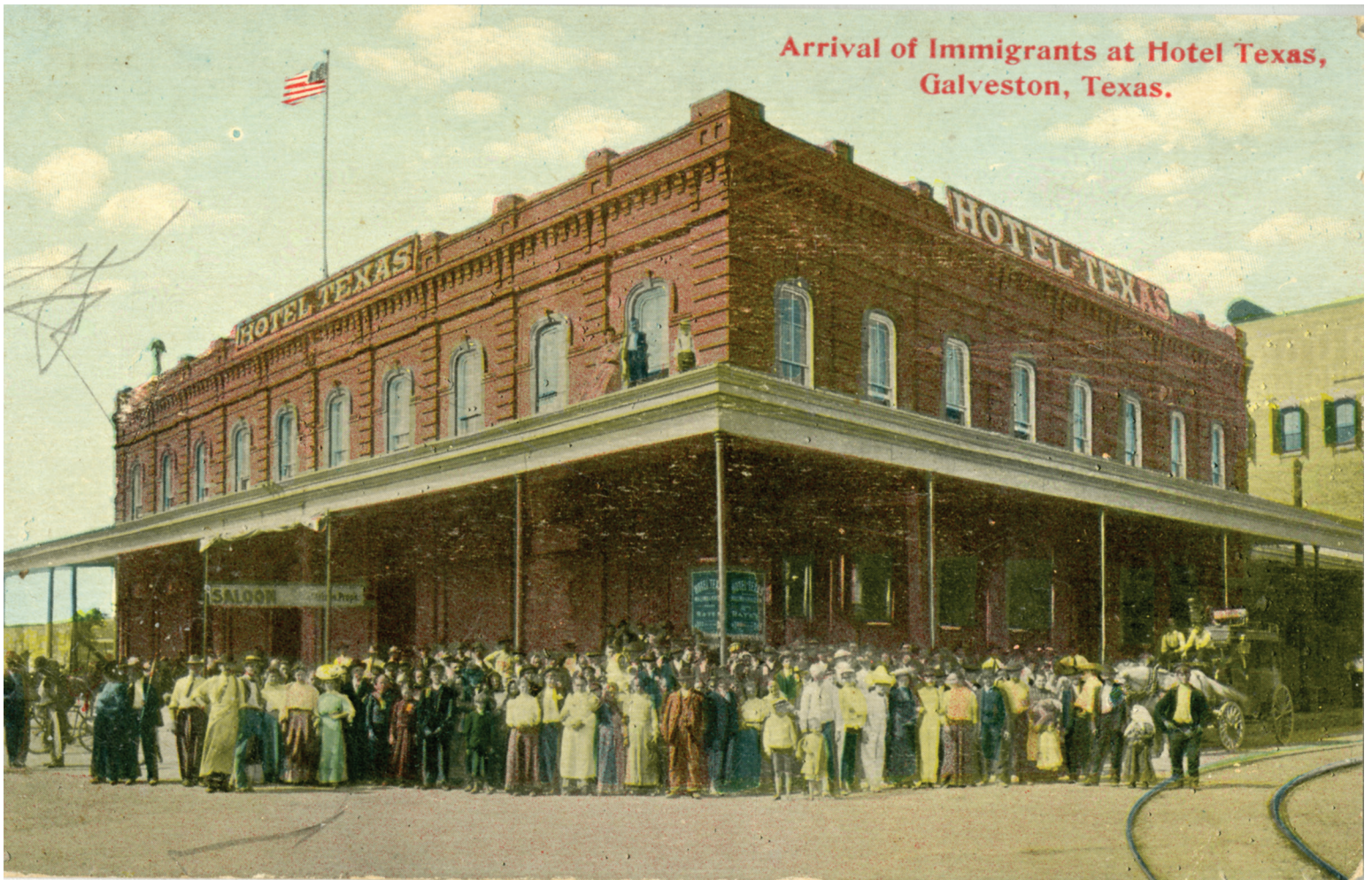


SYNAGOGUES ACROSS THE STATE

# TEXAS HERITAGE

A PUBLICATION OF THE TEXAS HISTORICAL FOUNDATION | EST. 1954 | \$5 ISSUE | Volume 3 2018



Arrival of Immigrants at Hotel Texas,  
Galveston, Texas.

## Lone Star Jews Leave Their Mark

The History of the State's Jewish Settlement

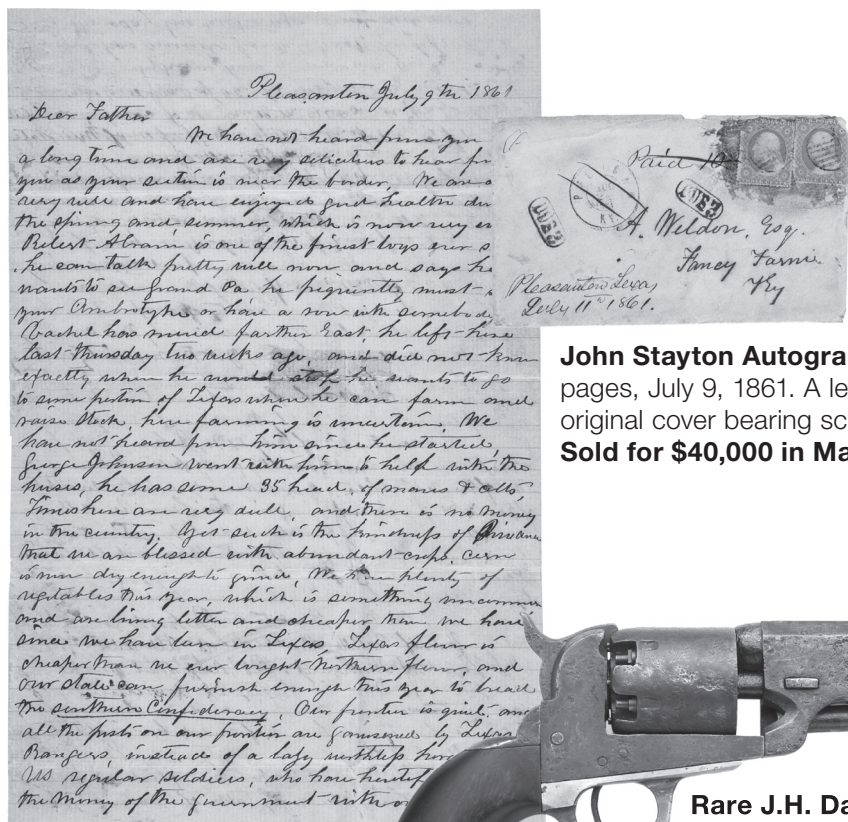
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# TEXAS HERITAGE

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## FEATURES

- 8 **A Very Brief History of Texas Jews**  
Jews began settling in Texas as early as the 16th century, during an era that required covert religious practice. Though Jews are a relatively small percentage of the state's population, the impact they have had on Lone Star history far outweighs the group's size.  
**By Debra L. Winegarten**

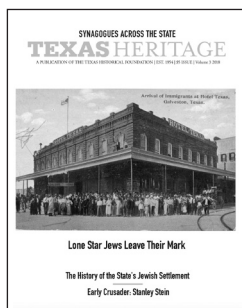
- 14 **Searching for Stanley Stein**  
In March 1931, a young Jewish pharmacist from San Antonio afflicted with leprosy became an exile in his own country. Forcibly confined to a military hospital in Carville, Louisiana, he assumed the identity of Stanley Stein and began a life-long crusade to shine "the light of truth on Hansen's disease."  
**By Jerry Klinger**

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## ON THE COVER

*Arrival of Immigrants at Hotel Texas, Galveston, Texas.* Image courtesy of SC 277 #148 Collection, Rosenberg Library, Galveston.



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**CONTRIBUTORS** Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Michael Barera, Baytown Library, Buster Jetter Photography, Wendy R. Corn, Dallas Jewish Historical Society, El Paso Museum of History, Bruce Elsom, Kristi Elsom, Raymond Ettelman, Fort Concho Foundation, Jonathan Frembling, Galveston County Museum, The Heritage Society-Houston, Jerry Klinger, Kosse Heritage Society, Gene Krane, Library of Congress, Linden Heritage Foundation, Pamela Murtha, National Hansen's Disease Museum, Debra Polsky, Public Health Image Library, William Reaves | Sarah Foltz Fine Art-Houston, Mariah Rockefeller, Rockwall County Historical Foundation, Rosenberg Library, Maurice Schmidt, Shalom Austin, Davie Lou Ettelman Solka, Texas Historical Commission, Texas Jewish Historical Society, Texas State Library and Archives Commission, University of Texas at San Antonio, Debra L. Winegarten

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# No Public Money Used to Fund THF Grants

THF is one of the few organizations that supports historic preservation in Texas without using tax money.

The Foundation's privately funded endowments will assist with these newly approved projects:

- **North Texas Society of History & Culture (Tales N' Trails)**, Nocona, will use its grant to extend the museum's West Wing and showcase the venue's main focus areas: Western heritage, American Indian culture, leather goods, oil and gas, and agriculture.

