

The Texas Jewish Historical Society Magazine



March, 2024

TJHS Board Meeting, January 28, 2024 Zoom and In-Person, McAllen, Texas



Sunday morning Board Meeting attendees.



Temple Emanuel Memorial Park entrance.

Notes From the Meeting

- Sheldon Lippman, Chairman of the Kessler Committee, reported that many donations have come in and he felt we would be reaching our goal quickly. Several gifts have been made in honor of or in memory of others.
- \$500 grant was awarded to Cody Sutterfield to establish a Jewish group focused on rural communities in East Central Texas for connecting them to the Texas Jewish community. A goal is to restore care of Jewish graves in relevant Christian cemeteries. He would present a progress report at the end of the year, and at

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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Texas Jewish history, oral histories, and requests for assistance with research are welcome, as are photographs and historical documents.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

To **John Campbell** on his 75th Birthday.

To **Bob Lewis/Tumbleweed Smith** who received the Big Spring "Man of the Year" award!

To **Cynthia Wolf** who was installed as President of Temple Emanuel in Beaumont.

Save the Date

April 12-14, 2024

Annual Gathering in Richardson, Texas

May 5, 2024

Hebrew Free Loan Association San Antonio
Centennial Year Celebration Picnic, 12:00 pm
- 3:00 pm, Barshop JCC, San Antonio

Message from the President

by Joan Linares



The new year started with the Winter Meeting in McAllen January 26-28. The Executive Board had a very productive meeting on Friday afternoon. Everyone enjoyed a delicious Mexican buffet at the beautiful Temple Emanuel followed by services. We appreciate the warm welcome given by Rabbi Nathan Farb and Temple President Annie Holand Miller who gave a history of the Temple. Sisterhood provided the delicious Oneg after services.

Saturday was nonstop with a bus tour of Jewish points of interest and reenactments at the Temple Emanuel Memorial Park Cemetery. Thanks to Barbara Rosenberg and Larry Holtzman for script and reenactors Joan and Louis Katz, Vickie Vogel, and Sharon and Sonny Gerber. Lunch was at Macaroni Grill. The afternoon consisted of a panel of McAllen residents detailing their personal experiences and family stories. Panel members were Larry Fallek, Harriet Kirsh Pozen, and 99 1/2 year old Cecilia Shapiro with moderator, Larry Holtzman. Thanks to Vickie Aaronson Hutson and Calvin Wolff who provided some additional history. The day ended with a catered dinner and private tour of the Museum of South Texas History in Edinburg by Francisco Guajardo, the museum's CEO. Thanks to Barbara and Ben Rosenberg for a beautiful Havdalah service prior to dinner. Guest speaker

Michael Blum gave a most interesting history of the McAllen Jewry. Sunday morning was the quarterly board meeting. After the meeting we had a powerful presentation by Jonah Goldberg who provided a documentary about his Great Uncle Joe Engel who escaped the Holocaust.

Many thanks to Meeting Chairperson Lynda Furgatch for planning such a wonderful weekend along with her team Anita Feigenbaum and Marilyn Lippman. Special thanks to Patty and Larry Fallek and Castle Hospitality employees Francie Jones, Veronica Moreno, and Chef Russell Walker who made us feel so welcome and provided wonderful accommodations and meals. I want to thank Pat and Michael Blum for enriching services and dinner décor. Thanks to Jules Frapart for providing maps. Thanks to our hospitality room bakers Jan Hart, Sally Drayer, Barbara Rosenberg, Phyllis Frapart, and Lynda Furgatch. The McAllen community could not have been more welcoming to TJHS.


Our Rabbi Jimmy Kessler Educational Outreach Fund, which was launched in October 2023, is off to a good start. In four month's time we are roughly 25% of reaching our goal of \$250,000. If you have not given to the Kessler Fund yet, I strongly encourage you to do so. All donations are appreciated. If you have any leads on grant opportunities, please email me at president@txjhs.org. Much thanks to Marcia and Lonnie Schooler for giving the seed money and Sheldon Lippman who helped established this fund with Shelley Kessler's blessing.

TJHS joined the Tex-


as State Historical Association as an affiliate member. At the annual TSHA Conference in College Station, we will award the Lynna Kay Shuffield Award to a deserving recipient at the Women in Texas History Luncheon. We will also have representatives at a roundtable focusing on Texas Jewish history and Jewish contributions. TJHS board member Scott Langston will moderate a panel which includes TJHS board member Hollace Weiner.

In March, TJHS will be partnering with the Dallas Jewish Historical Society for an event where TJHS grant recipient, Marlene Trestman, will be speaking. Thanks to Barbara Green Stone for coordinating with DJHS.

In early April TJHS member David Moore and I will speak at the Friends of Texas Historical Commission meeting in Austin. The topic will be centered around historical nominations for the National Register of Historic Places.

Our Annual Gathering will be held in Richardson on April 12-14. Thanks to Meetings Committee member Marilyn Lippman who has taken the lead on planning this exciting and educational weekend. Hope to see you in Richardson! 

Grant Awarded to Cody Sutterfield

A \$500 grant was awarded to Cody Sutterfield to establish a Jewish group focused on rural communities in East Central Texas for connecting them to the Texas Jewish community. A goal is to restore care of Jewish graves in relevant Christian cemeteries. He would present a progress report at the end of the year, and at that time, it would be determined if additional funding up to \$2,000 would be awarded over the next four years. 



Temple Emanuel

that time, it would be determined if additional funding up to \$2000 would be awarded over the next four years.

- The proposed Slate of Officers for 2024-2025 and for the Board of Trustees for 2024-2026 were presented, and may be found elsewhere in this issue. The electronic election will be held in March.
- Lynda Furgatch, Meeting Chair, announced that the Board Meeting & 45th Annual Gathering will be held in Richardson April 12-14, 2024.
- We are now at 646 members which includes two-person memberships.
- There have been an additional 481 entries into the burial database from July 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023. There are 284 known cemeteries or those with Jewish burials in Texas, with seventy-four of those in the Dallas area.



Sarah Mandelbaum Beer, David Stohl, Bill Rubinsky, John Havenar, and Joan Linares.



Zoom participants—Row 1: Gary Whitfield, Sheldon Lippman, and Barbara Green Stone. Row 2: Eric Nelson, Jules Frapart, and Cynthia Wolf. Row 3: Mark Wormser, Jeff Levine, and Davie Lou Solka. Row 4: Amy Milstein, Board Meeting; and Joyce Davidoff.



Susan Novick, Rusty Milstein, Kathy Kravitz updating cemetery records.

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Larry Fallek introducing Jonah Goldberg on Sunday Morning.



Dinner Saturday evening at Museum of South Texas history.



Pat & Mike Blum, Lynda Furgatch



Sonny & Sharon Gerber as Sam & Bea Lack; Vickie Vogel as Fannie Chaleff.



Above: Saturday's panel was Cecelia Shapiro, Harriett Kirsch Pozen, Larry Fallek, and Moderator Larry Holtzman. Left: Barbara & Ben Rosenberg presenting Havdalah.



Joan and Louis Katz as Isadore and Julia Bullock Moritz.



Toward an Inventory of Texas Jewish Cemeteries

by Donald Teter

Editor' note: This article first appeared in the TJHS publication, *Chronicles*, which was published in 1994. Don Teter was TJHS President 1993-1995. His daughter, Joan Linares, is the current TJHS President. For his pioneering cemetery studies work, Don was awarded The Texas Historical Foundation Parmelee Award for outstanding accomplishment in preservation and historical research in 1993. This project has continued with the publication of a second volume by Charles B. Hart in 2012, and annual updates by Rusty Milstein. The complete cemetery listings from both books and all updates can be found on the TJHS website www.txjhs.org

In 1985, the Texas Jewish Historical Society undertook a project designed to locate and to begin documentation of Jewish cemeteries in the state. Letters to historical societies, individuals, and Jewish publications across the state requested information on sites. From the replies, a list of seventy cities where Jewish cemeteries were, or might be located, was prepared, as well as information on communities where Jewish cemeteries did not exist.

In March, 1991, the president (Milton Smith) of the Texas Jewish Historical Society asked me to be the Cemetery Research Chairperson. The previous Chairperson was not able to participate in the current project, but supplied all the information collected during the preceding six years.

In the new historical project, all Jewish burials in Texas were to be included. A form was prepared asking for information, which included city, date founded, cemetery name, address or directions to cemetery, the name of who owns or maintains the cemetery, the earliest burial, the founder/owner/synagogue affiliation, whether a historical marker had been obtained, if it is currently in use for burials, and the date of the most recent burial. A census and identifying pictures such as entrances, unique markers and signs also were requested.

