

The Texas Jewish Historical Society Magazine



December, 2023

TJHS Announces The Rabbi Jimmy Kessler Educational Outreach Fund

by Sheldon Lippman, Chair, TJHS Kessler Fund Committee

The Texas Jewish Historical Society is pleased to announce the launch of the Rabbi Jimmy Kessler Educational Outreach Fund to honor the late Rabbi Jimmy Kessler and continue his legacy of promoting and preserving the history of Jews and Jewish communities in Texas.

“Jimmy would be thrilled to know that his legacy will carry on through the educational outreach of Texas Jewish history, which we all know was his passion,” Shelley

Kessler, Jimmy’s widow, wrote to TJHS. “I love what the (TJHS) Kessler Fund Committee has planned for the use of the funds and I wholeheartedly give my support.”

The Rabbi Jimmy Kessler Educational Outreach Fund set an inaugural goal of \$250,000 to launch a viable, sustainable program. Lonnie and Marsha Schooler, Rabbi Kessler’s close friends from Houston, have provided a generous gift as seed money to initiate the Fund. “I hope that both friends of Jimmy Kessler and advocates of Texas Jewish history will donate generously in honoring the TJHS founder and strengthening the efforts of the Texas Jewish Historical Society in expanding Jewish education and outreach, two important goals to Jimmy,” said Joan Linares, TJHS President.

Early in his rabbinical education and career, Rabbi Kessler lamented the absence of a significant record of the Texas Jewish experience in local, state, and university libraries. His frustration turned to action when in 1980, in San Antonio, he organized a meeting of like-minded Texans to inaugurate the Texas Jewish Historical Society. In addition to his thirty-two-year spiritual leadership of Congregation B’nai Israel in Galveston, Rabbi Kessler served as the Society’s founding president. His leadership and vision enabled the Society to grow and establish the TJHS Collection at the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas at Austin.

More than four decades after its founding, TJHS continues its mission to expand and enhance the knowledge and understanding of the Jewish presence in Texas through education and outreach. With continued incidences of antisemitism that have occurred recently in the United States and in Texas, the Society’s mission becomes even more important. The TJHS envisions the Kessler Fund will induce broader TJHS outreach efforts, increase membership, and share the incredible history of Jews in



Rabbi Jimmy Kessler

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Content

Quarterly Magazine

The Texas Jewish Historical Society 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. We recommend that you provide photocopies of all documents and photographs. Please provide color photocopies or scans at 300 dpi or greater in gif, tif, or jpg format, and send electronically to editor@txjhs.org or by mail to Texas Jewish Historical Society, P. O. Box 10193, Austin, Texas. 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.

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Mazel Tov

Davie Lou Solka and Rosalind & Dr. Burton Anes and Michael and Liz Solka, who are the proud great-grandparents and grandparents of Madison Jade Solka. Madison was born September 23, 2023, in Belle Meade, New Jersey to Brian and Amanda Solka. All are doing fine and admiring the many pictures that are sent daily.

The deadline for the February 2024 TJHS Magazine is Friday, January 19.

Message from the President

by Joan Linares



TJHS has launched a fundraising campaign for the newly established Rabbi Jimmy Kessler Educational Outreach Fund. Thank you to Kessler Fundraising Executive Committee members Lonnie Schooler, Sheldon Lippman, and Ben Rosenberg, and all of the members who are serving on the Kessler Fundraising Committee. Lonnie Schooler, a past president and founding member of TJHS, as well as a childhood friend of Jimmy, announced the fund at the Southern Jewish Historical Society's recent conference in Houston. I encourage all members to give to this worthwhile fund which will honor Jimmy's legacy and enhance the mission of the Texas Jewish Historical Society. One may give by going to the website at txjhs.org and scrolling down to "Give to the Kessler Fund." After clicking the blue box, there will be two choices...one for giving online and one for downloading and printing the mail-in

form. There is a Kessler Fund Committee made up of TJHS members who will manage the projects of the Kessler Fund, which will include programming for meetings.


TJHS had a golden opportunity to showcase our members and their works at the Southern Jewish Historical Society conference which was held at Rice University on October 20-22. There were multiple members who represented TJHS as keynote speaker, moderators, and panelists. Every session I attended had some reference to TJHS. Out of the 120 registrants, around forty were TJHS members. One of the organizers remarked to me that our TJHS members were very enthusiastic about our organization. Our membership team lead by co-chairs Barbara Stone and Joyce Davidoff, along with help from Sheldon Lippman, John Campbell, Jennifer Lava, and Lynda Furgatch set up and hosted the TJHS table for the registration and the reception. The table displayed copies of *The TJHS Magazine*, candies, QR code, notepads and pens with TJHS logo, membership forms, new brochure, and information on the Rabbi Jimmy Kessler Educational Outreach Fund. A few of the photos from our Photo Exhibit were featured by the table. All conference attendees were given tote bags. In the bags were pens and notepads with our logo on them. Our logo was also imprinted on the outside of the bags as well as on the t-shirts worn by conference organizers and staff. The Saturday night reception was co-hosted by TJHS. I was so proud of our TJHS presence

throughout the weekend.

I want to welcome the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society as a new member of TJHS. Our group had reciprocated by joining the NMJHS. President of NMJHS, Linda Goff, and I communicate and share ideas about our organizations. New Mexico Jewish Historical Society offers many opportunities for interesting webinars throughout the year which we are invited to join. This connection helps fulfill one of my goals which was collaborating with like organizations.

Mark your calendars for January 26-28, 2024, for the TJHS Winter Meeting. Lynda Furgatch, Meeting Chairperson, and her team of Marilyn Lippman and Anita Feigenbaum have planned an exciting weekend of Texas Jewish history and fun in McAllen, Texas. This dynamic team is working on the Annual Gathering which will be in April in Dallas. They are working with UT Dallas.