- **Grayson County College Foundation, Inc.**, Denison, received assistance to digitize the collection of T. V. Munson. He found a resistant rootstock to stop the *phylloxera aphid* epidemic in the early 1900s, thereby saving France's wine industry.

- **El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Landmark Association**, San Antonio, won support for archeological work at the Lt. Col. Ignacio Pérez Rancho. The ranch, dating to the 1700s and threatened by development, contains adobe houses built by Tejano settlers.

- **Friends of the History Center for Aransas County**, Rockport, will use THF funds to publish *Bays, Boats, and Birds: The Story of the Art Colony*. The book will contain biographical and historical information on the art collective as well as rare photos and paintings.

- **The East Texas Art League, Inc.**, Jasper, received a grant to scrape and paint the exterior of its Arts Center, formerly the historic Morgan Hotel.



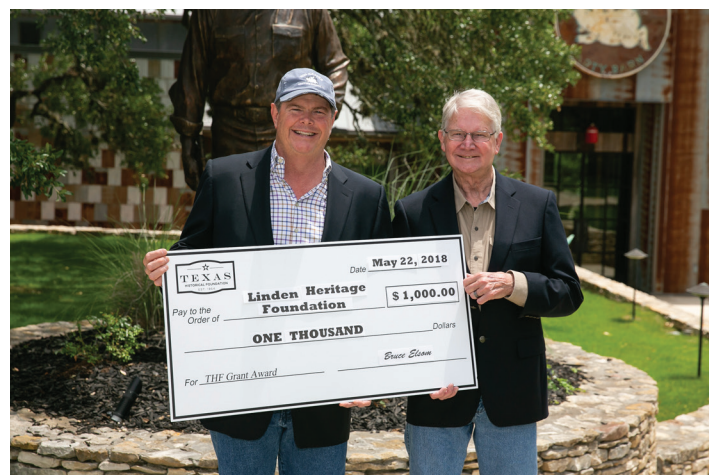
## ▲ FORT CONCHO FOUNDATION, SAN ANGELO

John Meadows, holding check on the right, was joined by fellow Foundation directors Marylee Taylor, to his left, and Lee Pfluger, second from right, as they presented a check to FCF to assist with restoration of Officer's Quarters 1 and help bring bathrooms up to Americans with Disabilities Act code. Fort Concho was established in 1867. The 10th Cavalry Buffalo Soldiers served there, as did other units. Photograph courtesy of the FCF.



## ▲ THE HERITAGE SOCIETY, HOUSTON

THF funds will help defray editing and promotional costs associated with production of the documentary *Home Front: Texas in World War II*. Clockwise from left, back: THF directors Michael Sparks, Bruce Elsom, (front) Paulette Gerukos, Mike Vance (representing The Heritage Society), and Julie Sparks gathered for the presentation. Photograph provided by Bruce Elsom.



## ▲ LINDEN HERITAGE FOUNDATION, LINDEN

Texas Historical Foundation Director Hank Seale, left, presented a preservation grant to LHF President Joe Lovelace to help restore the 1939 Linden Firehouse. The historic structure was named as one of Preservation Texas' Most Endangered Places in 2016. Photograph courtesy of Buster Jetter of Buster Jetter Photography.



▼ **KOSSE HERITAGE SOCIETY, KOSSE**

Funds presented by THF President Bruce Elsom, second from left in photo below, will help preserve Kosse's Hearne-Gidden House. In 2014, KHS purchased the structure, built in 1894 for two cotton farming families. The group has repaired the roof, leveled the house, replaced rotten floor beams, and added new concrete footings for the piers. Photos courtesy of Kristi Elsom.

Additional information about THF programs can be found at [www.texashistoricalfoundation.org](http://www.texashistoricalfoundation.org).



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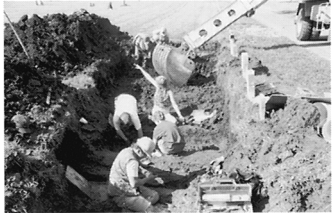
## Historic Texas Architecture




*Charles Goodnight House, before restoration. Courtesy of the Armstrong County Museum.*

You can help preserve historic Lone Star architecture by becoming an early supporter of THF's newest endowment. Call 512-453-2154 to learn how.

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Excavations at San Felipe Spring, Val Verde County, 1998

Excavating Confederate Veterans, Texas State Cemetery, Travis County, 1995

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# Scattershooting, With Apologies to Blackie Sherrod

By Bruce Elsom

For decades, *Dallas Morning News* sports columnist Blackie Sherrod would occasionally devote his words to miscellany that began with the line, “Scattershooting, while wondering ‘Whatever happened to \_\_\_?’” I don’t recall if he revealed the answer at the conclusion of his article or whether it was a genuine request for reader feedback. But I’m freshly back from the THF board meeting in Canyon where I had plenty of time to ponder all matters of history while seeing a great swath of our glorious state. So, with apologies to Blackie Sherrod, here is my effort at scatter-shooting, while wondering “Whatever happened to Davy Crockett’s widow?”



First, a big thank you to our meeting host city of Canyon. It isn’t possible to fully comprehend Texas without spending time in the Panhandle. History in this part of the state is closer, and by that, I mean more recent. While the East Coast was experiencing the Gilded Age after the Civil War, folks in the Panhandle were just beginning to settle the new frontier, and their closest link to the East was the rail heads in Kansas. Living in dugouts and battling Comanche and Kiowa tribes still fighting to hold onto their lands and the buffalo, it was the heyday of the cowboy—who worked cattle on ranches that spread for hundreds of thousands of acres.

Charles Goodnight, purportedly the real-life Captain Woodrow F. Call in Larry McMurtry’s *Lonesome Dove*, made his homestead here. Still standing near the rim of the Palo Duro (America’s second largest canyon) and lovingly restored (with help from several THF grants), Goodnight’s house is worth seeing, and you’ll enjoy learning the story of how the cattle driver’s wife Molly saved the American Bison from extinction. Another site to visit is the impressive Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum. A bit of friendly advice, though: schedule more than one day to take in everything.

Speaking of the more recent past, this edition of Tex-

as HERITAGE features great articles about Jewish settlement in Texas during the last 180 years. That’s pretty concise considering the religious group’s almost 6,000-year history.

While on the subject of ancient, a new find by a group of Texas State University scientists at the Gault archeological site suggests that humans inhabited Central Texas as far back as 21,700 years ago. This discovery would push the arrival of humans in North America back more than 8,000 years earlier than previously thought. Yep, even in prehistoric times, folks couldn’t wait to get to Texas! THF is fortunate to have Dr. Clark Wernecke, executive director of the Gault School of Archaeological\* Research as a scholar director.

A big thanks, too, to the more than 3,500 followers of THF on Facebook. If you can’t get enough Texas between our posts, check out some of my favorite groups, pages, and online communities: Traces of Texas, Daughters of the Republic of Texas, Texas Historical Commission, Texas General Land Office, the Bryan Museum, and Trammel’s Trace.

As this message draws to a close, I can tell you that scattershooting is considerably easier in the age of the internet. As for Davy’s widow Elizabeth Patton Crockett? She is buried in the Acton Cemetery near Granbury, which, at 0.006 acres, is the smallest Texas State Historic Site.

Eat your heart out, Blackie Sherrod.

\**Archeology* is the style used in Texas HERITAGE magazine. *Archaeological* is the spelling used by GSAR.

*Bruce Elsom is a sixth-generation Texan who traces his roots back to the Texas Revolution. He has enjoyed living in several areas of the state and currently resides in Houston. Send comments regarding this column to: THF, P. O. Box 50314, Austin, Texas 78763 or via email at [admin@texashistoricalfoundation.org](mailto:admin@texashistoricalfoundation.org).*



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# A Very Brief History of Texas Jews

By Debra L. Winegarten

When I was asked to write a short article on the history of Texas Jews for this magazine, I laughed. Not because I thought the question was funny, but because I could not imagine writing a “short” history of Texas Jews. Though few in number as a percentage of the population, the mark that Jews leave on a place far outweighs the group’s numerical size.

Let’s start by answering this question: How many Jews were in Texas before 1836? The answer may be a surprise: zero.







Jewish immigrants at the wharf in Galveston, circa 1907. Courtesy of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.



The reason there were no Jews prior to the Republic of Texas era is not necessarily that there were not any people practicing Judaism in the territorial region. Rather, it is because early settlers were not allowed to be Jewish by either Spain or its successor, Mexico.

*Since Roman Catholicism was the state religion for Spain and its colonies, Spain stipulated Catholicism as the state religion when Texas was opened to Anglo-American immigration in 1820. All newcomers were required to embrace it, and other religions were prohibited.<sup>1</sup>*

Because of this policy, the first Jews in Texas probably were labeled as Catholics but more likely were *conversos* (forced converts), or “secret Jews.”

