

# B'nai Abraham Synagogue Brenham, Texas

Robert P. Davis, Architect  
Houston, Texas  
June 1997



The above inscription appears on the cornerstone of a handsome little synagogue lovingly maintained by Leon Toubin, grandson of a founding member. Fully stocked with Siddurim and *Chumashim*, chairs in place, *parochet* richly colored, period lights sparkling, and newly installed air-conditioning ready to be switched on, this Shul has seen few minyans since WWII.

The white clapboard structure with its pointed arched windows closely resembles the small country churches in the region. But this was and remains a staunchly Orthodox Shul. The projecting structure on the near side is the Mikveh (ritual bath) virtually restored from the existing foundation and Leon Toubin's recollection. Inside the Aron Kodesh can be seen on the eastern wall and in the center the Bimah where the Torah was read.





The foyer is separated from the main room by a gracefully curved wall, which becomes the balcony rail for the women' gallery above. The stair, like many other details in a building fashioned without conscious artifice by local carpenters, has a Shaker simplicity.





Paper-cut and water-colored *Mizrachs* made by the *rebbetzin* sometime before WWII. These and others of Torah sages and similar Jewish themes and subjects hang throughout the shul.



Simon owned this theater and a celebrated regional Vaudeville house up the street. He was also one of the principal investors in the Gulf, Colorado, and Santa Fe railroad (later just Santa Fe) which brought Jewish immigrants up from Galveston through the Brazos River valley to Bryan and out to San Angelo.

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**WEBMASTER POSTSCRIPT:** In 2014, B'nai Abraham Synagogue was moved from Brenham, where it was built in 1893, to the Dell Jewish Community Campus in northwest Austin, Texas. It has a new home as, among other uses, a local orthodox congregation's house of worship. The Texas Jewish Historical Society contributed financially to the relocation of the synagogue.

