

# The Texas Jewish Historical Society Magazine



September 2024

## Tobolowsky Sculptures in Dallas by Jane Manaster


The National Museum of Jewish Art in Dallas was awarded a grant by the



Texas Jewish Historical Society in 2023 for the display of Jewish sculptures by George Tobolowsky. The images are displayed on the forecourt of the museum. They stand as a compelling invitation to museum visitors, showing examples of the larger collection on view inside. The height of the heritage steel exhibits ranges from eight to fifteen feet high, and includes interpretations of the Israel menorah, an Israeli soldier, the Heaven Menorah, and King David. They illustrate principles drawn from the Hebrew Bible, guiding visitors to understand Jewish values.

Tobolowsky fashions his sculptures with objects retrieved from area scrap yards that are mostly Jewish owned. These include parts from airplanes, oil rigs, cars, and even food processors.



The museum is located at 7500 Park Avenue in Dallas. 

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Texas Jewish history, oral histories, and requests for assistance with research are welcome, as are photographs and historical documents.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

**November 15-17, 2024**

TJHS Board Meeting, Waco, Texas

**The deadline for the December 2024  
TJHS Magazine is Friday, November 8.**

# Message from the President

by Joan Linares



The Summer Board Meeting was held in Round Rock and proved to be a most productive meeting as well as a fun time. One of our members said that our organization is “fun with a purpose.” I was extremely pleased with the attendance of so many board members. The Saturday afternoon brainstorming and work session looked back on goals that were set at last year’s summer meeting. We found that we achieved many of the goals and ideas that were written down last year. We still have some areas upon which we can improve. Brainstorming topics included how to use the Vice Presidents and board members more effectively. Thanks to the Meetings Committee composed of Lynda Furgatch, Marilyn Lippman, and Anita Feigenbaum for making arrangements for the meeting. Thanks to bakers, Jan Hart, Sally Drayer, and Lynda Furgatch for providing homemade goodies for the meeting. Thanks to Susan and Bob Lewis for providing the audio system and John Campbell and Sheldon Lippman for making the zoom component available.

We were delighted to have our youngest member of the board, Lila Katz, attend the work session and share a plethora of great ideas and ways that we may attract younger members. Lila joined the Membership Committee, and we are excited about

growing TJHS with younger members. Thanks to the Membership Committee Chairperson, Barbara Green Stone, and members Joyce Davidoff, Bunny Edelman, John Campbell, Tumbleweed Smith, and Lila Katz. Sheldon Lippman serves as advisor.

One of our goals from last year was collaborating with other organizations. We have excelled in this area by collaborating with the Texas State Historical Association; Friends of Texas Historical Commission and Lauren Fryer, Regional Coordinator and Volunteer Specialist of Texas Holocaust, Genocide, and Antisemitism Advisory Board; Yom Limmud in Houston; Houston Holocaust Museum; New Mexico Jewish Historical Society; Southern Jewish Historical Society; Dallas Jewish Historical Society; Keshet, an LGBTQ organization; and University of Texas Dallas Ackerman Center.

Our grant program continues to thrive. At the Round Rock meeting the board voted to approve five new grants. Topics include Jewish Community of the Permian Basin, Holocaust Houston Museum Survivor Exhibit, Jewish Medical Philanthropy, Romanian and Vietnamese Immigration to Texas, and Mt. Sinai Temple Revisited at the Texarkana Museum. Grants enable researchers to preserve Texas Jewish history in a variety of ways. We appreciate Grant Chairperson, Jane Manaster, and the committee members, Jim Bernick, Michael Wolf, Michael Furgatch, Hollace Weiner, and Sonny Gerber.

In an effort to increase awareness of TJHS, we are advertising in each of the major Jewish publications throughout Texas. We are advertising in Houston’s *Jewish Herald-Voice*, Dallas’ *Texas Jewish Post*, Austin’s *The Jewish Outlook*, and El Paso’s *The Jewish Voice*. We also advertise

in the Southern Jewish Historical Society yearly journal and the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society quarterly magazines. I encourage you to talk to friends and family about joining and or donating to TJHS as word of mouth is a great way to share our mission.

Another accomplishment for TJHS was the Baytown synagogue, Congregation K’Neseth Israel being listed on the National Register of Historic Places in February, 2024. TJHS member David Moore wrote the nomination.

I want to recognize Davie Lou Solka for almost twenty-five years as editor of the *TJHS Magazine*. We appreciate her hard work in collecting stories and putting the *Magazine* together. The *Magazine* is another wonderful product of TJHS which provides so much history to the readers.

We are approaching the one-year mark on our fundraising campaign for the Rabbi Jimmy Kessler Educational Outreach Fund. We are striving to reach our goal of \$250,000 by October, 2024, and are approximately 70% of the way there. Please give to this worthy fund and encourage friends and family to make donations. Donations may be made to honor or memorialize someone.

Our organization lost Charles Hart in July. Charles was a decades-long member who served as president as well as in many other roles during his membership. As we remember Charles, let us rededicate ourselves to working hard for TJHS, the organization that he loved.

We look forward to our Fall weekend in Waco, November 15-17, 2024. One of our grant recipients, Jeff Aresty, will premier his documentary about the founder of Waco, Jacob de Cordova. It should be an outstanding weekend. Hope to see you all there! 🇺🇸

# TJHS Board Meeting, July 27-28, 2024

## Round Rock, Texas

Five grants were awarded to the following---

- \$1,500 to Deborah Glast for research for a publication, "Temple Beth El and the Jewish Community of the Permian Basin."
- \$5,000 to the Houston Holocaust Museum for another

exhibit, "Houston Survivor Series: Liberation," which will open in December, 2024. TJHS awarded a grant for the first exhibit in this series.

- \$500 to Elyse Malamud for research for a publication, "Jewish Medical Philanthropy in Texas: Interfaith Col-



*Hollace Weiner, Hy Penn, Marilyn Lippman, Back to camera Lila Katz.*



*Back: Jules Frapart, Rusty Milstein, Jeff Levine, David Beer; Front Michael Furgatch.*



*Havdalah with Ben Rosenberg, Lynda Furgatch*



*Grant recipients Jeff Gross and Barbara Rosenthal showing clips from documentary "Grit and Grace: How Six Jewish Women Transformed Texas."*

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### Attendees in Round Rock

laboration and the Jewish Institute for Medical Research.”

- \$5,000 to Lori Navjar for support of a film documentary, “Two Worlds – One Path,” comparing the experiences of two young immigrant women from Romania during the Holocaust, and the other from Vietnam who fled during the fall of Saigon. Both women came to Texas with their families.
- \$5,000 to Texarkana Museums System for a permanent exhibit titled, “Mt. Sinai Temple Revisited.” The exhibit will show artifacts from the Temple and other museum Judaica items. Mt. Sinai closed in 2014.

The Nominating Committee is in the process of being formed. Sheldon Lippman, Chairman, asked for suggestions for Board Members.

The Briscoe Center received our second payment of \$5,000 of three for

an intern to digitize our collection. (See thank you letter elsewhere in this issue.)

Rusty Milstein, Chair of the Burial Committee said that 500 names had been added to the list as of June 30, 2024. There are 298 known cemeteries with Jewish burials in the state of Texas, with seventy-eight in the Dallas area.

Cemetery Research Chair, Kathy Kravitz, said that she had added 370 names to her data base, with photos and links to Find-a-Grave. When possible, she adds the information to the Find-a-Grave site. Her goal is have everyone in our data base on Find-a-Grave.

The next Board Meeting will be in Waco, November 15—17.

Sally Drayer, Archivist said that she had taken boxes with information from the now closed Temple Mount Sinai in Texarkana to the Briscoe,

had given forty Haggadahs from the Temple to Texas A&M Hillel, and was still looking for a new home for prayerbooks. 🇺🇸

## Welcome New Members!

**Phillip Brush**  
Austin

**Deborah Glast**  
Austin

**Norman & Joan Gordon**  
Denison

**Alona Weimer**  
College Station

If you have any changes in your information, please send them to [admin@txjhs.org](mailto:admin@txjhs.org)

# My Father, Sam Mason, aka Solomon Matusenko/Matusen

by Rena Appel

In 1913, at the age of 16, my father, Solomon Matusenko, left Russia, alone, without his family, and came to America, the promised land. Had he stayed in Russia, he would have been drafted into the Russian army. If he stayed in Russia, as a Jew, he knew he would not have had much of a future. He had trouble obtaining an exit visa, so he smuggled himself across the border, hid in the woods, and tried to keep warm at night. He slept in abandoned barns and bribed guards to let him cross from country to country, until he finally reached the port of Bremen, where he was met by members of a Jewish organization which cared for immigrants, fed them, and helped them board a ship. His father had bought him steerage passage for sixty rubles, about thirty dollars. After a three-week sea journey, the ship arrived at Galveston, Texas. He had the equivalent of ten cents on him when he left Russia; he lost it all in a poker game while he was at sea.

At that time, Jewish organizations were trying to disperse European immigrants from the East Coast to places across the country. In his case, it was to Texas. One of the group's representatives asked him what job he had in Russia. He said a "chemist's helper." He was told no such job awaited him in Texas. He was asked what he knew about horses and he admitted that he didn't know a thing about horses. The man said, "You'll learn." He was given a bag of food for lunch and put on a train to Hamilton, Texas, with his destination pinned on a small piece of paper on his lapel since he didn't know how to speak English.