During the Spanish Inquisition in 1492, Jews had two choices: convert to Catholicism or be ex-

pelled from Spain. Those who refused either option often were burned at the stake. While many wisely chose to convert, they still maintained their Jewish identity, covertly practicing their religion in their homes to escape the Church’s prying eyes. Alternatively, because remaining a Jew in Spain at that time was a death sentence, many others fled the country.

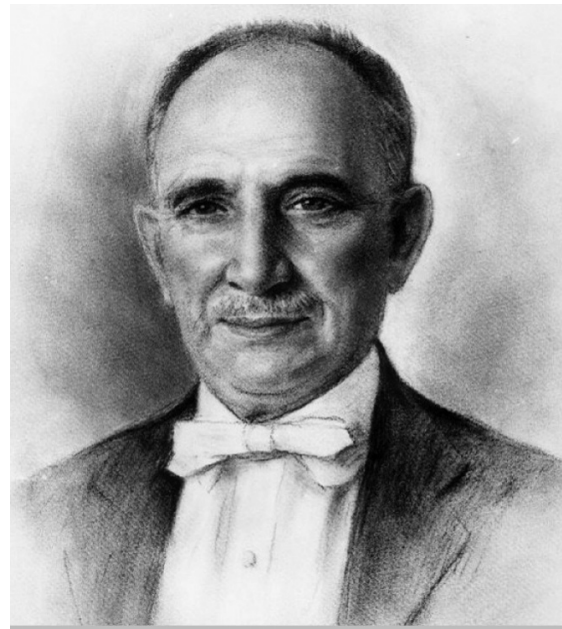
Carlos Larralde, a historian, believes that many colonists from the Canary Islands, who settled in Texas in the 1700s, “resented Catholic priests and were not interested in Catholicism.” His observation suggests that there may have been secret Jews among those early Spanish pioneers. There also is evidence that Jews came to the New World from Spain as early as the 16th century.

*When Hernan Cortés first conquered Mexico for Spain in 1521, he did so with a number of secret Jews amongst his men. Judaism was*

---

Above: The East Texas oil field discovery in 1930 made Kilgore a boomtown. By 1948, oil derricks provided the background to the Jewish-owned businesses on North Kilgore Street. In view here are the Model Fashion Center, owned by Eva and Isaac Wolf; Ettelman’s Credit Jewelers, owned by Dora and Eddie Ettelman; and Globe Men’s Clothiers, owned by Rose and Jap Polsky. Across the street (not shown), shoppers could choose from K. Wolens Department Store, founded in Corsicana by Kalman Wolens, or Toggery Ladies’ Clothes, owned by Frances, Ben, Sarah, and Abe Gertz. Photograph courtesy of Raymond Ettelman and Davie Lou Ettelman Solka.





banned at the time in Spain, and soon many secret Spanish Jews departed for “*Nueva Espana*” [New Spain] in the New World to try and live a more Jewish life. In fact, Spain’s first Viceroy in Mexico, Antonio de Mendoza, possessed a Jewish surname, and historians suggest he was possibly one of the secret Jews who moved to the new territory.

King Phillip II of Spain soon established the Kingdom of Nuevo Leon in Mexico (and parts of what is today Texas), and appointed Don Luis de Carvajal—a well-known Portuguese-Spanish nobleman who was born to Jewish conversos—as Governor of the new territory.

Carvajal welcomed both Jews and Catholics into his land. His nephew, Louis Rodriguez Carvajal, embraced his Jewish identity in the new kingdom and encour-

aged other secret Jews to do the same.<sup>2</sup>

A more large-scale Jewish immigration to Texas began in the mid-1800s. Political turmoil in Europe and the need for the newly-formed state to entice settlers to populate and support the economy were factors that led to this migration. It is important to note that because Judaism has been around for thousands of years (2018 is the year 5778 of the Jewish calendar), many religious and secular practices have evolved. Two, in particular, helped define how this small religious tribe set down roots wherever they settled, including those they dug deep in Texas soil.

The first age-old custom is that whenever a group of Jews moved to a new place, they collectively bought land for a cemetery in order to bury the dead according to specific theological beliefs. These burial grounds essentially serve as tangible markers of the era that

This page, top left: Immigrants suffering from illness upon arrival at the port city spent 20 days confined to the Galveston Quarantine Station. Photograph, circa 1917, courtesy of the Library of Congress. Top, right: A drawing of Rabbi Henry Cohen, who was instrumental in helping Eastern European Jews settle in Texas and elsewhere. Image courtesy of the Galveston County Museum. Bottom, right: Banker Isaac Kempner, a key figure in the Galveston Plan, is buried in the port city’s Hebrew Benevolent Society Cemetery, which was founded in 1868. Photograph courtesy of the internet. Original in color.

ushered in a historically visible and growing Jewish communal presence in Texas.

The second religious tradition that established and sustained a Jewish community is the concept of a *minyan*, a prayer quorum originally consisting of 10 males, age 13 or older.\* Certain daily prayers in Judaism, one being the mourner's kaddish, which is recited each day for 11 months following the death of a close family member, and reading from the *Torah*, the Hebrew Bible, requires the presence of a minyan.

Whenever a Jew contemplated moving to a new location, one consideration was whether there already was a minyan in place. When there was not, Jewish immigrants encouraged relatives and friends to relocate with them or follow soon thereafter in order to satisfy this prayer quorum requirement.

The concept of a minyan was practical not only on a religious basis, but on a secular level as well. These foundational collectives typically established benevolent societies to help care for the sick, aged, and in-

firm. They supported each other's businesses, founded synagogues, and engaged in community-building activities that allowed them not only to survive but also to thrive.

One has to look no further than the history of Galveston Island to understand how the concept of community enabled immigrant Jews to gain a foothold in the state. In the late 1800s, pogroms, violent and many times government-sanctioned acts of religious persecution, were raging throughout Eastern Europe. This resulted in a huge out-migration of Jews from the Ukraine, Hungary, Russia, Poland, and Germany.

These Jewish immigrants descended on Ellis Island and New York City by the boatloads. *Tenements* (houses divided into and rented out as separate residences) became overcrowded, with as many as 20 people living in one apartment. There were not enough jobs to support all these newcomers. In 1907, Jacob H. Schiff, a New York investment banker and philanthropist, financed what became known as the "Galveston Plan," diverting European ships from eastern U. S. seaports to that Texas port city.

Galveston's Rabbi Henry Cohen, a Londoner by birth who spoke five languages, would board incoming

At left: Note the front-page article titled "The Galveston Immigration Movement," penned by Rabbi Henry Cohen. Goldberg, E., *The Jewish Herald* (Houston, Tex.), Vol. 1, No. 20, Ed. 1, Friday, February 5, 1909. (texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph84755/: accessed July 17, 2018), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History.

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VOL. 1.

HOUSTON, TEXAS, FEBRUARY 5, 1909

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## The Galveston Immigration Movement

BY RABBI HENRY COHEN

To dignify the question of Jewish immigration by the term problem is incorrect, for this country could, without the least violence to itself, assimilate the world's Jewish population and then have room for three times that number, exclusive of the regular quota of other foreign settlers. With all the recent immigration consequent upon the brutal persecution in Russia and Roumania, together with the native-born children of the voluntary immigrants of normal times, the United States of America has no more than 1,500,000 Jewish residents. The Galveston movement, then, is not the outcome of a problem, but a question of expediency brought about by special conditions. To divert Jewish immigration from the Northern ports, notably New York, where there are about 800,000 Israelites, an interested committee bent its endeavors; and of the great masses, and points of entry, chose Galveston. Contiguous to and in direct railroad communication with the large country west of the Mississippi, scarcely touched by the newer immigrants—this Texas port offered excellent advantages for a point of distribution. The general scarcity of labor in the South and West under normal conditions would be counteracted if a steady flow of the able-bodied could be maintained and to this end the Jewish artisan and laborer, fortified by industry and abstemiousness, and well-disciplined by salutary religious laws and customs could contribute in measure with the Teuton and the Slav, as well as with the scions of the Latin races, he would make excellent citizenship—with no possible chance of his returning to his mother country—step-mother country, rather—when he had accumulated a little money. So be it.

In the spring of 1907 the Jewish immigrants' information bureau was opened in Galveston to supply that machinery which would advise intelligently the already carefully selected alien how to work at his own trade or profession—or at general labor necessary for his livelihood—

thereby serving two purposes: his own maintenance and the crying need of American industries. The present was all-important—the future would take care of itself. For just as soon as a man would save sufficient from the work of his hands to bring his family or his friends to his side, he would do so, and this committee knew by experience. A thousand immigrants the first of the year meant 5,000 a few years later. The un-uttered prophecy has been verified, for although our first group of immigrants arrived on July 1, 1907, and subsequent groups at three weeks' interval, family, relatives and friends have already joined the pioneers; the traveling expenses having been paid by the latter. The Galveston movement bids fair to remain a success as long as the powers that be think its continuance a necessity; and apart from such financial crisis with its consequent depression, as now obtains, there is no reason to believe but that its work will be uniformly appreciated.

