TJHS member, died April 19, 2008 in Beaumont, Texas. She is survived by her husband of 52 years, Harold; sons Jay L. Eisen and wife Mindy of Beaumont, and Stephen and wife Charlotte of Knoxville, Tennessee; daughter Eydie Eisen Dresser and husband Ed of Santa Monica, California; grandchildren Abby, Brad, Rachel, Emily, and Eric Eisen; and sister, Margot Feld of Fort Worth, Texas.

EDWARD C. GREENE, TJHS member, died May 6, 2008, in Dallas, Texas. He was a founding member

of URJ Greene Family Camp and Temple Shalom in Dallas. He is survived by his wife, Ilene, children and grandchildren.

JUSTIN ROSENFELD,

TJHS member, died May 15, 2008, in Waco, Texas. He is survived by his wife, Ellen; his daughters, Lynn and her husband, Rabbi Bob Loewy, of New Orleans; Jo Ann and her husband, Steven Potashnick, of Chicago, Illinois; and Sue Hanson; grandchildren Keith, Mendy, and Penny Hanson; Sara, Mica, Karen, and David Loewy; Samantha and Jake Potashnick; and David Widzer; four great-grandchildren; sister-in-law, Ruth Markus, and several nieces and nephews.

BERTA SCHLESINGER, past TJHS Board member, died May 1, 2008 in McAllen, Texas. She is survived by her sons, Murray and his wife Lori; and Jeff and his wife Suzanne; grandchildren Allen, Randi, Rachael, Ellie, and Evan; brother, Israel Lizka and his wife, Toni, and sister, Sophie Sklar; and nieces and nephews. She was married to Robert Schlesinger for 39 years until he died in 1989.



**MAY THEIR MEMORIES
BE A BLESSING.**

Contributions

The following donations have been received by the Texas Jewish Historical Society since April, 2008.

**In Memory of Fay Brachman
From Sharon and Bill Bengé**

In Honor of Sally Drayer, on her election as President of the Texas Jewish Historical Society
From Mille Zalim

In Honor of Jack Gerrick, in the hope for his quick and speedy recovery **From the Texas Jewish Historical Society**

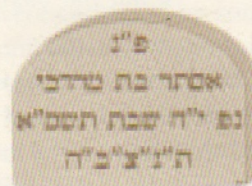
Needed: A Few Good Men and Women by Don Teter

We have received a lot of good comments from people all over the country on the book that we published in 1996, *Texas Jewish Burials*. Now, twelve years later, the book should have an update with the many burials that have occurred since then. With a membership of 800 to 900 people, we are looking for at least twenty volunteers who are capable of doing the job. It requires members from all areas of the state and provides a wonderful opportunity to enjoy a springtime outing.

Gertrude and I are no longer physically able to do the work that we did twelve years ago, but we will gladly instruct and counsel willing volunteers. A group of two working together is the ideal situation.

Contact me if you are willing to consider working on this project.

Don Teter
5013 Glenhaven
Baytown, TX 77521
281-424-5829
donte@hal-pc.org



A new TJHS Directory is coming soon!

It is every member's responsibility to make sure that his or her information is correct. Please take a moment to look at your listing in the last directory and send your corrections to Leon Brachman at 3720 Autumn Dr., Fort Worth, TX 76109, 817-924-9207, or email him at leonhb@flash.net.

Join TJHS on a
European adventure...
A Tour of Jewish
Portugal & Spain



For more information,
call Vickie Vogel at
(979) 247-4504
or email her at
txjhs@yahoo.com

Send \$450 deposit checks made payable to
Go Ahead Tours to Vickie Vogel at
3114 Frank Rd., La Grange, TX 78945.

Do NOT send checks to the TJHS post office box!

DEPARTURE DATE:

March 6, 2009

12-DAY TOUR INCLUDES:

- Round-trip air transportation with a major airline, airport transfers, and escorts
- The services of a multilingual Go Ahead Tour Director
- 10 nights accommodations in comfortable, well-located hotels with twin beds and private bath or shower
- All hotel service charges and tips, baggage handling and local taxes
- Buffet breakfast (B) daily
- 4 three-course dinners, including wine and beer (D)
- Private deluxe motorcoach
- Focus on sights and events of particular significance to Jewish travelers as well as highlights like the Alhambra and the Prado
- Go Ahead travel bag and membership in our World Traveler Club, which includes credit toward your next tour
- The price is \$3,239, which will be lowered when participation goals are met.

