

ABSTRACT

A Lost Heritage: The Jewish History of Waco

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The agency and industry of Jewish Wacoans have gone largely unobserved as primary subjects by academic historians. This oversight needs to be corrected to preserve the integrity of the historical record of Waco. An inaccurate historical record of early Waco (lacking proportionate reference to Jewish contribution) cannot be allowed to usurp Jewish legacies, and the details of the city's past cannot be permanently forgotten. By juxtaposing images captured by photographs from the past, next to my own modern recapturing of the same places and subjects, I intend to provide the viewer proof of the history that has gone unobserved. The focus of my work is on buildings, homes, and sacred places, presenting them as they exist (or do not) today. All the places captured feature sites and buildings that held an important role to the history of Waco. In many cases, the disparity is dramatic and leaves sections of the city unrecognizable.

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A LOST HERITAGE: THE JEWISH HISTORY OF WACO

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By

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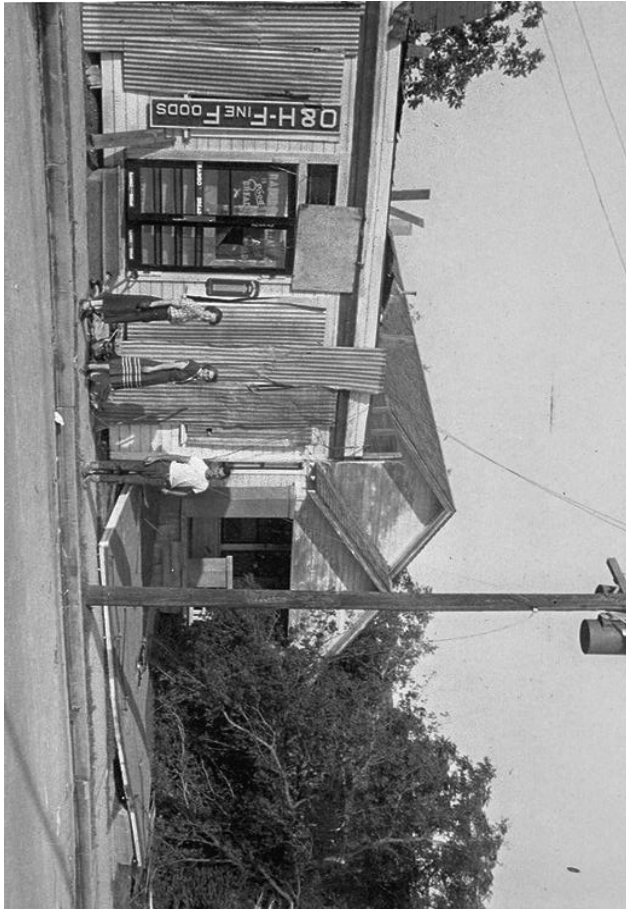
To Rosemary, for all the times I rambled on about the project and subjected you to the same images repeatedly (with slight editing and reshoots). I'd probably have been hit by several cars, standing out in Waco's roads, without you watching traffic.

In addition to my immeasurable gratitude to my advisor, H. Jennings Sheffield (without whom this project would never have been completed), I also thank Clark Baker & Michael Darough for participating in the culmination of more than two years of shooting and research.