The modus operandi of the bureau is interesting, but there is scarcely need to dwell upon the work in detail. The medical examination by the port marine surgeon, the interrogation by the immigration inspectors and the examination of baggage by the custom house officers is followed and by the removal of the immigrants and their baggage in large wagons from the docks to the bureau headquarters—about half a mile. Then the distribution of mail long looked for by the aliens, the refreshing bath and the wholesome and generous meal; the facilities for writing home and for reading Yiddish papers published since the managers' embarkation; the questioning of the individuals and the filling out of the consignee's record by the office management; the selection of localities according to the requisitions of the interior agents, and the purchasing of railroad tickets; and then, support: the apportionment of food sufficient to last each immigrant for the whole up-country journey and a little longer; then the baggage wagons for the

(Continued on Page 6.)

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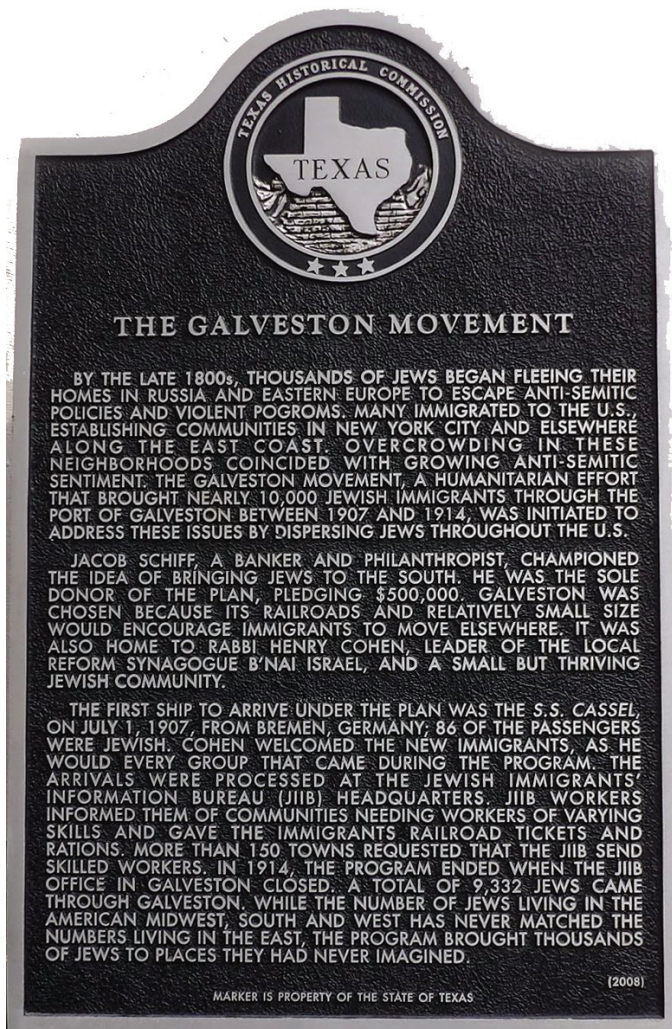
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Above: This historical marker commemorates New York investment banker Jacob Schiff's plan that brought European Jews to the Port of Galveston, many of whom made Texas their permanent home. Image courtesy of the internet.

ships and greet Jewish refugees. At the time, admittance to the United States through the Port of Galveston required a person to: 1) be healthy; 2) hold \$50 in their pocket; and 3) have the promise of a job. Rabbi Cohen was instrumental in seeing that these new *landsmen* (a term, Yiddish in origin, for a fellow Jew who comes from the same district, town, or country) had the resources they needed to fulfill the latter two requirements.

The religious leader had an agreement with Isaac "Ike" Herbert Kempner, a prominent Galveston banker and businessman: Cohen would give each new immigrant a note to take to Kempner's bank where the refugee would receive the necessary "pocket" money.

Cohen also used his connections in Jewish communities all across Texas, in New Mexico, and as far north as St. Louis, Missouri. His shipboard meet-and-greets then helped the rabbi match an immigrant's profes-

sional skills with opportunities available in places where he had contacts. When a refugee boarded the train destined for their new community, Cohen ensured that they left with the name of someone there who had promised to help with resettlement and employment. Despite this plan, some newly minted refugees were known to decide during an interim stop that they liked the looks of that particular locale and would disembark to make their own way.

As Jews claimed their place in big cities and small towns throughout the state, these newcomers founded businesses in trades that had once been the only career options for those who practiced Judaism. During the Middle Ages in Europe, Jews were prohibited from being landowners, and that limited their professional options. In part because of this exclusion—and the fact that literacy and numeracy were valued in Jewish culture—many became merchants, tailors, money lenders, physicians, and lawyers in order to make a living and support their families.

Today, faded wooden signs on the sides of old downtown buildings bearing names like Levi & Sons or Cohen Brothers, as well as other visible remnants, remind Texans of the state's rich Jewish history and the people behind those stories. Some of Dallas' early settlers made their mark on the American clothing industry. Neiman-Marcus, Sanger-Harris, and Titches were stores originally established by Jewish merchants. Austin's modern high-tech industry rests in part on the fortunes of a Jewish Houston native, Michael Dell, who started his computer business from a dorm room at the University of Texas.

These are but a few examples of the innumerable contributions Texas Jews have made to the state, many of which go unacknowledged in history books. Even so, preservation organizations, Jewish and non-Jewish alike, and many individuals are making efforts to fill in those gaps to give a more complete picture of the state's multicultural historical timeline. ★

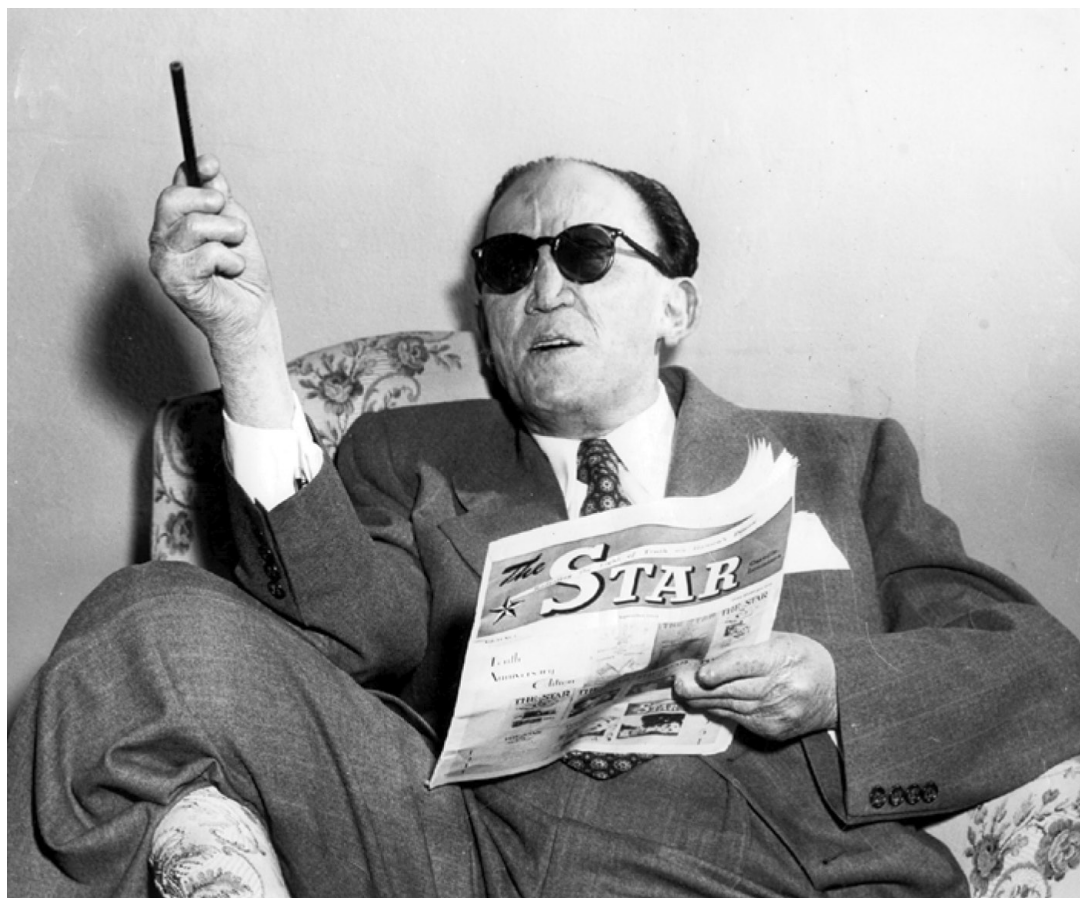
*Debra L. Winegarten, of Austin, is a third-generation Texas Jew and an award-winning author and publisher (www.winegarten.com and www.sociosights.com).*

\*Author's Note: Today, in many branches of Judaism, women also are included in a minyan.

Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> <https://texasalmanac.com/topics/history/religion-early-texas>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.aish.com/jw/s/Surprising-Facts-about-the-Jews-of-Mexico.html>



# Searching for Stanley Stein

By Jerry Klinger

Above: By the time an effective treatment for Hansen's disease was developed, the bacterial infection had rendered Stanley Stein blind. Image courtesy of the National Hansen's Disease Museum.



