

# Texas Jewish Historical Society




May 2020 News Magazine

## — TJHS Cancels Annual Gathering 2020 — by Davie Lou Solka

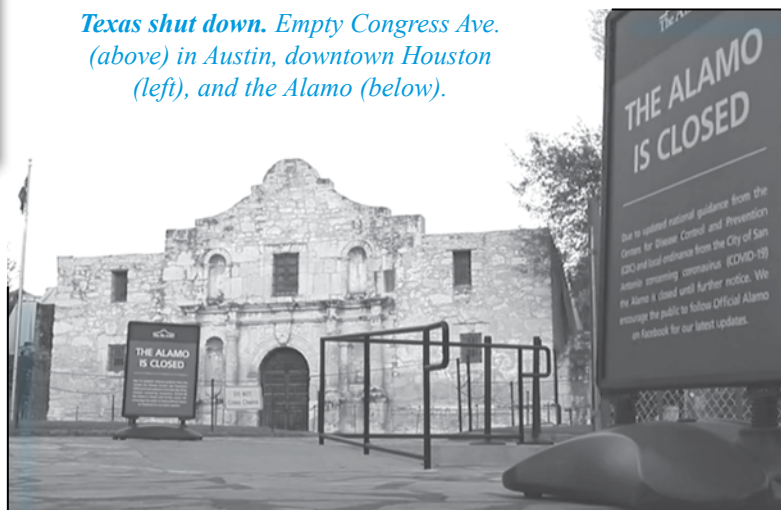
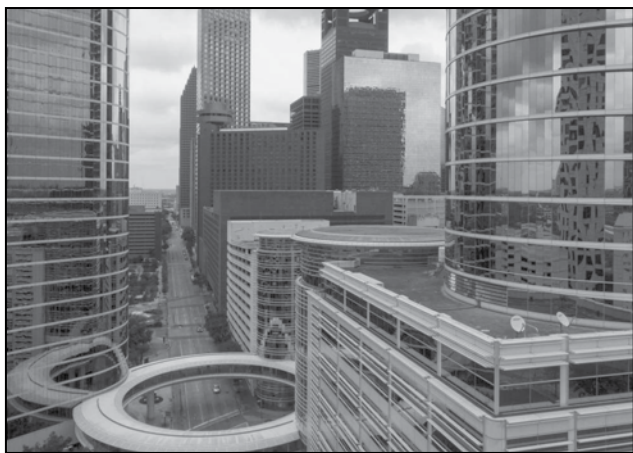
For the first time in its forty-year history, the Texas Jewish Historical Society cancelled its Annual Gathering and postponed the Summer Board Meeting for 2020. The cancellation was due to the Corona virus that was sweeping the world. Many of the members of TJHS were sequestered in their homes because of the “stay home” orders from state and national governments. Members stayed in touch via Facebook, emails, texts, and even telephone calls.

Since the Annual Gathering is the time, according to the By-Laws, to elect officers and new board members, a vote was taken via Google email. Over one-hundred members participated in the online voting and the Proposed Slate of Officers and Board Members were elected. (See the article on page 5.)

Plans are underway to hold the Summer Board Meeting in Bonham in August. Details will be forthcoming. 



*Texas shut down. Empty Congress Ave.  
(above) in Austin, downtown Houston  
(left), and the Alamo (below).*



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# Message from the President

by Susan Zack Lewis

So...what have you been doing? This question is often asked when the Texas Jewish Historical Society begins a meeting. The answers often fill an evening of visiting and a weekend experiencing Jewish life in towns all over the state. So what makes this column in the News Magazine different?

We've all been in quarantine. We've all been alone during one of our favorite holidays and now we're electing officers by absentee ballot.

Getting ready for Passover was unusually challenging this year. There were no trips to Fort Worth or other cities for supplies, so I turned to Amazon. The *matzah* I ordered came smashed and there was no *gefilte* fish available. I thought I also ordered macaroons, but they never arrived. I



did find part of a box of *matzah* and looked online to see if I could bring it back from "stale." Sure enough, there were instructions. I thought the miracle of the oil from Chanukah was amazing, but this!

This was fabulous. There was enough to get through the seder, have *gesmer-ta* (a cheesecake kind of topping with cinnamon and sugar—that's what my grandmother called it) *matza*, *matzoh* and eggs and *matzah* pizza. (Yes, I know I am spelling it many ways—it's a family joke.)

We were able to get horseradish and Mogen David from the store and even with eggs in short supply, we had a roasted one on our Seder plate. Our son in California had a Zoom Seder which we joined and we also Zoomed with Beth-El in Fort Worth for second

night Seder. It was amazing and more satisfying than we had expected.

Technology has been a lifesaver for us. We do yoga every morning at 11:00 AM using Facebook with our son who lives in Dallas. Every night at 7:00 PM, our California kids go out on the balcony at their house and cheer for the caregivers. We log into their Facebook to see them. So, we're staying in touch. It helps.

Tumbleweed is working on a new show on "Outrageous Texas Women." He hopes to debut it in July in Fort Davis. Since beginning to do the research on it, he says he has found enough content for two shows, maybe three. He began working on it after getting a contract for a speech to a women's group in Midland next February.

So while we've postponed some things, other opportunities have popped up. We have organized most of the cabinets in our office and we reworked some of the storage areas in the house. We have a new lawn mower (battery operated), so the lawn is getting mowed and we have pruned trees and bushes.

Before we had to shut our doors to company, we had a marvelous visit from Sheldon Lippman and John Campbell. They were touring West Texas and the Big Bend.

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## The Texas Jewish Historical Society May 2020 Quarterly News Magazine

The Texas Jewish Historical Society News Magazine is published four times annually. Stories about Texas Jewish history, oral histories, and requests for assistance with research are welcome, as are photographs and historical documents. Please provide color photocopies or scans at 300 dpi or greater in gif, tif, or jpg format, and send electronically to Editor Davie Lou Solka at [editor@txjhs.org](mailto:editor@txjhs.org) or by mail to 3808 Woodbrook Circle, Austin, TX 78759, 512-527-3799. Be sure to include your name and contact information.



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

*Visit us on the web at [www.txjhs.org](http://www.txjhs.org).*

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# — The History of the Diamond/Pink/ — Selzer Shabbat Candlesticks, Copper Wash Tub, and Brass Samovar

by Laurie Pink Selzer

These comments are made from notes collected with Ida Stein and Gladys Pink, and later collaborated with a story from Uncle Harold Stein.

In 2002, when I was unpacking our many boxes as we transitioned to high rise living, several friends commented on the beauty of my Shabbat candlesticks. I shared with them that there was a special story behind them. They said I should write the story for my family when I have time. While going through a quarantine period during the Coronavirus pandemic, I have gone through family scrapbooks, including my mother and grandmother's to add more facts to the story.

In the late 1880s to early 1900s my great-grandparents, Hyman and Sadie Diamond, were a young married couple living in a small village in Russia (still trying to find the name.) Russian Jews were forced to live in deplorable poverty level housing, limited jobs, and practice of their religion was kept at home and not shared with the community. Jobs were limited and the Jews were forced to sell off most of their loved possessions to have money to survive. The violence from the dictatorship created a movement that forced the Jews out of Russia, but yet the Russian dictatorship did not make it easy for Jews to leave freely on their own.

Although the government did not allow Jews to practice their religion openly, they wanted to keep the Jews in Russia to do the labor-intensive jobs that no one else wanted to do.



This prevented the Jews from being able to immigrate freely.

My great-grandfather, Hyman Diamond, was able to sneak out of Russia leaving behind his young wife, Sadie, and their two small children. He travelled to Poland and then to Amsterdam, where a program sponsored by a coalition of Jews in America gave him the opportunity to immigrate to the United States. He found his way to Galveston by travelling on a very crowded transport boat for many months. Many people died on the voyage due to diseases and their bodies were tossed overboard. The boat stopped at many ports, including one in Mexico before it docked in Galveston. He was lovingly placed with a Jewish foster family in Galveston who provided him with a place to live and work.