Slowly the locations of known Jewish cemeteries and Jewish burials in non-Jewish cemeteries were sited. While

instances by people acquainted with the deceased provided identification, if a Star of David, a Menorah (candelabrum) Hebrew writing, or other Jewish identification was not present on the grave marker, one cannot be certain of a Jewish burial. But there are graves with none of these identifying marks present of people known to have been practicing Jews, buried in non-denominational cemeteries. There were approximately seventy cities and towns documented, and these were placed into thirty-two groups of one or more places where a historical society member or a personal contact lived within seventy-five miles. I sent the forms along with a letter explaining the project to each of these people. There were few complete responses, some partial ones, a lot of promises to comply with the request at a future date, and many who did not even bother to say, "NO!" Those who had not answered at all were recontacted, and more promises and a few refusals resulted.

At this juncture, I decided that the project could never proceed unless I personally visited the sites and made the effort a personal historical quest. With my spouse, Gertrude, I made numerous "cemetery excursions," mostly in the eastern part of Texas, where the majority of Jewish burials are located. Thus far, Lubbock, Texas, has been the western perimeter of my efforts and there remain several cemeteries yet to be visited and documented.

Continuing research revealed three characteristic patterns of burial sponsorship. First, there were properties specifically purchased or donated and dedicated as Jewish cemeteries, usually by associations formed for the purpose or by a particular synagogue. Most of these originated as burial associations that dated back to the mid-nineteenth century. Typically, these had names such as the Jewish Ladies Aid and Cemetery Association in Orange, and the Hebrew Benevolent Society, organized in 1867 in Marshall. In some places, these burial organizations were founded prior to the establishment of a synagogue.

Second, there were areas in public or private cemeteries that were designated Jewish cemeteries some time after the establishment of the original nonsectarian cemetery. In a few instances Jewish cemeteries came first and were then surrounded by large non-Jewish cemeteries so that they now seem to be a part of a large nonsectarian cemetery.

Finally, there were Jewish people buried in non-Jewish cemeteries without identifying religious affiliation. These internments were usually in smaller towns where there were no Jewish cemeteries and where the deceased preferred to

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be buried alongside those with whom they had lived and worked. The contemporary veterans and military cemeteries, where no religious distinction is made, except for the symbol on the marker, derive from the earlier egalitarianism of the frontier community. But these individual burials are of equal importance, and documentation of them in early Texas must be continued.

The most time-consuming task was obtaining the census of a cemetery, especially a large one. Thus far, only one large city synagogue has furnished a computer printout of its burials. Others indicated that data was available on individual cards which could be copied. I have taken the census of several smaller cemeteries by walking the site and either writing down the gravestone data or using a tape recorder for later transcription. I found in many local libraries listings of all cemeteries in the surrounding county. This was most helpful, particularly in identifying the early burials. More recent individual burial data was more facily obtained from funeral homes, governmental agencies and cemetery associations.

The project already has provided gratifying results personally and hopefully for future students of southern Jewish history. A few examples of what was rediscovered through this project follow.

There is a Jewish cemetery in the town of Gonzales, located within the town limits and near other non-Jewish cemeteries. I had seen it some years ago when visiting that city, during research for the cemetery project. A former resident of Gonzales, who lives in another city, but who takes the responsibility for the cemetery's maintenance, mentioned "the other Jewish cemetery in Gonzales." This source told me he had not seen it for many

years, and was not aware if it still existed. He gave a general description of its location and names of Gonzales residents who might be helpful. One of these was a man whose family owned the ranch on which the "other" cemetery was located. He knew that it was, or had been there, but he had not been there for many years and was unsure that anything remained. My informant drew a map that directed me to the site three miles north of the city and indicated that was near the oil well.

My wife, an extremely cautious person, accompanied me. After leaving the pavement and proceeding on a gravel road, we arrived at the ranch entrance, which was a typical metal automobile gate commonly found on most farm and ranch entrances. This one had a large "No Trespassing" sign on it, and it took me awhile to convince my spouse that the owner had given us permission to enter, as long as we closed the gates behind us to retain the cattle. We proceeded along what could scarcely be called a road through two more gates until we reached the mud from a recent rain. That was when my wife decided that she and the car were going no further. So I left her and hiked the half-mile further and, to my delight and surprise, there among the weeds, cattle, and oil well, I "discovered" the old Gonzales Jewish Cemetery.

There were fifteen burials there, dating from 1861 to 1901. The black wrought-iron fence with the words, "JEWISH CEMETERY" on the gate had been trampled in places, presumably by the cattle feeding on the grass. The weeds were high, but most of the markers were standing and legible. I took some pictures and hurried back to my wife, who subsequently enjoyed recounting her "traumatic experience," left in the middle of a

ranch while I disappeared. She has since returned and visited the cemetery and shared excitement over the discovery.

As a result of this narrative of discovery which appeared in the Texas Jewish Historical Society Newsletter, in March, 1992, a group of ten sixth-grade students of a Jewish Day School in Dallas led by their Headmaster and a teacher, met me at the cemetery and spent four hours renovating it. A man who has lived all his life in a city thirty miles away also visited the cemetery for the first time and found his great-grandmother's grave. The marker was broken in two, and he planned to have it restored. The school plans to make this an annual educational project.

Another forgotten cemetery is in La Grange, Texas. I was aware of a few Jewish burials in the large city cemetery, but in talking with a descendant of one of the families interred there, mention was made of the "old Jewish cemetery down by the river." The source was unsure that it still existed, as she had not been there for many years.

The La Grange Hebrew Benevolent Society in 1868 purchased a four-acre tract for \$115.00 cash. Between that time and 1933, there were twenty-one burials in the smaller area designated as a cemetery. In 1957, the sole living member of the Ladies Hebrew Cemetery Association (the name was changed over the years) deeded the land to a man with the proviso that he maintain the cemetery in a decent manner and allow access to it for friends and relatives of the departed. He failed to do much upkeep, but when he divided the tract for residential purposes, the access provision was included. The present owner of the property has constructed

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an elegant home about one-hundred feet from the cemetery. He has performed a modest amount of upkeep, mostly keeping the grounds mowed. Recently, through the efforts of the one Jewish family residing in La-Grange, youth groups from temples in Houston and Austin met there one Sunday and spent several hours renovating the grounds and markers. These groups also plan to make it an annual affair.

Another first-time discovery took place in Denison, Texas. In a visit to the non-Jewish Fairview Cemetery, which was brought to public attention in the original 1985 Historical Society research, there were found about nine scattered Jewish burials. The maintenance supervisor informed the writer that there were Jewish graves also in the Oakwood cemetery, which he said was originally a Jewish cemetery. Gertrude and I found about eighteen identifiable markers there dating back to 1878, and there were a few which had fallen and could not be read. No one had mentioned this cemetery, and a local Jewish resident later encountered by me was completely unaware of it. This will be a future project for a volunteer group.


In Bonham, we found the Jewish Cemetery, an area adjoining the large Willow Wild Cemetery where Sam Rayburn is buried. There were only nine graves, well-marked with monuments, and it is uncertain whether this was a dedicated cemetery or a section of Willow Wild. Further research will be undertaken as time permits.

There are Jewish cemeteries in cities which no longer have more than a very few Jewish families. Among these are Rockdale, Greenville, Ennis, Luling, Gainesville, Mexia, Brenham, Navasota, Columbus, Sherman, Jefferson, Marshall, Palestine, and Orange. Marshall at one time had a synagogue, but the building is no

longer in existence. There is a Texas Historical Commission marker at the site. There is also a marker at its cemetery, and in addition, there has been built at the entrance a brick wall into which there has been inserted a cornerstone, a brick and a Star of David ornament from the synagogue. The architectural remembrance is unusual and beautiful.

There is a very unusual grave in the beautiful Corsicana cemetery, among some superb sculpture and headstones. This grave has a legend behind it. In 1884, a stranger came to Corsicana's "Trades Day." He had a wooden peg leg and was either a professional acrobat or a stove salesman. He stretched a wire two stories high from the southeast corner of Collins and Beaton Streets to the opposite northwest corner and proceeded to walk the tightrope with a stove strapped to his back and a long bar in his hands to balance himself. When he was about half-way across, he lost his balance and fell, and was badly crushed by the stove. He was carried to a nearby hotel, where a physician attended him. He said he was a Methodist and would like to see a preacher. One was called and he prayed for the injured man. When asked for his name he turned his head and refused to answer. Finally, when he realized he was dying, he said, "I wish to talk with a Jew; I am Jewish." A Jewish merchant was called to his bedside and requested that the dying man repeat a certain prayer, which he did in excellent Hebrew. As soon as he completed the prayer, he died. The Jewish people of Corsicana buried him in their cemetery and put this simple inscription on the plain stone marker: ROPE WALKER.