This is the story of a person with two identities—  
and one cause.

Sidney Maurice Levyson was born in Gonzales on June 10, 1899, but grew up in Boerne. Even without much in the way of formal religious education, he described himself as “not hard-shelled in my Jewishness.” Nonetheless, Levyson was proud of his heritage as a Jew and a second-generation Texan. His grandfather Paul Levyson had emigrated from Prussian Poland to the United States in 1859. He fought for the Confederacy during the Civil War under Brigadier General Thomas Neville Waul and participated in the Battle of Vicksburg.

The younger Levyson graduated from The University of Texas at Austin with a degree in pharmacology. His father ran a pharmacy in Boerne and had urged his son to pursue the profession. Levyson worked at the family business for a time before moving to San Antonio and opening his own drugstore. Loosely tied to the city’s reform congregation Temple Beth El, the pharmacist’s real pleasure was performing at the community’s Jewish theater.



Levyson was 21 when the first symptoms of Hansen's disease, commonly known as leprosy, appeared on his body. *Mycobacterium leprae*, the bacterial cause of the chronic condition, was discovered in 1873 by Norwegian researcher Dr. Gerhard Henrik Armauer Hansen. San Antonio physician, Dr. I. L. McGlasson, who knew from study and practical experience that leprosy was not highly contagious, quietly treated the young man.

Secrecy was necessary after the diagnosis because not all were equally enlightened. Society, reinforced by biblical injunctions and medical ignorance, responded to leprosy with fear, confusion, revulsion, and sometimes even violence. People believed that protection from the affliction required isolating the victim, and American quarantine laws mandated that sufferers of Hansen's disease be locked away for life without benefit of legal protest.

When Dr. McGlasson passed away and Levyson's condition progressed, the young man turned to Rabbi Ephraim Frish of Beth El congregation. Not knowing the exact nature of his congregant's skin disorder, Rabbi Frish recommended treatment by specialists in New York City. No longer

able to hide the evidence of the visibly spreading disease, Levyson heeded that advice and traveled to the East Coast.

### INVOLUNTARY EXILE AND A NEW IDENTITY

The Texan's life dramatically changed in New York. The specialist, Dr. Emil Loch, a renowned dermatologist, reported his new patient to the authorities as a leper. The police swept up Levyson, almost overnight. With only a small suitcase containing few possessions, he was dispatched, secretly, swiftly, and with as little human contact as possible, to the very isolated world of Carville, Louisiana, on the banks of the Mississippi River. The government-run hospital located there was the continental United States' first forced incarceration facility for victims of Hansen's disease.

Standing naked before a board of medical examiners, Sidney Maurice Levyson learned that he was to be designated as patient number 746. He was, however, given the option to choose a fictitious name to live under during his time of confinement. Emerging as Stanley Stein, the native Texan stepped into the hot, humid, mosquito-infested Deep South confused and depressed.

This page, top left: Simeon Peterson was the last Carville patient to serve as editor of *The Star*, which remains in publication. Courtesy of the National Hansen's Disease Museum. Original in color. Middle, spread: The entrance to U. S. Marine Hospital #66 in Carville, Louisiana, circa 1950. Photograph courtesy of the Public Health Image Library. Original in color. Opposite page, top right: In 1953, Stein was the recipient of the first Damien-Dutton Society for Leprosy Aid award, recognizing a person or group who has made "a significant contribution towards the conquest of leprosy." Photo courtesy of the National Hansen's Disease Museum. Original in color.





Stein, years later, wrote about his first impressions in his autobiography *Alone No Longer*:

*...I noticed the high metal cyclone fence with the three strands of barbed wire running along the top. I first saw the uniformed guards at the gate—and I realized that the moment I had been fighting against for nearly ten years had come at last. I had arrived at U. S. Marine Hospital No. 66, Carville, Louisiana.... At ten o'clock on that Sunday morning, March 1, 1931, I became an exile in my own country.*

*For hours, I stared into my private wakeful darkness.... I found it hard to believe that I had only recently been part of a laughing, carefree group in San Antonio.... I couldn't quite shut out the image of...a girl whom I sincerely loved yet dared not ask to marry because of the frightful secret I could not share with her, a girl whom I now knew I would never see again.... This recent past was so unreal now that the effort to connect it with my terrifying*



*present was overpowering, and I fell asleep in spite of everything.*

### CARVILLE'S CRUSADER

Stein refused to simply retreat into his own personal suffering during his years at the hospital. He chose instead to find a way to improve the lives of all those afflicted with Hansen's disease. He created a voice for the voiceless when he founded and edited an in-house newsletter, the *Sixty-Six Star*, later re-established as *The Star* magazine. Eventually, the publication grew beyond the confines of the Louisiana facility's barbed wire boundary, reaching a worldwide circulation of nearly 80,000.

The important social and legal breakthroughs the trailblazing publication achieved were at first simple: the ability of leprosy patients to use a phone, write a letter home, vote, and be treated with more consideration—not as pariahs. *The Star*

spread the word that leprosy was far less infectious than tuberculosis and sexually transmitted diseases. Further, the magazine championed the fact that it was scientifically safe to care for Hansen's victims in their own communities, near their families. The afflicted were capable of having normal lives, without compromising the health of others.

Stein's activism prompted popular American movie and stage stars, including Tallulah Bankhead, who became a personal friend, to publicize and crusade for a more humane treatment of Hansen's sufferers. In addition, because there were many military veterans at Carville, Stein enlisted the support of the American Legion and the Forty & Eight (40/8), which established chapters at the hospital. These groups offered political influence and outreach that helped further Stein's humanitarian efforts. The 40/8 also worked to in-

## THE LIGHT OF TRUTH

Stanley Stein founded the *Sixty-Six Star* newsletter as a way to give Carville patients a much-needed voice and to boost morale. In 1941, the bulletin evolved into *The Star* magazine, declaring its mission as “Radiating the light of truth on Hansen’s Disease.” Through advocacy and education, Stein and the publication helped change lives, laws, and attitudes.

- Residents at the Carville hospital gained access to telephones and an on-site post office, facilitating better communication with loved ones back home. A 1941 remodel created individual, dormitory-style rooms for patients. Barbed wire fencing was removed, and those who attempted to leave the facility were no longer confined to an in-house jail.

- The repeal of a Louisiana law declaring Hansen’s disease as a quarantinable contagious condition paved the way for the elimination of strictly-enforced segregation from society and life-long incarceration. Residents were able to leave the facility for short periods and following successful drug therapy, became eligible for a medical discharge. (Outpatient treatment of Hansen’s disease did not become the norm until the 1980s.)

- Carville patients saw their right to vote reinstated in 1946, and legislation banning their use of public transportation also was overturned. In the 1950s, the policy prohibiting marriage between patients was lifted, and housing for couples added.

- Encyclopedia publishers were persuaded to update and remove inaccurate and false (non-scientific) information about leprosy and include a cross-reference to Hansen’s disease.

crease subscriptions to *The Star* and purchased needed equipment for the magazine’s production.

In the 1940s, dedicated public health research physicians, working with Carville volunteer patients, Stein included, discovered the efficacy of sulfone therapy to treat the cause of the disease. However, by that time, Stein was blind, with his health severely compromised. He passed away from kidney failure in 1967, having spent 36 years in the Carville facility.

### A 21ST-CENTURY SEARCH

My discovery of Stein’s story was the result of an effort to make a long commute more tolerable by listening to recorded books. One week I opted for John Tayman’s *The Colony: The Harrowing True Story of the Exiles of Molokai*, chronicling the leper colony in Hawaii. It was on tape 12 that I first heard the name Stanley Stein, a Jew from Texas, who helped change the world for the better. I wanted to know more and decided to travel to Carville.

Located halfway between Baton Rouge and New Orleans on the banks of the Mississippi River in Iberville Parish, the site of the former leprosarium is isolated and difficult to find. While still surrounded by a steel cyclone fence, the barbed wire that once kept the inmates confined is long gone. The facility now is a Louisiana National Guard base.

Just past the guarded gate is Stanley Stein Drive. On the right side, is a small building housing the National Hansen’s Disease Museum. The only other area open to visitors is the well-maintained cemetery. Here, Hansen’s sufferers rest side-by-side and include Europeans, Asians, Latin Americans, Africans, Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, and Jews. Stanley Stein, however, is not among them. He, like so many others confined to Carville, had wanted to be with his fam-

ily, but only in death did he return home. Elizabeth Schexnyder, the curator of the museum, told me that his grave site was in San Antonio, which became my next travel destination.

The Texas crusader for Hansen’s victims is buried in the family’s plot, nearest to his mother, in Temple Beth El’s old Palmetto Street cemetery. His headstone is a simple, small rectangle engraved with two names: Sidney Maurice Levysen at the top and “Stanley Stein” (in quotations) carved below—a modest marker for a man who helped so many people.