Eventually, he landed in a small



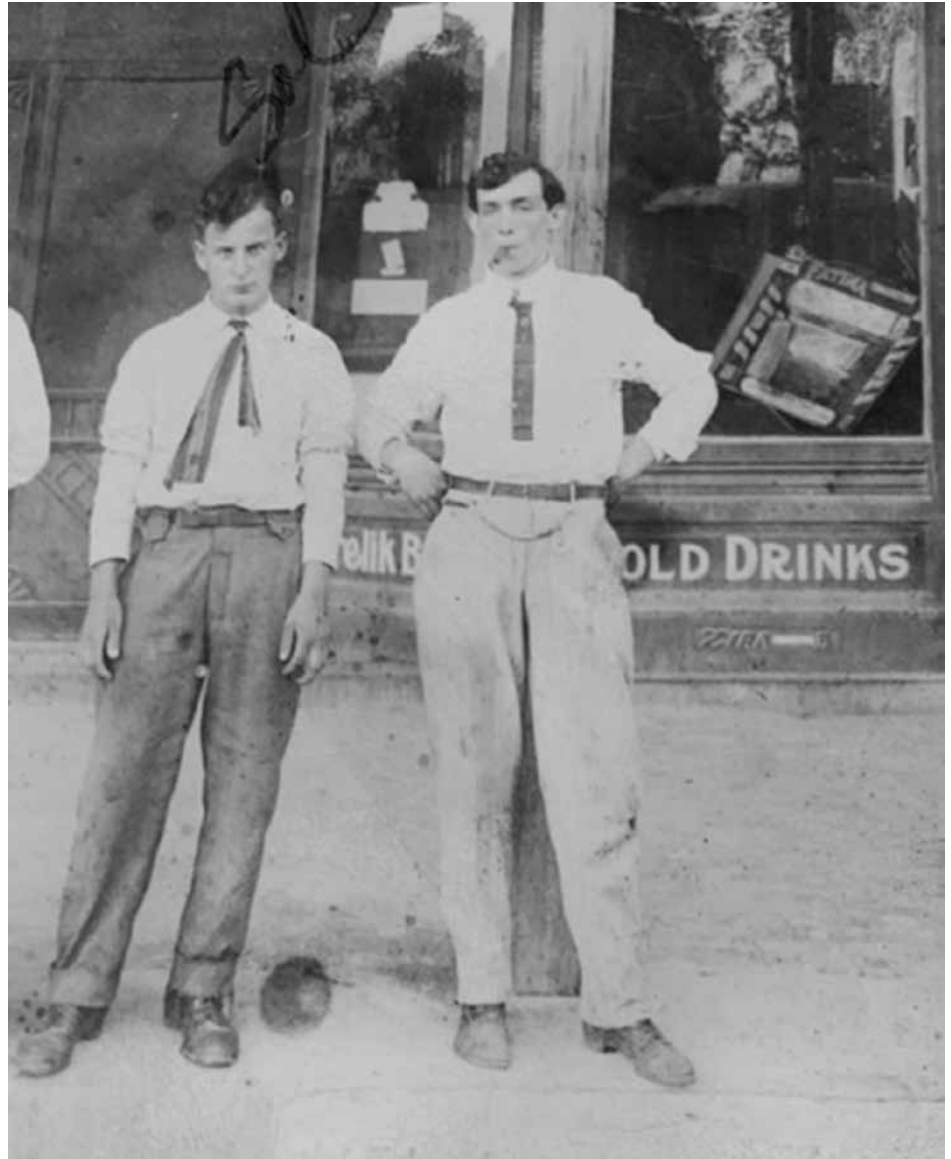
*Sam Mason at 16.*

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town called Hamilton. He was met by an elderly, bearded Jewish man, the father of Haskell Harelik, a member of one of only two Jewish families in the town of Hamilton. They took him home, stripped him, burned his clothes, deloused him, washed him down, gave him new clothes, fed him and welcomed him to his new home. Since they both spoke Yiddish, they were able to understand one another.

My father's name, already having been shortened from Matusenko to Matusen, was still too long as far as the Hareliks were concerned. They said, "You need a shorter name now that you are in America. How about "Sam Mason?" And so, for the rest of his life, at least in business circles, my father was known as Sam Mason. The Hareliks started to get my father ready for work and began to teach him about American currency—pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters. His job was to drive a banana wagon, led by two mules, around the road to the various farmhouses. The mules already knew the way by heart since it was the only road to follow. His job was to stop at each farmhouse and to yell out, "Bananas, fifteen cents a dozen, two dozen for a quarter." That was the only English he knew. And then he was to wait for the farmers' wives to come out to buy bananas.

He set out on the first day with his lunch bag at his side. The mules stopped at the first house and he shouted out: "Bananas, fifteen cents a dozen, two dozen for a quarter." He waited for the farmers' wives to come out to buy bananas. BUT pretty soon something happened that no one had accounted for... it started to pour. My father got off his wagon and tried to go to a farmhouse to seek cover but the dogs barked and the geese squawked and scared him off. Since he couldn't speak English, how was he going to ask the farmer's wife for shelter from



*Sam Mason with Haskell Harelik.*

the rain and the dogs anyway?

He returned to his wagon and tried to get it going but, in his distress, he mixed up the words for "STOP" and "GO." The wagon wheels got more deeply mired in the mud. What was a young boy in a foreign land to do? He went and sat under a tree and cried for his mother. Pretty soon a horse and buggy came down the road. Recognizing the peddler's banana wagon, and seeing what straits the foreign delivery boy was in, the buggy driver went back to town and told Mr.

Harelik, who sent yet another buggy to pull the banana wagon out of the mud and rescue his new delivery boy. When he got back to the Hareliks and into some dry clothes and had something warm to drink, he told them he wanted to go back home to Russia. They told him that the worst had already happened to him and that things would only get better from then on.

Soon after, my father was promoted to be the delivery boy for all of Mr. Harelik's fruits and vegetables, and

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## Sam Mason, continued from page 7

then he worked at the Harelik's fruit stand in town, and then at his stores in Hamilton. Haskell Harelik became the most successful businessman in Hamilton, owning many stores with the name "Harelik's" emblazoned on their awnings. My father eventually left Hamilton and ended up in Chicago, owning his own grocery store.


After he left Texas, my father enlisted in the Jewish Legion to fight for two years in Palestine. Upon his return, he lived in Kansas City with a cousin, a famous blind cantor, Todros Greenberg. Eventually he earned enough money to bring his entire family to America, i.e., his parents, his brother, sisters, and several cousins. He set them all up in his grocery business in Chicago.

My parents met through a mutual family friend and they married in Chicago in 1932. They had two children, my brother, Armand, born in 1934, and me, born in 1939. They discovered that their families had lived about seven miles from one another in Ukraine. My mother, Anya Ballin, escaped from Ukraine hiding in a hay wagon with her family after the Russian Revolution. She came to the United States in 1921. After working most of her life as a homemaker, she began teaching, at the age of fifty-eight, Russian at the University of Chicago. My father never forgot his Texas beginnings and the Hareliks and always loved bananas!



*Sam Mason in Jewish Legion uniform to fight in Palestine after WWI.*

## Mazel Tov

**To Bryan Stone**, who was named a 2024 "Piper Professor" by the Minnie Stevens Piper Foundation. One of the most prestigious higher education teaching awards in Texas, this award honors ten professors from colleges and universities across the state for their dedication to teaching and outstanding academic, scientific, and scholarly achievements. Bryan is a professor at Delmar College in Corpus Christi. 



# Ceci Shapiro at 100

## by Jonathan Salinas

Approximately 900 Jews emigrated from Lithuania to Mexico between 1900-50. At the age of three, in 1927, Cecilia “Ceci” Shapiro (Rabinovich, Rosenberg) became one of those cross-ocean voyagers off to el mundo nuevo.

Ceci, as she’s best known, is a local community treasure of the lower Rio Grande Valley of South Texas and the adjoining northern Mexican region, as a seventy-two-year long resident of McAllen. She says, “When I came to McAllen, it only had 29,000 people.”

Shapiro is an early member of Temple Emmanuel in McAllen (founded in 1948-49), as well as a lifelong philanthropist and volunteer for causes she’s passionate about, including active involvement in Hadassah, the Temple Emanuel Sisterhood, as well as donating to the local Chabad. Much the match-maker in the community, she has introduced future spouses to one another, hosting engagement parties, and wedding ceremonies at her home. “Match-making is a Jewish tradition.”

She turned one-hundred years old, on August 1, 2024, and a well-attended Oneg in her honor took place August 2 at Temple Emanuel. A packed room filled with family and community members were in attendance.

Since I first met Ceci, at the TJHS Board meeting held January 27, 2024, she’s been counting down to one-hundred every day with excitement. Introducing herself to the audience, she specified, “I’m 99-and-a-half. I don’t want to forget the half because it means a lot.” At her birthday celebration, she told those in attendance, “I’m one-hundred and one days old.” At ninety-nine and a half Shapiro stole the show, with the audience hanging on to every word, and bursting out in laughter every few seconds she spoke.

Ceci perfectly embodies and personifies the “Jewish grandmother,” a Bubbe, as well as a Mexican “abuela,” with a keen, sharp, dry, ironic, “dark” sense of humor, a spellbinding ability for storytelling, complimented by a Mexican-Yiddish accent. Combining all these features, her motto, which she insists on saying in three languages, is: “Que sera, sera. Whatever will be, will be.” And, “Vos vet zeyn vet zeyn.” As Ceci likes to say, the last language is “in Jewish, real Jewish.” I concur with Ceci’s taxonomy.

She possesses a strident attitude for justice as well. She made a comment in Spanish about how working-class people in society suffer most. “Para los trabajadores, los trabajadores siempre sufren.” (Working people always suffer.)

Ceci plays Mahjong twice a week with ladies from temple and enjoys watching *Murder, She Wrote*; *Love Boat*; and *Shark Tank* with her youngest son, George (67), who’s



*Cecilia “Ceci” Shapiro at 100 years old.*

always at her side. (George is a life-long garment worker and independent trader/collector.) And she loves Funyuns. Once mentioning my personal penchant for coffee, she informed me she used to be able to drink about twenty cups of coffee a day in her twenties and thirties.

She’s very confident in her own skin. Discussing pictures for this article, George suggested to her, “Mom why don’t you put on one of your red blouses or something?” “I like blue,” she replied. “I want to look natural.”

Telling the January 27 audience that she and her mother traveled to Mexico on a boat, Ceci specified, “It was not the love boat.” Later discussing the story again with her on a different occasion, noting her dislike for “third class” seating, she said, “My mother had to run around looking for me in first class.” She adds, “I had good taste.”

Indeed, international poverty and living between two

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world wars wouldn't stop Ceci from enjoying her tastes throughout her amazing life as she discussed a love of travel at the January TJHS panel discussion, although (or perhaps because) she had also learned the meaning of scarcity at a young age. Landing in Tampico with her mother, they traversed to Mexico City where Ceci's father awaited them and where she would spend her formative years. "I went to a regular school around the corner from where I lived. My mother went to the Jewish society at that time. They had a quota. My brother was the favorite so they asked that she pay half of the quota. So, I went around the corner to regular school, where they had tacos and everything, but we didn't have money for tacos," Shapiro said in an interview at her longtime McAllen residence June 16.