TJHS will also be represented in Austin at the Friends of Texas Historical Commission's Real Places Conference in April, 2024. TJHS member and historian, David Moore, and I will be speaking about the nomination process for the National Register of Historic Places for Congregation K'Nesseth Israel in Baytown.


One of the greatest joys of being the President of TJHS is getting to work with so many nice people who go above and beyond to carry out the mission of our organization. Thanks for all that you do. Feel free to reach out to me with questions or suggestions at president@txjhs.org. 

Kessler Fund, continued from page 1

Texas with an expansive community of participants.

TJHS will always keep in mind the many facets of Jimmy Kessler's

outreach efforts. In addition to his rabbinical and family life, he is remembered as a great storyteller, a civil rights advocate, an interfaith leader,

and an educator who believed that learning about Jewish history, particularly by young students, is a deterrent to antisemitism. 

Notes from the Board Meeting, October 22, 2023

Houston, Texas

- In the interest of time, committee reports were mailed to the board, and any questions were answered.
- Sheldon Lippman, Chairman of the Kessler Committee, gave an update on the Kessler Fund. Donations were already coming in and it was decided that in addition to donations honoring Rabbi Kessler, gifts in honor or in memory of others would be accepted.
- Joan Linares gave an update on the Southern Jewish Historical Conference and said that TJHS was well represented and was mentioned at all events. The Saturday night reception that we sponsored was very nice and well received.
- The Winter Board Meeting will be held in McAllen January 26-28, 2024, with an outstanding program planned.
- From the submitted Committee reports:
 - Articles from immigrants to Texas from South Africa, Russia, and other countries during the 1970s and 1980s are welcomed for publication in the *TJHS Magazine*. Send information to editor@txjhs.org.
 - The Speaker's Bureau has been busy with TJHS speakers presenting programs. Sheldon Lippman presented "The Comings and Goings of a Jewish Community in Fayette County" for the Winedale Historic Center's online lunch and learn program and Gayle Cannon presented a program for the Jewish War Veterans in Austin.
- There are several additional programs scheduled for the upcoming months.
- Total new members as of September 30, 2023 is 62. Welcome packets are being sent to each new member.
- The website continues to be used. From July 10 – October 10, 2023, there were 815 users accessing 1,212 webpages. The Texas Jewish Burial online database continues to be updated and now totals 48,155 names. 🇺🇸

Photographs by Jan Hart, Joan Linares, Sheldon Lippman, and Barbara Green Stone.



Left: Rabbi Henry Cohen headstone, Galveston.



Above: Hollace Weiner, Chair of Panel, "Documenting Teas in the Jewish Imaginary: Creative Musings of Space and Place in Southern Jewish History," with panelists, Dr. Suzy Seriff, S. L. Wisenberg, Joshua Gottlieb-Miller, and David Biespiel.



Left: Breakfast with Jan Hart, John Campbell, Vickie Vogel, Charles Hart, Ruben Linares, Bob & Susan Lewis, Marilyn Lippman, Lynda Furgatch and a friend of TJHS.

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Above: Andy and Shelley Kessler.

Below: Lonnie Schooler, Past TJHS President and founding member, and Joan Linares, TJHS President, announce the Rabbi Jimmy Kessler Educational Outreach Fund at TJHS sponsored Saturday night reception with Ruben Linares looking on.



Left: Joe Buchanan and Dr. Josh Furman.

Above: Joe Buchanan entertained after Havdalah.



*Above: TJHS sponsored reception attendees listening to Lonnie Schooler's presentation on the Kessler Fund.
Middle right: Saturday night reception sponsored by TJHS.
Bottom right: Marsha Schooler and Dr. Josh Furman.*



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Clockwise from above: Joyce Davidoff, Jennifer Lava, Barbara Green Stone greeted people at TJHS table. TJHS table displayed with some of Photo Exhibit photographs. TJHS logo on back of t-shirt worn by staff and committee members. Dr. Bryan Stone, Del Mar College, presenting "Very Small Histories in a Very Big State." John Campbell and Sheldon Lippman carrying TJHS flag into meeting. Rabbi Jimmy Kessler Memorial Wall at Congregation B'nai Israel, Galveston. TJHS Board Meeting Sunday morning.



Rabbi Jimmy Kessler Educational Outreach Fund Contributions

The following donations have been received in the Rabbi Jimmy Kessler Educational Outreach Fund:

All Gifts in Memory of Jack Solka will be merged to the Kessler Fund at the request of the Solka Family.

Platinum

Marsha & Lonnie Schooler

Silver

Joan & Ruben Linares

Sapphire

Sue Sue & Don Aaron

Ruby

Sheldon Lippman & John Campbell

Hyman Penn & Lynn Gordon

Marcie & Rabbi David Rosen

Barbara & Ben Rosenberg

Leah Stolar & Bruce Kessler

Diamond

Aaron & Perri Fink

Phyllis & Jules Frapart

Lynda & Michael Furgatch

Jan & Charles Hart

Shelli Kozberg

Cindy Lindauer

In Memory of Marlene Nathan Meyerson and Tillye & David Nathan from the Morton H. Meyerson Family Foundation

Beth & Mandel Nock

Susan & David Novick

Robert & Jennifer Relchek

Robin & Kurt Schriefer

Lisa Stone & Scott Cantor

Debbie & Marc Shabot

Phyllis & Phil Stoup

Save Postage:

Notify TJHS if your address changes or if you will be away from your home when *The TJHS Magazine* will be delivered. Send changes to txjhs.org.

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.