In *Alone No Longer*, Stein wrote:

*People sometimes ask me if I have a philosophy of life. I do.... I try and make the best of each day, not grieving over yesterday, and not being too concerned over what may happen tomorrow. To me, ‘eternity’ is the moment...Instead of bemoaning the things that I have lost, I try to make the most of what I have left.*

In searching for Stanley Stein, I discovered the courage of a blind Jewish leper who chose to turn adversity into accomplishments. He tirelessly, and to the very end of his life, worked to bring human understanding, tolerance, and medical attention to improve the lives of tens of thousands of Hansen’s disease sufferers worldwide. ★

*Jerry Klinger is the president of the Jewish American Society for Historic Preservation.*

Resources:

<https://www.hrsa.gov/hansens-disease/museum/index.html>

<https://tinyurl.com/y8fjey7j>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National\\_Hansen%27s\\_Disease\\_Museum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Hansen%27s_Disease_Museum)



# Texas Jewish Cemeteries *and* Burials

*A cemetery is one of the cornerstones of a Jewish community, and in the 19th century, immigrants to Texas made the establishment of these burial grounds a priority.*

❖ THE Buh Israel Society purchased land for the JEWISH CEMETERY in Gonzales during the mid-19th century. Gravestones date from 1861, and as is customary, the Hebrew-language side of a marker faces east. For years, the site was the only burial ground available to Jews in the region. In fact, the 1873 interment of Jeannette Hirsch, whose body was transported 140 miles from Corpus Christi, prompted the founder of King Ranch, Captain Richard King, to donate property for a Jewish cemetery in that Texas coastal city.

❖ STRANGER'S ROW in Houston's Beth Israel Cemetery is the resting place for unknown individuals who passed away far from home, and in some cases, for impoverished congregants. The synagogue reserved the back row for these burial sites. Among the notable graves is that of Will Horwitz, Jr., businessman and philanthropist. During the Great Depression, one day each week, patrons of Horwitz's four city theaters received free admission in exchange for canned goods, which helped feed more than 100,000 Houstonians.

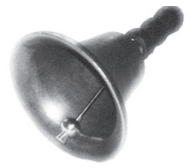
❖ THE HEBREW CEMETERY in Brownsville dates to 1868, when city founder Charles Stillman deeded the land to the local Jewish benevolent society for one dollar. The graves of Jews buried before that time were later moved to the consecrated site. Originally a wooden fence surrounded the graveyard, but near the turn-of-the-20th century, the community raised funding for a brick replacement wall.



Top: Waco's Hebrew Rest dates to 1869. Photo by Michael Barera. This image: The Hebrew Benevolent burial ground in Galveston is one of the state's oldest. Photo courtesy of SC 171 #1 Collection, Rosenberg Library, Galveston. Originals in color.

❖ HEBREW REST in Waco was founded by the Hebrew Benevolent Association, 20 Prussian and Polish Jewish immigrants, who bought the initial plot of land in 1869. The cemetery has a "no flowers" policy referencing the Jewish custom of placing a small stone on the grave of a loved one because unlike a bouquet of blossoms, a rock will not wither away and die.  
—Pamela Murtha

# San Antonio's Last Town Crier



*Texas is filled with characters—free spirits who follow their own paths. One of those non-conformists, Julius Meyer, was the subject of a speech that Frances Rosenthal Kallison, a San Antonio rancher and Jewish historian, gave to the Southwest History Group of the American Association of University Women on October 26, 1982.*

Kallison interviewed Meyer family members to shed light on the man she dubbed “The Last Town Crier of the Western Hemisphere.” A transcript of Kallison’s remarks, housed at the University of Texas at San Antonio Special Collections, provided this background (Kallison’s comments are italicized throughout):

*[Julius Meyer]...had a natural flair for advertising. He was a showman. His family...had been strolling players...in Prussia. His mother and father immigrated [from Germany] to New York, and he was born there in 1866.*

Twenty years later, Meyer moved to Luling, Texas, married, and had five children. There, he operated a small grocery, fruit stand, and short-order restaurant.

To bring in customers, the entrepreneur, who had a knack for showmanship, began distributing poster signs and handbills for not only his own business, but for others as well. Kallison explained how this unique approach helped spread the word:

*In many towns, the newspapers just came out once a week so this method of advertising a product by way of distributing hand bills from house to house, business offices,*

*store to store, or posting posters on the trees and telegraph poles, was a way that merchants and professional people could advertise their wares and services.*

*In 1911 or 1912, Meyer moved his family to San Antonio, where he continued to offer promotional services, employing his flair for theatrics.*

*Whatever he was advertising, [Meyer] dressed up for it. For advertising a farm show, he dressed up as a farmer; advertising a dog show, he dressed up as a clown.... [for a movie], he dressed up as a frontier man with a six-shooter on his hip...*

Kallison’s research revealed that though Meyer mainly publicized commercial enterprises, he also promoted charitable organizations:

*Julius was not a man of great worldly means; all he had to sell was his time and his services. Yet, he gave freely of himself for all charitable purposes. The family has preserved letters of gratitude for his services to the newly organized Associated Charities (the Community Chest, now the United Way), and from the Elks Lodge thanking him for his free advertisement of their concert in Beethoven Hall for the benefit of [the organization’s] milk and ice fund for needy children.*

By the 1920s, the Alamo City—and the world—was changing. The historian told her audience:

*The radio put Julius Meyer out of business. The radio could reach thousands of people where Julius on any day could only reach a handful... Also, the drivers of the automobiles on Houston and Commerce streets [in San Antonio] complained that he slowed traffic [using a horse-drawn carriage].*

*The mayor ordered [Meyer] off the street. His last appearance was on December 12, 1926... He was reinstated very briefly in 1928, due to numerous petitions and because he was so highly praised by the newspaper and many articles. An editorial from the Galveston Morning News says that by taking Julius off the streets, San Antonio was losing what had been one of their main unique institutions and attractions to tourists....*

Julius Meyer died in September 1929, beloved for his colorful personality, original flair, and benevolence to many.—Gene Krane

Editor’s Note: Frances Rosenthal Kallison, who passed away in 2004, co-founded the Texas Jewish Historical Society in 1980.



# Legacy Preservation: Saving History One Story at a Time

Since its start in 1971, the Dallas Jewish Historical Society has pursued the vision of late founders Ginger Jacobs and Ruth Kahn. From the beginning, the women wanted to collect and save not only artifacts, but also the stories of the Dallas Jewish community.

And so, the DJHS Oral History Project was born. Members of the Society—all of whom are volunteers—began to interview the oldest and most prominent individuals in the city's Jewish and secular life. These included Minnie Marcus, wife of Herbert Marcus, a founder of the luxury retailer Neiman-Marcus, and mother of store executive Stanley Marcus; Juanita Miller, wife of the prominent real estate developer Henry S. Miller; Raymond Nasher, founder of North Park Mall; Rabbi Levi Olan of Temple Emanu-El; and politician Robert Strauss.

Early interviews captured many stories of the 1900s through the 1920s. They include reflections on young lives and of families arriving in North Texas—tales of immigration from Germany, Austria, and Eastern Europe, among other places, and further journeys from northeastern U. S. cities. All tell of individuals seeking better lives, with opportunities to reach their full potential in a free, open society.

Original interviews were recorded on cassette tapes, but as technology evolved, so did the skills of DJHS volunteers. The collection now holds not only those early recordings but conversations preserved on VHS tapes, DVDs, and CDs. All are being converted to digital files for backup and cloud storage. Soon

more than 600 recordings will be available to the public via the organization's website and YouTube. Still, the collection continues, now with a broader scope.

A change of focus to legacy preservation has expanded the reach of the oral history program to include all members of the Dallas Jewish community. With this new model, any individual can sign up and create a legacy for their own family as well as the DJHS archives.

A major initiative of the preservation organization, the catalogued interviews document both the growth of the Jewish community in Dallas and the evolution of the city. As long as there are tales to be told, Society officials say the program will continue.—*Debra Polsky*

Editor's Note: Expanding on the idea of saving the stories of the Dallas Jewish community, the DJHS also gathers and maintains an archive of photographs. The image on this page is from that collection.

Above: This photograph of a B'nai B'rith league bowling team shows one of the many aspects of Jewish life. Image courtesy of the DJHS. To learn more about the organization's preservation initiatives, visit [www.djhs.org](http://www.djhs.org).



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# The Rock Wall: A Mystery Solved?

The City of Rockwall, 25 miles east of Dallas, is named for a geologic formation that stretches across 20 square miles. A section of the buried wall was first unearthed in 1852, revealing rows of stacked stone blocks with what looked like a layer of mortar between. More than a century and a half of debate surrounding its origins ensued, questioning whether this was the work of man or a natural phenomenon.

In 1901, geologist Robert Hill attributed the arrangement to a common geological occurrence—a *clastic dike*. This natural phenomenon is the result of water, sand, silt, and other deposits collecting in a *seam* (or crack) in the earth, which during the course of millions of years, hardened then fractured into a uniform pattern. Even so, speculation persisted.