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The Photography

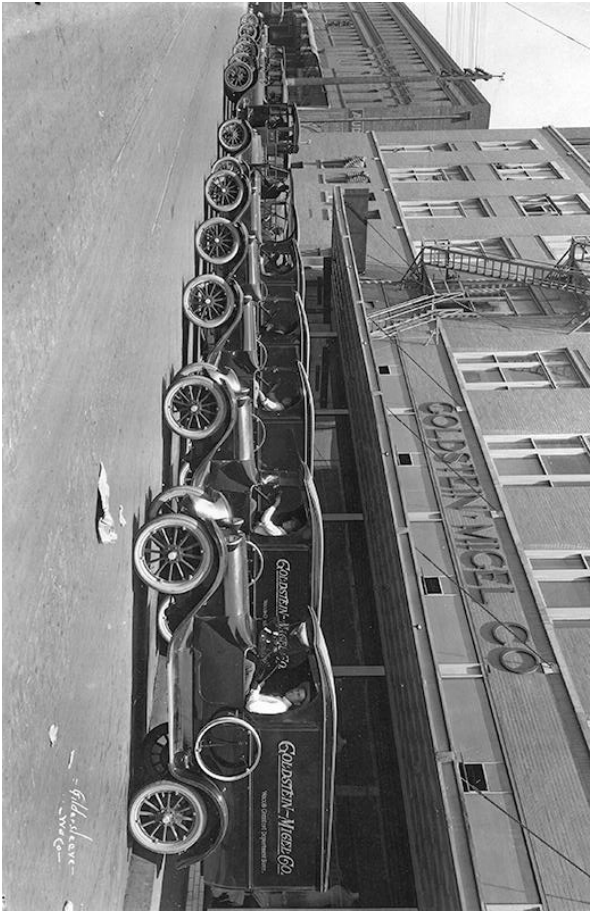


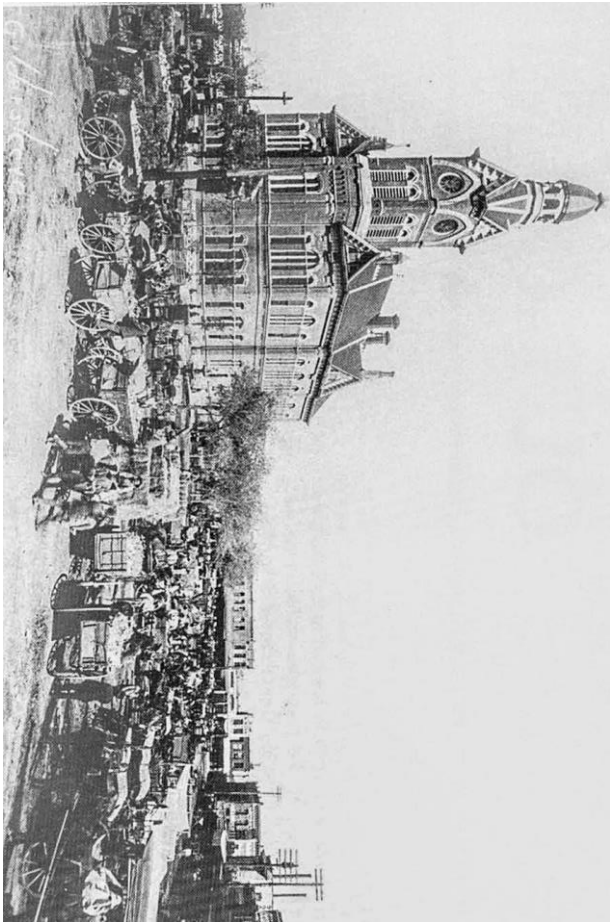


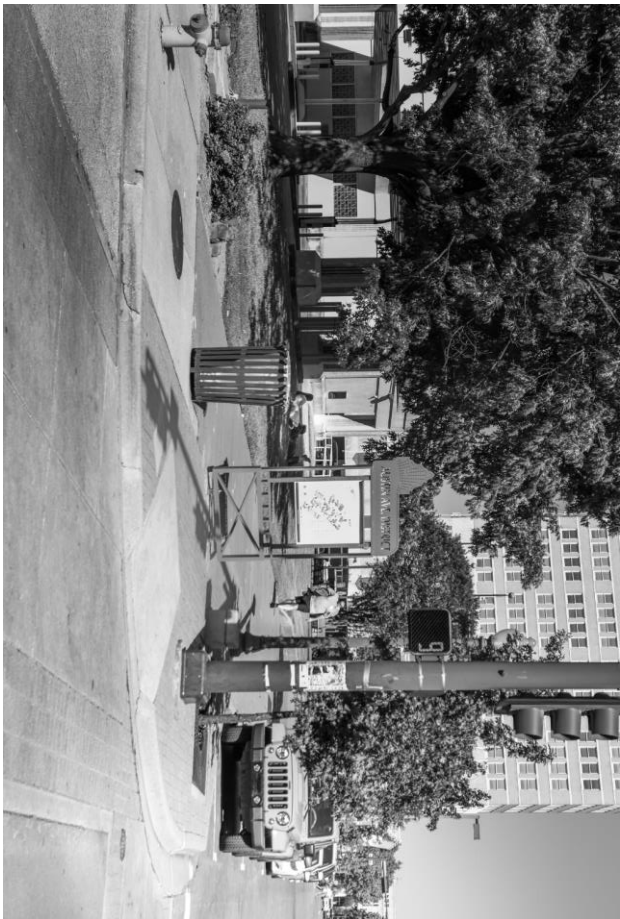


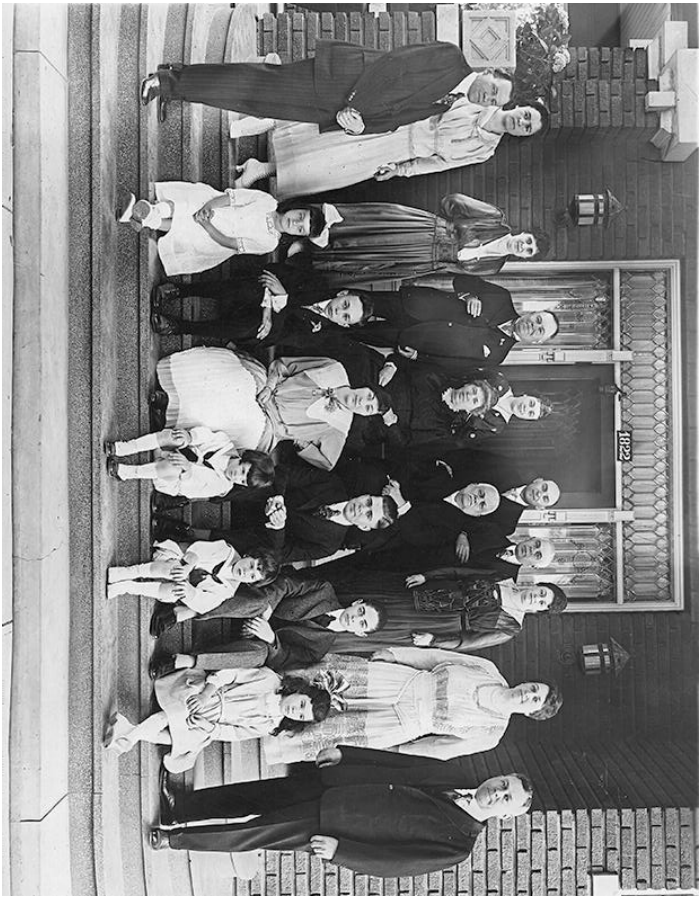






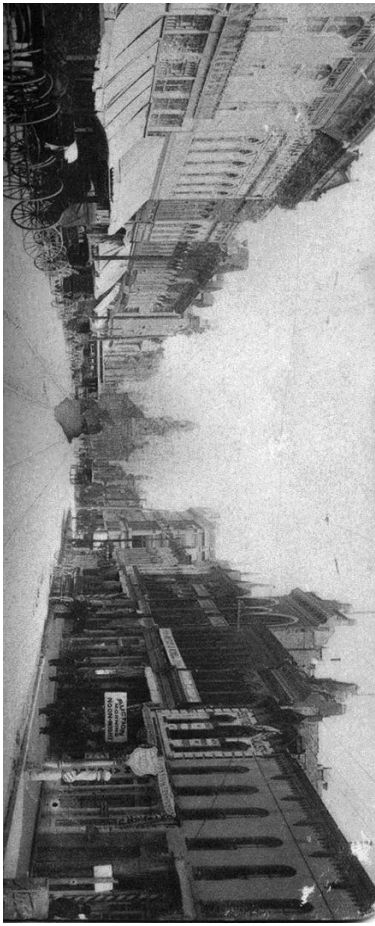




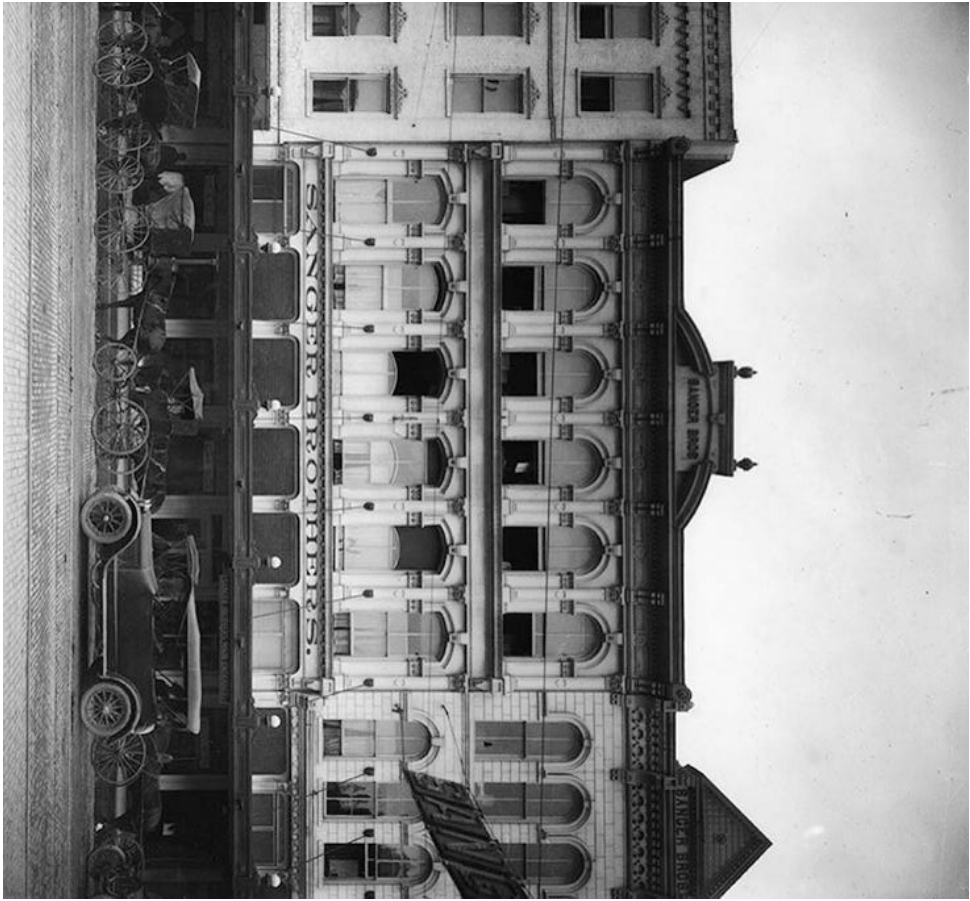


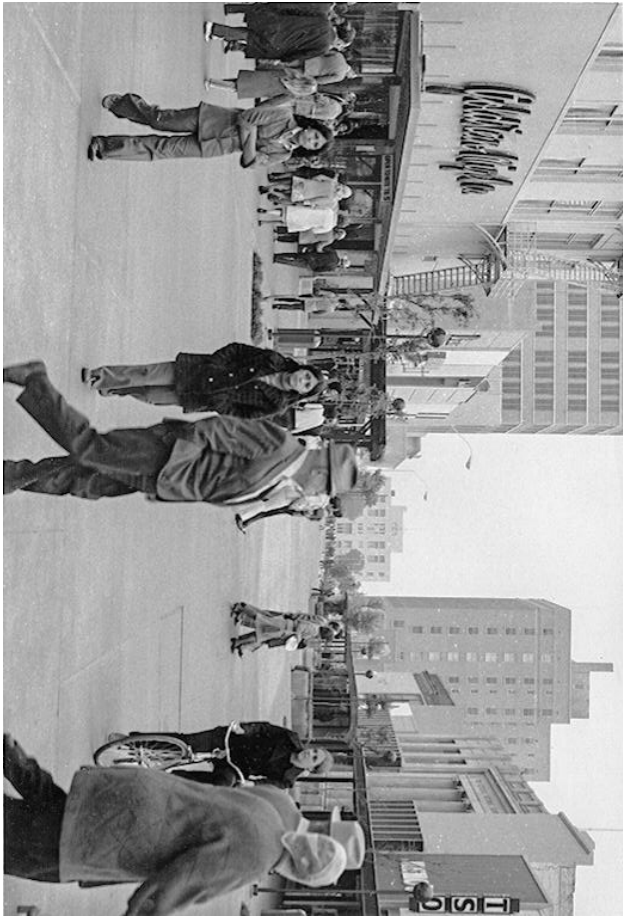


















PREFACE

A Brief Note

The research presented here has two primary components:

First, there are recaptured historical images from around Waco pertaining to Jewish influence. These recapturing's are presented beside the original images. By juxtaposing documentary images from the past and my own imagery of the same location captured in present day, I intend to inform the viewer of a part of history that has gone unobserved. The focus of this photographic comparison is on buildings, businesses, homes, and sacred places that have been lost to time. In many cases, the disparity is dramatic and leaves sections of the city unrecognizable.

Secondly, there is the following text-based component that compiles much of the existing literature, pertaining to Jewish influence in Waco, into one cohesive source. The textual component is compiled solely with the intent to inform further on the photography. This compilation effort is necessary as the agency and industry of Jewish Wacoans have gone largely unobserved as primary subjects by many academic historians. This oversight needs to be corrected to preserve the integrity of the historical record of the city of Waco. Many influential Wacoan lives and legacies have been omitted from the history due to indifference to cultural background, by those best empowered to preserve them.

My intent is to contribute a small volume towards raising awareness of the role Jewish Wacoans played in Waco's history, and I hope that it will inspire further readdress of this historical void. It is regrettable that time has not allowed for the research required

for this project to completely fill in the historical gap textually, but by continuing work on this project (long after it is completed for credit), I hope I may remedy that oversight.

Optimistically, this photographic collection will either motivate an expansion of study or someday itself sufficiently expand to provide a new address of the role of Jewish Wacoans.

An inaccurate historical record of early Waco cannot be allowed to usurp Jewish legacies, and the details of the city's past cannot be permanently forgotten. As this loss is the city's loss, and it is the duty of the city record it.