Two years later he was able to recruit his young wife, Sadie and



their children, Nathan and Ida (my maternal grandmother), to join him. Sadie Diamond (my great-grandmother) wrapped her treasured silver Shabbat candlesticks in her clothes, and put the clothes and candlesticks in her copper washtub, along

with her brass Samovar. I now have these three items in my home. She and the children travelled for thirty-plus days in an overcrowded boat where many died because of diseases. She only spoke Russian/Yiddish and along with her few precious items, she and the children eventually rejoined her husband in Galveston.

Hyman and Sadie Diamond had two more children, Max and Jake, and raised their family in Galveston, where they owned a prosperous grocery business. Hyman owned a horse-drawn cart where he sold food and supplies and was known for the apples that he sold. The Diamonds loved the Galveston community and survived many devastating hurricanes, including the Great Storm in 1900 and another one in 1914. Hyman and Sadie are buried in Galveston.

Sadie passed her beautiful candlesticks to her daughter, Ida, on her wedding to Jack Stein (my grandparents), and they went to my mother, Gladys Stein, on her wedding day to my dad, Louis Pink. I received them on my wedding day when I married Alan Selzer. The night before I got



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# TJHS Dolph Briscoe Center for American History Intern Report

by Elizabeth Seely

Hi! My name is Elizabeth Seeley and I worked as the Texas Jewish Historical Society Archives intern at the Briscoe Center for American History during the fall semester at UT Austin. I'm currently studying for a Master's in Library Science at the School of Information at UT. Working with the Texas Jewish Historical Society records was an absolute pleasure.

One of the things I'm most proud of accomplishing as the TJHS intern was the reincorporation of THJS materials that had been previously separated into a 'sample' collection of the Briscoe Center's archival holdings in the 1980s. I reintegrated them into the TJHS finding aid and the collection grew from 115.75 linear feet to 121 linear feet. Much of the material was valuable documentation of Jewish cultural institutions in various communities in Texas from roughly 1930 to 1980, including synagogue brochures and unpublished family histories that would be hard to find elsewhere.



Building on the major improvements made by my predecessor, Brady Cox, I also conducted a major rehaul of the finding aid, correcting description and arrangement inconsistencies, confirming the intellectual order of the materials, updating various aspects of the description, and rehousing the materials. These improvements will allow

future users of the TJHS archives to have an easier time finding and accessing the rich breadth of materials held within the collection.

I also processed quite a few related collections of Texas Jewish history, including the Fort Worth Texas Jewish History Collection, the Vickie Vogel Papers, the Jacob B. Werlin Papers, the Sam Perl Papers, and the Enid Klass Papers, among others. I encourage TJHS members to research these collections using the finding aids I have posted on TARO for the collections. They represent a wide array of narratives that contribute to the diverse history of Texan Jews.

I also worked on reintegrating the portions of the Henry Cohen papers, which had also been separated at some point to the TXC Collection. I described these materials, placing them back into the Henry Cohen finding aid. I also cleaned and rehoused a number of documents in the Cohen papers that required preservation

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## Does TJHS Have Your Current Email Address?

Is your email address current? Has it changed since the 2018 directory was printed? Have you changed email providers? If so, please send Marc Wormser an email at [c2aggie@gmail.com](mailto:c2aggie@gmail.com) so that he can update your information in the database. To reduce postage cost



and printing delays, we are going to be electronically sending as much mail as possible, so don't be left out or behind—send your current information today!

Please put "email change" in the subject line and with your name in the text of your message, send it today! Thank you.

*Selzer, continued from page 3*

married, Grandmother Ida Diamond Stein gifted the candlesticks to me in person and on her card, she wrote that "whatever challenge life gives us, and there will be those days, always remember that God will always give

us Shabbat. Take a moment to reflect on the goodness and G-d is there for us and will give you the strength to get through these challenges."

Those words and reflection during this uncertain period in our life, mean

so much now, and I feel blessed to have the opportunity to light them and have Shabbat or just have that moment in my day to make time for a moment of reflection for all the goodness in my life. 🇺🇸

# TJHS Holds Historic Election

by Davie Lou Solka

The Texas Jewish Historical Society held its annual Officer and Board election in an unusual way in this year because of the coronavirus pandemic and subsequent stay-at-home orders. Since the Annual Gathering, where the election is usually held, was cancelled due to the virus, the election was conducted online. A ballot was sent to the membership and they had one week to return it. More than one-hundred members voted and were given the chance to nominate others. The results were in and the following were elected/re-elected unanimously:

## Officers

### President

Susan Zack Lewis (Big Spring)

### 1st Vice President

Sonny Gerber (Houston)

### 2nd Vice President

Sheldon Lippman (Austin)

### 3rd Vice President

Jane Manaster (Dallas)

### Recording Secretary

John Campbell (Austin)

### Corresponding Secretary

Amy Milstein (Frisco)

### Treasurer

Ben Rosenberg (Sugar Land)

### Historian/Archivist

Sally Drayer (Dallas)

### Parliamentarian

Davie Lou Solka (Austin)

## Board Members 2020-2022

Ruthe Berman (Katy)

Gordon Cizon (Dallas)

Michael Furgatch (Brownsville)

Marlene Eichelbaum (San Antonio)

Melvin Eichelbaum (San Antonio)

Jeffrey Josephs (Austin)

Joan Katz (Houston)

Louis Katz (Houston)

Kay Krause (Dallas)

Molly Kristall (Austin)

Bob Lewis (Big Spring)

Marilyn Lippman (Dallas)

Mitzi Milstein (Longview)

Ruth Nathan (Houston)

Dr. Marc Orner (Abilene)

Jack Solka (Austin)

Betty Weiner (Houston)

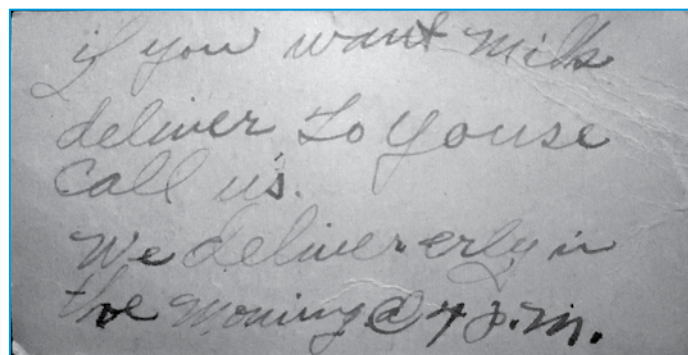
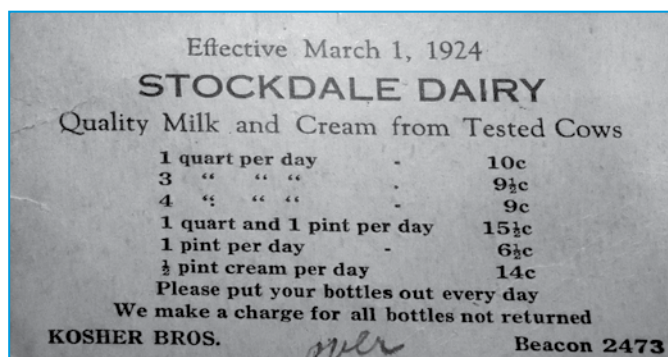
Michael Wolf (Beaumont)

Joyce Wormser (Pearland)

## Board Member to fill unexpired one-year term 2020-2021

Sharon Gerber (Houston) 

## Your Help Needed




Gregg Philipson, from Austin who is a collector of Holocaust and Jewish WWI and WWII items bought this item from a seller in Edinburg, Texas on eBay. It says "If you want milk deliver to youse call us. We deliver erly in the moning @ 4 p.m."

Dairy Calling Card and Price List from Stockdale Dairy. Note "Kosher Bros" statement.

If you have information about this Dairy in Stockdale, Texas, in 1924, please contact Davie Lou Solka at [davielou@solka.net](mailto:davielou@solka.net).