Jake J. Nathan Sold for Less

by W. T. Block

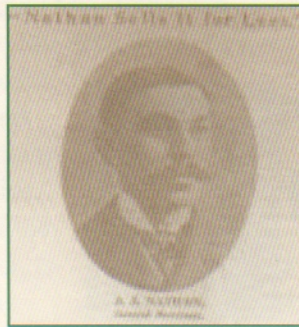
During years past, at least two elderly Beaumonters told me what it was like to visit Nathan Department Store's "Toyland" during the Christmas season. It was a special moment of ecstasy for each child, with every eye glued to the pretty dolls, tin soldiers, and tricycles.

In 1907, Jake J. Nathan was Beaumont's first department store owner in his four-story building of 30,000 feet capacity in the Goodhue block at Orleans and Laurel. Its slogan, and often its store sign, read "Nathan Sells It For Less." The same curt slogan separated news articles in *The Beaumont Enterprise*, and in its issue for November 13, 1907, there were many such short ads, a full-page ad, and a history of Nathan's Store.

Jake Nathan was born in 1874, and reared in the vicinity of Evansville, Indiana, where he grew up with

Stanley Marcus of Neiman-Marcus fame. Nathan arrived in Beaumont and Orange at an early age, perhaps by 1892, and his earliest employment there was in a store in Orange. His mother's maiden name was Bluestein, and Jake may have received his first merchandising tutelage from Wolf Bluestein, who was a pioneer merchant of both Beaumont and Orange in 1890.

Nathan opened his first store, jestingly called "a hole in the wall," in February, 1896, when he occupied two-thirds of a one-story building on



Jake J. Nathan

Crockett Street. In 1898, Nathan began occupying the entire building, plus half of an adjacent building. Nathan's success was nothing less than phenomenal, with nearly all Beaumonters believing that they could buy the best for less from Jake Nathan.

On May 5, 1900, *Sabine Pass News* published an article about Nathan's store, observing that "...J.J. Nathan conducts the leading and largest clothing store in Beaumont... His aggregation of clothing and furnishing goods is in the Goodhue building, size 30 by 90 feet, opposite S.P. depot. He gives employment to ten clerks."

In 1904, Nathan occupied two floors, for a total of 13,000-square-feet, in the Goodhue Building at Orleans and Laurel. Within a year, that building was also outgrown, and the building's owner decided to remodel

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Solinsky and Bluestein Were Early Jewish Settlers

by W. T. Block

In 1878, Beaumont offered an amenable and equitable climate for Jews to compete. Morris J. Loeb moved his family there in that year and opened a cigar store. Although Jewish settlement came comparatively late, it quickly flourished.

An early New Orleans paper (*Democrat*, September 18, 1881) also took note of Jewish immigration in Beaumont and noted:

"...Seven new stores have been built at Beaumont in the past 40 days, and a number of Israelite merchants have settled there, a sure precursor of the prosperity which is to follow..."

Before 1890, "Israelite" was the

common journalist jargon for a member of the Jewish faith.

In 1876, Henry Solinsky, Morris Hecht, and Wolf Bluestein settled in Orange, but late in 1880, Hecht and Solinsky, as partners, opened a business house in Beaumont. In 1881, Solinsky severed his ties with Hecht, and re-entered a partnership with Bluestein, who had also moved to Beaumont from Orange.

In April, 1881, while Blanchette Hall was being remodeled, Solinsky bought the new opera house, and he soon left for New York in search of vaudeville talent. In October, 1891, the new Bluestein Opera House

opened on the second floor of the partners' new brick building at Tevis and Forsythe Streets.

In September, 1881, *The Beaumont Enterprise* made its first reference to the Jewish holidays, observing that:

"...Today and tomorrow are Rosh Hashanah, or the Jewish New Year. All the stores and places of business kept by the Israelites will be closed..."

Wolf Bluestein was an enigmatic personage of rare talents. He was a pioneer rice farmer of Orange County, and in December, 1892, he shipped 100 barrels of rough rice in the first

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— Max Feinberg's Store Fed the Hungry —

by W. T. Block

It now appears that I may never find all the ways that neighbors helped less fortunate neighbors during the Great Depression. And although all those helpful neighbors may be dead as I write, it is not too late to recognize what their helpful deeds were. In 1935, there was no welfare or government agency to turn to.