Contributions

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

In Memory of

Mitzi Milstein

From

Glenda Bays
Jay & Ellen Gordon
Shanna Rodgers

In Memory of

Shirley Katz Greenblum

From

Rusty Milstein

In Honor of

Joyce Davidoff's
new granddaughter

From

Ed & Barbara Green Stone

Gift Membership for

Shana Creeger

Mia Hay

Isabell Henrick

Elija Kahlenberg

Alfred Kahn &

Betty Hudson

Lila Katz

Adrienne Lavis

Dr. Suzy Seriff

Beri Schwitzer

From

Barbara & Ben Rosenberg

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Salvo Lavis

Sheldon Lippman & John Campbell

Ed & Barbara Green Stone

Speaker's Bureau by Jan Siegel Hart

The Speaker's Bureau of the Texas Jewish Historical Society has had several presentations this quarter. Sheldon Lippman presented "The Comings and Goings of a Jewish Community in Fayette County" for the Winedale Historical Center online lunch and learn program in April. In October Gayle Cannon presented a power point program to the Jewish War Veteran Post in Austin. Gayle will also present a program in November for the Del Webb Sun City Chavurah in Georgetown.

Nelson Chavetz is scheduled to present a program on genealogy in January 2024, in San Antonio; and in April 2024, David Moore and Joan Linares will present a program to the Real Places 2024 Conference of the Texas Historical Commission in Austin. Their topic is entitled "K'nesseth Israel: A Hidden Treasure."

We are pleased to be able to share programming on many subjects of Jewish interest with congregations and organizations that request speakers. Send your request to tjhsspeaker@txjhs.org.



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.
On the form below, please show how your project meets our mission.

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.

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

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

Please detail the timeline of your project.

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

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



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 Awards Committee will be presented at TJHS Spring Annual Gathering. Applications must be received by July 15, 2024 and mailed to Awards Chair, Texas Jewish Historical Society, P. O. Box 10193, Austin, TX 78766-0193 or awardchair@txjhs.org.

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: Awards Chair, Texas Jewish Historical Society,
P. O. Box 10193, Austin, TX 78766-0193 or awardchair@txjhs.org.*

www.txjhs.org

Handler Brothers Made Headlines in Sports

Fort Worth Star-Telegram, August 6, 2023

by Hollace Ava Weiner

Brothers Zeke and Phil Handler, sons of Lithuanian-Jewish immigrants, each made a mark in Fort Worth sports history. Zeke, a journalist with a familiar byline, covered the Cats, the Panthers and the Horned Frogs during decades when newsstands sold the *Fort Worth Record*, *Fort Worth Press* and *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*. His kid brother Phil made headlines as a jock. At Central High, Phil was a gridiron star playing right guard in 1927 and 1928. Recruited to Texas Christian University, he was an All-Southwest Conference offensive guard in 1929 on the Frogs' first championship team. He was also an Honorable Mention All-American.

In the summer of 1930, Phil went to Chicago to try to make it in the National Football League. The Windy City had two pro teams—the Bears and the Cardinals (now in Arizona). The Cards' coach told Handler, who weighed 190 pounds, “You’ll never make it kid. You’re too small.” Although short for a football player at 5-feet 11-inches, Phil was determined to prove him wrong. He bulked up to 215 pounds. And he was fast on his feet.

His older brother Zeke described Phil as “a bulldozer-like guard who was to attain national fame in pro football.” The husky All-Pro lineman played fifty-three games with the Cards from 1930 through 1936. Ultimately, he had coaching and scouting positions with the Cards and then the Bears, including stints as head coach, co-coach, line coach and recruiter. Although statisticians note that he had one of the worst head-coaching records in football, he was a great



Phil Handler, 1930s gridiron star and 1940s NFL coach and recruiter, 1949. Photo courtesy Fort Worth Star-Telegram Collection, UTA Libraries Special Collections.

strategist. The fans and the press adored him.

Whenever Phil passed through Fort Worth on scouting trips and to visit his family, DFW sports columnists cornered him for quotes about NFL trades. If the Longhorns fired a coach, he hurried to Austin, by way

of Fort Worth, to lure away players.

In print, Zeke never disclosed that the football hero he often wrote about was his kid brother. In a 1950 feature for the *Texas Jewish Post* highlighting Jewish athletes who “excelled” at this “peculiarly U.S. sport,” Zeke wrote at length about Phil. He men-

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Zeke Handler in 1949 wearing an eye-catching necktie and has a ball-point pen clipped to his shirt pocket. Photo courtesy Fort Worth Star-Telegram Collection, UTA Libraries Special Collections.

tioned his parents, Morris and Rosa Handler, who operated a dry-goods store at the corner of N. Main and 23rd (in 2023, the location of Taco Heads). He wrote that Phil had grown up on the Southside in the 2200 block of Alston Ave., and he mentioned his brother's nickname—"Motsy."

Where did that nickname come from? "Matzoh," said Dick Simon, Phil Handler's nephew. "They were teasing him because of his religion. That's the source. It wasn't vicious."

Phil embraced the nickname. He was accustomed to being the only Jew on local football squads and being ac-

cepted for who he was. In Chicago, teammates shortened his moniker to "Motz," short for matzoh, the unleavened bread in his lunchbox during Passover.

"He was a pistol," continued Simon, a retired attorney whose late-wife, Bayla Handler Simon, was Zeke's daughter. "Phil knew everybody in Chicago. Everybody wanted to get tickets from him. We went to a Bears game once. It was pre-season, in August. . . . I've always been a sports nut and meeting George Halas ("Papa Bear" who founded the Bears and co-founded the NFL) was one of the best moments of my life. . . . I met 'em all. George Connor was one of the stars."

So was Curly Lambeau, founder of the Green Bay Packers, who coached the Bears for a season with Phil as an assistant coach.

Phil settled down in the Chicago suburb of Skokie, where he and his wife, Lillian, raised two children. He was inducted into the Chicago Sports Hall of Fame, the Chicago Jewish Sports Hall of Fame and the B'nai B'rith Sports Hall of Fame. The out-of-print book, *Sports Champions of Fort Worth, Texas*, by Flem Hall places him on the city's athletic Roll of Honor.