Every burial in any cemetery provides a starting point for historical research. There is so much more to be accomplished in what may well be

a never-ending project. I have visited seventy-three cemeteries in forty-six towns and cities, mostly in East Texas. There are twenty cemeteries in fifteen cities that others can document. When all the current documentation is completed, it will be housed in the Archives of the Texas Jewish Historical Society at the Barker History Center, University of Texas at Austin [in 2024, the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History]; an index containing the pertinent data will be available. A substantial contribution to the history of Jewry in Texas will have been completed. 

Welcome New Members!

Susie & David Askanase
Houston, Texas

Diane Jacobs
Austin, Texas

Sue & Stuart Jacobson
Houston, Texas

Mindy & David Klein
Georgetown, Texas

Beth & Mendel Nock
Houston, Texas

Nanette Putterman
Hedwig Village, Texas

Melanie & Cody Sutterfield
Teague, Texas

Sheldon Weisfeld
Brownsville, Texas

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

Rabbi Jimmy Kessler Educational Outreach Fund Contributions

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

Gold

Harris & Eliza Kempner Fund

Ruby

Sherri & Rabbi Bob Alper

Francine & Bradley Beckman

Marsha & Lewis Hoffer

Diamond

Robert Abzug

American Jewish Archives Friends

Barr, Downing, & Nussenblatt families

David Bell

Michele & Michael Brown

Bonnie Cohen

Susie & Rabbi Julian Cook

Dr. Joshua Furman

Janice & David Gerber

Annette & Daniel Gordon

Roberto Graetz

Jan & Charles Hart in honor of Bob Lewis/Tumbleweed Smith receiving Big Spring "Man of the Year"

Rabbi Peter Hyman

Mindy & David Klein

Susan & Bob Lewis in memory of Bob Gindler

Ann & Rabbi Ralph Mecklenburger

Fred Natkin

Carol Adatto & Eric Nelson

Charles Pehr

Holly & Randall Plost

Barbara & Ben Rosenberg in honor of Bob Lewis/Tumbleweed Smith receiving Big Spring "Man of the Year"

Ruth Seldman

Linda & Rabbi Robert Sharff

Davie Lou Solka in memory of Mrs. Cardoza

Davie Lou Solka in honor of John Campbell's 75th Birthday

Davie Lou Solka in honor of Joan & Louis Katz's 60th anniversary

Davie Lou Solka in honor of Bob Lewis/Tumbleweed Smith receiving Big Spring "Man of the Year"

Rai Thompson

Leslie & Sanford Weiner

Anne Woodson

Karen & David Wolf

Contributions

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

Joan & Ruben Linares

Susan & Max Reichenthal

David Rubenstein

Joan & Ruben Linares

In honor of John Campbell's 75th Birthday

In honor of Joan & Louis Katz's 60th Wedding Anniversary

In honor of Bob Lewis/Tumbleweed Smith receiving Big Spring "Man of the Year"

In Memory of Norma Schlinger

In support of the Winter Meeting in McAllen

Sheldon Lippman & John Cambell

Vickie & David Vogel

In honor of Ito Perl's 90th Birthday

In Memory of Robert Gindler

Anita & Leslie Feigenbaum

Sheldon Lippman

Vickie & David Vogel

In appreciation of the 50th Anniversary Book at the McAllen Meeting

Rabbi Robert Haas

Ruth Ann Hayter

Vickie Aaronson Hutson

Rosalie Weisfeld

For a wonderful meeting in McAllen and in appreciation to the Meeting Committee chaired by Lynda Furgatch

Speaker's Bureau by Jan Siegel Hart

The Speaker's Bureau of the Texas Jewish Historical Society has members who are available to bring programming to congregations and organizations on a variety of subjects. These include historical Jewish people and places, and information about the Texas Jewish Historical Society. Speakers have been provided to organizations on Zoom, as well as in person. For programs for your group, contact tjhspeaker@txjhs.org.

**The deadline for the May 2024
TJHS Magazine is Friday, April 5.**

The Gelfond-Savitsky-Titovets Family:

From Russia to the Texas Borderland

by Joyce Davidoff, with information provided by Lyuba Titovets and Marina Savitsky

To those of us who trace our Texas roots to the Galveston Movement 1907-1912, families arriving in the 1970s-1990s seem to be “new” immigrants. Here is one of their stories as relayed by El Paso artist Lyuba Titovets and her mother Marina Savitsky (Savitskaya in Russian.)

The family’s immigration story began decades ago when Marina’s grandfather’s family, the Gelfonds, moved from Lithuania to the Volga region of Russia. Due to regional pronunciation, the family name became Gelfond, both versions meaning “builder” in Yiddish.

Marina, born in Moscow before World War II, and her younger brother, Michael, born after the war, were educated in Soviet Russia – Marina at Leningrad Electrotechnical University and Michael at Leningrad’s State University. Marina’s education was in electrical engineering, and Michael’s in mathematics and computer science. Their parents were in the Russian army during World War II. Since their mother, Ruth, knew several languages specializing in English and Japanese, she was taken into the intelligence service after University graduation. Their father was taken into the maritime school during his third year at the Mining University. Nobody asked what they wanted to study or do; they were drafted into the Russian Army and went to the war.

It was very prestigious for a girl, especially a Jewish girl, to attend the Leningrad Electrotechnical Univer-



Marina Gelfond & Sergey Savitsky wedding 1964.

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Gelfond-Savitsky-Titovets, continued from page 10

sity and to succeed, as Marina did in academics and professionally. Upon graduation, students were required to work for three years, and the government chose where people worked. Marina was sent to the Department of the Navy as an Electrical Engineer. She continued working for the Navy and participated in the fabrication and installation of automatic computer control systems. In 1964, Marina married Sergey Savitsky who worked in the same unit. They each were required to sign documents stating they would not disclose Navy secrets or leave the country for fifteen to twenty years.

Based on standards at the time, the young couple lived relatively well in a two-room apartment “forever paying on credit” to an institu-



Standing: Ruth, Marina's mother; Bnoya/Bella, Marina's aunt. Seated: Sofia, Marina's grandmother; Marina as a baby, 1939.

tion which owned the building, and they acquired a car from friends who left Russia. Although they had their needs covered and were surrounded by people who cared and loved them, there was pressure to conform. Marina felt the pressure of state-sponsored antisemitism throughout her education and employment. By extension, Sergey, although not Jewish, felt it as well.

Marina's brother, Michael, was forced to leave Russia in the 1970s. He, his wife, and six-year-old daughter forfeited their Russian passports and belongings, and stateless, were housed in a Displaced Persons camp in Italy. The family ended up in California where Michael developed computer languages and early artificial intelligence.

When Michael left Russia, Sergey was fired from his job the next day. Marina maintained her employment

with the Department of Navy due to her needed skills and highest security clearance but was relocated to a low-level computer center. Sergey found a job as a chemical engineer working for a phosphorous mining company based in Kazakstan at half his previous salary. However, due to his skills, after two years he became chief of the company's laboratory.

Marina and Sergey's daughter, Lyuba, grew up in St. Petersburg/Leningrad, and was surrounded by European culture. She began art lessons at age five. At age seven, she was selected for a special children's art group. By fifth grade, she began attending an art school program after her public school classes. In eighth grade, she decided to pursue art studies with more preparatory classes at various institutions, to get ready for competitive placement later on.

After high school, out of thirty



Standing: Yulia Gelfond, Michael's daughter; Lyuba Titovets, Nina Titovets, Alexandra Gelfond, Michael's granddaughter; Anya Titovets. Seated: Jonathan Gelfond Michael's grandson; Sash Titovets; Marina Savitskaya; Michael & Lara Gelfond.

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students applying for one seat in the Educational State University College of Fine Arts comprehensive program, Lyuba was selected. There she met another art student, Aleksander (Sasha) Titovets. They married after Lyuba's graduation and lived with her grandmother Ruth, since it was impossible to obtain their own apartment. Lyuba had completed her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Fine Arts and was sent to work at a public school as an art teacher. She also worked at the newly established theater, "Mask," creating set designs and costumes for various productions. After three years, Lyuba was invited to apply and secured a position as an art historian in the University's new History of Culture Department.

Even with this level of education and success, Lyuba felt the ever-present stigma and fear of being Jewish.

With his own advanced degrees, Sasha became an Assistant Professor of painting at his alma mater. Though not Jewish, he was told, "You will never succeed as an artist."