**The deadline for the September 2020 TJHS News Magazine is Friday, August 14.**

## Save Postage

Please notify TJHS when your address has changed or if you may be temporarily away from home when the News Magazine is to be delivered. These issues are returned to us at a postage due rate of \$1.52. We want to save you money! 



# Meet Your Board

**Susan Zack Lewis**, President, is from Big Spring and is married to Bob Lewis, aka Tumbleweed Smith. They have two sons, Kevin (Jill) of Dallas, and BZ (Margaret)

of Oakland, CA, four grandchildren. Susan is involved in many civic activities in Big Spring. She and Bob have owned Multi Media Advertising for almost forty years, and she serves as technical director when Tumbleweed has a speaking engagement. She has a degree in Interior Design.

**Sonny Gerber**, First Vice President, is from Houston and he and his wife, Sharon, have been married for thirty-eight years. He has six granddaughters.

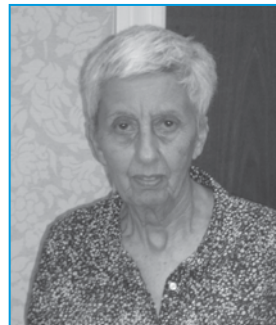


**Sheldon I. Lippman**, Second Vice-President, grew up in Schulenburg and attended the University of Texas, Austin, where he earned a

Bachelor of Journalism. From 1975-1981, he lived and worked in Washington, D.C., but returned to Austin and UT to get his MA in Radio-Television-Film. From 1985-1987, he was a media director for Keep Texas Beautiful, Inc. Returning to Washington, D.C. in 1987, he worked for five years at the National Academy of Sciences and the last twenty-five years with the

World Bank where he continues to do long-distance editing as a consultant. In 2017, Sheldon returned to Austin to live. In addition to his Vice-President duties Sheldon shares the Webmaster position for TJHS with John Campbell.

**Jane Manaster**, Third Vice President, lives in Dallas, and was raised in the north of England. She moved to Texas in 1969 with her husband, Guy, who was a former



TJHS Board Member and passed away in 2019. She has three children and six grandchildren. Jane has degrees in psychology and geography, and is the author of three natural history books, a former newspaper columnist and has written articles on travel and Texas history. Jane is a charter member of TJHS.

**John P. Campbell**, Recording Secretary, received a B.A. from Tulane University and a M.P.A. from the LBJ School at UT/Austin. From 1984-1987, he was on the staff of the Texas Select Committee on Higher Education.



From 1987-2004, he was a staff member of the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, D.C. In 2005 he became the Executive Director of the Inter-Academy Council in Amsterdam, Netherlands. He retired from this position in 2014, and now lives in Austin. In addition to his Recording

Secretary duties, John shares the Webmaster position for TJHS with Sheldon Lippman.

**Amy Milstein**, Corresponding Secretary, is from Frisco, and grew up in Longview. She graduated from the University of Texas/Austin, and shortly after graduation, became



certified to teach. She has been teaching for twenty-one years. She loves to travel, and has taken several trips with TJHS. In her spare time, she likes to scrapbook, read, and go to the movies. She has been involved with TJHS for many years, and is the daughter of Past President Rusty Milstein.

**Ben Rosenberg**, Treasurer, was born and grew up in El Paso. He attended the University of Texas/Austin, and graduated with a BBA in Accounting in 1967. After graduation, he

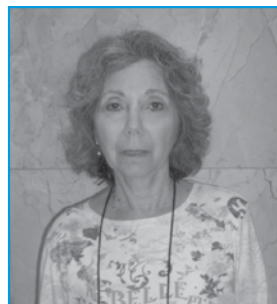


moved to the Houston area, and joined a CPA firm until his retirement in 2015. Ben is a Past President of the Houston Jewish Community Foundation, and serves on the boards of other charitable organizations based in Houston. He is married to Barbara, Past TJHS President, and they have one daughter and two grandsons who live in Boulder, Colorado. They enjoy traveling.

**Sally Drayer**, Historian-Archivist, is from Dallas, and is a Past President of TJHS. She grew up in

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Alice, Texas, and is the mother of three children, and one granddaughter. Sally is a retired teacher, and substitutes in the Richardson Independent



School District. She volunteers at the Dallas Museum of Art for Arts & Letters Live; is on the board of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra Guild, and is a CASA Advocate.

**Davie Lou Solka**, Immediate Past President, Parliamentarian, and News Magazine Editor, moved to Austin from Corpus Christi with her husband, Jack, in 2007. In Corpus Christi, Davie Lou was



active in the Jewish and non-Jewish community and served as President of several organizations, including the first woman President of Temple Beth El. After her children left home, she owned with her husband, brother and sister-in-law, the discontinued china and crystal business her parents began in Kilgore, Texas. After the business was closed, she began and taught a Jewish holiday program called L'Dor VaDor in the JCC pre-school. She retired from teaching after fourteen years prior to her move to Austin. She enjoys spending time with her three sons, three daughters-in-law, and six grandchildren (one of whom will be married soon) and playing Mah Jongg. She is a native-born Texan and graduated from the University of Texas/Austin with a BS in Elementary Education. Her grandparents were immigrants who were part of The Galveston Movement in 1912.

**Marlene Eichelbaum** is now retired after having served as a Paralegal/Office Manager in her husband, Mel's, law practice for twenty-five years. Prior



to that she taught Middle School and High School Math for eleven years. She is now involved with the National Council of Jewish Women, working with Voter Registration, cooking, baking, and of course, playing Mah Jongg. Marlene enjoys visiting old synagogues, and looks forward to the opportunity to do this with TJHS, and her husband, Mel, also, a TJHS Board member.

**Mel Eichelbaum** is a retired attorney, and practiced law for over forty years. He is a published author (see article on Mel in TJHS News Magazine, February 2020) having published the



book, *The Legal Aid Lawyer*, in 2019. He enjoys speaking to Law Schools and civic groups about his book and the significant Civil Rights and Poverty Law Reform Cases in which he was engaged. These events are described in his book. Mel is interested in History and photography. He is married to Marlene, also a TJHS Board Member.

**Michael Furgatch** was born and raised in Texas. He has lived in Beaumont, Dallas, Austin, and now Brownsville for forty-seven years. He is married to Lynda (also a TJHS Board Member), and they have two children and three grandchildren. Michael and Lynda were married in 1973, when he gradu-



ated from UT/Austin. They moved to Brownsville where he began working in the Ship Dismantling and Recycling Industry,

which is his occupation today. He enjoys working with non-profit and service organizations, and has been involved with the Temple Beth El Board of Directors in Brownsville for almost thirty years.

**Janice Gerber** lives in Houston and says "due to World War II, was born in Louisiana." Her family moved to Houston and she attended schools in Houston. In high school, she was on



the rifle team as ROTC sponsor and won All City College. Janice attended Sophie Newcombe College, and is active in Hadassah and other Jewish organizations. She has worked as a Jewish community professional and as a political fund raiser.

**Kathy Cornelison Kravitz** lives in Austin and taught high school biology and geometry. She worked for AT&T/Western Electric as a Statistical Quality Control Engineer and met her husband,



Bruce. After four years at AT&T, they

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# Encyclopedia of Texas Jewish Communities

*The Texas Jewish Historical Society awarded a grant to the Institute of Southern Jewish Life to research and publish the histories of Jews in Texas towns. These histories are available on the Institute's website and are called "Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities." We will adapt these histories in each issue of our News Magazine. Thanks to the History Department of the ISJL for permission to do so. To see other towns, go to the TJHS website at [www.txjhs.org](http://www.txjhs.org), or the Institute's website, [www.isjl.org](http://www.isjl.org), click on the "History Department" and look for "Encyclopedia" in the drop-down menu.*

## Bonham

Bonham's Willow Wild Cemetery, located along 7th Street on the western outskirts of town, contains the last reminders of a Jewish community that has long since disappeared. Even in comparison to the oldest headstones at Willow Wild Cemetery, the Jewish section crumbles in relative disrepair. The grounds have been mowed in recent times by the local 4-H and Boy Scout troop, but for years this handful of stones from the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries were dwarfed by thick grasses, leaving them almost invisible to the passerby. The arrangement of the stones bespeaks the onetime optimism of a community at its peak; the few graves that exist are widely spaced, anticipating large family plots that would never come. The cemetery was created in 1881, and the last legible date on a tombstone is from 1908. The Jewish community as a whole seems to have disappeared by the 1930s.