Recalling religious upbringing in Mexico she said, "Only the grownups used to go. So when my parents went to shul, we used to play outside." Yiddish was spoken at home.

Ceci spent time with her mother's, Bertha Rosenberg's, side of the family in Terre Haute, Indiana, where she attended school for a few years. Afterwards, Ceci, her parents and her brother Issac moved to Atlantic City, New Jersey where they spent time with her father's side of the family. Ceci's father's name was Moshe (Moses) Rabinovich. He had one sister and four brothers, according to Ceci. (Her mother had no siblings.)

"I did my high school there [Atlantic City]. Every night we used to go to the pier. We used to go two or three times, we fed ourselves with anything they gave. We didn't have any money."

Ceci's mother was a housewife and her father was a traveling salesman.

Her passport expiring only days

before graduating high school, Shapiro moved back to Mexico where she landed a job teaching English at a childcare center to first graders. She explained that she learned some "very important" life lessons, such as "how to lie." She told a story about the time when she reported a young boy to the principal's office for spitting on another child during class. Shapiro was shocked when her boss bluntly told her that the problematic child's parents are important people who help pay for the child center. Cecilia got the message, as she was just "happy to be making money."

"Como se porto Pepito?" (How did Pepito behave?) she would be asked of the parental dignitaries, upon picking up the aforementioned, 'Pepito.' "Oh, very, very well!" Shapiro would reply with a smile.

Shapiro's first marriage was to a Mr. Marcos Borovski from Reynosa (where she learned to drive) who owned a department store called El Nuevo Mundo, which still runs today. Shapiro sold the business after his passing. She says he is buried in Monterrey, Mexico.

Ceci likes to recall how she accidentally allowed for chocolates to melt inside the jacket her mother had borrowed for her date with Mr. Borovski, having stuffed handfuls into the jacket since she had never been to a "fancy candy store" after their "fancy movie and dinner."

Shapiro moved to McAllen as a single mother where she became part of the RGV Jewish community. It was during this time that she met Irving Ytzach Shapiro, a refugee from Europe, also born in Lithuania, who had been detained in Dachau concentration camp for an unknown amount of time during the war. He arrived at Ellis Island.

Ceci recalls how several young

European men who had also been in concentration camps moved to the area at the time to work as garment and textile workers. She and Mr. Shapiro married in 1953. According to Ceci's youngest of two sons, George, his father, Irving, also served in the German Army after the war in 1952, after spending time at a refugee camp in Italy. (Ceci's oldest is Jacob Shapiro, whose biological father was Marcos Borovski, adopted by Mr. Shapiro. Both were born in McAllen.)

Ceci recalled a time when "a man from the United Jewish Appeal" came to a department store she and Irving owned in McAllen, seeking a donation. Mr. Shapiro recalled the squalid conditions the organization had kept refugees in, during his stay in Italy after the war, and ran the man out of the store, Ceci recalled with laughter and amusement. "The man from the United Jewish Appeal just wanted to make money," she said.

Mr. Shapiro enjoyed the film, Dr. Zhivago, watching boxing on television, and writing letters. George holds on to his father's army photo and a letter he wrote to a brother from Germany.

Like all who survived the horror of the Shoah, the experience deeply haunted Mr. Shapiro. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, about which much more is known now than it was in the 60s, 70s and 80s, was an affliction he faced. Ceci describes night terrors of his, as well as panicking every time it rained and thunder struck. "He thought it was bombs." As George said, "He wouldn't talk about it at all," referring to his time at Dachau.

Ceci and George describe how Mr. Shapiro disliked lack and always made sure there was more than enough of everything, whether it be inventory at the family department

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store or at least double the amount of food necessary for their dinner guests. Ceci recalled one time she set aside potato peels during dinner and began to nibble and snack on them. Mr. Shapiro became upset and asked her to never do that again, as he recalled how inmates at Dachau had to resort to eating nothing but potato skins.

On March 10, 1983, Mr. Shapiro sadly passed away. In 1982, a currency devaluation of the Mexican peso (the lowest in history at the time) really began to worry him, as much of his business depended on Mexican commerce on the border. “We had a devaluation, a big one. He thought the worst,” George said. Ceci insisted that she assured her husband that he had nothing to worry about, that the currency would bounce back. Considering Shapiro’s trauma responses, it’s possible the prospect of a global economic crisis reminded him of that awful economic crisis that preceded the rise of fascism in Europe, the Great Depression.

It’s understandably difficult for the family to discuss this period of their lives, but they felt it important to say on the record for this TJHS interview, “for history”, as Ceci’s son George stoically stated. PTSD and suicide in those who survived the Holocaust is an under-researched topic. It’s believed by some, though unconfirmed, that the Jewish-Italian writer, Primo Levi, may have ended his life because of the distress he continued to suffer long after they’d passed, though the manner of his passing remains unclear if whether it was an accidental or an intentional fall from his staircase. However, what is well-documented is how Levi, too, suffered from night terrors, as he said many years afterwards that the voice of the “kapo” would continue “ringing” in his dreams.

Discussing whether such deaths, despite the years after the Holocaust, should be counted as Holocaust deaths, Shapiro vehemently said, “They should, because it’s on account of the Holocaust. That’s how I feel about it.”

After October 7, there’s also little doubt that post traumatic stress in survivors of genocidal attacks will continue to be a pressing subject.

Israel is very near and dear to Ceci’s heart. She’s been there three times since the 1980s. Her first time going, she took her mother, Ms. Rosenberg. On a bus, Ceci’s mother told her she swore a long-lost cousin was in the same vehicle with them. Ceci was sure she couldn’t have been who her mother thought she was, but later at dinner, it did turn out to be her mother’s cousin.

I asked Shapiro why Israel is important and what the country means to her. “Because I’m a Jew,” she said. “They’re Jewish and I’m Jewish. I can’t say they don’t belong to me. Number one, the Jews have a land. This is the way I feel. They need a land. They’re surrounded by seven Arab countries. They didn’t start the war. Hamas attacked them but nobody can see that.”

“I hope things in Israel quiet down. I hope everybody helps Israel so that they have a home. That’s what I wish,” Shapiro reflected.

I also asked Ceci what her immediate response to October 7 was. “I cried; I cried because they’re my people, and they had no place to go. Where are they going to go? Nobody is going to accept [them]. When people from Ukraine [fled], Israel was the only place to let them in.”

As you can see, even at 100, Cecilia is up to date on the latest in geopolitics and can offer solid and strong commentary and comparisons of dif-

ferent situations. She proudly boasts of being an avid news watcher and a prodigious reader of newspapers and magazines, although she joked that when it comes to books, she usually has to start over because she sometimes forgets what they’re about when she goes back to read. “I’m going to take 100 years to finish reading a book.”

Cecilia Shapiro has not forgotten about her adoptive country of Mexico either. “Mexico lindo y querido,” (My beloved, lovely Mexico,) she says in perfect Spanish. I brought up how she had lived long enough to see not just the first female President of Mexico and North America get elected, but the first Jewish person as well, President-elect, Claudia Sheinbaum. She lit up with pride. “I couldn’t believe it! I was so happy.”

Recalling the violence in Mexico, Ceci also noted the proliferation of guns in modern society. She suggested she should become a gun owner. “I can go to the gun store, acting pobrequita. And tell them there are robberies in my neighborhood and I need to defend myself.”

How about any regrets? Ceci told me a story about how she and her posse of Jewish ladies born all around the world, loved crossing the Rio Grande into Reynosa to do some light-hearted gambling.

“We used to, a bunch of Jewish ladies, we used to go gambling. Once we got to the bridge, the man said, are you American citizens? Charlene Hertz said I am. Simone Horovitz says ‘Cuba’, Thea said ‘Germany’, Bertha Schlesinger said ‘Cuba’ and I said ‘Lithuania.’ And he looks at me and said, ‘You must be kidding me.’ We told him our husbands had stores in McAllen and we would go to Reynosa to gamble. One week that

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we didn't go, a week after, it was raided by the police. That's one thing in my long life I didn't acquire, being arrested by the police."

If you're ever caught at a rough international checkpoint, you want Ceci Shapiro at your side.

Of all things, Cecilia cherishes most is her family, many grandchildren and great grandchildren, all successful and thriving, as well as their lovely home. "My house is a very livable home. We hang up decorations, this is it. Those plates were made for me by my family when I turned 75," pointing my attention to art work and china on the wall crafted by her granddaughters.

Her father's brother had a grandchild, Enrique Novi, who is a well-known actor in Mexico. Military valor is important as well, some of Ceci's family members in the old country having served in the Red Army during WWII. Several of her grandchildren and nephews have served in the US Armed Forces.

Much of Ceci's family from Europe lives in South Africa. Her son George showed me photographs from a family trip to Cape Town in the 1980s, one of which featured a family Torah passed down through many generations. It's featured at the Gardens Synagogue in Cape Town. George read part of the plaque to me:

"In the Garden Synagogue in Cape Town there was a Sefer Torah in safe keeping. This scroll of Jewish law bears witness to a farming family from Lithuania who came to Cape Town in the 1930s. They brought with them the living traditions of this

Torah. The Rosenberg family were one of the few Jewish farmers in the Serei district in Lithuania. They were a deeply orthodox family who organized their own services everyday and on every festival. On occasions, a minyan had to be hired and brought from a nearby village, but a service was never missed," it reads.

The Torah survived the first world war preserved by Shapiro's grandfather who carried it with him, in a special box made for it, during those years of wandering, until his return to the family farm in Lithuania.

Ceci doesn't have memories of the old country, but she did recall, "My mother always told us that during the [First World] War, the Germans were better than the Russians."

In honor of Holocaust remembrance month, the City of McAllen passed a recognition of the event May 28. Ceci went to the commissioner's meeting to show support and express thanks for the measure. Nathan Farb of Temple Emmanuel gave a statement, thanking the commission. He also attended Congresswoman Monica De La Cruz in recent days to Washington D.C. for Israeli Prime Minister's, Benjamin Netanyahu's, speech before a joint-session of Congress.