Sasha's family was originally from Belarus. Soon after the Bolshevik revolution, an informer told Red Army soldiers that Sasha's grandfather had an icon in the home. His grandparents were deported east beyond Siberia with their five young children, one of which was Sasha's mother. During the trip, the grandmother and children were dropped off in the taiga woods with nothing but an axe. The grandfather was forced further on as planned. In the frozen work camp beyond Siberia, Sasha's



Aleksander (Sasha) Titovets with daughters, Nina and Anya.

grandfather built a school, started teaching there, and was well liked by other prisoners. He was never heard from again, and the family learned he was shot. With her strong will and hard work, Sasha's grandmother was able to raise all her children. Sasha ate his first apple when he was nine years old.

Marina's brother, Michael Gelfond, had been hired by the University of Texas at El Paso in the 1980s as a full Professor of Computer Science (then later by Texas Tech University in Lubbock, from which he eventually retired). For permission to visit Michael in El Paso, Marina and Lyuba were advised by the French cultural attache in Russia, with whom Marina was friends, on how to best complete the necessary paperwork. Without this help, Marina said she and Lyu-

ba would never have been granted permission to leave for a visit. While in transit in New York, Marina and Lyuba visited another friend who helped Marina apply for the family to immigrate to the United States.

By the early 1990s, the Soviet Union was unstable. As Perestroika and open elections approached, Marina's husband, Sergey, feared that if Gorbachev was not elected, a Stalin-type era would return. Sergey's father had been killed during Stalin's reign, and his mother had been sent to a camp for wives of "enemies of the people." State antisemitism had always been felt in Russia and was further increasing among the local population as the danger of a Stalin-like revival loomed resulting from the "coup"

of open elections. Under these circumstances and because of his own history, Sergey felt the family had to leave.

Marina had completed her fifteen-year obligation to the Navy; but Sergey had to complete his twenty-year obligation, even though he no longer worked for the Navy. Therefore, the family had to wait to leave Russia until Sergey's compulsory obligation was finished.

Emigrating from Russia was a two-year process requiring applicants to quit their jobs and get by as best they could while waiting for permission to leave. Parents had to give formal permission for their child to leave Russia, no matter the age of the child – so Sasha as an adult had to receive his parents' permission allowing him to emigrate. Persons leaving Rus-

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Lyuba & Aleksander (Sasha) Titovets wedding, 1987.

sia also were not allowed to bring a book or written piece published before 1950, nor any other item produced before that year. This condition forced the Savitsky-Titovets family to give rare books and heirlooms to relatives and friends.

During the two-year waiting period, Lyuba and Sasha taught art at much less politically oriented schools and children's clubs, and also sold some of their art pieces – even though inflation in Russia in the early 1990s was so high that nothing really “cost money,” and it was nearly impossible to sell anything. With help from

friends and relatives, some saved money, and their ambition to leave, the family managed. They left Russia together in May, 1992, with Sasha and Lyuba taking several of their paintings with permission from the government institution. While paying the required fees and selling her mother-in-law's antique furniture, Marina was able to cover the family's necessities.

Thus, Marina, Sergey, Lyuba, and Sasha came to the Texas Borderland to join Marina's brother, Michael, and family in El Paso. All they had to live on was \$50. Michael and the El Paso

Jewish community helped them get settled in a two-bedroom apartment. A volunteer from El Paso's Jewish Federation escorted Lyuba and Sasha to art galleries in El Paso, and Federation friends took them to galleries in Santa Fe and Taos. Sasha got a job framing artwork at an El Paso gallery where he began meeting other artists and establishing a network. Lyuba began teaching art at the El Paso Jewish Academy where she worked for five years. Both also taught art lessons privately as well as classes for children and adults at the El Paso Museum of Art, Las Cruces Museum of Art, and Las Cruces' Branigan Cultural Center. The couple found strong supporters of the area's arts community. They entered local juried art exhibitions, and Sasha won a first-place prize of \$5,000. Meanwhile, the couple's two daughters were born in El Paso.

Marina and Sergey were over-qualified for available jobs. White Sands Missile Range offered opportunities, for example, but security clearance was not available. Their ages and limited English skills also were obstacles. Marina began teaching Algebra I & II, pre-calculus and calculus at a private high school; worked a year as a programmer for a local company; and taught Russian at several local language schools. Among other jobs, Sergey worked for El Paso Natural Gas (El Paso Corporation) before the company relocated to Houston, and as a researcher at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP). He passed away at age sixty-seven.

Lyuba and Sasha continued their work as artists and raised their two girls. They established their own private art school for all ages and abilities, and in recent years also began teaching through the internet reaching students at great distances. Over

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Gelfond-Savitsky-Titovets, continued from page 13

the years, they have given back to the community by creating posters for the El Paso Symphony Orchestra and El Paso Opera Company, various festivals and events, magazine covers and newspapers; and sculptures benefiting a local hospital and UTEP. Their older daughter now works in high tech for a global company in Scottsdale, Arizona. The younger daughter is a fine art photographer and works in social media, advertising, and event organizing for an El Paso company.

The following is drawn from an article in *Border Heritage* magazine, September, 2023:

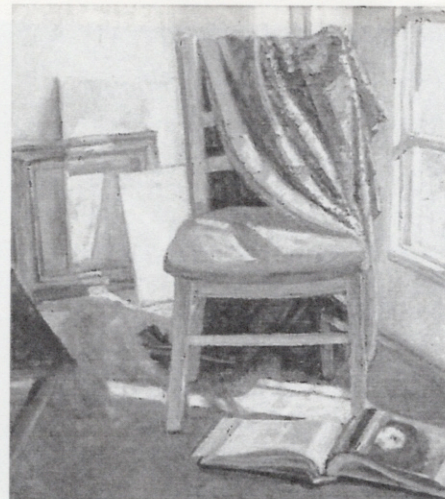
Lyuba captures imaginative figurative works and color harmony, sometimes bringing to life the folk traditions of Russia. She describes her work as “too symbolic to be realistic and too realistic to be symbolic.” Her paintings are in numerous private

and public collections in the U.S. and abroad, and her work has been displayed at the Great American Artists Exhibition in Cincinnati, Ohio; and Westminster Abbey Exhibition, London. Lyuba has participated in many juried art shows, has illustrated books, and is included in the Archive of the National Museum of Women in the Arts.

Aleksander’s work reflects the Russian School of Oil Painting with a classical style integrating lyrical impressionism and strong realistic movement. Some of his most powerful pieces capture intricate harmony, contrasts of shadows and light, feeling and mood, sometimes displaying nostalgia for Russian landscapes along with “graciousness of the soul,” as he describes it. He says, “I try to find something in nature of calmness and some reason, and let’s say harmony....”




Art by Aleksander Titovets.



Art by Lyuba Titovets.

Aleksander has won Best of Show six times in the International Fine Art Competition. He has participated in competitions of the National Academy of Design in New York, Oil Painters of America, and National Oil and Acrylic Painters Society. He was honored in 1998 with the Artist’s Choice Award of the Artists of America national invitational exhibition. Both Lyuba and Aleksander have exhibited extensively throughout the Southwest, U.S., and internationally. They have appeared in many publications including “International Artist” magazine, which described Aleksander as “one of America’s leading impressionistic painters.” Among many other honors and highlights, he was chosen by the Smithsonian to paint the portrait of First Lady Laura Bush for the Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery in Washington, DC. His paintings are in many public and private collections including those of Proctor & Gamble; Sophia Loren; and the Museum of His Majesty Juan Carlos, King of Spain.

As Aleksander acknowledges, he and Lyuba “...achieved the whole ‘American Dream.’” They may be visited at titovetsarts.com. 

FROM OUR ARCHIVES

Hyman J. Ettlinger - Renaissance Man

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.

Mathematics professor, All-American athlete, Jewish lay leader, textbook author, Phi Beta Kappa, bank director, football referee and coach - Dr. Hyman J. Ettlinger was truly a Renaissance man. Born Sep-

tember 1, 1889 to Abraham and Pearl Shucart Ettlinger in St. Louis, the second of six children (two girls, four boys), Hyman attended a Jewish day school and learned to read Hebrew. Upon graduation from high school as valedictorian, he received a four-year fellowship to Washington University in St. Louis, but he didn't need four years, finishing his BA in three. In addition to his academic studies, he was a member of the debate team and was a three-sport varsity player—football (All-American), basketball, and baseball. At one basketball game, he scored more points than the entire opposing team.