Bonham is just shy of the Oklahoma border at the northern-most edge of the Texas Blackland Prairie. Settlers began arriving in the area in significant numbers in 1837, after the construction of Fort English. After Texas gained its independence, Bailey English led a group of settlers to the area they would call Bois D'Arc. English constructed the two-story log fort as a safe haven in case of an Indian raid. In 1843, the settlement requested the name "Blooming-



*Fannin County Courthouse in Bonham, Texas, 1888.*

ton" before the Texas Congress, but Bonham was chosen as a memorial to James Butler Bonham, a fallen hero of the Alamo. Bonham exploded with economic growth following the construction of the Texas Pacific Railroad in 1873, and factories and mills began to open throughout the area.

Through the years of 1860-1930, a small group of Jewish families made Bonham their home. As was typical for Jewish families throughout the South, most of those would comprise the merchant class. Some of the names were Rosenbaum, Rhine, Englander, Klappholz, Cohen, Goldman, and Hermer. Although there were never enough to host a congregation, many attended services in private homes or traveled thirty miles to Sherman.

David Rhine arrived in Bonham

around 1860 from Bavaria. It looks as though he came alone, but by 1874, the census records show that he had married his brother's widow, Florence Rhine. She had a daughter named Eve, and the couple then had three more daughters together. Rhine fought for the Confederacy in Company A of the 16th Texas Cavalry during the Civil War, reaching the rank of Captain. After the war, the family earned a comfortable living in Bonham as the owners of a dry good retailer known for its imported goods and "bric-a-brac from around the world."

By the mid-1870s, the Rhine family built a lavish estate at 404 East 8th Street – a patch of the former Bailey English property. No known photos remain of the home as it existed. The Rhines' youngest daughter, Fridora, owned the home until 1912 when it was sold to Eugene Risser. Risser remodeled the exterior of the house, which included adding a porch. In recent years, the building burned to the ground, leaving only a sparsely wooded vacant lot.

Other Rhines lived and did business in Bonham. Abraham and Samuel Rhine may have owned and operated a store in downtown Bonham, since records mention the firm of S. and A. Rhine as the previous owners of a store sold to R.R. Russell in 1854. Another early Jewish

*continued on page 9*



resident was Henry Levine, who came to Bonham in 1878. He opened a store and his brother, Marks, worked as his bookkeeper. He lived with the Levines.

Perhaps the most prominent Jewish family in Bonham was the Rosenbaums. Morris Rosenbaum left Prussia in 1861, and was the first one of his family to settle in Bonham. His store was the Bonham Bargain House, located on South Main Street. Morris and his wife, Elizabeth, had five children with at least one helping in the store as a salesman. They are remembered as civic leaders in Bonham. Rosenbaum and R.W. Campbell donated several lots of land for the price of one dollar to the city. These lots were used as the site of the community waterworks. In addition to the retail business, Rosenbaum was a cotton buyer and one of the original stockholders in the First National Bank. Despite their involvement in Bonham's civic life, the Rosenbaum family had left the town by 1910.

Many of the Jews of this community have fallen through the cracks of the written record.

Cohen and Goldberg's Cheap Clothing store appears in an old photograph (circa 1890) of the town square. Later this store was purchased by Morris Rosenbaum, but the store seems to be short-lived and there is little about the Cohen and Goldberg families in the historical record. Neither are buried in the local Jewish cemetery so they probably moved to another town. The Lapheld family owned a local bargain store, and although they did not live in Bonham for a long time, their son, Adolph, is buried in the Bonham Jewish cemetery. The Cohen, Goldberg, and Klappholz families are not mentioned in the 1900 census.

The Bonham Jewish community was never large, and did not organize Jewish institutions beyond the small burial ground outside of town. For this small group of Jews, Bonham provided a measure of economic opportunity for a while even though they moved on once greater prospects were found elsewhere. There is not a Jewish community in Bonham in 2020. 🇺🇸

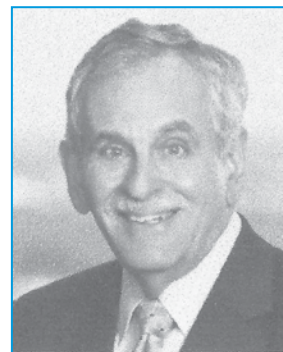
## We Need Your Stories!

We are earnestly looking for stories with ties to Texas Jewish history! Any kind of story about your family history or your Temple's history can fill the pages of our News Magazine. Everyone has a story to tell, long or short. To submit your story, or if you need help writing your story, contact Davie Lou Solka at [davielou@solka.net](mailto:davielou@solka.net) or 512-527-3799.

### *Meet Your Board, continued from page 7*

moved to New Zealand, where she worked as a Quality Manager for a telecommunications company. Their son, Scott, was born there. They moved to Austin in 1991, where she spent a few years as a mom homemaker, and volunteer. Subsequently, she worked for AISD as an Assistant Librarian. Kathy currently assists a legally blind widow and continues to volunteer in various organizations. She enjoys walking and hiking in natural surroundings, as well as travelling to new places. She does not like to cook. Kathy is helping with the Cemetery Committee by integrating photos of Jewish graves to the TJHS web site and other burial web sites.

**Lionel "Lonnie" Schooler** is one of the founding members



of the Texas Jewish Historical Society. He served as President in 1984-1986, and remains as the "official" legal counsel for the Society. He and his wife, Marsha, live in Houston. 🇺🇸

### *President's Message, continued from page 2*

I miss ALL of you. It has been a special honor to serve as your president this past year. I do believe that I never thought I would become the first TJHS president to cancel a meeting. Now, the Bonham

meeting has been postponed.

I HOPE to get to see you all in August in Bonham. Stay well and safe. Don't give up, we've been through tougher times. 🇺🇸



# The Texas Jewish Historical Society Grant Application

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

We solicit applications for research projects that are in this spirit.

Deadlines for submission are March 1, June 1, September 1, and December 1.

## Application Form

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

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

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Title and Description of project.

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

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

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Please detail the timeline of your project.

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

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

# From Our Archives

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

## The Conscience of Waco

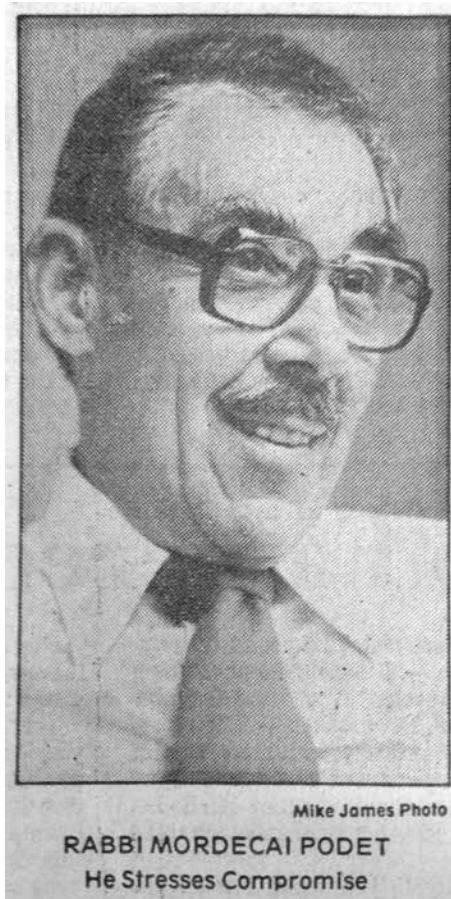
by Vickie Vogel

Mordecai Podet was born in 1922 in New York City to Irving M. and Becky Podet.<sup>1</sup> He married Norma Yonover of Chicago, Illinois in 1949. Her mother, Celia Davis Yonover, was a doctor, and her father, Nafthali, was a dentist.<sup>2</sup>

Mordecai earned a B.A. degree from Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, and a Master of Hebrew Letters from the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1951. He served in the Korean War as a U.S. Navy chaplain in the Sixth Fleet and N.A.T.O. installations, and retired with the rank of Commander. From the Naval Training Center in Illinois, he became the Navy's only Jewish chaplain in the Mediterranean.