A lifelong student of the game, he never stopped coaching. After two heart attacks in the spring of 1968, his physician ordered him never to attend Bears' games in person. His heart couldn't take the excitement. On Dec. 8, 1968, he watched on TV as the Bears pulled out a 17-16 upset over the Los Angeles Rams. Moments after the game ended, he died of a heart attack. He was sixty. He had lived and died for football.

His older brother Zeke had died three years earlier from complications of heart disease, diabetes and other maladies. Zeke, who married Rose

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Phil Handler, November 15, 1929 before Longhorn and Horned Frog game – courtesy Austin American Statesman.

Fram and raised two daughters, had begun his journalism career on the *Fort Worth Record*. When the *Star-Telegram* bought the *Record* in 1925, he remained a short time before moving to the *Fort Worth Press* under legendary sports editor Pop Boone. He also reported on sports for KFJZ radio. During the New Deal, Zeke was editorial supervisor of the Federal Writers Project, a massive compilation of Fort Worth history for which he gathered “slave narratives,” oral histories with formerly enslaved people.

In the mid-1950s he engaged in freelance sports publicity, advertising and public relations. He is well remembered for a 1953 bagel-lox-and-blintzes Sunday brunch at Congregation Ahavath Sholom. It featured the entire roster of the Fort Worth Cats, the city’s popular Texas League

team. Ballclub president Spencer Harris spoke. Homerun hitter Jimmy Baxes, “the slugging Golden Greek,” signed autographs.

Except for one embarrassing episode, Zeke kept his own name out of the news columns. At the start of his journalism career in 1921, late one Sunday night, a hold-up man confronted Zeke, 16, with a pistol at the corner of 7th and Throckmorton. According to a blurb in the *Star-Telegram*, “He relieved the *Fort Worth Record’s* police reporter of six cents.”

Editor Davie Lou Solka adds: My parents, Dora and Eddie Ettelman were early-marriage friends with Phil and Lillian Handler in Fort Worth. They married about the same time and had their children (each couple had a boy and a girl) around the same time. They remained friends and kept in touch after both couples moved away—the Ettelmanns to Greenville, Texas, and the Handlers to Chicago. Their daughter Joyce and I corresponded as pen pals throughout our school years. Once in a while, our parents even let us talk long distance with each other, which was something in those days! Sadly, after high school graduation, we stopped writing and lost contact with each other, but I have wonderful memories of talking with her. 🇺🇸

We Need Your Stories!

The Texas Jewish Historical Society would like to print your story if you or your family immigrated to the United States from the former Soviet Union, South Africa, India, or other countries. We have received many stories—and still want to include them—from families who immigrated during the earlier part of the twentieth century, but realize that our beautiful Texas history is much more than those stories. Help us tell the rest of the story and contact editor@txjhs if you will include your family’s history in *The TJHS Magazine*. 🇺🇸

FROM OUR ARCHIVES

Reuben and Hilda Askanase

by Vickie Vogel

This column is based on information available in the TJHS archives, supplemented by some online research. If you have corrections or additions to this information, please submit them in writing to the TJHS editor at editor@txjhs.org. We want the TJHS archives to be as complete and accurate as possible.

Reuben W. Askanase was born in 1908 in Fargo, North Dakota. He started his working life early, selling newspapers and helping his mother who ran a “chuck wagon” following migrant workers, feeding them, and even boarding them in their home. His father was a peddler, who was limited in his ability to work due to asthma. His mother was the breadwinner. Reuben joined ROTC as a requirement, and, in order to have the clothes needed for school.¹ He worked his way through both the University of North Dakota and graduate work at Washington University. He became a successful merchant at the New York department store, Abraham & Strauss. Starting as an office boy, he worked his way up to a vice-presidency. It was there he met his future wife, Hilda Graham.²

Hilda was born in 1906 in Old Town, Maine. She graduated from the University of Maine with a major in French. She worked at the cafeteria through college, taking a year off to



Hilda and Reuben Askanase, 1966. Photo courtesy of Dr. Josh Furman, Joan and Stanford Alexander South Texas Jewish Archives, Rice University.

earn money as an accountant to finish her degree. When she returned, she made up enough course work to graduate with her class as both a Phi Beta Kappa and Phi Kappa Phi honor graduate. She completed the Lord & Taylor training program in New York before finding employment at Abraham & Strauss where she was soon

promoted to buyer.³ Hilda and Reuben married in 1931 in Akron, Ohio, where they lived for several years. Two children, Phyllis and David, were born there before they returned to New York briefly.⁴

The Askanase family moved to Houston in 1945, where Reuben purchased Columbia Dry Goods

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Hilda and Reuben Askanase. Photo courtesy of Susan Askanase.



Reuben Askanase, 1966. Photo courtesy Dr. Josh Furman, Joan and Stanford Alexander South Texas Jewish Archives, Rice University.

Store. He later bought Evenflo infant feeding products with partners, acquired Spaulding sporting goods, and merged with Dunhill International, which owned American Bank Note and Coty Cosmetics. Reuben was chairman of the board. In 1950, the Houston Chronicle profiled him as “a smiling salesman with quick hands and a voice full of the voltage of assurance.”⁵

Reuben and Hilda were philanthropists in the Houston Jewish and non-Jewish communities. They raised funds for Citizens for Good Schools, the Houston Area Women’s Center, and many others. They were members of Congregation Beth Israel. Hilda volunteered for the Jewish Home

for the Aged, but she considered her most important job, “taking care of Rube.” She was his calming force and inspiration.⁶ Reuben was “a force to be reckoned with,” according to his daughter-in-law, Susie Askanase. “He had street smarts and Hilda had brain smarts.”⁷ Together, they made things happen.