A Washington University mathematics faculty member secured a Harvard Club of St. Louis scholarship for him to pursue a graduate degree in mathematics at Harvard, where he also became interested in the Menorah Movement.¹ Originating at Harvard in 1906-07 out of a desire to establish a Jewish cultural society open

to students and faculty,² Ettlinger helped organize a Menorah Society at the University of Texas after he joined the Department of Applied Mathematics faculty in 1913. There were only thirty Jewish students at the time and only a handful of Jewish faculty members. The Menorah Society was succeeded by Hillel in 1929 and Ettlinger chaired the committee to raise funds for a campus home in 1930.

Ettlinger remained at UT for 56 years as a teacher, switching to the Department of Pure Mathematics in 1953, and chairing the mathematics department for twenty-five years.³ He served on various committees to raise funds for scholarships, vetted applicants for financial awards, and helped students find short-term employment. Ettlinger and a colleague wrote the calculus textbook used in the introductory course. His research was in differential equations and the calculus of variations. He was associated with the UT Defense Research Laboratory where he worked on aerodynamics.⁴

In 1914, 16-year-old Texan⁵ Rosebud Segal entered the University of Texas, and shortly after her graduation in 1918 with a degree in botany, she and Hyman married. They had two children, Yetta Pauline who died at age two in 1926,⁶ and in 1925, Martin Grossman Ettlinger.⁷ Hyman, Rosebud, and Martin were all Phi Beta Kappa.⁸ Rosebud served as president of the University Ladies' Club and was active in other organizations.

In the summers of 1919-1920, Hyman returned to Harvard to complete his doctoral degree, around the time Harvard set a quota for Jews. Ettlinger wrote of no problems at Harvard or UT, except for one occa-

MATHEMATICS



Hyman Joseph Ettlinger (second row, first on left) and the math faculty at the University of Texas. Image included in accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107 as seen at <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/ettlinger-hyman-joseph>

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sion when, as assistant football coach, a caretaker refused to unlock a door so he could get a whistle. The caretaker said he wouldn't do it for anyone "and certainly not for a Jewish..." at which point the 210-pound Ettlinger floored him, largely to provide an example to his watching players.⁹

Also in 1919, Hyman and Rosebud bought what is now known as the Worrell-Harris-Ettlinger House built in 1912 in the Duval area just north of the UT campus, for \$4,000. The house is part of the Arts and Crafts Movement in the Craftsman bungalow style. The neighborhood was popular with professors and staff. Rosebud's botany degree was put to use designing the landscaping, including a stone wall Hyman built around the property to keep the cows out of Rosebud's garden. The house is on the National Register of Historic Places and was featured in an episode of HGTV's "If Walls Could Talk."¹⁰

Ettlinger integrated sports and

math. "You have to count to play football and you have to count in mathematics," he said.¹¹ An assistant coach of the UT varsity football team 1917-1919, he served as Director of Intercollegiate Athletics in 1928-1930. He was freshman football and basketball coach for two years (1913-1916).¹² His football squad never lost a game. "We tied one game though, 0-0. We would have won that one, but my quarterback disobeyed me."¹³ In 1931, Ettlinger arranged the only football game to date between UT and Harvard, which Harvard won 35-7.¹⁴

Ettlinger refereed many high school and college football games within a hundred mile radius of Austin, where he often addressed a school assembly or math class before the game, or became the luncheon speaker for a local service club. His topic was often a plea for stronger support of math or science. "At one time I refereed so many A&M games that they called me the

twelfth man on the squad," he said.¹⁵

In 1931, he was head linesman for a game between LSU and Arkansas at the Louisiana State Fair. After kickoff, a squat man in the stands starting leading the fans in yells and passing out dollar bills to band members. Ettlinger stopped the game and walked over to the man - Governor Huey Long. His six-foot frame towering over the governor, Ettlinger told him to sit down. Long stood silent. Ettlinger pointed to a seat and said, "Governor, I mean it." The Governor sat down.¹⁶

Ettlinger was an official at the spring Texas Relays for many years, as well as the interscholastic track meets. He was a charter and life member of the Southwest Conference Football Officials Association. In 1973, he was elected to the Longhorn Hall of Honor.¹⁷ He maintained his lifelong interest in college sports, although he began to think of it as too professionalized. Hyman Ettlinger was a great athlete, who regularly played handball and swam until late in life.

Although there were few Jewish faculty members at UT when Ettlinger arrived, they tended to be active in the Jewish community. Hyman and Rosebud were active members of Austin's Beth Israel where he taught Sunday School and served as secretary of the congregation from 1927 to 1945, and as president around 1938. For a year in the 1920s when there was no rabbi, Ettlinger led services each week. For ten years or so, he was a "circuit rider," traveling to small congregations without a rabbi to lead services, especially High Holy Day services, including towns as far as Palestine,¹⁸ Brownsville (1918),¹⁹ and Wichita Falls.²⁰ In 1951, he presided over the dedication of Temple Israel of Schulenburg, remarking that some day archeologists studying the area would discover the Jewish star mounted on its western wall and realize



Ettlinger in his office with graduate students, 1963. On the right is A. D. Stewart. Others not identified. Photo by Benny Springer. H. J. Ettlinger Photographs, di_07302, The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin

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“Jews were here, too.”²¹

Ettlinger’s teaching expertise extended to high school activities where he encouraged studies in math and science. Recognizing the Russians were promoting such studies and building a strong workforce resulting in scientific achievements such as the Sputnik satellite, he worried America would fall behind. Some called him “the Paul Revere of education.”²²

At the University of Texas, he wrote technical papers, book reviews, text books, and supervised dissertations for some twenty-two doctoral students and served on the committees of many others. He directed at least 105 master’s theses and served as second or third reader for others. His writing appeared in journals around the world, including Japan, Great Britain and Poland.

Anyone found loitering in the hall might be recruited for tasks such as mailing fund solicitations. A Catholic nun impressed into service wondered what the Mother Superior would think if she knew she was stuffing envelopes soliciting contributions for a Jewish scholarship fund!

One day, so the story goes, a Texas Ranger showed up in class with an arrest warrant for a student. Ettlinger made him wait until the end of the class, then accompanied the student to the station and secured his release, either through bail or personal recognizance.

In 1959, Ettlinger received a Teaching Excellence Award from the Student’s Association. In 1969 he was named Emeritus Professor of Mathematics at the age of 80, but he hardly retired. He maintained a keen interest in mathematics for the rest of his life. He continued to work on projects such as compiling a list of all PhD degrees in mathematics by supervising professor, as well as all PhD degrees granted by each graduate at UT or elsewhere. He fundraised and served on awards com-

mittees. In 57 years, he taught more than 10,000 students. Keeping an office in the math department, he walked to campus every day to visit or work on projects. For ten years he took half salary instead of retiring. “I’ve back talked every president there, and that includes Lorene Rogers,”²³ he quipped to a campus reporter.

Ettlinger was a strong supporter of the National Conference of Christians and Jews at a time when the only locations were New York and Chicago. He helped get a divisional office in Dallas and co-chaired a later Austin chapter for more than twenty years, serving on the National Board of Directors. He was a charter member of the Mathematical Association of America, founded in 1915, and was one of the last surviving members in 1986.

B’nai B’rith, the National Council of Christians and Jews, and the Kallah of Texas Rabbis are among the groups that honored him for humanitarianism and service to Judaism.²⁴ He served on virtually every international commission of B’nai B’rith for over thirty years, with frequent visits to lodges both large and small.²⁵

Among his many disparate activities, Ettlinger served as foreman of the Travis County Grand Jury for a term, and was a director of First Federal Savings and Loan Association of Austin for more than fifty years.

Four celebrations were held for Ettlinger’s 90th birthday in 1979: a breakfast party at Congregation Beth Israel, a party at home, a party by the directors of the First Federal Savings and Loan Association of Austin, and an afternoon reception given by the Department of Mathematics. His next seven years saw physical decline. A cataract operation led to retinal detachment which left him half blind. His hearing started to fail. Wanting to continue to learn, he turned to voice recordings of journals.