After the meeting, Ceci and I chatted in the elevator on the way down to the City Hall lobby. I asked her how she was feeling. She said, "I'm starting to get my age. I'm going to be 100 in two months. "Cuando vive uno mucho, llega a ver cosas que no quieren ver." ["When one lives long enough, you begin to see things you don't want to see."] "Así es que,

de vivir mucho, no es una ventaja." "Therefore, living a long time isn't an advantage."

Wrapping up my interview with Ceci on the 16th with retrospective, more philosophical questions about life, I followed up with her about that comment she'd made, as our conversation got interrupted before I could ask her what she meant. She remembered what she said and explained.


"I'm just watching everybody come by me. The longer you live, you get to see things you don't want to see," she said. "Like what," I pressed on. "Like I lost my only brother that was a wonderful man. I lost my sister in law that was not a sister in law, she was like my sister."

The longer one lives, the more you see others go, I said. "That's my answer," Ceci replied. "But you cannot say anything, you know? You sit where I'm sitting, waiting. Everything comes to an end sooner or later.

The author Elie Wiesel described undergoing a similar phenomenon, in one of his last interviews with Oprah Winfrey, in which he recalled seeing family members he lost in the Holocaust suddenly appear in the audience when he accepted his nobel prize.

I asked Shapiro, what's the meaning of life?

"One thing I can tell you is you cannot change whatever comes to you. I've learned that if something bad comes for you, you make the best of what you can. Otherwise, you just keep on living," she replied.

"So, the purpose of life is to live," I replied. Ceci responded, "Do we have a choice?" 

## 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](http://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.

# The Backstory of Novit's Department Store

## Friendly Service and Fair Price

by David Hart

In the late 1970s I was introduced to my great-grandfather, W. H. (Wolf) Novit, through a photograph of him from approximately 1909. It showed him in the driver's seat of a horse and buggy that held fresh fruit that he sold for a living. He and his wife, Channah (later Annie), settled in Dublin, Texas, known for the original Dr. Pepper bottling plant and the Dublin Rodeo. Dublin is where my grandmother, Minnie Novit Siegel, and later, my mother, Jan Siegel Hart, were born and raised. Some TJHS members may recognize the photo of Wolf because it was included in a documentary about Texas Jews called *West of Hester Street* (1983). I was lucky enough to know my great-grandmother Annie Novit, whom we all called Mummy. In 1968, she recorded her memories of life in Russia that we are lucky to have, and my mother transcribed this story in 1987 for the family to enjoy,



*Wolf and Annie Novit 1920s.*

and then turned parts of the story into a children's book in 1991, *Hannah, The Immigrant*.<sup>1</sup>

In the recording, Annie tells

of her father losing his job because of his religion when she was about eight to ten years old. He was a supervisor at a grain mill and a scholar of the Talmud. So, the family moved from Slavnya to Parichi for better prospects. This is in an area of old Russia that is now Belarus. All is better briefly in Parichi with her father working again and giving Hebrew lessons to help earn a living. Annie makes friends and learns to sew and eventually has a small sewing business out of the home, which contributes to the family's financial security. Parichi is also where she meets her future husband, Wolf. He and his father were home builders, and were hired by Annie's parents, Max and Baila Gorelik, to add a room to their home for their expanding family. Wolf's name was Velvel Astonovitsky, and they were married in 1907. They came to America because the pogroms in Russia were becoming more commonplace and the culture of Czarist Russia was



*Wolf Novit in horse and buggy, 1909*

*continued on page 14*



*Wolf and Annie (Channah) Novit.*

putting a stranglehold on their lives. Annie tells that this was also the time when the workday was blissfully reduced to a maximum of twelve hours per day. This gave them time “to think, to do, to read.” In these spare moments, they walked miles to participate in secret meetings in the forest to share information and ideas, where

Wolf would lead the group in reading and reviewing literature. Americans also knew about the pogroms. There is a note in *The Galveston Tribune*, May 20, 1903: “The Russian Government replied to inquiry about American relief being acceptable to Russia for Kishinev Jews that there is no need for relief.”<sup>22</sup> It may have been a

revelation upon arrival that people an ocean away had heard of Kishinev.

In 1907, just months after getting married, Velvel traveled with his brother, Sol, and sister, Esther, to Bremen and departed for America on the steamship Chemnitz, arriving three weeks later on December 30, 1907, during the first year of the Galveston Movement. Wolf and his siblings were sent by train to Fort Worth where they had a sponsor with housing and a job waiting. Velvel worked as a butcher for the Swift Company meat-packing plant near the Fort Worth Stockyards, where he worked for fifteen cents an hour, and his name was now Wolf Novit. His name at immigration is recorded as Wolf Astanowiski (record# 43928). Esther’s name was recorded as Ester Astanowicki (record #43934), and Sol’s was Sehmul Astanowitzky (record #43889).<sup>3</sup> This variance with immigrant names makes searching through historical archives especially challenging. At least they were all Novits in America.

Annie tells a story that may be familiar to those with ancestors from the same region. One day a man gave Wolf a banana to eat. They apparently didn’t have bananas in Parichi, so what do you expect happened? Wolf bit into it, skin and all! He learned further joy of this fresh fruit once he realized that he could sell it as well. What started as a fruit cart on the street developed into a horse and buggy business.

By 1909, he was able to help Annie immigrate. She brought their daughter, Feiga (later Fanny), whom Wolf had not yet met. Annie’s brother, Haskell, also joined her on the trip. His last name Gorelik became Harelik upon arrival. Haskell’s story is told through the successful play,

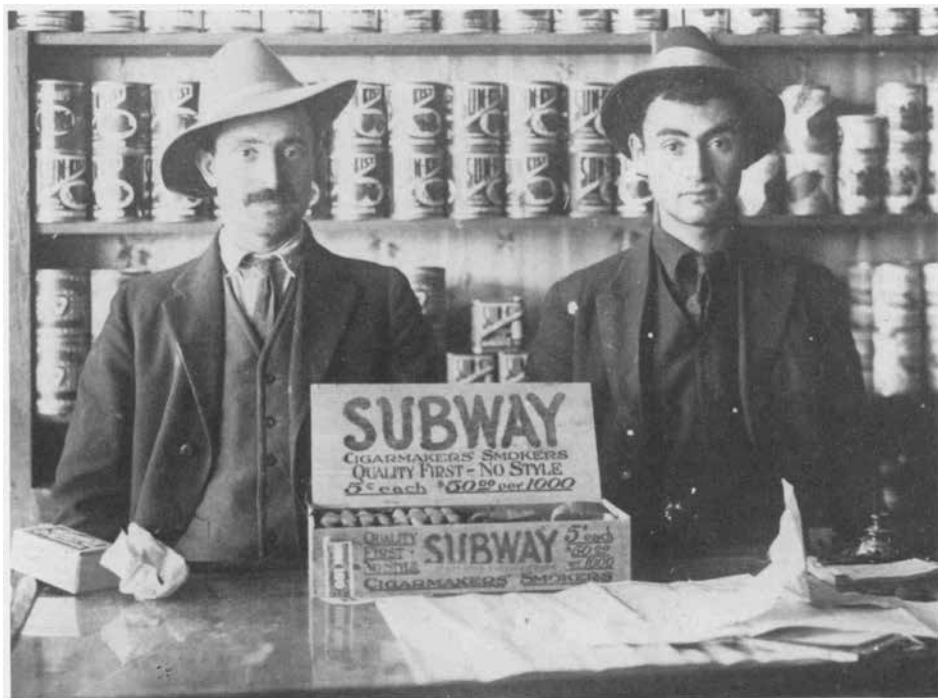
[continued on page 15](#)

## Novit, continued from page 14

*The Immigrant: A Hamilton County Album* (1988), written by his grandson Mark Harelik. Haskell ended up in Hamilton setting up a successful business there with his own developing family, along with his parents, Max and Baila, and younger brothers, Morris and David, who arrived two years later in 1911. Wolf and Annie settled in Dublin in 1911, where Wolf and his business partner Morris Hoffman ran the Dublin Fruit Company. Hoffman married Wolf's sister, Esther. This is the same Morris Hoffman who later became Mayor of Dublin.<sup>4</sup> They were the only two Jewish families in the city. Dublin was incorporated as a town in 1889, so the newly sanctioned city was just over twenty years old when my great-grandparents moved there. The bustling city of about 2300—on what was Comanche land only fifty years prior—had a few new members.<sup>5</sup>

Some of the Novit and Hoffman family history has been told in previous *TJHS Magazine* publications, so I will stick to new information here.<sup>6</sup> Through the online repository, "The Portal to Texas History,"<sup>7</sup> I researched and discovered further interesting moments of my ancestors' lives in Dublin. Wolf Novit's earliest mention in the paper was in 1913. There is a notice of him being closed along with other businesses that were committed to help out with Dublin's Annual Clean-Up Day.<sup>8</sup> (That's annual, not monthly or weekly!)

Novit and Hoffman began an on-again, off-again partnership in the Dublin Fruit Company that finally ended. Advertisements in *The Dublin Progress* show that in 1915 Novit opened "Novit's Cash Store" and Hoffman opened "Hoffman's Cash Store." These were two of the four stores in Dublin to introduce and support the national Green Stamp



*W. H. Novit and Morris Hoffman at Dublin Fruit Co. 1914.*

program to Dubliners, which offered redemption credits toward S&H catalog purchases. They referred to themselves as "Green Stamp Headquarters."<sup>9</sup> Hoffman eventually sold out his business to Novit to be involved with other ventures. Novit also became a naturalized citizen in 1915. According to laws at that time, his wife and children were instantly citizens as well.<sup>10</sup> Novit's store evolved into a mixture of dry goods and fresh fruit, and eventually became Novit's Department Store. This successful business continued through the next generation. In 1938, one of their five children, Minnie Novit, married Nathan Siegel (my grandparents) who helped run the store, and then bought them out in 1945 before Wolf and Annie retired to Dallas in 1948. Minnie and Nathan raised their own children in Dublin (Jan, Louis, and Pam), before they also retired to Dallas in 1963. They sold the store to Harelik cousins who kept it open for one

more year before it closed. Dallas is where I met my great-grandmother, Annie Novit, at family and holiday events. She lived until 1981 (age 95), while Wolf passed away in 1956.