CHAPTER ONE

Defining The City

Jewish influence was present and formative for the city from the time it was surveyed in 1849 into modernity. Despite their influence, Jewish citizens and their cultural affiliation often are omitted. This is evidenced in the historical photographs I have found, as this pertinent information is often unmentioned in their filing. During my research, I had to mine unconventional designations and alternative collections to compile a cohesive body of work. There is no “Jewish Texan” sections in the public library, only collections preserved for alternative research, and even those are poorly labelled.

To fully understand my intent to address the Jewish influence in Waco’s urban development, a comprehension of Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr.’s work is first required. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr. was inherently different in background and approach to the field of history than many of his contemporaries and colleagues. Schlesinger's father was a Jewish Prussian and his mother was Austrian Catholic, and it followed that he knew "first-hand the incompleteness of American history when told as an Anglo-Saxon Saga."¹² He was introduced to the field of history during a time when, "schoolbooks portray[ed] Great Britain as the one and only mother country", yet personally he would have experienced a very different reality.³ He was coming of age in the twentieth century, and his work was concerned with the role race and cultural experience had played in the nineteenth century

¹ James Chace, review of *A Life in the Twentieth Century: Innocent Beginnings, 1917-1950*, The New York Review of Books (December 2000), accessed March 20, 2018.

² Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., “Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr.: New Viewpoints in American History Revisited,” *The New England Quarterly* 60, no.4 (1988): 497.

³ Ibid.

(as well as predicting its role into the twentieth century). He was a highly educated child of immigrants, and his roots were largely excluded in the histories he was being taught. It was only natural he would gravitate to writing history that examined how race and culture influenced American development. Schlesinger's work pioneered the inclusion of cultural studies in the field of urban history and marked a turn towards greater inclusivity in the historical record.

Schlesinger's work claimed history served as a tool of examination, as catalyst for future societal change, and was guided by all cultural groups that formed it. He argued, "[i]t should direct attention to a much-neglected influence and, by so doing, help to illumine the historian's central problem".⁴

By focusing on neglected agencies, Schlesinger believed it was possible to expose important elements of individual societies that might have been previously overlooked. Schlesinger further believed that different cultural groups had agency, but they were influenced by forces or factors beyond the control of individuals.⁵ This emphasis on the relevance of influence and agency of all groups, especially minority groups, was radical. He claimed that despite minority groups lacking control over much of urban development, their reactions, contributions, and participation were just as critical to the process of society building as the actions of pluralities and majorities.

In growing societies, "changes ... moved some groups from a position of relative isolation in the countryside to a position of intense intergroup contact and interaction in

⁴ Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr., "The City in American History," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 27, no. 1 (June 1940): 43.

⁵ Zane L. Miller, "The Crisis of Civic and Political Virtue: Urban History, Urban Life and the New Understanding of the City," *Reviews in American History* 24, no. 3 (1996): 362.

the city".⁶ Schlesinger believed the city was unique in this regard. All cultural groups that resided in an urban center developed collectivist tendencies and increased their interactions with other cultural groups in response to promote common welfare and prosperity. The formation of a city was necessarily fueled by collectivist participation by many groups, as opposed to the dominance of one over the other. While one group may have been most recognizable or widely present, it did not constitute the culture of a city, as even the largest group depended on the other groups to maintain.

Schlesinger argued that the proximity of city groups to one another would necessarily foster mutual growth and change, but each group would maintain distinct features.⁷ Further encouraging the interplay of groups, the closeness in proximity and goals fostered increasing modernization and stability.⁸ Cities encouraged diversity inherently as they generated mutual interests across diverse groups (linked geographically and financially). Schlesinger believed, "[t]he compactness of living dramatized all inequalities of condition, facilitated the banding together of the tender-hearted, and sometimes enlisted the support of wealthy philanthropists."⁹ Cooperation and empathy, he argues, are drawn out by the urban environment. Together, groups survived and thrived where individually they could not; urban growth was mutually beneficial to all participant cultural groups. Despite distinct groups, a city cannot be understood without respect for all participating groups, as this cooperation necessitated a marbled society.

Schlesinger was one of the first historians to correlate urbanization and cultural interaction. He recognized, "the great variety of groups interacted in a competitive and

⁶ Miller, "The Crisis of Civic and Political Virtue: Urban History, Urban Life and the New Understanding of the City," 362.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Schlesinger, Sr., "The City in American History," 52.

cooperative manner that kept the social and civic peace".¹⁰ He called attention to the diversity inherent to urbanization and challenged the homogenous model of Anglo dominance and sole-propriety of American history. Schlesinger saw cities as the crowning achievement of a diverse humanity and acknowledged, "[t]he enlargement and multiplication of urban centers not only insured a greater appreciation and patronage of arts and letters, but immensely broadened the field for the recruitment of talent".¹¹ Schlesinger served to initiate more diverse consideration of American history and urbanization by acknowledging the role played by all cultural groups.

Schlesinger's thesis, however, should be observed in reporting history, not merely used to describe how societies function. To use it as merely a tool to understand how societies generally function is to abandon its central premise. In noting a lack of recognition of any of the groups that contributed greatly to a place, there is a duty of historians and artists alike to remedy the lack of representation of these contributors in the public mind. Minority agency needs to be recognized and contributions noted, out of respect for accuracy in the historical record and the contemporary public.

Schlesinger championed the relevance of minority groups as necessary and determinative, but current omission of the Jewish identities in Waco's historical understanding strays far from his suggestion. There is not recognition of Waco that considers the influence of many Jewish citizens who played decisive roles in shaping it. As time perpetually progresses, and sources grow farther obscured by its passage, it seems likely there is will be few contributions to this specific area. In line with Schlesinger's school of reason, it is necessary to produce a body of work such as this to insure the

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Schlesinger, Sr., "The City in American History," 53.

longevity of accurate depictions of Waco. Without coverage of Jewish citizens, there is not true historical coverage of the city.

CHAPTER TWO

The Founder – Jacob De Cordova

Jacob Raphael de Cordova (1808-1868), was a Jamaican-born son of Jewish Spaniards. His family was forced out of Spain during the inquisition when they refused to convert to Catholicism.¹² He was raised in England by his aunt briefly before joining his father in America. His father, Raphael de Cordova, served as president of the Mikveh Israel Sephardi synagogue in Philadelphia. He returned to Jamaica, in 1834, where he and his brother founded the Kingston Daily Gleaner (still published to date in 2019 under the name The Gleaner), and in doing so, revived a family trade generations of Spanish Cordova ancestors had worked before him. The modern staff of the paper goes so far as to recognize De Cordova for his role in starting a multi-ethnic paper in the predominately black country, stating in one op-ed that recognition in Jamaica was necessitated or else the country risked, “fail[ing] to recognize those who have played a role in paving the way toward the creation of our own unique place in history”.¹³

¹² Texas General Land Office, and Texas General Land Office, "Jacob De Cordova - a Texas Promoter and Entrepreneur," October 01, 2015. <https://medium.com/save-texas-history/jacob-de-cordova-a-texas-promoter-and-entrepreneur-62a2eefcbd86>.

¹³ Pauline Ford-Cesar, "Jacob DeCordova, the Jewish Jamaican Who Founded the Jamaica Daily Gleaner Newspaper," Jamaicans.com. June 06, 2016. <https://jamaicans.com/jacobdecordovajewishjamaican/>.

Following this, he would relocate to New Orleans, Louisiana (1836) where he would ship cargo to Texas throughout the revolution.¹⁴¹⁵ ¹⁶ He should be credited as a primary explorer of Texas and recruiting of settlers to the nation-state following independence in 1836; he also should be recognized as the primary founder of Waco Texas.

Prior to his affiliation with Waco (and McLennan County), Jacob De Cordova was already established in the state and actively participating in Texas politics. He served as the Grand Master of American branch of the Odd Fellows (an international fraternal organization), and after the battle of San Jacinto, De Cordova came to Texas establish the first North American Odd Fellows lodges outside of the United States.¹⁷ Prior to his arrival in Waco, he also lived in Galveston and Houston, where he served in the Second Texas Legislature (1847).¹⁸ By 1849, De Cordova had already proven himself a stalwart Texan and an accomplished statesperson.

De Cordova would go on to transform the site of an abandoned former Waco (Hueco) Indian village with its adjacent fort (built by Texas Rangers in 1837) into a developed city and county seat, through use of a newly established land agency (co-owned with his half-brother Phineas De Cordova).¹⁹ This agency became one of the largest such

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ David B. Green, "Leading Advocate of Texas Is Born," *Haaretz.com*, Haaretz.Com, 10 Apr. 2018, www.haaretz.com/jewish/.premium-this-day-advocate-of-texas-is-born-1.5250876.

¹⁶ Natalie Ornish, "JACOB RAPHAEL DE CORDOVA," *The Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association (TSHA), 12 June 2010, tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fdeo3.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica, "Waco," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 11 Dec. 2018, www.britannica.com/place/Waco.

agencies that ever operated in the Southwest.²⁰ He personally travelled domestically, going as far as New York and Philadelphia, and even internationally to cotton-spinners' associations in Manchester, England to give speeches. These speeches would further be published, soliciting potential settlers to Waco.²¹²² De Cordova also began the process of independently buying up the land in the area, and at one point he owned more than a million acres in the vicinity of present-day Waco. Shortly after, he soon went into business with Jonas Butler and N.A. Ware, two other investors in the area residing in Galveston.²³ De Cordova was tasked among the trio of investors with the actual planning of the initial town, and De Cordova and his wife are further credited with personally reserving sites that were eventually donated to the city for schools, places of worship, and public spaces.²⁴ In short, without De Cordova the town potentially could never have been established.