Reuben was active in the Houston Council on Human Relations, the Houston Symphony, and the Alley Theater. He served in leadership positions on the Houston Sports Association, the Jewish Community Center, the United Jewish Campaign, the Rothko Chapel, North Dakota State University (establishing Askanase Hall for theater arts,) and others. In

addition to many other awards, in 1964, he received the Max H. Nathan Award for community service from the American Jewish Committee.

In 1972, Reuben was asked by Judge Roy Hofheinz to serve as CEO of the Astrodomain Corporation, and he subsequently salvaged the troubled corporation. Although he was active in Democratic politics, often as a fundraiser for candidates like Mayor Fred Hofheinz and Congresswoman Barbara Jordan, he chose individuals over politics. He was a friend to both Senator Lloyd Bentsen and President George H. W. Bush.

Reuben and Hilda loved to travel and went all over the world, both

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Hilda Askanase and MJ Dittermar at the Calf Scramble February 8, 1948. Photo courtesy Dr. Josh Furman, Joan and Stanford Alexander South Texas Jewish Archives, Rice University.

Howard Binford's
GUIDE

**FARGO, N. D.
Moorhead, Minn.
West Fargo, N. D.**
JANUARY 1982
Volume 14, Number 7
(Our 163rd Issue)

January Features


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What's Happening In January?
(See Page 6)


Parents Anonymous Seeks to Improve Family Relationships
(See Page 9)

Nancy's Plan To Banish Those Christmas Blahs
(See Page 17)

Plus Continuing Coverage of Dining Out In the F-M Area
(See Page 36)



Reuben and Hilda ASKANASE
(See Page 21)



THIS BRILLIANT CONTEMPORARY has all the special features you would expect in a home. Contact Jim Reilly at 223-0207 for a personal showing. See Other Guide Reader Listings on Page 49-51.

Where to Worship
(See Pages 13-16)

Where to Stay
(See Pages 10-11)

Who's Playing Where
(See Pages 18-19)

Reuben Askanase was born and raised in Fargo. He attended NDSU for two years, but then after graduating from the University of North Dakota, wasn't around his hometown much for some 35 years while he was compiling a fantastically successful business career. But his roots are still deeply rooted here, as he describes in this month's cover profile interview with Guide Publisher Howard Binford.

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Cover Colorphoto by
Gross Studio of Photography
in Moorhead

Photo courtesy Dr. Josh Furman, Joan and Stanford Alexander South Texas Jewish Archives, Rice University.

for business and pleasure. They were married for 59 years.


Reuben Askanase died on January 3, 1991, and Hilda on August 4, 2013, at the age of 106. When asked the secret of her longevity, she said, "If you can survive the Maine winters, you can survive anything."⁹ Reuben and Hilda had seven grandchildren and twelve great-grandchildren.

The Askanase family papers are housed in the Houston Jewish History Archive at Rice University.⁹

Endnotes

¹ Telephone conversation with Susie Askanase, August 29, 2023.
² <http://archives.library.rice.edu/repositories/2/resources/1223>

³ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/114986715/hilda-askanase>; Obituary from *Houston Chronicle*, August 6, 2013. <https://jhvonline.com/hilda-graham-askanase-p15565-124.htm>
⁴ David graduated from Harvard Law School and practiced bankruptcy law in Houston, with his firm, Hughes, Watters and Askanase, for 40 years. Phyllis was a community leader in Jewish organizations, primarily in New Orleans. David's wife, Susie, was an executive assistant to Houston Mayor Kathy Whitmire and had her own business contracting residential renovations. Askanase op.cit.
⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/188614335071118/photos/a.1889331883725667571139026818645/?type=3>
⁶ findagrave op. cit.

⁷ Askanase, op. cit.
⁸ findagrave op. cit.
⁹ <http://archives.library.rice.edu/repositories/2/resources/1223> 