Other significant search results include a notice that the Novits formally created their own congregation in their home with extended family, and annual notices that the store would be closed for the High Holidays.<sup>11</sup> The Novits had earlier bought a Torah for Max and Baila Harelik to have access to the scriptures upon their arrival in 1911.<sup>12</sup> Yet it wasn't until 1937 that the front-page news announced, "Organization of Jewish Congregation." The article asserts that it "is the first congregation of this type that is and ever has been in this part of the country," as well as "money was contributed to the Jewish Consumptive Hospital at Denver, Colorado, and also for the Jewish National Orphan's Home, which is located in

[continued on page 16](#)

## Novit, continued from page 15

New Orleans, Louisiana.”<sup>13</sup>

The store motto was “Friendly Service and Fair Price”<sup>14</sup> and numerous business advertisements spell out the type of marketing Novit employed for his business. There is one ad that celebrates, “Novit’s Department Store Giving Owner Surprise Birthday,” stating that the “employees have taken over the store,” which was an ad for a promotional sale in honor of Novit.<sup>15</sup> He seemed to be a wizard at marketing. For instance, there is a notice from 1937 that Novit is hosting a short story competition with specific criteria that the story has to include “jealousy, ambition, and action.”<sup>16</sup> The winning story was published two weeks later and was clearly a promotional gimmick for Novit’s Department Store, as the story includes Novit finding a way to help a customer in need. The winner received \$2.50 and a year’s subscription to the newspaper, while second prize earned a year’s subscription and a pair of hosiery.<sup>16</sup>

There was also one clearly articulated note of antisemitism that appeared to be directed at my ancestor, only two years after he had established himself as an up-and-coming

merchant citizen in the community. I assume that he and Hoffman together were creating apparent competition with the business next door on Patrick Street, “Baxter’s Place.” Here is an excerpt from the ad: “My store is no Jew store. I mark everything in plain figures, and absolutely one price for all.”<sup>18</sup> I can only guess at what Wolf’s response may have been. He was not yet a citizen in this new land, so he had few outlets socially. Possibly, he set out to out-sell Baxter’s Place. By 1915, his first ads appeared, and sales upon sales followed.

Thankfully, the light is stronger than the dark spots of history. By 1916, business was so good that Wolf was able to buy outright “fully paid” a local judge’s home (after only five years in business in Dublin, nine total in the US).<sup>19</sup> There is a notice that Novit received a letter from Texas Governor Hobby in Austin, “appointing him as a representative at the cotton convention in Dallas” in 1916.<sup>20</sup> Novit also contributed to the needs of the community as an active member of the Lions Club.<sup>21</sup> By the 1920s, he was a 32nd Degree Mason of the Scottish Rite Freemasons and a Shriner.<sup>22</sup> In the late 1930s, he was

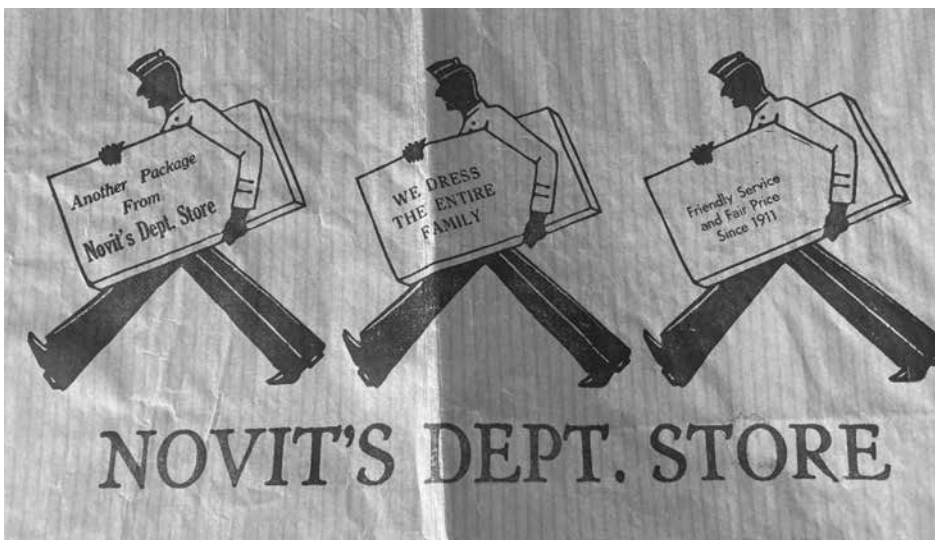
also one of many who donated funds to create a public space, dedicated as Shamrock Park, and a year later Novit personally funded the addition of a slide.<sup>23</sup> (What would a kids’ park be without a slide?). The park has more recently been repurposed as Veterans Memorial Park.

One particularly gratifying article is a celebration of the Novits being recognized by the community. “Mr. and Mrs. Novit are some of Dublin’s leading citizens... The success and growth of Novit’s Department Store is due to the fair and friendly company which Mr. Novit has always upheld in dealing with his customers. In return, he has appreciated the friendship and patronage given to him.”<sup>24</sup>

Although Minnie and Nathan Siegel took over the store in Dublin, Minnie’s siblings should also be noted: Fanny (Mellow), Morris Novit, Lilly (Waisman), and Mildred (Wiles) the last of her era, who only recently passed away in May 2024. These children of immigrants each accomplished so much as well, such as becoming business owners of their own, serving in the military during wartime, and attending Juilliard, fully participating in their respective communities. Such is the legacy of Wolf and Annie Novit’s grand adventure that they now have hundreds of descendants and extended relatives in America. Finally, I would like to add that my own birth announcement in *The Texas Jewish Post* noted that my great-grandparents were “of Dallas” although none of them were born or raised in Texas.<sup>25</sup> Assimilation status: complete. To keep their memories alive, I am writing a play inspired by their story.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Jan Siegel Hart, *Hannah, The Immigrant*. Eakin Press, Austin Texas, 1991.




Wrapping paper from Novit’s Dept. Store 1950-1960.

continued on page 17



## Novit, continued from page 16

- <sup>2</sup> “The News Briefed.” *The Galveston Tribune*. May 20, 1903. p3.
- <sup>3</sup> Galveston History. The Galveston Immigration Database: <https://www.galvestonhistory.org/sites/1877-tallship-elissa-at-the-galveston-historic-seaport/galveston-immigration-database>
- <sup>4</sup> For more on Hoffman, see Jon Awbrey, “Morris Hoffman, Mayor of Dublin, Texas.” *TJHS Magazine*. May, 2009.
- <sup>5</sup> William R. Hunt. “Dublin, TX.” *The Handbook of Texas*. 1952. Online. Texas State Historical Association. Revised entry September 21, 2023. Accessed May 17, 2024.
- <sup>6</sup> More on the Novits and/or Hoffmans in essays in *TJHS Magazine* from Bette Evans (September 2020), Jan Siegel Hart (August 2017), Jon Awbry (May 2009), Jan Siegel Hart (February 2003), and David Hoffman (Fall 2003).
- <sup>7</sup> See Kathy Hart, “Discovering Texas Jewish History in the Portal to Texas History.” *TJHS Magazine*. March, 2021. p12.
- <sup>8</sup> “Clean-up Day in Dublin Gets Busy Next Wednesday.” *The Dublin Progress*. April 18, 1913. p1.
- <sup>9</sup> “For You! S&H Green Stamps.” *The Dublin Progress*. May 11, 1923. p4.
- <sup>10</sup> John Foster Carr. *Guide to the United States for the Jewish Immigrant: A Nearly Literal Translation of the Second Yiddish Edition*. The Connecticut Daughters of the American Revolution. 1912. p33.
- <sup>11</sup> Untitled. Notice closing stores for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. *The Dublin Progress*. September 29, 1922. p4.
- <sup>12</sup> This torah is still in the family. It has been used during numerous cousins’ bar and bat mitzvahs.
- <sup>13</sup> “Organization of Jewish Congregation.” *The Dublin Progress*. September 10, 1937. p1.
- <sup>14</sup> Harriet P. Gross. “This Old Torah Scroll Makes the Rounds.” *Dallas Morning News*. August 31, 2002. pp1G, 4G
- <sup>15</sup> “Novit’s Department Store Giving Owner Surprise Birthday.” *The Dublin Progress*. March 19, 1937. p6.
- <sup>16</sup> “Novit’s Giving Prizes for Best Article on Jealousy, Ambition, and Action.” *The Dublin Progress*. June 11, 1937. p1, p8.
- <sup>17</sup> “Winner Novit’s Short Story Competition is Announced.” *The Dublin Progress*. June 25, 1937. p1.
- <sup>18</sup> “Baxter’s Place Is the Home for Bargains.” *The Dublin Progress*. May 2, 1913. p1.
- <sup>19</sup> Untitled. *The Dublin Progress*. December 8, 1916. P10.
- <sup>20</sup> Untitled Notice. *The Dublin Progress*. May 30 1919. p4.
- <sup>21</sup> “Dublin Lions Club.” *The Dublin Progress*. Dec 7, 1923. p1.
- <sup>22</sup> Untitled Notice. *The Dublin Progress*. April 18, 1924. p5.
- <sup>23</sup> “Novit Presents Slide to Shamrock Park.” *The Dublin Progress*. Sept 8, 1939. p1.
- <sup>24</sup> “Novits Been in Dublin Since 1911.” *The Dublin Progress*. November 12, 1937. p1.
- <sup>25</sup> “New Citizens.” *The Texas Jewish Post*. Jan 25, 1968. p8. 

# Congregation K’Nesseth Israel Damaged by Hurricane Beryl

by Joan Linares

Congregation K’Nesseth Israel in Baytown, Texas, was hit by a tornado during Hurricane Beryl on July 8, 2024. The synagogue has been listed as a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark since 1991. The synagogue was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in February, 2024. The historic synagogue was built in 1930 by architect Lenard Gabart. The tornado sucked the bricks off most of the front facade of the ninety-four year old building and left the front wall in shambles. The small congregation east of Houston is in the process of getting the bricks cleaned up by a masonry company after a tarp was hung to protect the exposed wood. Services are being held next door in the community building. There is still rubble in front of the entrance. Congregation K’Nesseth Israel (CKI) plans to restore the synagogue. They will work closely with the Texas Historical Commission in the restoration process to ensure the historical integrity of the building. For more information email [ckibaytown@gmail.com](mailto:ckibaytown@gmail.com).



