



# NEWSLETTER

P. O. Box 10193 Austin, Texas 78766-0193 Spring 1992

## Annual Gathering Best Ever!

At our 12th Annual Gathering, Galveston, March 6-8, 168 TJHS members and guests shared what all agreed was the best ever Gathering. Meeting chairman Barbara Rosenberg of Sugar Land, created a meeting that combined the history of the Jewish community in Galveston, the Galveston Immigrant Movement, information on Sephardic and Crypto Jews and Ladino music.

TJHS members journeyed by train, airplane and car from as far as California for our Gathering at the Galvez Hotel on the Seawall. Rabbi Jimmy Kessler, Temple B'nai Israel, one of the founders and first president of TJHS, acted as official greeter, tour guide and host at services at that temple.

TJHS honored Rabbi Kessler after Shabbat services with a plaque which thanked him for his long-term work for the society. The Temple Sisterhood hosted a reception following the services. A large display of photos and documents from the early days of Galveston are on display at the Temple.

TJHS president, Fay Brachman, Fort Worth, presided over 3 days of lectures and pre-

sentations on a variety of subjects. Activities from morning until night included a private tour of the Texas Seaport Museum. Many used the museum's computers to look up arrival records of family members. The tall ship *Elissa*, docked at the Museum, provided a stage for Jan Siegel Hart of Temple, in period costume to recreate her Grandmother's arrival in the United States which touched many hearts. Jan is the author of *HANNA THE IMMIGRANT*.

Herbert and Audrey Givens from El Paso, recalled that they married in the same room in the Galvez Hotel where we met. A wedding guest nearly 60 years ago was Winston Heidenheimer who met the bride for the first time in all those years.

Many members brought old photos, family records, and mementos handed down through the generations to share and show off. Members recorded video histories. By Sunday afternoon the sun came out to add to the pleasure of sharing 150 years of Texas history, our own history to share and remember.

*Copies of the group photograph of Galveston Plan descendants taken at the Gathering may be ordered from. Manny Chan, Creative Photography, 6428 Stewart Road, Galveston, TX 77551. (405) 740-3019. Cost is \$16.50 for each 8" x 10" photo shipping and tax included.*

TJHS NEWSLETTER -- News Letter Editor

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# NEWS AND NOTES

## MAY BOARD MEETING IN BRENHAM

The TJHS May 17th Board meeting will take place in the historic and lovely town of Brenham. The meeting will begin at 9:30 a.m. at B'nai Abraham synagogue in honor of the synagogue's 100th anniversary. Brenham is near Washington-on-the-Brazos, about one hour's drive from Houston, perhaps 2 hours from Waco. At one time this area had a large Jewish community.

The synagogue is on Park Street, one block north of Main Street in downtown Brenham.

If you want a reservation to have lunch on Sunday, please telephone Fay Brachman by May 10. (817) 924-9207.

## NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION TO HOST REGIONAL CONFERENCE

--On the care of Texas' Older Churches and Synagogues, June 4-5, 1992.

TJHS is assisting in sponsoring in Dallas a very important meeting for people interested in preserving our historic synagogues. Conference participants will come away with the practical information needed to carry out repairs and plan for the long-term maintenance of their buildings, as well as an understanding of the organizations which can provide ongoing assistance.

For more information, please contact: Libby Willis, Director, Texas/New Mexico Field Office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation; (817) 332-4398.



*Jan Siegel Hart as her Grandmother, Hanna as seen at the Seaport Museum during our 1992 Galveston Gathering.*

### Texas Wild Flowers

Wild flowers on a cloudy day  
makes my heart  
light and gay  
fields of yellow  
red and blue  
touched by a drop  
of morning dew.

*By Dr. Julian Haber*

## Report from the President --By Fay Brachman

The Gathering in Galveston is now over; however, the memories will continue for a long, long time.

It was a wonderful weekend. We all shared the results of the work that Barbara Rosenberg put into the planning, dreaming and preparation to make it the best Gathering that I have ever attended.

We shared many magic moments ... honoring Rabbi Jimmy Kessler as our founder and first president ... Jan Hart, portraying her grandmother's debarkation from the ship at the port of Galveston -- frantically searching for her husband ... searching through the computer at the Seaport Museum for data about immigrants ... looking at the names of our immigrants and their descendants in our lovely scroll ... gleaning information about crypto Jews ... hearing about early Texas Jewish history of people and places ...

And, of course, playing Jewish geography - finding and making friends.

It was a wonderful experience for all of us who attended. For those of you who could not be with us this time - we hope to see you at the Gathering '93 in San Antonio.