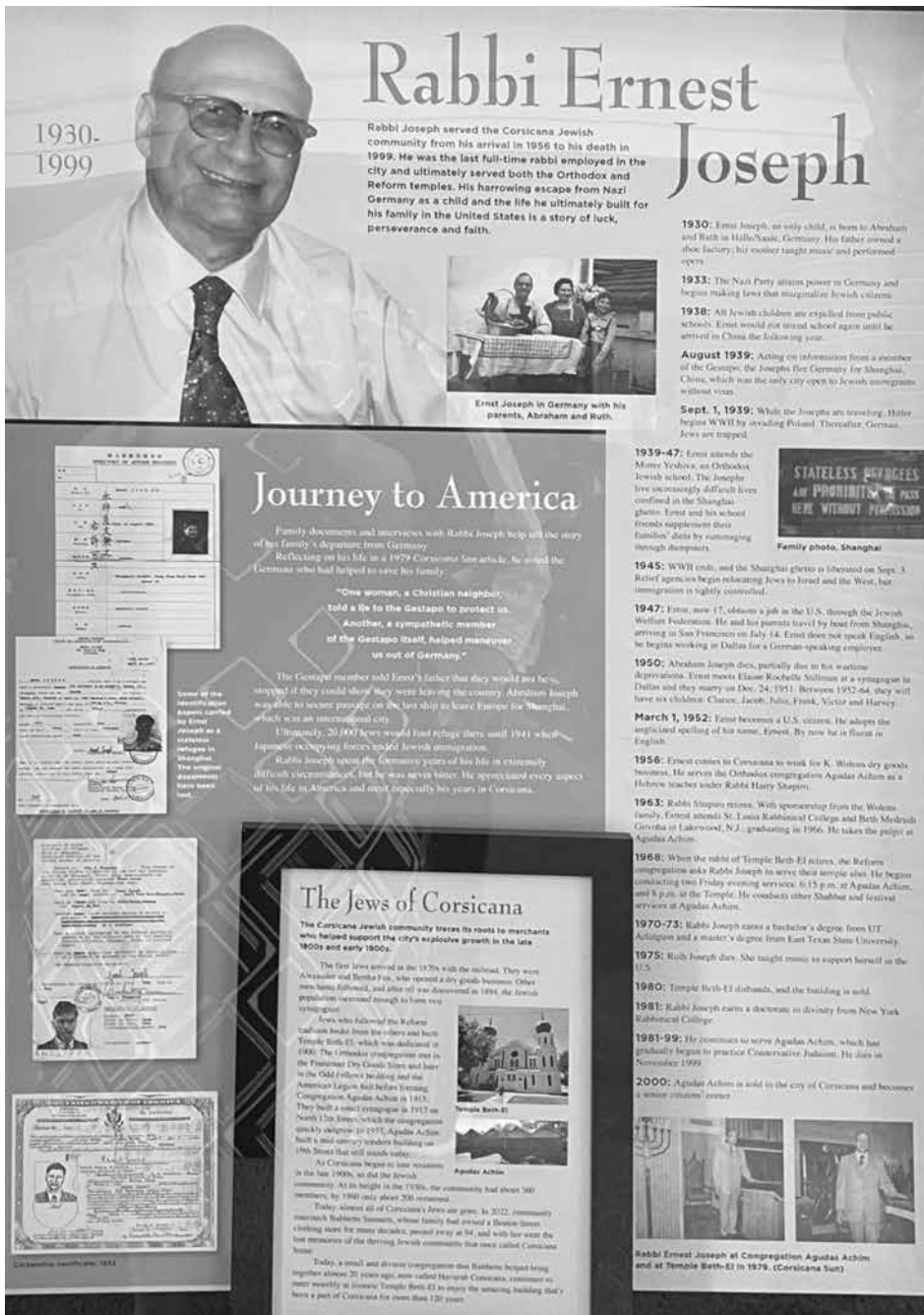
Save the Date

January 26-28, 2024

TJHS Board Meeting,
McAllen, Texas

Corsicana's 175th Anniversary Celebration Remembers Rabbi Ernest Joseph

by Laurie Joseph, daughter-in-law, and Davie Lou Solka



Memorial Box with Rabbi Joseph's memories will be permanently displayed in lobby of Temple Beth El.

Corsicana, Texas will recognize the 175th Birthday of the city with a year-long celebration, which included a tribute to Rabbi Ernest Joseph of the Jewish congregations in the city.

On August 26, 2023, Havurah Corsicana welcomed visitors to Temple Beth El to celebrate the life and accomplishments of Rabbi Joseph. Jews and Christian supporters filled



Rabbi Joseph's great-grandchildren look at Memorial Box.



Temple Beth El, Corsicana, Texas.

the historic building for a Shabbat morning service, followed by a light Kiddush luncheon. Speeches about Rabbi Joseph, who served the community for thirty-three years before his death in 1999 were presented by several people, including his son, Rabbi Frank Joseph. He was the last full-time rabbi employed in the city, and served both the Reform and Orthodox/Conservative congregations.

continued on page 17



Services for 175th Celebration.




Rabbi Ernest Josephs' son, Rabbi Frank Joseph, spoke to the congregation.

He was instrumental in helping both Temple Beth El and Congregation Agudas Achim as they wound down to closing and selling their buildings to the city.

Memorial Boxes shown at the event tell the personal story of Rabbi Ernest Joseph's escape from Nazi Germany and his childhood in the Shanghai ghetto. They will hang in the foyer of the Temple, and can be viewed by appointment with the Corsicana Parks Department or during the monthly Erev Shabbat services.

Corsicana was once a thriving community with a large Jewish population, mainly thanks to the railroad connecting Houston and Dallas that ran through the center of town. Most of the stores on Beaton Street (the main downtown thoroughfare) were owned by Jewish merchants.

Havurah Corsicana meets monthly in the 125-year old Temple Beth El building, and is led by Rabbi Joseph's son, Rabbi Frank Joseph, who travels to Corsicana monthly to lead the congregation. He may be contacted at 214-293-6515 for additional information. 

Stories of Houston Survivors' Exhibit Opens at Houston Holocaust Museum



Museum sign – TJHS awarded a grant and it is acknowledged in Exhibit Sign.

Texas Jewish Historical Society grant recipient Houston Holocaust Museum opened its exhibit “Stories of Houston Survivors” on September 22, 2023, at the museum. The exhib-



Hy Penn, Shana Bauman, Joan & Ruben Linares.

it features the testimonies of some of the survivors of the Holocaust who live in the Houston area. It features artifacts donated by the survivors,



Joan Linares, TJHS President and Judy Schnitzer Meyers.

their descendants, liberators, and other collections. Several TJHS members' families are featured in the exhibit. It will be available for viewing until December 3, 2023. 🇺🇸

Letter To the Editor

Hi, Joan,

I especially enjoyed reading Vickie Vogel's article in The Magazine about Ivan and Adele Rosenberg and their home in Corsicana. I clearly remember them when I was growing up attending Friday night services at Temple Beth El, and I recall that they were both tall, elegant, and stately.

As President of the Corsicana Hebrew Cemetery Association, I am

always looking for support for our beautiful and historic cemetery, as it becomes increasing difficult to support with each passing year, the almost total loss of a Jewish community around it, and the aging of us “Boomers.”

I wondered how Ms. Vogel became interested in the Rosenbergs and their lovely home, and I was very glad to learn that it is being well maintained. Please let her know how much

I enjoyed her article and especially its cemetery references and photos. If she, or any other TJHS members would like to learn more about our small group of cemetery supporters, please contact me. We truly NEED wider community support! But we are still an active Jewish presence in North Texas!