Hurricane Beryl damage to Congregation K’Nesseth Israel.

# Letters to the Editor

To TJHS Membership,

I have a very interesting project that I am looking for help with. I inherited hundreds of postcards from my father who passed away this spring. I discovered that they are not really a traditional collection; most of them are messages between a Viennese Jewish family from the 1890s – 1940s. I am not totally sure how they ended up in Texas with my family.

They are not specific to Texas history, but I was wondering if there are any history nerds in Austin that would be interested in researching this mystery with me.

Audrey Joy Maker

audreyjoymaker@gmail.com

Dear Mr. Wormser and Ms. Solka,

Please accept my sincere appreciation for the Texas Jewish Historical Society's \$5,000 pledge payment for the Briscoe Center for American History's Texas Jewish Historical Society Digital Collections project. Research to identify selects is underway and we look forward to seeing the first batch of materials added to the center's Digital Collections next year.

Thank you for helping us collect, preserve, and make the American story widely available.

Sincerely,

Don Carleton

Executive Director and J. R. Parten Chair in the Archives of American History

This letter was referred to Vickie Vogel and Davie Lou Solka,


Thanks for featuring the Waco Jewish Community in the June issue of the newsletter. My family was very active in the community

through our Schule, Agudath Jacob. Also know many of the people photographed in the Rodef Sholom archives. Margie Sanger just passed away at 101.

It was wonderful to see the group picture of my parents at the Agudath Jacob event—Elmer & Naomi Smith. My grandfather, Franke Chazanow, and my aunt & uncle, Phil & Fannye Smith. I have been writing memoir and fiction about my Chazanow family relatives who were on the boats that arrived in Galveston toward the end of the 1907-1914 migration. One piece appeared in the newsletter many years ago (November, 2013), "Papa Chazanow." Hope to share some of my work and archival material with TJHS and to attend one of your meetings. I live in California, so this kind of trip takes planning.

I have great appreciation for this organization. Many thanks for your work.

Sincerely,

Marianne Smith 

## FROM OUR ARCHIVES Ima Joy's Waco in Photographs by Vickie Vogel

This column is based on information available in the


assembled by Ima Joy Gandler about Waco. Gandler served as the TJHS Archivist from 1990 to 2010 except for 1998-2000 when she served as Third Vice President. She died in Jan.

## Five Grants Awarded at Round Rock Board Meeting

The Texas Jewish Historical Society awarded five grants to the following at the recent board meeting held in Round Rock, Texas.

- \$1,500 to Deborah Glast for research for a publication, "Temple Beth El and the Jewish Community of the Permian Basin."
- \$5,000 to the Houston Holocaust Museum for another exhibit, "Houston Survivor Series: Liberation," which will open in December, 2024. TJHS awarded a grant

for the first exhibit in this series.

- \$500 to Elyse Malamud for research for a publication, "Jewish Medical Philanthropy in Texas: Interfaith Collaboration and the Jewish Institute for Medical Research."
- \$5,000 to Lori Navjar for support of a film documentary, "Two Worlds – One Path," comparing the experiences of two young immigrant women from Romania during the Holocaust, and the other from Vietnam who fled during the fall of Saigon. Both women came to Texas with their families.
- \$5,000 to Texarkana Museums System for a permanent exhibit titled, "Mt. Sinai Temple Revisited." The exhibit will show artifacts from the Temple and other museum Judaica items. Mt. Sinai closed in 2014. 



## Rabbi Jimmy Kessler Educational Outreach Fund Contributions

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

### Diamond

In Memory of Charles B. Hart


Louis Adams  
 Lisa Berman  
 Ruthe Berman  
 John Campbell & Sheldon Lippman  
 Gayle Cannon  
 Trisha & Rob Devenport  
 Maretta Deiterman  
 Sally Drayer  
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 Davie Lou Solka  
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## Contributions

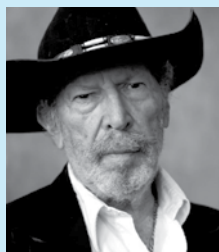
The following donations have been received by the Texas Jewish Historical Society:

Joan & Ruben Linares in memory of Ruth Chafetz and Kay Frapart Krause  
 Gift membership from Jan & Charles Hart to Phillip Brush

## 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](mailto:tjhsspeaker@txjhs.org). 

## In Memoriam



**Kinky Friedman**, country song writer, author, and leader of the Texas Jewboys country singing group, died at his Medina ranch June 27, 2024. He is survived by his brother, Roger (Roz Beroa), sister, Marcie; three nieces, one nephew, and one great-niece.

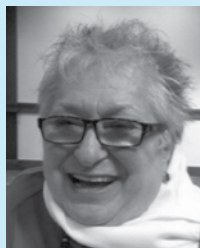


**Charles B. Hart**, past president of TJHS, 2002-2004, died July 10, 2024, in Temple, Texas. He is survived by his wife, Jan Siegel Hart, his children, Debbie Hart, Kathy Hart, David (Karen) Hart, and six grandchildren. (See additional article on page 20 in this issue.)



**Carolyn "Kay" Frapart Krause**, former TJHS board member, died June 12, 2024, in Houston. She is survived by her children, Marsha (Joe) Cohen, Randy (Elyse) Frapart, Richard (Susan) Frapart; nine grandchildren and spouses; nine great-grandchildren, first husband, Lewis Frapart; and many nieces, nephews, and cousins.

**Debby Brachman Rice**, former TJHS newsletter editor (1993-1997), died July 24, 2024, in Fort Worth. She is survived by her children, Mark (Ellen) Rice, Rodd Rice; brother, Marshall (Anne) Brachman; sister, Wendy (Warren) Brachman Fisher, and four grandchildren.



**Larry Kuehn**, TJHS member, died January 2, 2024 in Gainesville, Texas. He is survived by his wife, Shelley; sons, Scott (Julie), Blake (Celeste Brecht); two grandchildren; brother, Jack (Frances) Kuehn; brother-in-law, Jim Caldwell; several nieces and nephews and their families.

*May their memories be a blessing.*

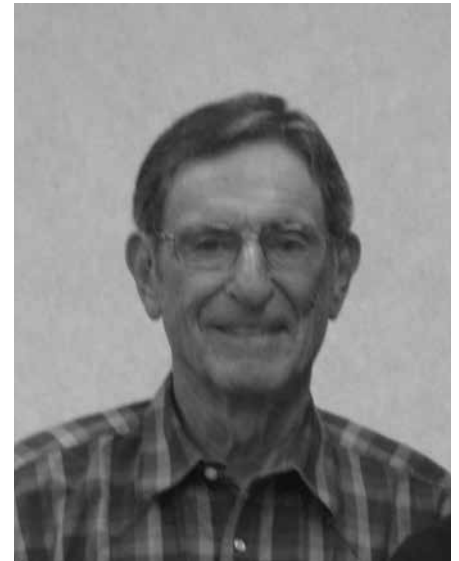
# Charles B. Hart, TJHS President 2002-2004 Passes Away

Charles B Hart, Past President (2002-2004), TJHS died July 10, 2024, at his home in Temple, Texas. Charles and his wife, Jan, have been members of TJHS for decades, and have attended almost every meeting since they joined. In addition to President, Charles was always available to help with any committee, and would drive the extra mile (figuratively and literally) if necessary. He retired as Meetings Chair a couple of years prior to his death and was always available when the current president called to “chat.”


Charles was born in Houston in 1935. He was an Eagle Scout, earned a Bachelor’s degree from the University of Houston and a Masters degree from American University in

Washington, D.C. He served in the US Army from 1958-1962, and was a Master Mason, a member of Scottish Rite, and a fifty-year member of the Karem Shrine in Waco, Texas. He was also a board member of the Texas A&M Hillel Foundation. He retired in 1994 from the US Department of Agriculture, Farmers Home Administration. He spent over twenty years after retirement teaching horseback riding at his beloved Echo Hill Ranch and at Greene Family Camp. He had a lifelong love of the outdoors and enjoyed raising cattle and taking care of retired ranch horses. His children share his love of the outdoors and traveling.

He is survived by his wife of sixty-three years, Jan Siegel Hart, children, Debbie Hart, Kathy Hart; David




*Charles Hart, 2016.*

(Karen) Hart, six grandchildren, and sister-in-law, Pam (Joe) Joffee. 

# Congregation Beth Jacob of Galveston Receives Historical Designation

by Davie Lou Solka

Congregation Beth Jacob of Galveston, Texas, has been listed on the National Register of Historical Places, a program of the National Park Service. The project to see that the congregation would be listed on the register was begun when clean up began after the building was flooded by Hurricane Ike in September, 2008. Repairs were made to the building using funds that had been donated to the Preservation Fund of Congregation Beth Jacob. Great care was taken to see that the exact original color and textures were used in the Great Hall, including those used on the floor and on the ceiling.

Kathleen Sukiennik headed the project of cataloging and searching through the records and papers that had been damaged in the flood. The congregation was notified of the historical designation in January, 2024. 



*Congregation Beth Jacob, Galveston.*

## FROM OUR ARCHIVES

# Levy Family Houston Chateau

by Vickie Vogel

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**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](mailto:editor@txjhs.org). We want the TJHS archives to be as complete and accurate as possible.**

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I plan my daily walks to trade books at Little Free Libraries in my area, and traded for an oversized book called Houston's Forgotten Heritage featuring architectural wonders from 1824-1914. This beautiful photo-filled book includes shots of the Levy family home that was located at 2016 Main Street. Between 1899 and 1906, many prosperous Houston families built grand homes, some with a decidedly French accent, not unlike the châteaux of the Loire Valley. The last, and the grandest, of the Houston châteaux was designed by architect Olle Lorehn for Abraham M. Levy in 1906. It featured large corner towers with twin French-gabled dormers in between and reportedly cost

\$150,000, an enormous sum at that time. It contained twenty rooms and was staffed by up to ten servants.