In about 1905, a Jewish gentleman named Max Feinberg opened a store in Beaumont, just as many others of his faith have done as far back as 1880. Many Beaumont oldsters can still remember when Max Feinberg's department store, on the west side of Orleans Street at Fannin, was a chic place to shop. Three years into the Depression, Feinberg felt the hard times, too, just as every other Beaumont merchant had, so when the store combined two departments on the second floor, it was to effect a saving, and it also left a blank space available for other use.

If Max walked down Orleans as far as Forsythe, he was met by six or more hungry people, requesting a dime for a hamburger. Most of them were not "railroad bums," only neighbors who had been laid off from some area store or industry.

Feinberg knew of another merchant, who one day sold eighty gallons of ice cream at one-cent per cone, as a promotion gimmick to attract new

customers. The people Feinberg planned to help had no money for purchases in his store, but he figured that some day, if their luck changed, they might remember the man who fed them a square meal for a nickel. So Feinberg installed the "Depression Lunch Counter" in the vacant space on the second floor. The five-cent meal was served at Feinberg's cost, and the customer could retain his dignity that he had paid the same price that every other customer paid.

The lunch counter was not a fancy place; the tables and chairs were nondescript—being often they were the display tables that had been taken out of service. However, the area was kept spotlessly clean. And Max Feinberg did not turn away black people from his counter, as others did at later dates. He had to conform to the segregation laws, so he served them at segregated tables, for truly hunger knows no color barriers.

Since everything was sold at cost, a five-cent meal consisted of a hot dog with chili, a glass of milk, and an ice cream cone. For ten cents, the customer bought the foregoing plus a nutritious sandwich. By individual prices, a hot dog sold for two cents; an ice cream cone was one cent; a glass of milk, two cents; soda pop, two cents; a sandwich was five cents; and a slice of watermelon was five cents.

One day, a black school-teacher brought her class of twenty-five students in to buy twenty-five ice cream cones. Her total bill was twenty-five cents, and the teacher did not have to feel that it was charity because the cost was the same to everyone. Think what twenty-five ice cream cones would cost today!

Later, if Max encountered a beggar on the sidewalk, he gave him a nickel and invited him into his store for a meal. People did not consider that the prices were charity because the costs were the same to everyone. Old-timers will recall that Max Feinberg's on Orleans was about as posh a store as Beaumont then had to offer, and just to be inside that store created a feeling of dignity and worth.

I do not recall what eventually happened to Feinberg's store after World War II. Perhaps Max died and the store was liquidated; otherwise it may have been sold and received a new name. I only know that Max realized a need to help his neighbors, and he met that challenge in the best way that he knew how.

And although he could not evade the segregation laws, Max fed both races at the same counter, but did so at a segregated table. Perhaps he realized that when everyone was hungry, the colors of skin seemed to be a lot less important.

We need Your Stories!

We are currently looking for stories with ties to Texas Jewish history! Any kind of story about your family history or your Temple's history can fill the pages of our quarterly newsletter. You can write it, or call our editor for an in-depth inter-

view, and it can be written for you!

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

of genealogy for future generations.

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

TJHS Summer Board Meeting



Left to right: Ben and Barbara Rosenberg, Vickie and David Vogel, and Claire Brooks



Ben Rosenberg and Ima Joy Gandler



Cynthia and Allen Mondell



Barbara Hesse, San Angelo's preservations officer, and Dr. Ralph R. Chase, a retired pediatrician who wrote the paper on Marcus Koenigheim, who is sometimes called the "Father of San Angelo."



TJHS Board Members held a meeting on Sunday morning.



Max Stool

in San Angelo, July 25-27, 2008



Our tour guide for the Painted Rock Excursion, Kay Campbell, talked to members about the many Indian tribes who may have lived in the area and about the pictographs they left there.