Regards,
Robert Rosen, M.D.
Dallas, Texas 🇺🇸

Looking for a Program for Your Organization?

Consider contacting the TJHS Speaker's Bureau. We have people who can speak on a variety of subjects with interesting, entertaining programs. Contact tjhsspeaker@txjhs.org. 🇺🇸

For membership forms that can be printed for personal use, events, or programs, go to our website www.txjhs.org. Credit card use is available for renewals or new memberships.

Southern Jewish Historical Society Houston Conference, October 20-22, 2023

by Joan Linares

The Southern Jewish Historical Conference entitled “Space and Place in Southern Jewish History” took place at Rice University on October 20-22, 2023. It was only the second time in decades that the Southern Jewish Historical Society held their meeting in Texas. It was a wonderful opportunity for the Texas Jewish Historical Society to be involved in the conference and TJHS appreciates Dr. Josh Furman, Curator of the South Texas Jewish Archives, for reaching out to our organization to play an active role in the conference.

There was an option for a pre-conference tour of Jewish Galveston which included tours of synagogues, cemetery, and history of Rabbi Henry Cohen and TJHS founder Rabbi Jimmy Kessler. Participants enjoyed a group dinner to end the day.

The conference kicked off with a panel chaired by Mark Goldberg focusing on Art and Oral Histories Enriching Jewish Studies Scholarship. All three panelists were TJHS Grant recipients. They were Emily Williams, Jillian Glantz, and Gabrielle Lyle. TJHS members Dr. Suzy Seriff and Hollace Weiner served as moderators and speakers throughout the conference. Friday’s keynote speaker was TJHS member Dr. Bryan Stone whose lecture was entitled “Very Small Histories in a Very Big State.” Friday evening was a dinner and memorial tribute program at Congregation Emanu El. SJHS honored their members who had passed away within the past year. Among those memorialized was TJHS founder Rabbi Jimmy Kessler. Hollace Weiner gave a beautiful tribute in memory of Jimmy. Jimmy’s widow, Shelley, and son, Andy, were in attendance at the dinner.

The conference continued Saturday with concurrent lectures that covered topics such as Out of State Tourism in the Jewish South, Childhood, Architecture, Material Culture, and Print Culture and Immigration. One of the historians who spoke was TJHS member Dr. Sam Gruber, who is also a TJHS grant recipient. Sam spoke about his mother and grandmother who had Texas roots. Another session was about the documentary by TJHS grant recipients, Barbara Rosenthal and Linda Levitt, who are working on “Grit and Grace: How Six Jewish Women Transformed Texas.” The keynote speaker was Tyina Steptoe whose topic was “On My Block: The Ethno-Ra-

Welcome New Members!

Doug Acker Richmond, Texas	Salvo Lavis Arlington, Texas
Victor Fahrer Asheville, North Carolina	Melvin Maltz Houston, Texas
Stephen L. Feinberg Santa Fe, New Mexico	Jeff Miller Livingston, Texas
Lora Ann & Steve Gerson Austin, Texas	Eva Ruth Moravec Austin, Texas
Mia Hay Austin, Texas	Michael Portal Houston, Texas
Isabell Hendrick Austin, Texas	New Mexico Jewish Historical Society
Barry Kahan & Dr. Marsha Capen Houston, Texas	Susan Rosenbaum & Eric Schoen Bellaire, Texas
Elijah Kahlenberg San Antonio, Texas	Beri Schwitzer Dallas, Texas
Betty Dunson & Alfred Kahn Houston, Texas	Dr. Suzy Seriff Austin, Texas
Lila Katz Tyler, Texas	Phyllis & Phil Stoup Plano, Texas
Fran & Mark Katzenellenbogen Houston, Texas	Peter Vogel & Marguerite Burtis Dallas, Texas
Madeline Knudtson Brownsville, Texas	Simon & Carol Wellner Round Rock, Texas
Adrienne & Dr. Victor Lavis Houston, Texas	

If you have any changes in your information, please send them to admin@txjhs.org

cial Landscape of Jim Crow Houston.”

TJHS co-sponsored the Saturday night reception. TJHS President, Joan Linares, spoke about the mission of TJHS and then introduced Lonnie Schooler, past president and founding member of TJHS. Lonnie announced the newly established Rabbi Jimmy Kessler Educational Outreach Fund, which was launched to honor Jimmy’s legacy by continuing the goals that were important to Jimmy. The evening ended with a Havdalah service and a performance by Joe

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Meet Your Board

Alan Selzer was born and raised in Houston. He graduated from Stephen F. Austin and has had a fifty-year career in the plumbing supply and manufacturing business. He is presently serving as a manufacturer representative with Alliance Manufacturer Representatives. He has been married to Laurie Pink Selzer (also a TJHS Board Member) for forty-four years, and they have three children and five grandchildren. Alan enjoys volunteer work and staying active playing with his family, golfing, fishing and being outdoors.



Sheldon I. Lippman, TJHS Past President, grew up in Schulenburg and attended the University of Texas, Austin, where he earned a Bachelor of Journalism degree. He began his communications career in Washington, D.C., working at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (1975-81). He returned to UT/Austin to get a M.A. in TV-Film and was media director for Keep Texas Beautiful (1981-87). He returned to Washington where he worked at the National Academy of Sciences on a PBS science documentary series and for the next thirty-plus years at the World Bank as a writer/editor. Sheldon returned to Austin in 2017 to “semi retire.”



Howard “Rusty” Milstein was born in Longview and still lives there. He is retired from Industrial Steel Warehouse. Rusty is a retired state level soccer referee; Administrator, Treasurer, Lay-leader, and Schlepper for Temple Emanu-El in Longview; and has performed in a community theatre production of “Fiddler on the Roof.” He and his deceased wife, Mitzi, are the main reason there is still a congregation in Longview. They have three children, Randy, Jeff and Amy. Rusty attended the University of Texas, Austin, and was a member of Phi Sigma Delta Fraternity. He was President of TJHS 2010-2012.