Gangrene cost him his left foot and a toe on his right foot. An artificial foot was only partly successful, so he used a wheelchair. In 1986, a cancer in the carotid artery recurred, and he seemed to lose the desire to live. He died June 8, 1986, aged 96. Rosebud died October 1, aged 88.²⁶

Hyman Ettlinger had a profound impact on the Jewish community, the University of Texas, and the greater Austin society. He was the driving force behind the promotion of Jewish student life at the university. The Hyman J. Ettlinger Renaissance Award was established in 2006 by Hillel to honor its tireless supporters.²⁷ Nobel Prize physicist Dr. Arthur H. Compton, then chancellor of Washington University, called Ettlinger “a brilliant mathematician, a great humanitarian, and a valiant champion of fair play and team work.”²⁸

Endnotes

- ¹ Robbie Sabo, “Retired professor celebrates 90th year of thinking like a kid”, *Daily Texan* August 29, 1979. Unless otherwise stated, all information is found in Box 3A167, Folder: Academics, Texas Jewish Historical Society Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, or In Memoriam H. J. Ettlinger, Resolution from Committee of the University of Texas, prepared by Professors Robert E. Greenwood, John Durbin, William T. Guy and Erwin Prouse. Mathematics Historian Albert Lewis suggested Ettlinger as my subject at a Briscoe Center reception. He provided valuable links, including a copy of the above resolution.
- ² <https://volopedia.lib.utk.edu/entries/menorah-society/>
- ³ *TJHS Magazine*, July 2014, p. 19, adapted from the Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities: <https://www.isjl.org/encyclopedia-of-southern-jewish-communities.html>; <https://texashillel.org/our-history/>
- ⁴ Ettlinger, H. J. (Hyman Joseph), 1889-1986 Papers, Archives of American

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- Mathematics, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History.
- ⁵ Natalie Ornish, *Pioneer Jewish Texans*, Texas A&M University Press 1989 p. 220; Robbie Sabo, op cit
- ⁶ <http://files.usgwararchives.net/tx/travis/cemeteries/beth2.txt>
- ⁷ Martin (1925-2007) wrote his Master's Thesis in mathematics, but switched to chemistry for his doctorate. He was a professor of chemistry at the University of Copenhagen. He married Rita Mary Sanford (1922-1997). His second wife was Lise Jorgenson. His two daughters were Rebecca and Sarah. Martin is buried in Oakwood, Beth Israel 2, in Austin.
- ⁸ There was no Washington University chapter when Hyman graduated in 1910, but when one was established in 1911, they elected some members from previous years, including Hyman. Rosebud was elected in her junior year, and Martin was also PBK. Memorial resolution, op cit.
- ⁹ Albert C. Lewis, "The Building of the University of Texas Mathematics Faculty, 1893-1938," in *A Century of Mathematics in America - Part III*, Peter Duren, ed. (Providence, Rhode Island: American Mathematical Society, 1989), p. 223-224.
- ¹⁰ Marty Moulthrop, "Duval Street in the 20s" from the Heritage Society of Austin. https://orb-chicory.squarespace.com/s/2007_Duval-in-the-20s.pdf
- ¹¹ Winegarten, Ruthe and Cathy Schechter, *Deep in the Heart: The Lives & Legends of Texas Jews*, Eakin Press, 1990, p. 150. There is a photo of Ettlinger on this page.
- ¹² <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/ettlinger-hyman-joseph> by Robert E. Greenwood.
- ¹³ Robbie Sabo, op cit.
- ¹⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1931_Texas_Longhorns_football_team
- ¹⁵ Robbie Sabo, op cit.
- ¹⁶ Ornish, op cit, p. 220.
- ¹⁷ <https://www.texaslsn.org/administration>.
- ¹⁸ *TJHS Magazine*, July 2012, p. 8; Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities, op cit.
- ¹⁹ Stephen W. Graffman, "Deep in the Heart of South Texas," *TJHS Magazine*, August 2017, p. 7.
- ²⁰ *TJHS Magazine*, April 2014, p. 9 "Wichita Falls," from Encyclopedia op cit.
- ²¹ Hollace Ave Weiner and Kenneth D. Roseman, *Lone Stars of David: The Jews of Texas*, Brandeis University Press, 2007, p. 199.
- ²² Ornish, op cit
- ²³ Protests erupted after her appointment, mainly fueled by the fact that a student-faculty committee, which preferred other candidates, had recommended she not be named president. News accounts at the time suggested that she was viewed by some as a poor administrator who made decisions slowly. She was the first woman to head a public US university. <https://www.latimes.com/local/education/la-me-lorenorogers28-2009jan28-story.html> President Rogers and the Board of Regents were sued in 1975 by UT professors, who claimed that they had been denied raises as part of an effort to stifle their dissent. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lorene_Rogers

Proposed Slate

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- ²⁴ https://library.austintexas.gov/library/jewishamericanresourceguide_3.pdf
- ²⁵ Resolution from B'nai B'rith District Seven, June 9, 1986.
- ²⁶ https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/18894829/rosebud_s-ettlinger.
- ²⁷ The honor was awarded to TJHS member Milton Smith, of blessed memory.
- ²⁸ Ornish, op cit.

Hebrew Free Loan Association of San Antonio:

100 Years Building Community while Changing Lives

Submitted by San Antonio Hebrew Free Loan Association

In the tumultuous landscape of 1920s America, a storm of antisemitism, anti-refugee violence, and economic adversity loomed large. Nativism, flexing its political muscles, cast a shadow pushing immigrant communities to the margins. The Immigration Act of 1924 codified prejudice in strict entrance limits.

San Antonio Rabbi Shlome Solomon was watching his dream of life in America resonate the nightmares of his childhood in Russia. His upbringing, marred by pogroms on Jewish villages, echoed in his memory as he navigated the Texan terrain, realizing with a heavy heart that history seemed to be repeating itself. In 1924, he undertook to protect the growing Jewish community of San Antonio.

The Rabbi partnered with San Antonio businessman Abraham Kamrass to provide for the community's growth and vitality. They formed a nonprofit organization to offer financial assistance to those in need, through loans without interest, without gain. Hebrew Free Loan of San Antonio was created in 1924 in reaction to growing intolerance. As Rabbi Feigenbaum said at the inaugural meeting of HFLA-SA, "These acts of kindness aren't charity—they are mutual protection."

Now, as we honor our centennial in 2024, in a world beset by violent attacks, rising intolerance, intensified by recent crises like the pandemic and distant wars, HFLA-SA is ever grateful to the founders who carefully documented our history and the community's heritage in The Books of Reminiscence. The Centennial will mark the fulfillment of a nearly century-old promise to make the documents available to the community it helps define.

Created as a gift to HFLA-SA in 1937 by Trustee Abraham Seriff (who designed the books, the artwork contained, and the original logo), these massively oversized volumes tell a wonderful series of stories that breathe life into the city's history. In the book are records of Bar and Bat Mitzvahs, marriages, births, election to offices in various Jewish organizations as well as other achievements. It has both a written and a photographic history. It is also a way of recognizing a person's accomplishments and good deeds.

For instance, it tells the story of a notable contributor to our joint culture, Mr. Wooden Nickels, Louis "Berkie" Berkowitz. HFLA-SA helped Berkie, an amateur magician, establish a magic shop, and later, in 1950, when he saw an ad in Billboard offering "100 wooden nickels for \$1.50," HFLA helped him buy the business itself for \$50. By the mid-1990s, the Elbee (L.B.) Company was producing over a million custom wooden nickels each year, and San Antonio became the proud possessor of the World's Largest Wooden Nickel.

Some of the stories are fundamental to the region's growth as well as the Alamo City's. When the Hebrew Free Loan Association of San Antonio supported post-war emigres Joseph and Ella Rotman, it planted trees bearing bountiful fruit today.

With an interest-free startup loan in 1950, Joe and Ella began a dry goods business and immersed their family in San Antonio's Jewish Community. Serving as a Trustee, Joseph was devoted to the annual BBQ, and the whole family—including children Sam, Michael, and Diana—participated. The "American Dream" beck-

oned, and they thrived.

Sam earned honors as a concert pianist and Julliard student: the first American semifinalist in Vienna's Beethoven competition. Diana studied science at UT and medical technology at Tarleton State, earning advanced degrees.

Michael Rotman took his MD from Galveston and opened his practice in Austin. There, he and wife, Sandy, became stalwarts of the Jewish Community... but he always remembered helping Dad at the HFLA-SA BBQ. Joining with Austin community leader Tracy Solomon, they created the Hebrew Free Loan of Austin.

On receipt of the Books of Reminiscence, the founders promised to make the books accessible to the community, first at Synagogue, then "on display at the new Jewish Campus." Unfortunately, the physical size of the books, and the growing Jewish Community, made it impossible... UNTIL NOW!

Thanks to new technology, the Books of the first hundred years can be found on the HFLA-SA website. The Second Century Book of Reminiscence will be ready in time for the 2024 Centennial Celebration, marking one hundred years of changing lives while building our community. As the project is refined, links to both the new book, and the archival history of Jewish San Antonio, can be found at HFLA-SA.org, in the Centennial tab.

The Centennial will be celebrated May 5, 2024, at the Barshop JCC in San Antonio with a picnic and other activities from 12:00 pm to 3:00 pm. See website for all information. Everyone is invited!