In the 1920s, archeologist Count Byron de Prorok concluded that a prehistoric race likely built the wall, incorporating archways, windows, and passageways. Though seemingly implausible, accounts from local residents, dating as far back as the 19th century, apparently agree with his assessment. T. U. Wade, one of the three men who discovered the sprawling underground anomaly, spoke of the structure as having rooms of stone with a corridor.

Another early settler uncovered a section with what appeared to be a doorway. Among the imaginative speculations was one that appeared in 1886 in the *Rockwall*

*County Success* newspaper, revealing a discovery of the “skull of a giant” buried within the wall. The piece hinted that Goliath-sized beings, perhaps of the extraterrestrial kind, served as the architects of the underground

landmark. Yet, that artifact’s existence never was verified, and many concluded the article was intended to be tongue-in-cheek.

The legend surrounding the mysterious origins of the rock wall eventually caught the attention of producers for the History Channel’s *America Unearthed*, a television series about lesser-known archeological treasures.

In 2012, host Scott Wolter, a forensic geologist, traveled to Rockwall to separate fact from fiction. He recruited Dr. John Geissman, a geology professor at the University of Texas at Dallas, to help put an end to the debate. A local property owner allowed excavation of a section of the underground formation, and Geissman collected core samples of rocks from various places along the exposed wall. Using paleomagnetism, which records the magnetic field of the earth at the time of geologic formation, the readings for all of the specimens were singular in direction, confirming a natural arrange-



Above: Stones harvested from the buried formation were used for this above-ground rock wall reproduction. Photo courtesy of Rockwall County Historical Foundation. Original in color.

ment. If done by human hand, the geologist explained when the show aired in 2013, results would have shown a multi-directional magnetic pattern, indicating random selection and placement of stones.

Some, though, still are not convinced. Geologist James Shelton and architect John Lindsey are among those who have argued that anomalies in the structure merit further investigation. These atypical features include window-shaped openings and archways, as well as what appeared to be ancient script engraved on a stone piece excavated in 1949.

Although repeatedly discounted, the lore surrounding the underground phenomenon has, for generations, shaped the city above.—  
*Pamela Murtha*



# CASETA★

CENTER FOR THE ADVANCEMENT AND STUDY OF EARLY TEXAS ART

## ARCHIVES PROJECT

### Early Texas Art Archives Project

If you know someone who was an early Texas artist, you could be the key to preserving a valuable part of Texas art history.

It is vital that the life and works of early Texas artists are documented. You can work with CASETA to donate archival material to an institution that will collect, organize and make it available to scholars, researchers, educators and others who will help preserve this important part of Texas history.

### Whose material is needed?

Archival material is sought for those artists who worked in Texas 40 years prior to the present date. There are more than 4,000 such individuals across the state.

### What is archival material?

Letters, exhibition catalogs, newspaper articles, photographs, diaries and other documents pertaining to the life and work of an Early Texas artist.

### What do you do?

Contact Howard Taylor or Valerie Bluthardt at [caseta@samfa.org](mailto:caseta@samfa.org). Discuss the material you have and your interest in disposition and we will refer you to the appropriate institution.

Some institutions have a statewide interest and others are interested in artists from a specific region of Texas. Each institution reserves the right to determine what material will be accepted. An institution may require that the gift be unrestricted and in some cases be appraised before a donation is accepted.



Amanda Medina, Cheek Collection Intern and student at Angelo State University, works at organizing the Collection at the San Angelo Museum of Fine Art's library.



Emily Grover, Collections Assistant at the San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts, and Molly Sauder, Archivist and Librarian at the Old Jail Art Center, Albany, TX, peruse the Bill and Mary Cheek Collection housed in the San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts library. The project to evaluate, organize and scan the Bill and Mary Cheek Collection is being funded through the CASETA Nancy and Ted Paup Research Initiative.

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# *The Diverse Architecture of* **Jewish Synagogues Across Texas**

*From small towns to large cities, historic synagogues embody the cultural and architectural legacy of Jewish immigration to the state.*



## ↑**Temple K'nesseth Israel, Baytown**

Temple K'nesseth Israel, constructed in 1930 and designed by Jewish architect Lenard Gabert, has a distinctive barrel-vault roof, arched yellow brickwork, and Star of David-shaped ceiling lights. Though without a rabbi since the 1950s, the synagogue remains as a place of worship, with services led by congregants. Damaged by Hurricane Harvey last fall, current and past members are actively raising funds to repair the historic synagogue. Photograph courtesy of Baytown Library Historic Photograph Collection.





### ← Temple Beth-El, Corsicana

The onion-domed octagonal towers of Temple Beth-El in the North Texas city reflect the Moorish Revival style of architecture. The synagogue, established in 1900, was once a house of worship for a Jewish population of more than 500. By 1980, though, that number had dwindled, and the congregation disbanded. Soon after, the City of Corsicana assumed the role of caretaker of the synagogue. Since that time, the National Register-listed Texas landmark has served as an event center, as well as the site of monthly *Shabbat* services (a ritual observance). Last year, the Corsicana Preservation Foundation launched a restoration campaign to ensure the building remains a centerpiece in the city's historical landscape. Image courtesy of Michael Barera.

### → B'nai Abraham, Brenham/Austin

This simple white clapboard synagogue was built in 1893 to house the Orthodox congregation of this Central Texas town. Some thought the structure was architecturally similar to New England-style churches, but others noted a design reminiscent of Eastern European synagogues. As Brenham's Jewish population declined, congregants worried that the structure would be demolished or repurposed. Instead, a plan was devised to cut the historic synagogue into three pieces and transport it 90 miles by flatbed truck to Austin's Dell Jewish Community Campus (see back cover). Though the 2015 move meant the loss of the building's historic landmark designation, the structure has found new life in the state capital where it continues to serve the Jewish people. Photograph courtesy of Wendy R. Corn.



### ← Temple Freda, Bryan

Temple Freda, located in the downtown district of this Brazos County city, is the only synagogue in the United States named after a woman (Ethel Freda Kaczer, wife of the congregation's president when the building was erected in 1912). During construction, local non-Jewish families helped by donating funds and materials. Now owned by the City of Bryan, the Greek Revival structure has fallen on hard times. However, a multi-year project to restore the National Register-listed site for future use as a community center is currently underway. Photograph courtesy of the Texas Historical Commission.





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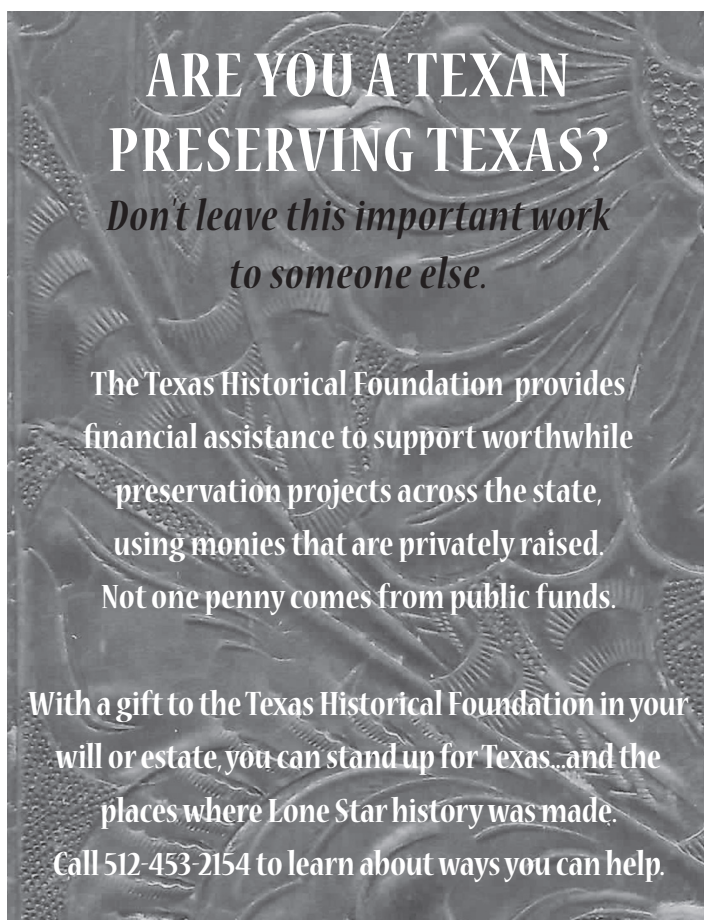
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## SPOTLIGHTING THE HOLDINGS OF THE INSTITUTION MEMBERS

— *Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth* —

Amon G. Carter was a consummate showman and promoter of his favorite causes—the City of Fort Worth and West Texas. In 1940, he learned that Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer would be releasing a movie called *The Westerner*, starring Gary Cooper and featuring Texas legend Judge Roy Bean. Carter had long touted Fort Worth as “Where the West Begins” and envisioned the film’s release as an exceptional promotional opportunity.

Carter’s charm offensive began immediately. Telegrams and letters circulated between the offices of the Texas businessman, one of the founders of the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* newspaper, and Samuel Goldwyn’s in Hollywood. The movie was duly scheduled to premiere in Fort Worth on September 19, 1940.