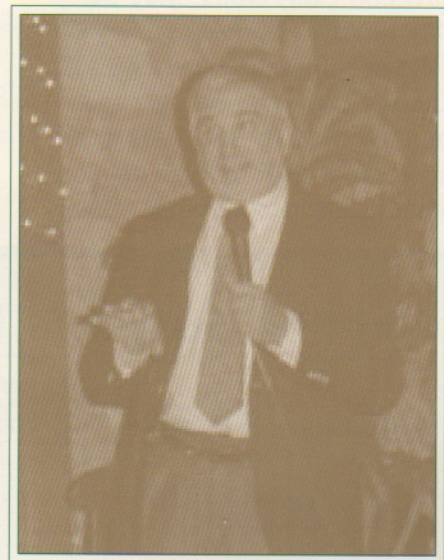
Our hosts from San Angelo and TJHS members enjoyed a good meal at Miss Hattie's Restaurant.



Amy Mizell-Flint holds a candle during Shabbat services, which were held Friday evening.



TJHS members gather for a picture near the Painted Rocks on Saturday morning.



Rabbi Tarlow from Texas A&M Hillel spoke about "The Conversos" in Texas and Northern Mexico.

by adding two new floors, giving it a total of 30,000 square feet. Jake Nathan claimed that on a per capita basis, his store sold as much or more than Macy's in New York.

In November, 1907, Nathan's first floor displayed all varieties of ladies' wear, silks, other yard goods, suits, trunks, bags, etc. The second floor also displayed a complete line of ladies' ready-to-wear, silk dresses, and furs; other clothing in linens, muslins, silks, knit goods, infants' wear, and children's and misses' wear. There was also a boy's wear department on that floor, with suits, shoes, and other apparel.

More than half of the third floor was devoted to household furnishings,

pillows, bed coverings, rugs, curtains, shades, cut glass, and china. On the same floor was Nathan's renowned toy department, the "heaven on earth" for every child.

The fourth floor was devoted entirely to a wholesale trade, which catered to the sawmill upcountry. An elevator connected every floor, and Nathan's was the first Beaumont store to offer tidy restrooms on the second floor for men and women. It was also the first store to install coal-fired steam heat.

In September, 1895, Jake Nathan was one of the organizers of Temple Emanuel, which soon brought to Beaumont its first Rabbi, Dr. Aaron Levy and Nathan's future father-in-law. In

1900, the wedding of Jake Nathan to Annette Levy, daughter of the Rabbi, was one of the city's social events of that year. The two children of that marriage were Annie and Irving.

Jake Nathan's secret of success was that his "customers were always right." He owned a Pierce-Arrow car, but never learned to drive, instead always employing a chauffeur. He loved to attend the New York vaudeville shows. And he was a generous giver, bestowing \$5,000 for the building of Temple Emanuel, and \$5,000 more to the YWCA, where a plaque honoring Annette Levy Nathan still hangs. He died in 1944, and is buried in Hebrew Rest Cemetery.

Solinsky and Bluestein, continued from page 10

box car of rice ever shipped from Orange County. For many years Bluestein owned the only Torah in Beaumont, and in lieu of a trained rabbi, Bluestein and S. Feinberg acted as lay leaders for the earliest Jewish services.

According to Bluestein's obituary (*Galveston Daily News*, May 24, 1896), he never learned to read and write, but his competence at mental arithmetic knew no peer. He once paid a teacher (whose efforts were unsuccessful) \$100 to teach him to write his name, but his crude "BXX"

on bank drafts was honored from Galveston to New York. By 1890, his personal wealth totaled \$75,000—a sizeable sum for that era.

In addition to his store, Henry Solinsky owned a shingle mill in Beaumont. Quickly finding for himself a niche in Beaumont's business and social community, he was chairman of Beaumont's Grand Tournament and Strawberry Festival of 1881; and in 1889, he became a director of First National Bank. On February 15, 1888, *Galveston Daily News* noted that:

"...Henry Solinsky is a wide-

awake merchant, who by dint of fair dealing, close profits, and closer collection, has amassed quite a neat fortune. He is proud of his city and is always ready to aid in any enterprise..."

By 1920, there were two synagogues in Beaumont, but only Temple Emanuel survives today. Like other families, Jews lose many of their children to the financial opportunities found in Houston, but for many years, Beaumont's Jewish community had remained rather steady at about 900 persons.

Meeting Schedule for 2009

- January 9-11, 2009** La Grange, Texas (see information on page 3)
April 24-26, 2009 College Station, Texas (Annual Gathering)

Watch your mail for further information about these meetings!

WANT THIS NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL?