The Novich and Adams Families from Waco, Texas

Submitted by Jeff Line, article by Sadie Novick Garin, December 4, 1955



Isaac "Ichissan" Adams – around 100 years old.

The Novich and Adams families were among the pioneer families of the Jewish faith to settle in Waco when it was just a village. About 1849, Sam Novich, the oldest of five brothers, arrived in Waco. Sam and his wife, Jennie Lyons Novich became active in early Jewish commu-

nity life. As was customary in those days, the first task for any Jewish settler was to turn his time, thoughts, and money to seeing that the remainder of his family in Europe come to this "land of golden opportunity." Arrangements were made to bring one by one, the rest of the Novich broth-

ers and their mother to Waco. After a while, Harris, Ben, Mose, and Abe, with their mother, Mrs. Toby Novich, arrived in Waco. The father of these sons had died young, leaving their mother to rear and educate them on her own. She managed to do this by owning and operating an inn in Dumbrove, Russia.

Sam Novich became a prosperous merchant in Waco, and he was among the twenty-seven charter members of Temple Rodef Sholom. The other brothers were among the charter members of Agudath Jacob Synagogue.

Sam and Jennie had six children, Bessie, Sadie, Eva, Frances, Joe, and Bert. They moved to Asheville, North Carolina in the early part of the twentieth century. Later, some of the children settled in New York, and this was the only branch of the family that drifted away and ceased contact with the Waco relatives.

The other brothers, Harris, Ben, Mose, and Abe began to earn their livelihood by peddling through the country. This helped them become acclimated quickly. The stories they told their children in later days about early farmhouses and farm people in Texas were most surprising and interesting, and illustrated the hospitality of Texans way back then. In addition to providing food and lodging for them and their animals, the long evenings were spent by instructing the visitor in English, American customs, song, etc.

With the good basic education the Novich brothers had in Europe, and the practical ways of life learned by going through the country, they shortly became versed in the American way of life.

Harris married Hannah Sabel, and

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they had six children, Bessie Lazarus, Mary Novich, Rae Novich, George, Joe and Jennie (Hyman) Block. He opened a business in Waco at 589 Austin Avenue around 1900, and this business existed in 1955. It was owned and operated by his daughter, Miss Rae Novich. The store gained a state-wide reputation. Mary and Rae were the organizers of the Waco Symphony Orchestra.

Ben Novich married Rosie Adams, and they had nine children, Bessie Lyons, Marie Jacobs, Joe B., Abe, Mose, Evelyn Dalkowitz, Sadie Cohen, Gertrude Schwartz, and Jake. Bessie and Marie's double wedding was the first wedding held in Agudah Jacob Synagogue at Seventh and Columbus Streets. Bessie married Ben Lyons, then of Flatonia, Texas, and Marie married Sam Jacobs of Luling, Texas. Both the Lyons and Jacobs families were pioneer Jewish families of prominence in Texas, and this wedding is said to have had recognition throughout Jewish communities in the state.

Mose Novich entered business in Hillsboro, Texas. He remained a bachelor until past fifty years of age, and "Uncle Mose" was the pet, pride, and joy of the family. When asked why he was not married, he would reply, "It's wonderful to be a bachelor – the married girls like you and the single girls like you." However, he took a trip to New York and met Bessie Lyons, an acquaintance of earlier days in Waco, and they were married. They returned to Waco, and he died five or six years after his marriage.

Abe Novich married Jennie Adams, whose sister was Rose, who had married Abe's brother, Ben. Abe and Jennie had four children, Joe A., Sadie N. Gorn, Thelma Lasser, and Mabelle Saladow. Abe and Jennie lived in East Waco, which was known to

always flood when heavy rains came. Abe dealt with the terrific task of rehabilitation from these floods for not only himself, but also his neighbors. There were two large train depots in East Waco, and when Jewish immigrants were expected with no one to meet them, Abe would be there with his horse and buggy to greet them and take them to his store. Mr. Sam Sanger was usually contacted before the immigrants arrived and would inform Abe. They would be given food and taken to a "landsman's" home until permanent quarters were found. After the disastrous flood of 1913, Abe moved to the City of Waco proper and continued as a merchant until his death in 1941.

In 1903, Toby Novich, the boy's mother, was past eighty, and was hale and hearty, with a great sense of independence and self-reliance. She refused to make her home with any of her children, and lived in her own home on North Third Street, with a young Jewish woman, Mrs. Harris. Mother Novich had become interested in "modern appliances," and had purchased a gasoline stove for cooking purposes. She was most proud of it, and felt very modern. One morning, she was preparing breakfast and was filling the tank when it exploded. She saved the life of Mrs. Harris, who had caught on fire first, but in doing so, Mother Novich received serious burns, which caused her death a few days later.

The other part of this interesting family duo was Isaac "Ichissan" Adams, who settled in Waco many years before the turn of the century. In Europe, he was born to wealthy parents eighteen years after their marriage. As an only child, he often said he was spoiled, as any faults were excused by his parents. At the age of sixteen, he married a woman by the name

of Peshal. They had five children, Hichel, Rosie Novich, Daniel, Meyer, and Gertrude Kantrovich. When the children were young, Peshal died. Isaac then married a woman from Dumbrovo, Sara Novich. They had six children, Eva Goldberg, Annie Gallob, Jennie Novich, Evelyn Gorin, Lape, and Joe.

The Adams family moved to Waco, and after a short time, their son, Lape was killed in an accident. He was the pride and joy of his mother, and several months after his death, Sara died. The family felt that her death had been caused by the grief over his death. After Sara's death, Isaac Adams married Anna Levine of Cincinnati, Ohio. She was a widow with two children, Dena Levine Friedman, and Max Levine. These stepchildren loved Isaac, and he thought of them as his own. Max Levin had one daughter, Jule Daniels of Corsicana, Texas. Isaac and Anna had two children, Mrs. Bessie Resnick, and Mose Adams. Isaac had come to this country as a mature man with a family, but he learned to read and write English. He would complain that the English language was not difficult to learn, but that he could not get the spelling perfect. He was 104 years old when he died and was alert and had use of all his faculties to the end. He always attributed his longevity to the fact that he never missed his "schnapps" every day. The younger off-spring had the idea that it was not one, but several more. However, he could "hold his liquor" and no one ever saw him in a state of intoxication. When he died, he had been married to five wives, and had approximately one-hundred-seventy-five living descendants.

Isaac's oldest son, Hichel, had seven children, Bessie Schwartz, Ray Goldberg, Abe, Mayer, Millie

Novich and Adams, continued from page 21

Swartzberg of Tyler, Texas, Bedie Dubinsky of Houston, and Dave of Waco. Rosie married Ben Novich, and their nine children are named earlier.

Daniel married Anna Reed and they had five children, Paul, Joe, Sadie Kester of Waco, Lillian Klein and Harold. Mayer Adams was the only member of the family who had served in the Russian army, and his stories were interesting and sometimes unbelievable. He had two children, Dora Kleiman and Abe.

Gertrude Adams Kantrovich died young and had three children, Abe, Lena Braslau of Galveston, and Bessie Chodorow of Waco. Eva Adams Goldberg had five children, Mary Mogul, Eva, Rose Eddelman of Baton Rouge, Sam, Belle of Baton Rouge, and Sadie Bloom of Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Annie Adams Gollob had five children, Mose, Sol, Abe, Harry, and Sarah Levine of Houston. Jennie Adams Novich married Abe Novice, and their four children are named earlier.

Evelyn Adams Gorin had two children, Vera Goldfarb of Cameron, TX, and Leonard L. Gorin of Waco. Joe had one daughter, Sarah Rubel of Waco. Bessie Adams Resnick of Watertown, WI had one child, Elliott.

In Memoriam

Robert "Bob" Gindler, TJHS past Board Member of Hallettsville and Round Rock, died January 22, 2024. He is survived by his children David (Alyson), and Anne, two grandchildren and their spouses.

Sheryl Mendlinger, TJHS member, died in Boston, MA. She is survived by her husband, Samuel Mendlinger, daughter, Yael Mazen, two grandchildren, and her brother, Sam Eneman, TJHS member.

Norma Bernice Aronoff Schlinger, founding TJHS member, died November 14, 2023, in Dallas. She is survived by her children, Henry D. (Hank) Schlinger, Jr., Ph.D (Julie Riggott), Paula Schlinger (Jim Gerhardt), and Barney Schlinger, Ph.D (Lorie Humphery), three grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

May their memories be a blessing.

Meet Your Board



Doug Braudaway is from Del Rio, and teaches government and history at Southwest Texas Junior College. He is married to Willie, and they have five children and seventeen grandchildren. Doug enjoys writing history and historic marker applications.