De Cordova had the foresight to personally set aside a prominent piece of land that still serves as Waco's town square today. De Cordova employed the surveyor George B. Erath to lay out the town, and Erath laid out the main street and lots around what would become the town square in March of 1849. By January of 1850, McClennan county was established. In exchange for signing over the property that would become the town square over to the city of Waco, De Cordova secured a deal that insured Waco would be the county seat of the newly formed territory.²⁵ Further, he offered up tracts of land for usage

²⁰ Pauline Ford-Cesar, "Jacob DeCordova, the Jewish Jamaican Who Founded the Jamaica Daily Gleaner Newspaper."

²¹ Ornish, "JACOB RAPHAEL DE CORDOVA."

²² Pauline Ford-Cesar, "Jacob DeCordova, the Jewish Jamaican Who Founded the Jamaica Daily Gleaner Newspaper."

²³ Margaret L. Sudderth, "Places in Time - The Square From Every Corner," Waco History, Accessed January 09, 2018. <http://wacohistoryproject.org/Places/waco-square.htm>.

²⁴ Ornish, "JACOB RAPHAEL DE CORDOVA."

²⁵ Sudderth, "Places in Time - The Square From Every Corner".

in forming public roads, and his gifts resulted in the recruitment of famous Texans to the new settlement, including Captain Shapley P. Ross of the Texas Rangers who was promised a monopoly on ferry services for relocating.²⁶²⁷

By 1851, a bid had been accepted and a lot laid out for the building of the first courthouse in the square.²⁸ De Cordova recognized that the expansive town square and recognition as the county seat were necessary for the town's success, and he acted to insure both were granted. This action, of donating his land, would set in to motion all that the city would become to date. De Cordova once said, "Waco was the most beautiful location for a city in all of Texas," and, "she will be my daughter, and a beautiful daughter she will be."²⁹ De Cordova's passion for the city literally put the city on the map.

In 1849, De Cordova worked with Robert Creuzbaur to create the first definitive map of Texas (a work that Sam Houston would praise on the floor of the capital and officially certify), and in 1856 he would publish the *Texas Immigrant and Traveler's Guide Book*, which would see more than 50,000 copies printed.^{30 31} Given his lifelong dedication to settling Waco and the Texas, it is likely De Cordova may even have brought more settlers to Texans than even Stephen F. Austin.³² His contributions to the city are unquantifiable, and without his founding of Waco, the landscape and settled population of central Texas would be dramatically different today.

²⁶ Monica Shannon, "Jacob DeCordova – Founding Father of Waco", *Act Locally Waco*, 2018, www.actlocallywaco.org/2018/09/13/jacob-decordova-founding-father-of-waco/.

²⁷ Texas General Land Office, and Texas General Land Office. "Jacob De Cordova - a Texas Promoter and Entrepreneur."

²⁸ Sudderth, "Places in Time - The Square From Every Corner".

²⁹ Monica Shannon, "Jacob DeCordova – Founding Father of Waco".

³⁰ Pauline Ford-Cesar, "Jacob DeCordova, the Jewish Jamaican Who Founded the Jamaica Daily Gleaner Newspaper."

³¹ Monica Shannon, "Jacob DeCordova – Founding Father of Waco".

³² Ibid.

Jacob De Cordova died January 26, 1868 and was buried beside the Brazos where he would rest until 1935. His remains would be moved at the point to Austin and reburied in the State Cemetery.³³

³³ Texas General Land Office, and Texas General Land Office. "Jacob De Cordova - a Texas Promoter and Entrepreneur."

CHAPTER THREE

The Brother – Sam Sanger

“Texas is a land of promise... Texas has a great future. My brothers and I will open stores in north Texas. We plan to go forward with Texas.” -Isaac Sanger 1857³⁴

In 1857 Isaac Sanger (1836–1918) of Bavaria naturalized and became an American citizen in New Orleans approximately 5 years after his initial arrival in New York City. One of the seven sons of Elias and Barbetta Sanger, he had big plans for his brothers and himself in Texas.³⁵ The same year Isaac Sanger naturalized, he set out from New Orleans to Texas promising to “go forward with Texas” (a phrase that would become the official slogan of all Sanger Bros. stores).³⁷

True to this promise, it was not long before the rest of the Sanger Brothers were in Texas operating more than a dozen stores that seemed to track the progress of railroad growth through the state. These department stores were among the first to have escalators and be linked by a buying office in New York City. By 1900 the Sanger Bros stores were the largest distributor of dry goods west of the Mississippi. Herbert Marcus, who would go on to co-found Neiman Marcus in 1907, also got his start as a salesman with the Sanger Bros.³⁸

³⁴ Mike Nichols, *Lost Fort Worth*, (Charleston, SC: History Press, 2014), 128.

³⁵ Diana J. Kleiner, "SANGER BROTHERS," *The Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association (TSHA), June 15, 2010. Accessed August 2, 2018. <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/ijsqj>.

³⁶ Amanda Sawyer, "Sanger Brothers Department Store," Waco History, 2019. Accessed January 10, 2019. <https://wacohistory.org/items/show/85>.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Mike Nichols, *Lost Fort Worth*, 129.

In March of 1873, Sam Sanger (1843-1918) opened the Waco, Texas Sanger Bros. store as the primary manager of the location.³⁹ Seven years younger than Isaac Sanger, he had previously studied at the University of Berlin as well as a seminary, served a Jewish congregation in Philadelphia, run a shoe store in New York City, and moved to Cincinnati to serve as a teacher at Hebrew Union College before coming to Waco on March 4th 1873 through Galveston.⁴⁰⁴¹

He was preceded to Texas by Isaac as well as his brothers, Lehman, Philip and Alex, who had already opened fourteen stores.⁴²⁴³ Of the department stores in the brand, however, the Waco and Dallas branches were distinct in their success.⁴⁴

With the completion of the H&T Central line in 1873, Sam Sanger opened the Waco location it was very small scale, selling \$1,300 worth of stock and only employing two clerks.⁴⁵⁴⁶ In the 1870s the store served many former confederates who had come to Waco for cheap land and a new start following the civil war.⁴⁷ In the first year of business, eighteen hundred dollars' worth of merchandise would be sold for thirteen thousand dollars' worth of sales.⁴⁸

³⁹ Amanda Sawyer, "Sanger Brothers Department Store".

⁴⁰ Hollace Ava. Weiner, *Lone Stars of David: The Jews of Texas*, Waltham, MA (Brandeis University Press: 2007), 46.

⁴¹ Amanda Sawyer, "Sanger Brothers Department Store."

⁴² "Sam Sanger: Merchant and Jewish Community Leader of Waco, Texas," JMAW – Jewish Museum of the American West, December 14, 2013. <http://www.jmaw.org/sam-sanger-waco-texas/>.

⁴³ Hollace Ava. Weiner, *Lone Stars of David: The Jews of Texas*, Waltham, MA (Brandeis University Press: 2007), 46.

⁴⁴ Amanda Sawyer, "Sanger Brothers Department Store."

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Hollace Ava. Weiner, *Lone Stars of David: The Jews of Texas*, Waltham, MA (Brandeis University Press: 2007), 46.

⁴⁷ Hollace Ava. Weiner, *Lone Stars of David: The Jews of Texas*, Waltham, MA (Brandeis University Press: 2007), 47.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

By 1876 most the Sanger Bros. locations were closing except the Dallas and Waco locations, the Waco store moved to a larger building (Austin and Fifth Street). By 1882, they were further expanding in spite of WWI. The business was incorporated in 1918, and Sam Sanger would continue to lead the business until his death in 1919.⁴⁹ Under his reign, the business also was quite innovated. It has been credited with being the first Texas business to install elevators, escalators, gas, and eventually electric lighting as well as establishing a night school for employees.⁵⁰

In addition to his work with the department store, Sam Sanger played a significant role in early Jewish life in Waco. At the time the community was reported to be only sixteen families and twenty young men in size.⁵¹ He served as the Vice President for the first planning committee of the synagogue Rodeph Sholom. Upon its completion, he would also serve as the President of the chartered synagogue until 1900. During this time, it was not uncommon for him to step in to officiate services as rabbi, as he was ordained.⁵²

Sam Sanger was also very active in the general affairs of the city of Waco. He was president of the Cotton Palace Festival in 1894, the first year of the festival. He is credited with leading successful fundraising efforts that resulted in the construction of an exposition hall with seating for 5,000. The first year's festivities were wildly successful drawing a statewide audience.⁵³ The Cotton Palace Festival continues today (albeit in a different form and fashion).

⁴⁹ Amanda Sawyer, "Sanger Brothers Department Store."

⁵⁰ Hollace Ava. Weiner, *Lone Stars of David: The Jews of Texas*, Waltham, MA (Brandeis University Press: 2007), 48.