The city welcomed the film’s cast, who disembarked at Fort Worth’s Meacham Field, for “The Westerner Week” celebrations. The *Star-Telegram* had great fun with star Gary Cooper, who alighted from the airplane wearing a tailored suit and no hat. Carter stepped in to lend the leading man a Shady Oak Stetson\*, horse, and revolver for photographs. In the afternoon, the two men led a



parade from downtown to the Will Rogers Memorial Coliseum. That evening, the stars were entertained by Carter at his Shady Oak Farm, followed by the movie’s premiere in the city’s best cinemas: the Worth and Hollywood theaters.

The grand spectacle was commemorated with gifts. Amon Carter received a matching pair of Colt .45 single-action army revolvers. Called the “Peacemaker,” the classic design was one of the most widely used firearms in the American West. The pistols were engraved by Colt’s best craftsmen, featuring a nickel finish with mother of pearl and diamond steer head grips and plates etched with Carter’s name and “Where the West Begins.” The customized revolvers, which reside in the Amon Carter Museum’s collection, were a fitting tribute to a tireless promoter of Fort Worth and the legendary American West.—*Jonathan Frembling*

\* The Shady Oak Stetson was made famous by Amon Carter, who worked with hat company officials to design and produce this handmade custom style.

*Jonathan Frembling is archivist and reference services manager at the Amon Carter Museum of American Art.*

Above: Gary Cooper, left, and Amon Carter are shown at Shady Oak, 1940. Left: The pair of Colt .45 single-action army revolvers were gifts, 1940. Images courtesy of the Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas. Originals in color.



# *Quiet, Bountiful, and Divine*

## The Story of An Inspired South Texas Painter

By Mariah Rockefeller



Nearly 42 miles southwest of Corpus Christi sits the quiet, but bustling city of Kingsville. This seat of Kleberg County is called the birthplace of American ranching because the legendary King Ranch rooted its empire here in the late 19th century. In 1904, Henrietta M. King, widow of Captain Richard King, founded the city shortly after assisting in the establishment of the St. Louis, Brownsville & Mexico Railway, which connected commerce between Brownsville and Houston.

Frequently referred to as the Brush Country, this remote part of the state has no grand and sweeping vistas. Most of the population has been here for generations with ties to the cattle business, including many who are employed by or associated with the King Ranch. Others are more recent locals, transplanting themselves because of Texas A&M University-Kingsville or the Naval Air Station.

Not many would call these landscapes inspirational, let alone divine. Artist Maurice Schmidt, however, is one exception. Born in 1936 in New Braunfels, the artist received his BFA from the University of Texas at Austin and an MFA from Michigan's Cranbrook Academy of Art in 1958. He moved to Kingsville in 1965 to help establish the art department at Texas A&I (now Texas A&M University-Kingsville),





**I LIKE TO THINK THAT IT WAS  
THE HILL COUNTRY THAT MADE  
ME AN ARTIST, AND SOUTH TEXAS  
THAT MADE ME A PAINTER.**

—Maurice Schmidt



from which he retired in 2002. There, Schmidt discovered a connection with the land and the community that stirred his imagination and desire to create.

Another important event in Kingsville—a meeting of kindred spirits—sparked a friendship between Schmidt and Texas Regionalist artist Emily Rutland (1890-1983) in the latter part of the 1960s. Although the Hill Country native was much younger, the two found themselves talking often about the land and the people of rural South Texas, sharing this constant source of inspiration. Throughout their careers, works by both artists show evidence of this ongoing artistic dialogue.

For Schmidt, Judaism has always been an integral part of his life and work. While on the way home from their synagogue in Corpus Christi, he recalls urging his wife to pull the car over so he could watch a farmer turn his tractor. In this moment as a contemplative spectator, Schmidt was reminded of *teshuvah*, the Hebrew metaphor of repentance that signals a return to the Father and to the land. To the artist, the beauty of South Texas lies quietly in the existence of these scenes and moments. His work reflects this appreciation of the bountiful and inherent joy in nature and commonplace activities in his adopted home.

South Texas is latitudinally parallel to parts of coastal Israel, meaning the two areas, though thousands of miles apart, share a familiar climate and corresponding harvesting seasons. This fact further connected the artist to his ancestral source, providing a deepened connection with the region. In Kingsville, he absorbed biblical associations all around him, like the palm tree, which became a frequent subject for his paintings.

As an art critic for the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* from 1974 to 1989, Maurice Schmidt was able to take part in the greater South Texas art scene. Through his teaching, writing, and paintings, he shared his embrace of all forms and manners of art with students, colleagues, and neighbors.

Earlier this year, Schmidt had his first solo exhibition in Houston, where his work was displayed alongside that of his late friend and mentor Emily Rutland. The South Texas artist also will have a retrospective exhibition at the John E. Connor Museum at Texas A&M-Kingsville from August 30 through October 25. For information on this exhibit, visit <http://tamuk.edu/artsci/museum/index.html> or call 361-593-2810.

*Mariah Rockefeller is the gallery director at William Reaves | Sarah Foltz Fine Art in Houston.*

All paintings by Maurice Schmidt; printed with permission. Courtesy of the artist and William Reaves | Sarah Foltz Fine Art.

Opposite page: *Turning Teshuvah*, 1997, oil on linen, 60 x 72 inches.

This page, left: *Goat Hauling*, 1989, oil on linen, 43.25 x 71.75 inches.

This page, right: *Tree Trimmer (Autumn Palm)*, 1980, oil on linen, 72 x 60 inches.

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### BASTROP COUNTY MUSEUM

904 Main St., Bastrop 78602;  
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### BRISCOE WESTERN ART MUSEUM

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12424 Camp Hearne Rd., Hearne 77859;  
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### FORT MARTIN SCOTT

1606 E. Main St., Fredericksburg 78624;  
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### FORT MASON

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Open year round; [www.masontxcoc.com/attractions-recreation/fort-mason](http://www.masontxcoc.com/attractions-recreation/fort-mason)

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112 Lamar Dr., Hillsboro 76645;  
254-659-7500; Mon-Thurs 8-4:30,  
Friday 8-4; Research Center hours,  
Mon-Fri 9-1;  
[www.hillcollege.edu/museum](http://www.hillcollege.edu/museum)

### TEXAS WENDISH HERITAGE MUSEUM

1011 County Road 212, Giddings 78942;  
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### VILLA FINALE AND VILLA FINALE VISITOR CENTER

401 King William, San Antonio 78204;  
210-223-9800; Tues 12-4, Wed-Sat  
9:30-4; [www.VillaFinale.org](http://www.VillaFinale.org)

### THE WITTLIFF COLLECTIONS,

TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
601 University Dr., San Marcos 78666;  
512-245-2313; Hours vary, call ahead;  
[www.thewittliffcollections.txstate.edu](http://www.thewittliffcollections.txstate.edu)

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### CHANDLER HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

721 Hwy. 31 East, Chandler 75758;  
903-849-2243; Wed-Sat 1-4;  
[www.chandlertx.comindex.aspx?NID=542](http://www.chandlertx.comindex.aspx?NID=542)

### EAST TEXAS ART LEAGUE INC.

364 N. Austin St., Jasper 75951;  
409-384-2404; Wed-Fri 10-4, Sat 10-2;  
[www.easttexasartleague.org/](http://www.easttexasartleague.org/)

### HERITAGE MUSEUM OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

1506 I-45 North, Conroe 77305;  
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[www.heritagemuseum.us](http://www.heritagemuseum.us)

### THE HISTORY CENTER

102 N. Temple, Diboll 75941;  
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[www.thehistorycenteronline.com](http://www.thehistorycenteronline.com)

### MCFADDIN-WARD HOUSE

1906 Calder St., Beaumont 77701;  
409-832-2134; Tues-Sat 10-11:30,  
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1808 Alumni Dr. North, Nacogdoches  
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### RUTHERFORD B. H. YATES MUSEUM

Andrews St. and Wilson St., Houston  
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[www.rbhy.org](http://www.rbhy.org)

### TEXAS FORESTRY MUSEUM

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[www.treetexas.com](http://www.treetexas.com)

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[www.cartermuseum.org](http://www.cartermuseum.org)

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1210 Park St., Commerce 75428;  
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### DALLAS JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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JEFFERSON HISTORICAL MUSEUM  
232 W. Austin, Jefferson 75657; 930-665-2775; Mon-Fri 9:30-4:30; [www.jeffersonmuseum.com](http://www.jeffersonmuseum.com)

MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN RAILROAD  
6455 Page St., Frisco 75034; 214-428-0101; Wed-Sat 10-5, Sun 1-5; [www.museumoftheamericanrailroad.org](http://www.museumoftheamericanrailroad.org)

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1200 Sycamore St., Waxahachie 75165; 972-825-4761; Mon-Fri 7:30 a.m.-11 p.m., Sat 11-10; [www.jmrl.org/br-nelson.htm](http://www.jmrl.org/br-nelson.htm)

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