Laurie Pink Selzer was born and raised in Wichita Falls, Texas. Her parents, Gladys and Louis Pink, were long-time members of TJHS. She graduated from the University of Texas/Austin, and has been married to Alan Selzer (also a TJHS Board Member) for forty-four years. They have three children and five grandchildren. Laurie is a senior marketing strategist for the Meredith Corporation (New York based) working remotely from home. Her career has encompassed journalism, marketing, public relations, business development, and fundraising. Her maternal grandparents migrated to the United States through Galveston and her paternal grandparents settled in Wichita Falls during the oil rush.




Allen Mondell, Dallas, has worked in films and television as a writer, producer, and director for fifty years. He began his career as a newspaper reporter in Baltimore, and then went to work for Westinghouse Broadcasting in Baltimore, MD (WJZ-TV) as a writer/director of documentary films. Allen spent five years at public television station KERA-TV in Dallas. He taught in the Peace Corps in West Africa after graduating from Williams College. Together with his wife, Cynthia Salzman Mondell, they founded Media Projects, Inc., a non-profit company dedicated to producing and distributing documentary and educational films. They



[continued on page 21](#)

[SJHS Conference, continued from page 19](#)

Buchanan, a Jewish country artist.

A TJHS board meeting was held on Sunday morning followed by the concluding session of the conference which was entitled, “Activating the Archives: Embracing the Power of Southern Jewish Collections for the 21st Century.” The panel included TJHS members Josh Furman, Dr. Bryan Stone, and Dr. Suzy Seriff. 

Meet Your Board, continued from page 20

have produced over forty documentaries about historical subjects and social issues. Their films have won numerous national awards, are exhibited in museums and have been selected for prestigious screenings in the United States and abroad. Some have received specialized theatrical distribution and have aired nationwide on PBS and cable networks. Allen has served on the TJHS board several times in the past and we welcome him back.

Barbara Green Stone, Membership Co-Chair, is a fourth



generation Texan, who was born in Dallas and grew up in Lafayette, Louisiana, and Dallas. She earned a B.S. in Medical Technology from the University of Texas/Austin, where she met her Houston-born husband, Edward. They have two sons and one granddaughter. Barbara is a longtime volunteer with Temple Emanu-El Women

of Reform Judaism in Dallas. Her hobbies include photography, crocheting for donation, reading, travel, and genealogy (including prior to the internet).

David Vogel graduated from University of Texas/Austin with a BBA in Marketing in 1971. He served as President of Temple Israel of Schulenburg for sixteen years. David is known as Bat Man in some circles because he volunteers at the largest bat cave in Colorado, where he shows and educates people about bats. He enjoys live, original



Paula Stein was born and raised in Schulenburg, Texas.



music and supports independent musicians, songwriters and independent music venues. He is a UT basketball and baseball fan, and attends many games. He is married to TJHS Past President, Vickie Vogel for “at least forty-five years (that number keeps changing.)”

She and Rick Stein have been married for forty-eight years, and they have three children and five grandchildren. Paula’s interests include traveling and her family’s genealogy. She has traced her father’s family’s arrival to Texas around 1860, and her mother’s side to New York City and Philadelphia in 1770.



Lionel “Lonnie” Schooler is one of the founding members of the Texas Jewish Historical Society. He served as President in 1984-1986, and has remained as the “official” legal counsel for the Society. He and his wife, Marsha, live in Houston.

Marilyn Lippman now lives in Dallas, but has connections to Fayette County. She is the Treasurer of Temple Israel in Schulenburg and a Board Member of the Jewish Cemetery in Hallettsville.



Marilyn is employed with Ericsson, Inc. in Plano, as a Business Operations Manager. In her spare time, she enjoys hot yoga, hiking, and gardening – especially mowing lawns! Marilyn is Chair of the Meetings Committee.



Marilyn is Chair of the Meetings Committee.

In Memoriam

Shirley Jean Katz Greenblum, TJHS member from



Laredo, died October 27, 2023. She is survived by her sons, Gary (Desiree Koome), Brad (Jennifer Frankfurt), Robbie, “adopted” son Dr. Arie Salzman, ten grandchildren and spouses, three great-grandchildren, sister, Frances Sue Schneider, and

brother-in-law, Leo Greenblum.

May her memory be a blessing.

TJHS on Facebook

TJHS on Facebook: Search *Texas Jewish Historical Society* on your device and “Like” us!



Rabbi Jimmy Kessler Educational Outreach Fund

Early in his rabbinical education and career, Rabbi Kessler lamented the absence of significant records of the Texas Jewish experience in local, state, and university libraries. His frustration turned to action when in 1980 in San Antonio he organized a meeting of like-minded Texans for what became the Texas Jewish Historical Society.

TJHS continues to expand and share the understanding of the Jewish presence in Texas through education and outreach.

The Kessler Fund is an inducement to share the incredible history of Jews in Texas with a broader community through an ever-expanding scope of projects such as invitations to renowned speakers to the TJHS Annual Gatherings, research grants to university students in Jewish studies, partnering with other organizations to expand educational programs for young people, piquing the interests of people from all religions to the richness of Texas Jewish history, and more. This Fund is a long-term commitment to the legacy of Jimmy Kessler for which \$250,000 has been set as a launch goal.

TJHS appreciates all donations, at any level, to honor the legacy of Jimmy Kessler. The Texas Jewish Historical Society, Inc., is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Donations are tax deductible within limits of the law.

Suggested donation levels:

\$25,000 or above	Platinum
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TJHS Photo Exhibits

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 txjhs_exhibits@txjhs.org.

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