After their son Ethan was born, he served as rabbi of Congregation B'nai Israel in Salt Lake City from 1954 to 1961, then after their daughter was born, with Congregation Judea in Coral Gables, Florida from 1961 to 1964, before settling in Waco with Congregation Rodef Sholom. In 1976, a seminary awarded him an honorary Doctor of Hebrew Letters degree.

In Utah, Rabbi Podet served on the boards of the Family Service Society, Utah Association for Mental Health, Salt Lake Community Welfare Council, Utah Citizens Committee for Civil Rights, the Utah Association for the United Nations; chaired the Utah State Mental Hygiene Clinic, and was president of the Salt Lake B'nai B'rith. He worked as a lecturer in the philosophy and religion department of Westmin-



*Rabbi Mordecai Podet*

ster College, and produced the Tree of Life, a television series on Judaism.<sup>3</sup> He was guest speaker on a 1958 radio program, Message of Israel, discussing "Affirming Life."<sup>4</sup>

Norma Podet had received a B. A. degree from the University of Chicago in 1942, and a M.S.W. at the University of Utah in 1958. She began her career in social work with the American Red Cross and continued with the Chicago Court of Domestic Relations

and later, the Veterans Administration Regional Office in Cincinnati, Ohio. When the family lived in Salt Lake City, she worked with the Children's Service Society, then the Department of Psychiatry of Salt Lake General Hospital, followed by the University of Utah Bureau of Marriage and Family Counseling. She also consulted for the Utah State Prison and was elected to the board of the Salt Lake Community Welfare Council.<sup>5</sup>

When the family moved to Florida in 1961, Norma served as Senior Day Center Social Worker, then as Director of the United HIAS<sup>6</sup> Service and the Cuban Refugee Center in Miami.

While with Temple Judea in Miami, Rabbi Podet received a citation from the Commission of Jewish Chaplaincy of the National Jewish Welfare Board in recognition of ten years of service as chaplain in the U. S. Armed Forces as a lieutenant commander in the U. S. Naval Reserve.<sup>7</sup>

In Waco, Rabbi Podet became the "go-to" person for the Jewish perspective on the issues of the day, and was frequently interviewed by reporters. His involvement with numerous civic, health, educational, and veteran causes recommended him, as well as the fact that he was a co-founder of the Waco Conference of Christians and Jews (later the Greater Waco Interfaith Conference). He served on the boards of Vanguard College Preparatory School (1974); the Economic Opportunities Advancement Corp. (1968-71); the

*continued on page 12*



McLennan County Association for Mental Health; and as ethics consultant, chaplain and rehabilitation worker for blind veterans at the Waco Veterans Affairs Hospital for over fifty years. He served for many years on the Waco Veterans Administration Medical Center Committee on Human Studies, the Providence Hospital Medical Morals Committee, and the Hillcrest Baptist Hospital Biomedical Ethics Committee.

From 1967 to 1973, he was on the board of the Waco Action Planning Council. In 1990, he was designated to form the Ethics Advisory Committee of Waco's Veterans Hospital and was long its chairman. He was a lecturer in the Department of Religion at Paul Quinn College,<sup>8</sup> and in the J. M. Dawson Institute of Church-State Studies of Baylor University. He co-chaired the United Negro College Fund Drive.<sup>9</sup> He served as Jewish chaplain for the Central Texas Veterans Health Care System, which in 2012 awarded him a plaque in appreciation for fifty years of faithful service to the United States government.

Newspaper clippings in our archives from the *Waco Tribune-Herald* give a sampling of the kinds of issues he was consulted for his opinion. "Premarital Advisers Have Same Goal" included interviews with Rabbi Podet, Dr. Daniel Bagby (Seventh and James Baptist Church), Monsignor Edward Rabroker, and Rev. Richard Freeman of First United Methodist Church. Rabbi Podet said he counseled couples who came to him for wedding ceremonies, emphasizing four areas: the nurturing the relationship will require, dealing with in-laws and family, money problems, and dealing with love and sex in marriage. His message to couples was that clergy and society have "a stake in making their marriage work" and the couple is not alone.<sup>10</sup>

A second clipping looked for commentary on a 1980 divorce ritual at a Dallas church. This article featured

Monsignor Mark Deering, Rev. Robert Elliott (United Methodist Church), Rev. H. F. Meier (Austin Avenue United Methodist Church), Rev. Peter McLeod (First Baptist Church), Rev. Larry Nixon (Calvary Baptist Church), and Rabbi Podet. Rabbi Podet said, "Actually, we have had hardly any divorces in the Jewish community of Waco." He said a divorce ritual had been unnecessary for his congregation, and he disapproved of the concept.<sup>11</sup>

When the Waco Independent School District Commission on Excellence addressed the issue of social promotion, i.e. sending a student on because of their age and not their academic performance, the newspaper interviewed Rabbi Podet as chairman of the Standards and Expectations Sub-Committee of the Excellence Commission. He criticized the practice and stated if the standards are there, they need to be enforced. His sub-committee made other recommendations.<sup>12</sup>

In 1984, a Texas House bill allowed students to use school buildings for religious meetings during non-school hours. Again, religious leaders were polled, including Rabbi Podet, Rev. John Collier (Parkview Baptist Church), Rev. Jimmy Dorrell (Fellowship Bible Church), and Rev. George Holland (Central Presbyterian). Rabbi Podet discussed the issue of separation of church and state.

"I feel like it's kind of yes and no. I don't see why anyone should object to the bill, nor do I think anyone should try to prevent praying in schools. On the other hand, I know from the examples of history that the closeness of church and state sooner or later results in damage to both. But no one step is the step into the abyss. I think it's fine if any youngster wants to organize with a prayer, but for the government to intrude at all in religious affairs is not good. The separation of church and state is a principle that grows out of the damage that

church and state linkage has caused in the past."<sup>13</sup>

Rev. Dorrell feared it would bring cults like the Moonies to campus. Rev. Holland thought it was a political stunt that accomplished nothing. Rev. Collier supported the bill.<sup>14</sup>

In 1969, Hebrew Rest Cemetery celebrated its centennial with a religious ceremony at the cemetery, officiated by Rabbi Podet. The celebration "represented a century of solemn dedication and fervent support from Waco's Jewish community."<sup>15</sup> There is an audio recording discussing the growth of the Jewish Community for an oral history interview of Daniel B. McGee of Baylor.<sup>16</sup> Oral history interviews in 1973, 1978, and 1981 cover his views on a variety of topics, including abortion, which the interviewer is obviously more interested in than the rabbi.<sup>17</sup>

In April, 1980, Rabbi Podet was elected president of the Southwest Association of Reform Rabbis at the organization's annual meeting in Austin. At that time, he was president of the Kallah of Texas Rabbis and the Waco Ministerial Alliance, and was on the National Executive Committee of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. The announcement, along with his photograph, appeared in the Waco paper.

In August of 1984, Rabbi Podet again made the newspapers, as chair of the Waco Conference of Christians and Jews (related to the National Conference of Christians and Jews) in their request for nominations from the public for the fourth annual Waco Humanitarian Award. Rabbi Podet emphasized the conference was made up of people from a wide range of ethnic, racial and religious backgrounds who want to build relationships and understanding among all groups of people. The organization was founded in 1980; its first program was to remember victims of the Holocaust. The

*continued on page 13*

Humanitarian Award was intended for a person who had served the community with concern and compassion for people of all races and faiths.<sup>18</sup> Rabbi Podet himself was named Humanitarian of the Year in 1988.