Would you like to save paper and instead receive this newsletter by email? You would be able to read the latest TJHS news in your inbox days before it would be scheduled to arrive in your mail box. Please send an email to alexa.kirk@gmail.com indicating that you would like to be on the email list. (The usual size of the newsletter is 2 MB.)

"The Monster Among Us"

Sold-Out Screening in Dallas

by Sally Drayer

The Monster Among Us, a film by TJHS members Allen and Cynthia Mondell, was held before a sold-out crowd at the Angelika Film Center in Dallas on Monday, June 23. Over 300 people attended the screening, which was presented by American Jewish Committee, with TJHS as one of the sponsors. The evening program began with a reception, followed by speakers from AJC and then the film showing. Following the film was a panel discussion and Q&A session. Members of the panel were: Dallas County Civil District Court Judge, the Honorable Emily Tobolowsky, moderator; Professor of History and Director of the Jewish Studies Program at the Univer-

sity of North Texas, Professor Richard Golden; Professor of Holocaust Studies at the University of Texas—Dallas, with emphasis in German-Jewish History, Professor Nils Roemer; and Allen Mondell, film maker, Media Projects.

The Monster Among Us is a documentary about the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe today. The documentary was filmed in Belgium, the Netherlands, England, and France. People of all ages were interviewed and viewers saw news clips from World War II to the present time.

As Allen Mondell said, "For almost sixty-five years, Jews have said 'Never Again.' We made *The Monster Among Us* to bring to light the

current rise of anti-Semitism in Europe. We hope that organizations and institutions (both Jewish and non-Jewish) use the film as an opportunity to discuss issues that should be addressed by all of us who believe in the sanctity of life and in democratic values. We felt that the event hosted by the Dallas office of the American Jewish Committee and co-sponsored by the TJHS and eighteen other community groups was a successful start to this process."

For more information concerning the film to be presented in Houston, San Antonio, Austin, or any other location where there are TJHS members, please contact Allen Mondell at www.mediaprojects.org.

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

The Texas Jewish Historical Society
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Your support of 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

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



"Jewish Life along the Camino Real"



Joint Meeting of the Texas Jewish Historical Society and the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society

October 24-26, 2008 in El Paso, Texas

at the **Historic Camino Real Hotel**

101 S. El Paso St., Reservations: 915-534-3000 or 1-800-769-4300

Ask for the TJHS rate of \$89 per night.

Free shuttle service is available from the El Paso Airport to the Camino Real Hotel. Parking at the hotel is \$2 per day.

Deadline for Hotel Reservations is September 24, 2008

Friday, October 24, 2008

- 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM Registration
- 5:45 PM Depart hotel for Temple Mount Sinai Kabbalat Shabbat Services
- 7:30 PM Opening dinner and informal conversations at the hotel

Saturday, October 25, 2008

- 9:00 - 10:30 AM First morning session: *Jewish Merchants along the Camino Real*
- 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM Second morning session: *Jewish Women in the Southwest*
- 12:30 - 2:00 PM Lunch on your own
- 2:00 - 3:00 PM Tour of the El Paso Museum of History
- 3:15 - 4:30 PM Tour of the El Paso Holocaust Museum and Study Center
- 7:00 PM Havdalah and Dinner at Temple Mount Sinai: *Crypto Jews in the Southwest*

For more information, contact Shari Schwartz (915-581-5132 or sharielp@aol.com) or Susan Novick (918-892-4302 or snovick@susannovick.com) of the TJHS, or Noel Pugach (npugach@unm.edu) of the NMJHS.

Sunday, October 26, 2008

- 8:30 - 10:30 AM Continental breakfast and Board Meeting



Fall Board Meeting Registration Form

Deadline for Registration is September 24, 2008.

Please list name of each person attending:

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Cell: _____ Email: _____

Registration Fee: \$80 x _____ = \$ _____
(number attending)

Registration fee includes two dinners and one continental breakfast, or choose one or both of the following:

Friday Dinner only \$30 x _____ = \$ _____
(number of people)

Saturday Dinner only \$30 x _____ = \$ _____
(number of people)

Mail form and check made out to TJHS to: Susan Novick, 1024 Blanchard Ave., El Paso, TX 79902

Welcome New Members!