⁵¹ Hollace Ava. Weiner, *Lone Stars of David: The Jews of Texas*, Waltham, MA (Brandeis University Press: 2007), 47.

⁵² "Sam Sanger: Merchant and Jewish Community Leader of Waco, Texas".

⁵³ Ibid.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Corner Store – Goldstein & Migel

In 1886, Isaac A. Goldstein and Louey Migel opened the Goldstein-Migel at their first location (Austin Ave.) as a dry goods store with several hundred dollars' worth of inventory.⁵⁴ Their founding mottos included "Honest goods at honest prices", "Fair treatment of all", and "We guarantee everything we sell".⁵⁵ By the 1890s, the store moved to its longer-serving location at the corner of Sixth Street and Austin Ave. The new location was in the heart of downtown and utilized dual storefronts on two heavily trafficked roads and offered a multi-story larger space.⁵⁶

A new slogan, "Waco's Greatest Department Store", was soon adopted to motivate rebuilding efforts following a fire on August 18, 1891 that burned the new location to the ground.⁵⁷⁵⁸ The lot was quickly transformed while the store moved into a nearby building that had survived the fire, and rebuilding sale initiatives were launched. Guided by the new slogan and sheer entrepreneurial drive featured the store would return with an even further expanded space that allowed it to maintain its business through the transition.⁵⁹⁶⁰ The store further doubled down on its diverse offerings that included clothing, furniture,

⁵⁴ "Goldstein-Migel." In A Moment in Time. Waco City Cable Channel.
<https://vimeo.com/142546957>.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Amanda Sawyer, "Goldstein-Migel." Waco History, Accessed April 31, 2018.
<https://wacohistory.org/items/show/69>.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ "Goldstein-Migel." In A Moment in Time. Waco City Cable Channel.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Amanda Sawyer, "Goldstein-Migel."

jewelry, and other house goods in addition to adding a restaurant inside and a soda bar to attract business.⁶¹

Innovation was also inherent to the partner's approach. Goldstien-Migel would be one of the first Wacoan businesses to feature electric fans, air conditions, and even public restrooms.⁶²⁶³ Further, it pioneered the department organization and layout in its display of diverse luxuries and commodities all under the same roof. Other competitive edges could be found in the store's fleet of delivery vehicles, and pursuit of innovative advertisement.⁶⁴ In 1912, the building would grow again as a structure was built completely encompassing the existing building and dramatically expanding the store's size. The construction would be completed on this addition in just seventy-five days. Throughout the construction, the store would not close for a business day. The new edition allowed for exhibition of clothing above the street on a platform around the building; once again, Goldstein-Migel pioneered a new standard for department stores.⁶⁵

Maintaining their business and location into the 1960s and 1970s, the business would become an anchor in a city funded project known as the Austin Avenue Pedestrian Mall that would ultimately end its reign as a prominent Wacoan department store. The pedestrian mall, that closed off several prominent blocks downtown to car traffic, simply could not draw the population that had fled to the suburbs back to what had once been a thriving downtown. In 1984, when the mall project failed, the main location at the corner

⁶¹ "Goldstein-Migel." In A Moment in Time. Waco City Cable Channel.

⁶² Amanda Sawyer, "Goldstein-Migel."

⁶³ "Goldstein-Migel." In A Moment in Time. Waco City Cable Channel.

⁶⁴ Amanda Sawyer, "Goldstein-Migel."

⁶⁵ "Goldstein-Migel." In A Moment in Time. Waco City Cable Channel.

of Sixth Street and Austin Ave. folded too. The building was then demolished by the city.

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Goldstein-Migel continued to survive briefly at a second location that had opened following the move of mid-century urban populations to the suburbs. The Lake Air Mall hosted a second location that would outlast the original location downtown.⁶⁷

Isaac A. Goldstein (1857–1920) was born in Waco and graduated from Baylor University the same year he co-founded Goldstein-Migel. From 1862, he also published *The Artesia*, a newspaper, for more than a decade, served as president for nineteen years on the Waco Public Library board of directors, secured the \$30,000 Carnegie Foundation grant that built the cities first library, and server as director of the First National Bank of Waco. In his role as director of the bank, he is credited with forming a Hebrew Free Loan (a loan offered to Jewish settlers in need of financial assistance).⁶⁸⁶⁹

His partner, Louey Migel (1858-1943), immigrated from Courland, Russia to Waco in 1880, In Waco, he would marry Rebecca Goldstein (Isaac A. Goldstein's sister) one year before going into business with Goldstein.⁷⁰⁷¹ Migel served Rodeph Sholom as president for twenty-five years in addition to donating land for usage by the Waco Boys Club. It was reported that "Migel's "name [was] almost a household word" in Waco due to his civic involvement".⁷²

⁶⁶Amanda Sawyer, "Goldstein-Migel."

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Roger N., "GOLDSTEIN, ISAAC A." The Handbook of Texas Online| Texas State Historical Association (TSHA). June 15, 2010.
<https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fgo27>.

⁶⁹ Natalie Ornish, *Pioneer Jewish Texans* (Dallas: Texas Heritage), 1989, 203.

⁷⁰ "Louey Migel (1858-1943)." Findagrave.com.
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/23263421/louey-migel>.

⁷¹ Natalie Ornish, *Pioneer Jewish Texans*, 203.

⁷² "ISJL - Texas Waco Encyclopedia." Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life. 2017. <https://www.isjl.org/texas-waco-encyclopedia.html>.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Couple – Otto & Hilde Levy

“You could not go in any... localities because they don’t accept Jewish people. And there was a Jewish clubhouse... And we had to change our wedding clothes under the attic. Had no mirror or anything. We just did wear our regular good clothes to get married. And we were lucky that we had a good rabbi which performed the ceremony.” – Otto Levy⁷³

Otto Levy and Hilde Rosenfeld were Jewish Germans married in May of 1937 (in Mannheim, Germany). What should have been a happy affair and wedding celebration, however, was largely muted as few friends or relatives attended fearing potential Nazi scrutiny. The ceremony only lasted five minutes due to the fear the whole wedding party and anyone attending might be collected by Nazis. The Levys admitted that they were gambling with their lives.⁷⁴ Determined to pursue a life together, the newly married Levys fled Germany before the end of the year to the United States.⁷⁵

“Well, we were really in love... That’s all. And sometimes a lot of sorrow brings you more closer than when you have only happiness.” -Hilde R. Levy⁷⁶

The immigration laws of the 1930s were not easy to navigate. The Levys attempts to leave Germany were delayed several times before they succeeded in immigration. Even

⁷³ Otto Levy and Hilde R Levy, “Oral Memoirs of Hilde Rosenfeld Levy and Otto Levy,” Interview 2 Transcript, Transcribed and Interviewed by Rebecca M Sharpless, *Institute for Oral History*, Baylor University, 1993, digitalcollections.baylor.edu/cdm/ref/collection/buioh/id/3337.

⁷⁴ Otto Levy and Hilde R Levy. “Oral Memoirs of Hilde Rosenfeld Levy and Otto Levy,” Interview 2 Transcript.

⁷⁵ Coleman Hampton and Amanda Sawyer, “O&H Rare Foods.” Waco History, Baylor University, 2019, wacohistory.org/items/show/26?tour=2&index=3.

⁷⁶ Otto Levy and Hilde R Levy. “Oral Memoirs of Hilde Rosenfeld Levy and Otto Levy,” Interview 2 Transcript.

their attempts to apply for visas that involved relatives and friends who had already fled Germany ahead of them, proved unsuccessful at first. It was only through very fortunate circumstance that they succeeded. The Levys' friend Gretel Weiser contacted her great-uncle, Fred Mailander, who in turn contacted the American consul in Germany and secured two visas for the couple. Mailander would also provide the Levys with a house to stay and paid to have their furniture shipped to Waco.⁷⁷

The Levys would not reach Waco until August of 1938, and they were only able to travel to Texas from New York, after receiving aid from the United Jewish Appeal Help Committee. Even then, the American consul denied Hilde because her health. Eventually they decided to make an exception and allow her immigration. By then the Nazi party had frozen their accounts and called back the ship carrying their furniture. When they arrived in Waco, they spoke no English and had only what they had brought with them.⁷⁸

"The people here—before we even say anything they shut us up. They wouldn't know nothing. That in a way they want to know it and the other way they wouldn't have the responsibility." – Otto Levy⁷⁹

"But I must say the Temple Rodef Sholom congregation—congregation Rodef Sholom—the Sisterhood and all were very good to us. Right? They brought us fruit; I didn't know how to eat grapefruit...." -Hilde R. Levy⁸⁰

In 1941, the couple would both quit their initial jobs and borrow money to take over a store located on South Eleventh Street. This would soon become known as O & H Foods after the new proprietors' own names. When it first opened, the store was open seven days a week from seven in the morning until eleven at night, and Otto and Hilde

⁷⁷ Coleman Hampton and Amanda Sawyer, "O&H Rare Foods."