In 1986, Rabbi Podet authored *Pioneer Jews of Waco*. The book was used as a source by TJHS member Hollace Weiner in her writings. She relates the strange story Rabbi Podet wrote about the first rabbi of Rodef Sholom. Rev. Mayer May hallucinated one Sabbath eve in March 1882, alarming congregants when he spoke about spiritual messages from his mother. The next morning, he lined up his students outdoors to lecture them on Jesus Christ. A local physician deemed the rabbi insane, and he was placed in a doctor's care, Podet reported.<sup>19</sup>

Meanwhile, Norma Podet was making her own mark. After resettling in Waco, she served as Social Work Supervisor and Director of Staff Development and Training at the Methodist Home (1965-1974); and Adjunct Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology at Baylor University (1966-1971), teaching courses in social work.<sup>20</sup> She served as Health Chair of the Waco Parent-Teacher Association in 1965, heading a drive for continuous health supervision of every Waco child. In 1967 she served on the board of the Economic Opportunities Advancement Corporation, and in 1975, she was on the Planned Parenthood board. She co-hosted the television program *Panel for Parents* in 1976, bringing psychiatrists and social workers together to answer questions on parenting. She twice won election for seven-year terms on the McLennan Community College Board of Trustees (1976-1990), and was elected president (1984-86). "The less newsworthy the better, is the way I see it," she told the *Tribune-Herald*, "because that means that things are going well." The Performing Arts Center was construct-

ed on her watch. She also worked as a project administrator for the Waco Family Home Care Agency, Inc., and participated in other civic endeavors. The home care agency provided day care for preschoolers in low-income homes. By 1984, she had been director of the agency for ten years.<sup>21</sup>

Norma appeared in many forums as lecturer, book reviewer, and panelist representing Judaism in addressing social and mental health topics, much as her husband did. She interviewed candidates in the Waco area for the University of Chicago. She frequently volunteered with the Waco Better Business Bureau. Her obituary lists her interests as the League of Women Voters, Hadassah, the Art Center of Waco, the Cameron Park Zoo, and the Waco Family "Y."

She retired in July, 1985, but continued to serve as a volunteer and consultant. One of the founders of the Waco Interfaith Forum, she served as chair and was a frequent program moderator. The Forum was organized to bring together women of all faiths to dialogue and create projects to better the community.

In August of 1984, Rabbi Podet was featured in the newspaper on the occasion of his twenty-year tenure in Waco. It was noted that in addition to his other accomplishments, he chaired the City of Waco Human Relations Commission, chaired the EOAC Priorities and Manpower Committees, served on the boards of Planned Parenthood (1969-72 and 1984-85),<sup>22</sup> McLennan County Association for Mental Health (1969-1983), and the YWCA, and was president of the Waco Downtown Rotary Club (1971-72). In 1967, he had established its televised youth knowledge competition, which won Rotary International's Significant Achievement Award that year. In 1982, he was named to the Rotary District Roll of Fame. Rabbi Podet reflected on the changes he had seen in Waco. "Waco has been chang-

ing continuously. It's going in the right direction. When I started here it was already on the way to openness. There is certainly a special significance that I was the first rabbi elected president of the Downtown Rotary. That suggests that there is an active element in the community working [for human rights]."

City Councilman Maurice Labens recalled how Podet would write poems for each synagogue member on their birthdays and anniversaries. To celebrate his twenty-year tenure, Temple Rodef Sholom hosted a special service and a reception for Podet following the regular Shabbat services that Saturday. Four years later, Podet became Rabbi Emeritus. After retiring, the Podets enjoyed traveling in the United States and abroad.

Podet's influence spread far beyond Waco. For example, Hilke Kuhlman's book, *Living Walden Two: B. F. Skinner's Behaviorist Utopia and Experimental Communities*, was inspired by Rabbi Podet's preaching about Prophetic Judaism.<sup>23</sup>

Norma Podet died December 12, 2006 at the age of 85.<sup>24</sup> Rabbi Mordecai Podet died on November 30, 2013, aged 91. He was praised as a civic leader who helped break down religious and ethnic barriers in Waco.

"We lost a great man," said Monsignor Mark Deering, who had become a close friend. "He did more to help the Waco community to get along together than anyone." Deering said 1950s Waco could be a hostile place for blacks, Jews, and Catholics, but Podet was undeterred. In a 2005 interview, Podet had conceded that even in 1980, "There was plenty of prejudice around then, too. But the atmosphere in Waco was if you don't talk about it, it will go away." The Waco Interfaith Conference had broadened to include Islam and Hinduism. Indeed, Podet's daughter Eve attended St. Louis Catholic School and participated in the

*continued on page 14*

required religious classes.

Deering visited Podet in the hospital, suspecting it would be their last visit. He told the rabbi that if he went ahead of him and saw Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give them his regards.

Doug Young, the Central Texas Veterans Health Care Assistant Director for Operations for Waco, said Podet, who had continued to be active in the Waco Veterans Affairs hospital into his 90th year, made a mark on the lives of veterans of every war from World War I to the Iraq War, citing him as an inspiration for everyone, not only Jews.<sup>25</sup>

Podet was survived by his dear friend Marjorie Sanger, son Ethan and wife Irene Wolski of Houston, daughter Eve and husband Michael Finucane of Lexington, Kentucky, three grandchildren, and his brother Rabbi Allen Podet of Buffalo, New York. Allen had also served as a chaplain in the U. S. Navy Reserve.<sup>26</sup>

Rabbi Mordecai Podet left his mark well beyond the synagogue. He is buried in the Rodef Sholom Cemetery. His papers are at the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives.<sup>27</sup>

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise stated, all information is from Box TN 21367, Texas Jewish Historical Society Collection, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

<sup>2</sup> *Waco Tribune-Herald*, December 14, 2006, C1, included in <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/17026445/norma-davis-podet>

<sup>3</sup> "Rabbi enjoys 20-year tenure in Waco," by Debbie Hutchinson, *Waco Tribune-Herald*, August 18, 1984. In Box TN 21367, op cit

<sup>4</sup> <https://newspapers.library.in.gov/cgi-bin/indiana?a=d&d=JPOST19581017->

01.1.8 Hoosier State Chronicles; *Jewish Post*, Indianapolis 17 Oct 1958

<sup>5</sup> *Waco Tribune-Herald*: 12/14/2006... C1 <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/17026445/norma-davis-podet> 1921-2006, age 85

<sup>6</sup> Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society

<sup>7</sup> <https://ufdc.ufl.edu/AA00010090/01763/22j> includes a photo

<sup>8</sup> Paul Quinn College in Dallas is the oldest historically black college west of the Mississippi River. It is affiliated with the African Methodist Episcopal Church. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul\\_Quinn\\_College](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Quinn_College)

<sup>9</sup> Ruthe Winegarten, *Deep in the Heart: The Lives & Legends of Texas Jews*, Eakin Press, 1990, p. 209. There is also a photo of Rabbi Podet on that page.