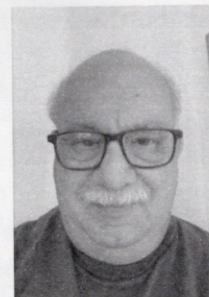


Elaine Albin grew up in the Boston area. She married a naval officer, Warren Kline, and they lived in many cities in the USA before he retired, and they settled in Corpus Christi. Warren passed away in 1982, and in 1989, Elaine married Phil Albin. She has three children and was an educator in San Antonio and Corpus Christi before her retirement.

Elaine and Phi live in Rockport.

Jeffrey Josephs lives in Austin. He grew up in Corpus Christi.

Michael Thomas Wolf was born in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, but moved to Brownsville, Texas, with his parents, Raymond and Madeleine Wolf. Michael grew up in Brownsville, where he became an



Eagle Scout and was involved in BBYO. He attended Texas A&M University, graduating with a degree in Finance. While at A&M, he was involved in Hillel and the Corps of Cadets and was commissioned as an Army Officer. He attended Texas Tech, earning his MBA. He moved to Beaumont where he served many years as Treasurer of Temple Emanuel until he became President of the congregation. He currently



serves on the Temple Board and is Chair of the Endowment Committee. Michael is Past Chair of the Greene Family Camp Committee, former board member of Union of Reform Judaism, and has served as president of many community organizations. He has thirty-seven years of perfect attendance in the Rotary Club of Beaumont and serves as Chair of the Rotary Foundation Board. He is a Life Underwriters Training Council

continued on page 23

Meet Your Board, continued from page 20

Fellow and has earned numerous company and industry awards. Michael is Past President of the Hillel Corporate Board at Texas A&M University and served over thirty years as Treasurer. He is a partner in Wolf Bunt and Associates, a financial services company. Michael and his wife, Cynthia (TJHS board member), have three children and four grandchildren. He is a member of the TJHS Grants Committee.

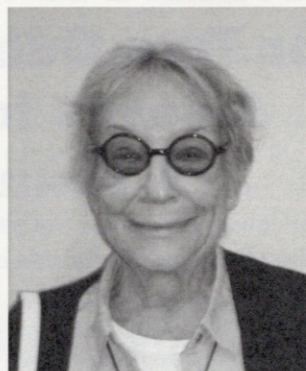
Barbara Rosenberg, Past TJHS President, lives in Sugar Land, Texas, with her husband, Ben, TJHS Treasurer. She is a native-born Texan who grew up in San Angelo; and is a first generation American. Her family owned the Hollywood Shoppe and Boston Store in San Angelo. She attended the University of Texas, Austin, and graduated at age twenty, when she married



Ben. They moved to Houston and she attended University of Houston graduate school for a Master's degree in Speech Pathology. She has worked in schools, hospitals, and has had a private practice. Barbara visits Jewish hospital patients as a volunteer of Houston's Jewish Chaplaincy; is a docent for the Fort Bend Museums; and is a former member of the Ft. Bend County Historical commission. Barbara enjoys flower arranging and gardening and is the coordinator of the Cinderella Project for the Sugar Land Garden Club.

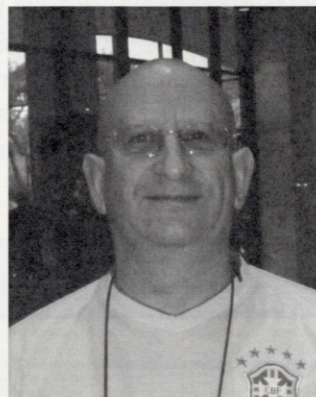
David Beer, TJHS Past President, was born and raised in Dallas. He worked in the restaurant business for eleven years, before joining the family real estate business. He is in his 38th year of representing buyers and sellers in real estate in Dallas. David has two sons, Alex and Nate. Alex and his wife live in Kansas City and are teachers in the Kansas City Independent School District. Nate is the manager of The Taco Joint in Dallas.

Ruth Nathan from Houston has served as Treasurer of the Texas Jewish Historical Society for many years.



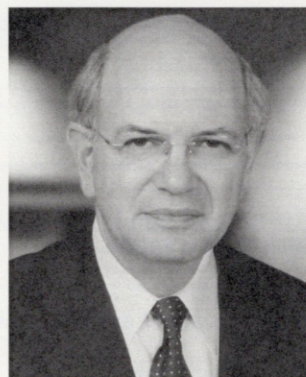
Ruth is the past assistant director of the Jewish Community Center in Houston. She has a MA in Speech Pathology and a MA in Social Work. Ruth teaches a social skills program called "Skills for Success." She is a docent at the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston.

Nelson Chafetz, Austin, is a lifelong Texas resident, who was born in San Antonio. He attended the University of Texas/Austin, where he received a BSEE degree. He is married to another native-born Texan, Mitzi Chafetz. Nelson works for the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and is a competitive swimmer. He has two children, and one grandson. Nelson is a thirty-three-year member of United States



Masters Swimming Organization, and in his spare time, is a party barge captain.

Martin Frost served twenty-six years as a congressman from the 24th District of Texas (Dallas-Fort Worth) from 1979-2005. During that time, he served eight years in the House Democratic Leadership, four years as Chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (1995-1999) and four years as chair of the House Democratic Caucus (1999-2003). He was a member of the House Rules Committee and the House Budget Committee. Since leaving Congress he served four years as chair of the National Endowment for Democracy (2013-2017). He holds journalism and history degrees from the University of Missouri and a law degree from Georgetown University Law Center, and is a member of Temple Beth-El in Alexandria, Virginia.



Henry Greenberg is from San Antonio, Texas.

Sherry Zander is from Dallas, Texas. 🇺🇸



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*



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.



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
\$10,000 - 24,999	Gold
\$5,000 - 9,999	Silver
\$2,500 - 4,999	Sapphire
\$1,000 - 2,499	Ruby
\$18 - 999	Diamond

Date: _____ Donation Amount: \$ _____

Name of Donor(s): _____

- I give permission to use my name for publication in Kessler Fund Donor List.
- I prefer that my donation remains Anonymous.

Mailin Address of Donor(s): *(All contact information is required)*

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Option to honor or memorialize family member or friend with your Kessler Fund donation:

In honor / In memory of (Name): _____

Mailing address to send acknowledgment: _____

Please send this completed donation form, along with your bank check, to:

Texas Jewish Historical Society, P. O. Box 10193, Austin, TX 78766-0193

Texas Jewish Historical Society, Inc. is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

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



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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 pre-paid freight back to the shipper via UPS ground.

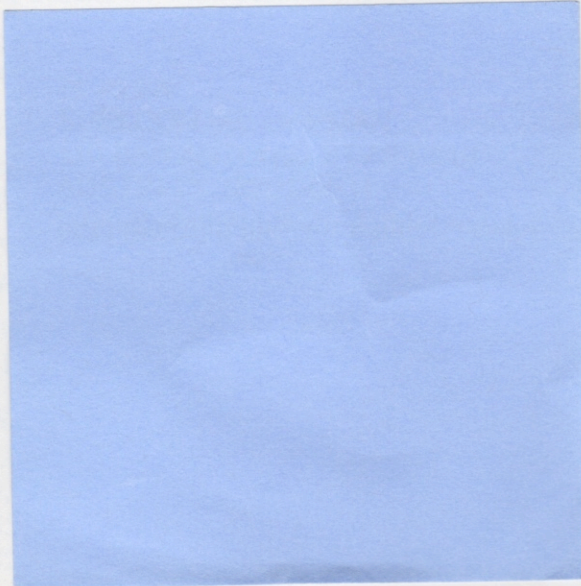
The exhibits have been displayed in various locations in Texas and other parts of the United States, including Rhode Island and California. They are an excellent program for schools, congregations, and other organizations. To schedule the exhibits, please contact txjhs_exhibits@txjhs.org.

Texas Jewish Historical Society

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www.txjhs.org

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Date: _____

Check the Appropriate Box(es)

- New Member Membership Renewal Gift* Information Update

Category of Annual TJHS Membership

- \$18 Student Member \$100 Sponsor \$1,000 Patron
 \$35 Basic Member \$250 Sustaining Member
 \$50 Supporting Member \$500 Benefactor

Member #1 _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Member #2 (optional for couple) _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Country: _____

*If a gift, name of person(s) giving the Gift Membership: _____

*Contributions to the TJHS are tax deductible within the limits of the law.
Please send this completed membership form along with a bank check to
Texas Jewish Historical Society, P. O. Box 10193, Austin, TX 78766-0193*