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Otto Levy and Hilde R Levy. "Oral Memoirs of Hilde Rosenfeld Levy and Otto Levy," Interview 2 Transcript.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

were recognized locally for memorizing all customers (and their respective sandwich orders). In addition to selling kosher foods and simple groceries, the Levy's (as early as 1946) began to introduce exotic options to their shelves as well. Imported cheeses, chocolates, and beers would quickly become regularly available offerings at their kosher grocery. Unfortunately in 1953, a tornado irreparably damaged their storefront. This caused them to relocate to a new location and rename the grocery. From then on, they were known as O & H Rare Foods.⁸¹

There, they would run the store until 1990, until they were forced to retire due to health-related issues. The store would remain open almost another decade and provide kosher and exotic food options to the Waco community for more than five decades. Their impact expanded beyond providing food for Wacoans. By the 1940s, nearly 40 percent of O&H's customers were traveling from out of town to visit their store, attracting customers from Austin, El Paso, and as far as Odessa.⁸² Their actions helped build the city of Waco into a city that serviced a community and perpetuated a Jewish presence.

⁸¹ Coleman Hampton and Amanda Sawyer, "O&H Rare Foods."

⁸² Ibid.

CHAPTER SIX

Considering Jewish Influence Throughout Texas

Jewish citizenry have held a unique place in Texas as important shapers of cultural landscapes and communities from the beginning. The summation of their influence is often reduced in historical accounts as it was overshadowed by historic recording muddled by anti-Semitism, politics, and dominance of Anglo culture. Their influence is further complicated by the uniqueness of the Jewish presence and interaction with Anglo society in Texas. Jewish reception and inclusion by Anglo-Texan society was different than most minority groups. To discern what is truly Jewish and what is Anglo, it becomes necessary to understand how Jewish Texans interacted with Anglo culture, and conversely, how it interacted with and regarded their culture. Through examination of specific individual accounts, a full representation of the experience of Jewish Texans can be achieved. By widely viewing the larger state of Texas, acquisition of appropriate and necessary context for understanding individual Jewish experiences in Waco is possible. To preserve the Jewish heritage of Waco, the Jewish tradition and experience must be firmly established throughout Texas.

On April 11, 1890, a column ran on the second page of *The Waco Day* that was titled, "Why Do You Persecute Us?": this was a reprint of a survey distributed in February of same year by the editors of the *American Review*, a leading national Jewish periodical. They had sent out the survey to many prominent individuals "requesting a written opinion

on the causes of prejudice against the Jews.”⁸³ The responses varied, mostly remaining positive in their description of a Jewish profile with few negative descriptions aside from those referenced in denunciation. It would seem Jewish Americans were generally favorably received, yet the replies acknowledged that they still were targets of prejudice and in need of defense from established negative stereotypes. This message was underscored by *The Waco Day*’s titling of the article “Peculiar People.”⁸⁴ It was strange that while most respondents reported viewing Jewish citizens favorably, most were familiar with the expressed negative stereotypes. Further, despite their admissions of comfort with Jewish people, the title made clear a peculiar distinction. Jewish citizens were viewed as distinct and different, a theme that will repeat throughout Texas history.

The first permanent Jewish settlement in Texas was likely Velasco (south of Galveston and on the Gulf of Mexico), however, that assertion may be viewed as an overly generous attribution by more formal historians. When Abraham C. Laba visited Velasco in 1831, he encountered only two other fellow Jewish residents (Jacob Henry and Jacob Lyons) engaged in mercantile-oriented business. It was not until Jacob Henry’s death, and the subsequent gifting of his estate to build a hospital in the town, that Velasco would become cemented as an established point of Jewish trade in an otherwise majority Anglo Texas.⁸⁵ Prior to that time, the majority of Jewish influence came in the form of traders who were hosted by the state temporarily.

Jewish migrants came to Texas seeking freedom and the space to work towards something more than they currently possessed. One of the earliest publicly recorded calls

⁸³ “Why Do You Persecute Us?” *The Waco Day*, April 11, 1890. Accessed January 31, 2018.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Henry Cohen, “Settlement of The Jews In Texas,” *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, no. 2 (1894):139-56.

for Jewish Americans to come to Texas appeared alongside an article addressing the history of anti-Semitism in the *Asmonean*, the first New York Jewish newspaper, and read:

Thousands of acres of land can be bought, within settled portions of the state, for the small sum of from 25 cents to \$1 an acre... where man can make his living to his liking, and [be] more independent than the Autocrat of Russia, or the Emperor of Austria.⁸⁶

The call was penned and paid for by a pioneering merchant, Lewis A. Levi, a Jewish Houstonian. As a surveyor and land dealer in the state of Texas, Levi was a clear break from European tradition that prevented Jewish landholding in Europe, and he represented all the opportunity America and more specifically Texas could offer the Jewish people.⁸⁷ It is because of his understanding of the opportunity Texas offered that in a single sentence he could sum up his own motivations as well those of so many Jewish immigrants. Levi bought land from Sam Houston personally and lived next door as neighbor. He received a headright certificate to sell government land, received a governmental commission to distribute 640 acres of land, and owned a successful business in the heart of downtown Houston. He put much of his profits from these ventures to work for as a massive contributor to philanthropic causes (i.e. personally fundraising in New Orleans to aid victims of yellow fever).⁸⁸

Despite his accomplishment, most of Levi's recorded biographical data can be found in a report titled *Foreigners in the Principal Towns of Ante-Bellum Texas* published in a 1962 edition of *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*.⁸⁹ It is the irony of his reputation as

⁸⁶ Ruthe Winegarten et al. *Deep in the heart: the lives and legends of Texas Jews: a photographic history* (Austin, TX: Eakin Press, 1990), 7.

⁸⁷ Maristella Botticini, et al., "Jewish Occupational Selection: Education, Restrictions, or Minorities?" *The Journal of Economic History*, no. 65 (2005).

⁸⁸ Natalie Ornish, *Pioneer Jewish Texans*.

⁸⁹ "Foreigners in the Principal Towns of Ante-Bellum Texas," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, no. 66 (1962).

“foreigner” that haunts the Jewish presence in Anglo society (regardless of how Texan or American Jewish settlers became).

This description personifies the complex coexistence of Jewish culture in an Anglo dominated society. Anglo society kept Jewish citizens on the periphery, and even in recording histories it kept them at arm's length. Jewish Texans had equivalent background, education, achievement and political power, yet there was still a reservation by Anglo culture to prevented full recognition. From the earliest of Jewish Texans, their citizenship was recognized but never fully embraced by or welcomed into mainstream Anglo culture. Although not fully accepted, Jewish Texans continued to thrive in Texas, opting to leave the oppressions of Europe for (in some cases) extravagant successes. They made intentional impacts on the areas they settled.

In Houston, Mitchell L. Westheimer's success was large and his legacy and name still factor integrally into the town where he settled and helped developed. In 1865, he purchased a cotton plantation and worked throughout the 1870's to complete a 5 mile trail from east to west (his front doorstep to downtown). In 1895, he gifted part of this trail to the city.⁹⁰ By the time of his death he was fluent in seven languages, worked at the bank and post office, built the city's first streetcars, and founded and fully funded the city's first public school.⁹¹ Additionally, he owned a flour mill and Houston Livery Stable (on Market Square) in Houston and funded the immigration of five of his nephews to Texas from Germany.⁹² He then put his nephews to work further expanding his business endeavors.

⁹⁰ Ruthe Winegarten et al., *Deep in the heart: the lives and legends of Texas Jews: a photographic history*, 34.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

Additionally, ten of his twelve nieces would eventually relocate from Germany to Houston.⁹³

Another case of a successful businessman was Morris Lasker. From a frightened fleeing teenage political refugee, to a successful Galvestonian business titan and statesman, Lasker's story is one that addresses the full range of success and mobility offered by Texas to Jewish settlers. In 1884, he arrived in Virginia (from Prussia) in his mid-teens, and gradually made his way south to Texas slowly over the next three years. He survived off the generosity and business of slaves and plantation owners alike.⁹⁴ Despite narrowly avoiding being lynched for voting against secession in Weatherford Texas, he went on to enlist in the confederate army. He served under the command of Col. George W. Baylor and Col. John S. "Rip" Ford. After the war, Lasker returned to peddling, this time with a horse and wagon and is recorded to have amassed \$1,500 in gold within a few months of the war's close.⁹⁵⁹⁶ By 1872, he finally settled in Galveston, was the president of two banks and a real estate company, founded Texas Star Flour and Corn Mill, and was one the first open advocates of the eight hour work day.⁹⁷ He would go on to serve on the Texas Senate via special election in 1895 to fill a vacant seat.⁹⁸

Jewish women proved successful in Texas as well. Fannie Fechenbach Sanger, originally of Wurtemberg Germany, moved to Dallas in 1876 where she became a city

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴Ruthe Winegarten et al., *Deep in the heart: the lives and legends of Texas Jews: a photographic history*, 36.

⁹⁵ Thomas Clarence Richardson, *East Texas: Its History and Its Makers* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing, 1940).

⁹⁶ Natalie Ornish, *Pioneer Jewish Texans*, 98.

⁹⁷ Ruthe Winegarten, et al., *Deep in the heart: the lives and legends of Texas Jews: a photographic history*, 36.