*April 1, 2008 -
June 30, 2008*

Baker, Grace & Robert
206 Clearview Ave., Apt. D
Friendswood, TX 77546
281-482-7094
bandgbaker@att.net

Moskowitz, Benny
8601 Anderson Mill Rd., #412
Austin, TX 78729
512-494-4451
523-740-8467 Cell
bmoskowitz@austin.rr.com

Rossel, Rabbi Seymour
10114 Cliffwood Dr.
Houston, TX 77035
713-726-9520
832-257-1200 Cell
rabbi@cjn.org

Stone, Bryan Edward
Dept. of Social Sciences
Del Mar College
101 Baldwin Blvd.
Corpus Christi, TX 78404
361-698-1988
bstone@delmar.edu

Has Your Address Changed?


If you have any changes in your information, please send those changes to:

Leon Brachman
3720 Autumn Dr.
Fort Worth, TX 76109
phone: 817-924-9207
e-mail: leonhb@flash.net

*A Texan Matriculates at Harvard, continued
from page 3*

I declined, and opted for what would be the most wonderful husband, children, and grandchildren in the world.

I used my Harvard graduate degree in international relations to develop a very successful business in commercial real estate brokerage and development, often working with foreign clients. My husband and I were instrumental in the development of the first synagogue in the corridor outside the Dallas/Fort Worth area. I feel that my earlier experience watching Harvard Hillel grow from a little ole house to the monumental institution it has become inspired us to make choices for the benefit of our own Jewish community.

My current project was most definitely inspired by Harvard Hillel and the marvelous resources it has available. I am writing my family history, both in narrative and genealogical form, in which we have now collected almost 1,800 names as well as a large number of oral histories. 

Attention Board Members, Committee Chairs, and Committee Members

In order to be reimbursed for monies spent for TJHS, you must fill out the Authorize Reimbursement Form from Treasurer Ruth Nathan. You may contact her at rcsparkles@aol.com, 713-728-3139 (phone), or 713-728-0381 (fax).

*This form **MUST** be
obtained **BEFORE**
spending the money!*

MAZEL TOV to the following Texas Jewish Historical Society members:

ALLEN & CYNTHIA MONDELL, on their film *A Fair to Remember* and the excerpt from the documentary that was in the "Guide" section of the *Dallas Morning News* on Friday, July 25, 2008.

HOLLACE WEINER, on receiving the B'nai B'rith Person of the Year Award in Fort Worth.

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

Visit us on the web at www.txjhs.org

www.txjhs.org

Speakers Bureau

When an organization asks TJHS for a speaker, we will suggest those on our list who match the criteria. That organization is responsible for making contact with the speaker and handling any details. No re-

muneration (other than expenses, lodging, meals, etc.) is provided to the speaker. If you would like to be included in this database, please provide the following information:



Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: (_____) _____ Work Phone: (_____) _____

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

Email (print clearly): _____

Topic(s): _____ Length: _____

_____ Length: _____

_____ Length: _____

Brief description of each topic (use another sheet of paper if needed):

Distance you are willing to travel: _____

Restrictions or special requirements: _____

*Mail this information to:
Texas Jewish Historical Society, P. O. Box 10193, Austin, Texas 78766-0193,
or email it to txjhs@yahoo.com.*



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History of Baytown Available for Free

A thirty-two-page "History of the Baytown Jewish Community, 1928-2008" has been written and is available at no cost by email attachment in Microsoft Word. A printed, bound, and mailed copy is available at a cost of \$5.50. Contact Don Teter at donte@hal-pc.org.

TJHS Traveling Exhibit

The Texas Jewish Historical Society has compiled two museum quality photo exhibits with explanations depicting early Jewish life and contributions. Both exhibits highlight the lives of Jews in Texas since the early part of the century.

Each exhibit is comprised of approximately thirty-six photographs that can either be self-standing with an easel back or hung on a wall. There is no charge for the exhibits and they will be shipped prepaid freight via UPS in

waterproof boxes to your location. The only expense to the borrower will be the shipping of the exhibit back via UPS ground.

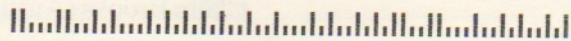
The exhibits have been displayed in various locations in Texas and other parts of the United States, including Rhode Island and California. They are an excellent program for schools, congregations and other organizations. To schedule the exhibits, please contact Jack Gerrick at 817-927-8765 or email him at texbed@aol.com.

Texas Jewish Historical Society

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

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

Check the Appropriate Box(es)

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