Abe, his brother Haskell, and his sister Harriet never married, and lived in the house for the rest of their lives. It was called "the most impressive of the Houston châteaux," a type popularized by Beaux Arts-trained American architects. The front entrance walk surrounded a central flower bed. Two urns flanking the walk were considered the height of fashion in garden design during the first decade of the twentieth century. Sadly, the house was demolished a year after Harriet's death on her instructions, and replaced with a high-rise apartment building.

My interest piqued, I wanted to know who was the Levy family. Abe Levy, called the "Merchant Prince of Houston," and his brother Leo established Levy Brothers Dry Goods Co. in 1887 with Abe as president. Five years later they moved to larger quarters, and in 1897 construction began on a larger store at a cost of \$1,000 a foot. Originally located at 309-319 Main, it had three floors and by 1904, there were more locations and some 400 employees, and was considered the largest mercantile establishment in the South. Levy Brothers was a landmark, a destination shopping mecca.

The store was successful in appealing to the rapidly-growing middle class. In 1929, a new store was designed by Joseph Finger at 914 Main. The original design was for four floors, but in 1939 it was increased to over twenty stories. It was one of the most modern department



*Levy Chateau, 2016 Main Street at Gray Avenue, built 1906, demolished 1938. Houston's Forgotten Heritage, p. 90.*

[continued on page 22](#)

## Levy Family, continued from page 21

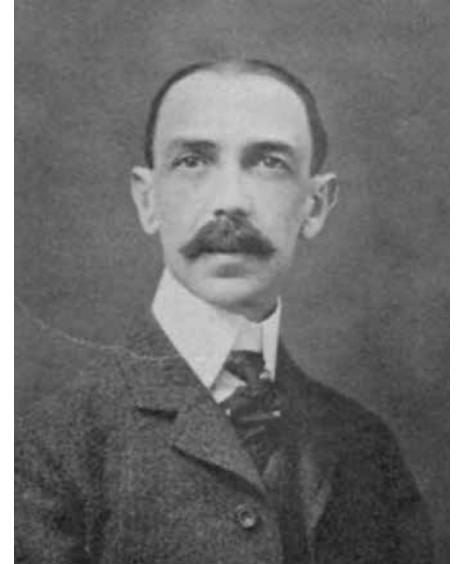
stores in the country at the time. Levy Brothers was known for community service, fair employment practices, and a policy of taking in employees on a cooperative basis.

The Levy family story began with Morris H. (b. 1826) and Adeline Levy, both born in Germany. They were married in Houston in 1855 and had nine children. The first son, Haskel, died the next year. Isaac was born in 1857 and Abraham in 1859. Harriet was born in 1862 and the second Haskel in 1866. They were joined by Fannie, Hyman, Joseph, and Leopold. Isaac and Fannie were the only siblings who married. Their father, Morris, died at age 50 in 1876 when most of the children were teenagers. Hyman was only six.

Morris and Adeline's son Abe became a prominent figure in the Houston Jewish community, serving as president of the United Jewish Charities, as a Houston Symphony board member, a director of Union National Bank, Bankers' Trust Com-

pany, Houston Land Corporation, and membership chair of the Houston chapter of the American Red Cross. Abe was a volunteer firefighter, called "alert and daring" who "made a splendid record as a volunteer." He was a member of the Houston Country Club, the Houston Club, and the Elks. His favorite hobby was golf. In 1912, the Levy family donated land for the construction of Congregation Beth Israel, and land for Levy Park, a 100-acre park in the heart of Houston in 1929.

Abe attended private schools in Houston. His professional journey began as a "mere boy" with William Ginnuth, then Sam Stern and John Finnegan, followed by Leon and H. Blum of Galveston who put him on the road at age 18 to represent them. After five years, Abe connected with a large New York house as their traveling representative in Texas for several years. He also worked for William Foley before his decision to found his own business with brother Leo.



*Abe M. Levy <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/169507561/abraham-m-levy>*

The family business was not easy sailing; they encountered ugly obstacles, beginning with the loss of their father at an early age. The inspiration, teasing and encouragement of a devoted mother helped to surmount the obstacles to become one of the strongest firms in the state. Adeline died in 1890.

Leo died in 1890, and younger brother Hyman (b. 1870, called Herman) joined the partnership, as did Joe and Haskel. Herman Levy was a member of the Elks and a former director of the Houston Business League. In 1909, Herman died in an automobile accident on the Harrisburg Road. The funeral was conducted at the family home by Rabbi Willner of Congregation Adath Yeshuran, as Rabbi Bernstein was out of town. Mayor H. B. Rice was an honorary pallbearer. The Levy Brothers Mutual Aid Society met at the store where carriages were waiting to take them to their late employer's home. Members

**continued on page 23**



*Levy Brothers delivery wagon. Found <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/kt809nd72x/?brand=oac4> and <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/levy-abraham-m>.*

## Levy Family, continued from page 22

of the Independent Order of B'nai B'rith also attended.

Abe Levy died of pneumonia in 1924. Two years later, Haskel died at home at age 60. Haskel had been an active partner in Levy Brothers, especially after Herman's death. Services were held at the Levy home at 2016 Main with Rabbi Barnston presiding at both funerals.

The last surviving Levy sibling was Harriet (1862-1937). She became ill on a summer vacation to Connecticut and returned to die at home. She was remembered as a philanthropist, a civic leader, and a life-long Houstonian. She was closely associated with Levy Brothers for some twenty years. Her life was devoted to charity and welfare work. She donated the ground for the DePelchin Faith Home for orphans and was made a life member of the board. The *Houston Post* reported a Silver Tea Benefit for the charity at her home in 1908. Harriet was one of the original patrons of the Houston Symphony Orchestra and a patron of the Houston Museum of Fine Arts. She was a member of the Council of Jewish Women and the Sisterhood of Congregation Beth Israel. She and her brother Haskell donated the Abe M. Levy Community House to Beth Israel. Rabbi Barnston once again officiated at a Levy funeral at the family home.

A niece, Fannie's daughter Adeline, and her husband, Leopold Meyer, lived in the house with 'Miss Harriet,' and following her wishes, they demolished the house a year after her death. The Meyers built a high-rise apartment known as 2016 Main, which is still standing on the site. Their penthouse apartment there contained many furnishings from the old Levy house.

Levy Bros. Dry Goods prospered long after the construction of their second flagship store, but decline set



*Levy house dining room. Grape cluster shades dangle randomly, as they might in an orchard. Houston's Forgotten Heritage, p. 211.*

in the 1970s due to the rise of chain and discount stores. Having filed for bankruptcy in 1982, the doors were closed in 1983 after more than ninety years in operation. The branch locations in Beaumont, Galveston, San Antonio, and throughout Houston had closed in the 1960s. The flagship business at 914 Main became a hotel, then Commerce Towers, a luxury high-rise residential building.

Abe Levy was praised as "one of the strong factors in promoting the growth of Houston largely through

the extension of trade over a great portion of Texas." He was "both enterprising and patriotic" and was to be found "among the first to do a generous part in advancing any movement to further the welfare of Houston." His loyalty to Houston came naturally, "as he is one of her native sons." The Levy family made its mark on Houston.

### *Endnotes*

- <sup>1</sup> Dorothy Knox Howe Houghton, Bar-

[continued on page 24](#)



*Parlor, Levy House, furnished with Louis XVI Revival Furniture. The upholstery, frieze, and ceiling decorations reflect Louis XVI decoration. Carpet came from Persia. Houston's Forgotten Heritage, p. 211.*



*Levy Brothers Dry Goods store at 309-319 Main Street, Houston. <http://www.houstontimeportal.net/congress---levys.html>*

rie M. Scardino, Sadie Gwin Blackburn, Katherine S. Howe, *Houston's Forgotten Heritage: Landscape, Houses, Interiors, 1824-1914*, Rice University Press, 1991, a project of the Junior League of Houston, Inc. I checked to be sure the Houston Public Library and the Austin Public Library have copies.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 93.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 157.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. Called variously Levy Brothers Department Store, Levy Brothers Company, and Levy Brothers Dry Goods Company. Their letterhead used Levy Bros. Dry Goods Co. in an ad for dry goods and women's furnishings. Their phone number was P675. <https://www.houstonarchitecture.com/topic/50359-levy-bros-dry-goods-co-at-311-main-st/>. A different source says Abraham and Haskell began the store in 1881. Houghton, op cit. <https://www.chron.com/this-forgotten-day-in-houston/article/Levy-Bros-Dry-Goods-Company-6612606.php#>

<sup>5</sup> Diana J. Kleiner, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/levy-abraham-m>

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 311.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.curioushistorian.com/levy-bros-dry-goods-co/> includes photo of store

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/groups/64405032292999/posts/7282497535114899/?\\_rdr](https://www.facebook.com/groups/64405032292999/posts/7282497535114899/?_rdr)

<sup>9</sup> Isaac married Carrie Landman who was born in Mississippi. Her parents were born in Germany. They had one son, Leo, who married Selma Roos of Beaumont, and they had one son, Irwin, who married Judith Milgram, daughter of Missouri merchants. Irwin was a petroleum engineer who served in World War II and Korea. Isaac and Carrie had one daughter, Carolyn Levy Clark. Fannie married Joseph Goldman, born in the Czech Republic. He worked in the family firm. Joseph died suddenly at age 39 while seating himself at the din-

**continued on page 25**



ner table. Fannie and Joseph had three children: Maurice, Leo, and Adelen. Maurice lived in California with his wife, Blanche Goodman. They had three sons: Joseph, Maurice, and Haskel. Leo did not marry. Adelen married twice. Harold Schadzki was the father of Alan Haskel and Frances Harriett. Leopold Meyer was Adelen's second husband. Alan was a veteran of World War II. Frances died at age 15. See findagrave memorials for each.