⁹⁸John Gunther, *Taken at the Flood: The Story of Albert D. Lasker* (New York: Harper, 1960), 19.

renowned patron of art following her marriage to Alexander Sanger in 1879. She dealt in European art and rarities, and she built up an extensive collection herself.⁹⁹ She also participated in many women's organizations and societies and is likely best known for her involvement with the Ladies' Hebrew Benevolent Association, the King's Daughters, the Dallas Woman's Home, and the Allegro Club.¹⁰⁰ Following her death in November of 1898, "a mile-long procession"¹⁰¹ trailed her body from her Dallas residence to graveside. Even more individuals attended the funeral (without participation in the procession) elevating attendance levels into the hundreds.¹⁰² Despite her service being held in a traditional Jewish cemetery, it is notable that the attendees were diverse in "races, economic classes, and denominations."¹⁰³ She represented another example of a Jewish immigrant fast becoming a political and communal influence in Texas. She impacted her community, and her funeral shows how great her reach was.

It is this variety of Jewish settlers (successful, philanthropic, and integrated finically) that secured a Jewish place in the Anglo societies of Texas. However, it is impossible to discuss Jewish accomplishments in Texas without also addressing the increasing persecution that occurred during the early 20th century. Achievement and stability were possible, but it was not the only experience of early Jewish settlers. It must also be noted that while some did prosper, many Jewish people settling in and residing in Texas were regularly persecuted and abused by racially motivated groups and individuals alike. Particularly in the two and a half decades leading up to World War II, the abuses

⁹⁹ Ruthe Winegarten et al., *Deep in the heart: the lives and legends of Texas Jews: a photographic history*, 51.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ *Dallas Morning News*, November 2, 5, 7, 1898. Accessed on January 31, 2018.

¹⁰² Brooks, Elizabeth, *Prominent Women of Texas* (Akron: Werner Company, 1896), 188.

¹⁰³ *Dallas Morning News*, November 2, 5, 7, 1898. Accessed on January 31, 2018.

become gradually more and more normalized. By the eve of the war, restrictive immigration guidelines, higher education & post collegiate educational restrictions, and neighborhood business owners' "gentlemen's agreements" had essentially barred Jewish Texans from many businesses, organizations, neighborhoods and geographic areas.¹⁰⁴ One Klan record of instruction from this period read:

The Jew patronizes only the Jew unless it is impossible to do so. Therefore, we Klansmen... must... by the same methods, protect ourselves... With this practice faithfully adhered to, it will not be long before the Jew will be forced out of business by our practice of his own business methods, for when the time comes when Klansmen trade only with Klansmen then the days of the Jews' success in business will be numbered and the Invisible Empire can drive them from the shores of our own America.¹⁰⁵

Again, the trope of the Jewish citizenry as the exploitive foreigners is evident. Subscribers to this stereotype genuinely believed in a Jewish conspiracy to betray America culture to foreign powers and organized their own Anglo-American conspiracy to compensate for this perceived threat.

This movement took the form of segregating Jewish citizens from the mainstream Anglo-American society and culture. Further, popular press and societal convention became more accepting, of the narrative of Jewish citizens as inferior un-American foreigners, than they had in previous eras. In Houston during the 1920s, a weekly newspaper edited by journalist Billie Mayfield began to regularly attack Jewish citizens, referring to them as intentionally parasitic of economic resources, and frequently used racial stereotypes in referencing specific local Jewish persons.¹⁰⁶ Expressing the sentiment

¹⁰⁴ Ruthe Winegarten et al., *Deep in the heart: the lives and legends of Texas Jews: a photographic history*, 134.

¹⁰⁵ Ezra A. Cook, *1841-1911 Ku Klux Klan Secrets Exposed: Attitude Toward Jews, Catholics, Foreigners, And Masons: Fraudulent Methods Used, Atrocities Committed In Name of Order* (Chicago: Ezra A. Cook, 1922), 45.

¹⁰⁶ Bryan Edward Stone, *The Chosen Folks: Jews on the frontiers of Texas* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2011), 127.

of the times in Mayfield's own words, "there are lots of good Jews in Houston and all over Texas; you find them with tombstones over their heads."¹⁰⁷ In clarification of the quote, Mayfield was asserting the only good Jewish citizens were those who were deceased.

Anti-Semitism was a growing trend across the state. In 1923 another Dallas paper's editor warned by name, a Jewish tailor not to try to organize his business against Klan extortion or his business would suffer.¹⁰⁸ The exact threat suggested that "Protestant Klothiers" might prefer Protestant scissors to Jewish should they not comply with Klan demands.¹⁰⁹ Threats such as this one reveal the open boldness with which the Jewish citizens were threatened.

Stereotypes were further perpetuated and abundant, and many centered on religious claims. Robert C. Ingersoll (popular American lawyer, a Civil War veteran, and politician) described and addressed his experience with blatantly racist stereotypes of Jewish people, saying:

"When I was a child I was taught that the Jews were exceedingly hard-hearted and cruel people, and that they were so destitute of the finer feelings that they had a little while before that time cruci-fied the only perfect man who had ap-peared upon the earth ; that this perfect man was also a perfect God, and that the Jews had really stained their hands with the blood of the Infinite."¹¹⁰

This sentiment is also mirrored in communications of organizations like the Ku Klux Klan. Sections of text from the Klan news pamphlet, *The Searchlight*, reveal anti-Semitic language being used by Chaplains within the organization. For example, one Chaplain "Ridley" wrote, "In all my twenty-five years traveling about over this continent I

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Bryan Edward Stone, *The Chosen Folks: Jews on the frontiers of Texas*, 129.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ *The Waco Day*, April 11, 1890. Accessed January 31, 2018.

have never met a disloyal American who failed to be either foreign-born or a Semite”.¹¹¹ He also claims Jewish conspiracy with Russian support saying, “[T]he Jew is interested in overthrowing Christian Russia. But remember, he does not intend to stop at Russia. Through his Third Internationale of Moscow he is working to overthrow all the Gentile Governments of the world.”¹¹² It is this breed of paranoia that seems to have been at the heart of the Klan’s persecution of Jewish Americans. In an increasingly hostile international environment following the first world war, the trope of Jewish persons as foreigners is all too apparent regardless of geography. The stereotype of foreigner is once again emphasized to make clear that the “American” designation is reserved for Anglos.

When these ideologies were realized in action, they often took the form of boycott and economic pressure. For example, Klan certification stickers were placed on windows of Anglo stores in Corsicana Texas, and stores not receiving the sticker were boycotted. Many Jewish storeowners resorted to paying all employees’ Klan fees, paying bribes, or putting employees belonging to the Klan on their letterheads (in effect making them partners) to escape the economic death sentence of a boycott.¹¹³ The Klan extorted these payments and forced their way into leadership positions in Jewish owned businesses through this process.

Jewish Texans faced persecution from the Ku Klux Klan in the form of cross burnings, destruction of personal property, and being tarred and feathered; however, they were not at risk of being lynched. There is only one recorded Jewish lynching

¹¹¹ Ezra A. Cook, *1841-1911 Ku Klux Klan Secrets Exposed: Attitude Toward Jews, Catholics, Foreigners, And Masons: Fraudulent Methods Used, Atrocities Committed In Name of Order*, 43-44.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Bryan Edward Stone, *The Chosen Folks: Jews on the frontiers of Texas*, 129.

domestically, and it was outside Texas in Marietta, Georgia.¹¹⁴ This is not to say that the Klan afforded Jewish Texans any special treatment, but rather they avoided persecution of Jewish Americans to the degree of other minority groups.

It is estimated Klan membership in Dallas stood at approximately 13,000 between 1921 and 1925, meaning Dallas boasted the highest per capita density of Klansman nationally during this time.¹¹⁵ The resulting effects on the Jewish experience was proportionate. It is clearly documented that, as the Klan grew, positive Anglo relations with Jewish citizens declined.

It is also notable that despite their anti-Jewish doctrine, Klansmen were known to make efforts to recruit Jewish community leaders as they were often ignorant of Jewish status. Integrated Jewish citizens often passed as Anglo professionally leading to some unusual recruitment efforts. Edward Tithe, a Jewish merchant from Dallas, was invited to join the Klan and serve in a leadership position of “Kleagle”.¹¹⁶ Upon learning he was Jewish their reaction was rather anti-climactic, merely stating that it was too bad as he would have been an excellent fit for the position.¹¹⁷

A more recent example of a Jewish leader being mistaken for Anglo, A.R. “Babe” Schwartz, a Texas House of Representative member elected in 1955, detailed, in his own words, that “During the segregation battles, we all got cards in the mail making us honorary members of the Ku Klux Klan... I got up in the House and renounced the membership because one could not be an honorary member of a dishonorable

¹¹⁴ Matthew Bernstein, *Screening a Lynching: The Leo Frank Case on Film and Television* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009), 2-15.

¹¹⁵ Ruthe Winegarten et al., *Deep in the heart: the lives and legends of Texas Jews: a photographic history*, 136.

¹¹⁶ Ruthe Winegarten et al., *Deep in the heart: the lives and legends of Texas Jews: a photographic history*, 134.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

organization... but the best news came the next day advising me that I couldn't be a member anyhow, because I was ineligible as a Jew."¹¹⁸ Including his first term, he would go on to serve three terms in the State House of Representatives and six terms in the State Senate. He became a stern defender of desegregation, environmentalism and successfully sought regulation and to reform nuclear waste disposal.¹¹⁹ He did not lose or jeopardize his seat in his openness as a Jewish American, or for his direct assault on the Klan in the public forum.