...Fay

### I REMEMBER ... *as told at the Galveston Meeting*

My name is Florence Frosch Blum and I remember that my father, David Frosch told me that he came to Galveston from Bojcov, Galicia in Austria in 1892. My mother came to Galveston through New York. She was sent by her parents to help her sister Jennie Painkinsky who already had 5 children and was expecting number 6. She arrived in August 1899. The storm hit September 8, 1900. She thought the world was coming to an end. Number 6 arrived September 14, 1900. She told me they managed to get the 5 children across the street to a brick house owned by a Mr. Rauch. The last one went piggy-back, because the water was then so high. My mother and her sister were alone in the house to deliver number 6. They made it. I do not know how my mother and father met. They married in about 1904 and moved to Houston. My father said he could borrow no money from Galveston friends because he moved away from Galveston after the storm. He started in business as a peddler. Later had a furniture store.

My name is Sonia Raizes and I remember that

my Grandmother, Fannye Feige Lerner told me that she married Aaron Farb the day she arrived in Galveston - a pre-arranged marriage. The Aaron Farb's had 7 children. Their home was opened to all visitors and businessmen who needed a Kosher home. Later, she walked all over Galveston selling raffle tickets to benefit Beth Jacob Synagogue and Hadassah. She paid a Black lady in bananas to teach her how to read English.

My name is Marvin Rich and I remember that my father, Philip Rich (Pinchos Ratschkovsky), told me that after he landed in New York at age 13, in 1904 on the SS Chemnitz, he came by boat to Galveston and continued on the train to his Uncle, Pinchos Oshmon, in Richmond, Texas. Pinchos was so excited at seeing his family after being on the trip for so long, that he left his straw suitcase on the train. As the train pulled out to Rosenberg, he started yelling in Yiddish, and the whole crowd yelled so the train backed up and the conductor threw the straw case out to him. Later, with his Uncle Pinchos they went out with a horse and wagon peddling to Wharton and back thru Damon and Needville. On the way back, the horse died, and they had to pull the wagon back to Richmond.

## TEXAS JEWISH IMMIGRANT RECIPES --By Naomi Friedman

During the Galveston Gathering I presented my idea for creating a cookbook of recipes that our ancestors brought with them from their Old Country. I am a professional nutritionist, and I will design a modern version of each recipe that takes into account our current views on nutrition and health. (Yes, you can make Grandmother's recipes without chicken fat!)

Our TJHS Board voted to support this project, and I received much positive input from people attending the Gathering. We need your family recipes that have been handed down through the generations of those who settled in Texas. We can use recipes that are written in Yiddish or Ladino with or without translations. We will translate the recipes into English and publish the original as well as up-to-date versions. Please send me anecdotes and history about the recipes. All recipes will be acknowledged.

We need information on how the Kashruth or Jewish holidays were observed.

How did your Grandmother selected chickens? We would love to hear from you.

The heart of every home is the kitchen. Please take a few minutes to send me copies of your recipes with the cook's name, country of origin, town and year of arrival in Texas, and your own name. Working together we can make this project a success. Naomi Friedman  
P. O. Box 2192, Longview, Texas 75606, Tele: (903) 758-2524 FAX: (903) 758-2265

### DALLAS TEENS CLEAN UP GONZALES CEMETERY

*By Don Teter*

I met ten 7th grade students from the Akiba Academy of Dallas on March 25 at the old Jewish Cemetery in Gonzales. Rabbi David Jacobson, headmaster and a teacher at Akiba accompanied the students. This small cemetery is located about three miles north of Gonzales on a ranch along a railroad track. The burials date from 1861 to 1902.

The students mowed, clipped weeds, straightened the fence, righted some of the fallen markers and made rubbings of some of the monuments. This cemetery is now in much improved condition. No one has seen it in years until we 'discovered' it. It is hoped that other forgotten Texas Jewish cemeteries may be restored by groups who want to do a mitzvah.

We have partial, and in some cases, especially the older and smaller Jewish cemeteries, complete lists of burials. I will be glad to look up any names for people if they will contact me.

### SCROLL PROJECT A HUGE SUCCESS

*By Don Teter*

Response to our Scroll Project came from all of the country and Mexico. About 90 families are represented, with approximately 700 names of immigrants and their descendants. Families wishing to be inscribed may send information to Don Teter, 5015 Glenhaven, Baytown, TX. 77521. Please indicate who were immigrants and who were descendants and what the relationship is by generation. The cost remains at \$5.00 per immigrant name and \$2.50 per descendant name. Please note that only direct descendants are to be included. For the sake of accuracy, it is important that names be typed or printed in block letters.

It is planned that within the next few months photographs of each page will be made. Copies showing their family will be sent to all participants. The ultimate site for permanent display of the Scroll has not yet been determined. This beautiful scroll is in a very large wooden box with handles that may be turned in order for the names to be read. It is a very impressive historical record.

# ORAL HISTORY --By Helen Wilk

Shalom Friends,

As I take on my new role as Chair of the Oral History Project I want to share with you the excitement and thrill I feel as I obtain each oral history in my community, Corpus Christi, Texas.