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/16956619/1/morris\\_h\\_levy](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/16956619/1/morris_h_levy)

<sup>11</sup> [https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/169507561/abraham\\_m\\_levy](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/169507561/abraham_m_levy), Charles D. Green, *Fire Fighters of Houston*, 1838-1915, p. 110

<sup>12</sup> *Makers of Houston*, 1912, Fred W. Turner, ed., contains 143 biographical sketches of Houston men, accessed from Houston Public Library Digital Archives, <https://cdm17006.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/books/id/9306/rec/1>

<sup>13</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/groups/644050532292999/posts/7282497535114899/?\\_rdr](https://www.facebook.com/groups/644050532292999/posts/7282497535114899/?_rdr)

<sup>14</sup> *Progressive Houston*, op cit.; <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/levy-abraham-m>


<sup>15</sup> *Progressive Houston*, December 1910 found at [https://images.findagrave.com/photos/2023/209/169507561\\_02c4958b-1342-4fd5-93de-503e92d-ba6b6.jpeg](https://images.findagrave.com/photos/2023/209/169507561_02c4958b-1342-4fd5-93de-503e92d-ba6b6.jpeg). Accessed Houston Public Library Digital Archives, <https://cdm17006.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/books/id/32142/rec/5> Unlabeled newspaper article, "The Levy Funeral," [https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/169571706/hyman\\_levy](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/169571706/hyman_levy). [https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/169566152/adeline\\_levy](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/169566152/adeline_levy)

<sup>16</sup> *Progressive Houston*, December 1910 found at [https://images.findagrave.com/photos/2023/209/169507561\\_02c4958b-1342-4fd5-93de-503e92d-ba6b6.jpeg](https://images.findagrave.com/photos/2023/209/169507561_02c4958b-1342-4fd5-93de-503e92d-ba6b6.jpeg)

<sup>17</sup> Horace Baldwin Rice, 1861-1929, was important in the development of the Houston Ship Channel. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horace\\_Baldwin\\_Rice](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horace_Baldwin_Rice)

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.houstonarchitecture.com/topic/50358-abe-levy-mansion-at-2016-main-st/#comment-132275>, *Texas Jewish Herald*, October 14, 1937, *Houston Post* March 1, 1908 "Silver Tea for Benefit of Faith Home."

<sup>19</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/groups/644050532292999/posts/7282497535114899/?\\_rdr](https://www.facebook.com/groups/644050532292999/posts/7282497535114899/?_rdr); [https://www.highrises.com/buildings/houston\\_tx/commerce-towers\\_914-main-st\\_1977](https://www.highrises.com/buildings/houston_tx/commerce-towers_914-main-st_1977)

<sup>20</sup> *Progressive Houston*, op cit. 

## Meet Your Board

**David Beer**, TJHS Past President (2015-2017), was born and raised in Dallas. He worked in the restaurant business,



waiting tables and working his way to managing restaurants for eleven years. He joined the Beer family real estate business, where he has spent forty years working with buyers and sellers in the DFW metropol-

ex. David has two sons, Alex (Laura) and Nate (Claire). Alex and Laura, who are educators, live in St. Louis. They have one son, Gabriel, who is

**Sheldon I. Lippman**, TJHS Past President (2021-2023),



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 (1984-87). 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."



**Lila Katz**, from Tyler, is an undergraduate at the University of Texas at Austin. This is her first year serving on the TJHS Board, and she is excited to help preserve Texas Jewish history! She is interested in Jewish storytelling, Jewish arts, novel and playwrighting, producing, and musical theatre.

[continued on page 26](#)

## Meet Your Board, continued from page 25



**Sonny Gerber** is married to Sharon, and they have been married forty years. They have six children and nine grandchildren. Sonny is retired and spends his time managing real estate investments, volunteering, and running errands. As he says “If you’re married, you understand.”

**Scott Langston has** taught at Texas Christian University



for nearly twenty years, and is the Native American Nations and Communities Liaison and Instructor in Religion. He has worked extensively with Native American communities, as well as researching and publishing widely in the fields of Southern Jewish History and the reception history of

the Bible. Scott is a past president of the Southern Jewish Historical Society and the current editor for the Primary Sources section of the journal *Southern Jewish History*. While doing graduate work in the field of ancient Near Eastern Archaeology he traveled to Israel many times, including excavating four seasons at Tel Beth Shean and Tel Batash (Timnah.) He has received the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Award from TCU, and the Plume Award from TCU’s Native American and Indigenous Peoples Initiative. Scott was born in Fort Worth, but grew up in Conroe, Texas. He is married with three children and one grandson, and currently lives in Weatherford, Texas.



**Hy Penn** is a native Houstonian and the oldest child of Holocaust survivors Linda and Morris I. Penn. He graduated from the University of Texas in Austin and the University of Texas Medical School in San Antonio, with a residency at the University of Texas Medical Branch Galveston. He recently retired after thirty-five years as

a pediatrician in the Kingwood-Humble area. He currently serves as a Docent at the Holocaust Museum of Houston, and serves on the board. He is also a Board Member of the Jewish Federation of Greater Houston. Hy has been mar-

ried to Lynn Gordon Penn for thirty-six years, and performs as the Magician, “The Great Hydini.”



**Jan Siegel Hart** grew up in Dublin, Texas and is a grandchild of immigrants from Russia that were part of the Galveston Movement. She attended the University of Texas, Kilgore Junior College, and Lon Morris Junior College. She and Charles Hart (past TJHS president) met at Echo Hill Ranch in 1960, and they were married in

1961. They have three children and six grandchildren. Jan participated in several productions at Temple Civic Theater and sang with Sweet Adelines, Int. for many years. She is the author of three children’s books based on her family histories. For over twenty-five years she has performed a one woman show as “Hanna, the Immigrant” for groups across the nation. Jan has served in many positions of Texas Jewish Historical Society, and currently is co-chair of the Speaker’s Bureau. She is proud to be part of five generations of women who are members of Hadassah.



**Susan Zack Lewis**, TJHS Past President (2019-2021), is from Big Spring, and is married to Bob Lewis, aka Tumbleweed Smith. They have two sons, four grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. Susan is involved in many civic activities in Big Spring. She and Bob have owned Multi Media Advertising for forty-five

years, where she serves as Technical Director when Tumbleweed has a speaking engagement. She has a degree in Interior Design.



**Gary P. Whitfield** is from Fort Worth and is a former coach and teacher. He retired from the Air Force Reserves where he was a small arms instructor. He is a former Data Collector (Field) RTI and is a past chairman of the Tarrant County Historical Society.

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## Meet Your Board, continued from page 26

**Janice Gerber** lives in Houston and says “due to World War II, was born in Louisiana,” but considers herself a Texan from birth. After World War II, her family moved back to Houston and she attended schools in Houston. At San Jacinto High School, she was on the rifle team as ROTC sponsor and won All City College competition. Janice attended Sophie Newcombe college, and after her marriage to David, Cornell University. They lived in Heidelberg, Germany,

for two years while David served in the Army, and then they moved back to Houston. Janice has been active in Haddassah, Federation, and ADL. She has worked as a Jewish community professional and as a political fundraiser. She and David have three children, and ten grandchildren, ranging in age from eleven to twenty-two.

**Sally Drayer**, Historian-Archivist, is from Dallas, and is a past president of TJHS (2008-2010). She grew up in Alice, and has three children and one granddaughter. Sally is a substitute teacher in the Richardson Independent School District and at a private Jewish school. She volunteers at the Dallas Museum of Art for the Arts and Letters Live Program and is on the board of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra Guild.

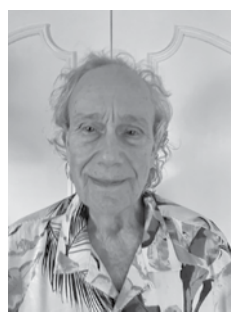
**Hollace Ava Weiner** joined TJHS in 1996 while researching her first book, *Jewish Stars in Texas*, which focuses on legendary Lone Star rabbis. Since then, she has written and edited four books on Texas Jewish history, including the anthology *Lone Stars of David: The Jews of Texas*, which was published by TJHS with Brandeis University Press in 2007. She writes a monthly column for the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* and is the director for the Fort Worth Jewish Archives. Hollace serve on the editorial board of Western States Jewish History.



**Marilyn Lippman**, a Dallas resident with strong ties to Fayette County, serves as Treasurer of Temple Israel in Schulenberg, and is a Board Member of the Jewish Cemetery in Hallettsville. After a distinguished forty-year career as a Business Operations Manager, Marilyn retired in Summer, 2024. She is eager to embrace her newfound free time with activities like exercising, reading, hiking, traveling, and gardening, while also continuing her work with the TJHS Meeting Committee.



**Jane Manaster** lives in Dallas and was raised in England. She moved to Texas with her American husband, Guy. Jane has three children and six grandchildren. She has degrees in Psychology and Geography, and is the author of three natural history books. She is a former newspaper columnist and has written articles on travel and Texas history. Jane is a charter member of TJHS, and is Chair of the Grants Committee.



**Eric H. Nelson** was born and raised in Corpus Christi. He currently lives in Houston. He attended the University of Texas in Austin for his undergraduate work, and law school at the University of Houston. He practices labor law. Eric and his wife, Carol, have two sons and five grandchildren. 🇺🇸

## 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](mailto:editor@txjhs) if you will include your family’s history in *The TJHS Magazine*. 🇺🇸



# 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, 2025 and mailed to Awards Chair, Texas Jewish Historical Society, P. O. Box 10193, Austin, TX 78766-0193 or [awardchair@txjhs.org](mailto:awardchair@txjhs.org).

## Application Form

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

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

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

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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](mailto:awardchair@txjhs.org).*

*[txjhs.org](http://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 or online, 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.

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

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

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Please detail the timeline of your project.

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

*Send applications to: TJHS Grant Committee: P.O. Box 10193, Austin TX 78766-0193, or email to [grantchair@txjhs.org](mailto:grantchair@txjhs.org) or go to [www.txjhs.org](http://www.txjhs.org) and click on "Apply for a Grant" at the top of the page.*



# 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.

Mailing 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 or go to [www.txjhs.org](http://www.txjhs.org) and click on "Give to Kessler Fund"**

*Texas Jewish Historical Society, Inc. is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.  
Contributions to TJHS are tax deductible within the limits of the law.*



# TJHS Board of Trustees

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*(Living Past Presidents are members of the Board of Trustees, per our bylaws.)*

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Paula Stein (Houston)

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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](mailto:txjhs_exhibits@txjhs.org).

# Texas Jewish Historical Society

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## The Texas Jewish Historical Society New Membership and Information Update Form



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. You can also visit [txjhs.org/membership](http://txjhs.org/membership).*