<sup>10</sup> "Premarital Advisers Cite Common Goal," *Waco Tribune-Herald*, June 29, 1980 In Box TN 21367, op ci

<sup>11</sup> "Area Religious Leaders Sit on 'Divorce Rituals,'" *Waco Tribune-Herald*, September 18, 1980. In Box TN 21367, op cit

<sup>12</sup> "Commission finds policy needs," by Betty Johnson, *Waco Tribune-Herald*, June 27, 1984. In Box TN 21367, op cit

<sup>13</sup> "Prayer bill: Waco clergy takes a look," by Debbie Hutchinson, *Waco Tribune-Herald*, August 11, 1984. In Box TN 21367, op cit

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> <https://wacohistory.org/items/show/40>, Coleman Hampton, "Hebrew Rest Cemetery," Waco History, accessed January 31, 2020, <https://wacohistory.org/items/show/40>

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> <http://digitalcollections.baylor.edu/cdm/ref/collection/buioh/id/1596>

<sup>18</sup> "Ecumenical group requests nominees," by Debbie Hutchinson, *Waco Tribune-Herald*, August 13,

1984. In Box TN 21367, op cit

<sup>19</sup> Weiner, Hollace Ava. "The Mixers: The Role of Rabbis Deep in the Heart of Texas," *American Jewish History*, Vol. 85, No. 3, SPECIAL ISSUE: Directions in Southern Jewish History, Part One (September 1997), pp. 289-332, Johns Hopkins University Press, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23885566>. See also <https://txjhs.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/2007-Aug.pdf> volume 7 no 3, August 2007.

<sup>20</sup> Winegarten, *ibid.* p. 207. There is also a photo of Norma Podet on that page.

<sup>21</sup> "Low profile Podet's goal for MCC," by Betty Johnson, *Waco Tribune-Herald*, May 24, 1984. In Box TN 21367, op cit


<sup>22</sup> He is listed as a Planned Parenthood Partner as late as 2007.

<sup>23</sup> [https://books.google.com/books?id=FIDvUFq567MC&pg=PA120&lpg=PA120&dq=Rabbi+MOrdecai+Podet&source=bl&ots=KwbHbAyocJ&sig=ACfU3U3lAgLQsyXlrmDUqHEVITVpRGqsnw&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiO06\\_2vK7nAhVJXK0KHT56Dsg4ChDoATAdegQICRAB#v=onepage&q=Rabbi%20MOrdecai%20Podet&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=FIDvUFq567MC&pg=PA120&lpg=PA120&dq=Rabbi+MOrdecai+Podet&source=bl&ots=KwbHbAyocJ&sig=ACfU3U3lAgLQsyXlrmDUqHEVITVpRGqsnw&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiO06_2vK7nAhVJXK0KHT56Dsg4ChDoATAdegQICRAB#v=onepage&q=Rabbi%20MOrdecai%20Podet&f=false)

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/17026445/norma-davis-podet>

<sup>25</sup> [https://www.wacotrib.com/news/rabbi-podet-remembered-as-a-voice-for-religious-tolerance/article\\_30c2f934-6c0c-501a-bfac-49c94458b8d.html](https://www.wacotrib.com/news/rabbi-podet-remembered-as-a-voice-for-religious-tolerance/article_30c2f934-6c0c-501a-bfac-49c94458b8d.html)

<sup>26</sup> <http://boston.ccarnet.org/50th-year-members/allen-howard-podet/>

<sup>27</sup> <http://prestohost54.inmagic.com/Presto/content/Detail.aspx?ctID=Q29weV9vZI9BcmNoaXZlc181MTQ1M2ViYThkMDE0YWY1OThhN2ZjNTIxZDhiNDNkMQ==&rID=MzA3OTI=&ssid=c2NyZWVuSURfMTQ3OTU=> 





# The TJHS is Accepting Nominations for Two Outstanding Recognition Awards for the Preservation of Texas Jewish History

Texas Jewish Historical Society (TJHS), founded in 1980, is seeking nominations for Outstanding Recognition Awards in two areas: (1) Significant Historic Site Preservation (awarded first to Leon and Mimi Toubin for the restoration of the Orthodox Synagogue originally in Brenham and moved to Austin, in order to continue as a sacred place for Jewish worship services) and (2) Extraordinary Historic Project (awarded first to Rabbi Jimmy Kessler for the 1980 founding of the Texas Jewish Historical Society, which continues to educate, to preserve stories, and to archive Texas Jewish History).

TJHS now seeks your help to identify and honor those individuals who have made a significant and lasting impact on the preservation of Texas Jewish History. Only one award per year can be given in each category; but it is not mandated to be given yearly, only when an outstanding accomplishment merits the award. Recognitions as determined by TJHS Award Committee will be presented at TJHS Spring Annual Gathering. Applications must be received by July 15, 2020 and mailed to Cynthia Wolf, 4305 Sterling Lane, Beaumont, TX 77706.

## Application Form

Date of Submission: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Contact Information of Nominee(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name and Contact Information of Person(s) Recommending Nominee(s) for Consideration: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Category of nomination:

☐ Significant Historic Preservation

☐ Major Historic Project

In the packet that you will return with this sheet as your cover page, please include the following:

- Complete description of the accomplishment
- Reasons that you are submitting this nomination and how you became aware of this accomplishment
- Pictures and other documentation
- Impact of this accomplishment and how it has and will continue to make a difference now and in the future on the ongoing story of the Jews of Texas
- Short bio of nominee(s)

Thank you for helping us recognize deserving individuals!

*Send applications to: Cynthia Wolf, 4305 Sterling Lane, Beaumont, Texas 77706*

*For more information, contact*

*Cynthia Wolf at 409-899-4499 or [cwolf@gt.rr.com](mailto:cwolf@gt.rr.com).*

# Torah in a Rowboat, 1882

by Larry Holtzman

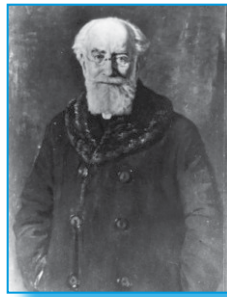
*Editor Note: This article is taken from a letter that Rabbi Abraham Blum wrote after a visit to Brownsville and Matamoros, Mexico in 1882.*

In 1882, the extent of Jewish population in South Texas was a mystery to rabbis in more populated areas of Texas. In January of 1882, Rabbi Abraham Blum, from Temple B'nai Israel in Galveston, paid a visit to Brownsville and Matamoros by stagecoach and wrote in his report that he had "one of the most pleasant reminiscences of my life."

The Rabbi's arrival in Brownsville was greeted with respect and friendliness by the Jewish citizens and he was invited to officiate at services. The Friday night and Saturday morning services were conducted in the Masonic Hall. But first, he was told, they had to go get the Torah.

On Friday afternoon, he and other Jewish men took the ferry boat, which was a large rowboat, from Brownsville to Matamoros, Mexico, a much larger city. The first bridge between the cities was not built until 1904.

From the river landing, the group was taken by horse-drawn buggies to



Rabbi Abraham Blum

he was safeguarding the Sefer Torah. Brownsville was considered too dangerous a city for the Torah to be kept there, so it stayed in Matamoros.

Bernard Cain, brother-in-law of Gustave Marks, was entrusted with carrying the Torah, and he led the entourage to the Mexican customhouse in the bustling central square of Matamoros. The guards of the customhouse made a path for Mr. Cain holding the Torah, and did not inspect it. Cain explained to Rabbi Blum that the guards would allow the Torah to cross to the United States because they were afraid to touch the "Jewish God." Cain then carried the Torah onto the ferry boat for the trip to Brownsville.

From the landing in Brownsville,

the house of Gustave Marks, who had lived in Matamoros for many years and owned a large trading company. Mr. Marks and his family greeted the men and Gustave took them to a back room where

the group walked to the Masonic Hall, with Mr. Cain leading the way, still holding the Torah. Rabbi Blum followed close behind. Services were held and were well attended by families from both sides of the river, with Rabbi Blum reading from the Torah.

In his report, Rabbi Blum reported that Brownsville and Matamoros combined have a Jewish population of fifty and a Benevolent Society of nineteen members. A cemetery was established by the Benevolent Society, and on Sunday, the Rabbi visited it. There were only a few graves, and a prominent monument was the grave of Joseph Alexander who helped found the cemetery and was murdered ten years before by a bandit who was a lieutenant to the infamous Cortina.

Some of the important Brownsville Jewish citizens listed by Rabbi Blum included Louis Cowen, who was a Grand Master of the Masonic Order; Dr. Adolph Woff, a surgeon at Fort Brown; Benjamin Kowalski, notary public and President of the Benevolent Society; Louis Kowalski, Adolph's brother and county treasurer; and Adolph Bollack, who was a member of the Brownsville City Commission. 🇺🇸

*Intern Report, continued from page 4* \_\_\_\_\_  
attention.