Since I'm a relative newcomer to taping oral histories, I understand the concerns that many of you may feel about your ability to do an oral history taping. However, all that one needs for this task are: 1) a sincere interest in people. 2) a brief training session covering the "how to's" of taping. (Our previous TJHS Newsletter had a great article written by Karen Kaplan with very good information about the ABC's of taking an oral history.) 3) an inexpensive cassette recorder, and most important of all, 4) a strong sense of the urgency of this project.

The TJHS can provide the training session, sample questions and guidelines concerning those who should be interviewed first. If you wish, TJHS can reimburse you for the cost of cassette tapes. It is vital that you begin with the most senior and/

or feeble members of your community so that you can begin to paint a word picture of what life was like and how Jewish residents integrated in the community. You'll be amazed at the stories, descriptions and anecdotes you'll hear! On a local level your tapes and written transcriptions will create an archive in your own community, preserving that history for the future. Copies of the tapes and transcriptions will be sent to the Barker History Center in Austin to become part of the Judaic collection which is available for research to students and scholars.

I guarantee that you will feel wonderful having made such a contribution in preserving our unique history!

Please contact me if you would like more information or assistance in creating an oral history project in your community.

Helen K. Wilk, Oral History Chair  
260 Cape Aron, Corpus Christi, TX 78412  
(512) 991-1118 [home] (512) 853-0237 [office]

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

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*Mr. and Mrs. Michael Brown, Houston*  
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*Mr and Mrs. Herman Munter, San Antonio*

## MEMBERS' PUBLICATIONS

Please make orders to the addresses listed with each book or video.

Many prices are special to TJHS members.

**HANNA THE IMMIGRANT** by Jan Siegel Hart, book, tax & postage \$16.00: 2509 Redwing Drive, Temple, TX 76502 (817) 778-2676

**HISTORY OF THE JEWS OF TEXAS MIDDLE CORRIDOR** by William J. Munter, book, tax & postage \$2.50: Border Studies Publishing, P.O.Box 3063, Laredo, TX 78044.

**OLEANDER ODYSSEY, The Kempers of Galveston, Texas 1854-1980** by Harold M. Hyman, book, tax & postage \$45.00, Texas A&M Univ. Press, Drawer C, College Station, TX 77843 or (800) 826-8911.

**WEST OF HESTER STREET**, video (VHS only) of a film by Allen Mondell & Cynthia Salzman Mondell, video, tax & shipping, \$32.00, 5215 Homer St., Dallas, TX 75206.

**GALVESTON, ELLIS ISLAND OF THE WEST**, by Bernard Marinbach, book, tax & postage, \$19.00, SUNY Press, c/o CUP Services, P.O. BOX 6525, Ithaca, NY 14851 (Mention TJHS to get discounted price).

**REFLECTIONS OF SOUTHERN JEWRY, The letters of Charles Wessolowsky (1878-1979)** edited by Louis Schmier, book, tax & postage \$7.50, TJHS, P. O. Box 10193, Austin, TX 78766-0193.

**DEEP IN THE HEART, The Lives & Legends of Texas Jews, a Photographic History**, book, tax & shipping, \$20.00, TJHS, P.O. Box 10193, Austin, TX 78766-0193.

### 1992-1993 OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

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# NEWSLETTER SCHEDULE

Texas is a big, big state. We have a lot of distance to cover to put together the TJHS Newsletter. It is very important that we work together to meet deadlines.

Issue Month	DEADLINE
August	July 1, 1992
November	October 1, 1992
February 1993	January 1, 1993

Please send materials to be considered for the Newsletter to:

Ellen Kurtzman, Editor (817) 292-3491  
4801 Willow Run Court  
Fort Worth, TX 76132-1518

Unless specified in a cover letter and a cover letter and a return envelope with postage is included, all materials submitted will be forwarded to the Barker Texas History Center and will become the property of that library. When items are valuable, one-of-a-kind or fragile, please submit copies only. We cannot be responsible for items lost in shipment or slept upon by the Editor's cat.

Please assume that your Editor knows absolutely nothing about the information and photographs you are submitting when preparing your items. (We promise there will be no hurt feelings.) It will help if you print key names in the margin close to where they appear in the text. There are many close variations of family names.

The TJHS Newsletter is catalogued by several university libraries and is recognized as a research guide. We all can be proud of this status.

Remember: do NOT send us your only copy of a precious photograph. Have a duplicate made and send it.

## TEXAS JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

I am enclosing my contribution of \$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 \$1,000  
to the Texas Jewish Historical Society for the 1992 membership year.

Classification of membership: \$25 - Annual Member; \$50 Supporting Member;  
\$100 - Sponsor and Organization, \$250 - Sustaining member;  
\$500 - Benefactor; \$1,000 - Patron

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

My areas of interest are: \_\_\_\_\_

Please furnish us with a brief family history for our archives.

Clip and send to address below

Contributions to TJHS are tax deductible within the limits of the law