This strange association and contact of Jewish citizenry by the Klan was the result of Jewish Texans surviving for so long by congregating together while also making deliberate moves toward community involvement. From the very beginning they had mutually banded together with other Jewish families. They, however, also had made an intentional effort to become fully immersed in local Anglo society and culture. In the town of San Angelo Texas, as early as 1880 (and again in 1885), local newspapers noted merchants closing during Jewish High Holy days, marking a clear display of Jewish influence and openness in the community.¹²⁰¹²¹ By 1927 a formal two-story synagogue was built, and in 1929 the dedication of the building was attended by San Angelo's mayor and several Christian ministers. The proceedings were broadcasted live via the radio to the surrounding area.¹²² For context, three years later (1930), there were only eighty Jewish citizens living in the town of roughly twenty five thousand in population, yet they were

¹¹⁸ *Houston Chronicle*, June 22, 1886. Accessed on January 31, 2018.

¹¹⁹ Ruthe Winegarten et al., *Deep in the heart: the lives and legends of Texas Jews: a photographic history*, 178.

¹²⁰ *The San Angelo Standard*, September 12, 1885. Accessed on January 31, 2018.

¹²¹ Ruthe Winegarten et al., *Deep in the heart: the lives and legends of Texas Jews: a photographic history*, 126.

¹²² Henry Cohen et al., *One Hundred Years of Jewry in Texas. Dallas: Jewish Advisory Committee* (1936).

given disproportionate recognition by the Anglo authorities.¹²³ This shows extreme investment in the minority Jewish community by the majority Anglo community, and it implies intentional Jewish efforts to make connections with those most different from themselves in San Angelo (i.e. Protestant Christians).

These efforts to make connections between Anglos and the Jewish Texans are mirrored in consideration of how the town of San Angelo was founded in the first place. Marcus Koenigheim, a Jewish businessman out of San Antonio, acquired the land in 1878 as a repayment of a loan. He allowed Baptists and Methodists to settle it, selling his land indiscriminately and even giving portions of the land freely without charge to be used as Christian church grounds and schools.¹²⁴

This is not an isolated incident. Consistently, Jewish Texans have made an intentional effort to positively interact with traditionally Anglo powers and sectors of society. As a result, it was common to see Jewish candidates for public office (even early in Texas history). Especially following independence from Mexican rule, Jewish Texans seem to have fully embraced and adopted politics in the fledgling Republic.

This can be seen as early as the Texas revolution through Adolphus Sterne, a Jewish German and immigrant to the filibuster town of Nachodoges. An East Texas merchant, he is considered and critical financial backer of the Texas revolution. After fighting in and being captured during the Fredonia Rebellion, he was released from a death sentence by fellow Freemasons (in the Mexican army) after swearing to never take up arms against the Mexican government again. He proudly adhered to that vow, all while sending funds to

¹²³ *Yearbook* 52 (West Texas Historical Association, 1976).

¹²⁴ Ruthe Winegarten et al., *Deep in the heart: the lives and legends of Texas Jews: a photographic history*, 33.

Sam Houston (an old friend he had made while still in Tennessee).¹²⁵ He would go on to serve in the Constitutional Congress of 1833, command a company at the Battle of the Neches, became the Nacogdoches postmaster, serve as Nacogdoches deputy clerk, an Associate Justice in Nacogdoches, a member of the State Board of Health, and an Overseer of Streets for the county. Finally, he also would become the representative of Nacogdoches to the Texas House of Representatives. In this capacity, he went on to be successfully re-elected before finally serving as a representative to the Texas Senate.¹²⁶

The first record of a Jewish candidate for statewide non-legislative office in Texas was the 1926 race for attorney general. Charles Louis Brachfield, a Jewish Texan from Henderson, ran a close race and lost by a mere 3,600 votes; this was an impressive showing considering the state was experiencing the height of the Klan's influence at the time.¹²⁷ Brachfield had previously held the position of county judge from 1897 until 1902 (having been re-elected twice), was in the Texas Senate for the following eight years, and also was appointed as a District Court judge in 1918 (a position he held until 1928). It is important to recognize, at this point in time, that a Jewish candidate could be considered seriously as a prospect for political office and could amass a serious resume in political roles. Further, it is likely that his loss can be attributed to his strict prohibition stance rather than his status as a Jewish citizen.¹²⁸

Community and political activism was not limited to politicians like Brachfield or the previous example of the 1895 special election of State Senator Morris Lasker. Many

¹²⁵ Archie P. McDonald, *Hurrah for Texas: The Diary of Adolphus Sterne* (Waco: Texian Press, 1969).

¹²⁶ Archie P. McDonald, *Adolphus Sterne: Mover and Shaker* (Nacogdoches, Texas: Jaycees, 1976).

¹²⁷ Ruthe Winegarten et al., *Deep in the heart: the lives and legends of Texas Jews: a photographic history*, 137.

¹²⁸ Natalie Ornish, *Pioneer Jewish Texans*, 265.

semi-political and charitable organizations also sprung up with Jewish sponsorship, often indiscriminate in faith or race of those receiving assistance.¹²⁹ It was a general rule, according to one report by the *American Israelite*, that in Waco, “there [was] not a Christian church in the city or county which Jews did not help support financially.”¹³⁰ In Waco in 1913, a local chapter of the Council of Jewish Women emerged; it was founded by Carrie Sanger Godshaw. The Waco chapter founded a night school geared specifically to new arrivals and immigrants. Its objective was to teach English and enable its students for success. They also founded a penny lunch initiative benefiting a local school as well as clothing relief efforts. Godshaw herself was a progressive, a suffragist, and politically active in Waco’s community where she served as the founder of local chapter of the League of Women Voters as well as the director of Planned Parenthood.¹³¹¹³² This demonstrates again the significant Jewish involvement in community improvement.

Indiscriminate support can also be found in the general efforts of the Jewish National Women’s Council across the state. The first Texas chapter of the organization was founded in Beaumont in 1901. During the first meeting the group established a library containing three hundred titles in the vestry of Beaumont’s Temple Emanuel as part of an effort to begin the collection for the establishment of a public library.¹³³ The organization’s

¹²⁹ John Gunther, *Taken at the Flood: The Story of Albert D. Lasker* (New York: Harper, 1960), 19.

¹³⁰ Ruthe Winegarten et al., *Deep in the heart: the lives and legends of Texas Jews: a photographic history*, 124.

¹³¹ Ruthe Winegarten et al., *Deep in the heart: the lives and legends of Texas Jews: a photographic history*, 114.

¹³² Dayton Kelley, *The Handbook of Waco and McLennan County* (Waco: Texian, 1972).

¹³³ Ruthe Winegarten et al., *Deep in the heart: the lives and legends of Texas Jews: a photographic history*, 114.

long-term support of Texas libraries, schools, and educational enterprises is well documented.

This effort continued on June 1, 1936, when the San Antonio chapter donated two thousand books to the San Antonio public library system.¹³⁴ The Jewish National Women's Council also sought to address controversial issues head on and frequently advocated for suffrage and against prostitution and slavery.¹³⁵ The organization made important cultural and political contributions to the discourse and direction of the state as a result; Jewish citizenry was once again participating in the community building of larger society, beyond their own immediate sphere.

A modern example of intentional Jewish outreach can be found in today's Dallas Jewish Community Foundation. It does not exclude students of any faith from applying to the scholarships they offer, nor are the scholarships distributed with any consideration of faith. Their website (as of November 25, 2017) states any "full time student attending school from the Fall of 2018 until the Spring of 2019" who is also an "American Citizen" and has resided in "Collin County, Dallas County, or Denton County" (i.e. the city of Dallas) for at least one year is be eligible to receive their scholarship offerings.¹³⁶ Once again, the intentional effort at community involvement by Jewish Texans is apparent. As in the previous historical examples, no expectations are attached to these efforts, and they represent genuine attempts to remain good neighbors to their surrounding communities.

¹³⁴ Ruthe Winegarten et al., *Deep in the heart: the lives and legends of Texas Jews: a photographic history*, 137.

¹³⁵ Ruthe Winegarten et al., *Deep in the heart: the lives and legends of Texas Jews: a photographic history*, 114.

¹³⁶ "College Scholarships." (Dallas Jewish Community Foundation: 2017). Accessed September 29, 2017. <http://www.djcf.org/collegescholarships>.

The relationship between Jewish Texans and the Anglo culture of Texas is inherently peculiar. There seems to have always been some sort of hanging uneasiness that shrouds Jewish citizens from full recognition by Anglo society, but this also offers a veil of occasional protection and defense. Jewish Texans have often been incredibly successful within the state, yet they have also been the target of discrimination and hate. Despite this, they have successfully integrated and cooperated with Anglo-American society through fostering this relationship and making efforts to actively involve themselves in their local communities. The Jewish citizens of Texas have shaped Texas dramatically and continue to do so today. Perhaps, the April 11, 1890 headline from the newspaper, *The Day*, was not incorrect; it seems Jewish Texans do have a uniquely peculiar role in Texas' history; one definitely worth recording.

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