Thank you, TJHS, for the wonderful opportunity to work on the TJHS collection. I was able to experience so many important aspects of Jewish life in Texas through these documents and it is an opportunity I will never forget. 🇺🇸

## Please Note:

*If you are sending a check to the Texas Jewish Historical Society, please indicate the purpose of the check—dues, gift, contribution, etc.*

## You Can Help Recruit New Members

by Jane Manaster, TJHS Third Vice President

As one of the founding members of the Texas Jewish Historical Society, I realize that it's time to recruit younger members; we can draw on the children and grandchildren of the current membership.

A suggestion on how to remedy this concern is to offer memberships as Wedding, Bar Mitzvah or Bat Mitzvah gifts. The memberships could be for one to three years depending on how generous the gift is. This would be a good introduction to an organization that we find so interesting.

## In Memoriam

**Stuart Bamberger**, TJHS member, died on November 4, 2019, in Houston. He is survived by his wife, Terri; his brother, Richard; and his in-laws, Barry and Janet Tobias.

**Carol Gene Cohen**, TJHS member, died on February 5, 2019 in Dallas. She is survived by her husband, Howard Sheldon Cohen; children Kay Ellen (Jake) Pollack, Scott (Barbi) Cohen, Wendy (Leo) Elliott, Mark (Lauren) Cohen; and nine grandchildren.



**Marvin Greenberg**, TJHS member, died in Dallas. He is survived by his wife, Sylvia; children, Marla (Howard) Jano, Steve (Marybeth) Greenberg, Barry (Sandi) Greenberg; nine grandchildren and their spouses; and two great-grandchildren.




**May their memories  
be a blessing.**

## Guess This Member

No guesses on this cutie! Put on your thinking hats as you're sitting at home looking for something to do. This dark-haired adorable girl was about four or five when this photo was taken. She grew up and still



lives in one of our larger cities. Good luck!

Email your guess to Davie Lou Solka at [editor@txjhs.org](mailto:editor@txjhs.org) any time beginning Monday, June 8. Entries received before that date will not be considered. Family members and previous winners and their families are not eligible to participate. Good luck! If you'd like to try and stump the TJHS membership, please send your photo to [davielou@solka.net](mailto:davielou@solka.net) 

## Your Help Needed

- The Cemetery Committee needs help from many of you who live outside the major cities. If you learn of a Jewish death in Texas in your locale, please send that information to Rusty Milstein, [hrmilstein@prodigy.net](mailto:hrmilstein@prodigy.net).
- If your family came to the United States through Galveston, during the time of Galveston Movement 1907-1914, please contact Davie Lou Solka at [davielou@solka.net](mailto:davielou@solka.net).

## Contributions

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

### In Honor of

Davie Lou and Jack Solka, on their 60th wedding anniversary

### From

their children and grandchildren

### In Memory of

Jack Gerrick

### From

Jan & Charles Hart  
Susan & Bob Lewis  
Jan & Charles Hart  
Sally Drayer  
Jan & Charles Hart  
Isadore Bloomberg

Jay Ignatoff  
Louis Kariel

Harriet Schmidt Lurie

### Gift Membership For

Wolf Hofman

### From

Jan & Charles Hart



## Save the Date

**August 14-16,  
2020**

Board Meeting in Bonham

**September 5-7, 2020**  
**CANCELLED**  
TJHS Trip to Poland

**October 23-25,  
2020**

Board Meeting with New Mexico Jewish Historical Society in Las Cruces, New Mexico. The theme of the weekend is "West of Hester Street: The Galveston Movement and Jewish Immigration and Communities in the Southwest."

**If you need TJHS membership applications for an event, program, personal use, etc., please contact Rusty Milstein at [hrmilstein@prodigy.net](mailto:hrmilstein@prodigy.net).**

## Committee Chairs 2020-2021

<i>Archivist/Historian</i>	Sally Drayer ( <a href="mailto:sallyeddrayer@gmail.com">sallyeddrayer@gmail.com</a> )
<i>Audio/Video</i>	Bob Lewis ( <a href="mailto:ts@crcom.net">ts@crcom.net</a> )
<i>Award Committee</i>	Cynthia Wolf ( <a href="mailto:cwolf@gt.rr.com">cwolf@gt.rr.com</a> )
<i>Cemetery Committee</i>	Rusty Milstein ( <a href="mailto:milstein@prodigy.net">milstein@prodigy.net</a> )
<i>Finance Committee</i>	Ben Rosenberg ( <a href="mailto:bcr219@windstream.net">bcr219@windstream.net</a> )
<i>Grant Committee</i>	Michael Wolf ( <a href="mailto:mwolf@gt.rr.com">mwolf@gt.rr.com</a> )
<i>Historical Texas Cemetery Designation Committee</i>	Doug Braudaway ( <a href="mailto:dbraudaway@stx.rr.com">dbraudaway@stx.rr.com</a> )
<i>Institute of Texan Culture</i>	
	Davie Lou Solka ( <a href="mailto:davielou@solka.net">davielou@solka.net</a> )
<i>Legal Committee</i>	Lonnie Schooler ( <a href="mailto:lmschooler@aol.com">lmschooler@aol.com</a> )
<i>Meetings Committee</i>	Sally Drayer ( <a href="mailto:sallyeddrayer@gmail.com">sallyeddrayer@gmail.com</a> )
<i>Membership Committee</i>	Marc Wormser ( <a href="mailto:c2aggie@gmail.com">c2aggie@gmail.com</a> )
<i>Nominating Committee</i>	Davie Lou Solka ( <a href="mailto:davielou@solka.net">davielou@solka.net</a> )
<i>Publications Committee</i>	Davie Lou Solka ( <a href="mailto:davielou@solka.net">davielou@solka.net</a> )
<i>Publicity Committee</i>	Bob Lewis ( <a href="mailto:ts@crcom.net">ts@crcom.net</a> )
<i>Speakers Bureau</i>	Jan Hart ( <a href="mailto:jshauthor@sbcglobal.net">jshauthor@sbcglobal.net</a> ) Gayle Cannon ( <a href="mailto:gayle.cannon70@gmail.com">gayle.cannon70@gmail.com</a> )
<i>Texas History Day Committee</i>	Willie Braudaway ( <a href="mailto:librarywillie@hotmail.com">librarywillie@hotmail.com</a> )
<i>Texas Jewish History Adult Writing Contest Committee</i>	Willie Braudaway ( <a href="mailto:librarywillie@hotmail.com">librarywillie@hotmail.com</a> )
<i>Travel Committee</i>	Vickie Vogel ( <a href="mailto:vickvogel@yahoo.com">vickvogel@yahoo.com</a> )
<i>Traveling Exhibit Committee</i>	Dolly Golden ( <a href="mailto:golden.dolly81@yahoo.com">golden.dolly81@yahoo.com</a> )
<i>Website/Tech Committee</i>	John Campbell ( <a href="mailto:jpcampbell3@yahoo.com">jpcampbell3@yahoo.com</a> ) Sheldon Lippman ( <a href="mailto:silippman@yahoo.com">silippman@yahoo.com</a> )

## Welcome New Members!

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If you have any changes in your information, please contact

**Marc Wormser at  
832-288-3494,  
[c2aggie@gmail.com](mailto:c2aggie@gmail.com)**

## TJHS on Facebook

Did you know that TJHS has a Facebook page?  
Like us at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Texas-Jewish-Historical-Society/187629054741368>.





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## TJHS Traveling Exhibit

The Texas Jewish Historical Society has three museum quality photo exhibits, with explanations depicting early Jewish life and contributions. The 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. There will be the expense of prepaid freight back to the shipper 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 Dolly Golden at [goldendolly81@yahoo.com](mailto:goldendolly81@yahoo.com) or 512-453-8561.

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**Historical Society**  
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